

(Landmarks)

DESIGNATING THE ODD FELLOWS COLUMBARIUM AS LANDMARK NO. 209  
PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 10 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 the Odd  
Fellows Columbarium, One Loraine Court, Lot 1 in Assessor's Block  
1132, and Lot 2 in Assessor's Block 1084, has a special character  
and special historical, architectural and aesthetic interest and  
value, and that its designation as a Landmark will further the  
purposes of, and conform to the standards set forth in Article 10  
of the City Planning Code.

(a) Designation: Pursuant to Section 1004 of the City  
Planning Code, Chapter II, Part II of the San Francisco Municipal  
Code, the Odd Fellows Columbarium is hereby designated as Landmark  
No. 209. This designation having been fully approved by Resolution  
No. 11999 of the City Planning Commission, which Resolution is  
on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors under File  
No. 90-95-5 and is incorporated herein and made a part of hereof as  
though fully set forth.

(b) Required Data:

(1) The description of the location and boundaries of the  
Landmark site is the Odd Fellows Columbarium at One

Loraine Court, Lot 1 within Assessor's Block 1132 and  
Lot 2 within Assessor's Block 1084.

(2) The characteristics of the Landmark which justify its  
designation are described and shown in the photographs  
and other materials on file in the Department of City  
Planning Docket No. 94.532L and the Landmarks  
Preservation Advisory Board's Case Report contained in  
Docket No. 94.532L.

(3) The particular features that should be preserved are  
those shown in the photographs on file in Department of  
City Planning Docket No. 94.532L and described in the  
Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board's Case Report, in  
Section A, entitled "Architecture," Subsection No. 4,  
"Design" and in Section D, "Integrity," Subsection No.  
13, "Alterations," said photographs and Case Report are  
incorporated in this designating ordinance as though  
fully set forth.

APPROVED AS TO FORM:  
LOUISE H. RENNE

CITY ATTORNEY  
By [Signature]  
Deputy City Attorney

RECOMMENDED:


CITY PLANNING COMMISSION  
By [Signature]  
Lu Blazej  
Director of Planning

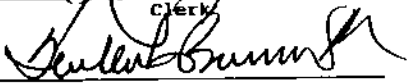
Vincent Marsh, Secretary  
Landmarks Preservation  
Advisory Board  
450 McAllister, 5th Flr

Board of Supervisors, San Francisco

Passed for Second Reading	§	Finally Passed
January 22, 1996	§	January 29, 1996
	§	
	§	
Ayes: Supervisors Alioto Amiano	§	Ayes: Supervisors Amiano Bierman
Bierman Hsieh Kaufman Kennedy	§	Kaufman Kennedy Leal Migden
Leal Migden Shelley Teng	§	Shelley Teng
	§	
	§	Absent: Supervisors Alioto Hsieh

I hereby certify that the foregoing ordinance was finally passed by the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Clerk

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mayor

File No.  
90-95-5

FEB 2 1996  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date Approved

**RECEIVED**  
 FEB 16 1996  
 CITY & COUNTY OF S.F.  
 DEPT. OF CITY PLANNING



SAN FRANCISCO LANDMARKS BOARD, 1660 MISSION STREET, FIFTH FLOOR, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94103  
(415) 558-6345

FINAL CASE REPORT

DATE: November 2, 1994

**HISTORIC BUILDING NAME:** San Francisco Columbarium      **OWNER:** Sentinel Cremation Societies, Inc.

**ADDRESS:** One Loraine Court

**BLOCK & LOT:** 1084/2; 1132/1

**POPULAR BUILDING NAME:** Same

**ZONING:** RH-1, 40-X

**ORIGINAL USE:** Columbarium

**ARCHITECT:** Bernard J. S. Cahill

**CURRENT USE:** Columbarium

**CONSTRUCTION DATE:** 1898

**STYLE:** Neo-Classical

**LANDMARK NO:** 209

**NUMBER OF STORIES:** 2 1/2

**EXTERIOR MATERIALS:** Steel reinforced masonry with a cement plaster finish

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:** The San Francisco Columbarium is the only remaining in this use in the City of San Francisco. Its distinctive Neo-Classical styling, reminiscent of designs and planning concepts derived from the Chicago Columbian Exposition, were interpreted here by English/American architect Bernard J. S. Cahill, who is best known for his work in determining the current form of Civic Center. The building is a rich and strongly academic design. It is the single surviving element of the city's original Lone Mountain Cemetery district, and as such provides an important link with the developmental past of the region. Its spectacular but simple and serene setting complements the architecture, and provides a unique haven in this part of the city. The building and its grounds have become an important visual landmark for the city as a whole. Virtually intact, the building displays a high degree of integrity. The Columbarium rates highly in the categories of Architecture, Historic Context, Physical Context and Integrity.

## CRITERIA

### **A. ARCHITECTURE**

#### **1. STYLE:**

Significance as an Example of a Particular Architectural Style or Convention

The Columbarium is an archetypal Beaux Arts composition, combining elements of Roman, Baroque, English neoclassicism and 19th century polychrome in the best tradition of the American Renaissance. The interior was designed and embellished in classical style.

#### **2. CONSTRUCTION TYPE / USE CATEGORY:**

Significance as an Example of a Particular Occupancy Type or Use, Method of Construction or Material

The building is a steel-reinforced masonry building with a cement plaster exterior.

#### **3. DATE BUILT:**

Significance as an Example of a Particular Period in San Francisco History

Completed in 1898, for the International Order of Odd Fellows Cemetery Association, the building was influenced by the master planning and Neo-Classical styles presented at the Chicago Columbian Exposition of 1893. This period in San Francisco's history is known as the Early Empire Period (1850-1906). Significant non-residential architecture from this period is extremely rare, making the Columbarium an important surviving example from the period.

#### **4. ARCHITECT:**

Designed or Built by an Architect or Builder Who Has made a Significant Contribution to the Community, State or Nation

Bernard J. S. Cahill (1866-1944) was an extremely important London-born San Francisco architect. He emigrated to the U.S. in 1888, and arrived in San Francisco in 1891. Today, Cahill is best remembered for his interest in planning, although his skills as an architect were abundant, as represented by this monumental and imposing structure. San Francisco histories recall his important role in the evolution of the Civic Center concept, an early and prescient example of City Beautiful planning. Other extant Cahill buildings include the (old) Municipal Building (1911) at 1231 Market Street and the Terbush Building (1907) at 515 Bush Street.

#### **5. DESIGN:**

Quality of Composition, Detailing and Ornament Measured in Part in Originality, Urban Design, Craftsmanship or Uniqueness

Two San Francisco buildings have prominent copper sheathed domes, and both date from before the turn of the century. The best known is Albert Pissis' Hibernia Bank building, but this example by Cahill is equally impressive. The building's plan reflects a curvilinear form with symmetric temple "fronts" placed one on each side. Elaborate mouldings, pilasters, window frames and round

windows separated by swag motifs complete this design. The building's current paint colors, which tend towards greys and taupes, reflect a Victorian era sensibility; it is likely that the original exterior colors were more monochromatic, allowing the building to appear as a stone structure.

**6. INTERIOR:**

Interior Arrangement, Finish, Craftsmanship, and/or Use Detail is/are Particularly Attractive or Unique

The Columbarium's interior was intended to complement its unique Beaux Arts design. The interior is an elaborate confection of intense coloration and faux finishes. Water seepage and years of neglect by previous owners have taken its toll on the marble-inlaid floors and plastered walls. By the time the Neptune Society purchased the property, mushrooms, mold and fungus multiplied in nooks and corners, and the niches themselves sported strange patterns of plant tile. The marble-clad staircase had become a cascading waterfall in winter, and raccoons and pigeons were the Columbarium's only living lodgers. Had the building not been purchased by the Neptune Society, it would soon have reached a point of no return. Consequently, the scope of repairs is extensive and will certainly continue well into the foreseeable future.

**B. HISTORIC  
CONTEXT**

**7. PERSONS:**

Associated with the Life or Activities of a Person, Group or Institution That Has Made a Significant Contribution to the Community, State or Nation

No persons of transcendent importance are located at the San Francisco Columbarium, although the names of many prominent families are included on the markers, the most significant of which are the final resting places of Arthur and Lucia Mathews, I. Magnin, Ritchie, Folger, two mayors, Adolph Sutro and Edward Robinson Turner, Gabriel Moulin (turn of the century photographer) and A. P. Hotaling, among other local notables.

**8. EVENTS:**

Associated with Events That Have Made a Significant Contribution to the Community, State or Nation

The type of events that normally occur in buildings such as this include the obvious (interments), and the less obvious (memorial services). As with the "persons" category, these events are in themselves not of particular importance, except to those involved. The interior of the building has been used for other kinds of events over the years, including occasional musical concerts. It is said that the building has excellent acoustics. Nonetheless, there is no association for this building with events of significance.

**9. PATTERNS:**

Associated with or Illustrative of Broad Patterns of City's Cultural, Social, Political or Economic History or Development

A most significant pattern in the history of San Francisco is marked by the presence of the Columbarium in San Francisco: it is the city's last remaining burial site. In 1937, the Board of Supervisors succeeded in banning all cemeteries in the City; by this time, City

property had become too valuable to remain in this use. Consequently, beginning that year the "permanent" residents of Lone Mountain, as the area had become known, were transferred to a new "final" resting place, this time in the City of Colma. The Columbarium building and a small garden composing its current site was allowed to remain. It remains, a silent survivor of a significant period in the City's early history.

### **C. PHYSICAL CONTEXT**

#### **10. CONTINUITY:**

Contributes to the Continuity or Character of the Street Neighborhood or Area

It is fair to say that this building and its ground represent a continuity that the remainder of the neighborhood has lost. No other structures in this area of the City brings with them this level of built continuity.

#### **11. SETTING:**

Setting and/or Landscape Contributes to the Continuity or Character of the Street, Neighborhood or Area

Surrounded by modest stucco homes of the late 30s and early 40s, this building is best experienced at the entrance gates. From here, the structure takes on the Paladian significance of a single jewel in a park-like setting. It is this assertive architectural style, wherein the building is clearly separated from its natural setting that makes the architecture so powerful. Taken with its site, this building provides a unique urban experience.

#### **12. VISUAL SIGNIFICANCE:**

Significant as a Visual Landmark to the Neighborhood, City, Region or Nation as a Whole

This building has been the subject of much curiosity over the years. It can be glimpsed briefly by those travelling west on Geary Boulevard. As if in a Neo-Classical dream, the richly detailed copper dome appears for a moment, hovering above the much more modern development along Geary Blvd. and then it is gone. Curious observers find their way to the one block long Loraine Court which leads to the building. This is a significant visual landmark for the City as a whole.

### **D. INTEGRITY**

#### **13. ALTERATIONS:**

The Degree to Which the Property Has Retained Original Materials From Which Its Significance is Derived or Which Characterize its Period

Reconditioning and refurbishment will allow the Columbarium to emerge as a polished jewel within its historic setting. Great care has been taken at every stage to preserve and enhance where possible and to retain the structure's essential character.

E. THREATS TO SITE: NONE ( ) DEVELOPMENT (X) ZONING ( ) VANDALISM ( )  
PUBLIC WORKS PROJECT ( ) OTHER ( )

**REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS:**

- ( ) NATIONAL
- ( ) STATE
- (X) LOCAL

**CALIFORNIA STATE REGISTER:** N/A

**HERE TODAY:** Page 279

**HERITAGE SURVEYS:**

**DCP 1976 SURVEY:** 2

**OTHER:**

**ENDNOTES:**

**BIBLIOGRAPHY:** Page 6

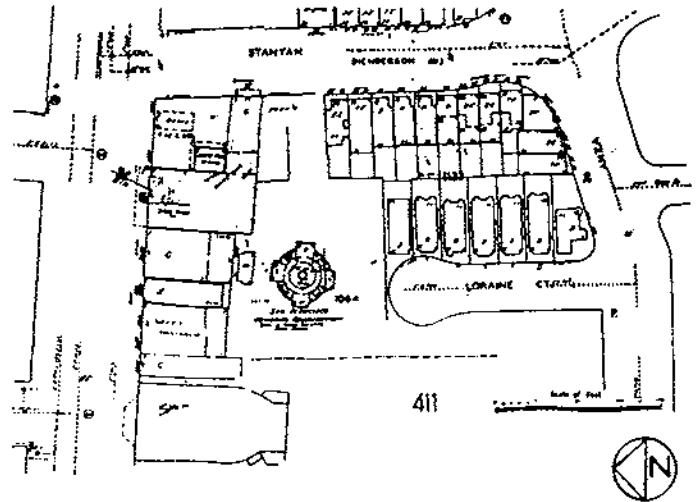
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BASED UPON MATERIAL SUPPLIED BY:**

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San Francisco, CA 94105

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**DATE SUBMITTED:** October 12, 1994



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