

FILE NO. 99-23 ORD. NO. —
DESIGNATING THE SAN FRANCISCO
CITY HALL AS A LANDMARK PUR-
SUANT 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 Supervi-
sors hereby finds that the San Fran-
cisco City Hall has a special charac-
ter and special historical, architec-
tural and aesthetic interest and val-
ue, and that its designation as a
Landmark will be in furtherance of
and in conformance with the pur-
poses of Article 10 of the City Plan-
ning Code and the standards set
forth therein.

(a) Designation Pursuant to Sec-
tion 1004 of the City Planning Code,
Chapter II, Part II of the San Fran-
cisco Municipal Code, the San Fran-
cisco City Hall is hereby designated
as a Landmark, this designation hav-
ing been duly approved by resolution
of the City Planning Commission.

(b) Location and Boundaries. Pur-
suant 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:

The entire site bounded by McAl-
lister Street, Polk Street, Grove
Street and Van Ness Avenue; being
Assessor's Block 787.

(c) Justification. The special char-
acter and special historical, architec-
tural and aesthetic interest and
value of the said Landmark justify-
ing its designation are as follows:

The City Hall is a structure mag-
nificent and monumental in concep-
tion and design, in keeping with the
highest ideals of civic architecture
of the City Beautiful era. It is one of
the nation's finest examples of the
French Renaissance style recalling
the glories of ancient Greece and
Rome. Both exterior and interior are
ornamented in splendid and extrava-
gant fashion. A symbol of the rebirth
of the City and its government after
the Great Earthquake and Fire, the
City Hall was planned and execut-
ed as the focus and key structure of
the grandiose Civic Center complex.
The seat of government for the City
and County of San Francisco for
over half a century, it has been the
scene of many impressive ceremo-
nies of the highest civic and social
importance.

(d) Features. The said Landmark
should be preserved generally in all
of its particular features, including
major interior architectural 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. LM597,
the summary description being as
follows:

The City Hall takes the form of a
rectangle some 400 feet long by 300
feet wide, with its central mass sur-
mounted by a dome over 300 feet in
height, flanked by two inner light
courts north and south. It is set
back from the street line on all
sides and surrounded by landscap-
ing, ornamental grounds and a low
wall of granite blocks. The building
is of steel frame and masonry con-
struction; its walls are in part brick
and in part reinforced concrete and
are faced with California granite.
There are four stories and a base-
ment.

The style is French Renaissance,
with classical architectural features.
The building is monumental in both
elevation and plan. There are two
principal facades, facing east and
west; each has a grand entrance ap-
proached by a broad flight of steps
and surmounted by a central portico
and pediment; from each of these
two central porticos, a two-story col-
onnade extends across the facade
north and south to be terminated by
a smaller pediment. Above the col-
onnades runs a continuous dentil-
lated cornice surmounted by a bal-
ustrade. The ornate decoration of
the building's exterior also includes
a carved frieze, and major sculpture
on the central pediment.

The roof line at the facade is 77
feet above the curb; from this level,
and receding from the facade, the
central mass, drum and dome as-
cend magnificently, with the lantern
topped by its pinnacle over all. The
drum is pedimented and surrounded
by a colonnade with surmounting
urns; the massive dome is ribbed,
and ornamented with spindles and
finials.

The great interior feature of the
building is the central rotunda under
the dome, with a grand staircase
spreading fanlike onto the marble
main floor. The rotunda is flanked
north and south by galleries at each
floor level overlooking the main floor.
Corinthian columns and pilasters
two stories high surround the rotun-
da, and a profusion of carved orna-
ments and painted designs adorns
its walls and ceiling.

The floors and stairs of the interi-
or are of marble; many doors, rooms
and other features are finished with
Manchurian or Siberian oak. The
most notable chamber is the elegant
and spacious one of the Board of
Supervisors, on the west side of the
building. The chambers of the Mayor
and the Chief Administrative Officer
on the east side are also outstand-
ing.

I hereby certify that the foregoing
ordinance was passed for second
reading by the Board of Supervisors
on the City and County of San Fran-
cisco at its meeting of Jan. 26, 1970.

ROBERT J. DOLAN, Clerk

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

RESOLUTION NO. 6463

WHEREAS, A proposal to designate the San Francisco City Hall as a Landmark pursuant to the provisions of Article 10 of the City Planning Code was initiated by the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board on December 3, 1969, 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 December 18, 1969, 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 the San Francisco City Hall 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:

The entire site bounded by McAllister Street,
Polk Street, Grove Street and Van Ness Avenue:
being Assessor's Block 787.

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

The City Hall is a structure magnificent and monumental in conception and design, in keeping with the highest ideals of civic architecture of the City Beautiful era. It is one of the nation's finest examples of the French Renaissance style, recalling the glories of ancient Greece and Rome. Both exterior and interior are ornamented in splendid and extravagant fashion. A symbol of the rebirth of the City and its government after the Great Earthquake and Fire, the City Hall was planned and executed as the focus and key structure of the grandiose Civic Center complex. The seat of government for the City and County of San Francisco for over half a century, it has been the scene of many impressive ceremonies of the highest civic and social importance.

Third, That the said Landmark should be preserved generally in all of its particular features, including major interior architectural 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. LM69.7; the summary description being as follows:

The City Hall takes the form of a rectangle some 400 feet long by 300 feet wide, with its central mass, surmounted by a dome over 300 feet in height, flanked by two inner

light courts north and south. It is set back from the street line on all sides and surrounded by landscaping, ornamental grounds and a low wall of granite blocks. The building is of steel frame and masonry construction; its walls are in part brick and in part reinforced concrete, and are faced with California granite. There are four stories and a basement.

The style is French Renaissance, with classical architectural features. The building is monumental in both elevation and plan. There are two principal facades, facing east and west; each has a grand entrance approached by a broad flight of steps and surmounted by a central portico and pediment; from each of these two central porticos, a two-story colonnade extends across the facade north and south to be terminated by a smaller pediment. Above the colonnades runs a continuous dentillated cornice surmounted by a balustrade. The ornate decoration of the building's exterior also includes a carved frieze, and major sculpture on the central pediment.

The roof line at the facade is 77 feet above the curb; from this level, and receding from the facade, the central mass, drum and dome ascend magnificently, with the lantern topped by its pinnacle over all. The drum is pedimented and surrounded by a colonnade with surmounting urns; the massive dome is ribbed, and ornamented with spindles and finials.

The great interior feature of the building is the central rotunda under the dome, with a grand staircase spreading fanlike onto the marble main floor. The rotunda is flanked north and south by galleries at each floor level overlooking the main floor. Corinthian columns and pilasters two stories high surround the rotunda, and a profusion of carved ornaments and painted designs adorns its walls and ceiling.

The floors and stairs of the interior are of marble; many doors, rooms and other features are finished with Manchurian or Siberian oak. The most notable chamber is the elegant and spacious one of the Board of Supervisors, on the west side of the building. The chambers of the Mayor and the Chief Administrative Officer on the east side are also outstanding.

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 hearing of December 18, 1969.

Lynn E. Pio
Secretary

AYES: Commissioners Brinton, Fleishhacker, Kearney, Mellon, Newman, Porter, Wight

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

PASSED: December 18, 1969

LOCATION: Two square blocks surrounded by Van Ness, McAllister, Polk and Grove Streets, being Assessor's Block 787.

NATURE AND HISTORY: The present city hall stands to the west of the site of the older Pre 1906 City Hall, which (from 1870 on) stood 200 feet north of Market Street, from Larkin to McAllister.

After the city hall was severely damaged by the Earthquake in 1906, it was apparent that a new one must be built. Late in 1911, a select committee of architects was appointed to assist the Supervisors in the choice of a site for a new civic center. Under the chairmanship of John Galen Howard, supervising architect of the University of California, they reported favoring a site between Van Ness, Hayes, Market and Golden Gate Avenue. January 1912, the Supervisors adopted the report and ordered a special election to approve issuance of bonds to pay the costs, in the sum of \$8,800,000. Mayor James Rolph Jr., just taking office in the same month, was instrumental in the successful campaign to pass the bonds. Supervisor Paul Bancroft, chairman of the public lands committee of the Board, was leader among the Supervisors.

A prize competition was announced for the design of the Hall, limited to San Francisco architects. Seventy three individuals and firms practising in the city competed. The firm of John Bakewell, Jr., and Arthur Brown, Jr., won the first prize (\$25,000) in June 1912. They were employed in September; and in April 1913 ground was broken by Mayor Rolph, ex-Mayor Edward Robeson Taylor, and the Board of Supervisors. Rolph laid the cornerstone October 25, 1913. Steelwork was completed January 21, 1914, and most stonework by October 5, 1915; on that day the Hall was opened for public inspection. On December 28, 1915, public ceremonies of dedication were held, Rolph presiding. The first ten days of March in 1916 saw city departments moving in.

The cost of the building itself was just under Four Million dollars. Land cost \$1,412,260. The rest of the proceeds of the bond issue went for landscaping, furnishings, fees and other costs.

Constructed in an era of architectural magnificence, the City Hall like most public buildings of the time was designed in the classical style of Greece and Rome by men who were trained in the then dominant school of the Beaux Arts of Paris; and is generally acclaimed one of the finest examples of the French Renaissance in America.

Monumental in conception and design, the City Hall is a regular rectangle, some 400 feet long and 300 feet wide.

NATURE AND
HISTORY: (Con'td)

Designed as a hollow quadrangle, the central space is filled with the mass of the dome and rotunda, thus dividing the open interior into two light courts, one north and one south of the dome. The central rotunda rising through all four principal floors of the building to the under surface of the dome, is the chief feature of the building, seen from the interior. The principal exterior feature is the dome, rising above the central rotunda. The rotunda, in the plan, is the center of circulation of each floor, with corridors and entrances all leading to and from it.

Some dimensions of the building will indicate the proportions employed: the roof line is 77 feet above the curb; the base of the central mass rises 99 feet; the drum supporting the dome is 191 feet above the curb. From this line the dome springs to a height of 307 feet, with the lantern and pinnacle above it rising to an utmost height of 350 feet. The terms of the architectural competition required that a minimum of 236,000 square feet of usable space be provided. At the time of completion it is stated that 371,317 square feet were available. More has been obtained later by interior alterations. The design by Bakewell and Brown was reviewed by a Board of Architects presided over by John Galen Howard, Director of Architecture at the University of California. The design of the interior was done by Louis Bourgeois, and the sculptures of the rotunda are by Henri Grenier, both products of the Ecole des Beaux Arts, both killed while serving in the French army during World War One.

Within the central rotunda, the principal feature is the staircase, facing Polk Street entrance, and rising to the second story, leading to the chambers of the Board of Supervisors. A classical balustrade surrounds the rotunda at each of the upper floors, between columns. The stairs and floors are of marble; the columns and walls of the rotunda and interior are finished in granite, and Indiana limestone. Doors, wainscoting and mouldings, and other interior finish are of Manchurian or Siberian oak.

The building has two principal facades, almost identical: one facing Polk Street and the Civic Center (the chief) and one facing Van Ness Avenue. The chief and ceremonial entrance to the building is that in the Polk Street facade. The main entrances to the Hall are in the center of these facades, on the axis of Fulton Street. The hexastyle porticos, composed of Doric Columns, are surmounted by massive pediments containing carved figures.

The pediment on the Polk Street facade represents San Francisco as the central figure, flanked on one side by figures representing the riches and resources of the state; on the other side by figures representing Commerce and Navigation. The idea conveyed is that of San Francisco, serving as a link between the World and California.

NATURE AND
HISTORY: (Con'td)

The pediment on the Van Ness Avenue facade has a figure of Wisdom in the center; flanked on the one side by figures and symbols representing the Arts, Learning, and Truth; on the other side by figures representing Industry and Labor.

In the interior rotunda, the figures over the Clock on the East Wall represent Father Time flanked by a figure representing History; and the figures on the other side represent the Future Generation carrying the Torch of Progress, with figures in the background in low relief, representing the Fleeting Hours of the Day. The cartouche over the entrance to the Supervisors Vestibule is a composition based on the seal of the city. The Medallions on the Pendentives of the Dome represent Liberty, Equality, Learning and Strength.

Exterior metal trim is of iron work, painted Blue and Gold. The Dome is of copper, laid over wooden backing on the steel frame. The dome has been gilded at times. Approximate weight of the building is 90,000 tons, of which 7,900 tons are structural steel.

The magnificent rotunda has been the scene of many ceremonies, ranging from Mayoral inaugurations and receptions for visiting presidents, kings and queens to state funerals and memorial services, exhibits, balls and musicales. The rotunda is adorned with busts of former mayors and other dignitaries, civic and military. An inscription on the pediment in the rotunda reads: "San Francisco, O Glorious City of our hearts, that had been tried and not found wanting, go thou with like spirit, to make the Future thine."

ARCHITECTURAL
STRUCTURE:

A steel frame, rectangular masonry structure, with reinforced concrete walls as well as unreinforced brick ones; in the shape of a hollow quadrangle, with a central mass surmounted by a dome. Designed in French Renaissance style, derived from the classical. A four story and basement building with attic story and mezzanines, and two interior light courts, one on either side of the dome. Two principal facades, facing east and west, bilaterally symmetrical, each with central portico and pediment; smaller pediments and slightly projecting wings terminate the colonnades stretching from the central portico. The ground story is of rusticated stone. The fenestration is rectangular and the windows at the ground or main story have carved heads on the keystones of the flat arches. The main entrance doors, glass and framed in metal, painted Blue and Gold, are arched. The approach to the entrances on both facades is by a broad flight of stone steps. Above the doorways, a full story high, the Classic Doric Porticos rise full four stories. Six fluted columns support a classical entablature: architrave, a frieze with triglyphs and carved figures; and cornice which is dentillated. A massive pediment with sculptured figures surmounts the entablature. On either side of the portico is a classic colonnade of Doric columns, two stories in height, runs along the entire facade, above

ARCHITECTURAL
STRUCTURE: (Con'td)

the rusticated first story; above the colonnade is the principal cornice, which like that of the pediments is dentillated. The fourth story windows, above the cornice, are smaller and less impressive than those of the other stories. Balconies of stone with railings of ornamental ironwork, painted Blue and Gold, are projected between the columns of the colonnade at second story level, with a large and imposing ceremonial balcony (which is reached through the Mayor's office) at this level running across the entire Portico. This stone balcony is supported by brackets crossed with carved wreaths. At the fourth story window level, within the Portico, the windows at that level are replaced by three large oval medallions in stone, with carved wreaths surrounding them.

The dome, some 86 feet in diameter, rises from a round drum which is supported by an octagonal base. The drum is surrounded by a classic Doric colonnade and is lighted by large rectangular leaded and mullioned windows of many small panes. Each window is surmounted by a triangular pediment. Below the drum, each principal point of the compass (N,E,S,W,) is marked by a classic pediment standing alone on the base and at a level above that of the pediments (E and W) on the principal facades.

The dome is ribbed, with each rib being aligned with the columns around the drum below, and is surrounded by a ring of classic spindles, simulating statues around the circumference of the upper surface of the drum which is larger than the dome. Smaller finials surround the dome at a higher elevation, also corresponding to the number and location of the ribs and columns. Below and between these ornaments the dome is lighted by square windows. Above and between the ribs of the dome, small round windows light the upper portion.

The dome is surmounted by an open lantern, which in turn is surmounted by small finials and a very high pinnacle above all. Within, there is seen a boldly carved cartouche at the apex of the inner dome.

The basement story is half below, half above, ground; and is lighted by small rectangular windows. The building is set back from the street line on all sides, and is surrounded by landscaping and ornamental grounds; with a low stone wall of granite blocks around the whole. The wall is unbroken save at a point on Polk near Grove where the statue of Lincoln has been placed above the wall.

The principal cornice runs the entire length of the facade; below is a decorative carved frieze like that of the portico. Classical balustrades in stone surmount the principal cornice and there is one also around the drum beneath the dome; there is another around the top of the octagonal base on which the drums and dome rest.

ARCHITECTURAL
STRUCTURE: (Con'td)

The design of the shorter facades is similar to but plainer than that of the principal facades. There is no major entrance; but sloping ramps lead to low entrances at the basement level; these ramps have balustrades and large granite masses to mark these entrances at ground level. There are no pediments on these shorter facades (McAllister and Grove Streets); the colonnades are carried around the building only on the projecting wings (four columns) which duplicate those of the extremes of the principal facades. The balustrade of these facades, at the cornice line, is found only above the colonnades and is not continuous across the facade.

Of the interior chambers of the building, the most worthy of notice is that of the Board of Supervisors, on the Van Ness Avenue side (west) of the building, and that of the Mayor, on the Polk Street side (east). The Chamber of the Supervisors is spacious and elegant, with three arched windows facing west (Van Ness). The interior of dark golden oak, is ornately decorated with classical motifs. Doric pilasters, alternately square and round, surround the room. The pilasters are fluted and foliate in decor. The ceiling is coffered, with octagonal and hexagonal design. Curvilinear pediments and classical urns, in low relief surmount the three entrances. Carved desks and a carved rostrum fill the interior of the space behind the wooden balustrade separating the supervisors from the public. The golden oak is relieved by faint Blue painted foliate designs, in the ceiling.

The great interior structural feature of the building, the rotunda, is dominated by a massive stone staircase, facing Polk Street, with its lower steps spreading out fanlike onto the marble floor. An ornamental iron railing descends the steps on either hand, being continuous with that around the second floor, which here is balconylike in its relation to the main floor. The rotunda is surrounded by two story high columns and pilasters, here of the corinthian order (in contrast to the doric used elsewhere) which support the drum and pendentives of the dome, and separate the iron railings of the second and the stone balustrades of the third floor. Above the four columns (two north and two south) of the rotunda are classic stone urns. Medallions, floral and foliate designs adorn the ceilings of the vaults lying between the pendentives. Four large medallions are centered in the pendentives. Several dentillated cornices are around the rotunda at successively higher elevation: at the base of the drum, of the dome, and of the lantern. The drum itself is supported from within by a ring of corinthian columns. The inner surface of the dome is adorned with large rosettes within octagonal frames. Shields, cornucopias, wreaths, carved heads, crests, coats of arms, fasces, scrolls, rosettes and lamps intermingle in profusion among the carved ornaments on walls and ceilings.

ARCHITECTURAL
STRUCTURE: Con'td)

The rotunda is lighted by great fanlights north and south, under the drum and dome. The supervisors vestibule is lighted from above by a circular skylight in the (here) low roof. The ceilings off the east and west halls around the rotunda are supported by simple doric columns.