

NOTICE OF FINAL PASSAGE
FILE NO. 90-70-10 ORD. NO. 150-70
DESIGNATING THE ABNER PHELPS
HOUSE AS A LANDMARK.

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 April 27, 1970.

ROBERT J. DOLAN, Clerk
 Approved: April 30, 1970.
 JOSEPH L. ALIOTO, Mayor
 May 7, 1970—1t

FILE NO. 90-70-10 ORD. NO. —
DESIGNATING THE ABNER PHELPS
HOUSE AS A LANDMARK.

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

Section 1. The Board of Supervisors hereby finds that The Abner Phelps 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 10 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, The Abner Phelps 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 a point on the westerly line of Divisadero Street distant thereon 87 feet 6 inches north of the northerly line of Page Street; running thence 107 feet 6 inches at a right angle westerly; thence 10 feet at a right angle northerly; thence 30 feet at a right angle westerly; thence 40 feet at a right angle northerly; thence 137 feet 6 inches easterly to the said line of Divisadero Street; thence southerly along said line of Divisadero Street 50 feet to the point of beginning; being lot 5 in Assessor's Block 1218.

This landmark site shall include only that portion of said lot which includes the above building and its immediate environs.

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

Generally considered to be the oldest unaltered house in San Francisco, The Abner Phelps Residence dates from 1850-51. According to the family, Phelps purchased the house in New Orleans in 1850 and had it shipped around the Horn in sections to please his new wife. It was then erected on Phelps' 160 acre homestead at the foot of Buena Vista Hill, well beyond the City Limits which did not reach Divisadero Street until 1854. It has been repositioned on the land twice, the last time being in 1904 when it was moved to its present location at the rear of the lot and in the middle of the square block.

The history and photographs of The Abner Phelps House are included in a listing of significant buildings across the country in the National Park Service's (Department of the Interior) Historic American Buildings Survey; the house is also recorded in the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

(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. LM69.2; the summary description being as follows:

Built in the Gothic Revival Style popular in the mid-nineteenth Century, this residence, two stories in height not including its basement, is of wood frame construction with clapboard or shiplap siding. All windows are multi-paned, narrow and rectangular. Upper-story fenestration consists of dormers lighted by French doors. The central dormer is the focal point as it is larger than the others and has more prominent projecting eaves which are enhanced by a simple ornamental barge board, repeated at the gable ends afforded by the steeply pitched roof.

The balcony, which constitutes the veranda roof, is one of the distinguishing features of the house and, with the veranda, provides a southern air. Well-turned classic wooden spindle-form balustrades add to this feeling as do the Tuscan columns which support the balcony (veranda roof).

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 Apr. 20, 1970.

ROBERT J. DOLAN, Clerk
 Apr. 25, 1970—1t

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

RESOLUTION NO. 6444

WHEREAS, A proposal to designate the Abner Phelps House as a Landmark pursuant to the provisions of Article 10 of the City Planning Code was initiated by the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board, Sept. 10, 1969, and said Landmarks Preservation 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 13, 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 Abner Phelps 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 a point on the westerly line of Divisadero Street distant thereon 87 feet 6 inches north of the northerly line of Page Street; running thence 107 feet at a right angle westerly; thence 10 feet at a right angle northerly; thence 30 feet at a right angle westerly; thence 40 feet at a right angle northerly; thence 137 feet 6 inches easterly to the said line of Divisadero Street; thence southerly along said line of Divisadero Street 50 feet to the point of beginning; being lot 5 in Assessor's Block 1218. This landmark site shall include only that portion of said lot which includes the above building and its immediate environs.

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

Generally considered to be the oldest unaltered house in San Francisco, the Abner Phelps Residence dates from 1850-51. According to the family, Phelps purchased the house in New Orleans in 1850 and had it shipped around the Horn in sections to please his new wife. It was then erected on Phelps' 160 acre homestead at the foot of Buena Vista Hill, well beyond the City limits which did not reach Divisadero Street until 1854. It has been repositioned on the land twice, the last time being in 1904 when it was moved to its present location at the rear of the lot and in the middle of the square block.

The history and photographs of the Abner Phelps House are included in a listing of significant buildings across the county in the National Park Service's (Department of the Interior) Historic American Buildings Survey; the house is also recorded in the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

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. LM69.2; the summary description being as follows:

Built in the Gothic Revival Style popular in the mid-nineteenth Century, this residence, two stories in height not including its basement, is of wood frame construction with clapboard or shiplap siding.

All windows are multi-paned, narrow and rectangular. Upper-story fenestration consists of dormers lighted by French doors. The central dormer is the focal point as it is larger than the others and has more prominent projecting eaves which are enhanced by a simple ornamental barge board, repeated at the gable ends afforded by the steeply pitched roof.

The balcony, which constitutes the veranda roof, is one of the distinguishing features of the house and, with the veranda, provides a southern air. Well-turned classic wooden spindle-form balustrades add to this feeling as to the Tuscan columns which support the balcony (veranda roof).

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 13, 1969.

R. Bruce Anderson
Acting Secretary

AYES: Commissioners Finn, Fleishhacker, Kearney, Newman, Porter
NOES: Commissioners Brinton, Mellon
ABSENT: None
PASSED: November 13, 1969

OWNER: Estate of Dr. Charles L. Ayers, Jr. and Clifford E. Ayers

LOCATION: 329 Divisadero Street: Interior of block bounded by Oak, Divisadero, Page and Broderick Streets; being Lot 5 (rear) in Assessor's Block 1218.

NATURE AND HISTORY: Although accounts vary as to its date and builder, the Abner Phelps house is generally considered to be the oldest unaltered residence in San Francisco and dates from 1850-51.

The earliest published account (August 8, 1934) states that the house was "built in 1850 by John Middleton & Sons, one of the first real estate concerns in the city ... (and) constructed of lumber framed into sections brought round the Horn from Maine, there being no sawmills here at the time."

However, Mrs. Victor E. Rosenstein, Abner Phelps' great-granddaughter declared in 1961 that the house had been purchased in New Orleans in 1850 and shipped in sections around the Horn to ease the homesickness of Phelps' bride, born Augusta Roussell. It was then re-erected here about 1850-51.

The Junior League of San Francisco's book Here Today, favors the latter explanation: the house is raised on a high foundation, reminiscent of southern river-front cottages of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; furthermore, the upper-story balcony and the veranda are also reminiscent of Louisiana homes of the day. This book further states the certainty that Phelps, who had been a colonel in the Mexican War, lived in the house in 1851; and suggests the possibility that John Middleton's firm assembled the house for Phelps when it arrived.

At the time the dwelling was erected, it stood in the midst of Phelps' 160-acre homestead at the foot of Buena Vista Hill, well beyond the city limits which did not reach Divisadero Street until 1854. A portion of Golden Gate Park's Panhandle was then part of the Phelps property.

Phelps was a lawyer who had his office in the Montgomery Block, and made what was then a long dusty journey to town daily by horseback. At that time Divisadero Street was no more than a path which served as the western boundary of the new city from 1854 to 1856 when the city and county were consolidated.

The house has been moved twice: with the grading and building of Divisadero in the 1890's the house was repositioned on the land; then in 1904, it was moved backward to its present location in the middle of the block to enable Phelps to build stores in front.

Despite its Divisadero address, the house is actually visible only from Oak Street as it is situated at the extreme rear of the large lot. The front of the lot contains an old hall, 321 Divisadero Street.

- ARCHITECTURE: Built in the Gothic Revival Style popular in the mid-nineteenth Century, this residence, two stories in height not including its basement, is of wood frame construction with clapboard or shiplap siding.
- All windows are multi-paned, narrow and rectangular. Upper-story fenestration consists of dormers lighted by French doors. The central dormer is the focal point as it is larger than the others and has more prominent projecting eaves which are enhanced by a simple ornamental barge board, repeated at the gable ends afforded by the steeply pitched roof.
- The balcony, which constitutes the veranda roof, is one of the distinguishing feature of the house and, with the veranda, provides a Southern air. Well-turned classic wooden spindle-form balustrades add to this feeling as do the Tuscan columns which support the balcony (veranda roof).
- ZONING: Zoning is C-2, community commercial. Surrounding land uses include shops and a hall to the east, and multiple residential units to north, west and south.
- RECOGNITION: Listed in many architectural surveys of the City, including the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) of the U.S. Department of the Interior's National Park Service, the Junior League of San Francisco, Inc.'s survey and book, Here Today as well as the Barclay-Jones Survey.