

**NOTICE OF FINAL PASSAGE
FILE NO. 88-70-15 ORD. NO. 364-70
DESIGNATING THE FEUSIER OCTA-
GON 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 Nov. 2, 1970.

ROBERT J. DOLAN, Clerk
Approved: Nov. 3, 1970
JOSEPH L. ALIOTO, Mayor
Nov. 10, 1970—1t

**FILE NO. 88-70-15 ORD. NO. —
DESIGNATING THE FEUSIER OCTA-
GON 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 Feusier Octagon House at 1067 Green Street 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 11, Part II of the San Francisco Municipal Code, the Feusier 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 11, 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 south line of Green Street distant thereon 71 feet 6 inches easterly from the east line of Leavenworth Street; running thence easterly 66 feet along the said line of Green Street; thence at a right angle southerly 137 feet 6 inches; thence at a right angle westerly 66 feet; thence at a right angle northerly 137 feet 6 inches to the point of beginning; being Lot 22A in Assessor's Block 126.

(c) Justification. The special character and special historical, architectural and aesthetic interest and value of the said Landmark justifying its designation are as follows: The older of San Francisco's two remaining octagonal houses, the Feusier Octagon House was constructed circa 1857-58 according to guidelines set forth in Orson Squire Fowler's "A Home for All; or, the Gravel Wall and the Octagon Mode of Building." Particularly noteworthy here are the interior which continues to reflect its eight-sided shape as seen from the street, and the third story with Mansard roof surmounted by an octagonal cupola which were added in the 1890's, as well as the large, beautifully landscaped garden which surrounds the structure.

Although the first known owner of the house was George L. Kenny, an agent for historian, publisher and bookseller H.H. Bancroft, the residence is named for its second owner Louis Feusier, companion of such notables as Leland Stanford and Merk Twain and well-known San Francisco businessman, whose family held the residence from 1873 to 1954.

(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. LM70.2; the summary description being as follows: Octagonal in shape and having three stories, the house was built of a mixture of cement or burnt lime, gravel and clay, according to the method prescribed by O. S. Fowler. Unlike the Colonial Dames Octagon, there is no exterior wood covering. The house is surmounted by an octagonal cupola, windowed on each side. The third story has a Mansard roof covered by fish scale shingles, with dormer windows alternately single and double. The corners are quoined, and there are brick chimneys at three corners. There is a flat projecting cornice at the roof line; the original cornice, at second-story ceiling level, is sloping and supported by exposed rafters. The house is not heavily ornamented; small consoles support the upper cornice, and there is an ornamental iron cresting above that cornice at the roof line. There are balustraded balconies at the second-story floor level. The base of the house sits below street level on the downsloping lot. The entrance is by way of a stairway to a columned porch at the second story on the east side of the house, the porch projecting out from the basic octagonal form.

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 meetings of October 26, 1970.

PHILIP P. ENGLER, Acting Clerk
Oct. 31, 1970—1t

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

RESOLUTION NO. 6633

WHEREAS, A proposal to designate the FEUSIER OCTAGON HOUSE as a Landmark pursuant to the provisions of Article 10 of the City Planning Code was initiated by the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board on June 3, 1970, and said Advisory Board, after due consideration, has recommended approval of this proposal; and

WHEREAS, The City Planning Commission, after due notice given, held a public hearing on September 17, 1970 and October 1, 1970, 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 FEUSIER 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 a point on the south line of Green Street distant thereon 71 feet 6 inches easterly from the east line of Leavenworth Street; running thence easterly 66 feet along the said line of Green Street; thence at a right angle southerly 137 feet 6 inches; thence at a right angle westerly 66 feet; thence at a right angle northerly 137 feet 6 inches to the point of beginning; being Lot 22A in Assessor's Block 126;

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 older of San Francisco's two remaining octagonal houses, the Feusier Octagon House was constructed circa 1857-58 according to guidelines set forth in Orson Squire Fowler's "A Home for All; or, the Gravel Wall and the Octagon Mode of Building." Particularly noteworthy here are the interior which continues to reflect its eight-sided shape as seen from the street, and the third story with Mansard roof surmounted by an octagonal cupola which were added in the 1880's, as well as the large, beautifully landscaped garden which surrounds the structure.

Although the first known owner of the house was George L. Kenny, an agent for historian, publisher and bookseller H. H. Bancroft, the residence is named for its second owner Louis Feusier, companion of such notables as Leland Stanford and Mark Twain and well-known San Francisco businessman, whose family held the residence from 1875 to 1954.

Third, That the said Landmark should be preserved generally in all of its particular 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. LM70.2; the summary description being as follows:

Octagonal in shape and having three stories, the house was built of a mixture of cement or burnt lime, gravel and clay, according to the method prescribed by O. S. Fowler. Unlike the Colonial Dames Octagon, there is no exterior wood covering. The house is surmounted by an octagonal cupola, windowed on each side. The third story has a Mansard roof covered by fish scale shingles, with dormer windows alternately single and double. The corners are quoined, and there are brick chimneys at three corners. There is a flat projecting cornice at the roof line; the original cornice, at second-story ceiling level, is sloping and supported by exposed rafters. The house is not heavily ornamented; small consoles support the upper cornice, and there is an ornamental iron cresting above that cornice at the roof line. There are balustered balconies at the second-story floor level. The base of the house sits below street level on the downsloping lot. The entrance is by way of a stairway to a columned porch at the second story on the east side of the house, the porch projecting out from the basic octagonal form.

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 October 1, 1970.

R. Bruce Anderson
Acting Secretary

AYES: Commissioners Finn, Fleishhacker, Mellon, Porter, Ritchie, Rueda
NOES: None
ABSENT: Commissioner Newman
PASSED: October 1, 1970

OWNERS: Donald F. Houghton and Byron R. Meyer

LOCATION: South side of Green Street, between Jones and Leavenworth Streets; Assessor's Block 126, Lot 22a.

HISTORY AND
NATURE:

The Feusier Octagon is one of only two surviving houses in San Francisco built on the octagon plan, the other being the Colonial Dames Octagon on Gough Street. The exact year of its erection is uncertain, but the Feusier is one of the oldest houses on Russian Hill; the most informed estimate indicates that it was built in 1857 or 1858, with one source alleging construction as early as 1852. This Octagon is notable in having preserved the original exterior construction, and it fortunately continues to reflect its eight-sided shape on the interior.

Octagon houses became something of a national fad in the mid-19th century as the result of a book by Orson Squire Fowler entitled "A Home for All; or, the Gravel Wall and the Octagon Mode of Building". In this work Fowler, a New York phrenologist who identified one's well-being with the shape and construction of his domicile, proposed a new and cheap way to construct houses for the "new age". The octagon form was prescribed by Fowler so that every room could receive sunlight at some time of the day; he asserted that it would admit more sunlight into more rooms for longer periods than any other building form.

The fad resulting from Fowler's book swept several sections of the country and has left us with a hundred or more Octagons nation-wide. These are concentrated in the Hudson River country of New York, in New England (especially New Hampshire), in the South and Southwest (Mississippi and Texas), and in the Far West, including California. At one time there were at least five (possibly six) Octagon Houses in San Francisco, as well as others in the Fruitvale section of Oakland and elsewhere in the Bay Area. Of the San Francisco Octagons, all but one were on or near Russian Hill, the sole exception being Cyrus Palmer's home on Rincon Hill (on the east side of Second Street near Folsom Street); it has been said (and the story appears likely) that all of these were built by a single Eastern builder. The Feusier House and the Colonial Dames Octagon are apparently the only two remaining in the entire Bay Area.

Although the precise construction date and the builder have not been conclusively established, the first known occupant of the house was George L. Kenny, whose grandson Robert W. Kenny was Attorney General of California from 1943 to 1947. George Kenny was a salesman or agent for H. H. Bancroft, the famous bookseller, publisher and historian. A newspaper for January 20, 1859 states that Kenny owned the house then, and he is listed in the 1860 city directory as living in the building, shown as being at the southeast corner of Green and Leavenworth Streets; he was so listed continuously until 1874. In 1875 Louis Feusier first appears as the owner and occupant of what was then 1027 Green Street. The house is commonly associated with the name of Feusier, in whose family it was to remain for some 80 years.

HISTORY AND
NATURE (continued)

According to the family history, Louis Feusier arrived in California about 1852, spent the years 1857-1867 in Nevada, and then returned to San Francisco, later marrying Louise Guerne, daughter of the pioneer for whom Guerneville was named. Feusier is said to have been a companion of such San Francisco notables as Leland Stanford and Mark Twain. He was for many years in the wholesale produce business as commission merchant, together with a brother and nephew. The Feusiers subsequently were engaged in mining, salmon canning, winemaking, and importing oriental goods. His wife Louise lived in the house until her death, as did their son Clarence who died in 1951, and the wife of Clarence, who survived her husband by two years. In 1954 the Feusier Octagon was sold by the family to one of its present owners.

The house appears in early views of the city showing Russian Hill, including views dated 1858, 1861, 1862 and 1863. It was near the summit, not closely surrounded by other buildings, and was indeed an outstanding landmark of the city's skyline. The original two-story house was modified (not to its detriment) late in the century when the Feusiers added a third story with Mansard roof, surmounted by an octagonal cupola. Like other buildings on Russian Hill, the Feusier House escaped the 1906 Earthquake, but was menaced by the Fire; the outbuildings were dynamited but fortunately the main house was saved.

Today, with Russian Hill built up intensely and high-rise apartments vying with older dwellings, the Feusier Octagon no longer stands isolated and dominant as shown in the pictures of a century ago; but it remains a link with the early days of the city and a visible reminder of the time when eight-sided houses were a fashion. The Feusier is undoubtedly the most distinguished landmark on its block, but it is by no means the only building of interest. The 1000 block of Green Street is, in fact, one of the most charming in the city due to its profusion of fine residences and its dignified and spacious profile. Adjacent to the Feusier on the east is an elegant little villa (1055 Green Street) built in 1866 and remodeled by Julia Morgan in 1916. Farther to the east are a 19th century farmhouse-style brown shingle home (1045 Green); a three-story, narrow Stick-style building of the 1880's, whose exterior curving staircase is quite unusual (1039-43 Green); and an elegant Italianate house with slanted bay and arched doorway, built prior to 1891 (1033 Green). Across Green Street is the striking firehouse (1088 Green) built in 1907, with its half-timbered facade, steeply pitched roof, and ornate front dormer; saved from destruction by Mrs. Ralph K. Davies who bought it from the city in 1956, it continues to serve as a gathering-place and is frequently the scene of charity functions.

ARCHITECTURE:

Octagonal in shape and having three stories, the house was built of a mixture of cement or burnt lime, gravel and clay, according to the method prescribed by O. S. Fowler. Unlike the Colonial Dames Octagon, there is no exterior wood covering. The house is surmounted by an octagonal cupola, windowed on each side. The third story has a Mansard roof covered by fish scale shingles, with dormer windows alter-

ARCHITECTURE:
(continued)

nately single and double. The corners are quoined, and there are brick chimneys at three corners. There is a flat projecting cornice at the roof line; the original cornice, at second-story ceiling level, is sloping and supported by exposed rafters. The house is not heavily ornamented; small consoles support the upper cornice, and there is an ornamental iron fence above that cornice at the roof line. There are balustered balconies at the second-story floor level. The base of the house sits below street level on the down-sloping lot. The entrance is by way of a stairway to a columned porch at the second story on the left side of the house, the porch projecting out from the basic octagonal form.

SITE, ZONING AND
SURROUNDING LAND
USE:

The Feusier Octagon House is surrounded on its relatively large site by a spacious garden. The house immediately to the east is similarly advantaged and the properties further to the east also have an open feeling, while across Green Street the predominant character (unusual for San Francisco) is one of openness on the street side with buildings set well back. The Feusier site is zoned R-5 (Highest Density Multiple Residential) as is most of the "1000 Block"; but the mid-block properties directly east of the Feusier are zoned R-3 (Low-Medium Density Multiple Residential). To the east and south, dwellings and flats predominate, although the south side of the 900 block of Green Street is given over to high-rise apartment development. To the north (across Green St.) small apartment houses and dwellings set the prevailing tone, but there are high-rise apartments directly opposite the Feusier House and at the corner of Jones Street. To the west are apartments, flats and dwellings with a three-story multiple dwelling adjoining the Feusier House and a high-rise apartment building on the southwest corner of Green and Leavenworth Streets.