

FILE NO. 90-72-2

ORDINANCE NO. 94-72

1 DESIGNATING THE HOUSE OF THE FLAG AS A LANDMARK PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 10 OF THE CITY
2 PLANNING CODE.

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

4 Section 1. The Board of Supervisors hereby finds that the House of the Flag
5 located at 1652-1656 Taylor Street, being Lot 23 in Assessor's Block 149, has a
6 special character and special historical, architectural and aesthetic interest
7 and value, and that its designation as a Landmark will be in furtherance of and
8 in conformance with the purposes of Article 10 of the City Planning Code and the
9 standards set forth therein.

10 (a) Designation. Pursuant to Section 1004 of the City Planning Code,
11 Chapter II, Part II of the San Francisco Municipal Code, the House of the Flag
12 hereby designated as a Landmark, this designation having been duly approved by
13 Resolution No. 6809 of the City Planning Commission, which Resolution is on file
14 with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors under File No. 90-72-2.

15 (b) Required Data. The location and boundaries of the landmark site, the
16 characteristics of the landmark which justify its designation, and the particular
17 features that should be preserved, described and included in the said Resolution,
18 are hereby incorporated herein and made a part hereof as though fully set forth.
19

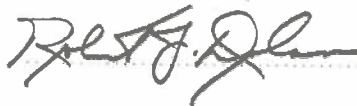
Passed for Second Reading
Board of Supervisors, San Francisco

APR 3 1972

Ayes: Supervisors Barbagelata, Boas, Feinstein,
Francois, Gonzales, Kopp, Mendelsohn, Molinari,
Pelosi, Tamaras, von Beroldingen.

~~Noes: Supervisors~~

~~Absent: Supervisors~~

 Clerk

90-72-2
File No.

APR 12 1972
Approved

Read Second Time and Finally Passed
Board of Supervisors, San Francisco

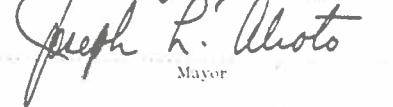
APR 10 1972

Ayes: Supervisors Barbagelata, Boas, Feinstein,
Francois, Gonzales, Kopp, Mendelsohn, Molinari,
Pelosi, Tamaras, von Beroldingen.

~~Noes: Supervisors~~

~~Absent: Supervisors~~

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

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

RESOLUTION NO. 6809

WHEREAS, A proposal to designate the House of the Flag as a Landmark pursuant to the provisions of Article 10 of the City Planning Code was initiated by the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board on August 18, 1971, and said Advisory Board, after due consideration, recommended approval of this proposal;

WHEREAS, The City Planning Commission, after due notice given, held public hearings on December 9, 1971 and February 10, 1972 to consider the proposed designation and the report of said Advisory Board, and the Advisory Board after further consideration recommended revised boundaries for the landmark site; 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 House of the Flag 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 intersection of the southerly line of Vallejo Street with the easterly line of Taylor Street, thence easterly, along said line of Vallejo Street, 64.50 feet; thence at a right angle southerly, 27.80 feet; thence at a right angle westerly, 8.15 feet; thence at a right angle southerly 13.00 feet; thence at a right angle westerly, 22.20 feet; thence at a right angle southerly, 9.20 feet; thence at a right angle westerly, 11.60 feet; thence at a right angle northerly, 10.00 feet; thence at a right angle westerly, 22.55 feet to the aforementioned easterly line of Taylor Street; thence at a right angle northerly, 40.00 feet to the Point of Beginning. Being a portion of Lot 23 in Assessor's Block 149.

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

According to neighborhood legend, the house, like others on this hillside which commanded a clear view of the Bay, was built by a sea captain. The frame is said to have been made of Georgia Pine brought around the Horn. The house, clinging to the brow of the cliff, appears to date from around 1860.

In 1903, Eli T. Sheppard, owner of the house through the turn of the century, added a new portion on the uphill side. The new portion was then rented to Edward A. Dakin, a Civil War veteran and active GAR member.

Dakin, a printer and publisher, collected historic flags, and his collection included flags from U.S. Warships which had seen service in the Spanish American War: the "Marblehead"; the famed "Oregon", built in the Union Iron Works, San Francisco; and the "Olympia" flagship of Commodore Dewey at Manila Bay.

Sheppard, like Dakin a Civil War veteran, had served 1869 to 1875 as U.S. Consul in Tientsin, China. A lawyer, he had been appointed in 1876 by President U.S. Grant, as advisor in international law to the Imperial Japanese cabinet, and he later returned to San Francisco to practice law. Sheppard's portion of the house was filled with treasures which he had brought back: presentation swords, vases, lacquer cabinets and others, gifts from the Emperor and Empress of Japan and from Princes of the Royal Household.

The principal historical distinction of the house lies in its dramatic rescue during the 1906 disaster. According to an account in St. Nicholas Illustrated Magazine of July 1908 (oral accounts differ in minor details): When the Earthquake struck in 1906, Mrs. Brindley, daughter of Sheppard, knew from her experience in the Orient that the water supply was likely to be cut off. She filled all the tubs with water before the mains broke, and additionally went to the nearby grocery and bought siphon bottles of "fizz" water. However, the size of the fire storm was unexpected, and the Sheppard family left when the eaves and veranda caught fire. Dakin however remained.

In an age when spectacular events were more noted than now, Dakin decided upon a spectacular end for the house. It should go down in flames with flags flying. He went to the room where he kept his flag collection, chose the largest, and hoisted it on the pole on the roof. He dipped the flag three times in salute, descended, the stairs, closed and locked the door. His gesture did not go unnoticed. Three blocks downhill, at the corner of Vallejo Street and Montgomery (now Columbus) Avenue, a newly arrived company of the 20th Infantry Regiment saw the flag salute, and one remarked, "Boys, a house that flies a flag like that is worth saving". The young officer in command gave the order, and the company was up on the hill on the double.

Arriving at the house they tore off the burning wood, broke open the door, entered and saw the tubs of water. The soldiers mixed earth with the water to the consistency of wet plaster, applying it to the burning wood and smothering the flames. As they worked, all the other houses along Taylor Street burned, but this house stood. Still the fire burned on, and found a lodging place under the eaves. The soldiers could not reach it from the windows. Mounting to the roof, men leaned over the roof, held by their comrades, who passed the siphon bottles. The man at the point of the line squirted them into the flames, extinguishing the last embers, and the house was saved.

The owners and tenants having crossed by ferry to Oakland, supposed their house destroyed like the others. Not until several days after the Fire did they see a newspaper with a photograph of the house still standing, flag flying, and learned that, like the Livermore houses and others on the crest of the hill above, their house had been saved. From that time of the "House of the Flag" has been a living legend in the neighborhood. It appears in many views taken from the slopes above, as one of the few survivors of the days when "the Earth Shook and the Sky Burned".

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. LM71.4; the summary description being as follows:

The older portion downhill, contains two floors and a basement. The newer portion, uphill, contains two stories and an attic. The two principal floors are continuous in both halves of the house. An enclosed porch of the Taylor Street front projects like a bay.

The older and original portion, like the newer, is sheathed in shingles. But the fenestration differs in the two halves. In the older part, the tall, narrow windows are multi-paned, heavy-framed, and the upper-story windows are surmounted by oblong wooden modillions. In the newer part, the windows are double-hung, with two panes, and without heavy framing.

The older part has a heavy cornice, a flat roof, a set back on the north side at the topmost level, and the roof is surmounted by flower boxes.

The newer part has a pitched roof, overhanging eaves all around, slope-roofed bay windows with square boxy bays at the main floor level, and the sloping roof has low dormer windows to the north, east and south.

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 February 10, 1972.

Lynn E. Pio
Secretary

AYES: Commissioners Finn, Newman, Porter, Ritchie
NOES: Commissioners Fleishhacker, Mellon, Rueda
ABSENT: None
PASSED: February 10, 1972

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD
Revised Case Report -- June 16, 1971 (Corrected)

3

"HOUSE OF THE FLAG"
(OLD SHEPPARD-DAKIN HOUSE)

OWNER: California Pacific Title Insurance Company, San Francisco.

MANAGER: Manzanita Management Corporation, Palo Alto.

LOCATION: 1652 - 1656 Taylor Street, southeast corner of Taylor and Vallejo Streets. Lot has 67.5 feet of frontage on Taylor Street and 82.5 feet on Vallejo Street; being Lot 23 in Assessor's Block 149.

HISTORY: The house as it exists today is composed of two parts: the original, built around 1860 on the lower side overhanging the cliff; and a later part on the uphill side, built in 1903.

The identity of the builder and original owner of the house is a matter of uncertainty. According to neighborhood legend, the house, like others on this hillside which commanded a clear view of the Bay, was built by a sea captain. The frame is said to have been made of Georgia Pine brought around the Horn.

The city directories of the period shed some light on early residents. Angus McPherson, civil engineer and foreman, Spring Valley Water Works, is shown residing at the "southeast corner of Vallejo and Taylor Streets" in the edition of 1863-4 and he remains here until 1869; his widow appears in that of 1870 only. The earliest Water Department record shows A. McPherson to have taken water here under date of June 22, 1864.

In 1897, the city directory shows Eli T. Sheppard resident at this location, then known as 1624 Taylor Street. The Sheppards found the original house inadequate to their needs, and in 1903 they built a new portion above the old house which clings to the brow of the cliff. The new portion was then rented to Edward A. Dakin, a Civil War veteran and active GAR member.

Dakin, who is variously shown in the directories as printer, publisher, lithographer, and vendor of writing machines, was a collector, like his landlord Sheppard. He collected historic flags, and his collection included flags from U.S. Warships which had seen service in the Spanish American War: the "Marblehead"; the famed "Oregon", built in the Union Iron Works, San Francisco; and the "Olympia", flagship of Commodore Dewey at Manila Bay.

Sheppard, like Dakin a Civil War veteran, had served 1869 to 1875 as U. S. Consul in Tientsin, China. A lawyer, he had been appointed in 1876 by President U. S. Grant as adviser in international law to the Imperial Japanese cabinet, and he later returned to San Francisco to practice law. Sheppard's house was filled with treasures which he had brought back: presentation swords, vases, lacquer cabinets and others, gifts from the Emperor and Empress of Japan and from Princes of the Royal Household.

According to an account in St. Nicholas Illustrated Magazine of July 1908 (oral accounts differ in minor details): When the Earthquake struck in 1906, one person in the house was prepared. From her experience in the Orient, Mrs. Brindley, daughter of Sheppard, knew that the water supply was likely to be cut off. She filled all the tubs with water before the mains broke, and additionally went to the nearby grocery and bought siphon bottles of "fizz" water. Thus, when the fires broke out and the flames were visible,

HISTORY: there would have been a means of combatting them, as the house was
(continued) somewhat isolated from its neighbors. However the size of the fire storm was unexpected, and the Sheppard family left when the eaves and veranda caught fire. Dakin however remained.

In an age when spectacular events were more noted than now, Dakin decided upon a spectacular end for the house. It should go down in flames with flags flying. He went to the room where he kept his flag collection, chose the largest, and hoisted it on the pole on the roof. He dipped the flag three times in salute, descended the stairs, closed and locked the door. His gesture did not go unnoticed. Three blocks downhill, at the corner of Vallejo Street and Montgomery (now Columbus) Avenue, a newly arrived company of the 20th Infantry Regiment, fresh off the Oakland ferry, was about to go in camp at Washington Square. But several saw the flag salute, and one remarked, "Boys, a house that flies a flag like that is worth saving!" The young officer in command gave the order, and the company was up the hill on the double.

Arriving at the house they tore off the burning wood, broke open the door, entered and saw the tubs of water. The soldiers mixed earth with the water to the consistency of wet plaster, applying it to the burning wood and smothering the flames. As they worked, all the other houses along Taylor Street burned, but this house stood. Still the fire burned on, and found a lodging place under the eaves. The soldiers could not reach it from the windows; mounting to the roof, men leaned over the roof, being held by their comrades, who passed the siphon bottles. The man at the point of the line squirted them into the flames, extinguishing the last embers, and the house was saved.

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ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION: The older portion, downhill, contains two floors and a basement. The newer portion, uphill, contains two stories and an attic. The two principal floors are continuous in both halves of the house. An enclosed porch on the Taylor Street front projects like a bay.

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The older part has a heavy cornice, a flat roof, a set back on the north side at the topmost level, and the roof is surmounted by flower boxes.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION: (continued) The newer part has a pitched roof, overhanging eaves all around, slope-roofed bay windows with square boxy bays at the main floor level, and the sloping roof has low dormer windows to the north, east and south.

A garden has long been maintained along the entire rear depth of the property, and the rear basement level of the older portion was used as a separate garden apartment by daughters of the family.

ZONING AND SURROUNDING LAND USE: R-4 zoning district, without height limit, although a height limit of 105 feet exists immediately to the east of the subject property. Neighboring uses juxtapose low-density old wooden houses with high-rise apartment houses to the northeast and northwest.

6
40 x 65