ORDINANCE DESIGNATING LANDMARK

FILE NO. 90-76-3 ORDINANCE NO. 324-76

DESIGNATING St. John's Presbyterian Church AS A LANDMARK PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 10 OF THE CITY PLANNING CODE.

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

Section. The Board of Supervisors hereby finds that St. John's Presbyterian Church located at 25 Lake Street, being lot 1 in Assessor's Block 1361, has a special character and special historical, architectural and aesthetic interest and value, and that its designation as a Landmark will be 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, St. John's Presbyterian Church at 25 Lake Street is hereby designated as a Landmark, this designation having been duly approved by Resolution No. 7478 of the City Planning Commission, which Resolution is on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors under File No. 90-76-3.

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

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

THOMAS M. O'CONNOR
CITY ATTORNEY

By Robert A. Ferrero
Deputy City Attorney

RECOMMENDED:

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

By Rai Y. Okamoto
Rai Y. Okamoto
Director of Planning

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

LM #83

Passed for Second Reading

Board of Supervisors, San Francisco

JUL 26 1976

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

~~Noes: Supervisors~~

Absent: Supervisors MENDELSOHN

A. H. Brennan Clerk

Read Second Time and Finally Passed

Board of Supervisors, San Francisco

AUG - 2 1976

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

~~Noes: Supervisors~~

Absent: Supervisors GONZALES PELOSI

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

A. H. Brennan Clerk

90-76-3 AUG 13 1976 George R. Moscone

File No. Approved Mayor

SAN FRANCISCO

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

RESOLUTION NO.7478

WHEREAS, A proposal to designate Saint John's Presbyterian Church at 25 Lake Street as a Landmark pursuant to the provisions of Article 10 of the City Planning Code was initiated by the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board on March 3, 1976, 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 April 8, 1976, 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 Saint John's Presbyterian Church at 25 Lake Street 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 point of intersection of the southerly line of Lake Street and the westerly line of Arguello Boulevard, thence southerly along the westerly line of Arguello Boulevard for a distance of 74.6 feet, thence at a right angle westerly for a distance of 85 feet, thence at a right angle southerly for a distance of 27.5 feet thence at a right angle westerly for a distance of 50 feet, thence at a right angle northerly for a distance of 102.1 feet, thence at a right angle easterly along the southerly line of Lake Street for a distance of 135 feet to the point of beginning; Being Lot 1 in Assessor's Block 1361; which property is known as 25 Lake Street.

Second, that the special character and special historical, architectural and aesthetic interest and value of the said Landmark justifying its designation are set forth in the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board Resolution No. 139 as adopted on March 3, 1976, which resolution is incorporated herein and made a part hereof as though fully set forth;

Third, that the said Landmark should be preserved generally in all of its particular exterior features as existing on the date hereof and described and depicted in the photographs, case report and other material on file in the Department of City Planning Docket LM 76.2;

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 certify that the foregoing resolution was ADOPTED by the City Planning Commission at its regular meeting of April 8, 1976.

Lynn E. Pio
Secretary

AYES: Commissioners Bierman, Dearman, Finn, Lau, Rosenblatt, Starbuck

NOES: None

ABSENT: Commissioner Mellon

PASSED: April 8, 1976

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD
Final Case Report -- March 3, 1976

SAINT JOHN'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
25 Lake Street

OWNER: Saint John's United Presbyterian Church.

LOCATION: 25 Lake Street.
Southwest corner of Arguello Boulevard and Lake Street, being lot 1 in Assessor's Block 1361.

HISTORY: The formal organization of Saint John's Presbyterian Church took place on March 6, 1870, when sixty-one charter members met at Pacific Hall, at Bush and Kearny Streets, to establish a new Presbyterian congregation in the City.

Steps were immediately taken by the Board of Trustees to have Dr. William Anderson Scott named pastor and to arrange for a permanent site for the congregation by purchasing Old Saint James Episcopal Church, located at Post Street near Mason, at a cost of $45,000. First services were held at the new church on Sunday, March 27, 1870, with Dr. Scott as minister; almost immediately there were large congregations at morning and evening services and the Sunday School attendance was composed of one hundred pupils and fourteen teachers.

Dr. Scott, while new to Saint John's, was already well known in San Francisco from the early days of the City. His initial visit to San Francisco occurred early in 1854; later that same year he and his family arrived by clipper ship from New Orleans where he had been granted a leave of absence from the First Presbyterian Church. He began his preaching in the Music Hall at the southeast corner of Montgomery and Bush Streets, and immediately organized a church and raised money to build a sanctuary he named Calvary Presbyterian Church. The church flourished; Dr. Scott was recognized as a spiritual leader and a magnetic speaker, a man of principle and courage. In 1856, when lawlessness and violence were rampant in the City, he found himself caught in conflict with many citizens and members of his own congregation because of his opposition to the Committee of Vigilance. This culminated in his being hanged in effigy from a lamppost at Bush and Montgomery on October 5, 1856.

Dr. Scott immediately offered to resign his post as pastor of Calvary. The church, as well as the City was in turmoil. His resignation was not accepted and Dr. Scott remained at Calvary, helping his parishioners build a new church to replace one which had been destroyed by fire. He went on to achieve national recognition: at age 45, in New Orleans, on May 6, 1858, he was elected moderator of the Old School Presbyterian Assembly the highest honor his church could bestow.

But trouble for Dr. Scott still lay ahead. In 1861, he found himself in conflict with the mandates of the Presbytery of California which required all ministers to "preach...the awful crime of rebellion" with regard to secession and Civil War. Born as he was in Tennessee and reared in Louisiana, he followed the dictates of his conscience and included Jefferson Davis, President of the Southern Confederacy, in his public prayers, making clear his opposition to the horrors and destruction of of the Civil War.

HISTORY:
(Cotninued)

Opposition to his point of view was great from his congregation, the press, and the general public. This came to a climax on Sunday, September 22, 1861, when once again he was hanged in effigy, this time outside his church. He and his family left the city promptly, and went by steamer to Panama, then to England, Paris and back to England before taking a pastorate in New York City.

By 1868, the wounds of the Civil War had healed somewhat and the slavery issued had been settled, San Francisco's Protestant community had grown, and Dr. and Mrs. Scott were anxious to return to San Francisco. At that time, the pulpit at Calvary Presbyterian Church was vacant and Dr. Scott was considered for the post. When Calvary decided upon the Reverend John Hemphill, a promising young candidate, Dr. Scott turned with enthusiasm to the establishment of a new church, Saint John's, and accordingly accepted with alacrity the approaches of the provisional trustees, several of whom had been his former parishioners at Calvary.

Dr. Scott served as minister at Saint John's from May 1, 1870, until his death on January 14, 1885, the longest pastorate of the several which he had held.

For a number of years, membership in the church grew; the original 61 parishioners of 1870 increased steadily until 1879 when 382 members were reported. Dr. Scott served twice as Moderator of the Presbytery of California, in 1870 and 1872, and as moderator of the Synod of the Pacific in 1876. He was one of the leaders in efforts to organize a theological seminary in San Francisco, feeling strongly that too many seminaries were located in the East. His efforts were rewarded when on October 4, 1871, the San Francisco Theological Seminary, presently located in San Anselmo,was established. Dr. Scott served as first president of the Board of the faculty. In the early years, some of the seminarians lived in Saint John's Sunday School rooms, used the organ loft as a study, and had access to Dr. Scott's extensive library.

Later, in 1880, Dr. Scott married Robert Louis Stevenson and Fannie Osborne in his study.

The task of following in the footsteps of so distinquished a pastor as Dr. Scott was a formidable one. Upon Dr. Scott's death in 1885, his young successor, the Reverend Andrew Meldrum, who served as Dr. Scott's associate for two years, found that membership almost immediately dropped to about half; at the same time, there was a movement within the congregation to relocate the church away from the downtown area to a site closer to the newly developing residential area of the city. Reverend Meldrum resigned and was followed by four other pastors during the 1890's, a period of struggle and austerity in both the church and the city. In the meantime, in 1888, the congregation moved from their downtown site to a new building, their second home, located at California and Octavia Streets. The interior of the building was much the same as that of the original church; the organ, the pews, and the pulpit furniture remained the same as did the transcept arch. Large stained glass windows enhanced the beauty of the sanctuary.

HISTORY:
(Continued)

By the end of the century, Saint John's was in dire straits. The church was heavily in debt due to the mortgage, and by 1895, its membership had dropped below 100. Almost coincidentally, their sister church, Calvary, came to the rescue. Calvary had been offered the opportunity to sell its land, the site of the present St. Francis Hotel, for $240,000; in the interim, while plans were under way to build a new church on land which the church owned at Fillmore and Jackson Streets, a happy solution appeared to be the sharing of Saint John's facilities. Calvary assumed Saint John's mortgage; Saint John's pastor became the Associate Pastor of Calvary and the two ministers preached the sermon on alternative Sundays.

When the new Calvary Church building was completed, there was serious discussion about the advisability of disbanding Saint John's as a separate congregation and uniting with Calvary. But in 1902, Arthur W. Foster, one of Dr. Scott's sons-in-law who had been deeply committed to Saint John's since he joined the church in 1875, believed very strongly that there was a need for more Presbyterian churches to serve the developing neighborhoods.

Foster was President of the California Northwestern Railroad which grew out of his purchase of the San Francisco and North Pacific Railroad from the Donahue estate. Foster owned vast expanses of real estate in San Francisco, Marin, Sonoma and other north coast counties including Fairhills, the former Mailliard estate in Marin County, which he purchased in 1880. In 1890, he gave 14 acres in San Anselmo to the San Francisco Theological Seminary which then moved there from San Francisco. In 1883, he was instrumental in the chartering of the Islam Temple of the Mystic Shrine and served as its first grand potentate in 1885. Additionally, Mr. Foster serves as a Regent of the University of California, a Director of the Market Street Railway Company, and as a Director and Treasurer of the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition. The broad scope of his interest is evidenced by his sponsorship of Luther Burbank's agricultural and horticultural research and his acceptance of a trusteeship from the Carnegie Foundation for International Peace.

Accordingly, he proposed that the congregation undertake, with his help, the challenge of moving to a new location and the development of a new church. Not only did he challenge the congregation with words; he offered tangible support. To quote him: "If 50 people will give positive leadership, seek out a new site for the Church, and move, I will pay off all debts, repay our rightful obligations to Calvary Church, buy the needed land, build a church as beautiful as the one I remember so well a quarter of a century ago, and guarantee the pastor's salary. All I ask is that at each annual meeting of

HISTORY:
(Continued)

the Church, the treasurer is able to report the Church is debt free, and that the congregation addresses itself to the future with optimism, dedication and confidence whatever may be the circumstances of the Church, the City or the world."

The congregation accepted the challenge. The site of the present church at Arguello and Lake Streets, close to the Presidio of San Francisco, surrounded by sand dunes, enshrouded by fog, was selected as was the architectural firm of Dodge and Dolliver. Groundbreaking services were held on April 25, 1905, attended by Mrs. Arthur W. Foster and Mrs. Nicholas G. Kittle, two of Dr. Scott's daughters. The first service was held in the sanctuary on Easter Sunday, April 15, 1906, attended by the entire membership and many celebrities of the city.

Three days later, on April 18, 1906, the church was shaken by the great earthquake. Damage was severe. The chimney crashed into the rear of the building, damaging much of the furniture and the organ. Some of the stained glass windows were loosened and fell into the street. But the dedication of the members to the future of their church did not flag; services were held in the members' homes.

On April 28, 1907, repairs were completed and the formal dedication was held. Arthur Foster turned over the deed to the congregation with the admonition "To be rich in spirit and free of debt."

The history of the church in its present location parallels the development of the Richmond District. Rows and rows of homes replaced the sand dunes; the congregation grew in numbers. Attendance at Sunday School swelled with children who came every Sunday from the Maria Kip orphanage which was located at Seventh Avenue and Lake Street and the San Francisco Protestant Orphanage, located at Fourteenth Avenue and Lake. The church was always responsive to the needs of the community. After the fire and earthquake, food and shelter were provided to refugees encamped in the neighborhood and in Golden Gate Park. During the Depression in the 30's, assistance was given to the unemployed by providing food and listing jobs. In both World War I and II, special programs were organized for soldiers stationed at the Presidio and the women of the church were deeply involved in knitting socks, sweaters and afghans and making quilts and bandages for the American Red Cross.

As services increased, the congregation recognized the need for expansion of its facilities, As early as 1910, the members of the Young Men's Bible class tore down the wood shed, and built the McCol Sunday School building to house the primary grades. In 1944, this building was replaced by a redwood chapel which was dedicated in 1949.

HISTORY:
(Continued)

In the 1970's, disaster almost struck the church when termites threatened to undermine the steeple. Once again the congregation rallied, and at a cost of $17,000, the damage was repaired and the interior of the sanctuary reburbished.

The church has always been fortunate in its pastors who have served the congregation with dedication. Following Dr. George Eldredge who presided at the beginning of the present church, Dr. Alexander Eakin served from 1908 to 1918, Dr. William Anderson Philips from 1919 to 1927, and Dr. Lloyd Raymond Carrick from 1927 to 1960.

Brief service from Dr. Paul Buchholz, Dr. Raven Davis, and Rev. Lawrence Monroe was followed in 1908 by the pastorate of Rev. David B. White who is the present minister.

In addition to Arthur W. Foster, particularly distinguished members of the congregation who played important roles in the Church's development and who contributed significantly to the wider community have included: Gertrude Atherton's grandfather, Stephen Franklin, who served as Secretary of the Bank of California; farmer, rancher and businessman Henry Mayo Newhall; Supreme Court Justice James Dahney Thorton; Superintendent of Schools Joseph P. Nourse, and Nicholas G. Kittle.

INTERIOR
DESCRIPTION:

The present church, designed by the architectural firm of Dodge and Dolliver, copies almost exactly that of the original church at Post and Mason Streets. The arch spanning the pulpit with inscription "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive honor, glory, and blessing", the pews, the pulpit furnishings, and the Rose window on the South wall of the Narthex are from the original building. Stained glass windows add much to the beauty of the sanctuary. The Foster window, on the East wall of the Narthex which depicts the Prophet Elijah being fed by ravens at Brook Cherith (1 Kings 17:6) was the gift of Arthur Foster in 1906 in memory of his parents. All of the other windows, with the exception of the two in the choir loft which were given by John and Flora Kemp in 1920, were moved from the church's second home on California and Octavia Streets. The Hope window, commonly called the Newhall window, commemorates the life of Henry Mayo Newhall and is located on the North side of the sanctuary. On the south side of the sanctuary is the Saint John window, in memory of William Anderson Scott. Both of these windows, as well as six other smaller windows were part of the interior of the second church.

The Johnson organ has always been the center of the church's musical activities. It was purchased in 1870 for $10,000, brough round the Horn from Boston and played a prominent part in the musical ministry in all three churches. In 1928, an electric blower and motor was installed. By the 1950's it was apparent major repairs were needed. With great effort, the congregation raised $27,000. Otto Schoenstein performed a major overhaul, increased the ranks of pipes from 30 to 40, and installed a three manual electric console. This was completed in 1956, and provided Saint John's with a "sonorous instrument in a tone-perfect setting". Chimes for the organ were the gift of Mrs. John Kemper.

ARCHITECTURE: Throughout history, Christian architecture has been closely tied to prevalent religious theory. This was best expressed visually when the power of the church was most widely felt. With the advent of humanism and self-determination in the 17th and 18th centuries, the control and influence of the church began to take a secondary role to political power. As the church relinquished its absolute political control, so did its artistic dictatorship come to an end. No longer were all churches created following a standard format. Rather, religious design became more responsive to individual and cultural distinctions. By the end of the 19th Century, this individualistic approach to the artistic interpretation of religious theory had developed into cross-cultural and trans-historic expression. Thus, the artist/designer could combine a multitude of styles and theories creating a structure which was expressive of current cultural trends. As the era of internationalism developed on a social and political level, the religious expression parallelled this movement by creating styles which combined elements taken from many cultures and societies. This design movement was known as eclecticism.

When Saint John's was designed and built, architects George Dodge and J. Walter Dolliver were responding to just these concepts. Their focus was the expression of the community's historic ties, the cultural evolution of this particular religious branch, and the social structure and derivation of the community as well as certain fashionable and culturally responsive design ideas.

In 1905-06, a popular design motif was the "shingle style", evocative of rustic simplicity and directness. The style used broad sweeping gables, with deep overhangs and an over-all shingling to express the romantic vision of life so popular with the late Victorians and Edwardians. This style is important in the development of religious architecture in that it is a direct response to the humanization of scale and integration of nature that has consistently been a trend in design all along the western coastline of the United States. This naturalistic approach, now popular world-wide, had many early and successful expressions in this area, including St. John's.

The ritualistic symbolic aspects of the exterior design are derivatives of the trend begun by Christopher Wren in England, namely the clean, Puritan lines of the design which responds to the personal, intimate, and self-realized approach to religion which was an early part of our national heritage. Similarly, the tower's placement in the front of the structure re-inforces the symbolic use of the church as a community gathering place. It is not only a call to worship; it is a call to meeting and assembly. This usage is a carryover from the early Puritan times, when the church was also the political hub of the community. As a symbolic statement, the front tower should be viewed as a reiteration of the church's focal position in the community.

Internally, the stylistic content is equally eclectic, integrating different levels of symbolism with complementary design techniques from divergent historic origins. The first amalgamation of styles and concepts can be seen in the floor plan of the church. In architectural expression, the plan is a modified Greek cross which has been detailed with Gothic tastes and designed to be used as an axial Basilican nave with a false narthex.

(Continued)

How did such a combination come about and why? The eclectic architect, trained in both historic and current trends, was artist of style who was familiar with the basic origins and development of all design and often was as well versed in religious and cultural affairs. Thus in a church such as Saint John's, he would analyze not only the needs of the congregation but also the historic development of their church and society. The use of the Greek cross plan can be traced to the flowering of the English church in a period when it had just established its independence from Rome. As a symbolic gesture, church designers returned to Greco-Byzantine and North Italian (Eastern Empire) examples for inspiration; hence the "illusionary" Greek cross which appears so often in Palladian design. Again, being an English church, reference was made in the detailing to the fine woodwork and tracery effect developed in late English Gothic design. The Roman Basilican seating and flow plan is also a reference to the reform nature of the newer English church. This simplistic, approach to religion developed in the Cromwellian period (Puritans) and was reflected in the starkly elegant designs by Wren. It is firmly uni-directional in flow, expressive of Puritan man's affirmation of God, yet acknowledging man's existence on an equal axis, the linking line being man's rationality.

The quality of light in the interior combines the Gothic interpretation of colored light as the purest form (seen in the circumberal windows) with the Baroque "sense" of pure light reflective from white on pale surfaces and also a suspended chandelier of Spanish origins providing the dimmer "candle-light" of a Gothic space.

Decorations also combine eras. Here there are hanging banners, a custom dating to English Crusade churches. The lettering on the altar arch may have several origins, one of which is the Arabic calligraphy seen by the Crusaders. The door at the entrance uses a Tudor flattened arch style frame. Art Nouveau naturalism is seen in the pew design.

SURROUNDING LAND USE AND ZONING: The property is zoned R-4 (High Density Multiple Residential) District.with a height and bulk limit of 40-X. The surrounding land uses are largely residential with the exception of Temple Emanu-El on the north side of Lake Street.

RESEARCH: The historical information contained in this case report was prepared for the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board by Mrs. Alice B. Henry of Saint John's Church; Robert Stevenson is responsible for the architectural commentary.