



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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## Landmark Designation Case Report

*Hearing Date:* August 15, 2018  
*Case No.:* 2018-006347DES  
*Project Address:* 449 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
*Zoning:* (RTO-M) Residential Transit Oriented- Mission  
*Block/Lot:* 3546/026  
*Property Owner:* Noe Vista LLC  
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### PROPERTY DESCRIPTIONS & SURROUNDING LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

The former Welsh Presbyterian Church (APN 3546/026) is located on the south side of 14<sup>th</sup> Street between Guerrero and Valencia Streets in the Inner Mission District. Built between 1907 and 1913 by a small congregation of Welsh-speaking Presbyterians and designed by architect Edward T. Foulkes, the building's design replicates, in wood, the native stone parish churches of South Wales. The two and partial three-story building features a crenellated tower, pointed Gothic arch windows and doors, stepped buttresses, and uniform cladding in dark gray-painted shingles. A detailed building description can be found on pages 2-12 of the attached Community-Sponsored Article 10 Landmark Designation. The property is located within an RTO-M (Residential Transit Oriented- Mission) zone and a 45-X height and bulk district.

449 14<sup>th</sup> Street was previously identified as a contributor to the Mission Reconstruction District, a California Register-eligible historic district comprising buildings constructed between 1906 and 1913 in the Inner Mission District. It was also surveyed in the Inner Mission North Historic Resources Survey and was found to be individually significant under California Register of Historic Resources Criterion 1 (Events) and Criterion 3 (Architecture/Design).

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The case before the Historic Preservation Commission is the consideration of the initiation of a community-sponsored landmark designation of 449 14<sup>th</sup> Street, also known as the former Welsh Presbyterian Church, as a San Francisco landmark under Article 10 of the Planning Code, Section 1004.1, and recommending that the Board of Supervisors approve of such designation. The building was nominated for designation by the property owner and the designation report was prepared by VerPlanck Historic Preservation Consulting.

## ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW STATUS

The Planning Department has determined that actions by regulatory agencies for protection of the environment (specifically in this case, landmark designation) are exempt from environmental review, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15308 (Class Eight - Categorical).

## GENERAL PLAN POLICIES

The Urban Design Element of the San Francisco General Plan contains the following relevant objectives and policies:

- OBJECTIVE 2: Conservation of Resources that provide a sense of nature, continuity with the past, and freedom from overcrowding.
- POLICY 4: Preserve notable landmarks and areas of historic, architectural or aesthetic value, and promote the preservation of other buildings and features that provide continuity with past development.

Designating significant historic resources as local landmarks will further continuity with the past because the buildings will be preserved for the benefit of future generations. Landmark designation will require that the Planning Department and the Historic Preservation Commission review proposed work that may have an impact on character-defining features. Both entities will utilize the Secretary of Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* in their review to ensure that only appropriate, compatible alterations are made.

## SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING CODE SECTION 101.1 – GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY AND IMPLEMENTATION

Planning Code Section 101.1 – Eight Priority Policies establishes and requires review of permits for consistency with said policies. On balance, the proposed designation is consistent with the priority policies in that:

- a. The proposed designation will further Priority Policy No. 7, that landmarks and historic buildings be preserved. Landmark designation of the former Welsh Presbyterian Church will help to preserve an important historical resource that is significant for its associations with the reconstruction of San Francisco following the 1906 Earthquake and Fire and as the best remaining building associated with San Francisco's Welsh community. It is also significant in the area of design/construction as a modest but well-preserved example of a neighborhood church designed in the Gothic Revival style and as the work of a master architect, the MIT and *École des Beaux Arts*-trained Edward T. Foulkes.

## BACKGROUND / PREVIOUS ACTIONS

The former Welsh Presbyterian Church was nominated for Landmark designation by the building's owner. Staff conducted two site visits to the property, in the fall of 2016 to provide initial feedback regarding potential eligibility for Landmark designation and again in 2018. The final draft of the Landmark designation report, prepared by VerPlanck Historic Preservation Consulting, was received by the Department on June 27, 2018.

## **OTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED**

If the Historic Preservation Commission decides to initiate designation of the subject property as an Article 10 landmark at its August 15, 2018 hearing, the item will again be considered by the Commission at a future hearing. During this subsequent hearing, the Commission will decide whether to forward the item to the Board of Supervisors with a recommendation supportive of designation. The nomination would then be considered at a future Board of Supervisors hearing for formal Article 10 landmark designation.

## **APPLICABLE PRESERVATION STANDARDS**

### **ARTICLE 10**

Section 1004 of the Planning Code authorizes the landmark designation of an individual structure or other feature or an integrated group of structures and features on a single lot or site, having special character or special historical, architectural or aesthetic interest or value, as a landmark. Section 1004.1 also outlines that landmark designation may be initiated by the Board of Supervisors or the Historic Preservation Commission and the initiation shall include findings in support. Section 1004.2 states that once initiated, the proposed designation is referred to the Historic Preservation Commission for a report and recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to approve, disapprove or modify the proposal.

Pursuant to Section 1004.3 of the Planning Code, if the Historic Preservation Commission approves the designation, a copy of the resolution of approval is transmitted to the Board of Supervisors and without referral to the Planning Commission. The Board of Supervisors shall hold a public hearing on the designation and may approve, modify or disapprove the designation.

In the case of the initiation of a historic district, the Historic Preservation Commission shall refer its recommendation to the Planning Commission pursuant to Section 1004.2(c). The Planning Commission shall have 45 days to provide review and comment on the proposed designation and address the consistency of the proposed designation with the General Plan, Section 101.1 priority policies, the City's Regional Housing Needs Allocation, and the Sustainable Communities Strategy for the Bay Area. These comments shall be sent to the Board of Supervisors in the form of a resolution.

Section 1004(b) requires that the designating ordinance approved by the Board of Supervisors shall include the location and boundaries of the landmark site, a description of the characteristics of the landmark which justify its designation, and a description of the particular features that should be preserved.

Section 1004.4 states that if the Historic Preservation Commission disapproves the proposed designation, such action shall be final, except upon the filing of a valid appeal to the Board of Supervisors within 30 days.

### **ARTICLE 10 LANDMARK CRITERIA**

The Historic Preservation Commission on February 4, 2009, by Resolution No. 001, adopted the National Register Criteria as its methodology for recommending landmark designation of historic resources. Under the National Register Criteria, the quality of significance in American history, architecture,

archaeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, feeling, materials, workmanship, and association, and that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or properties that have yielded, or may likely yield, information important in prehistory or history.

## **PUBLIC / NEIGHBORHOOD INPUT**

The current tenant of the building, the Assembly, has expressed their support of the landmark designation. The Department received one inquiry from the Mission Economic Development Association (MEDA) related to the current and proposed use of the property and how landmark designation may impact future uses. The Department has received no formal objection to the landmark designation.

## **PROPERTY OWNER INPUT**

This is a property owner-initiated designation.

## **STAFF ANALYSIS**

The case report and analysis under review was prepared by Department preservation staff. The Department has determined that the subject property meets the requirements for Article 10 eligibility as an individual landmark. The justification for its inclusion is explained in the attached Landmark Designation Report.

## **SIGNIFICANCE**

Designed by Edward T. Foulkes to resemble the traditional mediaeval stone churches of South Wales, the former Welsh Presbyterian Church at 449 14th Street is unique in San Francisco. It is significant in the area of *events* for its associations with the reconstruction of San Francisco following the 1906 Earthquake and Fire and as the best remaining building associated with San Francisco's Welsh community. It is also significant in the area of *design/construction* as a modest but well-preserved example of a neighborhood church designed in the Gothic Revival style and as the work of a *master architect*, the MIT and *École des Beaux Arts*-trained Edward T. Foulkes. The period of significance is 1908 to 1913, beginning with the completion of the first floor level and exterior in 1908 and ending with the completion of the second-floor sanctuary in 1913.

## **UNDERREPRESENTED LANDMARK TYPES**

The proposed landmark designation does not meet any of the HPC's established designation priorities for underrepresented landmark types, as it is not located within an area that is geographically underrepresented among the City's designated Landmarks, is not of the modern era, is not a landscape, and it is not associated with an underrepresented racial/ethnic or social group.

## INTEGRITY

Although the former Welsh Presbyterian Church has undergone some alterations, including window glass replacement, application of low-maintenance materials atop the original cladding on the non-character-defining south and east facades, as well as various interior upgrades, it retains sufficient integrity to convey its association with its original design, use, and period of construction.

## CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

Whenever a building, site, object, or landscape is under consideration for Article 10 Landmark designation, the Historic Preservation Commission is required to identify character-defining features of the property. This is done to enable owners and the public to understand which elements are considered most important to preserve the historical and architectural character of the proposed landmark.

Character-defining features of the former Welsh Presbyterian Church include both exterior and interior elements, as described below and on page 51-52 of the attached landmark designation report.

### Exterior:

The character-defining exterior features of the former Welsh Presbyterian Church include its overall form, massing, structural system, fenestration patterns, some cladding materials, and architectural ornament. Its specific exterior character-defining features include:

- The overall height and massing of the two and partial three-story building, including its cruciform composition with a square tower at the front, two shed-roofed transepts, and steeply pitched, gable-roofed sanctuary at the rear;
- The publicly visible portions of the building's exterior—in particular the primary north façade – including the north, east, and west sides of the tower and the north walls of the transepts;
- All visible ornament, including all door and window trim, raking cornice, crenellated parapet, and intermediate cornice;
- The original primary entrance, including the oak doors and quatrefoil ornament and trim;
- Other exterior fenestration on the north, east, and west façades, including, on the north façade, the Gothic-arch window at the center of the tower, the three windows on the transepts, and the louvered openings at the top of the belfry on the north, east, and west sides of the tower; and the fenestration on the east and west sides of the sanctuary, including the tripartite windows with flat lintels on the first floor level and the tripartite windows with Tudor arches on the second floor level;
- Painted shingle cladding on the north façade, including decorative shingle patterns;
- Remaining areas of rustic channel siding on the east, west, and south façades, including siding that may be concealed behind non-historic vinyl and asbestos siding on the east and south façades; and
- Remaining simple flying buttresses.

Interior:

The character-defining spaces and features of the interior of the former Welsh Presbyterian Church include all intact parts of the former church that would have been experienced by the public, including the entry/stair hall, the gallery, the sanctuary, and the former Sunday school hall. Its specific interior character-defining features include:

- Footprint and volume of the spaces identified above except the Sunday school hall;
- Wall between gallery and sanctuary containing art glass transom and sidelights;
- All surviving trim in the spaces identified above, including wainscoting, stairs and balustrades, and doors;
- Scissors trusses and corbels in the sanctuary;
- Wood flooring in the Sunday school hall, entry hall, stairs, and gallery; and
- General outline of dropped beam ceiling in Sunday school hall but not the beams themselves, which are clad in non-historic materials.

## **BOUNDARIES OF THE LANDMARK SITE**

The proposed landmark site encompasses Assessor's Block 3546, Lot 026 – on which the subject property is located.

## **PLANNING DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION**

Based on the Department's analysis, the former Welsh Presbyterian Church is individually eligible for Article 10 Landmark designation for its association with events important to San Francisco's history, including its association with the reconstruction of San Francisco after the 1906 Earthquake and the city's small Welsh-speaking immigrant population. It is also significant for its architecture as a well-preserved example of a neighborhood church designed in the Gothic Revival style, and for its architect, Edward T. Foulkes. The Department recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission approve the proposed designation of 449 14<sup>th</sup> Street as a San Francisco landmark.

The Historic Preservation Commission may recommend approval, disapproval, or approval with modifications of the proposed initiation of the former Welsh Presbyterian Church as a San Francisco landmark under Article 10 of the Planning Code to the Board of Supervisors pursuant to Planning Code Section 1004.1. If the Historic Preservation Commission approves the initiation, a copy of the motion of approval is transmitted to the Board of Supervisors, which holds a public hearing on the designation and may approve, modify or disapprove the designation (Section 1004.4). If the Historic Preservation Commission disapproves the proposed designation, such action shall be final, except upon the filing of a valid appeal to the Board of Supervisors within 30 days (Section 1004.5).

## **ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Exhibits
- B. Draft Resolution initiating designation
- C. Draft Landmark Ordinance
- D. Draft Landmark Designation Report

# LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT



## The former Welsh Presbyterian Church

449 14<sup>th</sup> Street

June 27, 2018

City and County of San Francisco  
Mark Farrell, Mayor

Planning Department  
John Rahaim, Director

Cover: Former Welsh Presbyterian Church, 1964, San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) is a seven-member body that makes recommendations to the Board of Supervisors regarding the designation of landmark buildings and districts. The regulations governing landmarks and landmark districts are found in Article 10 of the Planning Code. The HPC is staffed by the San Francisco Planning Department.

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# Former Welsh Presbyterian Church

## 449 Fourteenth Street

**Built:** 1907-13

**Architect:** N. Franklin Oliver & Edward T. Foulkes

### OVERVIEW

The former Welsh Presbyterian Church at 449 14<sup>th</sup> Street occupies a midblock site on the south side of 14<sup>th</sup> Street, between Guerrero and Valencia Streets, in the Inner Mission District. Bounded on both sides by three and four-story Edwardian flats, it is easy to miss. Built between 1907 and 1913 by a tiny congregation of Welsh-speaking Presbyterians, the building's design replicates, in wood, the native stone parish churches of South Wales. Indeed, the church's crenellated tower, pointed Gothic-arch windows and doors, stepped buttresses, and uniform cladding in dark gray-painted shingles makes it appear, at first glance, to be a stone country church incongruously set down in San Francisco's Mission District. Built between 1907 and 1913, it replaced an older church that the congregation had built in 1902, but that was destroyed in the 1906 Earthquake and Fire. Dedicated in 1913, the church served San Francisco's Welsh-speaking Presbyterians for about half a century. In addition to fulfilling the community's spiritual needs, the church hosted most of the Welsh community's cultural events, including the annual *Eisteddfod* and *Cymanfa Ganu* festivals. Declining numbers of Welsh-speaking immigrants in the post-World War II era led to a name change in 1949 and the church's eventual closure a decade later. After a short interim as an office building and an art gallery operated by the Presbytery of San Francisco, the Free Greek Evangelic Church, another small immigrant congregation, purchased the building in 1968 and used it as a church until 2014. The building is now home to a women's health and wellness institution. The current tenant made several minor changes to the modest building to accommodate its new use, but these changes do not detract from the building's eligibility as a San Francisco City Landmark.

## BUILDING DESCRIPTION

### Neighborhood Context

The former Welsh Presbyterian Church occupies a 5,196-sf parcel bounded by 14<sup>th</sup> Street to the north, a pair of three-family flats to the east (443-47 14<sup>th</sup> Street) and west (453-55 14<sup>th</sup> Street), and to the south by the Valencia Gardens affordable housing project at 340-70 Valencia Street (**Figure 1**). The former church is located in the Inner Mission District, in a part of the neighborhood that was destroyed in the 1906 Earthquake and Fire and then rebuilt over the next seven years during the Post-quake Reconstruction Era (1906 to 1913). Because it was rebuilt during a comparatively short time, the subject block is characterized by a cohesive building stock of Edwardian-era flats, apartment buildings, and mixed-use buildings that is very typical of the Inner Mission District.

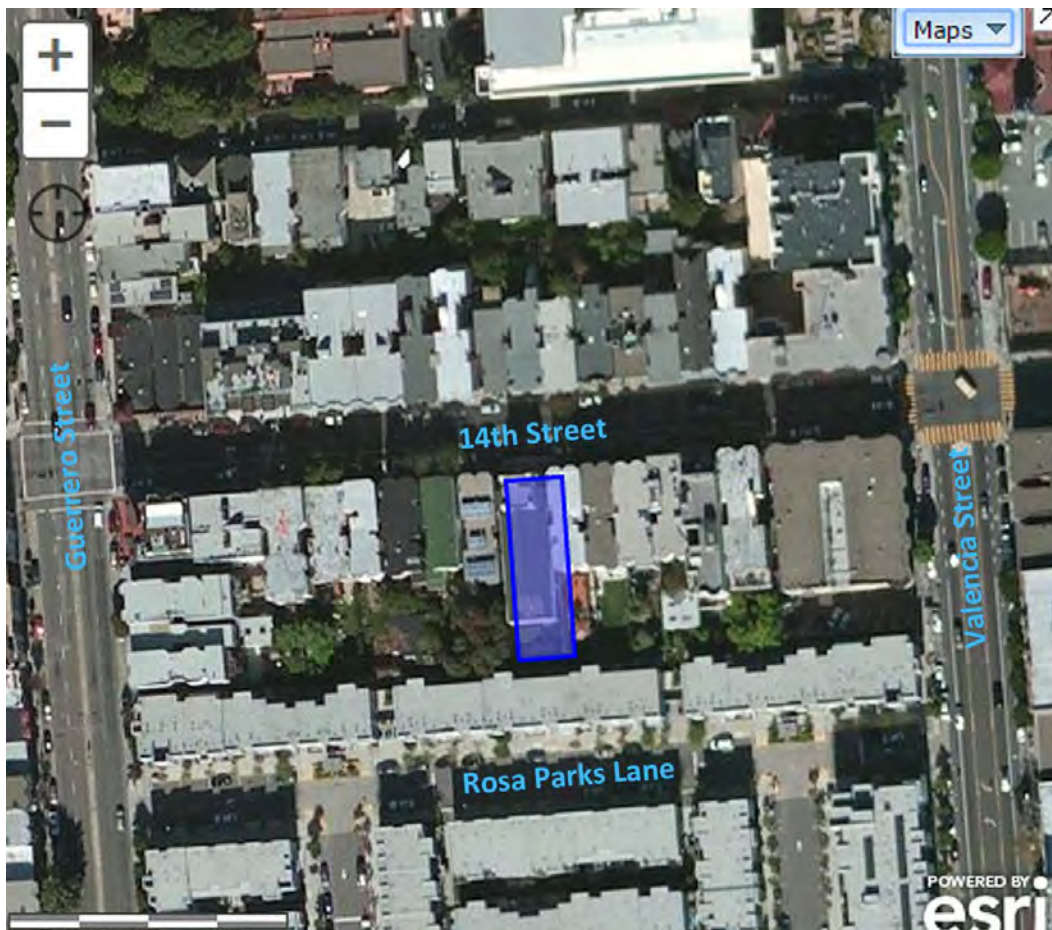


Figure 1. Map showing location of 449 14<sup>th</sup> Street (in dark blue).  
Source: San Francisco Planning Department

The north side of the 400 block of 14<sup>th</sup> Street begins at Guerrero Street on the west. The first building on the block is a one-story, Mission Revival-style commercial block built in 1907 at 494-98 14<sup>th</sup> Street (**Figure 2**). Located next-door to it is 480 14<sup>th</sup> Street, a four-story condominium building constructed in 2009.

Continuing east along the north side of 14<sup>th</sup> Street is a row of four, four-story apartment buildings constructed between 1925 and 1926. The two westernmost buildings in this group, 466 and 470 14<sup>th</sup> Street (both built 1925), are identical, as are 456 and 460 14<sup>th</sup> Street (both built 1926) (**Figure 3**). All four buildings are designed in a simplified version of the Renaissance/Baroque style that was popular during this era.



**Figure 2. Mission Revival-style commercial building at 494-98 14<sup>th</sup> Street; view toward east.**



**Figure 3. Renaissance/Baroque-style apartment buildings at 456 to 470 14<sup>th</sup> Street; view toward northwest.**

The eastern half of the north side of the block is less architecturally cohesive than the western half. Across the street from 449 14<sup>th</sup> Street is the sole single-family dwelling on the block, a Classical Revival cottage built in 1908 at 454 14<sup>th</sup> Street (**Figure 4**). Adjoining it to the east is a pair of three-family flats, both built in 1907, at 440-44 and 446-50 14<sup>th</sup> Street (**Figure 5**). The building at 440-44 14<sup>th</sup> Street has been stripped and re-clad in asbestos shingles, but 446-50 14<sup>th</sup> Street is intact and is a typical example of the multifamily housing erected in the Inner Mission District after the 1906 Earthquake.



**Figure 4. Classical Revival-style cottage at 454 14<sup>th</sup> Street; view toward north.**



**Figure 5. Classical Revival-style flats at 440-44 (right) and 446-50 (left) 14<sup>th</sup> Street; view toward north.**

The eastern third of the block (**Figure 6**) includes a four-unit Art Deco-style apartment building (built 1924) at 436-38 14<sup>th</sup> Street; a five-unit “Contractor Modern” apartment building (built 1954) at 434 14<sup>th</sup> Street; Classical Revival flats (built 1923) at 428-30 14<sup>th</sup> Street; a three-unit Classical Revival-style apartment building (built 1907) at 422-26 14<sup>th</sup> Street; and a nine-unit Renaissance/Baroque-style apartment building (built 1925) at 420 14<sup>th</sup> Street. Anchoring the northwest corner of 14<sup>th</sup> and Valencia Streets is a five-story, 36-unit, mixed-use (residential and commercial) apartment building (built 2000) at 286 Valencia Street (**Figure 7**). This building is designed in a vaguely Victorian style with bay windows, an octagonal corner turret, and a box cornice supported by what appear to be foam brackets.



**Figure 6. North side of the 400 block of 14<sup>th</sup> Street; view toward west.**



**Figure 7. Large contemporary apartment building at 286 Valencia Street; view toward northwest.**

The south side of the 400 block of 14<sup>th</sup> Street begins at Valencia Street on the east. At the southwest corner of 14<sup>th</sup> and Valencia Streets is a 30-unit, Classical Revival-style, mixed-use (commercial and residential) apartment building (built 1908) at 300-20 Valencia Street (**Figure 8**). Next-door at 417-21 14<sup>th</sup> Street is a three-story, Renaissance/Baroque-style, mixed-use (commercial and residential) building constructed in 1924. Adjoining this property to the west, at 425 14<sup>th</sup> Street, is a four-story condominium building (built 2001) designed in a faux Victorian style. Between this building and the former Welsh Presbyterian Church is a row of four, three-story flats constructed between 1906 and 1910, at 427-31, 433-37, 439-41, and 443-47 14<sup>th</sup> Street (**Figure 9**). All are designed in the Classical Revival style except for 433-37 14<sup>th</sup> Street, which was remodeled in the Art Deco style in the 1930s.

West of the former Welsh Presbyterian Church is another row of flats constructed between 1906 and 1910, including 453-55, 457-59, 461-65, 467-71, and 477-81 14<sup>th</sup> Street (**Figures 10-11**). The last two buildings are “Romeo Flats” – multi-family buildings containing two railroad flats on each floor level with a central stair between them.<sup>1</sup> The second-to-last building is a three-story, mixed-use (residential and commercial), Classical Revival-style, brick-clad apartment building (built 1927) at 483-89 14<sup>th</sup> Street

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<sup>1</sup> Romeo flats get their name from the balcony-like appearance of the central stair, especially if it is unenclosed.

(Figure 12). The last building on the block, at the southeast corner of 14<sup>th</sup> and Guerrero Streets, is a three-story, four-unit, mixed-use (residential and commercial) condominium (built 2004) at 201-07 Guerrero Street (Figure 13).



Figure 8. Classical Revival apartment building at southwest corner of 14<sup>th</sup> and Valencia Streets; view toward southwest.



Figure 9. Classical Revival-style flats at 427-31 to 443-47 14<sup>th</sup> Street; view toward southeast.



Figure 10. Classical Revival-style flats at 453-55 to 461-65 14<sup>th</sup> Street; view toward southeast.



Figure 11. Romeo flats at 467-71 (left) and 477-81 (right) 14<sup>th</sup> Street; view toward south.



Figure 12. Classical Revival-style apartment building at 483-89 14<sup>th</sup> Street; view toward southwest.



Figure 13. Contemporary condominium building at 201-07 Guerrero Street; view toward southeast.

The former Welsh Presbyterian Church backs up onto Valencia Gardens, a sprawling affordable housing complex consisting of 250 units arrayed across 16 buildings. Occupying a five-acre site that was historically Recreation Park – a baseball stadium – the original Valencia Gardens project was constructed in 1943 by the U.S. Housing Authority (USHA) and the San Francisco Housing Authority (SFHA) as part of a pioneering slum clearance program. Designed by William Wurster, the original Valencia Gardens complex was designed in the International style. Compromised by neglect and hobbled by crime, the World War II-era complex was demolished and rebuilt in 2005-06 as part of San Francisco’s Hope VI program. Unlike the original Valencia Gardens, which was fenced off from the surrounding neighborhood, its replacement is arrayed along two internal streets (Rosa Parks Lane and Maxwell Court) that connect Valencia and Guerrero Streets. The buildings are designed in a contemporary architectural idiom and finished in a variety of materials, including stucco, wood, concrete, and metal (**Figures 14-15**).



**Figure 14. Valencia Gardens; view toward northwest from intersection of 15<sup>th</sup> and Valencia Streets.**



**Figure 15. Valencia Gardens; view toward southwest from intersection of 14<sup>th</sup> and Valencia Streets.**

## Exterior Description

The former Welsh Presbyterian Church is a two-and partial three-story, wood-frame assembly building clad in painted wood shingles at the front and a mixture of materials on the side and rear elevations. It is capped by a steeply pitched gable roof with a square tower at the front. The building has a cruciform plan, with its long axis oriented north-to-south. Completed in 1913, the building strongly resembles the stone Gothic churches of South Wales. Its uniform shingle cladding (on the primary façade) and modest wood trim also recall the First Bay Region Tradition. Built with a modest budget, the building makes the most of its inconspicuous mid-block site and modest materials palette with its crenelated tower, which exerts a monumental presence on the residential block. The interior of the building consists of two full floors and a partial third floor level at the rear. The first floor level contains a stair/entry hall, the former Sunday school hall, a kitchen/dining room, an office, and men’s and women’s toilet rooms. The second floor level contains the upper part of the stair/entry hall (the gallery), the former sanctuary, two small offices, and a pair of toilet rooms. The third floor level contains two offices at the rear. Recently renovated for use as a

women's health and wellness institution, the former Welsh Presbyterian Church is in very good condition and remains intact from its original period of construction.

### North (Primary) Façade

The north (primary façade) of the former Welsh Presbyterian Church faces 14<sup>th</sup> Street (**Figure 16**). It is organized in three sections, with the central tower located closest to the street and the two shed-roofed transepts recessed 15 feet back from the north property line. At the first floor level, the tower contains a pair of hinged doors enclosed within a Tudor arch. The doors, the casings, and the quatrefoil panels at the corners of the entrance are all original features (**Figure 17**). Flanking the entrance are superimposed buttresses that diminish in size at each floor level. The second floor level of the tower contains a tripartite window enclosed within a Gothic arch supported



**Figure 16. North (primary) façade of the former Welsh Presbyterian Church; view toward south.**

by dropped pendant corbels (**Figure 18**). The window is composed of three panels enclosed within smaller Gothic arches and the entire unit is capped by a Gothic-arch transom. The actual glazing is non-historic colored Plexiglas dating to the early 1960s. Decorative diamond-shaped shingled panels flank the window to the left and to the right. The third floor level of the tower—the belfry—is articulated by three louvered openings, including a circular opening surrounded by concentric rows of shingles, and two narrow lancets to either side (**Figure 19**). The tower terminates with a wide wooden entablature and a crenellated parapet. The east and west façades of the tower are detailed the same as the north façade.



Figure 17. Main entrance; view toward south.



Figure 18. Gothic window on primary façade; view toward south.



Figure 19. Belfry and parapet; view toward south.



As mentioned previously, the transepts are recessed about 15 feet back from the sidewalk, leaving room for two small paved forecourts that are now enclosed behind contemporary wood gates. The transepts are essentially identical; the east transept contains an entrance and a small double-hung wood window at the first floor level, and a matching double-hung wood window at the second floor level (**Figure 20**). Non-historic wood lattice fencing encloses a gap between the church and its neighbor to the east. The door, which is original, is paneled and all openings are capped by pointed Gothic arches clad in shingles. The west transept features double-hung windows at both floor levels (**Figure 21**). Each window is glazed with a mixture of historic “moss” glass and amber-colored replacement glass of unknown origin.



Figure 20. East transept; view toward south.



Figure 21. West transept; view toward south.

### South (Rear) Façade

Like many buildings in San Francisco, the primary façade of 449 14<sup>th</sup> Street is the only side of the building that is given any ornament. With the exception of the east and west walls of the belfry, the other three façades of the former church are utilitarian in character. The south (rear) façade, which encloses three floor levels, is massed as a rectangle with clipped corners. It is clad in non-historic asbestos shingles and has no ornament (**Figure 22**). The south façade is articulated at the first floor level by a non-historic sliding door in the left bay and the right bay has no openings. The second floor level features a row of five double-hung wood windows. Above them, at the partial third floor level, is a pair of widely spaced double-hung wood windows. The window sashes are all contemporary replacements.



Figure 22. South façade; view toward north.

### East and West Façades

The east and west façades of the former Welsh Presbyterian Church are very similar. Originally clad in rustic channel siding, both have a symmetrical fenestration pattern and no ornament (**Figures 23-24**). At the north end of the property, the east and west façades of the tower and transepts are both shingled and windowless and abut adjoining properties. Behind the transepts is the gable-roofed section of the building that contains the former Sunday school hall and sanctuary. Unlike the front part of the building, the sanctuary wing does not occupy the full width of the property, leaving narrow passageways on either side. The east and west façades are both fenestrated by rows of five tripartite windows at the first and second floor levels. The windows at the first floor level, which illuminate the former Sunday school hall, have flat lintels, whereas the windows on the second floor level, which illuminate the sanctuary, are enclosed within Tudor arches. The rear portion of the east and west façades, which contains the offices and the kitchen/dining room, features a symmetrical arrangement of double-hung wood windows. The west façade retains its rustic channel siding, whereas the east façade has a layer of vinyl siding applied on top of the rustic channel siding. Entirely utilitarian in design, the most notable features of the east and west façades are the simple flying buttresses made out of 6 x 6 members. These buttresses are exposed to a point about 6 feet above ground and then enclosed within rustic channel siding above.



Figure 23. West façade; view toward north.

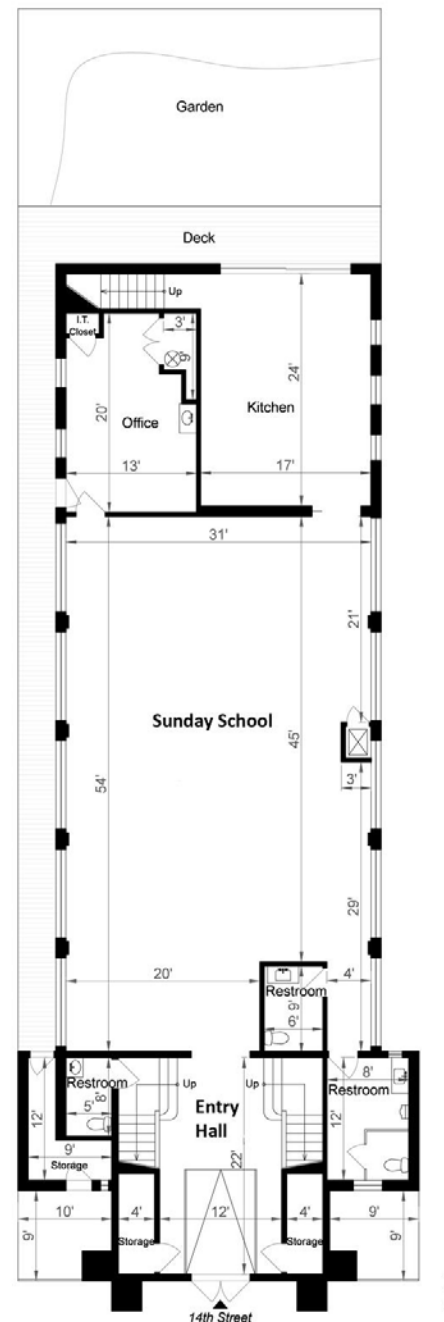


Figure 24. East façade; view toward north.

## Interior Description

### First Floor Level

Like the exterior, the interior of the former Welsh Presbyterian Church is finished in modest, durable materials and little ornament. In large part, the interior retains its original floorplan and most of its original finish materials. As previously mentioned the first floor level contains the entrance hall/stair, the former Sunday school hall, an office, three toilet rooms, and a kitchen/dining area (**Figure 25**). The entry hall and stair are located in the tower/transept; they are accessed from the street by a pair of glazed wood doors. Originally, three steps provided access from the sidewalk into the entry hall, but in 2015 the current owner built a ramp to provide ADA-compliant access (**Figure 26**). On axis with the primary entrance, a pair of original wood doors provide access to the former Sunday school hall. Like most of the original doors in the building, these are embellished with Gothic arch moldings. To either side of these doors are quarter-turn stairs that wrap around the interior of the tower to the gallery on the second floor level. Flooring in the entrance hall is light-colored Douglas fir and the walls are lath-and-plaster with dark-stained redwood wainscoting below. The stairs also have Douglas fir risers, redwood wainscoting, and redwood balustrades composed of turned balusters, handrails, and Gothic newel posts (**Figure 27**). At the first landing, doors on the east and west walls of the entry hall provide access to a pair of toilet rooms. The current owner retrofitted the toilet rooms with contemporary finishes and plumbing fixtures in 2015.



**Figure 25. Floorplan of the first floor level of the former Welsh Presbyterian Church.**  
Source: Noe-Vista, LLC



Figure 26. Entry hall; view toward south.



Figure 27. Entry hall; view toward southeast.



Figure 28. Entry hall; view toward northeast.

The former Sunday school hall was subdivided into a suite of six offices in 1961 and then converted back into a single multi-purpose room by the building's current owner in 2015. Measuring 31 feet wide by 54 feet long, the space is entirely open except for a non-historic mechanical closet on the west wall and a small toilet room enclosure on the north wall. The former Sunday school hall is naturally illuminated by double-hung wood windows along the east and west walls (**Figures 29-30**). The flooring is Douglas fir and the walls are lath-and-plaster with painted redwood wainscoting. The wainscoting has very high base trim along the south wall, indicating the original location of an altar, which was in use from 1907 to 1913 when the Sunday school hall was the church's sanctuary. The ceiling is coffered, consisting of an alternating grid of lath and plaster beams covered in repurposed subflooring and recessed panels covered in acoustical tiles. Original paneled doors embellished with Gothic tracery, including one hinged door at the southeast corner and a pocket door at the southwest corner, provide access to the office and the kitchen/dining area at the rear of the building, respectively. The windows retain their original double-hung wood sashes and their original "moss"-pattern glazing.



**Figure 29. Sunday school hall; view toward south.**

At the southeast corner of the first floor level is a small office. Originally, the kitchen, this space has Douglas fir flooring, lath-and-plaster walls, painted tongue-and-groove "beadboard" wainscoting, and paneled wood doors. A door on the east wall of the office provides access to an outdoor passageway on the east side of the property.



**Figure 30. Sunday school hall; view toward north.**

The room at the southwest corner of the first floor level is now a combined kitchen and dining area. It is finished in the same materials as the former Sunday school hall, with Douglas fir flooring, lath-and-plaster walls, painted redwood wainscoting, and a lath-and-plaster ceiling (**Figure 31**). Contemporary kitchen cabinetry and appliances, as well as marble counters, line the east wall. A contemporary sliding metal door provides access to the garden at the rear of the property.



**Figure 31. Kitchen; view toward northwest.**

A stair at the southeast corner of the building provides access to the second and third floor levels. The stair is carpeted and has lath and plaster walls and ceilings with painted tongue-and-groove wainscoting.

## Second Floor Level

The second floor level of the former Welsh Presbyterian Church contains the upper part of the entry/stair hall (the gallery), the former sanctuary, a pair of offices, and two toilet rooms (Figure 32).

The gallery is detailed the same as the entry/stair hall at the first floor level, with fir flooring, dark-stained redwood wainscoting, twin quarter-turn stairs composed of massive turned balusters, a large handrail, and Gothic newel posts (Figure 33). The stairs converge at the main entrance to the former sanctuary on the south wall of the gallery. The entrance to the former sanctuary is flanked to either side by art glass windows and capped by an art glass transom framed in redwood paneling that matches the wainscoting (Figure 34). The rest of the gallery is finished in lath-and-plaster with redwood wainscoting. The ceiling of the gallery, which was until 2015 enclosed behind a non-historic dropped ceiling, is now open, providing views of exposed truss work in the belfry (Figure 35). Some of the truss work has surface charring, physical evidence of a fire that damaged the building in 1930.

Compared with most Catholic and “high church” Protestant denominations, the sanctuary of the former Welsh Presbyterian Church is quite austere. The most notable features in the space are the scissors trusses that support the vaulted ceiling. The trusses bear on chamfered corbels that transfer the load to the buttresses outside (Figure 36). The sanctuary is illuminated by tripartite wood windows housed within Tudor arch openings. Though many of the wood window sashes are original, the existing colored glass was added in 2017, replacing inexpensive Plexiglas added in 1968. The sanctuary has a contemporary painted wood floor, painted redwood wainscoting, and lath-and-plaster-walls (Figures 37-38). The ceiling is covered in painted acoustical tiles. The former sanctuary no longer retains an altar. Instead, at the south end of the space is a partial-height, demountable screen wall that encloses a service corridor (Figure 39).

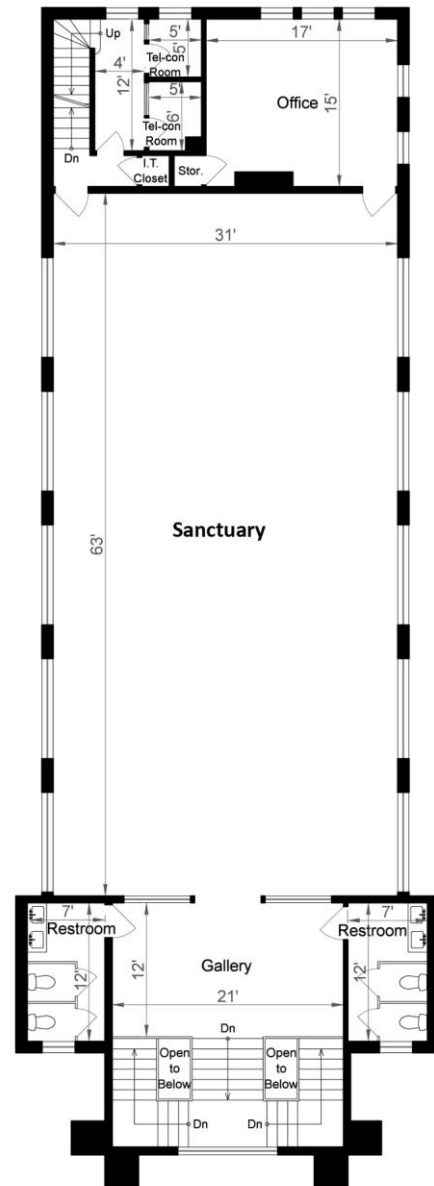


Figure 32. Floorplan of the second floor level of the former Welsh Presbyterian Church.

Source: Noe-Vista, LLC





Figure 33. Gallery; view toward east.

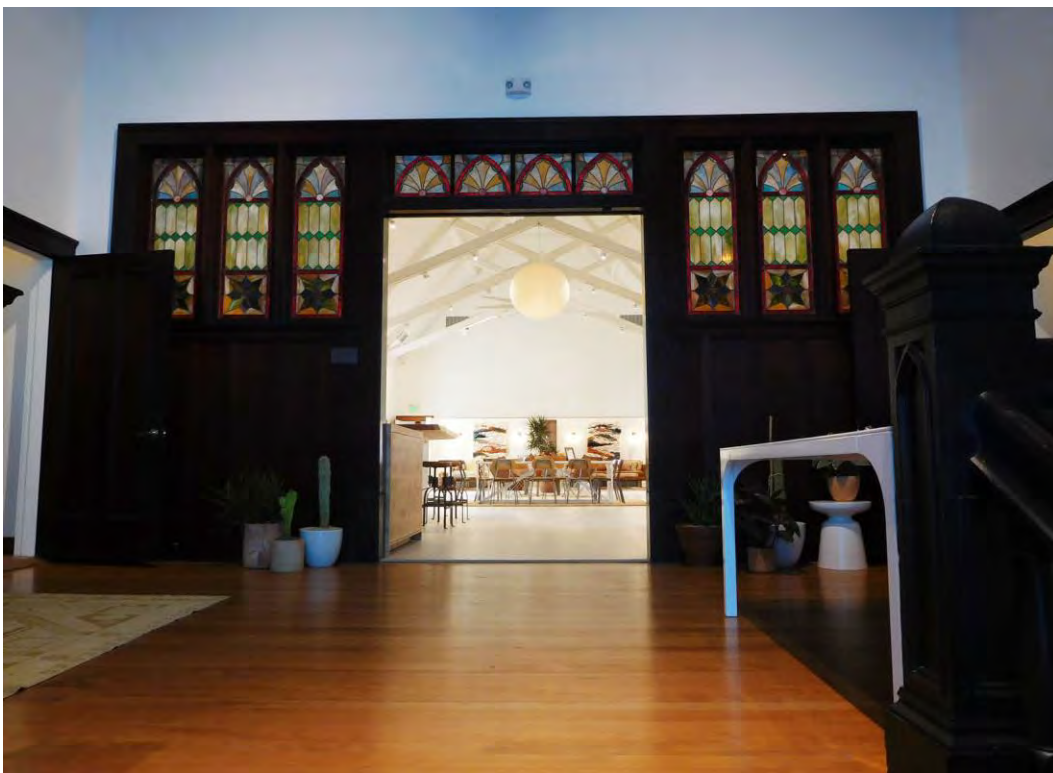


Figure 34. Gallery; view toward south.



Figure 35. Interior of belfry; view toward south.



Figure 36. Corbels supporting the scissors trusses inside the former sanctuary; view toward southwest.



Figure 37. Sanctuary; view toward northwest.



Figure 38. Sanctuary; view toward south.

The offices at the south end of the second floor level, including the former pastor's study and the former trustees' rooms, are finished in utilitarian materials, including lath-and-plaster wall and ceiling finishes, painted tongue-and-groove wood wainscoting, and flat-sawn wooden trim.

### Third Floor Level

The former Welsh Presbyterian Church has a small partial third floor level at the rear of the building (Figure 39). Accessed by a stair at the southeast corner of the building (Figure 40), the third floor level contains a pair of offices that resemble their counterparts on the second floor level. Both are finished in utilitarian materials, including lath-and-plaster wall and ceiling finishes, painted tongue-and-groove wainscoting, and flat-sawn wood trim (Figure 41).

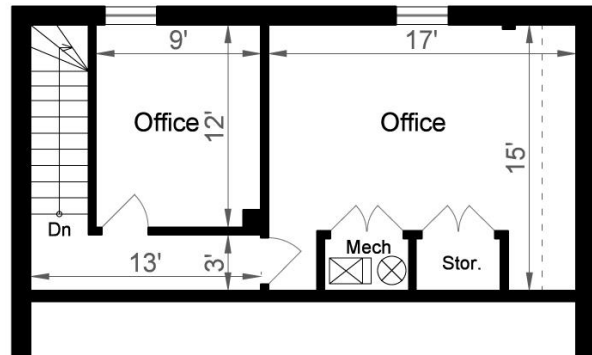


Figure 39. Floorplan of the second floor level of the former Welsh Presbyterian Church.  
Source: Noe-Vista, LLC



Figure 40. Stair leading to third floor; view toward north.



Figure 41. Office on third floor level; view toward southwest.

## HISTORICAL CONTEXTS

### Pre-construction History: 1857–1907

The former Welsh Presbyterian Church is located in the Inner Mission District, San Francisco's oldest neighborhood. When the United States annexed Alta California in 1848, what is now San Francisco contained three settlements, including the tiny communities surrounding *El Presidio de San Francisco* (Presidio) and *Misión San Francisco de Asís* (Mission Dolores)—both founded in 1776—and the *Pueblo de Yerba Buena*, established in 1835 by the Mexican government as a civil settlement and port on Yerba Buena Cove. The three settlements were very different, with the settlements near the Presidio and Mission Dolores consisting largely of Spanish-speaking Mexicans and *Californios*, and Yerba Buena having a polyglot population of Mexicans, Americans, Hawaiians, and representatives of many different European nations.<sup>2</sup>

Lieutenant Washington Bartlett, the first American *alcalde*, or mayor, of Yerba Buena accomplished two important things immediately following the American conquest, including renaming the tiny settlement “San Francisco.” He also hired Jasper O’Farrell, an Irish saloonkeeper with some surveying experience, to survey the city. O’Farrell’s plan consisted of two separate areas, the 50 Vara Survey and the 100 Vara Survey, which were separated by a diagonal boulevard called Market Street.<sup>3</sup> The 50 Vara Survey is oriented roughly parallel to the north-south cardinal axis, whereas the 100 Vara Survey is laid out at a 45-degree angle to it. Market Street, a 100-foot wide boulevard, is laid out on a diagonal parallel to the 100 Vara Survey in order to provide a direct link between Yerba Buena Cove and Mission Dolores. O’Farrell laid out the blocks south of Market Street four times larger than the blocks north of Market, a decision that has hampered communications between the northern and southern sections of the city ever since.<sup>4</sup>

A subsequent survey extended the 100 Vara Survey westward to what is now 9<sup>th</sup> Street in 1851. In 1855, the city surveyor extended it even farther into the Mission District, which, with the exception of the area surrounding Mission Dolores, remained overwhelmingly rural. U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey maps dating to the mid-1850s illustrate the Mission District as a rural expanse of truck farms, seasonal wetlands, and thickets of willows and oaks lining several year-round and seasonal creeks. The 1857 Coast Survey Map shows a willow-lined creek roughly tracing the alignment of 14<sup>th</sup> Street, just north of the subject property (**Figure 42**).

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<sup>2</sup> Californios were native-born residents of Mexican and/or Spanish descent.

<sup>3</sup> A vara is an archaic Spanish unit of measurement roughly equivalent to an English yard.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 43. Some scholars believe that O’Farrell laid out the 100 vara blocks for agricultural use but others believe that they were intended for industrial use, for which in fact they proved to be useful.



**Figure 42. 1857 Coast Survey Map showing approximate location of subject property.**  
Source: David Rumsey Map Collection

Recorded a little over a decade later, George Goddard's 1869 Map of San Francisco shows the subject block (Old Mission Block 29) defined by Guerrero Street to the west, 14<sup>th</sup> Street to the north, Valencia Street to the east, and 15<sup>th</sup> Street to the south. The map shows an omnibus horsecar line running along Valencia Street, as well as an unnamed creek transecting the subject block from east to west. Also published in 1869, the U.S. Coast Survey Map indicates that the four streets defining the subject block had been graded but not paved. This map does not show the unnamed creek, indicating that it had likely been filled, probably when 14<sup>th</sup> Street was graded. The 1869 Coast Survey map shows very little construction on the subject block, with only a handful of dwellings near the intersection of 15<sup>th</sup> and Valencia Streets (Figure 43).



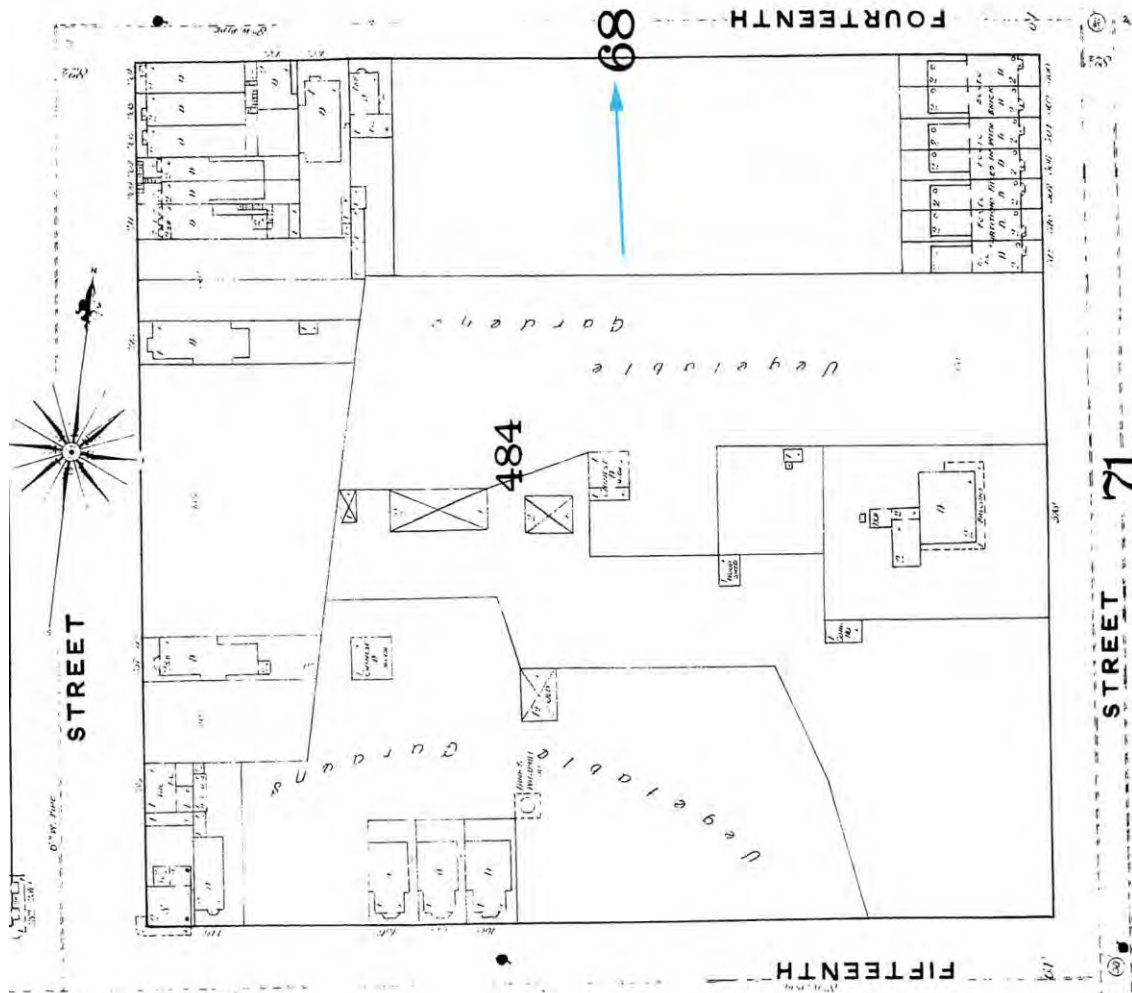
Figure 43. 1869 Coast Survey Map showing location of subject block.  
Source: David Rumsey Map Collection

Endowed with ample fresh water, good soil, and a moderate climate protected from the harsh onshore winds by Twin Peaks, truck farms were an important feature of life in the nineteenth-century Mission District. Indeed, George Center, the so-called “Father of the Mission District,” earned his fortune from growing fresh vegetables in the neighborhood’s loamy soils and selling them for top dollar in the city’s Produce Market. Immigrants, including many Chinese and Italians, eventually came to dominate the local truck farming business, putting several dozen acres in the Mission District under cultivation by the 1870s.

The 1889 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company maps (Sanborn maps), the earliest to depict the Mission District, indicate that approximately 75 percent of the subject block was devoted to vegetable gardens (**Figure 44**). The rest of the block contained several clusters of rowhouses and a handful of farmhouses and associated rural outbuildings. The 1889 Sanborn maps indicate that the subject property was part of a vacant parcel belonging to Margaret E. Crocker, widow of Sacramento attorney Edwin B. Crocker. Edwin “Judge” Crocker, brother of Charles Crocker, one of the owners of the Central Pacific Railroad, was hired by his younger brother to be the railroad’s chief staff counsel, a position he held from 1864 until 1869. In 1863, then-governor Leland Stanford appointed Edwin Crocker to the California Supreme Court. Crocker was also chair of the California Republican Party. Edwin and Margaret were avid art collectors, and following her husband’s death in 1875, Margaret established the Crocker Art Museum in the family’s



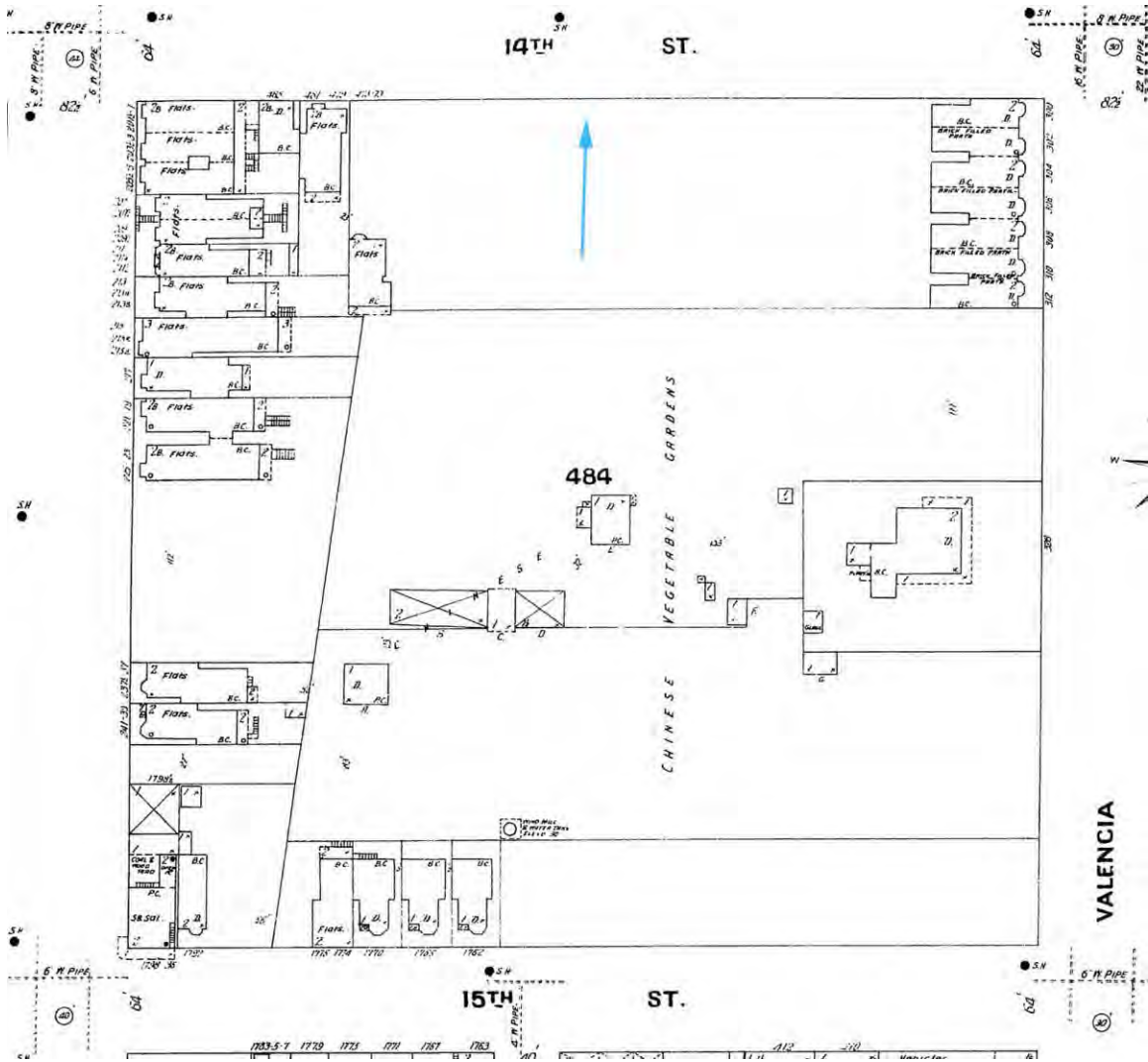
home in downtown Sacramento. Margaret died in December 1901, leaving the Crocker Art Museum to the City of Sacramento.<sup>5</sup>



**Figure 44. 1889 Sanborn map showing approximate location of the subject property.**  
Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, San Francisco Public Library

The 1899 Sanborn maps, published a decade later, show very similar conditions to the 1889 Sanborn maps (Figure 45). Most of the block was still occupied by vegetable gardens, including a large block at the center tended by Chinese truck farmers who lived in a cluster of shacks. The rest of the block contained several speculative rowhouses, flats, and a handful of larger single-family dwellings. The only commercial use on the block was a saloon at the northeast corner of 15<sup>th</sup> and Guerrero Streets.

<sup>5</sup> "Death Ends Charitable Life of Mrs. Margaret E. Crocker," *San Francisco Call* (December 3, 1901).



**Figure 45. 1899 Sanborn map showing approximate location of the subject property.**  
**Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, San Francisco Public Library**

Following Margaret E. Crocker’s death in December 1901, her heirs subdivided the property on 14<sup>th</sup> Street into 11 lots and sold them. They sold the biggest lot, which measured 40 feet by 130 feet, to the Welsh Presbyterian Church. In January 1902, the congregation announced its plans to build a church costing \$5,000 on the site.<sup>6</sup> The church was built and opened for services eight months later according to the August 10, 1902 *San Francisco Chronicle*.<sup>7</sup> This church appears on the 1905 Sanborn maps published three years after its completion (**Figure 46**). The building was two stories high, of wood-frame construction, and set back about 10 feet from 14<sup>th</sup> Street. It had a cruciform footprint but unlike the present church, it did not have a tower. The 1905 Sanborn maps indicate that the Chinese-owned truck farms still occupied the center of the block behind the church.

<sup>6</sup> “Building News,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (January 11, 1902), 7.

<sup>7</sup> “Welsh Presbyterian Church,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (August 10, 1902), 16.



**Figure 46. 1905 Sanborn map showing the first Welsh Presbyterian Church.**  
Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, David Rumsey Map Collection

On April 18, 1906, a tremendous earthquake, subsequently determined to measure 7.9 on the Richter scale, hit Northern California. The temblor, which occurred at 5:12 AM, wrecked or damaged thousands of buildings all over the city, especially on filled land south of Market Street and in the adjoining Mission District. Broken gas lines caused several fires to break out. When these fires joined, they created massive firestorms that rapidly devoured block upon block of wood-frame buildings. Firefighters could do little to combat the firestorms because they were so tremendous, and additionally, most of the water mains had broken in the quake. In the Mission District, the fires consumed everything between Dolores Street and Howard Street (now South Van Ness Avenue) as far south as 20<sup>th</sup> Street. Every building on the subject block, including the first Welsh Presbyterian Church, was destroyed.

## Design and Construction History: 1907–1913

The congregation of the Welsh Presbyterian Church of San Francisco was devastated by the loss of their church, records, and other property. Many insurance companies went bankrupt after paying out only a portion of their policyholders' claims, leaving many without recourse. It seems likely that the Welsh Presbyterian Church either did not have insurance or that its insurance carrier failed, because it was financially unable to rebuild. In response to the disaster, the Presbyterian Church in America, the national mother church, raised over \$140,000 from its members to rebuild several Presbyterian churches in San Francisco. Initial recipients included Trinity, Old First, Calvary, and Mizpah Presbyterian congregations, which each received between \$7,000 and \$20,000 to repair and/or rebuild. For some reason, the Welsh Presbyterian Church was overlooked in this first round. When this omission was discovered, the Presbyterian Church of America reapportioned the money and gave the Welsh congregation \$10,000.<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, this figure was not enough to replace their old church, and the congregation held a series of fundraisers in late 1906 and early 1907 to increase the building fund.

An article in the August 25, 1907 *San Francisco Chronicle* provides some information on the Welsh congregation's progress, including the fact that they had selected the architecture firm of Oliver & Foulkes. Edward Foulkes, himself the son of Welsh immigrants, based his firm's design on the vernacular country churches of South Wales, where most Welsh immigrants in San Francisco had come from. However, in place of the customary stone, Foulkes designed the new church to be built of wood, which was much cheaper than masonry.<sup>9</sup> The article described the church's program, which would consist of a Sunday school/social hall on the first floor and an "auditorium" (sanctuary) on the second floor capable of seating 250 people. The church would be illuminated by windows containing "cathedral glass" and the walls would be lath-and-plaster with frescoes and "native wood" (redwood) wainscoting. The article, which included a rendering of the design, showed the tower capped by a pointed steeple, which was evidently never built (**Figure 47**). The article concluded with a statement that the new church would cost \$16,000, and that the congregation was hoping for "material assistance" from "other and stronger Welsh parishes....throughout the United States."<sup>10</sup>

The Welsh Presbyterian Church applied for a building permit three days later, on August 28, 1907. The application described the new church as measuring 40 feet wide at the front and 105 feet deep. It would have a concrete perimeter foundation and be framed of redwood with 2 x 6 studs and 2 x 10 and 2 x 12 joists. The exterior was to be clad in rustic channel siding on the east, west, and south façades and wood

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<sup>8</sup> *San Francisco Chronicle* (December 23, 1906).

<sup>9</sup> Stone construction is significantly more expensive than wood and does not perform well in earthquakes.

<sup>10</sup> "To Build New Welsh Church," *San Francisco Chronicle* (August 25, 1907), 45.

shingles on the north (front) façade and on all four sides of the tower. The application noted that the church would be built using “day work.”<sup>11</sup>

The Welsh Presbyterian Church continued to hold fundraisers after construction began in September 1907. To economize, the congregation decided to build the church in two phases, beginning with the exterior and the first floor level, and then the second floor (and presumably the steeple) later. Many of the parishioners worked in the local building trades, and several carpenters and plasterers donated their labor to help build the church. Construction of the first phase went quickly, with the exterior and the Sunday school hall completed within five months so the congregation could start worshipping in the building on February 23, 1908.<sup>12</sup> The congregation worshipped in the Sunday school hall for five years, with the main sanctuary on the second floor remaining unfinished until the spring of 1913. The church was formally dedicated in a ceremony on March 16, 1913.<sup>13</sup>

Original architectural drawings of the church survive in the collections of the Records Management Division of the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection (See Appendix Item A). The drawings depict exactly what was shown in the August 1907 rendering in the *Chronicle*, including the high conical steeple, suggesting that it was cut from the program after construction began. Furthermore, the belfry framing shows no evidence of a large steeple ever having been built. A photograph taken by the Market Street Railway in 1909 catches a glimpse of the church at the left side of the frame. From this image, it is clear that the front of the building has undergone few changes, looking almost exactly as it does today (Figure 48).



Figure 47. Welsh Presbyterian Church with proposed steeple, 1907. Source: *San Francisco Chronicle* (August 25, 1907)

<sup>11</sup> San Francisco Department of Building Inspection, “Application for Building Permit, 449 14<sup>th</sup> Street,” August 28, 1907.

<sup>12</sup> “Eloquent Preacher Speaks in Old Tongue,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (July 13, 1908), 2.

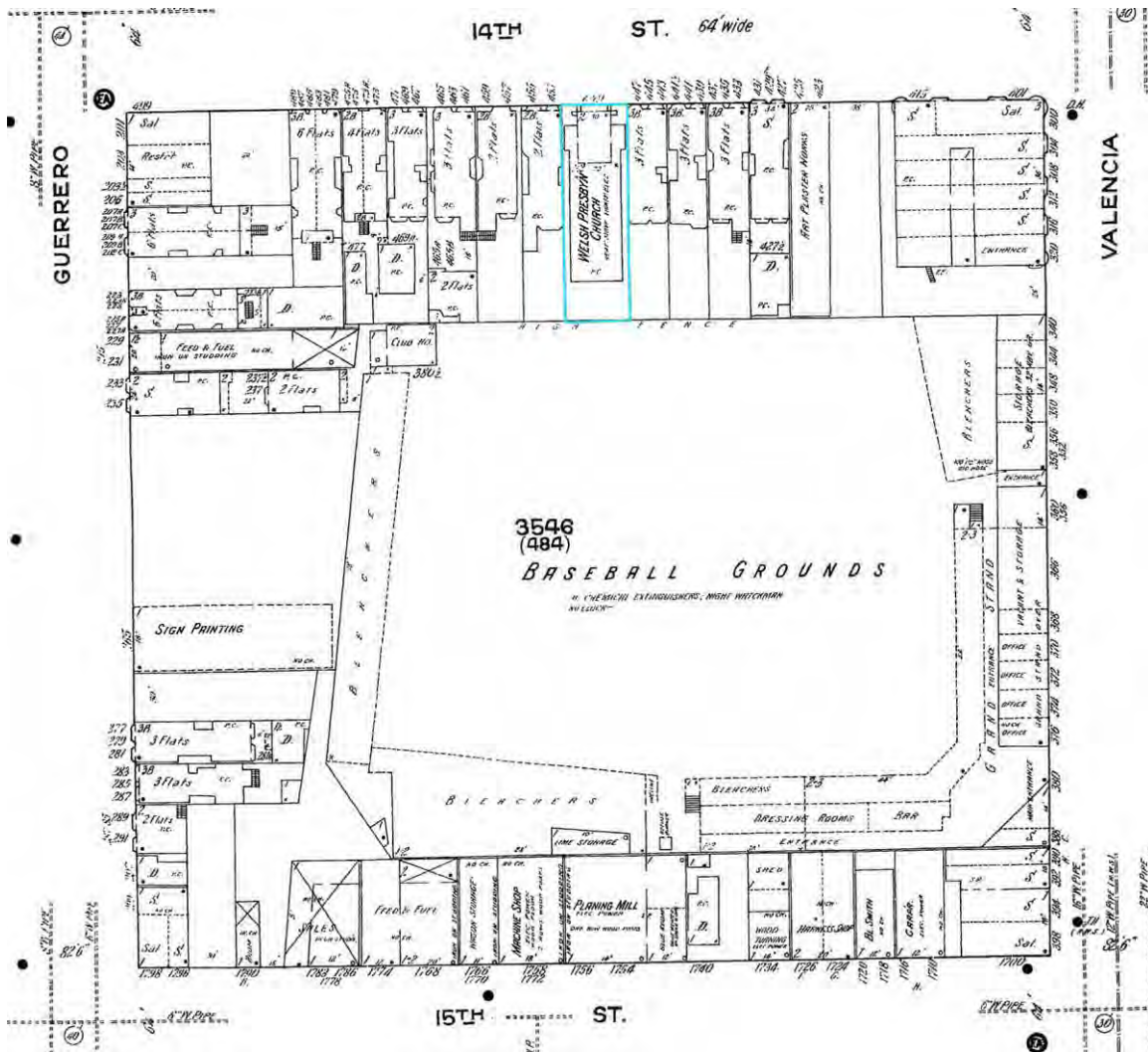
<sup>13</sup> “Welsh Presbyterian Church is Consecrated,” *San Francisco Call* (March 17, 1913).



Figure 48. View west along 400 block of 14<sup>th</sup> Street with Welsh Presbyterian Church at left, 1909.  
Source: San Francisco Municipal Transit Authority Archive, Image No. U02313

### Alteration History: 1914–2018

The following alteration history is based on several sources, including Sanborn maps, aerial photographs, newspaper articles, and permit applications. The 1914 Sanborn maps, the earliest to show the Welsh Presbyterian Church, indicate that the majority of the subject block had been rebuilt in the first eight years following the 1906 Earthquake. The maps show a large baseball stadium – Recreation Park – at the center of the block, where the Chinese truck farms had been located before the disaster. Flats lined the south side of 14<sup>th</sup> Street and parts of Guerrero Street and several light industrial and commercial buildings were clustered along the north side of 15<sup>th</sup> Street. The 1914 Sanborn maps indicate that the Welsh Presbyterian Church looked largely as it does now, being two stories high, of wood-frame construction, and with a cruciform plan (**Figure 49**).



**Figure 49. 1914 Sanborn map showing the Welsh Presbyterian Church.**  
**Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, San Francisco Public Library**

The earliest alteration permit application filed by the Welsh Presbyterian congregation occurred in the 1920s. The scope of work, which was likely prompted by neighbors' noise complaints, entailed covering the rustic siding on the east, west, and south façades with felt, adding 2 x 3-inch furring and building paper, and attaching another layer of rustic siding on top. The cost of the work was \$4,500.<sup>14</sup>

Tragedy befell the Welsh Presbyterian congregation on May 30, 1930 while a church elder was burning rubbish in an incinerator in the back yard. Embers from the incinerator chimney ignited the wooden shingles on the roof of the church, as well as a high wood fence separating the property from Recreation Park. Horrified onlookers watched from the baseball stadium as the roof of the church burst into flames

<sup>14</sup> San Francisco Department of Building Inspection, "Application for Alteration Permit, 449 14th Street," date illegible. The width of the sanctuary walls do not suggest that the exterior contains an additional layer of rustic siding, suggesting that the original rustic was replaced or the second layer have been replaced at a later date.

and then quickly spread to the belfry. High winds threatened to spread the flames to adjoining structures and Recreation Park, but the San Francisco Fire Department managed to extinguish the fire before it spread.<sup>15</sup> The congregation applied for a permit to repair the church two months after the fire. The contractor, Thomas M. Jones, repaired damaged framing and replaced the flammable wood shingles on the roof with “mineral surface” asphalt shingles. The cost of the work was \$3,400.<sup>16</sup> The church appears on a series of aerial photographs taken by Harrison Ryker eight years after the fire (**Figure 50**). The photograph of the subject block shows no departures from earlier Sanborn maps or existing conditions.



**Figure 50. 1938 aerial photograph showing the subject property outlined in blue.**  
Source: David Rumsey Map Collection

In 1949, the church leadership renamed the Welsh Presbyterian Church “St. David’s Presbyterian Church,” after the patron saint of Wales. The newly renamed church appears on the 1950 Sanborn maps a year later. Aside from the name change, the 1950 Sanborn maps record no changes to the property since 1914. In contrast, the subject block had undergone a major transformation with the demolition of Recreation Park and the construction of Valencia Gardens, a World War II-era housing development built by the USHA and the SFHA for defense workers and low-income Mission residents (**Figure 51**).

<sup>15</sup> “Church Damaged by Fire, S.F. Ball Park Menaced,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (May 31, 1930), 1.

<sup>16</sup> San Francisco Department of Building Inspection, “Application for Alteration Permit, 449 14<sup>th</sup> Street,” June 17, 1930.



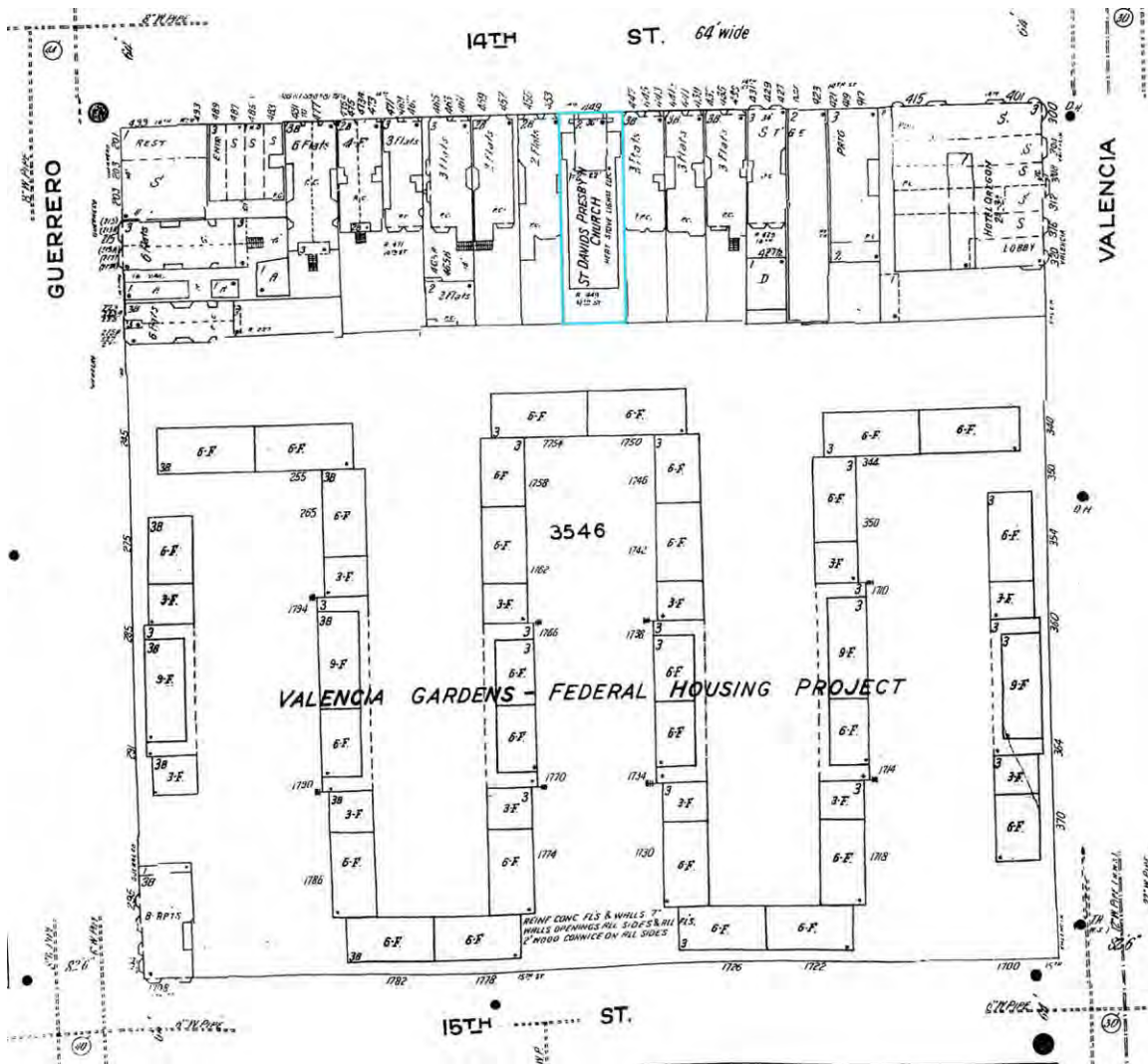


Figure 51. 1950 Sanborn map showing St. David's Presbyterian Church.  
 Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, San Francisco Public Library

St. David's Church lasted about a decade, closing due to a dwindling congregation ca. 1960. The Presbytery of San Francisco, the headquarters of all Presbyterian churches in the city, acquired the vacant church in 1960, and several months earlier, in October 1961, it applied for a permit to convert the Sunday school hall into a suite of offices.<sup>17</sup> The work, which cost \$5,400, including furring out the interior walls and adding sheetrock, installing heat throughout the building, and augmenting the electrical system. According to the permit application, the building was to be used as a church and offices.<sup>18</sup> City directory listings from the early 1960s indicate that the building housed the Presbyterian Art Center and the Inner City Council of the United Presbyterian Church in the USA but it does not appear to have been used as a church.

<sup>17</sup> San Francisco Office of the Assessor-Recorder, "Sales Ledger records for 449 14<sup>th</sup> Street."

<sup>18</sup> San Francisco Department of Building Inspection, "Application for Alteration Permit, 449 14<sup>th</sup> Street," October 2, 1961.

In October 1968, the Presbytery of San Francisco sold the former Welsh Presbyterian Church to the Free Greek Evangelic Church.<sup>19</sup> Within a few weeks, its pastor, the Reverend James Gianakos, applied for a permit to perform \$500 worth of repairs, including replacing several windows, repairing the “decayed roof brace” (probably a buttress), and reattaching siding for moisture control. The contractor was Hastie, Inc. This permit appears to document when the original “cathedral glass” in the windows in the sanctuary and the Gothic window above the main entrance was replaced with the colored Plexiglas.<sup>20</sup>

The former Welsh Presbyterian Church appears on the ca. 1990 Sanborn maps, which show no major changes to the church or to the subject block since 1950 (**Figure 52**). The Free Greek Evangelic Church owned the former Welsh Presbyterian Church for 46 years. Throughout this time, the congregation made very few changes to the building, submitting only one permit application. Dating to May 2007, the work described in the permit application entailed applying 2,000 square feet of vinyl siding to the east façade. The cost of the work was \$35,000 and it was completed by Armstrong Installation.<sup>21</sup> The vinyl siding was applied on top of the original rustic channel siding, which continues to exist beneath the vinyl siding.

The present owner, Noe Vista, LLC, bought the property from the wife of the founder of the Free Greek Evangelic Church on August 28, 2014.<sup>22</sup> In 2015, the new owner repaired and rehabilitated the former church, starting with the removal of most of the non-historic changes, including removing the dropped ceiling from the gallery that was added ca. 1930 and the office partitions that were inserted in the Sunday school hall in 1961. The owner then brought the kitchen and the toilet rooms up to code, made the entire first floor level wheelchair-accessible, leveled the sanctuary floor, painted the exterior and interior, and added new light fixtures.<sup>23</sup> In 2016, the owner renamed the building, “The Assembly.” In 2017, the property was leased to an institution of the same name focused on women’s health and social issues. The institution’s owners made a few additional changes to the building’s former sanctuary, including the installation of a juice and coffee bar, a seating area, a demountable and partial-height wall at the south end, as well as replacing the 1960s-era Plexiglas glazing with more historically appropriate colored “moss” glass that enhances both the aesthetic and historical character of the building.

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<sup>19</sup> San Francisco Office of the Assessor-Recorder, “Sales Ledger records for 449 14<sup>th</sup> Street.”

<sup>20</sup> San Francisco Department of Building Inspection, “Application for Alteration Permit, 449 14<sup>th</sup> Street,” October 22, 1968.

<sup>21</sup> San Francisco Department of Building Inspection, “Application for Alteration Permit, 449 14<sup>th</sup> Street,” May 23, 2007.

<sup>22</sup> San Francisco Office of the Assessor-Recorder, “Sales Records for 449 14<sup>th</sup> Street.”

<sup>23</sup> San Francisco Department of Building Inspection, “Application for Alteration Permit, 449 14<sup>th</sup> Street,” 2015-2016.

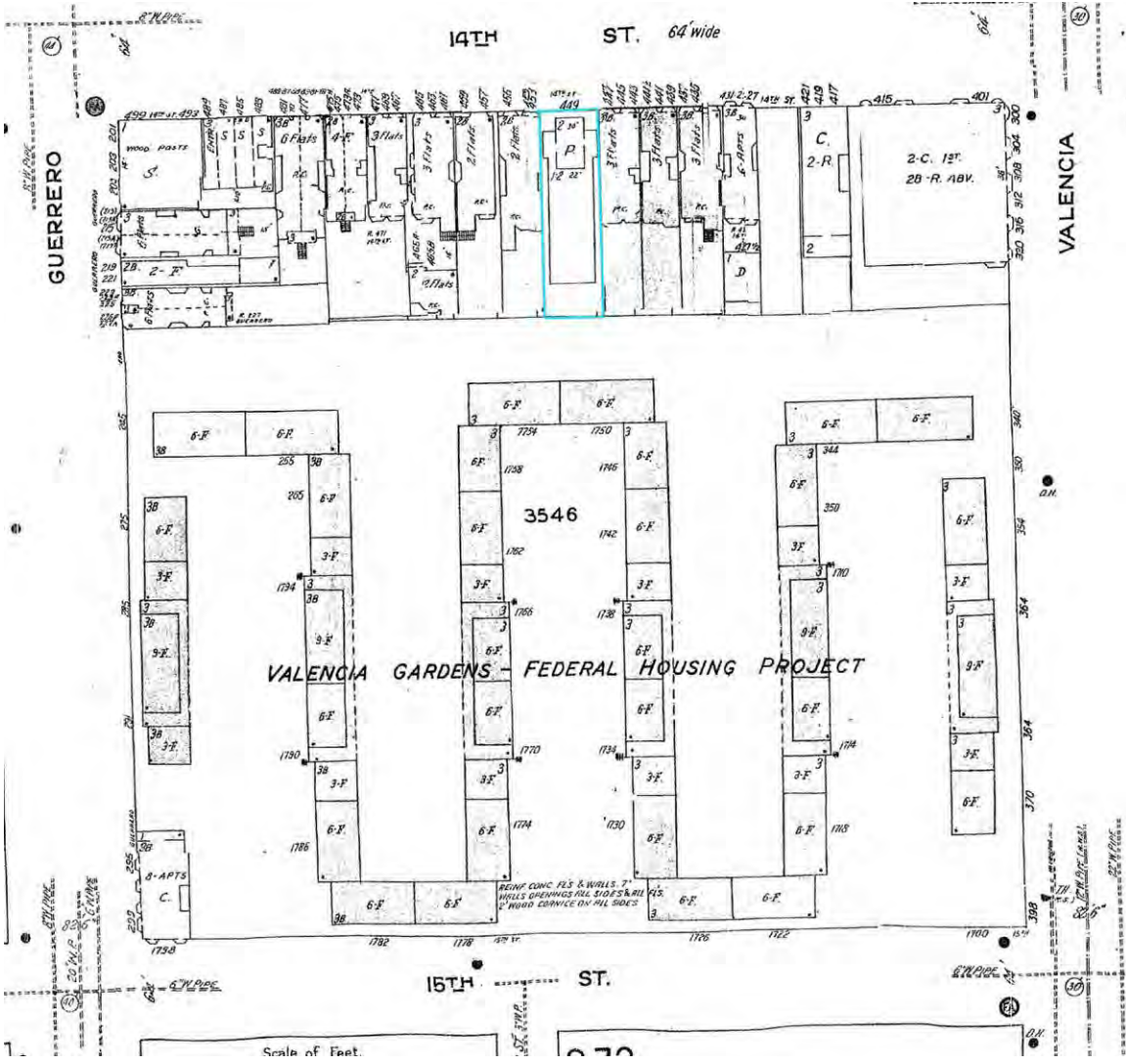


Figure 52. Ca. 1990 Sanborn map showing the former Welsh Presbyterian Church.  
 Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, San Francisco Public Library

## Concise History of the Welsh Presbyterian Church: 1857–1960

The roots of the Welsh Presbyterian Church go back to the Gold Rush and an influx of a small number of Welsh gold miners into San Francisco. The earliest organized Welsh Presbyterian worship began in 1852 under Reverend William O. Williams, who held Welsh language services in a public school at 234 Dupont Street (Grant Avenue).<sup>24</sup> On January 16, 1853, the Welsh Presbyterian Church was formally organized to serve the Welsh-speaking Presbyterians of San Francisco. It soon became a member of the newly founded Presbytery of California's Synod of the Pacific.<sup>25</sup> After the schoolhouse on Dupont Street was torn down, the Welsh Presbyterians began meeting at First Presbyterian Church on Stockton Street. In 1854, the congregation constructed its own building on Pollard Place in North Beach. That same year, the Reverend David J. Lewis replaced Reverend Williams after the latter returned to Wales.<sup>26</sup>

The early years of the Welsh Presbyterian Church were not easy. The attractions of rough-and-tumble San Francisco made it difficult to retain parishioners. In addition, the siren song of the gold fields and silver mines in the Sierra Nevada periodically lured Welsh residents away. By 1860, the tiny congregation was teetering on the brink of bankruptcy. Though the Welsh Presbyterian Church managed to eke out an existence through the Civil War, its mounting debts forced the Board of Trustees to sell all of the church's property, including the church itself, in January 1864.<sup>27</sup> As an institution, the Welsh Presbyterian Church appears to have dissolved, with no record of any Welsh-language church existing in San Francisco between 1864 and 1877.<sup>28</sup>

On February 27, 1878, the Reverends Moses Williams and Aaron Williams revived the Welsh Presbyterian Church. Under their joint leadership, a small Welsh-speaking congregation began meeting at the Cambrian Mutual Aid Society of San Francisco. The society's facility, known as Cambrian Hall, was located near the intersection of 7<sup>th</sup> and Mission Streets in the South of Market area. The congregation included around 30 people—nearly all Welsh-speaking immigrants from South Wales. In 1885, the Reverend Morgan A. Ellis assumed the helm of the Welsh Presbyterian Church, a period in which the congregation grew from 30 to 53 people. Reverend Moses Williams took over again in 1886 and presided over the church until 1892. In addition to offering Welsh-language services on Sunday morning, the church

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<sup>24</sup> Pastor Ronald C. Smith, *History of the Welsh Presbyterian Church: 1853 – 1949 and St. David's Presbyterian Church: 1949 – 1953* (San Francisco: self-published pamphlet in the collections of the California Historical Society, 1953), 2.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

provided a Sunday school program for children and weekday services on Sunday and Wednesday evenings.<sup>29</sup>

In 1892, the Reverend R. Vaughan Griffith of Powell, North Dakota, took over the helm of the Welsh Presbyterian Church. Reverend Griffith introduced nightly prayer meetings to serve the needs of his largely working-class congregation. In 1894, he started a fund drive to acquire land and build a new church for the congregation, which had not had a building of its own since 1864. The congregation raised \$4,750 to buy a lot on 13<sup>th</sup> Street but Reverend Griffith suddenly had to resign to take care of his wife, who had fallen ill.<sup>30</sup> The congregation remained without a pastor for two years, until the Reverend William O. Williams took over again, remaining at the pulpit until 1903.

In 1900, the Welsh Presbyterian Church's building committee began raising money to build a church on the lot the church had purchased on 13<sup>th</sup> Street in 1894. With assistance from Trustee David R. Jones and the Welsh Ladies' Society, the congregation raised \$4,000. The church then sold the lot on 13<sup>th</sup> Street and bought a "more suitable" lot on 14<sup>th</sup> Street, between Guerrero and Valencia Streets. Construction of the \$5,000 edifice began on July 20, 1902 and services were held in the new building at the end of the summer. Not much is known about the appearance of the original church on 14<sup>th</sup> Street aside from the fact that it was two stories and of wood-frame construction.<sup>31</sup> Like the existing church, it had a cruciform plan but it did not have a tower.

The Reverend J. Rhys Evans took charge of the new Welsh Presbyterian Church on October 19, 1902. In addition to ministering to his congregation, Reverend Evans proudly retired the church's debt. Seemingly, a new era had begun.<sup>32</sup> Sadly, the Welsh Presbyterian Church was destroyed less than four years later in the 1906 Earthquake and Fire. For the first year or so after the disaster, the congregation met in several temporary locations, including a flat at 2152 15<sup>th</sup> Street, at St. Luke's Presbyterian Church on 15<sup>th</sup> Street, at St. Helen's Hall at 15<sup>th</sup> and Market Streets, and in the Woodmen of the World (WoW) Hall at 2140 Market Street.<sup>33</sup>

Given the expense of renting space, the Board of Trustees voted to raise the money to rebuild. As mentioned previously, the Welsh Presbyterian Church initially did not receive any funds from the Presbyterian mother church. Even after receiving \$10,000, the congregation only had enough money to build the shell of the new church and finish the Sunday school/social hall, which allowed services to

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 15.

recommence at 449 14<sup>th</sup> Street on February 23, 1908. The entire building was not finished for five more years, with the final dedication occurring on March 16, 1913.<sup>34</sup>

Reverend J. Rhys Evans resigned his post on October 25, 1908 and the pulpit was not permanently filled for another decade. The combination of no permanent pastor and the departure of so many parishioners from San Francisco after the 1906 Earthquake led to the Welsh Presbyterian Church's congregation declining from 76 members in 1908 to only 37 in 1918.<sup>35</sup>

The next full-time pastor to serve the Welsh Presbyterian Church was the Reverend T. Lloyd Jones, who began preaching in San Francisco in June 1918. His arrival caused the congregation to grow again, reaching 78 by the time he retired in May 1922. The Reverend John D. Jones, who began his ministry in June 1922, succeeded him. He served for two years, dying on August 5, 1924.<sup>36</sup> An interim pastor served the church for two years, until May 16, 1926, when the Reverend John R. Jones of Bangor, Maryland was appointed. Reverend Jones served for 23 years, longer than any other pastor did. His small congregation held him in high regard and affection and Reverend Jones dutifully filled the pulpit until his death in 1949.<sup>37</sup>

Despite its difficulties, the Welsh Presbyterian Church remained one of the cultural pillars of San Francisco's tiny Welsh community. In addition to offering regular Sunday services and Sunday school, the church hosted lectures and concerts by prominent Welshmen and Welsh-Americans. The church also celebrated all important Welsh holidays and festivals, including *Eisteddfod*, an ancient Welsh festival of music, literature, and performance dating back to Druidic times; the festival of St. David, Wales' patron saint; and *Cymanfa Ganu*, a Welsh festival of sacred hymns sung in four-part harmony.

The death of Reverend Jones in 1949 marked the beginning of the end of the Welsh Presbyterian Church. San Francisco had never had a very large Welsh population to begin with, and immigration from Wales to the United States slowed to a standstill in the 1920s. The Welsh language, which had sustained Welsh immigrants during the nineteenth century, was falling out of use in both Wales and among the Welsh diaspora. Indeed, by World War II, most Welsh-Americans were exclusively English-speaking. Compounding these trends were demographic changes in San Francisco's Mission District. As many long-time European-American residents moved out of the neighborhood after World War II, many of their cultural institutions either followed them to the suburbs or closed down. In response to these factors, the

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<sup>34</sup> "Welsh Church is Scene of Impressive Service," *San Francisco Chronicle* (March 17, 1913), 5.

<sup>35</sup> Pastor Ronald C. Smith, *History of the Welsh Presbyterian Church: 1853 – 1949 and St. David's Presbyterian Church: 1949 – 1953* (San Francisco: self-published pamphlet in the collections of the California Historical Society, 1953), 16.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

Board of Trustees voted in 1949 to drop the Welsh language services and rename the church St. David's Presbyterian Church. After several years of interim pastors, the Reverend Ronald C. Smith was installed on June 24, 1953, marking the centennial of the Welsh Presbyterian Church in San Francisco.<sup>38</sup>

St. David's Presbyterian Church limped along for another few years, holding regular services and putting on the annual *Cymanfa Ganu* and St. David's Day festivals. The last mention of the church occurred in November 23, 1960, when an announcement in the *Chronicle* mentioned a special Thanksgiving service at St. David's.<sup>39</sup> It closed shortly after. In 1961, the Presbytery of San Francisco assumed control of St. David's and converted it into an office building and an art gallery. From 1961 until 1968, the building was used for both office space and cultural purposes, including concerts and art exhibits. A photograph taken of the building in 1964 indicates that it looked exactly as it does today (**Figure 53**).



**Figure 53. Former Welsh Presbyterian Church, 1964.**

**Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library**

The Presbytery of San Francisco sold the former Welsh Presbyterian Church to the Free Greek Evangelic Church on October 3, 1968.<sup>40</sup> With assistance from his wife Helen, Pastor James Gianakos ran the Free Greek Evangelic Church for almost 46 years. The church, which appears to have been an independent, family-run enterprise, held regular services on Sundays at 9:45 AM, 11 AM, and 7 PM, as well as on Tuesday evenings. Nothing else is known about the church or its congregation. On October 29, 2014, Maria Gianakos, a representative of the Free Greek Evangelic Church, sold the property to the current owner, Noe Vista, LLC.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>39</sup> "Thanksgiving Tomorrow: Special Events Scheduled," *San Francisco Chronicle* (November 23, 1960), 26.

<sup>40</sup> San Francisco Office of the Assessor-Recorder, "Sales Ledger records for 449 14<sup>th</sup> Street," October 3, 1968.

<sup>41</sup> San Francisco Office of the Assessor-Recorder, "Sales Ledger records for 449 14<sup>th</sup> Street," October 3, 1968.

## The Welsh in San Francisco: 1848–1945

Although the presence of Welsh people in San Francisco goes back to the Gold Rush, their numbers were never very large. In part, this was due to the small population of Wales itself, whose total population did not exceed one million until 1841. Furthermore, in comparison with other parts of the British Isles, including England, Scotland, and Ireland, the rate of Welsh emigration was much lower. When Welsh immigrated to the United States, they tended to gravitate toward mining communities where their experience in hard rock coal mining were in demand. Because of this, the largest Welsh immigrant populations are in eastern and midwestern states with significant mining operations, including New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio.<sup>42</sup> Most Welsh immigrants came from South Wales, where coal mining had sustained generations of people in the narrow vales that lay just inland from the cities of Newport, Cardiff, and Swansea. Many were “Non-conformists,” meaning that they had abandoned the Anglican faith for Methodism, Baptism, Congregationalism, and Presbyterianism. The vast majority were native Welsh-speakers who did not speak English.

Many of the Welsh who came to San Francisco during the Gold Rush were miners, and although panning for gold was quite different from hard rock mining, their ability to wield a pick and work outside for long periods probably helped. Federal census records first begin recording peoples’ birthplaces in 1850, although California’s first decennial federal census was not recorded until 1860. Still, the numbers of Welsh-born people in San Francisco during the nineteenth century remained vanishingly small, with only 238 recorded in the 1870 census – out of a total population of 150,000. A decade later, the total number of first and second-generation Welsh people in San Francisco was only 486 out a total population of almost 234,000. By the end of the nineteenth century, the total number of Welsh-identified people in San Francisco was 642, including 399 immigrants and 243 second-and third-generation Welsh-Americans.<sup>43</sup> Between 1900 and 1930, the number of Welsh-identified residents in San Francisco never exceeded 800.

Because their numbers were so small, San Francisco’s Welsh community never occupied a predominantly Welsh enclave, or even a heavily Welsh Street. However, as working-class immigrants, they tended to live in blue-collar areas such as the South of Market area or the Mission District. There, they lived alongside Americans and Irish, German, French, Scandinavian, English, and Mexican immigrants. Given these conditions, cross-cultural friendships and business partnerships, as well as intermarriage, were common in the Welsh community, especially with their fellow Celts, the Irish.<sup>44</sup> Similar to the Irish, Welsh

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<sup>42</sup> Robert Llewellyn Tyler, “The Welsh in San Francisco: Culture Maintenance, Occupational Change, and Social Status,” *California History*, Vol. 94, No. 1 (Spring 2017), 6-25.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*



immigrants clustered in skilled blue-collar trades – especially the building trades and maritime work – and lower white-collar occupations, including clerks, inspectors, government workers, etc.<sup>45</sup>

In spite of their rapid assimilation into San Francisco life, the city's Welsh immigrants remained proud of their ancient language and unique culture. Leaders in the community established several organizations to protect it and to showcase it to the general community. In comparison with the other major Celtic language families, including Irish Gaelic, Scottish Gaelic, Manx Gaelic, Cornish, and Breton, Welsh was still spoken by a majority of the Welsh people in 1900, including a plurality of Welsh immigrants in San Francisco. As a result, most important Welsh organizations in San Francisco conducted their day-to-day affairs in Welsh, including the Cambrian Mutual Aid Society, *Cymdeithas y Cymrodorion*, and the Welsh Presbyterian Church – the only Welsh-speaking religious institution in San Francisco. Poetry and music, especially choral and bardic singing, were very important to the Welsh, forming the centerpiece of the community's three major cultural festivals, including St. David's Day, *Eisteddfod*, and *Cymanfa Ganu*. These events were typically held at the Welsh Presbyterian Church and they continued to be well-attended long after English had begun to replace Welsh in the early 1920s.<sup>46</sup>

Despite their small numbers, high rates of intermarriage, and the gradual displacement of the Welsh language, San Francisco's Welsh community remained a definable ethnic community until the post-World War II era. Factors leading to its eventual dissolution included suburbanization, decreasing immigration from Wales, and the increasing individualism and atomization of American society during the post-war era. One by one, various Welsh organizations that had sustained the community for generations folded, including the Welsh Presbyterian Church, which closed for good in 1960. Today, there is very little left of Welsh heritage in San Francisco. The site of the former Cambrian Hall at 1133 Mission Street is a hole in the ground and the only organization representing Welsh culture in the region is the Welsh American Society of Northern California, which puts on an annual St. David's Day/*Cymanfa Ganu* at Lafayette United Methodist Church. Though a Welsh congregation has not used it since 1960, the former Welsh Presbyterian Church at 449 14<sup>th</sup> Street is the best-preserved remnant of this now largely vanished culture in San Francisco.

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 12-13.

## Edward T. Foulkes: 1874–1967

The architectural firm of Oliver & Foulkes designed the former Welsh Presbyterian Church. The firm consisted of the partners D. Franklin Oliver and Edward T. Foulkes. Edward T. Foulkes, the primary designer in the partnership, was born August 14, 1874 in Monmouth, Oregon. His parents, both immigrants from Wales, were Robert and Laura Foulkes. Edward attended public schools in Portland, Oregon. In 1893, he matriculated at Stanford University, where he studied a variety of subjects. In 1895, he left Stanford to study at MIT, graduating with a Bachelor's Degree in Architecture. MIT was the first American university to teach architecture in the tradition of the *École des Beaux Arts* in Paris, and Foulkes distinguished himself with his excellent architectural drafting skills.<sup>47</sup>

Upon graduating from MIT in 1898, Edward Foulkes went to work as a draftsman for the Boston architect, Clarence Blackall. After working for Blackall for two years, Foulkes moved to New York in 1901, where he began working for Cass Gilbert, a fellow MIT alumnus and one of the best-known American architects of the era. Two years later, he went on to work with Carrere & Hastings, designers of the New York Public Library, the Cannon House Office Building in Washington, D.C., and dozens of other important Beaux Arts landmarks in eastern and midwestern cities. While working for Carrere & Hastings, Foulkes won the prestigious Rotch Fellowship, which funded his continuing studies at the *École de Beaux Arts*. After his stint in Paris was over, Edward Foulkes spent two years traveling and sketching buildings throughout Europe.<sup>48</sup>

Upon the completion of his European tour, Foulkes did not return to New York where he could have easily gotten a good job in any prestigious architecture firm. Instead, he moved to San Francisco, which was just then beginning to recover from the 1906 Earthquake. The April 26, 1906 *Chronicle*, published just a week after the disaster, contains an announcement mentioning that Edward Foulkes had opened an office with D. Franklin Oliver in Oakland's Syndicate Building.<sup>49</sup> Not much is known about Franklin Oliver but his local connections undoubtedly helped Foulkes get work quickly. Indeed, the new firm was very successful, winning a commission to design the Scott & Van Arsdale Building on Stockton Street, near Union Square, in San Francisco. Within a year, the firm earned a commission to design the massive Keystone Apartments at 1369 Hyde Street, also in San Francisco.<sup>50</sup> Oliver & Foulkes' best-known San Francisco commission remains the Navarre Guest House (now the Mystic Hotel) at 417 Stockton Street (1907).

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<sup>47</sup> John Edward Powell, "Edward T. Foulkes," *Fresno Past & Present* (Spring 1983), 3.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>49</sup> "Business Personals," *San Francisco Chronicle* (April 26, 1906), 8.

<sup>50</sup> "First Skyscraper for Mission Street," *San Francisco Chronicle* (June 2, 1906), 4.

After 1907, Oliver & Foulkes began taking on more work in the East Bay, in particular, Oakland, Alameda, and Berkeley. Several important East Bay projects include Citizens' Bank of Alameda, at the northeast corner of Park Street and Santa Clara Avenue; the Key Route Inn in Oakland, at Broadway and Grand Avenue (demolished); and the well-known Tribune Tower in downtown Oakland. The Tribune Tower, which is Oakland's premier architectural landmark, is also significant as one of the Bay Area's earliest skyscrapers (**Figure 54**). Built in two sections, the six-story base was designed by Franklin Oliver and completed in 1906. The 16-story clock tower, modeled after the Campanile of St. Mark's in Venice, was designed by Edward Foulkes and built in 1923.



**Figure 54. Tribune Tower.**  
Source: Author's postcard collection

In 1910, Oliver & Foulkes dissolved, and Edward Foulkes established his own private practice. That same year, he earned a commission to design the Hotel Fresno in downtown Fresno. This project inspired Foulkes to open a branch office in that Central Valley City, and between 1910 and 1914, Foulkes earned many commissions in greater Fresno. During those four years, he designed several of Fresno's major public buildings, as well as mansions for its leading citizens. In addition to the Hotel Fresno, Foulkes' other important Fresno commissions include the H. H. Brix Mansion, the Brix Apartments, the Gudelfinger Residence, the Rowell-Chandler Building, and the White Theater. Edward Foulkes remained the most sought-after architect in Fresno until 1915, when he abruptly closed his local office to concentrate on the Panama Pacific International Exposition (PPIE) in San Francisco.<sup>51</sup> Foulke's most notable contribution to the PPIE was the Oregon Pavilion, aka, the "Rustic Parthenon," which he designed for his native state. After the PPIE closed in December 1915, Edward Foulkes concentrated on commissions in Portland and Oakland. He was a charter member of the Oakland Planning Commission, upon which he served for 13 years. Foulkes continued to enjoy a position of influence in Oakland following his retirement in 1957. He died a decade later, on December 10, 1967.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>51</sup> John Edward Powell, "Edward T. Foulkes," *Fresno Past & Present* (Spring 1983), 3.

<sup>52</sup> California Death Index, 1940-1997.

## Gothic Revival Style in Britain and the United States: 1836–1950

The Gothic Revival style arose in England during the nineteenth century. The intellectual foundations of the style included the writings of tastemaker John Ruskin, especially his *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* and *The Stones of Venice*. Others important figures in the evolution of the Gothic Revival style included the British architect Augustus Northmore Welby Pugin, whose conversion to Roman Catholicism guided his fervent desire to revive England's medieval Catholic architecture. Pugin presented his ideas in his book, *Contrasts, or a Parallel between the Noble Edifices of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries and Similar Buildings of the Present Day*, published in 1836; and *The True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture*, published in 1841. Pugin's ideals found a home in the Church of England, as well as the affiliated Episcopal Church of North America. Around the same time, the Oxford Movement, spearheaded by John Henry Newman, sought to restore ritual and liturgical richness to the Church of England, which had been stripped of much of its mystery during the seventeenth-century response to Puritanism.<sup>53</sup>

At first, the Gothic Revival style was merely surface decoration. A.W.N. Pugin designed the Houses of Parliament in London (1836-37, 1844, and 1852) in collaboration with classicist Charles Barry. Pugin was responsible for all external ornamentation and interior decoration, but the plan and exterior massing of the building remained essentially classical, leading critics to demand a more



**Figure 55. Manchester Town Hall.**

**Source: Wikimedia Commons**

authentic expression of Gothic architecture. Architects such as George Edmund Street, William Butterfield, and Edward Buckton Lamb, all took a rigorous approach toward reinterpreting Gothic buildings for the Victorian age. Church architecture became an important means for disseminating the more period-correct Gothic Revival style, particularly as the expansion of British cities required the construction of hundreds of new churches and cathedrals. Several of the best-known examples of the Victorian Gothic Revival style include William Butterfield's Church of All Saints' Margaret Street in London

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<sup>53</sup> Mark Gelernter, *A History of American Architecture: Buildings in their Cultural and Technological Context* (Hanover, NH and London: University Press of New England, 1999), 144-6.

(1849-59), Alfred Waterhouse's Manchester Town Hall (1867-77) (**Figure 55**), and George Gilbert Scott's Albert Memorial in London (1863-72).<sup>54</sup>

British-born architect and builder, Richard Upjohn, brought the Gothic Revival style to the United States not long after it had begun to flourish in the United Kingdom. Upjohn's Trinity Church in New York (1839-41) is widely recognized as the first true Gothic Revival building in the United States. Soon, other architects began to adopt the style, including James Renwick, who designed St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York (1853), and Town & Davis, who designed Wadsworth Athenaeum in Hartford, Connecticut (1842-44).<sup>55</sup>

The Gothic Revival style declined in popularity in the United States toward the end of the nineteenth century – partly in response to a resurgence of classicism – but it experienced a revival of its own during the early twentieth century with the work of Ralph Adams Cram. Cram was a giant in the field of late Gothic Revival architecture, and several of his most important commissions include St. Thomas Episcopal Church in New York (1906-13) (**Figure 56**), St. Paul's Cathedral in Detroit (1907-unfinished), and St. John the Divine in New York (1892-unfinished). Architect Philip Frohman picked up the torch following Cram's retirement in the mid-1930s, keeping the style alive well into the middle of the twentieth century with projects such as the Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul – better known as the National Cathedral (1921–90); and St. Paul's Cathedral in San Diego (1950–unfinished), which is one of the last true Gothic Revival cathedrals in the United States.



**Figure 56. St. Thomas Church, New York.**  
Source: Wikimedia Commons

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<sup>54</sup> Marvin Trachtenberg and Isabelle Hyman, *Architecture from Prehistory to Post-modernism* (New York: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1986), 457-61.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 147-8.

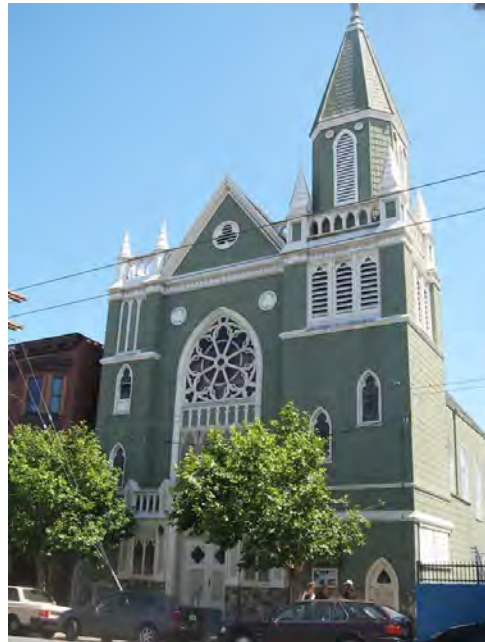
## Gothic Revival Churches in San Francisco: 1853–1950

The Gothic Revival style arrived in San Francisco during the Gold Rush, influencing the design of several early Anglo-American churches, including Old St. Mary's Cathedral at Grant Avenue and California Street (1853) (**Figure 57**), St. Francis Church at 610 Vallejo Street (1859, rebuilt 1919), and St. Patrick's Church at 756 Mission Street (1872, rebuilt 1914). Due to the scarcity of good building stone, as well as a lack of skilled masons, most early Gothic Revival churches in San Francisco were made of brick, with molded brick or stone used only for trim. By the close of the century, brick construction had become increasingly unpopular, largely due to its poor performance in earthquakes.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, the 1906 Earthquake destroyed many of the city's brick churches, most of which were concentrated in the downtown area and along Van Ness Avenue.



**Figure 57. Old St. Mary's Church, San Francisco.**  
Source: Wikimedia Commons

After the 1906 Earthquake, the Gothic Revival style remained in use in San Francisco, mainly due to its associations with mediaeval Christianity. Post-quake examples include the reconstructed St. Dominic's Catholic Church at 2390 Bush Street (1923-28), and the entirely new Grace (Episcopal) Cathedral at the northwest corner of California and Taylor Streets, on Nob Hill (1928-64). Many smaller congregations also employed the style for their parish churches in the Mission District and other outlying parts of the city. Examples include St. John the Evangelist Episcopal Church at 1661 15<sup>th</sup> Street (1907), Mission Congregational Church at 601 Dolores Street (1915), and St. Matthew's Lutheran Church at 3281 16<sup>th</sup> Street (1907) (**Figure 58**). Although masonry was occasionally used for post-quake Gothic Revival churches, wood-frame construction was by far the most popular for neighborhood



**Figure 58. St. Matthew's Lutheran Church.**

<sup>56</sup> Lyle F. Perusse, "The Gothic Revival in California, 1850-1890," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (October 1955), 15-22.

churches. Not only was wood-frame construction cheaper, it was more adaptable to semi-skilled labor, which was important when much of San Francisco was being rebuilt from the ground up. Although wood-frame structures were forbidden downtown and in several adjoining neighborhoods like the Tenderloin and Chinatown, there were no such prohibitions in the rest of the city, meaning that most neighborhood congregations chose wood.

Churches built by particular ethnic groups tended to adhere to examples from their home countries. At the turn of the twentieth century, a rich mixture of European immigrants, including Irish, German, Italian, Scandinavian, and British, populated San Francisco. Although most had come to the United States to better their lives, many missed the culture and traditions of their respective homelands.



Figure 59. St. Cadoc Church, Llancafán, Wales.

Source: Wikimedia Commons

Church architecture was a highly visible means to convey an immigrant group's pride and nostalgia for a lost way of life. Indeed, the designs of many "ethnic" churches in San Francisco are based on a particular example (or examples) from the old country, including the former Welsh Presbyterian Church, which is clearly based on the typical mediaeval stone churches of South Wales, albeit constructed of wood (**Figure 59**).

With the exception of several larger cathedrals that were already under construction, by the 1920s, the Gothic Revival style had gone out of fashion in San Francisco, as it had elsewhere. During the 1920s and 1930s, the Catholic Archdiocese of San Francisco – by far the largest religious community in San Francisco – embarked on a campaign to build several new churches in the fast-growing residential neighborhoods of San Francisco's West Side, the Excelsior/Outer Mission, and the Oceanview/Merced Heights/Ingleside area. Mostly built of concrete, the vast majority of these new churches were designed in the Classical Revival, Romanesque Revival, and Italian Renaissance Revival styles. Meanwhile, many mainline Episcopal, Methodist, and Presbyterian congregations had begun to embrace a "woody" Arts and Crafts aesthetic more in keeping with the Bay Area's indigenous architectural influences.

## ARTICLE 10 LANDMARK DESIGNATION

This section of the case report provides an analysis and summary of the applicable criteria for designation, integrity statement, statement of significance, period of significance, inventory of character-defining features, and additional Article 10 requirements.

### CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION

Check all criteria applicable to the significance of the property that are documented in the report. The criteria checked are the basic justifications for *why* the resource is important.

Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

Association with the lives of persons significant in our past.

Embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

Has yielded or may be likely to yield information important in history or prehistory.

### Statement of Significance

Designed by Edward T. Foulkes to resemble the traditional mediaeval stone churches of South Wales, the former Welsh Presbyterian Church at 449 14<sup>th</sup> Street is unique in San Francisco. It is also notable for its architect, its associations with the reconstruction of San Francisco after the 1906 Earthquake, and as a rare building associated with San Francisco's small Welsh-speaking immigrant population.

#### **Characteristics of the Landmark that justify its designation:**

##### *Events*

The former Welsh Presbyterian Church is eligible for local landmark status on the basis of its clear association with the reconstruction of San Francisco after the 1906 Earthquake and Fire. Its predecessor at this address, which was built in 1902 as the first church housing the small Welsh Presbyterian congregation since 1864, was destroyed in the firestorms that swept down from the South of Market area into the Mission District on April 18, 1906. San Francisco's small, working-class Welsh Presbyterian congregation relied on donations from the Presbyterian mother church and Welsh cultural organizations to rebuild. They hired a Welsh-American architect named Edward T. Foulkes to design the new church, which was based on the simple stone rural churches of South Wales, where many in the congregation had come from. Begun in late 1907, the Sunday school hall was ready for occupancy in 1908, with the sanctuary on the second floor level not dedicated until 1913. The context of post-quake reconstruction is important because it signaled the recovery of San Francisco, which many thought would never recover from a disaster of such epic proportions. The former Welsh Presbyterian Church is already a contributor to the Mission Reconstruction District, a California Register-eligible historic district comprising buildings constructed between 1906 and 1913 in the Inner Mission District. The former Welsh Presbyterian Church is also significant as the best remaining building associated with San Francisco's Welsh community.



### *Design/Construction*

The former Welsh Presbyterian Church is eligible for local landmark status as a very modest but well-preserved example of a neighborhood church designed in the Gothic Revival style. Designed by a master architect, the MIT and *École des Beaux Arts*-trained Edward T. Foulkes, the building's design is explicitly based on the mediaeval parish churches of South Wales. Though it is built of wood on a narrow urban lot, the former Welsh Presbyterian Church bears all of the hallmarks of rural Welsh church design, including its massing, which consists of a stoutly proportioned and crenellated tower with flanking shed-roofed transepts, a gable-roofed sanctuary at the center, and a subsidiary gable-roofed volume at the rear. The concrete foundation is disguised to look like stone and the shingle cladding – which appears to be original – has evidently always been painted a dark gray color to further the illusion of masonry construction. The church has very little applied ornamentation and very few openings on the primary façade, which is also in keeping with rural Welsh church architecture. The windows are capped by either Tudor or pointed Gothic arches and they contain tracery, also features of rural Welsh church design. In keeping with its period of construction, the church also embodies several characteristics of the First Bay Region Tradition, including its shingle cladding with decorative shingle panels, as well as its redwood wainscoting, stairs, and other detailing within the interior.

### **Period of Significance**

The period of significance for the former Welsh Presbyterian Church is 1908-13, beginning with the completion of the first floor level and exterior in 1908 and ending with the completion of the second-floor sanctuary in 1913.

### **Integrity**

The seven aspects of integrity used by the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register of Historical Resources, and Article 10 of the Planning Code are location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, and association. In summary, though the former Welsh Presbyterian Church has undergone some alterations, chiefly window glass replacement, application of low-maintenance materials atop the original cladding on the non-character-defining south and east façades, as well as various interior upgrades, the building retains ample integrity to convey its association with its original design, use, and period of construction.

#### Location:

The former Welsh Presbyterian Church retains the aspect of location because no part of it has ever been relocated.

#### Design:

The former Welsh Presbyterian Church retains the aspect of design because it has kept its original massing, its original fenestration pattern, and its original Gothic Revival ornament. Within the interior, the building retains nearly all of its original floorplan and design features, especially in the entry/stair hall, gallery, and sanctuary. The only major elements that are no longer present include the angled floor in the sanctuary and the altar.

#### Materials:

The former Welsh Presbyterian Church retains virtually all of its original materials. The entire north façade, which faces 14<sup>th</sup> Street, retains its original shingle cladding, foundation materials, door and window trim, window sashes (though not the glass), doors, and ornamental detailing. The west façade retains its historic rustic channel siding and the east façade appears to retain its original rustic channel siding as well, though it is concealed behind a layer of vinyl siding applied in 2007. The south façade retains its original rustic channel siding, though it has been concealed behind asbestos shingles applied ca. 1930. The interior retains its original fir flooring, redwood wainscoting, paneled doors and pocket doors, art glass partitions, scissors trusses, corbels, and door and window trim. The interior does not retain the original altar or pews and the original glazing in the sanctuary and the large Gothic window on the primary façade have been replaced with newer materials, including Plexiglas (front façade) and colored glass (sanctuary).

#### Workmanship:

Although built of mass-produced materials, the former Welsh Presbyterian Church does contain several features that demonstrate advanced workmanship, in particular the redwood stair balustrade, redwood wainscoting, scissors trusses and corbels in the sanctuary, and the redwood and art glass partition between the sanctuary and the gallery. It does not retain its original interior paint scheme.

#### Setting

Even the setting of the former Welsh Presbyterian Church has not changed all that much since it was dedicated in 1913. The majority of the Inner Mission District was destroyed in the 1906 Earthquake and Fire and the 400 block of 14<sup>th</sup> Street was rebuilt within a narrow window of time between 1906 and 1917, resulting in the block having a cohesive streetscape dominated by Edwardian flats.

#### Feeling:

Because overall very little has changed with the property over the last 110 years, the former Welsh Presbyterian Church retains the feeling of an early twentieth century church built for San Francisco's small Welsh immigrant population. The building's Gothic Revival styling, which was designed to resemble a typical stone mediaeval church in rural South Wales, is still very much intact.

#### Association:

The former Welsh Presbyterian Church retains its association with the reconstruction of the Inner Mission District after the 1906 Earthquake and Fire. Not only has the church not undergone many physical changes, but it remains part of an intact block largely composed of post-quake flats and apartment buildings.

## Article 10 Requirements Section 1004 (b)

### Boundaries of the Landmark Site

The site proposed for landmark status encompasses the entirety of Assessor Parcel Number 3546/026, a 5,196-square-foot parcel bounded by 14<sup>th</sup> Street to the north, residential flats to the east and west, and the Valencia Gardens apartment complex to the south.

### Character-defining Features

Any case report for a property proposed for Landmark status under Article 10 of the Planning Code requires an inventory of all character-defining features. This is necessary so that the property owner, Planning staff, and the public understand what features and materials (elements) should be preserved in order to protect the historical and architectural character of a proposed landmark. Significance diagrams are attached in **Appendix Item C** of this report.

#### Exterior

The character-defining exterior features of the former Welsh Presbyterian Church include its overall form, massing, structural system, fenestration patterns, some cladding materials, and architectural ornament. Its specific exterior character-defining features include:

- The overall height and massing of the two and partial three-story building, including its cruciform composition with a square tower at the front, two shed-roofed transepts, and steeply pitched, gable-roofed sanctuary at the rear;
- The publicly visible portions of the building's exterior—in particular the primary north façade – including the north, east, and west sides of the tower and the north walls of the transepts;
- All visible ornament, including all door and window trim, raking cornice, crenellated parapet, and intermediate cornice;
- The original primary entrance, including the oak doors and quatrefoil ornament and trim;
- Other exterior fenestration on the north, east, and west façades, including, on the north façade, the Gothic-arch window at the center of the tower, the three windows on the transepts, and the louvered openings at the top of the belfry on the north, east, and west sides of the tower; and the fenestration on the east and west sides of the sanctuary, including the tripartite windows with flat lintels on the first floor level and the tripartite windows with Tudor arches on the second floor level;
- Painted shingle cladding on the north façade, including decorative shingle patterns;
- Remaining areas of rustic channel siding on the east, west, and south façades, including siding that may be concealed behind non-historic vinyl and asbestos siding on the east and south façades; and
- Remaining simple flying buttresses.

At the time of designation, non-character-defining exterior features include all post-1913 alterations, including the following features:

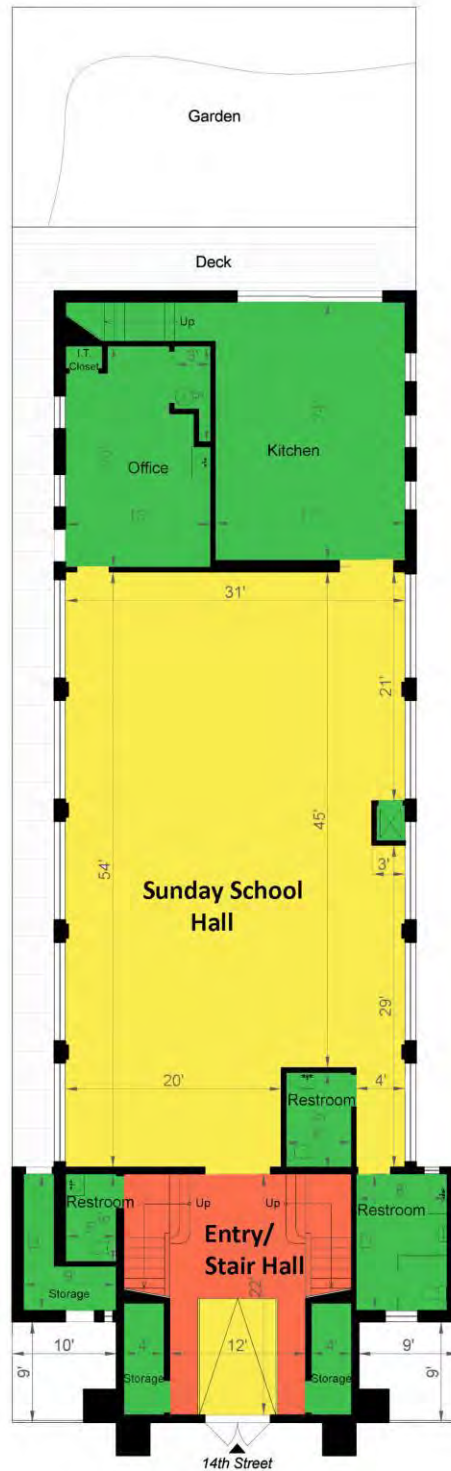
- All window glass on the primary façade and on the second floor level of the east and west façades;
- Fenestration pattern and all double-hung windows on the south façade;
- Vinyl siding on the east façade and asbestos shingles on the south façade; and
- Security gates in front of the transepts.

The character-defining spaces and features of the interior of the former Welsh Presbyterian Church include all intact parts of the former church that would have been experienced by the public, including the entry/stair hall, the gallery, the sanctuary, and the former Sunday school hall.

- Footprint and volume of the spaces identified above except the Sunday school hall;
- Wall between gallery and sanctuary containing art glass transom and sidelights;
- All surviving trim in the spaces identified above, including wainscoting, stairs and balustrades, and doors;
- Scissors trusses and corbels in the sanctuary;
- Wood flooring in the Sunday school hall, entry hall, stairs, and gallery; and
- General outline of dropped beam ceiling in Sunday school hall but not the beams themselves, which are clad in non-historic materials.

At the time of designation, non-character-defining interior features include all spaces affected by post-1913 alterations or that lack significance, including the remodeled bathrooms, and all utilitarian back-of-house offices and storage areas, including the dining room/kitchen, trustees' room, pastor's study, and all offices at second and third floor levels. The overall space/volume of the Sunday school hall is also not a character-defining feature.

Significance diagrams indicating the location of character-defining features are included on the following pages (**Figures 60-61**).



**Figure 60. First floor plan of the former Welsh Presbyterian Church.**  
Red denotes primary character-defining spaces and features; yellow denotes contributory/altered spaces; and green denotes non-character-defining spaces.

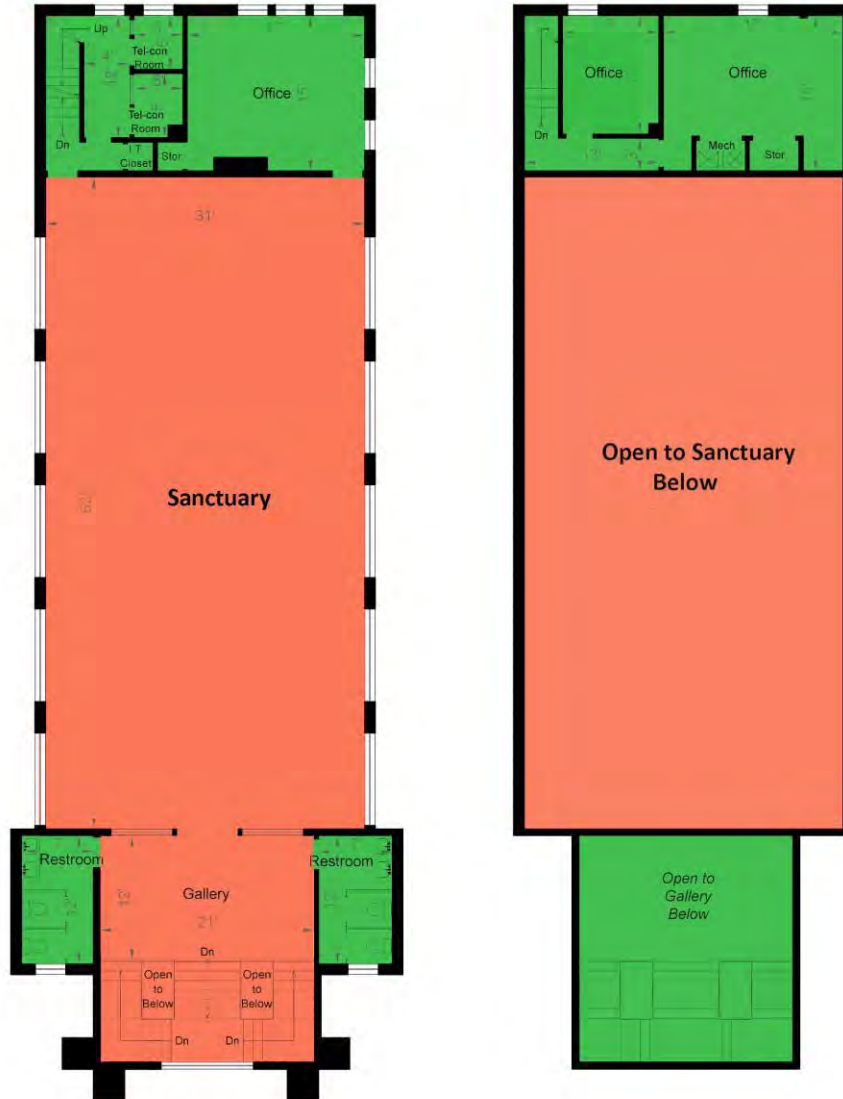


Figure 61. Second (left) and third (right) floor plans of the former Welsh Presbyterian Church. Red denotes primary character-defining spaces and features; yellow denotes contributory/altered spaces; and green denotes non-character-defining spaces.

## **PROPERTY INFORMATION**

**Historic Name:** Welsh Presbyterian Church

**Popular Name:** The Assembly

**Address:** 449 14<sup>th</sup> Street

**Block and Lot:** 3546/026

**Owner:** Noe Vista, LLC

**Current Use:** Social Club

**Zoning:** RTO – Residential Transit Oriented - Mission; 45-X  
height and bulk

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## Government Records and Repositories

San Francisco Department of Building Inspection. Permit applications on file for 449 14<sup>th</sup> Street.

San Francisco Office of the Assessor-Recorder. Property records on file for Assessor's Parcel 3546/026.

San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library.

San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, Historic Photograph Archives.

San Francisco Public Library. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for San Francisco.

## **APPENDIX**

- A. *Original Drawings of the former Welsh Presbyterian Church*
- B. *Building Permit Applications on file for 449 14<sup>th</sup> Street*