

ARTICLE 10 LANDMARK DESIGNATION

FACT SHEET

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Historic Name: | City Cemetery (at Lincoln Park) |
| Address: | 90-100 34 th Avenue |
| Block/ Lot(s): | 1313/029 |
| Boundaries | The boundaries of the Landmark are the north side of the Clement Street right of way (southern boundary), San Francisco Veterans Affairs Medical Center and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (western boundary), Golden Gate National Recreation Area (northern boundary), and the east side of blocks 1312, 1392, 1401 as well as the western terminus of California Street (eastern boundary). |
| Parcel Area: | 4,880,701.45 sq ft, landmark boundaries encompass 4,769,461.45 sq ft |
| Zoning: | P- Public |
| Year Built: | 1868 |
| Designer/Surveyor: | William P. Humphreys |
| Prior Historic Studies/Other Designations: | Palace of the Legion of Honor (built between 1921-1924) is within the designating block, but the City Cemetery Article 10 Landmark does not include the Palace of the Legion of Honor structure or landscaping. The DCP 1976 Survey assessed the Palace of Legion of Honor building as potentially significant. The Palace of the Legion of Honor is discussed in the Modern Architecture and Landscape Design 1935-1970 Historic Context Statement. |
| Prior HPC Actions: | Board of Supervisors Resolution No. 374-21 |
| Significance Criteria: | <p><u>Event</u>: Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.</p> <p><u>Design/Construction</u>: Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, and/or represents the work of a master; or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.</p> <p><u>Information Potential</u>: has yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.</p> |
| Period of Significance: | 1868 – 1909. The Board of Supervisors’ Committee on Outside Lands designated the land for cemetery purposes in 1868. City Cemetery was actively used for burial between 1870 and the turn of the century. The land was transferred to the Park Commission in July 1909. |
| Statement of Significance: | City Cemetery is significant historical resource because it represents an early incarnation of social safety nets related to burial of the dead for socially, ethnically, and culturally diverse populations of San Franciscans in the late nineteenth century. Its establishment on the margins of the city and |

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | <p>its closure are associated with shifting attitudes regarding cemeteries in urban spaces during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The extant Kong Chow funerary structure and Ladies' Seamen's Friends Society obelisk both embody distinctive characteristics of late 19th century funerary design and practice and the buried remnants of the cemetery including human remains have yielded and are likely to yield information important to the history of the city.</p> |
| <p>Assessment of Integrity:</p> | <p>Although the cemetery land was converted to Lincoln Park in the early twentieth century, it retains integrity to convey the historical and cultural significance of City Cemetery. There are seven aspects of integrity. City Cemetery retains integrity of location, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling, and association. It retains limited integrity of design.</p> |
| <p>Character-Defining Features:</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topography and setting • Human remains • Exhumation pits • Standing and visible mortuary structures • Plantings associated with cemetery section boundaries • Mortuary furniture and grave goods • Cemetery operational infrastructure |
| <p>Buildings, structures, objects in Lincoln Park that are not character defining features:</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Golf clubhouse ○ Number and location of golf holes ○ Legion of Honor Museum & fountain ○ Legion of Honor Drive ○ Lincoln Park playground ○ Lincoln Park Steps ○ Memorial for Peace ○ Kanrin Maru Memorial ○ Holocaust Memorial ○ Lands End Trail ○ Utility buildings along southern boundary of park ○ SFRPD restrooms ○ SFRPD parking lot ○ El Camino Del Mar/Lincoln Highway |

Site Description

San Francisco's Lincoln Park is situated in the northwest corner of the city between 33rd Avenue, Clement Street, Fort Miley VA Medical Center, and the Golden Gate. Primary uses of the park are golfing on its 18-hole course and visits to the museum operated by the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco at the California Palace of the Legion of Honor. Lincoln Park also has a clubhouse attached to the golf course, playground, picnic tables, walking paths, and view benches. Public art, commemorative installations, some interpretive signage, maintenance structures, and parking lots are also on the grounds of Lincoln Park.

Before the establishment of Lincoln Park in 1909, its land was part of a 200-acre municipal burial ground commonly known as City Cemetery. The City Cemetery landmark encompasses the majority of APN 1313/029 (except 111,240 square feet in the northwest corner of the parcel that was outside the boundaries of the cemetery), which is bounded by the north side of the Clement Street right of way (southern boundary), the San Francisco VA Center and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (western boundary), the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (northern boundary), and the east side of blocks 1312, 1392, 1401 as well as the western terminus of California Street (eastern boundary) (Figure 1).

City Cemetery Context

Historical Context

The lands that is now Lincoln Park was once part of a grant given to Benito Diaz.¹ It was purchased in 1849 by Sweeny and Baugh to be the first leg of a semaphore system that notified the city of incoming ships.² In 1866, an Act of Congress granted to San Francisco most of the "Outside Lands," extending the incorporated city limits west to the Pacific Ocean. The vast new acreage not only allowed for the creation of Golden Gate Park, but also gave the city an opportunity to create a new municipal cemetery.

In 1868, the Board of Supervisors designated approximately 200 acres near Lands End as a municipal cemetery.³ The cemetery extended west from 33rd Avenue to 48th Avenue. From the southeasterly corner of 33rd Avenue and Clement Street the cemetery extended 1,960 feet north toward the top of a bluff overlooking the ocean.⁴ The Board of Supervisors asserted that the land was suited to be a burial ground because "[i]t is sheltered from the wind to some extent; has a beautiful view; is susceptible of cultivation, and has a firm clayey soil, which is much better in a sanitary point of view than a light or sandy soil."⁵ Although city surveyor William P. Humphreys suggested the name "Golden Gate Cemetery," the name "City Cemetery" proved to be more common in general usage. In 1870, the city funded construction of a

1 Hendry, G.W. and J.N Bowman. *The Spanish and Mexican Adobe and Other Buildings in the Nine San Francisco Bay Counties, 1776 to about 1850*. mF868.S156.H4. Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. 1940, page 1160.

2 Soulé, Frank, John H. Gihon, and James Nisbet. *Annals of San Francisco*. D. Appleton & Company. New York City. 1855:465; Wackenreuder, V. *City And County Of San Francisco. Compiled From Official Surveys And Sectionalized In Accordance With U.S. Surveys*. Published By Henry G. Langley For the San Francisco Directory. 1861. Available via [davidrumsey.com](http://www.davidrumsey.com).

3 Daily Alta California, 30 March 1868; Humphreys, William P. *Atlas of the city and county of San Francisco from actual surveys and official records*. Plate 61. 1876. Available via [davidrumsey.com](http://www.davidrumsey.com)

4 Humphreys, William P. *Map of the city and county of San Francisco*. 1876 [Plat 61](#)

5 Board of Supervisors. "Majority Report on the Committee on Outside Lands Upon the Reservations of Land for Public Use." In *San Francisco Municipal Reports for the Fiscal Year 1867-8, Ending June 30, 1868*. Published by John H. Carmany & Co. 1868: 560, 575, 586. Available on [archive.org](http://www.archive.org).

wood fence around the cemetery, digging a well, building a superintendent's cottage, and purchasing a ledger book for recording burials.⁶

Humphreys and a Mr. F. Mow conducted a survey of City Cemetery in 1871. This survey resulted in a report and map that summarized Humphreys' design of the cemetery's landscape that was planned "in accordance with the rules of English landscape gardening, and combining as far as practicable the most desirable elements of the different rural cemeteries of the United States."⁷ Humphreys report called for naming proposed avenues, grading and macadamizing main avenues, tapping into springs in the northwest corner of the tract that could pump water to a reservoir on a hill that could then be used for irrigation, constructing receiving vaults and a chapel, establishing a nursery, and planting "[p]ines, [c]ypresses, [e]ucalyptuses, and [a]cacias" around the sections near the entrance on the south side of the cemetery.⁸

Humphreys planned to divide the cemetery into 17 different sections. Each section consisted of blocks that would contain family lots and/or individual plots for burial. Although the original plat map of the cemetery has not been discovered and may have been destroyed in the 1906 disaster, glimpses of the plan have survived in the form of other maps of City Cemetery produced in the 1870s and 1880s.⁹ Figure 2 is a reconstruction of Humphreys' planned layout of City Cemetery based on information in the 1872-1873 Municipal Report as well as the maps referenced above. Although Humphreys' plan seems to have guided the layout and organization of City Cemetery, the actual layout of blocks and plots does not entirely conform to his plan. The 1884 US Coast Survey Map shows the as built or actual layout of the burial ground. Figure 3 depicts a reconstruction of plots within City Cemetery based on research drawing from newspaper accounts of the cemetery, photographs, municipal reports, and historical maps.¹⁰ Many of these plots can be seen in a historical photograph taken in 1900 (Figure 4).

The grounds were operated as a municipal cemetery between 1870 and 1876. For the first six years of its operation, the cemetery accepted bodies that were either relocated from Yerba Buena Cemetery, now in the area of Civic Center, as well as indigent individuals who died without the means to pay for burial elsewhere.¹¹ In the late 1870s, the Board of Supervisors began to grant blocks within the cemetery to benevolent, social, and religious societies for the interment of their members. These plots were granted to at least 24 different associations (Figure 5).

⁶ Board of Supervisors. "Auditor's Report" In San Francisco Municipal Reports for the Fiscal Year 1870-71, Ending June 30, 1871. Published by Cosmopolitan Printing Co. 1870:6. Available on [archive.org](https://www.archive.org).

⁷ Board of Supervisors. "Golden Gate Cemetery" In San Francisco Municipal Reports for the Fiscal Year 1872-73, Ending June 30, 1873. Published by Spaulding and Barto Printers. 1873:484. Available on [archive.org](https://www.archive.org).

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Britton & Rey. Britton & Rey's Guide Map of the City of San Francisco. 1887. Available at [davidrumsey.com](https://www.davidrumsey.com); Humphreys, William P. Map of the City and County of San Francisco, October 26, 1870, revised 1884. Bancroft Library Map G4364.S5 1884.H8 Case XD; Faust, William W. Faust's Map Of City And County Of San Francisco California. Published By H.W. Faust. 1892. Available via [davidrumsey.com](https://www.davidrumsey.com); United States Coast Survey Map. San Francisco entrance, California. 1884. Available via [davidrumsey.com](https://www.davidrumsey.com)

¹⁰ Ryder, Alex and John Martini. Uncovering the Story of San Francisco's City Cemetery. Presentation given at the 2019 Annual Meeting of the Society for California Archaeology; Hervey-Lentz, Kari. Discovering the Departed with GIS: Mapping and Managing the Cultural Landscape of San Francisco's Historical Cemeteries. M.A. thesis. Sonoma State University, 2022.

¹¹ Board of Supervisors. San Francisco Municipal Reports 1870-71, 1871-72, 1872-73, 1873-74, 1874-75, 1875-76, 1876-77, 1877-78.

Societies Granted Sections within City Cemetery listed in the 1892-93 Municipal Report¹²

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Christian Chinese Society | Japanese Colony |
| Chuc[k] Sen Tong Company (likely the Chop Sen Benevolent Association, 集善堂 - 陽和) | Jewish Temples (including Beth Israel, Sherith Israel, and Schaari Zedeck) |
| French Mutual Benevolent Society (<i>La Société Française de Bienfaisance Mutuelle</i>) | Knights of Pythias |
| German Mutual Benevolent Society | Ladies' Seaman's Friends Society |
| Germania Club (<i>Turn Verein</i>) | Master Mariners' Benevolent Association |
| Grand United Order of the Odd Fellows of America, Golden Gate Lodge, No. 2,007 (African American) | Qui Son Tong Company (possibly the Gway Sen Association, 歸善堂 - 陽和) |
| Grand Army of the Republic | Ning Yung Benevolent Association (寧陽會館) |
| Greek Russian Slavonian Benevolent Society | Scandinavian Society |
| Hop Wo Benevolent Association (合和會館) | Slavonic Mutual Benevolent Society |
| Improved Order of Red Men | Society of Old Friends |
| Italian Mutual Benevolent Society | St. Andrews & Caledonia Club (Scottish) |

In the 1880s and 1890s, city leaders, neighborhood booster groups, and residents began advocating for the closure and removal of burial grounds in the city and county. The southwest portion of the City Cemetery land was annexed by the Federal Government in 1893 to construct coastal fortifications that became Fort Miley.¹³ The city banned new burials at City Cemetery in 1898 and two years later interment within the city was outlawed. After 1900, large private cemeteries created in San Mateo County became the final resting place for the majority of San Francisco's dead.

San Francisco's Board of Supervisors reclassified the land of City Cemetery as a park in 1909. Although a contemporary ordinance directed interested parties to disinter and relocate their dead, comparatively few bodies were moved from City Cemetery. Most of the associations and organizations cited a financial burden to relocate their members. The city itself declined to move the indigent dead it had buried over the years. Some disinterments were carried out on an ad hoc basis over the next decade, but records show that only a few hundred remains were removed before the municipal cemetery was converted to a park and golf course.¹⁴

It is estimated that between 10,000 and 19,700 burials remain in the park. Extant records indicate that more than 29,000 people were buried in City Cemetery between 1870 and 1898. Of these, more than 6,300 Chinese individuals were disinterred in accordance with their death rites of the time, which included the transportation of their bones to China. The extent to which other societies and organizations removed their dead is, at the present time, unclear. The City and County of San Francisco made no attempt to remove the remains of indigents.¹⁵

¹² Board of Supervisors. "City and County Property, Golden Gate Cemetery" In San Francisco Municipal Reports for the Fiscal Year 1892-93, Ending June 30, 1893. Published by James H. Barry Printer. 1893:239-240. Available on archive.org.

¹³ National Register of Historical Places Nomination Form for Fort Miley (National Register #80000371)

¹⁴ Chavez, David with Eleanor Ramsey. Report on Preliminary Cultural Resources Evaluations of the Richmond Transport Sewer Alternatives, San Francisco Wastewater Management Program, San Francisco, California (Phase I). Unpublished document on file at NWIC as S-4867. 1979; Valente Marini Perata & Co. Records of the Valente Marini Perata & Co. on file at the San Mateo Genealogical Society.

¹⁵ Ryder and Martini 2019

Although bodies remained, materials related to the cemetery aboveground were almost completely removed by 1921 and likely years earlier.¹⁶ Grave markers and monuments, caretaker buildings, section fencing, water tanks, and other cemetery infrastructure were demolished or relocated during the staged creation of the Lincoln Park golf course (Figure 6). Two notable exceptions were left in place and remain today: the Kong Chow funerary structure on the fairway of the course's Hole 1 and the Ladies' Seaman's Friends Society monument near Hole 15.

Archaeological Context

Human remains and funerary items are periodically unearthed or discovered within the former cemetery land. In 1921, an estimated 1,500 coffins and human remains were uncovered during construction of the California Palace of the Legion of Honor Museum.¹⁷ Human remains have been found by groundskeepers, utility workers, and members of the public within Lincoln Park throughout the 20th century.¹⁸ In the 1990s, remains of almost 750 individuals from an indigent section of City Cemetery were documented by archaeologists during construction at the Legion of Honor Museum.¹⁹ In the 21st century, human remains that were once buried in the Italian Mutual Benevolent Society and the French Mutual Benevolent Society sections have been uncovered as a result of construction around Lincoln Park.²⁰

Statement of Significance

Event

City Cemetery represents an early incarnation of social safety nets related to burial for socially, ethnically, and culturally diverse populations of San Franciscans in the late nineteenth century. During this period terms of employment did not include survivors' benefits. Although commercial life insurance was beginning to be offered to the working class in the 1870s, working class people commonly joined fraternal, ethnic, religious, and professional associations during their lives to secure some assurance that their bodies would be cared for after their passing.²¹ City Cemetery had at least 24 sections operated by benevolent, social, and religious societies for interment of their members (see Figure 3, 4 and 5). Ethnic and nationalist associations that held sections included a number of Chinese companies (Chuck Sen Tong Company, Hop Wo Association, Ning Yung Association, Qui Son Tong Company), the French Benevolent Society, the German Benevolent Society, Germania Club (Turn Verein), the Grand United Order of the Odd Fellows of America (African

¹⁶ *San Francisco Examiner*, 18 July 1921

¹⁷ Larsen, Vid. "City Scrapers Tear Open 1500 Graves in Old S.F. Cemetery." *The Daily News*, 23 December 1921.

¹⁸ Ambro, Richard. Report on Archival Research of Cultural Resources for the Proposed Facilities Expansion Project at the California Palace of the Legion of Honor, Lincoln Park, San Francisco, California. Prepared by Richard Ambro of Holman and Associates for the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. 1990.

¹⁹ Chattan, Cassandra, Katherine Flynn, Dea Bacchetti, and Elizabeth Kallenbach. Report on Excavations at the California Palace of the Legion of Honor. Prepared by Abacus Archaeological Associates for the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. 1997.

²⁰ Pastron, Allen G., Richard D. Ambro, and Michelle Touton. Report of Archaeological Monitoring at the California Street Tile Steps Project, Lincoln Park, San Francisco, California. Prepared by Archeo-Tec for the San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department. 2010; Russell, Matt and Paul Zimmer. Archeological Testing Results Report for the Westside Recycled Water Lincoln Park Golf Course Ground Penetrating Radar Survey, San Francisco, California. Prepared by ESA for the San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department. 2020.

²¹ Murphy, Sharon. "Life Insurance in the United States through World War I". *EH.Net Encyclopedia*, edited by Robert Whaples. August 14, 2002. [URL](#)

American), the Greek Russian Slavonian Benevolent Society, the Italian Mutual Benevolent Society, the *Societa Cosmopolita Italiana d'Mutua Beneficenza*, the Japanese Colony of San Francisco, the St. Andrew's Society and Caledonian Club (Scottish), and Scandinavian Society. Social associations included the Grand Army of the Republic, the Improved Order of Red Men, Knights of Pythias, and Society of Old Friends as well as associations geared towards a specific occupation, such as the Master Mariners' Benevolent Society, Ladies' Seamen's Friend Society, and members of the fire and police departments. Sections were also granted to religious associations including Jewish congregations Beth Israel, *Schaari Zedeck*, and Sherith Israel and to other religious groups like the Christian Chinese Society. City Cemetery reflects a period of social history where private associations and organizations played a key role in disposing of the dead. The cemetery is a testament to the evolution of burial customs, particularly about how diverse non-hegemonic social, ethnic, and cultural communities took care of their deceased members as an early form of social safety net.

In addition, City Cemetery was the final resting place of socioeconomically marginalized people between 1870 and 1898. If a person or their family and friends did not have the means to pay for burial, the city was responsible for interment of the body. After 1870, City Cemetery was the only municipal burial place for the indigent dead in San Francisco. Municipal records indicate that the city and county interred over 10,000 people in the indigent sections of the cemetery. Indigent burials were often only marked with a simple wood marker with a sequential number rather than a name (Figure 7).

The creation and dissolution of City Cemetery reflects shifting attitudes towards cemeteries during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. The cemetery was the last cemetery established in San Francisco. It was created as a municipal cemetery to meet the needs of burying the indigent dead. The burial ground was established on the outskirts of the city at the tail end of the Rural Cemetery movement. Rural cemeteries were typically beautiful places that were “[p]lanned as serene and spacious grounds where the combination of nature and monuments would be spiritually uplifting.”²² Although lacking in investment from the city and formal designed landscaping, the grounds did have picturesque vistas over the Pacific Ocean. Rural Cemeteries were also popular destinations for recreation, which led to the urban park movement. Although City Cemetery was not as popular for recreation as Laurel Hill Cemetery or Calvary Cemetery near Lone Mountain, it later succumbed to the mounting desire for public parks. The closure and partial removal of City Cemetery reflects changing attitudes in the early twentieth century wherein the sentimentality about sanctity of the dead resting in burial grounds was outweighed by notions of the city's progress.²³

Design/Construction

The Kong Chow funerary structure and Ladies' Seamen's Friends Society obelisk are representative of a stylistic type or period and method of construction or fabrication of funerary structures. The Kong Chow structure stands near present day golf Hole 1 and the Ladies' Seamen's Friends Society obelisk is located near the tee of Hole 15 (Figure 8).

²² National Park Service “How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation,” National Register Bulletin, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1995:6.

²³ Shelton, Tamara Venit. “Unmaking historic spaces: Urban progress and the San Francisco cemetery debate, 1895-1937.” *California History* 85, no. 3 (2008): 26-70.

The exact date of construction of the Kong Chow funerary structure is unknown (Figure 9). However, it was likely constructed between 1878 and around 1898, which corresponds to the period that the Chinese made interments according to cemetery superintendent reports in municipal reports (after 1898 a Chinese cemetery was established in Colma). The Chinese faced challenges in building funerary structures and improving their sections. In 1888 the superintendent of City Cemetery stopped the Chinese from improving their section because the “..State Constitution prohibits the employment of Chinese on any public work, and as City Cemetery is public property, [the cemetery superintendent] concluded that the Chinese cannot employ their own countrymen in improving their grounds.”²⁴

According to Abraham and Wegars “there are three characteristic funerary structures often found in Chinese cemeteries; the altar or memorial shrines, the ‘bone house’, and the burner.²⁵ Altars serve as generalized markers of the sanctity of the site for the entire community. They also serve as a centralized locus for ceremonies for honoring the dead, like spring Qingming festival and fall *Chongyang* festival. Bone houses were places where the disinterred remains could be stored and cleaned before transport back to China. According to Abraham and Wegars, “more permanent” bone houses are a 20th century invention because shipping channels to China were blocked by Japanese invasion of China in the late 1930s.²⁶ Burners were masonry incinerators usually over 7 ft tall that were used to burn ritual and spiritual tributes to the dead while preventing fires from burning the entire cemetery.

The Kong Chow structure likely functioned as an altar. It was likely a location for prayer, burning incense, roast pig and fowl food offerings, and burning symbolic paper money and clothes for the deceased’s journeys in the afterlife (Figure 10). It is built in the shape of an open-air rectangle, with a high entranceway inscribed with Chinese characters that have been translated roughly as “Temporary Resting Place for Coffins Being Sent to Kong Chow Province” (Figure 11). Interior features include a small altar area for incense sticks and laying out of offerings (Figure 12), and what appears to be a furnace pit for burning offerings (Figure 13). The inscription may also indicate it was used as a bone house. The structure is consistent with descriptions of an earlier altar built for funeral service in the Chinese section of Lone Mountain Cemetery.²⁷ A newspaper article describes this altar as;

... in the shape of a roofless temple or place of prayer ... resembling a gigantic French bedstead, with a high, arched headboard, at the eastern, and a lower footboard at the western end. The enclosure is two-five by thirty feet in size with neatly plastered brick side-walls about four and a half feet in height, the wall at the eastern end rising to perhaps seven feet in height in the center, and receding to the level of the other walls on either side.²⁸

²⁴ Daily Alta California, 27 October 1888

²⁵ Abraham, Terry, and Priscilla Wegars. "Urns, bones and burners: overseas Chinese cemeteries." *Australasian Historical Archaeology* (2003): 58-69.

²⁶ Abraham and Priscilla Wegars (2003):63

²⁷ Daily Alta California, 25 November 1863

²⁸ Daily Alta California, 10 January 1864

This description is echoed by a 1913 description of two Chinese funerary structures in Lincoln Park that states "West of the golf course are two curious structures of brick and cement, forming enclosures open to the sky, with high walls at the west ends. They look like stone beds for giants"²⁹ (Figure 14 and 15).

The Kong Chow funerary altar in Lincoln Park stands as a symbol of Chinese culture and history in San Francisco. It is the last remaining funerary structure that was designed to host Chinese religious funerary rites in San Francisco during the 19th century. It is difficult to assess the architecture of the altar within the broader context of overseas Chinese (or *huangxi*) cemetery structures because as Abraham and Wegars assert altars are "highly individualistic structures and to date there has been so little information gathered about them that it is difficult to generalize on their constituent characteristics."³⁰ In absence of a typology or survey, the Kong Chow funerary altar may be a unique structure on the West Coast or even in the United States or world. As such, it could be a singular embodiment of common artistic values of 19th century Chinese funerary architecture.

The Ladies' Seaman's Friend Society obelisk is a 15-foot-tall zinc spire that reflects the common artistic values of the late 19th century in relation to grief and commemoration (Figure 16). The rise of the romantic movement during the Victorian Era (1837-1901) led to elaborate monumentation that became characteristic of cemeteries of the era. Grief and devotion could be expressed nobly in artistic terms by means of code-like imagery. Social historians have labeled this ideology as the beatification of death,³¹ which was "characterized by ritualized behavior and material objects that idealized death and heaven and prolonged the mourning and memorialization of the dead."³² Tapering shafts on pedestals were among the popular monument forms drawn from the ancient world because of their association with Egyptian sepulchral monuments signifying eternal life beyond the earthly realm. The pyramid and obelisk became symbols for Christian belief in the eternity of the spirit.

The elaborate Ladies' Seaman's Friend Society obelisk exhibits Victorian tastes for "sentimentality, melancholy, romanticism, and didactic moralism."³³ The anchor, ship, and sailor iconography along with the ornamental feathers and columns decorating the spire speak to the celebration of their profession. Part of the dedicatory plaque also provides insight into how the Ladies' Seaman's Friend Society expressed their sentimentality towards the sailors buried there by their charity; here stands "A landmark of the seaman's last earthly port and resting-place in which he awaits the advent of The Great Pilot for his Eternal Destiny (Figure 17).

In part, the richness and variety of monuments in Victorian cemeteries also derived from the introduction of mechanized manufacturing processes. A broad range of patterns were available to consumers in catalogs printed by monument makers. Monuments of cast zinc marketed as white bronze were popular throughout the United States after a fabrication process was developed in the 1870s. Metal grave markers generally

²⁹ Todd, Frank Morton. Chamber of Commerce Handbook for San Francisco Historical and Descriptive, A Guide for Visitors. Published by the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce. 1914:185.

³⁰ Abraham and Priscilla Wegars (2003):63

³¹ Jackson, Charles O., American Attitudes to Death. *Journal of American Studies* 11(3):297-312.

³² Bell, Edward. The Historical Archaeology of Mortuary Behavior: Coffin Hardware from Uxbridge, Massachusetts. *Historical Archaeology* 23(3)(1990):54-78.

³³ Linden-Ward, Blanche. *Silent City on a Hill: Landscapes of Memory and Boston's Mount Auburn Cemetery*. Ohio State University Press. 1989:295.

were cheaper than marble and granite markers and, depending on the number and variety of casting molds used, could surpass in elaboration the carved stone monuments they emulated.

The Ladies' Seaman's Friend Society obelisk was manufactured by the Monumental Bronze Company of Bridgeport, Connecticut and was likely ordered through their catalog (Figure 18).³⁴ The 1884 Annual Report of the Ladies' Seaman's Friend Society of the Port of San Francisco indicates that the monument was purchased by Dr. Henry D. Cogswell and was shipped in pieces around Cape Horn and erected in late 1884 or 1885. The monument cost approximately \$495 dollars, roughly \$14,000 today.³⁵ The monument was originally painted to look like granite with customized insert panels on three sides showing maritime motifs.

The City Cemetery may have been the place where the poorer classes, such as sailors, were interred, but it also offered a magnificent and fitting view of the Pacific Ocean and Golden Gate. An article in the *San Francisco Examiner* described the scene:

High on the hill there are clustered a few graves close to the edge of the cliff where it sheers into the water. 'Them's mariners,' said the gravedigger, who stood dreaming on his shovel, and flicking a curly dog with a coffin rope. 'They're put there so'st they can see the ships come in.' The mariners have decidedly the best of it, for though their little plot of ground is bare enough, in all conscience, it is not quite so miserable as the rest.³⁶

Information Potential

City Cemetery has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important about the history of San Francisco. Archaeological studies of historic cemeteries provide valuable information about past ways of life that are not always captured in the historical record. Burial places are important sites of study because almost any aspect of life can be studied through the material remnants of death. They provide direct evidence about health, disease, and funerary and medical practices.³⁷ Cemeteries are chronologically bound places that function as time capsules that embody shifting attitudes towards commemoration, death, and remembrance in their design, geographic location, and organization. As Harold Mytum and Laurie Burgess assert, "...burial places provide "unique opportunities for highly contextualized analysis" because they can be "linked directly to particular communities, families, and, often, specific, named individuals".³⁸ There have been six archaeological studies of human remains discovered in City Cemetery. These reports dating from 1990 to 2020 indicate that the buried remnants from the cemetery can inform scholars on the beliefs, health, and identity of people buried here.

As the largest cemetery for the indigent and ethnic, social, religious, and fraternal organizations, City Cemetery has potential to yield information about the beliefs and practices of cultural and ethnic groups

³⁴ Monumental Bronze Company. Catalogue of the Monumental Bronze Co. Bridgeport, Connecticut. White Bronze Monuments, Statuary, Portrait Medallions, Busts, Statutes, and Ornamental Art Work for Cemeteries, Public and Private Grounds and Buildings Manufactured by the Monumental Bronze Co. 1882.

³⁵ Ladies' Seamen's Friend Society of the Port of San Francisco. Twenty-Eight Annual Report of the Ladies' Seamen's Friend Society of the Port of San Francisco. Mining and Scientific Press. 1884. Available on archive.org.

³⁶ *San Francisco Examiner*, 3 February 1891

³⁷ Bell, Edward. *Vestiges of mortality and Remembrance: a Bibliography on the historical archaeology of cemeteries*. Scarecrow Press.1994: 2

³⁸ Mytum, Herold and Laurie Burgess. *Death Across Oceans: Archaeology of Coffins and Vaults in Britain, America, and Australia* / Edited by Harold Mytum and Laurie E. Burgess. Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Press; 2018:285

that were disenfranchised in 19th century San Francisco. Burial places of marginalized groups, especially those that no longer have an easily recognized presence in the physical landscape, often become forgotten or lost through processes that disproportionately affect “ethnic minorities and the poor.”³⁹ These populations were less likely to be included in written accounts or histories of the era. In cases where written documentation is not available, studies of a cemetery may reveal important information about an area. Limited interment records have survived for City Cemetery and most records appear to have been destroyed in the 1906 earthquake and subsequent fires. Although there are no headstones to gather biographic data, there remains upwards of 15,000 individuals buried in present day Lincoln Park. The buried remnants of City Cemetery have the potential to provide the most comprehensive data on life in San Francisco during the late 19th century. Human remains, coffins, coffin decorations, grave goods, and buried grave markers have the potential to inform on the health, diet, religious and social beliefs and practices of a diverse array of the city’s past inhabitants that have historically been disenfranchised.

Aspects of Integrity

Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance. The seven aspects of integrity as defined by the National Park Service (NPS) and the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) are location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.⁴⁰

City Cemetery retains integrity of location because the Kong Chow funerary structure and Seamen’s obelisk stand in their original location. In addition, archival and archaeological evidence indicates the subsurface remains of the cemetery are present in their original locations.

City Cemetery retains limited integrity of design because the elements that created the form, plan, space, and style of City Cemetery were modified when the cemetery land was converted to a public park and golf course. However, it retains the traces of natural markers from the cemetery era such as non-native vegetation, particularly cypress trees, that were planted around the boundaries of some sections in the cemetery.

City Cemetery retains integrity of setting because the Lincoln Park property retains the open space with undulating hills sloping to up to the west with broad vistas of the city and Pacific Ocean.

City Cemetery retains some integrity of materials because there are some above ground remnants of the structures and objects in Lincoln Park dating to the cemetery era. Below ground deposits associated with City Cemetery are also present and have not been modified since their deposit in the nineteenth century.

City Cemetery retains integrity of workmanship because the extant cemetery era structures provide physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture, illustrate the aesthetic principles of a historic period, and reveal local applications of technological practices. The Kong Chow funerary structure’s design expresses the aesthetic principles of funerary practices of the Chinese diaspora. The Ladies’ Seaman’s Friends Society obelisk reflects the aesthetic principles of Victorian mourning practices and the technological practices of the industrialization of the mourning industry in the 19th century.

³⁹ Baugher, Sherene and Richard Viet. *Archaeology of American Cemeteries and Gravemarkers*. University Press of Florida, 2015:61

⁴⁰ “How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation,” *National Register Bulletin*, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1995, p. 44.

City Cemetery retains integrity of feeling. Although the land now functions as a golf course and public park for recreation, the presence of the Kong Chow funerary structure and Seaman's obelisk, rolling hills, setting on the edge of the city, and presence of the remains of thousands of people convey a feeling of a municipally owned cemetery in the 19th century.

City Cemetery retains integrity of association because of the presence of physical features and human remains that convey the historic character of the burial ground, including the Kong Chow funerary structure the Seamen's obelisk, and the thousands of people still resting in the ground associated with cultural, religious, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups that reflect the diversity of San Francisco residents in the late 19th century.

Character-Defining Features of the Landmark

Topography and Setting

Although there have been modifications to the land surface for creation of recreational facilities in Lincoln Park, the topography of rolling hills sloping up to the west has remained largely unchanged from the topography of City Cemetery (Figure 19). The modern setting of undulating hills, open space, and broad vistas overlooking the Pacific Ocean echoes the historical setting of City Cemetery.

Human Remains

Historic-era burials in City Cemetery, which includes intact or in situ burials as well as human remains that have been disturbed by subsequent development.

Exhumation Pits

Many Chinese people who came to California in the 19th century held Confucian beliefs that their bones must be laid to rest in their home villages. When they died outside of China, individuals were temporarily buried, their bones would be disinterred after the bodies decomposed, and the bones would be sent back to deceased's village. Pits used for exhumation were often reused multiple times. Although subsequent landscaping in Lincoln Park filled any depressions associated with the 19th century pits, archaeological remnants may still exist below the surface, particularly in the sections once used by Chinese organizations. The pits may contain human remains or grave goods, but in some cases may be devoid of cultural material.

Standing and Visible Mortuary Structures

Standing and visible mortuary structures that include the Kong Chow funerary structure and the Ladies' Seaman's Friend Monument (see Figure 8, 9 and 11).

Trees Associated with Cemetery Section Boundaries

Extant trees planted during the operation of the cemetery that demarcated section boundaries (Figure 20 and 21). Non-native cypress trees were typically planted to mark section borders in City Cemetery.

Mortuary Furniture and Grave Goods

Mortuary furniture and grave goods, which may include but is not limited to remains of funerary structures, mausoleums or vault foundations, grave or plot curbing, grave railings, tombstones, grave makers, foot markers, wood or metal coffins, coffin hardware, memorial plaques, as well as adornments, personal items, and clothing that would have been buried with individuals (Figure 22). These objects may be visible from the

current ground surface but generally likely to be subsurface, with discovery most likely during construction. These objects may be in situ or may have been disturbed from their original location and may be located in areas that were used as burial sections throughout the parcel.

Cemetery Operational Infrastructure

Cemetery operational infrastructure includes but is not limited to retaining walls, foundations and deposits associated with the sexton and caretakers' homes, remnants of water towers and windmills, remains of macadamized avenues, and remains of the French Station of the Sea Cliff Railroad (the cemetery stop). These features may be visible on the ground surface, partially visible, or subsurface, with discovery most likely during construction (Figure 23 and see Figure 8).

FIGURES

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Figure 1. Location Map of City Cemetery Landmark..... | 15 |
| Figure 2. Topography of City Cemetery (1884 US Coast Survey map) overlaid with a Reconstruction of Humphreys' Original Plan of City Cemetery (Humphreys 1884 and Britton and Rey 1887) | 16 |
| Figure 3. City Cemetery plots (Ryder and Martini 2019) on 1884 US Coast Survey Map (Rumsey) | 17 |
| Figure 4. Looking northwest at City Cemetery from Geary Bouvard and 32nd Ave in 1900 (San Francisco Public Library Historical Photography Collection AAB-5048) | 18 |
| Figure 5. Reconstruction of Plots within City Cemetery on topography shown on 1884 US Coast Survey Map (Ryder and Martini 2019)..... | 19 |
| Figure 6. Lincoln Park Golf Course Holes overlapped with City Cemetery Plots..... | 20 |
| Figure 7. Numbered headboards on indigent graves in city & county Section 2, Chinese section gates behind (Examiner, 3 February 1891). | 21 |
| Figure 8. City Cemetery Plots, Operational Infrastructure, and Standing Structures..... | 22 |
| Figure 9. Kong Chow funerary structure (Alex Ryder 2022)..... | 23 |
| Figure 10. Chinese funeral ceremony in City Cemetery (California Historical Society, FN-19298)..... | 24 |
| Figure 11. Inscription on Kong Chow funerary structure (Alex Ryder 2022) with transcription (Martini 2019) | 25 |
| Figure 12. Possible offering area in Kong Chow funerary structure looking west (Alex Ryder 2022). | 26 |
| Figure 13. Possible furnace on north side of Kong Chow funerary structure, looking southwest (Alex Ryder 2022) | 27 |
| Figure 14. Kong Chow funerary structure circa 1914, looking northwest (Todd 1914:186). | 28 |
| Figure 15. Kong Chow Funerary Structure, circa 1920. Golfer is likely on Hole 2 or 12 (Western Neighborhoods Project, wnp15.1277) | 28 |
| Figure 16. Ladies' Seamen's Friend Society of the Port of San Francisco obelisk (Alex Ryder 2018)..... | 29 |
| Figure 17. Detail of embossed panel in Ladies' Seamen's Friend Society obelisk (Alex Ryder 2018)..... | 30 |
| Figure 18. Catalog item similar to the Ladies' Seaman's Friend Monument (Monumental Bronze Co. 1882:92) | 31 |
| Figure 19. Topography similarities between 1884 and 2020 | 32 |
| Figure 20. Lincoln Park c. 1920 aerial photograph, cemetery era trees highlighted (GGNRA Archive)..... | 33 |
| Figure 21. Approximate Location of Cemetery Era Trees in Lincoln Park | 34 |
| Figure 22. Examples of mortuary furniture and grave goods that have been found in Lincoln Park (not to scale) | 35 |
| Figure 23. Examples of remnants of operational infrastructure visible within Lincoln Park in 2018..... | 36 |



Figure 1. Location Map of City Cemetery Landmark

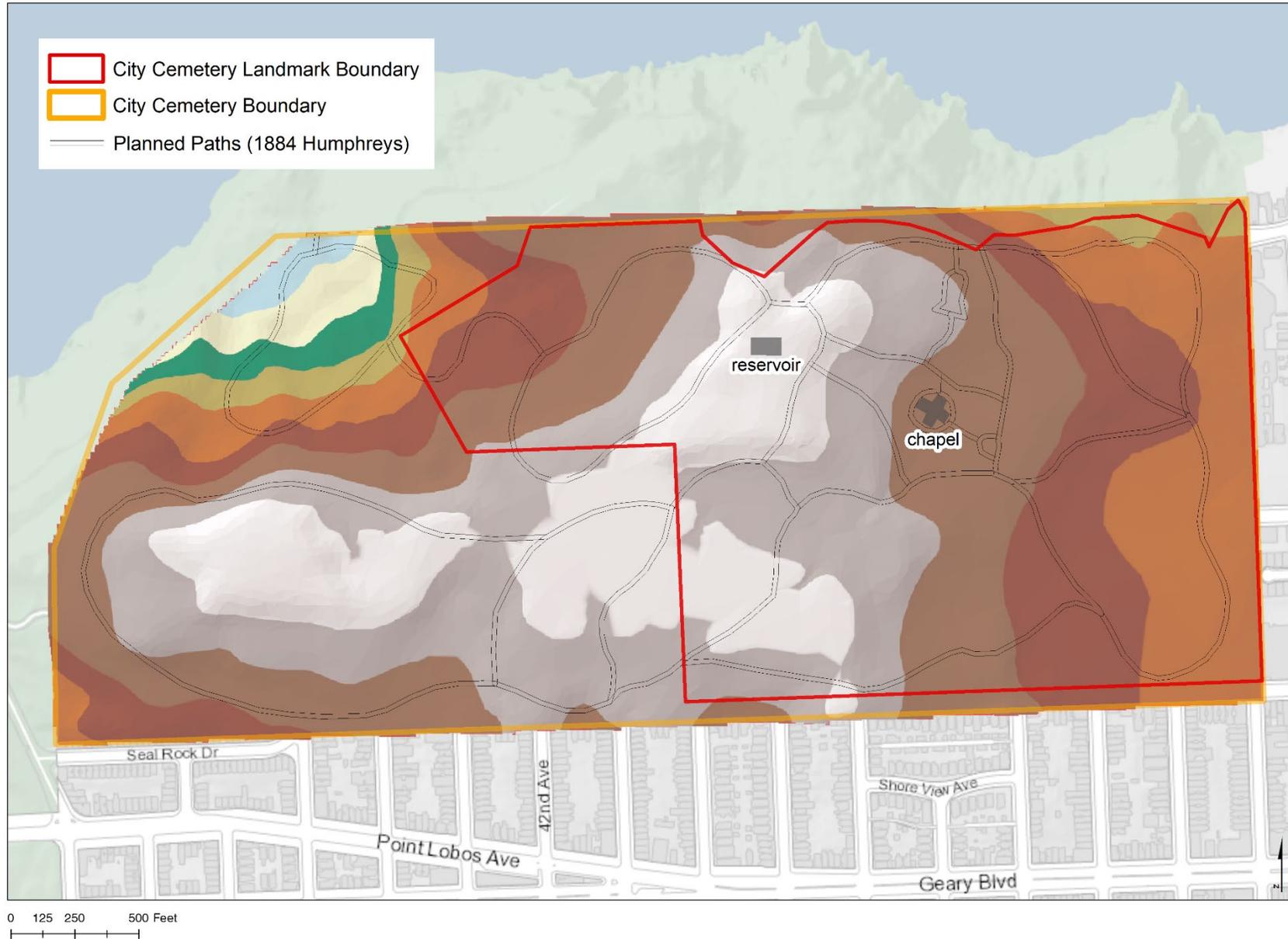


Figure 2. Topography of City Cemetery (1884 US Coast Survey map) overlaid with a Reconstruction of Humphreys' Original Plan of City Cemetery (Humphreys 1884 and Britton and Rey 1887)

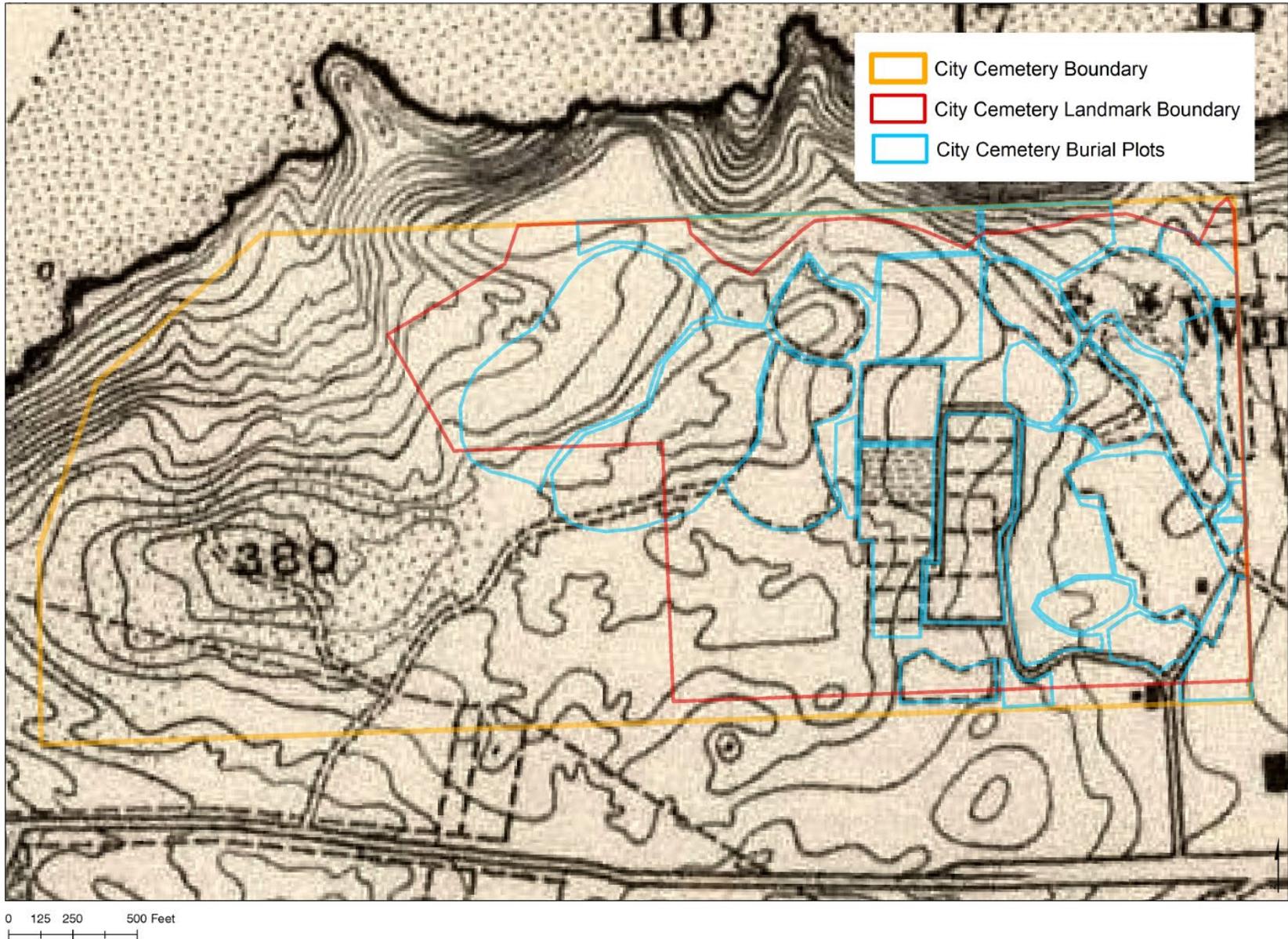


Figure 3. City Cemetery plots (Ryder and Martini 2019) on 1884 US Coast Survey Map (Rumsey)

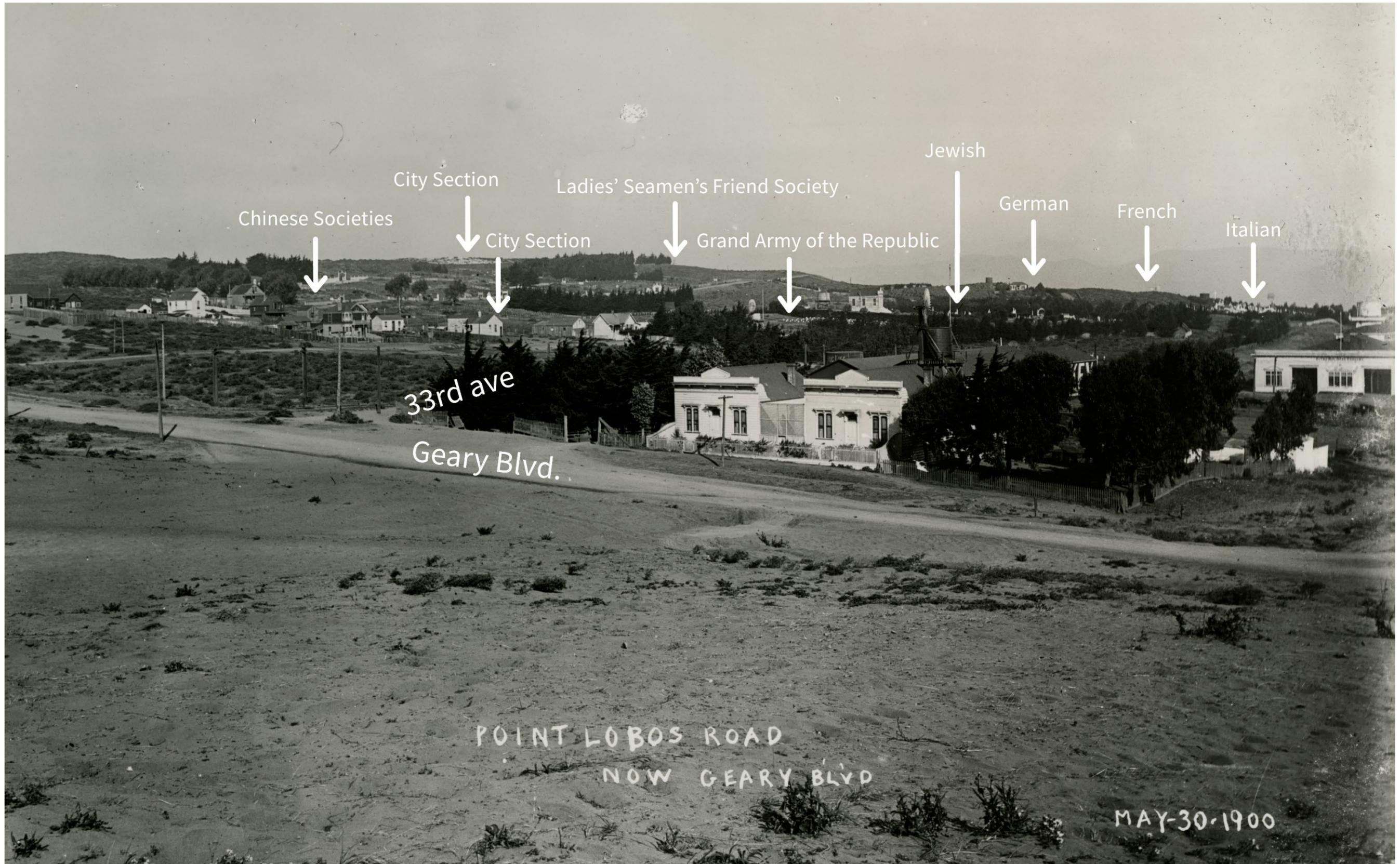


Figure 4. Looking northwest at City Cemetery from Geary Bouvard and 32nd Ave in 1900 (San Francisco Public Library Historical Photography Collection [AAB-5048](#))

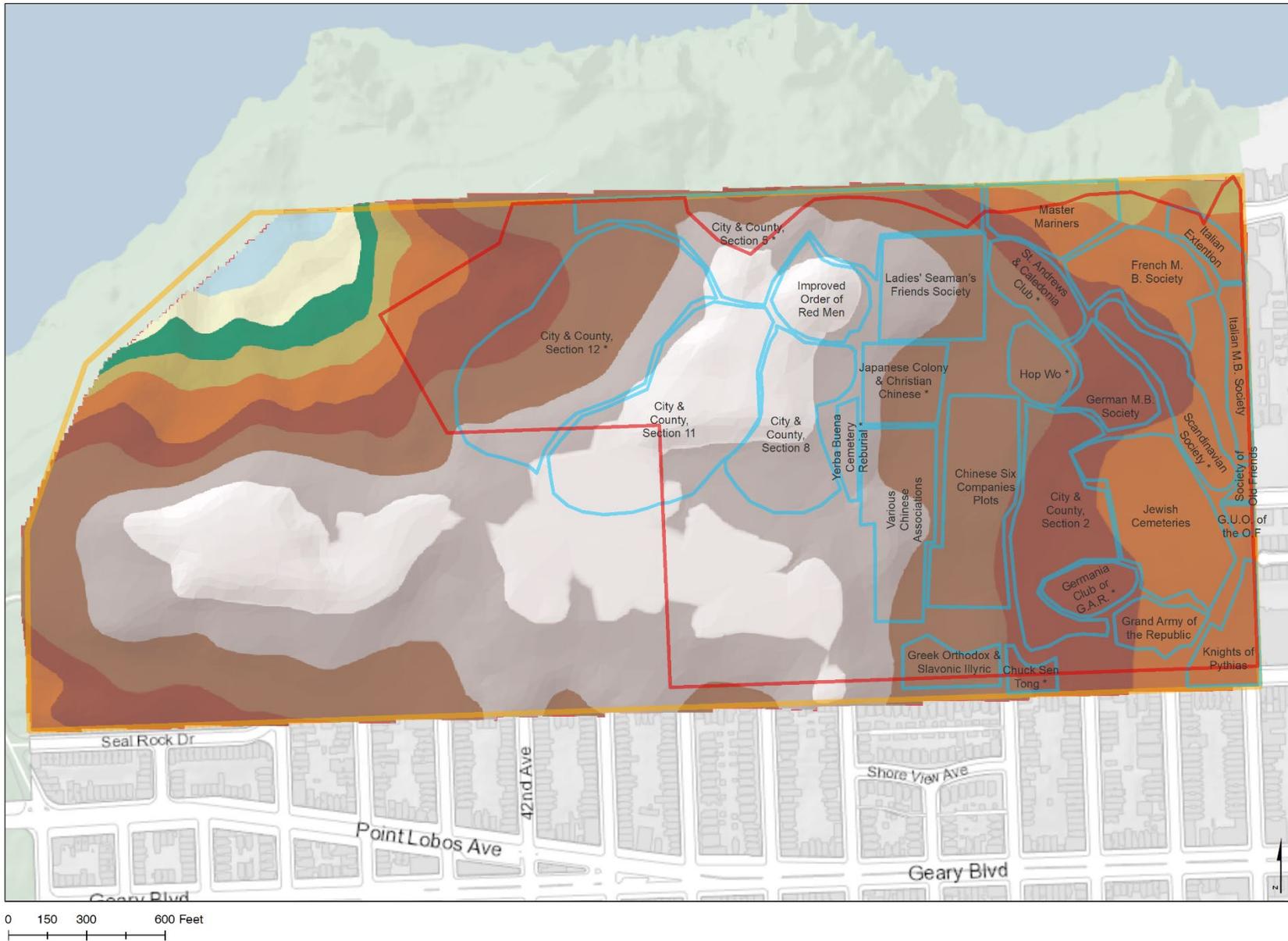


Figure 5. Reconstruction of Plots within City Cemetery on topography shown on 1884 US Coast Survey Map (Ryder and Martini 2019)

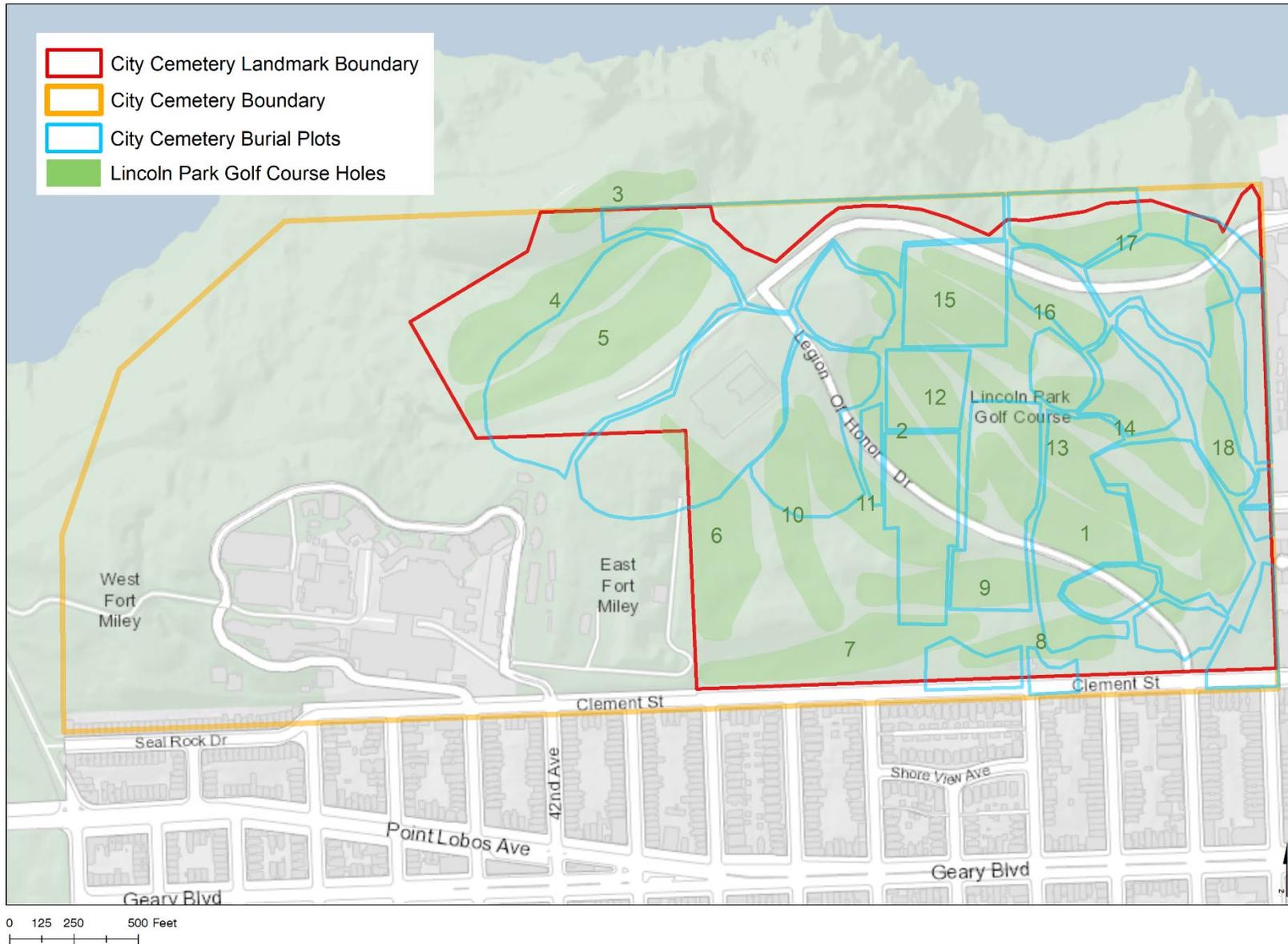


Figure 6. Lincoln Park Golf Course Holes overlapped with City Cemetery Plots



Figure 7. Numbered headboards on indigent graves in city & county Section 2, Chinese section gates behind
(*Examiner*, 3 February 1891).



Figure 8. City Cemetery Plots, Operational Infrastructure, and Standing Structures



Figure 9. Kong Chow funerary structure (Alex Ryder 2022)



Figure 10. Chinese funeral ceremony in City Cemetery (California Historical Society, [FN-19298](#))



Figure 11. Inscription on Kong Chow funerary structure (Alex Ryder 2022) with transcription (Martini 2019)



Figure 12. Possible offering area in Kong Chow funerary structure looking west (Alex Ryder 2022).



Figure 13. Possible furnace on north side of Kong Chow funerary structure, looking southwest (Alex Ryder 2022)



Figure 14. Kong Chow funerary structure circa 1914, looking northwest (Todd 1914:186).



Figure 15. Kong Chow Funerary Structure, circa 1920. Golfer is likely on Hole 2 or 12 (Western Neighborhoods Project, [wnp15.1277](https://www.westernneighborhoods.org/wnp15.1277))



Figure 16. Ladies' Seamen's Friend Society of the Port of San Francisco obelisk
(Alex Ryder 2018)



Detail of panel (Alex Ryder 2018)



Detail of plinth decoration (Alex Ryder 2018)

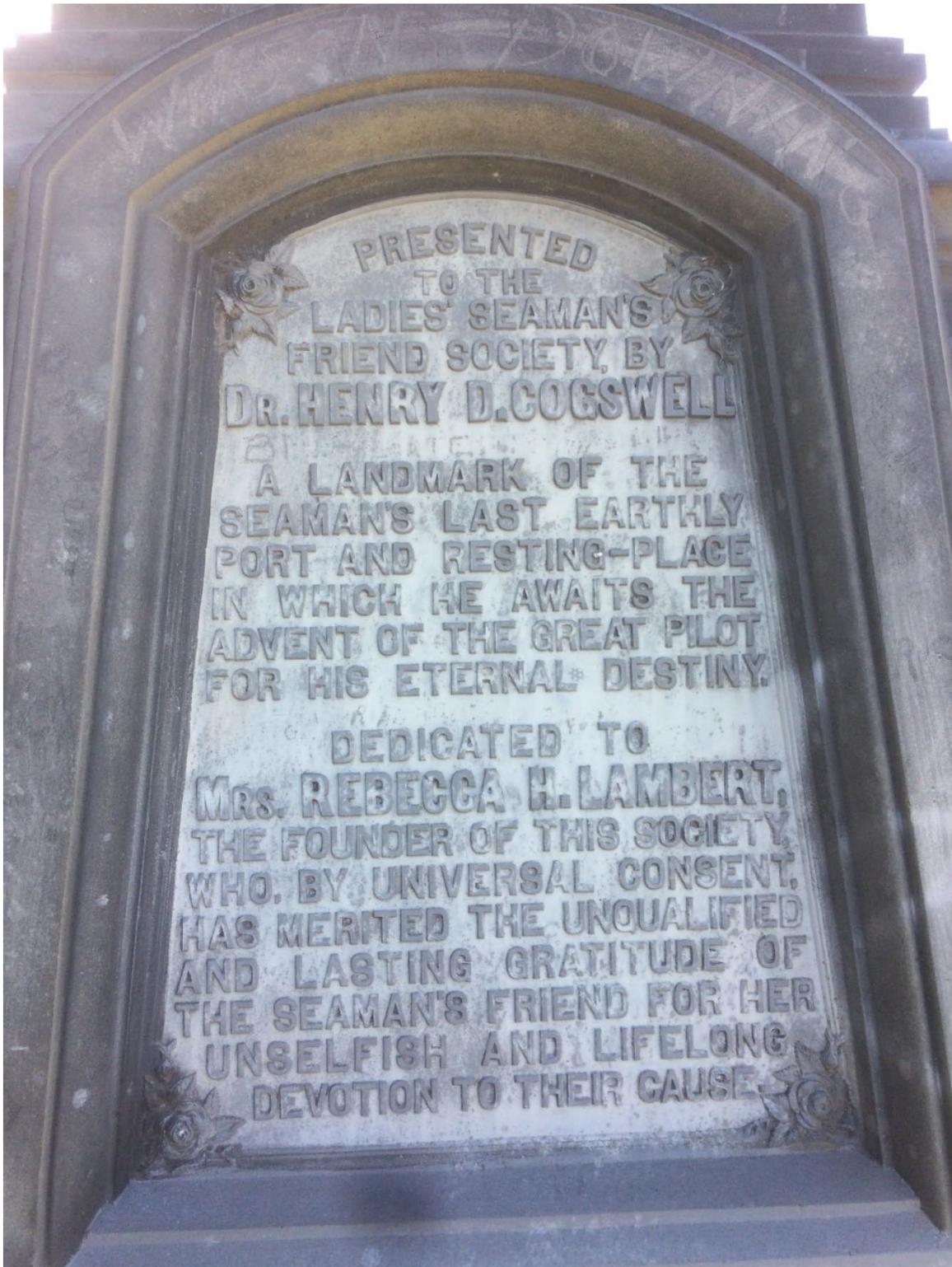


Figure 17. Detail of embossed panel in Ladies' Seamen's Friend Society obelisk (Alex Ryder 2018)

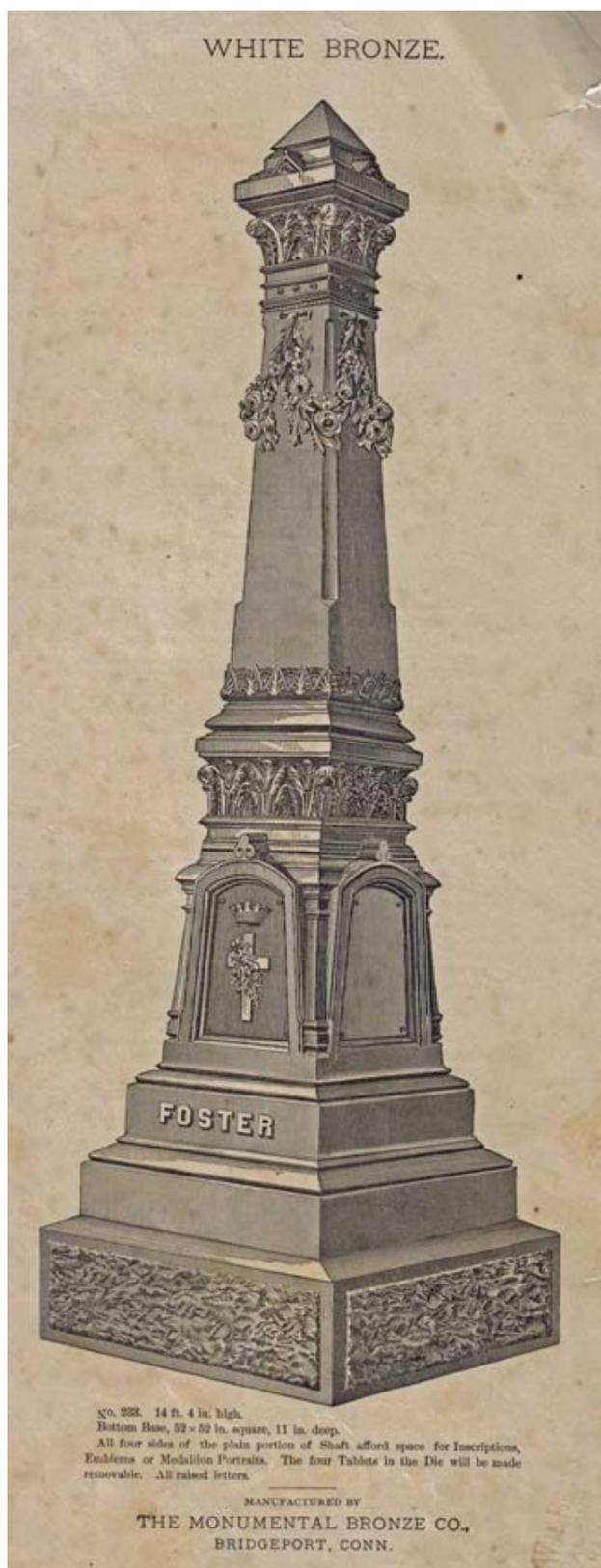


Figure 18. Catalog item similar to the Ladies' Seaman's Friend Monument ([Monumental Bronze Co. 1882:92](#))

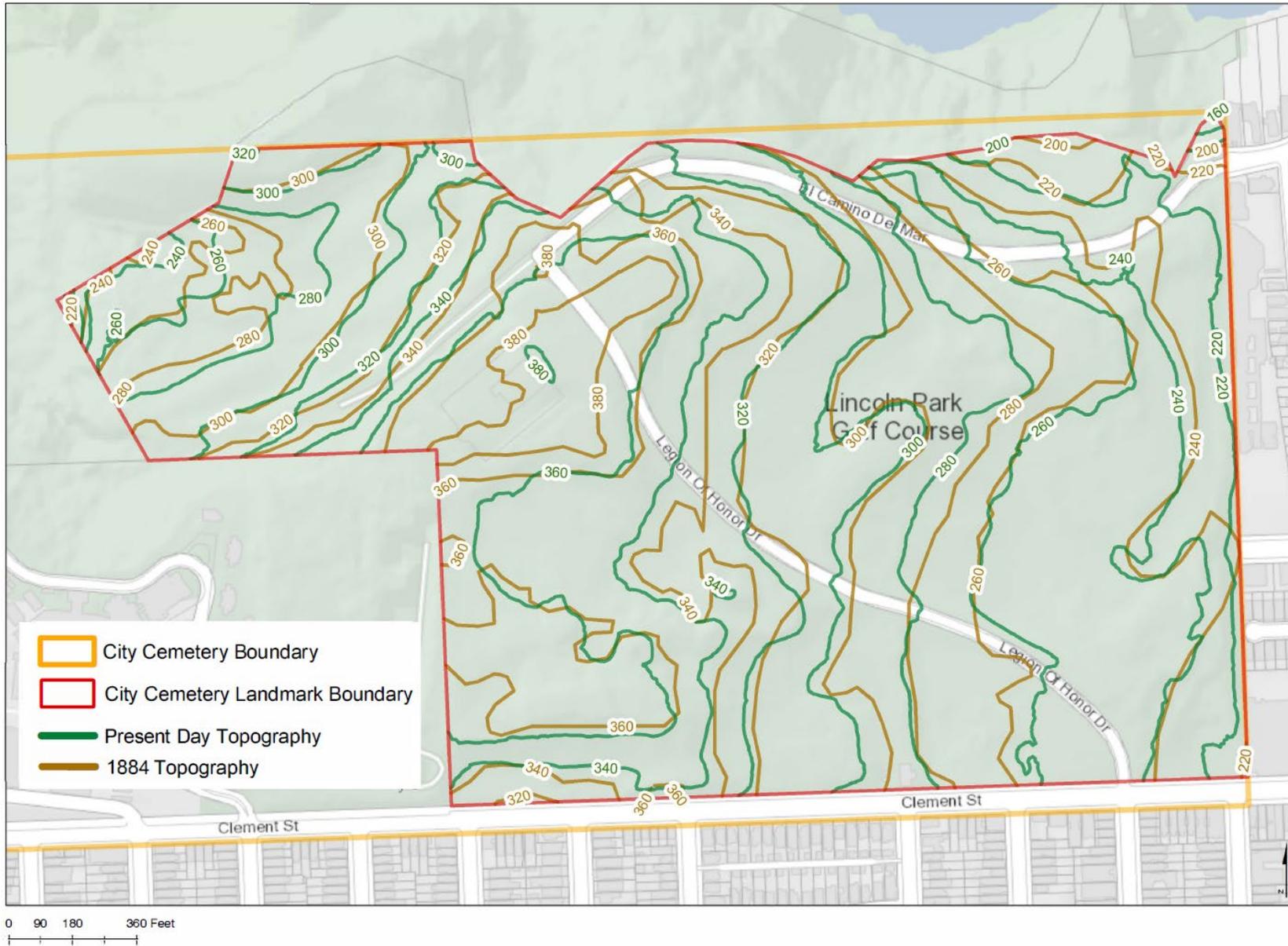


Figure 19. Topography similarities between 1884 and 2020

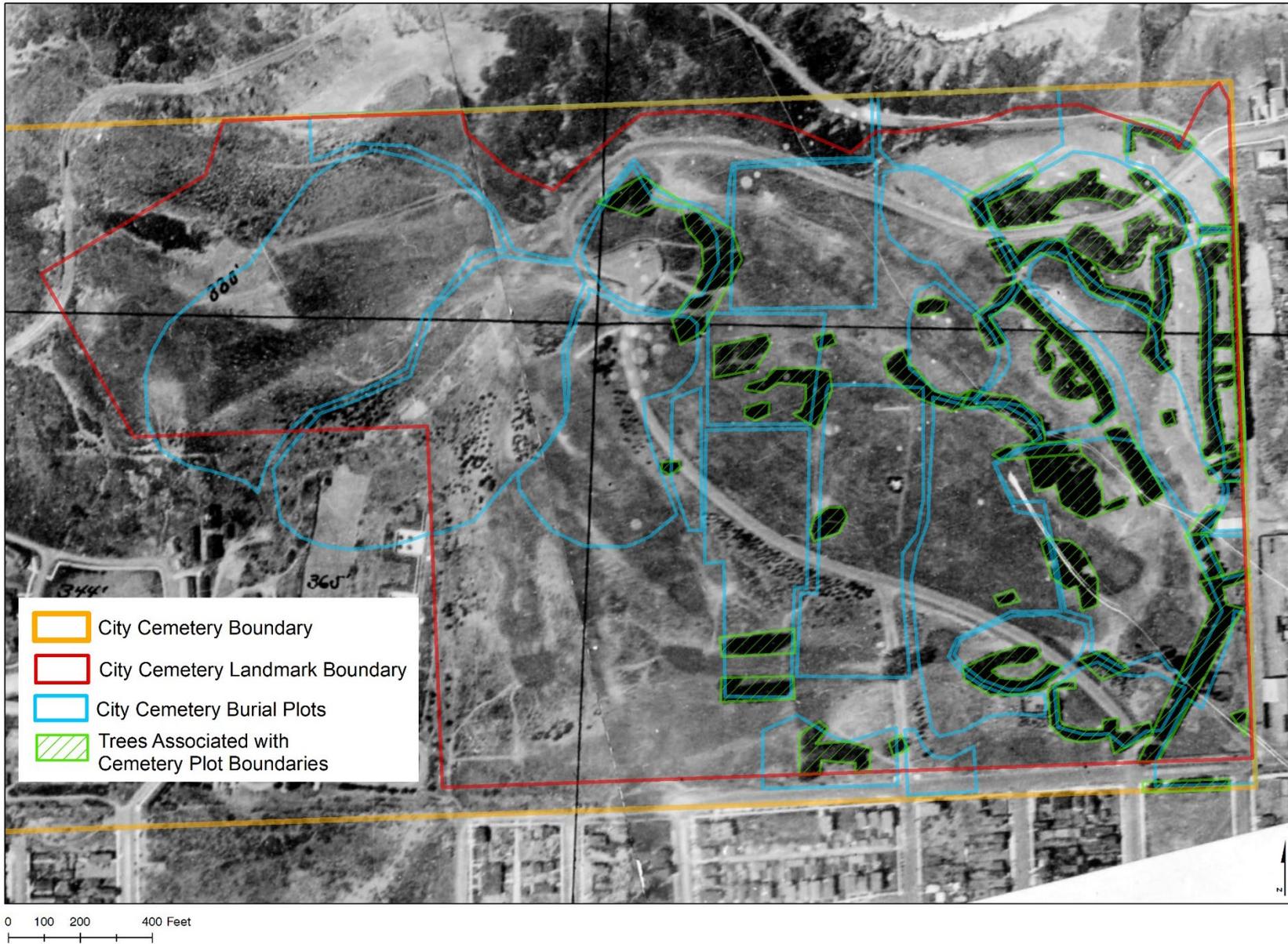


Figure 20. Lincoln Park c. 1920 aerial photograph, cemetery era trees highlighted (GNRA Archive)



Figure 21. Approximate Location of Cemetery Era Trees in Lincoln Park

Figure 22. Examples of mortuary furniture and grave goods that have been found in Lincoln Park (not to scale)



Chinese name brick (Chattan et al. 1997)



Coffin found during Palace of the Legion of Art in the 1990s (Burns 1994)



Tombstone fragment (Archeo-Tec 2010)



Lambert curbing near Hole 15 and Ladies' Seamen's (Alex Ryder)



Shoe (Archeo-Tec 2010)



Rosary (Chattan et al. 1997)

Figure 23. Examples of remnants of operational infrastructure visible within Lincoln Park in 2018



Brick alignment near eastern boundary of cemetery (Kari Hervey-Lentz)



Brick and concrete structure in bank on eastern boundary of cemetery (Kari Hervey-Lentz)