

File No. 231045

Committee Item No. 2

Board Item No. \_\_\_\_\_

## COMMITTEE/BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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Date: February 26, 2024

Board of Supervisors Meeting:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Prepared by: John Carroll

Date: February 23, 2024

Prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1 [Planning Code - Landmark Designation - Sacred Heart Parish Complex]

2

3 **Ordinance amending the Planning Code to designate the Sacred Heart Parish Complex,**  
 4 **located at 546-548 Fillmore Street, 554 Fillmore Street, 735 Fell Street, and 660 Oak**  
 5 **Street, Assessor's Parcel Block No. 0828, Lot Nos. 12, 21, 22, and 22A, as a Landmark**  
 6 **consistent with the standards set forth in Article 10 of the Planning Code; affirming the**  
 7 **Planning Department's determination under the California Environmental Quality Act;**  
 8 **and making public necessity, convenience, and welfare findings under Planning Code,**  
 9 **Section 302, and findings of consistency with the General Plan, and the eight priority**  
 10 **policies of Planning Code, Section 101.1.**

11 NOTE: **Unchanged Code text and uncodified text** are in plain Arial font.  
 12 **Additions to Codes** are in *single-underline italics Times New Roman font*.  
 13 **Deletions to Codes** are in *strikethrough italics Times New Roman font*.  
 14 **Board amendment additions** are in double-underlined Arial font.  
 15 **Board amendment deletions** are in ~~strikethrough Arial font~~.  
 16 **Asterisks (\* \* \* \*)** indicate the omission of unchanged Code  
 17 subsections or parts of tables.

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

19 Section 1. CEQA and Land Use Findings.

20 (a) The Planning Department has determined that the actions contemplated in this  
 21 ordinance comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (California Public Resources  
 22 Code section 21000 et seq., "CEQA"). Said determination is on file with the Clerk of the  
 23 Board of Supervisors in File No. 231045 and is incorporated herein by reference.

24 (b) Pursuant to Planning Code Section 302, the Board of Supervisors finds that the  
 25 proposed landmark designation of the Sacred Heart Parish Complex, located at 546-548  
 Fillmore Street, 554 Fillmore Street, 735 Fell Street, and 660 Oak Street, Assessor's Parcel  
 Block No. 0828, Lot Nos. 12, 21, 22, 22A, will serve the public necessity, convenience, and

1 welfare, for the reasons set forth in Historic Preservation Commission Resolution No. 1345,  
2 recommending approval of the proposed designation, which is incorporated herein by  
3 reference.

4 (c) On September 20, 2023, the Historic Preservation Commission, in Resolution  
5 No. 1345, adopted findings that the actions contemplated in this ordinance are consistent, on  
6 balance, with the City's General Plan and with the eight priority policies of Planning Code  
7 Section 101.1. The Board adopts these findings as its own.

8  
9 Section 2. General Findings.

10 (a) On October 5, 2016, the Historic Preservation Commission adopted Resolution  
11 No. 806, initiating landmark designation of the Sacred Heart Parish Complex as a San  
12 Francisco Landmark pursuant to Section 1004.1 of the Planning Code. Said resolution is on  
13 file with the Clerk of the Board in Board File No. 231045 and incorporated herein by reference.

14 (b) Pursuant to Section 4.135 of the Charter of the City and County of San Francisco,  
15 the Historic Preservation Commission has authority "to recommend approval, disapproval, or  
16 modification of landmark designations and historic district designations under the Planning  
17 Code to the Board of Supervisors."

18 (c) Historic preservation consultant Elaine Brown Stiles prepared a Landmark  
19 Designation Report for the Sacred Heart Parish Complex. All preparers meet the Secretary of  
20 the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards for historic preservation program staff, as  
21 set forth in Code of Federal Regulations Title 36, Part 61, Appendix A, and Planning  
22 Department staff reviewed the report for accuracy and conformance with the purposes and  
23 standards of Article 10 of the Planning Code.

1 (d) The Historic Preservation Commission, at its regular meeting of  
2 September 20, 2023, reviewed the analysis of the Sacred Heart Parish Complex's historical  
3 significance set forth in the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet dated September 20, 2023.  
4

5 (e) On September 20, 2023, after holding a public hearing on the proposed  
6 designation, and having considered the specialized analyses prepared by consultants and  
7 Planning Department staff, and the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet dated  
8 September 20, 2023, the Historic Preservation Commission recommended designation of the  
9 Sacred Heart Parish Complex as a landmark under Article 10 of the Planning Code in  
10 Resolution No. 1345. Said resolution is on file with the Clerk of the Board in Board File  
11 No. 231045.

12 (f) The Board of Supervisors hereby finds that the Sacred Heart Parish  
13 Complex has a special character and special historical, architectural, and aesthetic interest  
14 and value, and that its designation as a Landmark will further the purposes of and conform to  
15 the standards set forth in Article 10 of the Planning Code. In doing so, the Board hereby  
16 incorporates by reference the findings of the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet dated  
17 September 20, 2023.  
18

19 Section 3. Designation.

20 Pursuant to Section 1004 of the Planning Code, the Sacred Heart Parish Complex,  
21 located at 546-548 Fillmore Street, 554 Fillmore Street, 735 Fell Street, and 660 Oak Street,  
22 Assessor's Parcel Block No. 0828, Lot Nos. 21, 22, 22A, and 12, in, is hereby designated as a  
23 San Francisco Landmark under Article 10 of the Planning Code. Appendix A to Article 10 of  
24 the Planning Code is hereby amended to include this property.  
25

1 Section 4. Required Data.

2 (a) The description, location, and boundary of the Landmark site consists of the parcel  
3 located at 546-548 Fillmore Street, 554 Fillmore Street, 735 Fell Street, and 660 Oak Street,  
4 Assessor's Parcel Block No. 0828, Lot Nos. 21, 22, 22A and 12, in in San Francisco's  
5 Western Addition neighborhood.

6 (b) The characteristics of the Landmark that justify its designation are described and  
7 shown in the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet dated October 5, 2016 and other supporting  
8 materials contained in Planning Department Case No. 2015-005890DES. In brief, the Sacred  
9 Heart Parish Complex is eligible for local designation under National Register of Historic  
10 Places Criteria A (associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the  
11 broad patterns of our history), B (associated with a significant person; and embodies  
12 distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction), and C (represents the  
13 work of a master architect). Under Criterion A, designation of Sacred Heart Parish Complex is  
14 proper due to its association with the growth and development of the Western Addition and  
15 Catholic religious institutions in San Francisco in the late nineteenth and early twentieth  
16 centuries. Under Criterion B, its designation is proper because of its association with  
17 prominent and influential civil rights activist Father Eugene Boyle, pastor of the church from  
18 1968 to 1972. Under Criterion C, it is proper as a distinctive and well-executed example of a  
19 Romanesque Revival-style Catholic parish grouping and for its association with master  
20 architect Thomas J. Welsh.

21 (c) The particular features that shall be preserved, or replaced in-kind as determined  
22 necessary, are those generally shown in photographs and described in the Landmark  
23 Designation Fact Sheet dated September 20, 2023, which can be found in Planning  
24 Department Case No. 2015-005890DES, and which are incorporated in this designation by  
25

1 reference as though fully set forth. Specifically, the following features shall be preserved or  
2 replaced in kind:

3 (1) All exterior elevations, architectural ornament, and rooflines of the Sacred  
4 Heart Parish Complex, which includes the Church, Rectory, School, and Convent buildings,  
5 identified as:

6 (A) Original locations and spatial relationships between the four  
7 component buildings of the Sacred Heart Parish Complex (Church, Rectory, School, and  
8 Convent), identified as;

9 (B) All exterior elevations, form, massing, structure, architectural  
10 ornament, and materials of the Church building, identified as:

11 (i) Form, massing, and roof forms of the rectangular plan nave,  
12 projecting transepts, sacristies, and sanctuary;

13 (ii) Form, massing, and height of square campanile with hipped,  
14 terra cotta tiled roof and a variety of arched and circular openings;

15 (iii) Porch configuration, three primary entrances with wood doors,  
16 and arched and squared window openings, circular opening at half story on the primary  
17 elevation;

18 (iv) Three elongated rectangular window openings on north and  
19 south nave elevations;

20 (v) Circular window openings at the transepts;

21 (vi) Materials including buff colored face and ornamental brick,  
22 and buff colored, slip glazed terra cotta ornament;

23 (vii) Extant stained glass windows with wood sash at north and  
24 south nave elevations, transept, baptistery, narthex, and choir loft; including wood tracery at  
25 the nave and transept;

1 (viii) Bell located in campanile;  
2 (ix) Metal roof ornaments in a cross shape at ridge of church and  
3 campanile;

4 (x) Concrete wall topped by wrought iron fence at north elevation;

5 (C) The exterior elevations, form, massing, structure, architectural  
6 ornament, and materials of the rectory identified as:

7 (i) Rectangular plan and massing of the flat roof, brick main block;

8 (ii) Raised, centered, recessed entrance and exterior vestibule;

9 (iii) Regularly spaced fenestration pattern on front, some with  
10 decorative mullions, and arched window openings at the third floor;

11 (iv) Wood window sash, including decorative muntin patterns  
12 where present;

13 (v) Overhanging cornice supported by paired, oversized brackets  
14 that wraps around to north and south elevations;

15 (vi) Materials including buff colored face and ornamental brick;  
16 molded tin detailing at third story; and stucco ornament below third story and surrounding  
17 entrance;

18 (D) The exterior elevation, form, massing, structure, architectural ornament, and  
19 materials of the school building, identified as:

20 (i) Rectangular plan and massing of the flat roof school building;

21 (ii) Centered, recessed entrance;

22 (iii) Regularly spaced fenestration pattern with arched and  
23 rectangular window openings;

24 (iv) Multi-paned, wood sash windows; multi-paned, wood sash fan  
25 lights at first story;

1 (v) Plaster decorative features surrounding entrance and above  
2 first story windows; frieze separating basement and first floors, frieze separating first and  
3 second stories, and frieze at cornice;

4 (vi) Deeply scored concrete at basement and lightly scored plaster  
5 of first through third stories;

6 (E) The exterior elevations, form, massing, structure, architectural  
7 ornament, and materials of the convent, identified as:

8 (i) Rectangular plan and massing of flat roof main building and  
9 chapel ell;

10 (ii) Raised, centered entrance with vestibule, arched main  
11 entrance, and wood door at primary façade;

12 (iii) Regularly spaced fenestration pattern with rectangular  
13 openings at first floor and arched openings at second floor of primary façade;

14 (iv) Wood, multi-paned, casement window sash;

15 (v) Smooth stucco cladding;

16 (vi) Decorative plaster details at window and door openings,  
17 including balconette and stucco cross on primary façade;

18 (vii) Frieze near cornice and slightly overhanging cornice with  
19 terra cotta roof tiles that wrap around to east and west elevations;

20 (viii) Extant stained glass windows that previously filled the  
21 convent chapel window openings.

22  
23  
24 Section 5. Effective Date. This ordinance shall become effective 30 days after  
25 enactment. Enactment occurs when the Mayor signs the ordinance, the Mayor returns the



1 ordinance unsigned or does not sign the ordinance within ten days of receiving it, or the Board  
2 of Supervisors overrides the Mayor's veto of the ordinance.

3

4 APPROVED AS TO FORM:  
5 DENNIS J. HERRERA, City Attorney

6 By: /s/ Peter R. Miljanich  
7 PETER R. MILJANICH  
8 Deputy City Attorney

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## **LEGISLATIVE DIGEST**

[Planning Code - Landmark designation of 546-548 Fillmore Street, 554 Fillmore Street, 735 Fell Street, and 660 Oak Street (also known as the Sacred Heart Parish Complex)]

**Ordinance amending the Planning Code to designate 546-548 Fillmore Street, 554 Fillmore Street, 735 Fell Street, and 660 Oak Street (also known as the Sacred Heart Parish Complex), Lots Nos. 21, 22, 22A and 12 in Assessor's Block No. 0828, as a Landmark under Article 10; affirming the Planning Department's determination under the California Environmental Quality Act; and making findings under Planning Code Section 302, and findings of consistency with the General Plan, and the eight priority policies of Planning Code, Section 101.1.**

### Existing Law

Under Article 10, Section 1004 of the Planning Code, the Board of Supervisors may, by ordinance, designate an individual structure that has special character or special historical, architectural or aesthetic interest or value as a City landmark. Once a structure has been named a landmark, any construction, alteration, removal or demolition for which a City permit is required necessitates a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Preservation Commission ("HPC"). (Planning Code Section 1006; Charter of the City and County of San Francisco, Section 4.135.) Thus, landmark designation affords a high degree of protection to historic and architectural structures of merit in the City. There are currently more than 260 individual landmarks in the City under Article 10, in addition to other structures and districts in the downtown area that are protected under Article 11. (See Appendix A to Article 10.)

### Amendments to Current Law

This ordinance amends the Planning Code to add a new historic landmark to the list of individual landmarks under Article 10: 546-548 Fillmore Street, 554 Fillmore Street, 735 Fell Street, and 660 Oak Street (known as Sacred Heart Parish Complex).

The ordinance finds that the Sacred Heart Parish Complex is eligible for designation as a City landmark under National Register of Historic Places Criteria A, B and C (as it is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; embodies distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction; and represents the work of a master). Specifically, designation of the Sacred Heart Parish Complex is proper given its association with the growth and development of the Western Addition and Catholic religious institutions in San Francisco in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; with prominent and influential civil rights activist Father Eugene Boyle, pastor of the church from 1968 to 1972; as

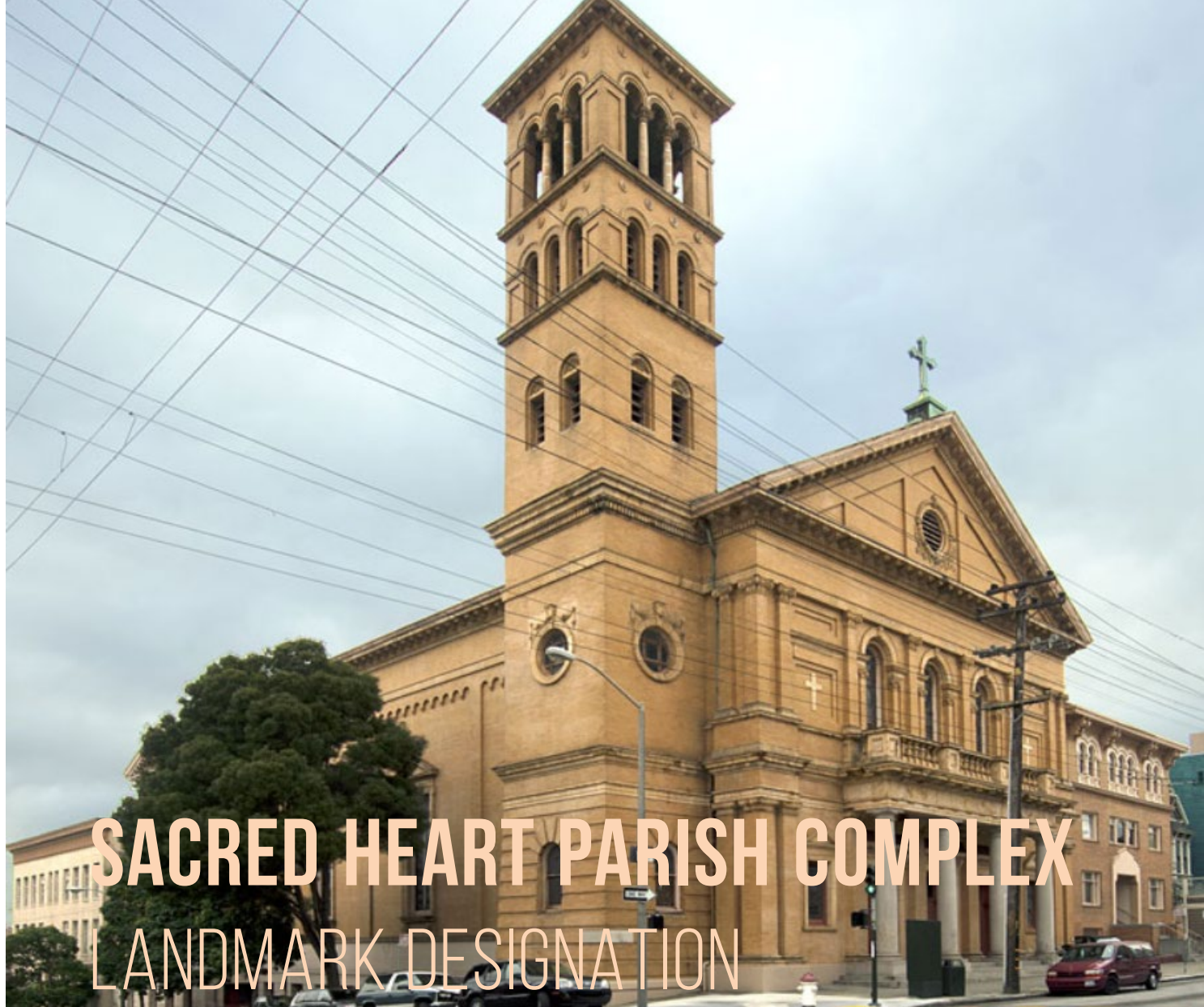
a distinctive and well-executed example of a Romanesque Revival-style Catholic parish grouping and for its association with master architect Thomas J. Welsh.

As required by Section 1004, the ordinance lists the particular exterior and interior features that shall be preserved, or replaced in-kind as determined necessary.

#### Background Information

The landmark designation was initiated by the HPC pursuant to its authority under the Charter to recommend approval, disapproval, or modification of landmark designations and historic district designations under the Planning Code to the Board of Supervisors. The HPC held a hearing to initiate the landmark designation of the Sacred Heart Parish Complex on October 5, 2016. On September 20, 2023, after holding a public hearing on the proposed designation and having considered the Landmark Designation Case Report prepared by Planning Department staff Shannon Ferguson, the HPC voted to recommend approval of the Sacred Heart Parish Complex to the Board of Supervisors.

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# SACRED HEART PARISH COMPLEX

## LANDMARK DESIGNATION

**Pilar LaValley**

Senior Preservation Planner / February 12, 2024 / BOS – Land Use & Transportation Committee

# Sacred Heart Parish Complex

## Church

1898 & 1909



## Rectory

1891 & 1906



## School

1926



## Father Boyle



## Convent

1936





**THANK YOU**



**Pilar LaValley**  
Senior Preservation Planner  
San Francisco Planning

[pilar.lavalley@sfgov.org](mailto:pilar.lavalley@sfgov.org)  
[www.sfplanning.org](http://www.sfplanning.org)

**San Francisco  
Planning**

Sacred Heart Church and School, view east on Fell Street, 1939  
SF Public Library, Historical Photograph Collection



October 10, 2023

Ms. Angela Calvillo, Clerk  
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors  
City Hall  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 244  
San Francisco, CA 94102

Re: **Sacred Heart Parish Complex Landmark Designation**  
Planning Department File No. 2015-005890DES

Dear Ms. Calvillo,

On September 20, 2023, the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission (hereinafter "HPC") conducted a duly noticed public hearing at a regularly scheduled meeting to consider a recommendation for landmark designation of 546-548 & 554 Fillmore Street, 735 Fell Street, 660 Oak Street, known historically as the Sacred Heart Parish Church Complex, to the Board of Supervisors. At the hearing, the HPC voted unanimously to approve a resolution to recommend landmark designation pursuant to Article 10 of the Planning Code.

The proposed amendments have been determined to be categorically exempt from environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act Section 15060(c)(2).

Please find attached documents relating to the HPC's action. If you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Aaron D. Starr".

Aaron D. Starr  
Manager of Legislative Affairs

cc: John Carroll, Assistant Clerk of the Board  
Peter Miljanich, City Attorney's Office



# LANDMARK DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**HEARING DATE: SEPTEMBER 20, 2023**

**Record No.:** 2015-005890DES  
**Project Address:** 546-548 & 554 Fillmore Street, 735 Fell Street, 660 Oak Street (Sacred Heart Parish Complex)  
**Zoning:** RM-3 Residential-Mixed Medium Density and RM-1 Residential-Mixed Low Density; 40-X height and bulk district  
**Block/Lots:** 0828/021, 022, 022A and 012  
**Project Sponsor:** Historic Preservation Fund Committee  
**Property Owners:** Noe Vista LLC, 41 Dorman Ave Ste 5, San Francisco, CA 94124 and 554 Fillmore Street LLC, P.O. Box 14039, San Francisco, CA 94114  
**Staff Contact:** Shannon M. Ferguson 628-652-7354  
Shannon.Ferguson@sfgov.org

**Recommendation:** Recommend Landmark Designation to the Board of Supervisors

## Project Description

On October 5, 2016, the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) adopted Resolution No. 806 to initiate landmark designation of 546-548 Fillmore Street, 554 Fillmore Street, 735 Fell Street, 660 Oak Street, known historically as the Sacred Heart Parish Complex (“subject property”), pursuant to Article 10 of the Planning Code. Under Article 10, initiation and recommendation are two distinct steps of the landmark designation process which require separate hearings and resolutions.

After consulting with the property owner of the Church, the Department recommends including only exterior character defining features in the landmark designation, in order to retain the property owner’s flexibility to pursue adaptive reuse of the building. Exterior character defining features would remain the same as proposed during initiation.

The item before the HPC is consideration of a Resolution to Recommend Article 10 landmark designation of the subject property to the Board of Supervisors under Article 10 of the Planning Code, Section 1004.1.



## **Basis for Recommendation**

The Department recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission recommend to the Board of Supervisors landmark designation of Sacred Heart Parish Complex as it is individually eligible for association with the growth and development of the Western Addition and Catholic religious institutions in San Francisco in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; is associated with prominent and influential civil rights activist Father Eugene Boyle, pastor of the church from 1968 to 1972; and is a distinctive and well-executed example of a Romanesque Revival-style Catholic parish grouping; and as the work of architect of merit Thomas J. Welsh.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Draft Resolution Recommending Landmark Designation  
Resolution No. 806 Initiating Landmark Designation  
Draft Landmark Designation Ordinance  
Executive Summary Initiating Landmark Designation  
Landmark Designation Fact Sheet dated September 20, 2023  
Maps and Context Images



# LANDMARK RESOLUTION RECOMMENDATION DRAFT RESOLUTION NO. XXXX

**HEARING DATE: SEPTEMBER 20, 2023**

**Record No.:** 2015-005890DES

**Project Address:** 546-548 & 554 Fillmore Street, 735 Fell Street, 660 Oak Street (Sacred Heart Parish Complex)

**Zoning:** RM-3 Residential-Mixed Medium Density and RM-1 Residential-Mixed Low Density, 40-X height and bulk district

**Block/Lots:** 0828/021, 022, 022A and 012

**Project Sponsor:** Historic Preservation Fund Committee

**Property Owners:** Noe Vista LLC, 41 Dorman Ave Ste 5, San Francisco, CA 94124 and 554 Fillmore Street LLC, P.O. Box 14039, San Francisco, CA 94114

**Staff Contact:** Shannon M. Ferguson 628-652-7354  
Shannon.Ferguson@sfgov.org

RESOLUTION TO RECOMMEND TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS LANDMARK DESIGNATION OF SACRED HEART PARISH COMPLEX (546-548 FILLMORE STREET, 554 FILLMORE STREET, 735 FELL STREET, 660 OAK STREET), ASSESSOR'S PARCEL BLOCK NO. 0828, LOT NOS. 021, 022, 022A, 012, AS LANDMARK NO. XXX CONSISTENT WITH THE PURPOSES AND STANDARDS OF ARTICLE 10

1. WHEREAS, Historic Preservation Consultant Elaine Brown Stiles, who meets the Secretary of Interior's Professional Qualification Standards, prepared the Landmark Designation Report for 546-548 Fillmore Street, 554 Fillmore Street, 735 Fell Street, 660 Oak Street (aka Sacred Heart Parish Complex), which was reviewed by Department Staff Shannon Ferguson, who meet the Secretary of Interior's Professional Qualification Standards, for accuracy and conformance with the purposes and standards of Article 10; and
2. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission, at its regular meeting of October 5, 2016, reviewed Department staff's analysis of 546-548 Fillmore Street, 554 Fillmore Street, 735 Fell Street, 660 Oak Street (aka Sacred Heart Parish Complex) historical significance per Article 10 as part of the Landmark Designation Case Report dated October 5, 2016 and initiated Landmark designation process through Resolution 806; and
3. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the 546-548 Fillmore Street, 554 Fillmore Street, 735 Fell Street, 660 Oak Street (aka Sacred Heart Parish Complex) nomination is in the form prescribed by the Historic Preservation Commission and contains supporting historic, architectural,

and/or cultural documentation; and

4. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that 546-548 Fillmore Street, 554 Fillmore Street, 735 Fell Street, 660 Oak Street, (aka Sacred Heart Parish Complex), which includes the former rectory, church, school and convent buildings, is associated with the growth and development of the Western Addition and Catholic religious institutions in San Francisco in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; is associated with prominent and influential civil rights activist Father Eugene Boyle, pastor of the church from 1968 to 1972; and is a distinctive and well-executed example of a Romanesque Revival-style Catholic parish grouping; and as the work of architect of merit Thomas J. Welsh; and
5. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that 546-548 Fillmore Street, 554 Fillmore Street, 735 Fell Street, 660 Oak Street (aka Sacred Heart Parish Complex) meets the eligibility requirements per Section 1004 of the Planning Code and warrants consideration for Article 10 landmark designation; and
6. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the boundaries and the list of exterior and interior character-defining features, as identified in the Landmark Ordinance, should be considered for preservation under the proposed landmark designation as they relate to the building's historical significance and retain historical integrity; and
7. WHEREAS, the proposed designation is consistent with the General Plan priority policies pursuant to Planning Code sections 101.1 and 302; and furthers Priority Policy No. 7, which states that historic buildings be preserved; and
8. WHEREAS, the Department has determined that landmark designation is exempt from environmental review, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15308 (Class Eight - Categorical); and
9. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends to the Board of Supervisors approval of landmark designation of 546-548 Fillmore Street, 554 Fillmore Street, 735 Fell Street, 660 Oak Street (aka Sacred Heart Parish Complex), Assessor's Block 0828, Lots 021, 022, 022A and 012 pursuant to Article 10 of the Planning Code.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Historic Preservation Commission at its meeting on September 20, 2023.

Jonas P. Ionin

Commission Secretary

AYES:

NAYS:

ABSENT:

ADOPTED: September 20, 2023



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

## Historic Preservation Commission

### Resolution No. 806

HEARING DATE OCTOBER 5, 2016

1650 Mission St.  
Suite 400  
San Francisco,  
CA 94103-2479

Reception:  
415.558.6378

Fax:  
415.558.6409

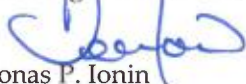
Planning  
Information:  
415.558.6377

**RESOLUTION TO INITIATE DESIGNATION OF 546-548 FILLMORE STREET, 554 FILLMORE STREET, 735 FELL STREET AND 660 OAK STREET, HISTORICALLY KNOWN AS THE SACRED HEART PARISH COMPLEX, LOTS 21, 22, 22A AND 12 IN ASSESSOR'S BLOCK 828, AS ARTICLE 10 LANDMARK.**

1. WHEREAS, Historic Preservation Consultant Elaine Brown Stiles, who meets the Secretary of Interior's Professional Qualification Standards, prepared the Landmark Designation Report for Sacred Heart Parish Complex, which was reviewed by Department Staff Shannon Ferguson and Tim Frye, who meet the Secretary of Interior's Professional Qualification Standards, for accuracy and conformance with the purposes and standards of Article 10; and
2. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission, at its regular meeting of June 15, 2016, reviewed Department staff's analysis of Sacred Heart Parish Complex's historical significance per Article 10 as part of the Landmark Designation Case Report dated October 5, 2016; and
3. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the boundaries and the list of exterior and interior character-defining features, as identified in the Landmark Designation Case Report dated October 5, 2016, should be considered for preservation under the proposed landmark designation as they relate to the building's historical significance and retain historical integrity; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby initiates designation of Sacred Heart Parish Complex, Assessor's Block 828, Lots, 21, 22, 22A, and 12 as an Article 10 Landmark pursuant to Article 10 of the Planning Code.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Historic Preservation Commission at its meeting on October 5, 2016.

  
Jonas P. Ionin  
Commission Secretary

AYES: Wolfram, Hyland, Hasz, Johns, Johnck, Matsuda, Pearlman

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ADOPTED: October 5, 2016

[Planning Code - Landmark Designation - Sacred Heart Parish Complex]

**Ordinance amending the Planning Code to designate the Sacred Heart Parish Complex, located at 546-548 Fillmore Street, 554 Fillmore Street, 735 Fell Street, and 660 Oak Street, Assessor’s Parcel Block No. 0828, Lot Nos. 12, 21, 22, and 22A, as a Landmark consistent with the standards set forth in Article 10 of the Planning Code; affirming the Planning Department’s determination under the California Environmental Quality Act; and making public necessity, convenience, and welfare findings under Planning Code, Section 302, and findings of consistency with the General Plan and the eight priority policies of Planning Code Section 101.1.**

NOTE: **Unchanged Code text and uncodified text** are in plain Arial font. **Additions to Codes** are in *single-underline italics Times New Roman font*. **Deletions to Codes** are in *strikethrough italics Times New Roman font*. **Board amendment additions** are in double-underlined Arial font. **Board amendment deletions** are in ~~strikethrough Arial font~~. **Asterisks (\* \* \* \*)** indicate the omission of unchanged Code subsections or parts of tables.

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

Section 1. CEQA and Land Use Findings.

(a) The Planning Department has determined that the actions contemplated in this ordinance comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (California Public Resources Code section 21000 et seq., "CEQA"). Said determination is on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors in File No. \_\_\_\_\_ and is incorporated herein by reference.

(b) Pursuant to Planning Code Section 302, the Board of Supervisors finds that the proposed landmark designation of the Sacred Heart Parish Complex, located at 546-548 Fillmore Street, 554 Fillmore Street, 735 Fell Street, and 660 Oak Street, Assessor’s Parcel Block No. 0828, Lot Nos. 12, 21, 22, 22A, will serve the public necessity, convenience, and welfare, for the reasons set forth in Historic Preservation Commission Resolution No. \_\_\_\_\_,

1 recommending approval of the proposed designation, which is incorporated herein by  
2 reference.

3 (c) On September 20, 2023, the Historic Preservation Commission, in Resolution No.  
4 \_\_\_\_\_, adopted findings that the actions contemplated in this ordinance are  
5 consistent, on balance, with the City's General Plan and with the eight priority policies of  
6 Planning Code Section 101.1. The Board adopts these findings as its own.

7

8 Section 2. General Findings.

9 (a) On October 5, 2016, the Historic Preservation Commission adopted Resolution No.  
10 806, initiating landmark designation of the Sacred Heart Parish Complex as a San Francisco  
11 Landmark pursuant to Section 1004.1 of the Planning Code. Said resolution is on file with the  
12 Clerk of the Board in Board File No. \_\_\_\_\_ and incorporated herein by reference.

13 (b) Pursuant to Section 4.135 of the Charter of the City and County of San Francisco,  
14 the Historic Preservation Commission has authority "to recommend approval, disapproval, or  
15 modification of landmark designations and historic district designations under the Planning  
16 Code to the Board of Supervisors."

17 (c) Historic preservation consultant Elaine Brown Stiles prepared a Landmark  
18 Designation Report dated September 2016 for the Sacred Heart Parish Complex. All  
19 preparers meet the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards for historic  
20 preservation program staff, as set forth in Code of Federal Regulations Title 36, Part 61,  
21 Appendix A, and Planning Department staff reviewed the report for accuracy and  
22 conformance with the purposes and standards of Article 10 of the Planning Code.

23 (d) The Historic Preservation Commission, at its regular meeting of September  
24 20, 2023, reviewed the analysis of the Sacred Heart Parish Complex's historical significance  
25 set forth in the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet dated September 20, 2023.

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(e) On September 20, 2023, after holding a public hearing on the proposed designation, and having considered the specialized analyses prepared by consultants and Planning Department staff, and the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet dated September 20, 2023, the Historic Preservation Commission recommended designation of the Sacred Heart Parish Complex as a landmark under Article 10 of the Planning Code in Resolution No. \_\_\_\_\_. Said resolution is on file with the Clerk of the Board in Board File No. \_\_\_\_\_.

(f) The Board of Supervisors hereby finds that the Sacred Heart Parish Complex has a special character and special historical, architectural, and aesthetic interest and value, and that its designation as a Landmark will further the purposes of and conform to the standards set forth in Article 10 of the Planning Code. In doing so, the Board hereby incorporates by reference the findings of the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet dated September 20, 2023.

Section 3. Designation.

Pursuant to Section 1004 of the Planning Code, the Sacred Heart Parish Complex, located at 546-548 Fillmore Street, 554 Fillmore Street, 735 Fell Street, and 660 Oak Street, Assessor’s Parcel Block No. 0828, Lot Nos. 21, 22, 22A, and 12, in, is hereby designated as a San Francisco Landmark under Article 10 of the Planning Code. Appendix A to Article 10 of the Planning Code is hereby amended to include this property.

Section 4. Required Data.

(a) The description, location, and boundary of the Landmark site consists of the parcel located at 546-548 Fillmore Street, 554 Fillmore Street, 735 Fell Street, and 660 Oak Street,

1 Assessor's Parcel Block No. 0828, Lot Nos. 21, 22, 22A and 12, in in San Francisco's  
2 Western Addition neighborhood.

3 (b) The characteristics of the Landmark that justify its designation are described and  
4 shown in the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet dated September 20, 2016 and other  
5 supporting materials contained in Planning Department Case Docket No. 2015-005890DES.  
6 In brief, the Sacred Heart Parish Complex is eligible for local designation under National  
7 Register of Historic Places Criteria A (associated with events that have made a significant  
8 contribution to the broad patterns of our history), B (associated with a significant person; and  
9 embodies distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction), and C  
10 (represents the work of a master architect). Under Criterion A, designation of Sacred Heart  
11 Parish Complex is proper due to its association with the growth and development of the  
12 Western Addition and Catholic religious institutions in San Francisco in the late nineteenth  
13 and early twentieth centuries. Under Criterion B, its designation is proper because of its  
14 association with prominent and influential civil rights activist Father Eugene Boyle, pastor of  
15 the church from 1968 to 1972. Under Criterion C, it is proper as a distinctive and  
16 well-executed example of a Romanesque Revival-style Catholic parish grouping and for its  
17 association with master architect Thomas J. Welsh.

18 (c) The particular features that shall be preserved, or replaced in-kind as determined  
19 necessary, are those generally shown in photographs and described in the Landmark  
20 Designation Fact Sheet dated September 20, 2023, which can be found in Planning  
21 Department Docket No. 2015-005890DES, and which are incorporated in this designation by  
22 reference as though fully set forth. Specifically, the following features shall be preserved or  
23 replaced in kind:

24 (1) All exterior elevations, architectural ornament, and rooflines of the Sacred  
25 Heart Parish Complex, identified as:



1 (A) Original locations and spatial relationships between the four  
2 component buildings of the Sacred Heart Parish Complex;

3 (B) All exterior elevations, form, massing, structure, architectural  
4 ornament, and materials of the church, identified as:

5 (i) Form, massing, and roof forms of the rectangular plan nave,  
6 projecting transepts, sacristies, and sanctuary;

7 (ii) Form, massing, and height of square campanile with hipped,  
8 terra cotta tiled roof and a variety of arched and circular openings;

9 (iii) Porch configuration, three primary entrances with wood doors,  
10 and arched and squared window openings, circular opening at half story on the primary  
11 elevation;

12 (iv) Three elongated rectangular window openings on north and  
13 south nave elevations;

14 (v) Circular window openings at the transepts;

15 (vi) Materials including buff colored face and ornamental brick,  
16 and buff colored, slip glazed terra cotta ornament;

17 (vii) Extant stained glass windows with wood sash at north and  
18 south nave elevations, transept, baptistery, narthex, and choir loft; including wood tracery at  
19 the nave and transept;

20 (viii) Bell located in campanile;

21 (ix) Metal roof ornaments in a cross shape at ridge of church and  
22 campanile;

23 (x) Concrete wall topped by wrought iron fence at north elevation;

24 (xi) Elevated, enclosed bridge connecting the rectory to the choir loft of the  
25 church.

1 (C) The exterior elevations, form, massing, structure, architectural  
2 ornament, and materials of the rectory identified as:

- 3 (i) Rectangular plan and massing of the flat roof, brick main block;
- 4 (ii) Raised, centered, recessed entrance and exterior vestibule;
- 5 (iii) Regularly spaced fenestration pattern on front, some with  
6 decorative mullions, and arched window openings at the third floor;
- 7 (iv) Wood window sash, including decorative muntin patterns  
8 where present;
- 9 (v) Overhanging cornice supported by paired, oversized brackets  
10 that wraps around to north and south elevations;
- 11 (vi) Materials including buff colored face and ornamental brick;  
12 molded tin detailing at third story; and stucco ornament below third story and surrounding  
13 entrance;

14 (D) The exterior elevation, form, massing, structure, architectural ornament, and  
15 materials of the school building identified as:

- 16 (i) Rectangular plan and massing of the flat roof school building;
- 17 (ii) Centered, recessed entrance;
- 18 (iii) Regularly spaced fenestration pattern with arched and  
19 rectangular window openings;
- 20 (iv) Multi-paned, wood sash windows; multi-paned, wood sash fan  
21 lights at first story;
- 22 (v) Plaster decorative features surrounding entrance and above  
23 first story windows; frieze separating basement and first floors, frieze separating first and  
24 second stories, and frieze at cornice;

1 (vi) Deeply scored concrete at basement and lightly scored plaster  
2 of first through third stories;

3 (E) The exterior elevations, form, massing, structure, architectural  
4 ornament, and materials of the convent, identified as:

5 (i) Rectangular plan and massing of flat roof main building and  
6 chapel ell;

7 (ii) Raised, centered entrance with vestibule, arched main  
8 entrance, and wood door at primary façade;

9 (iii) Regularly spaced fenestration pattern with rectangular  
10 openings at first floor and arched openings at second floor of primary façade;

11 (iv) Wood, multi-paned, casement window sash;

12 (v) Smooth stucco cladding;

13 (vi) Decorative plaster details at window and door openings,  
14 including balconette and stucco cross on primary façade;

15 (vii) Frieze near cornice and slightly overhanging cornice with  
16 terra cotta roof tiles that wrap around to east and west elevations;

17 (viii) Extant stained glass windows that previously filled the chapel  
18 window openings of the convent.

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20  
21 Section 5. Effective Date. This ordinance shall become effective 30 days after  
22 enactment. Enactment occurs when the Mayor signs the ordinance, the Mayor returns the  
23 ordinance unsigned or does not sign the ordinance within ten days of receiving it, or the Board  
24 of Supervisors overrides the Mayor's veto of the ordinance.

1 APPROVED AS TO FORM:  
2 DENNIS J. HERRERA, City Attorney

3 By: /s/ Peter R. Miljanich  
4 PETER R. MILJANICH  
5 Deputy City Attorney

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# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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## Landmark Designation Case Report

*Hearing Date:* October 5, 2016  
*Case No.:* 2015-005890DES  
*Project Address:* 546-548 Fillmore Street, 554 Fillmore Street, 735 Fell Street,  
660 Oak Street  
*Zoning:* RM-3 Residential-Mixed, Medium Density; RM-1 Residential-  
Mixed, Low Density  
*Block/Lot:* 0828/021, 0828/022, 0828/022A, 0828/012  
*Property Owner:* Noe Vista LLC  
3265 17<sup>th</sup> St., Ste. 403  
San Francisco, CA 94110  
554 Fillmore Street LLC  
1760 Mission St.  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
*Staff Contact:* Shannon Ferguson – (415) 575-9074  
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### PROPERTY DESCRIPTION & SURROUNDING LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

The Sacred Heart Parish Complex is situated on four contiguous lots on the city block bounded by Fillmore Street to the west, Fell Street to the north, Webster Street to the east, and Oak Street to the south in the Western Addition neighborhood, a largely residential neighborhood characterized by three and four story multi-family buildings. Sacred Heart Church (1898, 1909) is set at the southeast corner of Fillmore and Fell streets. Sacred Heart School (1926) is immediately east of the church on Fell Street. The rectory (ca. 1891, 1906) is immediately south of the church on Fillmore Street. The convent (1936) fronts Oak Street. An adjacent lot associated with the convent contains a paved parking area. The four lots converge in the center of the block to form an enclosed school yard.

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The case before the Historic Preservation Commission is the consideration of the initiation of landmark designation of Sacred Heart Parish Complex 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.

## 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 Sacred Heart Parish Complex, will help to preserve an important historical resource that is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction; and was designed by a master architect.

## BACKGROUND / PREVIOUS ACTIONS

The Sacred Heart Parish Complex landmark designation report was funded by the Historic Preservation Fund Committee and prepared by Elaine Stiles, Historic Preservation Consultant.

## OTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED

If the Historic Preservation Commission adopts a resolution to initiate designation of the subject property as an Article 10 landmark at its October 5, 2016 hearing and directs staff to finalize the landmark designation report, a second Historic Preservation Commission hearing will be scheduled for the

Commission's recommendation of approval of the designation. At the second hearing, if the Historic Preservation Commission recommends approval of the designation, its recommendation will be sent by the Department to the Board of Supervisors. 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

There is no known public or neighborhood opposition to designation of Sacred Heart Parish Complex as an Article 10 landmark. The Department received several letters in support of landmark designation (attached). The Department will provide any public correspondence received after the submittal of this report in the Historic Preservation Commission's correspondence folder.

## PROPERTY OWNER INPUT

Property owner Noe Vista LLC and 554 Fillmore Street LLC have been informed of the landmark designation and have worked with staff to refine and finalize the character defining features of the landmark designation.

## STAFF ANALYSIS

The case report and following analysis 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 outlined below under the Significance and Integrity sections of this case report.

### SIGNIFICANCE

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

The Sacred Heart Parish Complex is significant for its association with the growth and development of the Western Addition and Catholic religious institutions in San Francisco in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Sacred Heart was the first Catholic parish established in western San Francisco and was an important religious, social, and education center for the district's predominantly Catholic population. The significance of Sacred Heart as a social institution in the Western Addition was particularly pronounced during the late 1960s and early 1970s when the complex was a center of secular and religious social justice and civil rights activism during a turbulent and critical time in the history of the neighborhood.

*PERSONS: Association with a Significant Person*

Sacred Heart Parish Complex is significant for its association with Father Eugene Boyle, who presided over one of the most active, influential, and controversial periods of parish ministry and community involvement at Sacred Heart. Boyle was a prominent and influential civil rights activist in the Archdiocese of San Francisco and in northern California during the 1960s and 1970s. Locally, he exemplified the new clerical activism that emerged in the Catholic Church after the Second Vatican Council urged clergy and laity to be more active in the secular world. Father Boyle organized and served as the public face for Catholic involvement in the Black civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, urban renewal, fair housing, and the farm worker labor movement in San Francisco. Boyle was pastor at Sacred



Heart from 1968-1972, and while at Sacred Heart he made the church a center of activism in the turbulent Western Addition and greater San Francisco. Boyle threw open the doors of the church to secular activist groups ranging from Vietnam Veterans against the War to the Black Panthers during a tense and transformative period in the social and racial landscape of the city. Boyle's ebullient liberalism and commitment to community activism marked the leading edge of Catholic involvement in the social justice issues of the mid twentieth century. Father Boyle passed away May 24, 2016 at age 94.

*ARCHITECTURE: Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction and represent the work of a master*

The component buildings of the Sacred Heart Parish Complex embody the distinctive characteristics of the Romanesque Revival style, which was widely popular for religious and civic buildings in San Francisco. As is common in Catholic parish groupings, the church building has the most developed Romanesque Revival architectural scheme, marking a higher level of artistic investment in the holy site of worship. The church building stands out as the most fully developed example of Italian-influenced Romanesque Revival liturgical architecture in San Francisco. The rectory, school, and convent have more modest Romanesque Revival architectural detailing.

The church and rectory are also significant for their association with master architect Thomas J. Welsh, who had a prolific and successful architectural career in northern California. Welsh designed 400 buildings in the City of San Francisco. His work demonstrates that he was well-versed in the popular styles of his day; his commissions included Italianate domestic architecture, Gothic Revival ecclesiastical architecture, and conservative Romanesque religious building designs. He also demonstrated his awareness of then cutting-edge design developments such as Romanesque Revival architecture in his ecclesiastical and civic work. Welsh's surviving works include three designated San Francisco Landmarks: the Irving M. Scott School (1895, City Landmark #138) at 1060 Tennessee Street; the Burr Residence (1878, City Landmark # 31) at Vallejo and Franklin streets and the McMorry-Lagan House (1884, City Landmark #164).

#### PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE

Staff recommends two periods of significance: ca. 1891-1936 and 1968-1972. The first period encompasses the full development of the component buildings in the parish complex and the second period encompasses the tenure of Father Eugene and the most vigorous period of social justice activism at the parish.

This recommendation differs from the designation report, which has a period of significance of 1891-1972. Staff believes that this time period is overly long. Two periods of significance better encompass the Complex's association with events, persons and architecture.

#### INTEGRITY

The Sacred Heart Parish Complex retains integrity of location, design, and setting. The component buildings remain in their original locations and in the same relation to each other as in the period of significance. The late nineteenth and early twentieth-century residential and neighborhood-scale commercial setting for the buildings also remains consistent with the period of significance. The component buildings have undergone few exterior alterations since the end of the period of significance and retain sufficient integrity of design, materials, workmanship, and feeling to convey their historic

religious, education, and residential uses. The parish complex has lost some integrity of association with conversion of the church to recreational use, however the high degree of integrity of setting, materials, design, workmanship, and feeling for the church building more than compensate for this loss. The other component buildings retain integrity of association with their historic uses as educational and residential facilities.

#### 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.

In an effort to provide clarity, staff has refined the character defining features described in the Landmark Designation Report on pages 77-78, to the following list of exterior and interior character defining features of Sacred Heart Parish Complex. Staff has also removed the following items from the character defining features:

- (1) **Wood connector between the choir loft and rectory.** Although the connector was constructed during the period of significance, it has not taken on significance over time.
- (2) **Interior volumes, materials and finishes of the narthex, baptistery and sanctuary.** The narthex, baptistery and sanctuary have since been altered. It should be noted that extant stained glass windows in narthex and baptistery are character defining features.

Revised per Department Staff, the exterior and interior character defining features include the following:

#### **Parish Complex:**

- Original locations and spatial relationships between the four component buildings

#### **Church**

All exterior elevations, form, massing, structure, architectural ornament and materials identified as:

- Form, massing, and roof forms of the rectangular plan nave, projecting transepts, sacristies, and sanctuary
- Form, massing, and height of square campanile with hipped, terra cotta tiled roof and a variety of arched and circular openings
- Porch configuration, three primary entrances with wood doors, and arched and squared window openings, circular opening at half story on the primary elevation
- Three elongated rectangular window openings on north and south nave elevations
- Circular window openings at the transepts
- Materials including buff colored face and ornamental brick, and buff colored, slip glazed terra cotta ornament
- Extant stained glass windows with wood sash at north and south nave elevations, transept, baptistery, narthex, and choir loft; including wood tracery at the nave and transept

- Bell located in campanile
- Metal roof ornaments in a cross shape at ridge of church and campanile
- Concrete wall topped by wrought iron fence at north elevation

Publicly accessible interior spaces of the Church have the following character defining features:

- Interior volume of the nave
- Interior volume of the choir loft
- Coved nave ceiling
- Materials including the wood floors and doors, oak wood wainscoting, beadboard ceiling paneling at choir loft, wood choir loft frieze and balustrade, cast iron choir loft supports, as well as plaster walls and ceiling
- Decorative plaster finishes including pilasters at nave walls, window and door surrounds at nave walls, wall banding and cornice ornament at nave, arched detailing at east nave wall, and coffered transept ceilings
- Decorative paintings on nave ceiling and decorative stenciling on choir loft walls and ceiling

### **Rectory**

The exterior elevations, form, massing, structure, architectural ornament and materials identified as:

- Rectangular plan and massing of the flat roof, brick main block
- Raised centered, recessed entrance and exterior vestibule
- Regularly spaced fenestration pattern on front, some with decorative mullions, and arched window openings at the third floor
- Wood window sash, including decorative muntin patterns where present
- Overhanging cornice supported by paired, oversized brackets that wraps around to north and south elevations
- Materials including buff colored face and ornamental brick; molded tin detailing at third story; and stucco ornament below third story and surrounding entrance

### **School**

The exterior elevation, form, massing, structure, architectural ornament and materials identified as:

- Rectangular plan and massing of the flat roof school building
- Centered, recessed entrance
- Regularly spaced fenestration pattern with arched and rectangular window openings
- Multi-paned wood sash windows; multi-pane wood sash fan lights at first story
- Plaster decorative features surrounding entrance and above first story windows; frieze separating basement and first floors, frieze separating first and second stories and frieze at cornice
- Deeply scored concrete at basement and lightly scored plaster of first through third stories

### **Convent**

The exterior elevations, form, massing, structure, architectural ornament and materials identified as:

- Rectangular plan and massing of flat roof main building and chapel ell

- Raised, centered entrance with vestibule, arched main entrance and wood door at primary facade
- Regularly spaced fenestration pattern with rectangular openings at first floor and arched openings at second floor of primary facade
- Wood, multi-paned, casement window sash
- Smooth stucco cladding
- Decorative plaster details at window and door openings, including balconette and stucco cross on primary facade
- Frieze near cornice and slightly overhanging cornice with terra cotta roof tiles that wrap around to east and west elevations
- Extant stained glass windows that used to fill the chapel window openings

## INTERIOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION

According to Article 10, Section 1004(c) of the Planning Code, only those interiors that were historically publicly accessible are eligible for listing in Article 10. Article 10, Section 1004(c) of the Planning Code states,

(c) The property included in any such designation shall upon designation be subject to the controls and standards set forth in this Article 10. In addition, the said property shall be subject to the following further controls and standards if imposed by the designating ordinance:

- (1) For a publicly-owned landmark, review of proposed changes to significant interior architectural features.
- (2) For a privately-owned landmark, review of proposed changes requiring a permit to significant interior architectural features in those areas of the landmark that are or historically have been accessible to members of the public. The designating ordinance must clearly describe each significant interior architectural feature subject to this restriction.

The interior of the church nave was historically publicly accessible to the congregation and the neighborhood; therefore it is eligible for protection under Article 10 of the Planning Code. Historically publicly accessible interior spaces in the rectory and school are not included in the character defining features for the parish complex because of subsequent and/or substantial alterations after the end of the period of significance for the complex. The interior spaces of the convent were never historically publicly accessible and are therefore not eligible for landmark consideration per Planning Code Article 10, Section 1004(c).

## BOUNDARIES OF THE LANDMARK SITE

The boundaries of the landmark site encompass all of and limited to lots 12 (convent), 21 (rectory), 22 (church), and 22A (school) in Assessor's Block 828.

## PLANNING DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of the proposed landmark designation of Sacred Heart Parish with the following changes:

- (1) Period of significance of ca. 1891-1936 and 1968-1972.
- (2) Remove wood connector between the choir loft and rectory from character defining features.
- (3) Remove interior volumes, materials and finishes of the narthex, baptistery and sanctuary.

Based on the Department's analysis, Sacred Heart Parish Complex is individually eligible for Article 10 Landmark designation for its association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; its association with the lives of persons significant in our past; as the embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction; and as designed by a master architect.

The Historic Preservation Commission may recommend approval, disapproval, or approval with modifications of the proposed designation Sacred Heart Parish Complex 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 designation, 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. Draft Landmark Designation Report
- B. Draft Motion initiating designation



# LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT



**DRAFT**

## **Sacred Heart Parish Complex**

546 and 554 Fillmore Street, 735 Fell Street, and 660 Oak Street

September 2016

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# Sacred Heart Parish Complex

546 and 554 Fillmore Street, 735 Fell Street, and 660 Oak Street

**Built:** Church, 1898/1909; Rectory, 1891/1906; School, 1926; Convent, 1936  
**Architects:** Thomas J. Welsh/Welsh & Carey (church), Hugh Keenan and Welsh & Carey (rectory), John J. Foley (school and convent)

## OVERVIEW

The Sacred Heart Parish Complex occupies four sites on the city block bounded by Fell, Fillmore, Webster, and Oak streets. The complex is comprised of the 1898/1909 Romanesque Revival-style church and the Romanesque Revival-style ca. 1891/1906 rectory, 1926 school, and 1936 convent.

The Sacred Heart Parish Complex is significant as a distinctive and well-executed example of a Romanesque Revival-style Catholic parish grouping consisting of church, rectory, school and convent. The complex is additionally significant for its association with master architect Thomas J. Welsh, who designed over 400 buildings in San Francisco and was one of the chief practitioners of the Romanesque Revival style in the city. Welsh's Sacred Heart Church and rectory are rare surviving examples of his work; Sacred Heart Church is Welsh's only extant Romanesque Revival church design.

The Sacred Heart Parish Complex is additionally significant for its association with Father Eugene Boyle (1921-2016), pastor of the church from 1968 to 1972. A prominent and influential civil rights activist in northern California, Father Boyle served as the public face for Catholic involvement in the Black civil rights movement, protest of the Vietnam War, fights against urban renewal, fair housing advocacy, and the farm labor movement. At Sacred Heart, Boyle used the parish complex as a platform for a progressive program of Catholic and secular social justice activism. Under his leadership, the parish hosted the Black Panther Party Breakfast Program, meetings of anti-Vietnam War and San Francisco State University student activists, and the start of the 1970 United Farm Workers Union (UFW) lettuce boycott in San Francisco.

The Sacred Heart Parish Complex is also significant for its association with the growth and development of the Western Addition and Catholic religious institutions in San Francisco in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Sacred Heart was the first Catholic parish established in western San Francisco and was an important religious, social, and education center for the district's predominantly Catholic population. The significance of Sacred Heart as a social institution in the Western Addition was particularly pronounced during the late 1960s and early 1970s when the complex was a center of secular and religious social justice and civil rights activism during a turbulent and critical time in the history of the neighborhood.



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## BUILDING DESCRIPTIONS

### SACRED HEART PARISH COMPLEX (SITE)

The Sacred Heart Parish Complex is situated on four contiguous lots on the city block bounded by Fillmore Street (west), Fell Street (north), Webster Street (east), and Oak Street (south) in the Western Addition neighborhood (Figure 1). Sacred Heart Church (1889, 1909) is set at the southeast corner of Fillmore and Fell streets; the church is built out to the street line on Fillmore Street and set back from Fell Street along the nave. A low, concrete retaining wall and cast iron decorative fence line the sidewalk along the setback. The Sacred Heart School (1926) is immediately behind (east) of the church on Fell Street and is set flush with the front lot line. The rectory (ca. 1891, 1906) is immediately south of the church on Fillmore Street with a narrow setback from the lot line. The convent (1936) fronts on Oak Street and has a shallow setback from the front lot line. An adjacent lot associated with the convent contains a paved parking area. The four lots converge in the center of the block to form an enclosed school yard.

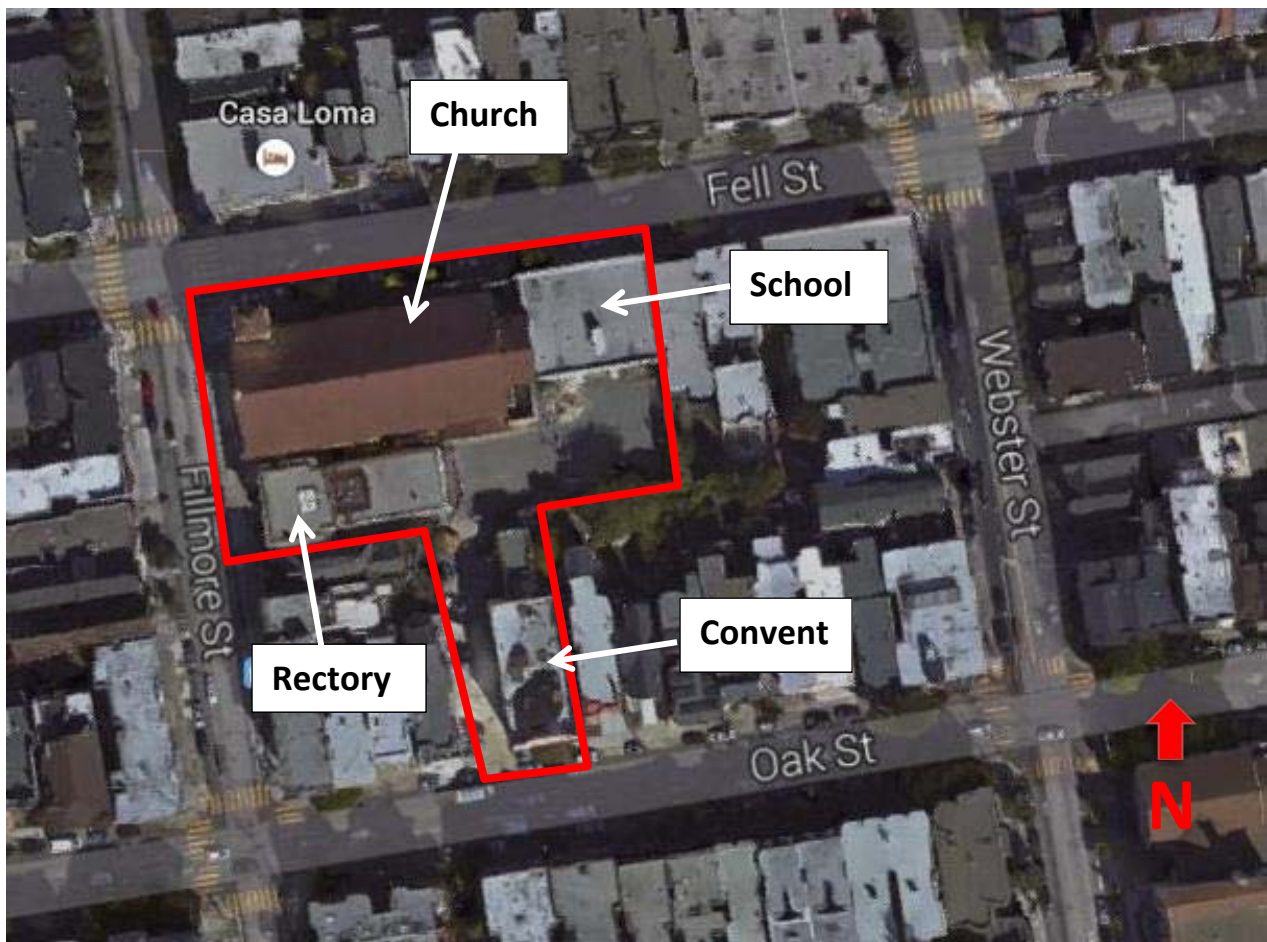


FIGURE 1. AERIAL VIEW OF SACRED HEART PARISH COMPLEX. SOURCE: GOOGLE EARTH, 2015.

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## SACRED HEART CHURCH<sup>1</sup> (1898/1909)

### EXTERIOR

Sacred Heart Church is a Romanesque Revival-style, basilica-plan church building with corner campanile (Figure 2). Key features of its Romanesque Revival styling include the basilica plan with gable roof, narrow nave, short vestibule, classical ornament scheme, use of round arched and pedimented openings, and corbeled tables below the eaves.

Sacred Heart Church has overall dimensions of approximately 66 by 170 feet. The two-story nave measures approximately 50 feet in height and has a gable roof. The two-story north and south transepts and a projecting rear sanctuary also have gable roofs, while the flanking, one-story sacristies have flat roofs. An approximately 90-foot high campanile with a pyramidal hipped roof rises from the northwest corner of the building. All roof surfaces are clad in red-brown asphalt shingles. The church has a concrete foundation and water table and walls clad in yellow face brick and terracotta details. A high basement story, originally housing the parish hall, is set into the natural slope of the lot, with a full height exposure at the rear (east) end of the Fell Street (north) elevation.

### WEST ELEVATION (FAÇADE, FILLMORE STREET ELEVATION)

The primary elevation of Sacred Heart Church faces west onto Fillmore Street (Figure 3). The façade is compositionally divided into two and one-half stories by paired pilasters at each end of the elevation, intermediary friezes and cornices between first and second and second and half-stories, and a pedimented half-story. The façade is approximately five bays wide.

The primary entries to the church are centered on the first story, sheltered by a terracotta entry portico with granite base and granite, Tuscan columns. The ornate portico has a classical frieze with triglyphs and metopes, and a deeply projecting cornice. The underside of the cornice features modillions with mutules alternating with bas relief terracotta tiles with floral and foliate patterns (Figure 4). A balustrade with paneled piers tops the portico.

Three granite steps lead up to Sacred Heart's three primary entries. Each entry features recessed, double-leaf, paneled wood doors and large transom windows (Figure 5). The center transom retains painted numbers identifying the church as number 554. The door openings have architrave-molded terracotta surrounds and shallow, terracotta hoods with scroll brackets. The hoods feature an entablature with an acanthus leaf scroll, dentils, egg-and-dart molding, and a modillion cornice. Four pilasters with Tuscan order capitals flank the entrances.

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<sup>1</sup> The architectural description of Sacred Heart Church is adapted from the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for Sacred Heart Church prepared by Kelly & VerPlanck in September 2009. The descriptions are updated to reflect current conditions where possible. Portions of the church interior were not accessible for full inspection at the time of this report.

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**FIGURE 2 (LEFT). CHURCH: WEST ELEVATION LOOKING SOUTHEAST FROM FILLMORE STREET, 2015.**



**FIGURE 3 (RIGHT). CHURCH: WEST ELEVATION LOOKING NORTHEAST FROM FILLMORE STREET, 2015.**



**FIGURE 4 (LEFT). CHURCH: DETAIL OF SOUTHWEST CORNER OF PORTICO SHOWING DECORATIVE DETAILS, 2015.**



**FIGURE 5 (RIGHT). CHURCH: MAIN ENTRY, CENTER DOORS, 2015.**

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The outer bays of the first story contain pedimented terracotta window frames fitted with stained glass sash. The north window features an image of the Sacred Heart; the south window, which looks into the baptistery, features John the Baptist baptizing Jesus (Figure 6). The end bays also feature paired Tuscan pilasters at the corners, and a third pilaster closely set on the side elevations.

The first and second stories of the church are separated by an intermediary entablature articulated with a terracotta architrave and cornice. The center three bays on the second story feature recessed, arched windows with stained glass sash. The window surrounds consist of a half-circle, terracotta arch with keystone and an interrupted entablature on engaged, square Ionic columns. The outer bays feature square panels set into the brickwork with a bas relief Roman cross articulated in terracotta tile. The panels sit between a terracotta water table and continuation of the terracotta cornice molding from the window entablatures. A narrow, rectangular panel in the brickwork is set between the intermediary cornice and the architrave of the pedimented half-story. The ends of the second story have paired Ionic pilasters set on an articulated pier base. As on the first story, another similar pilaster is set immediately adjacent on the side elevations.

The pedimented half-story of the façade features a plain frieze, a projecting cornice with acanthus leaf modillions, and dentil and egg-and-dart moldings. The tympanum has simple, inset panels that follow the triangular shape of the space. A louvered oculus window with a foliated, terracotta surround is centered on the pediment. The apex of the gable roof features a large, copper-plated, Roman cross on a square pedestal.

### CAMPANILE

The campanile at the northwest corner of the building is compositionally divided into five parts, the lower two of which follow the story heights of the main block of the church (Figure 7). The first story features a concrete water table and banded, rusticated brickwork. The north and west elevations have single arched windows with articulated brick voussiors. The top sash has stained glass diamond panes depicting a floral pattern, surrounded by a geometric border. An entablature with plain frieze, terracotta architrave, and molded cornice divides the first and second stories. The second story elevations have glazed oculus windows with terracotta surrounds, exaggerated terracotta keystones, and bas relief swags and fruit.



**FIGURE 6. CHURCH: WEST ELEVATION, FIRST STORY, SOUTH WINDOW WITH STAINED GLASS RENDERING OF THE BAPTISM OF JESUS, 2015.**

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The second story ends with another entablature, continued from the primary elevation, but with dentil and egg-and-dart molding and a simpler, molded cornice. The top of the tower is composed of three tiers. The lower tier has two unglazed, arched windows on the east, north, and west elevations. The middle tier has arcaded arched openings on all elevations with paneled corner piers and terracotta arch surrounds. Four floral medallions are set evenly across each elevation of the second tier, above the windows. The top tier features similar, arcaded openings, piers, and rose medallions, but with Corinthian columns in the arcade. The campanile ends with dentil molding and a projecting, modillion cornice. The apex of the pyramidal hipped roof has a copper Roman cross.

### NAVE: NORTH ELEVATION

The north elevation of the church increases in height as it descends the hill along Fell Street (Figure 8). The basement story is banded, molded concrete and is fully exposed at the east end of the building. Four double-hung wood sash windows are set along the basement story. The first- and second-floor levels of the nave are clad in yellow face brick. Three large windows are set evenly along the side of the nave, fitted with fixed, stained glass sash. The windows have projecting terracotta sills on shallow brackets, eared terracotta architrave moldings, a simple entablature, and pediment with dentil molding (Figure 9). The roofline of the nave has an arcaded frieze rendered in brick, and a terracotta entablature with dentil molding and acanthus modillions.

### NAVE: SOUTH ELEVATION

The south elevation maintains a consistent story height along the flat grade of the lot interior (Figure 10). At the Fillmore Street (west) elevation, a staircase to the choir loft projects from the elevation. The massing follows the ornament scheme of the west elevation, with single Tuscan pilasters on pedestals at the corners of the first story and Ionic pilasters on the second story. An entablature with dentil-molded cornice divides the first and second stories, and the second story ends in a terracotta, arcaded frieze and entablature with dentil molding and modest modillion cornice. The remainder of the south elevation of the nave largely mirrors the north elevation in composition and details. Other features include a flight of steel stairs leading down to the basement level and a wood-frame, wood-clad



**FIGURE 7. CHURCH: CAMPANILE, LOOKING SOUTHEAST FROM FILLMORE ST., 2015.**

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**FIGURE 8. CHURCH: NORTH ELEVATION, LOOKING SOUTHWEST FROM FELL ST., 2015.**



**FIGURE 9. CHURCH: NORTH ELEVATION, DETAIL OF WINDOW, LOMBARDY BAND, AND CORNICE, 2015.**

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bridge with an arched, fixed sash windows connecting the choir loft to the third story of the adjacent rectory (Figure 38). A recent plywood partition with a plain, wood door seals the alley between the church and rectory from the street.



**FIGURE 10. CHURCH: SOUTH ELEVATION LOOKING EAST. (PHOTO 2009. COURTESY CHRIS VERPLANCK)**



**FIGURE 11. CHURCH: SOUTH TRANSEPT AND SACRISTY LOOKING NORTH FROM PARKING AREA OFF OAK ST., 2015.**

### TRANSEPTS

The north and south transepts (1907-1908) are shallow projections at the east end of the nave. The transepts have gable roofs, articulated corner piers, and large rose windows with molded terracotta surrounds at the second story level (Figure 11). The south rose window has plain glass and the north rose window is sealed with plywood. The transepts have simple entablatures and pedimented rooflines with dentil molding and modillion cornices. The tympanum has paneled brickwork following the outline of the pediment. Both transepts have pedestrian entrances on the shallow, west elevations with wood, paneled doors similar to the main entry doors to the nave. The north transept has a large bay entrance in the exposed basement story with a metal, rolling overhead door (2015).

### EAST (REAR) ELEVATION

Much of the east elevation of the church is set nearly flush with the adjacent parish school building, and many details are partially or entirely obscured. The elevation consists of the projecting two-story sanctuary, flanking one-story sacristies, and a pedimented half-story massing set between the sacristies (Figure 12). The sanctuary has a gable roof and simple entablature with terracotta architrave and

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modillion cornice. The corners of the sanctuary feature brick quoining. The sacristies have flat roofs topped with terracotta balustrades with paneled end piers. The south sacristy has a pedestrian entrance with a paneled wood door and a double-hung, wood-sash window on the south elevation. Both openings have eared, terracotta, architrave moldings. The east elevation of the south sacristy has a similar window. The north sacristy has a fully exposed basement story due to the slope of the lot along Fell Street. The basement story has a simple, recessed, double-hung wood sash window and the first story



**FIGURE 12. CHURCH: REAR, EAST ELEVATION FROM INTERIOR OF LOT, 2016.**

level has a similar window with an eared, terracotta, architrave surround. The east elevation of the nave, exposed here only as the half story, is similar in finish to the west elevation. There is an arcaded frieze rendered in brick at the top of the second story level and a simple entablature with terracotta architrave, plain frieze, dentil and egg-and-dart molding, and an acanthus-leaf modillion cornice. The tympanum has simple brick paneling following the contours of the pediment and an oculus window with terracotta molding.

### INTERIOR

#### BASEMENT

The basement story of the church is a single-volume space that runs the full width and approximately half the length of the building. The church originally used the basement as a parish hall. The basement is accessible on the exposed north elevation via a large bay entrance with metal rolling overhead door and on the south elevation by a flight of stairs descending below grade level (see Figure 8).<sup>2</sup> The south entrance has double-leaf, wood doors and a large, divided transom window. Double-hung, wood-sash windows line the above-grade portions of the basement story on the north and south elevations.

As of January 2015 the basement story has been substantially altered in preparation for conversion to a parking garage (Figure 13). The basement currently features a stripped concrete subfloor and intermittent areas of original bead board wainscoting and plaster on the interior walls. The plaster ceiling and a grid of four structural cast iron columns with round shafts and Corinthian capitals also remained intact as of January 2015. The west and north portions of the hall were visually inaccessible at the time fieldwork was conducted, and the condition of those areas cannot be confirmed.

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<sup>2</sup> In 2005, the Fell Street entrance to the hall was via a pedestrian door into a small enclosed interior vestibule.



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**FIGURE 13. CHURCH: BASEMENT SHOWING GUTTED CONDITION, 2015.**

### NARTHEX

The church narthex, or vestibule, has wood strip flooring, oak wainscoting, and painted plaster walls (Figure 14). Fluted oak pilasters with a simple base and capital begin above the wainscoting and flank each of the three exterior entry doors. Similar paired pilasters articulate the corners of the room. A wide band of oak paneling runs along the cornice line. Cased beams divide the ceiling into even sections, each paneled in diagonal flush board. The narthex has square, brass, flush-mounted ceiling fixtures likely installed in the 1930s. The stained glass window on the north side of main entries is deeply recessed on the interior. The narthex has three, wide entry openings into the nave with large transom openings. An entrance to the choir loft and campanile stair is situated at the north end of the narthex, fitted with an oak paneled door, blind paneled oak transom, and pilaster surround. An entrance to the baptistery is set at the south end of the narthex and has identical fittings and details (Figure 15).

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**FIGURE 14. CHURCH: NARTHEX, LOOKING NORTH TOWARD CHOIR LOFT AND CAMPANILE STAIR, 2016.**



**FIGURE 15. CHURCH: NARTHEX LOOKING SOUTH TOWARD BAPTISTRY, 2016.**

### BAPTISTRY

The baptistry has oak flooring, plaster walls, and a wide frieze with molded architrave and cornice. The ceiling is identical to the narthex with a single panel composed of diagonal flush board. A metal hanging fixture with chain and simple metal shade hangs from the center of the ceiling. A vestibule and exterior door to the alley between the church and rectory is set in the south wall. The door has paneled wood double-leaf doors and a large, plain transom light. The west wall retains a stained glass window depicting the Baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist set in a deep, paneled recess with architrave surround (Figure 16). A portion of the south wall of the baptistry has been stripped of plaster, revealing furring strips for lathe and red brick beneath (Figure 17).

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**FIGURE 16 (LEFT). CHURCH: BAPTISTRY, INTERIOR WINDOW TRIM, 2016.**



**FIGURE 17 (RIGHT). CHURCH: BAPTISTRY SHOWING PARTIAL REMOVAL OF WALLS AND DOOR TO INTERIOR ALLEY, 2016.**

### STAIR

The staircase to the choir loft and campanile is set at the north end of the narthex. Between the narthex and choir loft, the stairwell has plaster walls, wood stairs, and mounted wood handrails (Figure 18). The stained glass windows lighting the stair on these levels have paneled recesses. Above the level of the choir loft, the plaster walls become brick, and the stair has a turned bannister with square newel posts and bead board wainscoting (Figure 19).

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**FIGURE 18 (LEFT). CHURCH: STAIR FROM NARTHEX TO CHOIR LOFT, 2016.**



**FIGURE 19 (RIGHT). CHURCH: STAIR FROM CHOIR LOFT LANDING TO CAMPANILE, 2016.**

### CHOIR/ORGAN LOFT

The choir/organ loft is located above the west end of the nave, supported on four round, cast iron columns (Figure 20). The loft extends into the nave as a half-ellipse projection; the projecting section has dentil molding, a modillion cornice, and a carved oak balustrade. The underside of the loft is clad in bead board paneling. The level floor of the loft is sheathed in wood strip flooring and the plaster walls have bead board wainscoting. Sections of wainscoting and plaster have been removed in the loft revealing underlying brick. Large pilasters with Corinthian capitals are set at the northwest and southwest corners of the loft, and cornice and ceiling treatments continue from the nave (Figures 21 and 22). The west wall of the loft features three arched stained glass windows with pilaster side casings, arched architrave headers, and molded sills. St. Cecilia, patroness of musicians, is pictured playing an organ in the southern window. The center window depicts King David, a lover of music, in the center and the northern window portrays an unidentified saint (Figure 23).

The organ once installed along the west, north, and south walls of the loft has been removed. Removal of organ has revealed an earlier, still largely extant stenciling pattern on the underlying plaster walls. The pattern consists of a pink body color, a wide band of grotesque pattern in light and dark blue, gold, and maroon along the wainscoting, and a band of similar grotesque pattern in cream, maroon, dark blue and white at the cornice line. A narrow band of maroon and blue foliated pattern runs vertically along the wall intersections with the corner pilasters. Wood trim in the loft appears to have been painted the same dark blue as used in the grotesque bands (see Figures 21 and 22).

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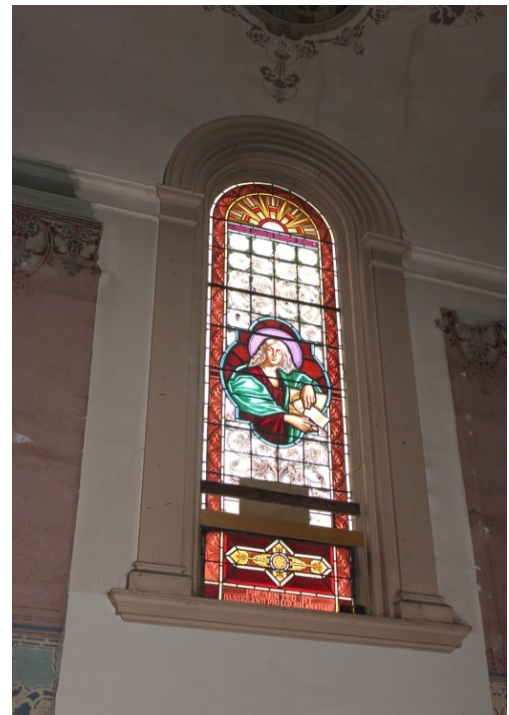
**FIGURE 20. CHURCH: INTACT CHOIR AND ORGAN LOFT (PHOTO 2009, COURTESY CHRIS VERPLANCK)**



**FIGURE 21: CHURCH: CHOIR LOFT, NORTHWEST CORNER AND DOOR TO STAIRS, SHOWING FINISH MATERIALS AND DECORATIVE TREATMENTS, 2016.**



**FIGURE 22. CHURCH: CHOIR LOFT, SOUTHWEST CORNER AND DOOR TO CONNECTOR TO RECTORY, 2016.**



**FIGURE 23: CHURCH: CHOIR LOFT, NORTH STAINED GLASS WINDOW AND SURROUND, 2016.**

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### NAVE

The Sacred Heart nave measures approximately 62 feet wide and 152 feet long. The choir/organ loft is located above the west end of the nave (Figures 24 and 25). The narthex entrances to the nave are flanked by painted wood pilasters with fluted shafts and simple bases and capitals (Figure 26). Two plywood confessional booths, now converted to restrooms, are set on the south side of the west (narthex) wall. A large raised oak dais is located at the east end of the nave, indicating the former location of the sanctuary.

The main body of the nave is an uninterrupted, open space with oak flooring. All pews have been removed. The nave has plaster walls clad in plywood wainscoting over earlier, still extant bead board wainscoting. The north and south walls feature wood pilasters with unfluted, tapered shafts capped by Corinthian capitals. Gilded, rounded

sconces are affixed to each pilaster. Three stained glass windows are set between the pilasters on each wall. The windows all have wood architrave surrounds and paneled recesses. Windows on the north wall depict St. Francis of Assisi and St. Patrick in the west window, SS Matthew and Catherine in the center window, and the Immaculate Heart of Mary in the east window. The windows along the south wall depict the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the east window, Saint Joseph in the center window, and unknown saints in the west window. Painted wood crosses and ghosted profiles between the windows on both sides of the nave indicate the locations of the Stations of the Cross. The walls end in an entablature consisting of a frescoed frieze of crosses with a sunburst pattern and foliage, dentil and egg-and-dart molding, and an acanthus leaf modillion cornice.



**FIGURE 24: CHURCH: NAVE, LOOKING NORTHEAST FROM CHOIR LOFT, 2016.**



**FIGURE 25. CHURCH: NAVE, LOOKING WEST FROM SANCTUARY, 2016.**

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**FIGURE 26. CHURCH: NAVE, NORTH DOOR FROM NARTHEX, 2016.**

The deeply coved nave ceiling features frescoes of the Twelve Apostles and four angels along the coving. The flat surface of the ceiling has three frescoes. The center panel is of two angels amidst the Celestial Aureole, with silver sun rays bearing the Paschal Lamb. The east panel, nearest to the sanctuary, depicts Abraham preparing to sacrifice his son Isaac and the angel sent by God to stop the sacrifice. The west panel, adjacent to the choir loft, shows Cain slaying Abel. The frescoes are surrounded by a decorative, foliated border (Figures 27, 28, and 29).

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**FIGURE 27. NAVE CEILING BEFORE HANGING OF SAFETY NETTING IN 1989 (PHOTO 2005, COURTESY KATHERINE PETRIN).**



**FIGURE 28. CHURCH: NAVE CEILING, DETAIL OF ORNAMENT ON COVED SECTION, 2016.**



**FIGURE 29. CHURCH: NAVE, WEST PORTION OF PAINTED CEILING, 2016.**



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## TRANSEPTS

The two transepts have nearly identical features and detailing. Both have pilasters at their intersection with the nave walls and large circular rose windows with pulvinated, foliate surrounds at the second story level. The rose windows are composed of a round center panel and eight plain, radial lights. A small, banded laurel cornice molding runs along the first story-line of the transepts and the wainscoting continues from the sanctuary on the lower section of the walls (Figure 30).



**FIGURE 30: CHURCH: NORTH TRANSEPT SHOWING DECORATIVE DETAILING, 2016.**

The ceilings have square coffers with square panels of grotesque decoration. Some of the coffers feature a centered, recessed light fixture. Sconces matching those found in the nave are set on the walls. Doors to the sacristies are set in the east elevation of both transepts, fitted with painted, wood, paneled doors with eared, molded surrounds. The south transept also features an exterior door to the alley between the rectory and church. The entrance has double-leaf doors covered in plywood, a large divided transom light and pedimented, eared surround (Figure 31).



**FIGURE 31: CHURCH: NAVE, SOUTH TRANSEPT ENTRY TO ALLEY, 2016.**

## SANCTUARY

The sanctuary is separated from the nave by three steps leading up to an oak dais. The sanctuary has a deep, half-domed, central altar space flanked by more shallow niches for side altars. The side niches have painted wood pilasters with fluted shafts and gilded Corinthian capitals, and painted and gilded wood paneling. The inside of the niches feature fluted Doric pilasters and an entablature with acroteria, egg-and-dart molding, and modillions. Three carpeted steps lead up to the high altar from the dais. The main altar space is similar to the side altar niches in decorative detail, but with the addition of heralding angels at the corners of the arch. The arched openings are currently partially sealed with temporary partitions (Figure 32).

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## SACRISTIES

The sacristies were not accessible for inspection at the time of this report. The sacristies are accessed from each of the transepts by short flights of stairs. The floor of the north sacristy is covered in narrow wood plank flooring and has plaster walls and a plaster ceiling. The west wall contains a large bureau of drawers and the east wall features several closets with stained paneled wood doors. A sink is also located on the west wall in a small alcove adjacent to the closets. The north wall contains a large double-hung, wood-sash window with wire glass glazing. The south wall provides access behind the main altar to the south sacristy.

The floor of the south sacristy is covered in resilient tile flooring and the walls and ceiling are plaster. The south wall features a plain wood door to the exterior. To the east is a painted wood counter that features a sink and has wood cabinet doors and a ceramic tile countertop and back splash. Above the sink is a double-hung, wood-sash window with opaque textured glass. The east wall has a similar window flanked by closets with painted wood paneled doors. Additional similar closets are located on the west wall. The north wall provides access behind the main altar to the north sacristy.



**FIGURE 32. CHURCH: SANCTUARY SHOWING SEALED ALTAR NICHES, 2016.**

## LITURGICAL ARTWORK

### STAINED GLASS

All **extant** stained glass windows in Sacred Heart Church were installed in 1898. The table below details the window subject and known donors, memorial names, and makers. Images of selected windows follow (Figures 33 through 36).

**TABLE 1. EXTANT STAINED GLASS WINDOWS AT SACRED HEART (ALL INSTALLED 1898)**

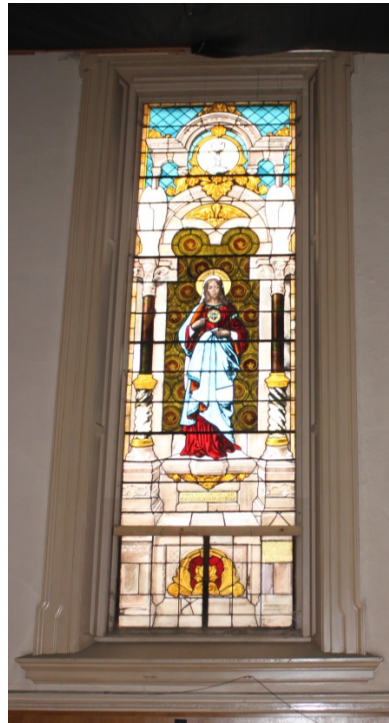
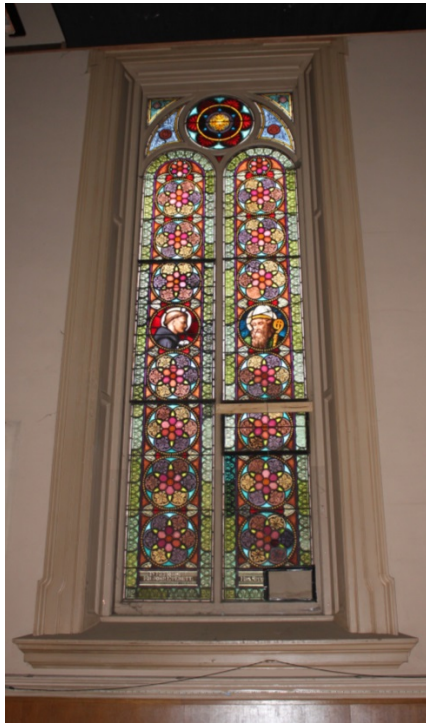
Location	Subject	Maker	Donor/Memorial Names
Nave, north wall	Immaculate Heart of Mary	Riordan Art Glass Studios, now BeauVerre-Riordan Studios, Cincinnati, Ohio	Annie, William, and James Costello, natives of Rathkeale, Ireland in memory of brothers Augustine, Joseph and Charles (likely died in Spanish-American War)
Nave, north wall	SS. Matthew and Catherine	Unknown	Matthew and Catherine Kavanagh
Nave, north wall	SS. Francis of Assisi and Patrick	Unknown	Annie Everett, in memory of John Everett (d. 1885)

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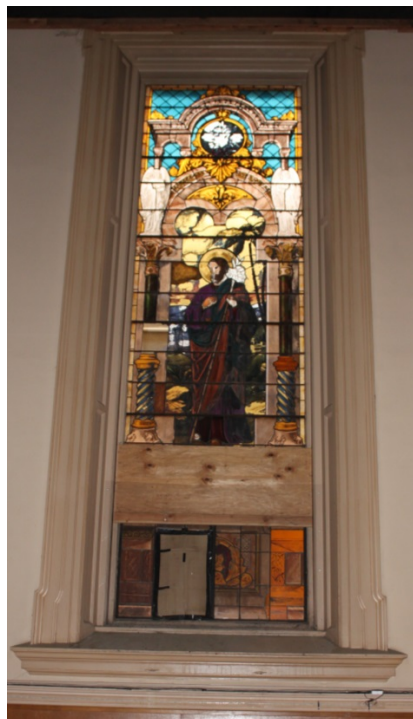
<b>Location</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Maker</b>	<b>Donor/Memorial Names</b>
Nave, south wall	Sacred Heart of Jesus and St. Joseph	Riordan Art Glass Studios, now BeauVerre-Riordan Studios, Cincinnati, Ohio	Annie, William, and James Costello, natives of Rathkeale, Ireland in memory of brothers Augustine, Joseph and Charles (likely died in Spanish-American War)
Nave, south wall	Two unidentified saints	Unknown	Swift Family
Choir loft, north wall	Unknown saint	Unknown	Unknown
Choir loft, west wall	King David	Unknown	Unknown
Choir loft, south wall	St. Cecilia, patroness of musicians	Unknown	Shanahan Family
Narthex	Image of the Sacred Heart	Unknown	Mrs. P. Harrigan
Baptistry	Baptism of Jesus by St. John the Baptist	Unknown	Catherine Corbett, by her son Mr. Joseph Corbett
Campanile	Floral and geometric patterns	Unknown	Unknown

The Riordan Art Glass Studios, now BeauVerre-Riordan Studios, of Cincinnati, Ohio, designed and executed the three Costello memorial windows. The Riordans were in-laws to Augustine Costello, one of the brothers memorialized in the windows. The firm is best known for its regional work in the Midwest and upland South.

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**FIGURE 33 (LEFT). CHURCH: NAVE, NORTH WALL, WEST WINDOW, 2016.  
FIGURE 34 (RIGHT). CHURCH: NAVE, NORTH WALL, EAST WINDOW, 2016.**



**FIGURE 35 (LEFT). CHURCH: NAVE, SOUTH WALL, CENTER WINDOW, 2016.  
FIGURE 36 (RIGHT). CHURCH: CAMPANILE WINDOW, 2016.**

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### PAINTINGS AND MURALS

In 1920, San Francisco mural and landscape artist Achille G. Disi painted a series of small murals on the nave ceiling. Disi was born in Rome and studied at the Art Academy there.<sup>3</sup> The Sacred Heart murals included depictions of Cain slaying Abel and Abraham preparing to sacrifice his son, Isaac. Smaller portraits of the Twelve Apostles and angels frame the larger images.<sup>4</sup>

After sale of the church in 2005, the Archdiocese of San Francisco and the Megan Furth Academy removed selected interior liturgical artwork. For descriptions and photographs of no-longer-extant altars, stained glass panes, and sanctuary murals see Appendix C.

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<sup>3</sup> "Sacred Heart Church is Beautifully Frescoed," *The Monitor* (2 October 1920).

<sup>4</sup> "Sacred Heart Parish, September 2, 1995-1985. 100 Years Doing His Will", Golden Jubilee program, 1985.

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### RECTORY<sup>5</sup> (CA. 1891, REBUILT 1906)

The Sacred Heart Rectory at 546 Fillmore Street sits immediately south of the church building, separated by a narrow alley (Figure 37). The Romanesque Revival-style rectory is composed of a three-story, square-plan, wood-frame main block on raised basement and a two-story, wood-frame ell. The main block is clad in yellow face brick and the ell is clad in narrow flush-board siding. Both parts of the building have flat roofs. The rectory continues the Romanesque Revival scheme of the church with round arch windows and classical detailing, along with the overhanging eaves and heavy brackets of the Romanesque and later Renaissance period palazzi (Figure 38).

The main entrance to the rectory is centered on the raised, first story and is accessible via a set of terrazzo steps with metal handrails. The entrance has a deeply recessed entry vestibule flanked by two large, brick piers with concrete caps (Figure 39). The opening has a wide plaster surround with cutaway corners and molded trim. The top of the surround is shaped like a shallow, stepped gable roofline. A molded cross is centered above the opening. The entrance is fitted with a wood door and wide, full-length sidelights with waffle pattern privacy glass. The entrance bay is flanked by slightly bowed, three-part windows with fixed center sash, side casement sash, and transom lights with flared, brick lintels. Slim engaged colonettes divide the tripartite window arrangement.

The second story has a centered, tripartite wood window composed of a central, fixed-sash, Tudor arch window and flanking, one-over-one, double-hung, wood windows. Slim engaged colonettes divide the window arrangement. Windows in the outer bays are simple, fixed, wood sash with transoms and no ornament save brick sills.

A decorative, machicolated beltcourse delineates the third and final story of the building. On the third story, the elevation has a tripartite, round-arched window opening with one-over-one, double-hung, arched sash set the center bay, flanked by paired sash with identical features in the end bays. The windows have surrounds with engaged Ionic columns on pedestals and spandrel panels with applied, chain-like ornament. The elevation ends in a wide overhanging eave with paired scrolled brackets, an egg-and-dart molding, and cornice with arcaded ornament. A short parapet wall projects above the cornice line.

The basement story of the main elevation has a large window opening on the north side of the elevation with a flared lintel rendered in brick. A garage entrance on the south side of the elevation has identical trim and is fitted with a wood overhead door.

Secondary elevations of the main block are largely obscured by adjacent buildings. Window openings on all stories appear to have simple surrounds and double-hung wood sash windows. A metal fire escape is set on the south elevation.

The wood frame ell extends to a full three stories in height at the rear of the lot, following the sloping grade (Figure 40). The ell is minimally visible from public ways, but has paired double hung wood sash

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<sup>5</sup>The description of the Sacred Heart Convent and Rectory is adapted and expanded from a Historic Resource Evaluation for both properties prepared by architectural historian Caitlin Harvey in 2007.

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with simple surrounds and a simply molded projecting cornice. A secondary entrance is centered on the rear elevation of the first story level, sheltered by a small entry porch with a flat roof and plain iron column supports. A staircase leads down to grade level. Aerial photographs indicate that there is a small roof deck on the ell.

The entrance lobby of the rectory features plaster walls, checker pattern resilient tile flooring, a wide cornice with oversized dentils, and a cased beam bisecting the ceiling with identical details. A series of doors off the lobby space have modest architrave surrounds, and glazed, paneled wood doors (Figure 41).



**FIGURE 37. RECTORY AND CHURCH, LOOKING NORTHEAST ALONG FILLMORE STREET, 2015.**

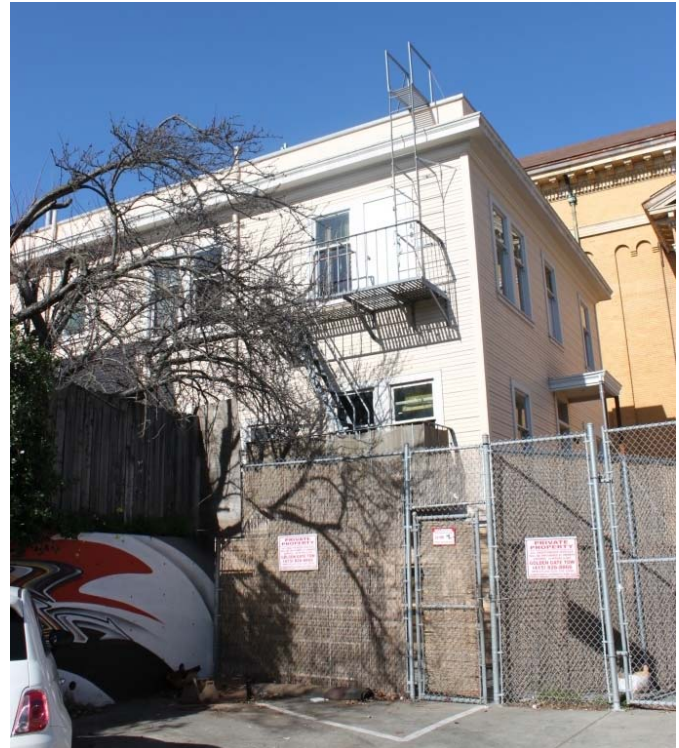
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**FIGURE 38. RECTORY: MAIN (WEST) ELEVATION FROM FILLMORE STREET, 2015.**



**FIGURE 39 (LEFT). RECTORY: MAIN ENTRANCE, 2015.**



**FIGURE 40 (RIGHT). RECTORY: REAR ELL, LOOKING NORTHWEST FROM PARKING AREA OFF OAK STREET, 2015.**



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**FIGURE 41: RECTORY: LOBBY, 2016.**

### SCHOOL (1926)

The Sacred Heart School is a three-story, rectangular-plan building of reinforced concrete with a high basement story and flat roof (Figure 42). The building combines Romanesque Revival features such as round arched windows and entrances with a rusticated basement and first story and modified classical ornament typical of Romanesque and later Renaissance period palazzi.



**FIGURE 42. SACRED HEART SCHOOL, LOOKING SOUTHWEST ALONG FELL STREET, 2015.**

The primary elevation of the school is the most articulated in its design (Figure 43). The elevation is clad in scored concrete on the basement story and buff stucco scored to look like ashlar masonry on the

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upper stories. A paneled water table divides the basement and first story levels, and a beltcourse with molded, chain ornament divides the first and second stories.

The main entrance to the school is centered on the Fell Street (north) elevation (Figure 44). The opening has an arched, acanthus leaf molding and an outer surround with larger foliate moldings, cutaway corners with scrolled tongue molding, and corner finials. The tympanum of the arch has scroll and block brackets, a relief of the Sacred Heart of Christ, and an inscription reading “Sacred Heart School.” The deeply recessed entrance has a tiled floor and is fitted with double-leaf, glazed wood doors with full-height sidelights and two tiers of transom windows. The surround extends past the first-story level to enclose a small, arched, casement window with wood sash that lights the entry stairwell. The window has a semi-circular projecting sill with foliate ornament and a shield cartouche above the opening. The surround on this level has large foliate molding and ends in a gable peak. A Celtic cross with surround sits atop the peak.



**FIGURE 43. SCHOOL: MAIN (NORTH) ELEVATION, LOOKING SOUTH FROM FELL STREET, 2015.**

A secondary entrance accessing the courtyard behind the school building is set at the east end of the basement story. The entrance has an arched opening with vousoirs articulated in the scored concrete of the foundation. The entrance is fitted with a metal security gate.

The first story has arched window openings with wood casement sash and fanlights. A scroll with flanking scrolled, foliate ornament sits above each window opening. The windows on the upper stories are rectangular and fitted with three tiered, divided, wood awning sash.

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The main elevation has an ornate entablature at the cornice line composed of a diaper pattern architrave; divided frieze with thin, decorative metopes with stops; egg and dart and dentil moldings; and a fluted cornice line with medallions. The frieze panels feature shields with an open book and crossed quill pens.

Secondary elevations of the school building are not visible because they directly abut adjacent buildings. The rear (south) elevation of the school has primarily plain window openings fitted with divided metal sash identical to those on the upper stories of the primary elevation. A centered entrance set slightly below grade features modern, double-leaf, metal doors and a heavy cornice on brackets. Secondary doors from the second story level flank the center entrance, and feature concrete steps, modern metal doors, and historic three-light transoms. A wood accessibility ramp provides access to the east entrance.



**FIGURE 44. SCHOOL: MAIN ENTRANCE, 2015.**

The rear schoolyard features modern playground equipment, a variety of soft pavement coverings, and a container and raised bed garden area. The school yard is enclosed by a combination of chain link and wood plank fencing (Figure 45).

The interior of the school features limited areas of historic fabric, primarily due to the removal of most interior partitions in 1969. The front and rear stairwells retain the most historic fabric, primarily consisting of plaster walls and solid balustrades. Windows throughout the building appear to retain original, plain surrounds, and the rear (south) doors to the school yard retain original transom lights (Figure 46).



**FIGURE 45. SCHOOL: REAR (SOUTH) ELEVATION AND SCHOOL YARD, 2016.**

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**FIGURE 46. SCHOOL: ENTRY HALL AND STAIRS  
LOOKING TOWARD MAIN ENTRANCE, 2016.**

### CONVENT (1936)

The Dominican Convent at Sacred Heart continues the Romanesque Revival scheme of the church with arched window forms and corbeling. The convent has its primary elevation on Oak Street. The two-story building has a rectangular-plan main block with flat roof and a single-story ell housing the convent chapel (Figures 47 and 48). All parts of the building have flat roofs and are clad in stucco. The street frontage on Oak Street features brick planters.

The primary elevation of the convent measures five bays wide and has a centered main entrance accessed via a dogleg, brick staircase. Stanchions once holding a brass handrail remain in place on the staircase parapet wall. The deeply-recessed entry vestibule has a surround with concrete, spiraled, Corinthian columns and a mid-relief, acanthus leaf, concrete border along the arch (Figure 49). The vestibule is fitted with a decorative metal security gate. The arched door opening has a wood door with grated opening and partial-length sidelights. The remaining bays of the first story have rectangular casement windows with surround elements identical to the entry vestibule. The second story has arched, double-leaf casement windows in the end bays and a smaller arched window in the center bay with a molded concrete window box with metal railing. Surround elements are again identical to the first story. A cross with sunburst is set above the center window. The elevation ends in an arcaded frieze, simple

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entablature, and pent roof with red tile roofing. The roofline elements continue on the first six feet of the side elevations.

Side (east and west) elevations of the convent have no ornament and plain window openings fitted with wood casement sash. On the east elevation, the side alley is sealed with a stuccoed partition with arched wood door and pent roof with red tile cladding. Brick steps lead from the sidewalk to the alley door and a brick wall separates the staircase from the stairs to the adjacent property. The roof of the main block of the convent has a roof deck space, and the parapet wall has sets of wood-frame pivot sash at the rear (north) elevation and north ends of the side elevations.

The chapel ell has a narrow, nave-like form ending in a slightly larger end block (Figures 50 and 51). Articulated piers divide the bays of the nave section and mark the four corners of the end block. The nave section has narrow, round-arched windows with stained glass sash, while the end block has plain, double-hung wood sash. A narrow, pent roof with red clay tile roofing runs along all elevations.



**FIGURE 47. CONVENT LOOKING NORTHEAST FROM OAK ST., 2015.**

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**FIGURE 48. CONVENT LOOKING NORTHWEST FROM OAK ST., 2015.**



**FIGURE 49. CONVENT, DETAIL OF MAIN ENTRY, 2015.**

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**FIGURE 50. CONVENT, CHAPEL WING, LOOKING SOUTHEAST FROM PARKING AREA OF OAK ST., 2015.**



**FIGURE 51. CONVENT: REAR (NORTH) ELEVATIONS OF CHAPEL ELL AND MAIN BLOCK, 2016.**

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### SACRED HEART PARISH AND THE WESTERN ADDITION, 1885-2004<sup>6</sup>

Sacred Heart Parish was founded in 1885 to serve Catholics in the western precincts of San Francisco. The original parish boundaries extended from Buchanan Street on the east to the Pacific Ocean on the west, but the parish shrank by the mid-1920s to encompass the Western Addition neighborhoods east of Divisadero Street and south of Turk Street.<sup>7</sup>

As the major Catholic institution in the Western Addition during San Francisco's "Catholic Century," Sacred Heart was a dominant religious, social, and educational institution for the district's predominantly Catholic population. Over the course of its nearly 120-year history, Sacred Heart Parish was actively engaged in the demographics, politics, and social history of the rapidly changing Western Addition. Sacred Heart Parish went from being "the most Irish parish west of Chicago" in 1885 to one of the most diverse urban congregations in the city by the mid-1960s.<sup>8</sup> The parish was embedded in a neighborhood that functioned as an important intra-city migration hub for generations of immigrants, racial and ethnic groups, and working class residents as they pursued middle-class respectability, escaped earthquake ravaged neighborhoods, and later tried to create a more socially just home in the city. The significance of Sacred Heart as a social institution in the Western Addition underwent a dramatic shift during the late 1960s and early 1970s. The changing character of the neighborhood and its congregation put the parish at the center of social justice and civil rights issues in San Francisco. Under Father Eugene Boyle, the parish became a center of Catholic social activism during the period, opening its doors to groups ranging from Vietnam Veterans Against the War to the Black Panthers.

#### ESTABLISHING "THE MOST IRISH PARISH WEST OF CHICAGO" (1885-1906)

The founding of Sacred Heart Parish in 1885 occurred at the beginning of one of the most substantial periods of growth and development in the Western Addition. The area now known as the Western Addition began developing as a residential district after 1860 when local landowner and speculator Thomas Hayes completed a steam railroad along Market and Hayes streets to his Hayes Park Pavilion amusement ground. The completion of the Market Street Railway's Haight Street Cable Railroad in 1883 brought a more intensive, second wave of development. During the 1880s, mixed commercial and residential development grew along Haight Street, three blocks south of the Sacred Heart site, and rows upon rows of two and three-story, wood-frame flats and single-family residences spread along intersecting streets.

The establishment of Sacred Heart Parish also took place at the onset of what historians have called the "Catholic Century" in San Francisco, a period when between thirty and forty percent of the urban

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<sup>6</sup> This section includes information on the Western Addition excerpted and adapted from the National Register nomination for Sacred Heart Church prepared by Kelly & VerPlanck in 2009.

<sup>7</sup> The Western Addition is generally bounded by San Francisco Bay to the north, Larkin Street to the east, Duboce Avenue to the south, and Divisadero Street to the west. It includes neighborhoods as disparate as Hayes Valley, Alamo Square, the Fillmore, Japantown, and Pacific Heights. In popular usage the name is often (and mistakenly) understood today to refer only to the areas cleared and rebuilt by the Redevelopment Agency under the guise of "slum clearance" during the 1960s and 1970s. Parishes that split from Sacred Heart Parish include Holy Cross (1887), St. Agnes (1895), St. Anne (1904), St. Monica (1911), Star of the Sea (1914), St. Thomas (1922), and Holy Name (1925) parishes.

<sup>8</sup> "Best Children in the City' - Sacred Heart Pastor Says," *Catholic Monitor*, October 29, 1954.



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population was Roman Catholic.<sup>9</sup> This was a time of robust Catholic institution building and parish expansion in San Francisco. Under the leadership of then-Archbishop Patrick W. Riordan (1841-1914, Archbishop 1883-1914), the Archdiocese of San Francisco established twenty-one new parishes in San Francisco, built St. Patrick's Seminary in Menlo Park (1898), and constructed the second St. Mary's Cathedral on Van Ness Street (1889, burned 1962).<sup>10</sup> By 1915, Catholic Irish- and Italian-Americans dominated local government and politics in San Francisco, and the doctrines, positions, and leadership of the Catholic Church held significant sway in public life.<sup>11</sup>

Sacred Heart Church, set among the newly opened residential tracts of the Western Addition, was a symbol of the church's growth alongside the city. Between 1885 and 1889, the first pastor of Sacred Heart, Father James Flood shepherded the congregation from makeshift quarters to construction of the parish's first purpose-built, albeit temporary, wood-frame church building. The first church home for Sacred Heart Parish was a derelict, one-story, wood-frame Methodist chapel on the corner of nearby Linden and Buchanan streets. Shortly after the Archdiocese established the parish, Father Flood purchased the chapel, conducted some minor renovations, and began conducting mass in the building.<sup>12</sup> In 1886, Father Flood began assembling land for a permanent parish complex, purchasing the core of the existing Sacred Heart property on the corner of Fillmore and Fell streets. With land secured, he moved the wood-frame chapel to the site and renovated the interior to better conform to Catholic liturgy.<sup>13</sup>

Looking to the future, Father Flood commissioned Archdiocese architect Thomas J. Welsh to design a new, more suitable wood-frame church to accommodate 700 people. The parish built the church in 1887 at 546 Fillmore Street on what is now the site of the rectory (Figure 52).<sup>14</sup> As described in the *Catholic Monitor*, the Romanesque, two-story church building contained a sanctuary in the upper story and a Sunday School with eight classrooms and a hall in the basement.<sup>15</sup> The parish moved the former Methodist church to the rear of the property to serve as an on-site parochial residence.<sup>16</sup>

In 1889, the church acquired an additional lot along Fell Street, completing the configuration of the Fell/Fillmore portion of the church property as it is today. With sufficient property secured, the parish began preparing to build its permanent church home, moving Thomas Welsh's wood-frame church to the northeast corner of the lot to make space for a new church building. This would be a substantial, masonry building and serve as an anchor for a fully-developed parish complex composed of a rectory, school, and convent.

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<sup>9</sup> Jeffrey M. Burns, *San Francisco: A History of the Archdiocese of San Francisco* (Strasbourg: Editions du Signe, 1999), 18.

<sup>10</sup> Clay Mansfield O'Dell, "On Stony Ground: The Catholic Interracial Council in the Archdiocese of San Francisco" (University of Virginia, 2005), 130.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 7–8. Even mayors who were not Catholic, like James Rolph, maintained close ties with the Archdiocese of San Francisco.

<sup>12</sup> Father Flood is not the same James Flood who made his fortune in the Comstock Lode silver mines.

<sup>13</sup> Sacred Heart Parish, *Sacred Heart Parish September 2, 1885-1985*, 1985, 3; "A Church Location Changed," *Catholic Monitor*, June 30, 1886.

<sup>14</sup> Sacred Heart Parish, *Sacred Heart Parish September 2, 1885-1985*, 4.

<sup>15</sup> "Sacred Heart Church - Description of the New Structure," *Catholic Monitor*, May 18, 1887; "Sacred Heart Church: The Edifice to Be Erected on Fillmore Street," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 8, 1887.

<sup>16</sup> "'Best Children in the City' - Sacred Heart Pastor Says"; Sacred Heart Parish, *Sacred Heart Parish September 2, 1885-1985*, 6.

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Sacred Heart Parish announced ambitious building plans late in 1891, detailing work on the church building, a new rectory, and a future parochial school.<sup>17</sup> The parish turned again to architect Thomas J. Welsh and his then-partner John Carey to design an 88'x169' brick church building at the corner of Fillmore and Fell streets. Their plans called for a load-bearing masonry building with exterior walls of buff-colored, pressed brick. The architects supported the large interior spans with wooden trusses over the 67'-wide nave, a steel girder to support the choir loft, and steel columns in the bell tower. The church building was expected to cost \$60,000, much of it to come from funds raised in the parish.<sup>18</sup>

The parish was able to raise funds and complete the rectory rather quickly to provide suitable housing for the four to six priests assigned to them. Earlier parochial quarters had been makeshift affairs. In 1886, city directories list Father James Flood residing at a rented flat at 710 Hayes Street. By 1888, parish priests were living at the rear of the Fell and Fillmore street property in the recycled Methodist chapel that had served the parish in its first year. The new, purpose-built rectory at 550 Fillmore, built ca. 1891 was a two-story, wood frame building with brick facing on the front and portions of the side elevations. Contractor Hugh Keenan designed and constructed the new rectory (Figure 53).



**FIGURE 52. SACRED HEART CHURCH ON FILLMORE ST. CA. 1888 SHOWING THOMAS WELSH'S 1887 WOOD FRAME CHURCH. SOURCE: SAN FRANCISCO HISTORY CENTER, SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY**

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<sup>17</sup> "To Be Built of Stone - A New Church for the Sacred Heart Parish," *Catholic Monitor*, September 2, 1891.

<sup>18</sup> "To Build A New Church," *San Francisco Chronicle* (28 August 1896).

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**FIGURE 53. SACRED HEART PARISH COMPLEX IN THE MID-1890S SHOWING ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION OF RECTORY (RIGHT), THE FIRST CONVENT (CENTER RIGHT), AND THOMAS WELSH'S 1888 WOOD-FRAME SACRED HEART CHURCH (LEFT). SOURCE: ARCHIVES OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN FRANCISCO**

The parish made unexpected progress on establishing a parochial school, albeit via tragic circumstances. In 1893, Father Flood took in the Dominican Sisters of St. Rose's Academy after a devastating fire destroyed their San Francisco convent and school on Golden Gate Avenue. Though the sisters appear infrequently in parish histories and records, they played important roles in the religious and social life of the Sacred Heart Parish. A preaching order, the Dominican Sisters of Saint Dominic, Congregation of the Most Holy Name took as their mission teaching in parish elementary and secondary schools throughout California and Nevada, as well as operating their own schools for girls in the Bay Area.<sup>19</sup> Dominican sisters historically made up approximately half of the female faculty at parochial schools in San Francisco, alongside the Sisters of Notre Dame.<sup>20</sup> The newly arrived Dominican Sisters started a flourishing parochial school at Sacred Heart, operating in the church basement and a series of temporary buildings on and off-site during construction of the rectory and church.<sup>21</sup> The Sisters would go on to educate the students of the Sacred Heart Parish and the wider Western Addition on this site for more than 100 years.

By 1896, the parish had raised sufficient funds to begin construction on the Sacred Heart church. The parish laid the cornerstone on September 7, 1897, filling it with ancient coins; rock from Tara Hill, Ireland; moss from the roof of St. Columbkille's Abbey; minerals from the Colorado and Union mines in

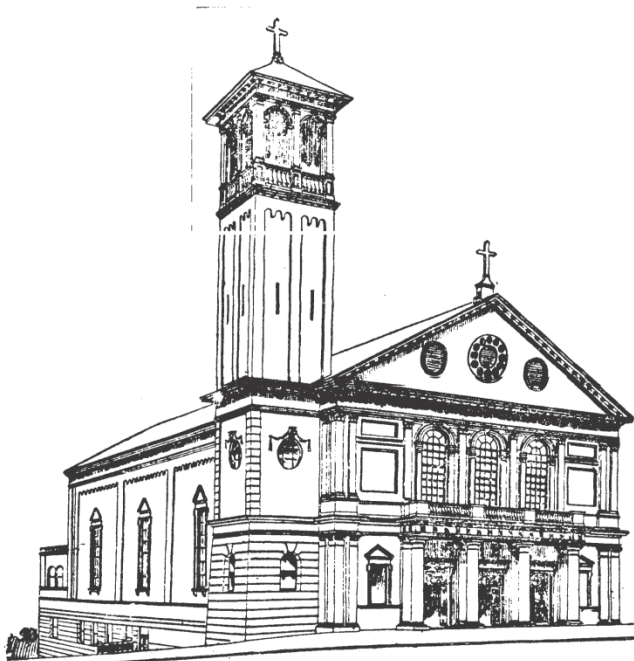
<sup>19</sup> Dominican University of California, "History of the University," n.d., <http://www.dominican.edu/about/facts/history-traditions> The Sisters of Saint Dominic, Congregation of the Most Holy Name is headquartered in San Rafael, CA.

<sup>20</sup> Archdiocese of San Francisco, California, *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Schools, 1920-1921* (Archdiocese of San Francisco, 1921), 125.

<sup>21</sup> These included the relocated 1889 wood-frame church building and the former Sutro Mansion several blocks away at Hayes and Fillmore streets. See the following section, "Earthquake, Demographic Change, and a Complete Parish Complex."

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El Dorado County; and copies of daily newspapers.<sup>22</sup> The majority of the church was completed by the summer of 1898, however, because of a lack of funds, the parish halted construction with only 126 feet of the planned 169-foot long nave in place. A temporary wood-frame wall enclosed the east end of the church, where the juncture between the nave and transepts is now located (Figures 54 and 55). Archbishop Riordan dedicated the nearly completed church on September 25, 1898. At the time of the Sacred Heart Church building dedication, the parish was one of the largest in the city, hosting 1,800 families, 6,000 congregants, and a Sunday school enrollment of 700-800 children.<sup>23</sup>



**FIGURE 54 (LEFT). DRAWING OF PROPOSED SACRED HEART CHURCH PUBLISHED IN THE *SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE*. SOURCE: *SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE*, OCTOBER 7, 1896**

**FIGURE 55 (RIGHT). SACRED HEART CHURCH BEFORE TRANSEPT AND SACRISTY ADDITIONS IN 1909; THE SPIRE OF THE EARLIER WOOD FRAME CHURCH, MOVED TO THE REAR OF THE PARCEL, IS VISIBLE IN THE BACKGROUND. SOURCE: SAN FRANCISCO HISTORY CENTER, SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY**

This prosperity continued into the first years of the twentieth century. Then-pastor Father John McQuaide (pastor 1905-1922) successfully raised the funds to complete the unfinished 1898 church in 1905 according to Welsh & Carey's original plans.<sup>24</sup> George Goodman was hired to build the enlarged

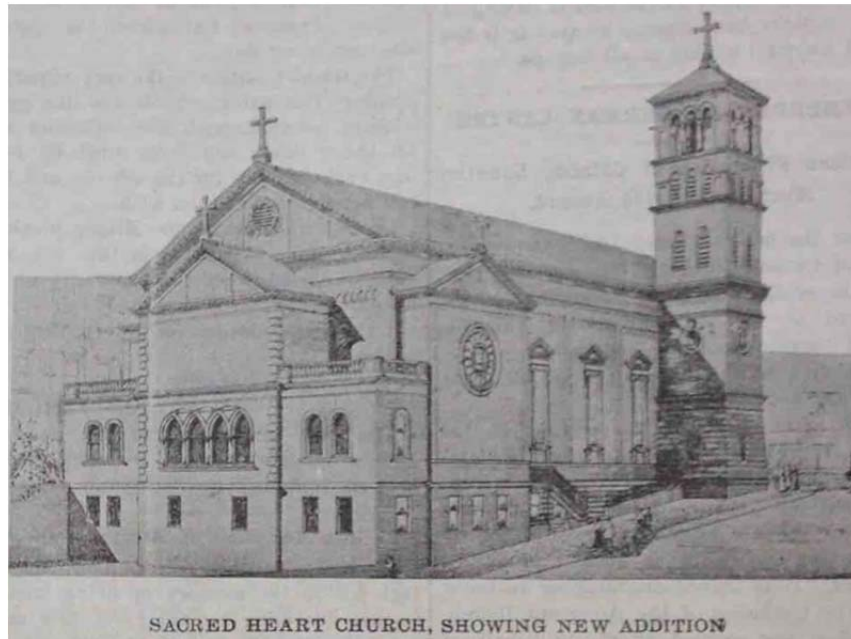
<sup>22</sup> "Laying of Corner Stone of Sacred Heart Church: The Articles to Be Deposited in the Stone of the Sacred Edifice," *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 12, 1897.

<sup>23</sup> Sacred Heart Parish, *Sacred Heart Parish September 2, 1885-1985*, 6, 11; "Dedicatory Services - Archbishop Riordan Will Dedicate New Sacred Heart Church Tomorrow," *Hayes Valley Advertiser*, 1898, Archives of the Archdiocese of San Francisco.

<sup>24</sup> Father McQuaide was also well-known beyond the parish for having as an Army chaplain in the Spanish-American War, the Philippine-American War, and the First World War. He assisted in securing the Panama Pacific International Exposition for San Francisco in 1915 through his acquaintance with President Taft, whom he met during his service during the Philippine- American War. Sacred Heart Parish, *Sacred Heart Parish September 2, 1885-1985*, 6.

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basement, transepts, sanctuary, and sacristies.<sup>25</sup> A 1905 article in *The Monitor* described the vision for the new spaces. The new sanctuary was to have recessed niches for side altars and a marble reredos would extend across the entire sanctuary to screen the passageway between the sacristies. The altar rail was to be of oak and supported by oak pilasters and filled with bronze panels. The sanctuary was also to have windows (never realized) set below the level of the reredos to illuminate the “curved surface of the sanctuary and show the altar in strong relief.”<sup>26</sup> The shallow transepts were to be twenty-eight feet in length and ten feet in depth and allow egress to the outside. Both transepts were to have large rose windows, fourteen feet in diameter, “giving a grand opportunity for memorial windows.”<sup>27</sup> (Figure 56) The article also stated that the new portion of the church would have “one of the finest above-ground basements in the city; 100 feet long from end to end and averaging 70 feet wide and amply lighted on all sides.”<sup>28</sup> Plans for the space included a three-foot high stage or platform at one end that the parish could use for services as well as entertainment, complete with a set of scenery and electric stage lights. When completed, the space would seat up to 1,000 people. The foundations for the extension were laid in 1906, but work on the rest of the extension halted in the wake of the 1906 earthquake and fire.<sup>29</sup> Construction was finally completed and the church rededicated in 1909.<sup>30</sup>



**FIGURE 56. RENDERING OF THE PROPOSED 1907-1908 TRANSEPT AND SACRISTY ADDITIONS.  
SOURCE: CATHOLIC MONITOR, NOVEMBER 11, 1905**

The successful building campaigns of the turn of the twentieth century were a testament to the emerging Irish middle class then settling in the Western Addition and Sacred Heart Parish. During this period, much of the Western Addition was a middle-class district composed of native-born whites;

<sup>25</sup> Builder's Contracts, *San Francisco Examiner* (8 June 1905).

<sup>26</sup> "Labors Reward. Sacred Heart Church Receiving Magnificent Extension," *The Monitor* (2 November 1905), 14..

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> "Sacred Heart Church Being Completed," *Catholic Monitor*, August 15, 1908.

<sup>30</sup> "Praise for Big Parish," *San Francisco Examiner* (22 February 1909).

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Jewish, Protestant, and Catholic German immigrants, Irish Catholics, English and Scandinavian Protestants, and smaller communities of Japanese and African Americans. Irish and Irish-Americans dominated, however, making up one-third of San Francisco's population in 1880 and Irish Catholics made up the bulk of Sacred Heart's parishioners for more than three decades. The church counted many prominent members of San Francisco among its congregants, including the Mahony and Fay families and opera star Maude Fay Symington.<sup>31</sup> Parishes such as Sacred Heart were important centers of religious and community life for the Irish-American community, providing education, social structures, and mutual or benevolent aid.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board, "Final Case Report for Sacred Heart Church," December 15, 1993, San Francisco Planning Department.

<sup>32</sup> Sacred Heart Parish, *Sacred Heart Parish September 2, 1885-1985*, 12.

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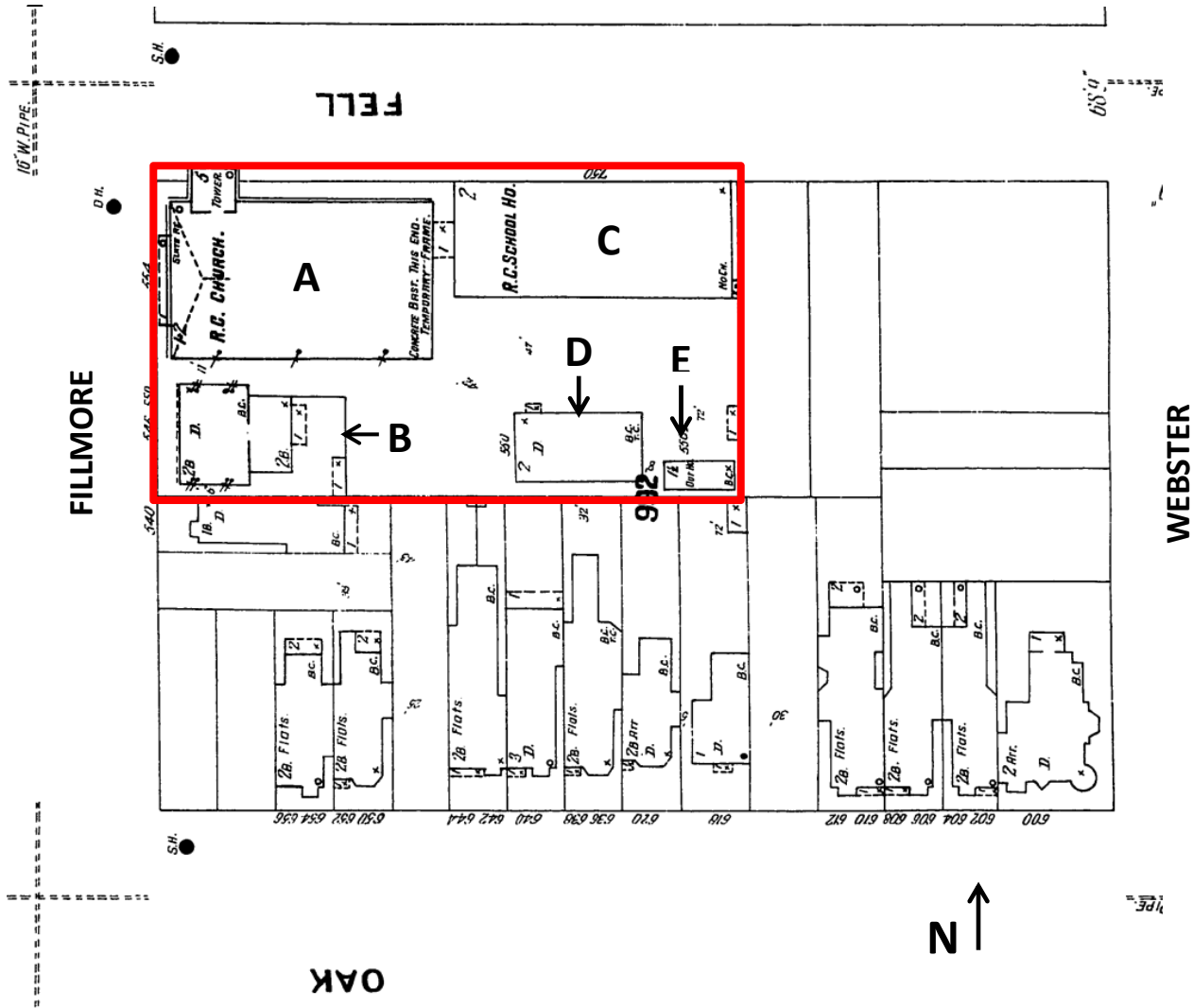


FIGURE 57. SANBORN MAP OF SACRED HEART PARISH COMPLEX WITH PROPERTY OUTLINED, 1899.

A – CHURCH BEFORE COMPLETION OF TRANSEPTS AND SACRISTIES (1898)

B – RECTORY (1891)

C – SCHOOL (1887 WOOD-FRAME, ROMANESQUE CHURCH DESIGNED BY WELSH)

D – FIRST CONVENT (1893)

E – OUTHOUSE

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### EARTHQUAKE, DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE, AND A COMPLETE PARISH COMPLEX (1906-1940)

As in many parts of the city, the 1906 earthquake and fire marked a turning point for the Sacred Heart Parish. Because it largely escaped post-earthquake fires, the Western Addition was not as heavily damaged by the 1906 earthquake as other closer-in Victorian-era residential districts. After 1906, earthquake survivors took up residence in several refugee camps in the district sponsored by the San Francisco Red Cross Relief Corporation, and, as their circumstances improved, permanently resettled in the neighborhood.<sup>33</sup> During the second decade of the twentieth century the Western Addition became one of the most diverse neighborhoods in the city, or any western US city – home to Japanese, Filipino, Mexican, Jewish, Russian, and African-American residents.

The crush of new residents – plenty of whom were poor or working-class – prompted many local middle and upper-class local residents to move to new and more prestigious tracts being built to the north and west. The parish's predominantly Irish population had begun moving out of the Western Addition in small numbers in the 1890s, but by the 1910s the number had significantly increased. As they departed, speculators increasingly converted the district's large stock of single-family dwellings into apartments and flats and constructed infill development and apartment buildings. Increasing numbers of Italian and Spanish-speaking Americans and immigrants, including families from Mexico, Guatemala, and Puerto Rico moved into the neighborhood and joined the parish in the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>34</sup>

Sacred Heart remained a robust, influential local institution during this period of demographic transition. Sacred Heart Parish was active in earthquake relief efforts, and the Sacred Heart School, then in a residential structure at Hayes and Fillmore streets, was a temporary hospital and shelter for quake and fire victims.<sup>35</sup> The parish also continued with their building plans, adapting to unexpected circumstances and opportunities as they arose. In October 1906, just months after the parish complex survived the 1906 earthquake and fire unscathed, a fire seriously damaged the rectory. The parish hired architects Welsh & Carey to rehabilitate and expand the building in 1906-1907.<sup>36</sup> Welsh & Carey reconstructed and expanded the rectory, adding a third story to the main block and replacing the brick facing. The new rectory provided much needed quarters for the parish and mission priests serving the parish, meeting rooms for the various societies at the church, and smaller parish gathering spaces. The new rectory contained forty rooms and two meeting halls in the basement story seating about 250 people combined (Figures 58, 59).<sup>37</sup> Sometime between 1913 and 1920, the parish constructed a wood-frame connector from the third-story level of the rectory to the choir loft of the church. The connector allowed priests easy access to the sanctuary for early morning masses and to get between the church and rectory in inclement weather.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> San Francisco Relief Corporation, *Department Reports of the San Francisco Relief and Red Cross Funds* (San Francisco: annual report of the San Francisco Relief Corporation, March 19, 1907), 18.

<sup>34</sup> Sacred Heart Parish, *Sacred Heart Parish September 2, 1885-1985*, 12.

<sup>35</sup> O'Ryan, Rev. Philip, "Comforting Aged and Infirm During Fire," *San Francisco Call*, May 20, 1906, California Digital Newspaper Collection.

<sup>36</sup> "'Best Children in the City' - Sacred Heart Pastor Says"; "Sacred Heart Church Being Completed."

<sup>37</sup> Sacred Heart Parish, *Sacred Heart Parish September 2, 1885-1985*, 9.

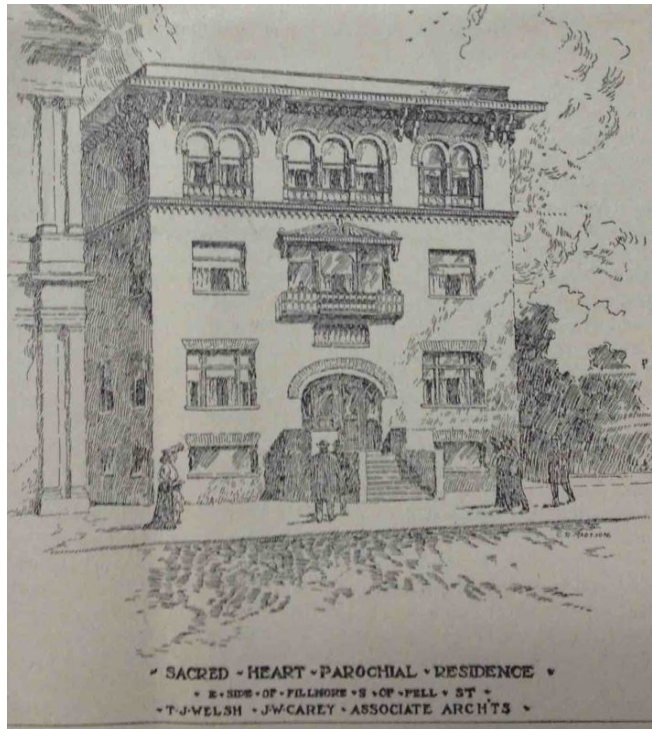
<sup>38</sup> "Sacred Heart Church Is Beautifully Frescoed," *The Catholic Monitor*, October 2, 1920; Sanborn Map Co., San Francisco, CA. Volume 4, Sheet 350, 1913.



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**FIGURE 58. CHURCH AND RECTORY SHOWING ORIGINAL DOOR AND WINDOW TREATMENT ON FIRST AND SECOND STORIES. SOURCE: CATHOLIC MONITOR, OCTOBER 2, 1920**



**FIGURE 59. LINE DRAWING OF THE REHABILITATED RECTORY. SOURCE: CATHOLIC MONITOR, NOVEMBER 2, 1907.**

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One of the chief accomplishments during this period was the completion of a permanent parochial school in the parish. A parish-based parochial school was a vital part of Catholic religious and community development. Addressing the Sacred Heart graduates in 1904, Bishop George Montgomery noted that “no parish was fully equipped that did not have its parochial schools, wherein every boy and girl could be accommodated.”<sup>39</sup> While Sacred Heart had succeeded in establishing a parochial education program, housing the program had been more of a challenge. Sanborn maps show that upon completion of the masonry Sacred Heart Church building in 1898, the parish converted the entirety of the wood frame church building into a school (see Figure 57).

In 1900, deteriorating conditions in the makeshift school building and city plans to construct a panhandle park through the Sacred Heart property spurred then-pastor Father Hugh Lagan to rent, and then purchase the former Sutro property at Hayes and Fillmore streets. The Dominican Sisters also had a part in the decision. In 1900, the Sisters announced their intention to leave because of unfit living and teaching conditions. The parishioners rallied, putting together an evening entertainment to thank and woo the sisters back, as well as raise money as a show of good faith toward the construction of a new school building.<sup>40</sup> The Sisters stayed on, conducting school in new temporary quarters at the Sutro mansion while the parish worked to construct a new school building within the parish complex. The mansion, which reportedly accommodated about 500 students, remained in use until 1914 (Figure 60).



**FIGURE 60. OLD SUTRO MANSION/SACRED HEART SCHOOL AND CONVENT, HAYES AND FILLMORE STREETS, SAN FRANCISCO, CA. 1910. SOURCE: ARCHIVES OF THE DOMINICAN SISTERS OF SAN RAFAEL, SAN RAFAEL, CA**

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<sup>39</sup> “School Exercises at Sacred Heart Parish,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 4, 1904.

<sup>40</sup> “A Testimonial to Dominican Sisters,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 30, 1901.

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**FIGURE 61. SACRED HEART CHURCH AND SCHOOL IN 1939. SOURCE SAN FRANCISCO HISTORY CENTER, SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY**

The lengthy occupation of the Sutro site was not planned; the 1906 earthquake and the dislocation of other Catholic educational institutions interfered with progress on a parish school. Sacred Heart College (1874-1929), one of the largest Catholic boys' and men's educational institutions in the city, was displaced when their building at the corner of Eddy and Larkin streets burned in the post-quake fire. The college arranged with the parish to construct a temporary, wood-frame, three-story school building behind the church on Fell Street (see Figure 63).<sup>41</sup> Sacred Heart College relocated to a new building at Ellis and Larkin streets sometime after 1914, and Sacred Heart parochial school students again took up residence within the parish complex property, using the former Sacred Heart College building.<sup>42</sup>

Father John Cullen, who became pastor at Sacred Heart in 1922, finally oversaw construction of the current, permanent school building. Architect John J. Foley designed the school. As built, the school contained classrooms, an assembly hall, library, and nurse's room (Figure 61).<sup>43</sup> Sacred Heart School grew to become one of the Dominican Sisters' primary institutions in the city. In the early 1920s, the Dominican Sisters had fifteen teachers and 463 students at their flagship school, St. Rose's Academy, and eight teachers and 502 students at Sacred Heart.<sup>44</sup> A school contract between the Dominican Sisters and the Sacred Heart Parish from the early 1940s gives some insight into their role and influence in the parish. Per the terms of the contract, the parish pastor was the ex officio head of the school, but the Dominican principal had control of the curriculum, discipline matters, appointing sisters teaching at the school, and any lay employees. The contractual arrangement required that the parish provide

<sup>41</sup> Hamilton Wright and F. Marion Gallagher, "What the Catholic Church Has Done for San Francisco," *The Overland Monthly* L, no. 5 (1907): 415-416.

<sup>42</sup> "Best Children in the City" - Sacred Heart Pastor Says."

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

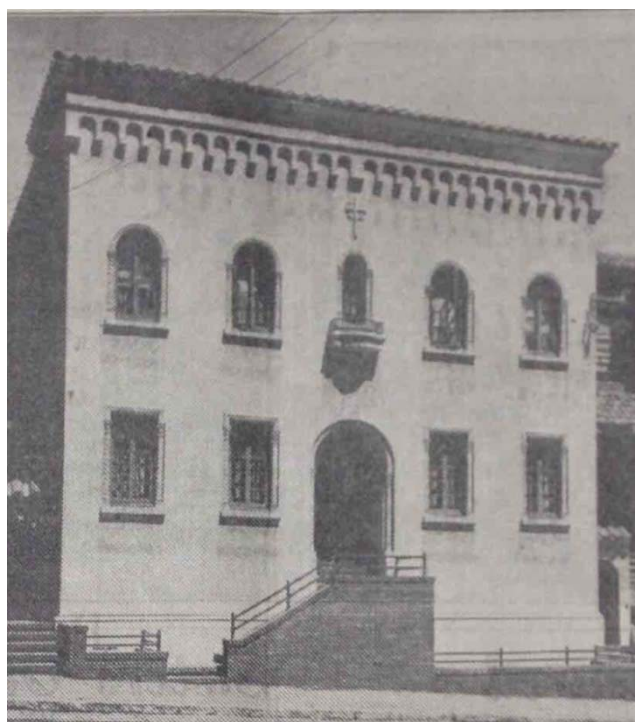
<sup>44</sup> Archdiocese of San Francisco, California, *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Schools, 1920-1921*, 125.

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suitable living quarters and furnishings for the sisters and administer daily mass. The sisters also stipulated that they would not be responsible for janitorial services at the school. Sisters earned a modest salary from the parish (\$40.00 per month in 1942) but could forgo that salary and earn supplemental income offering music lessons to parish children.<sup>45</sup>

Father Cullen also oversaw the last remaining building task on the parish property: a proper convent for the Dominican Sisters. In the early years of the parish school program, the Dominican Sisters faced somewhat harrowing housing circumstances. According to a 1927 letter from Father Cullen to the Archdiocese, the sisters first lived in a makeshift building behind the rectory constructed by Father Flood, then in the attic of the Sutro Mansion when it served as the parish school, and finally in a “rat ridden shed” off the school yard.<sup>46</sup> The sisters also lived in the attic of the wood-frame Sacred Heart College building from 1914 until sometime in the late 1910s.<sup>47</sup>

In 1927, just after completion of the parish’s masonry school building, Father Cullen purchased two lots on Oak Street with the intent of using them as the site for a new convent. It was not until 1936, however, that Father Cullen was able to commission architect John J. Foley to design a new convent building. Foley, who also designed the parish school, proposed a modestly-styled Romanesque and Renaissance Revival building of stuccoed, reinforced concrete. The building contained reception rooms, library, dining, kitchen, and community rooms on the first story and living quarters, infirmary, sewing room, and cedar closet on the second story. The convent included a chapel on the first story with painted art glass windows and a frescoed, beamed ceiling. The roof featured a paved, tiled garden (Figure 62).<sup>48</sup>



**FIGURE 62. SACRED HEART CONVENT JUST AFTER COMPLETION IN 1936. SOURCE: CATHOLIC MONITOR, AUGUST 15, 1936**

<sup>45</sup> Archdiocese of San Francisco, California, “School Contract between Pastor of the Church Sacred Heart, San Francisco and the Sisters of St. Dominic, Congregation of the Most Holy Name,” July 12, 1942, Archives of the Archdiocese of San Francisco.

<sup>46</sup> Father John Cullen to Unidentified Monsignor, April 12, 1927, Sacred Heart Historical File, Archives of the Archdiocese of San Francisco; Sacred Heart Parish, *Sacred Heart Parish September 2, 1885-1985*, 11. The “rat ridden shed” was likely the former Methodist church building. That structure was finally demolished in 1931.

<sup>47</sup> Sisters of Saint Dominic, “Annals of Sacred Heart Convent, San Francisco, California” n.d., 1920–1950:3, Archive of the Dominican Sisters of San Rafael, San Rafael, CA.

<sup>48</sup> “New Sacred Heart Convent,” *Catholic Monitor*, August 15, 1936.

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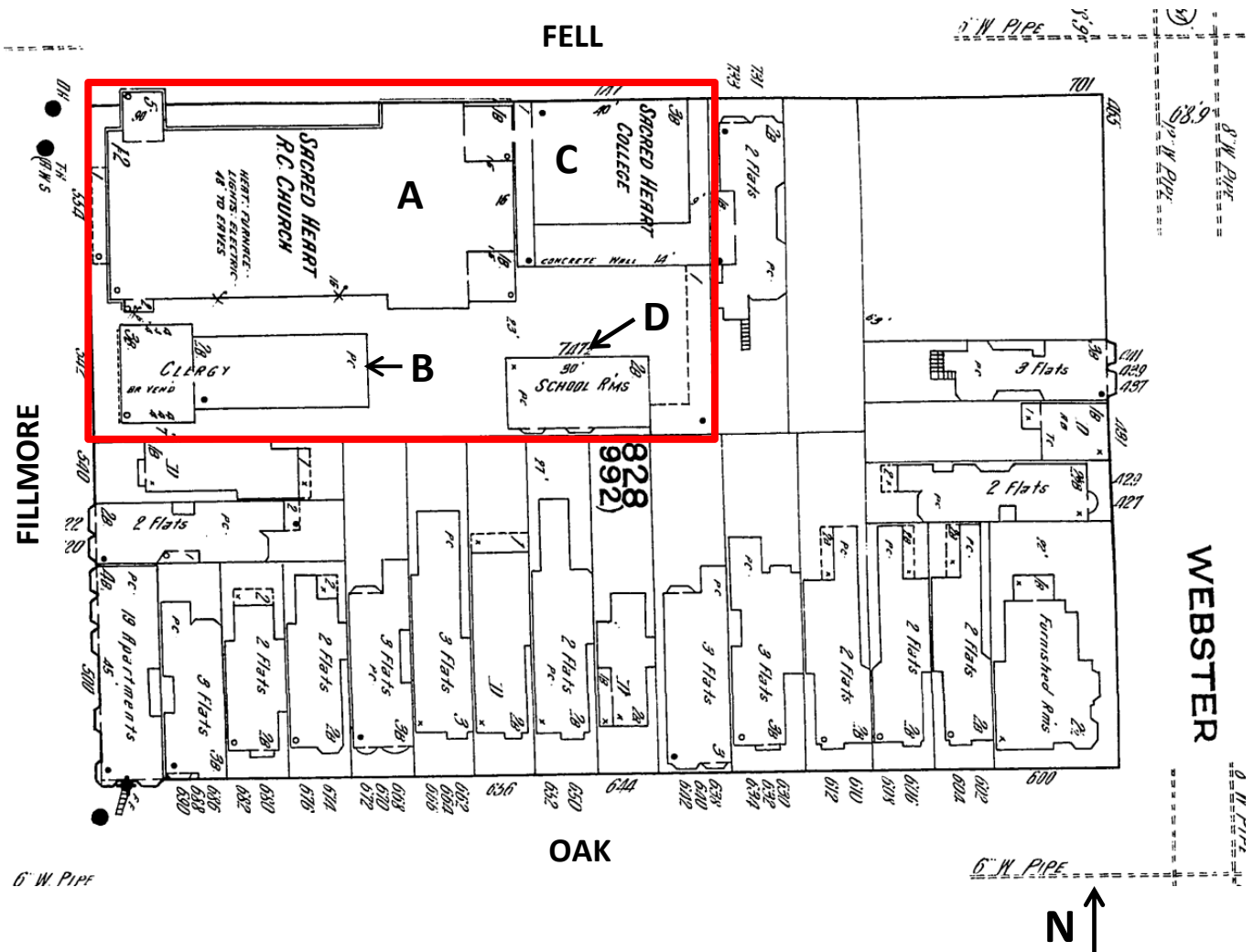


FIGURE 63. SANBORN MAP OF SACRED HEART PARISH WITH PROPERTY OUTLINED, 1913

A – CHURCH AFTER COMPLETION OF TRANSEPTS AND SACRISTIES (1898, 1909)

B – RECTORY AFTER RECONFIGURATION (1891, 1906)

C – SACRED HEART COLLEGE (CA. 1906)

D – FIRST CONVENT (1893), HERE IN TEMPORARY USE AS SCHOOL ROOMS

Note: At this date the parish school is located several blocks away in the former Sutro Mansion.

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### SERVING A CHANGING NEIGHBORHOOD: ACCENTS “FROM LIMERICK TO LUZON” (1940-1989)

Having achieved a position of stability with its completed parish church, rectory, school, and convent, Sacred Heart experienced another ground shift. With the onset of World War II and the massive influx of workers to the Bay Area’s wartime industries, the Western Addition underwent another significant demographic change. Throughout the 1940s, thousands of African Americans coming to work in the shipyards and munitions factories around the Bay began settling in the Western Addition. Before passage of fair housing legislation in California, African Americans were still restricted by law and custom from renting or buying in much of San Francisco. Vacancies in the Western Addition due to Japanese internment, the neighborhood’s central location and less expensive rents, and a small existing African-American community in the district attracted the newcomers. During the 1940s, the Western Addition evolved into the center of African-American life in the city. African-American residents crowded into the apartment houses and converted Victorians of the district, eventually moving south along Fillmore and Webster streets into Hayes Valley.<sup>49</sup> After 1950, a postwar influx of African Americans from Texas, Arkansas, and Louisiana hastened the transformation of the Western Addition, and the Fillmore District in particular, from a largely white district into a heavily African-American neighborhood.

These demographic shifts were apparent at Sacred Heart. Father Cullen’s parish historical report in 1943 noted an increase in “transient” attendance due to the war and “rooming house conditions” in the adjacent neighborhoods.<sup>50</sup> The annual parish report from 1945 recorded that “Negroes” and Chinese were purchasing property near the church on both Fell and Fillmore streets.<sup>51</sup> Reports from the late 1940s note continued increase in African Americans in the parish as well as the “constant increase of Latins.”<sup>52</sup>

After World War II, the suburban boom, urban renewal, and new US immigration policies further changed the face of the Sacred Heart Parish and its relationship with the surrounding community. With many middle-class, Americanized Catholics moving to the expanding suburbs, parishes in the city such as Sacred Heart grew more ethnically and racially diverse in the 1950s and 1960s with increasing numbers of Latino and African-American residents moving into once predominantly Irish, Eastern European, and Italian neighborhoods.

Urban renewal also impacted the parish. The San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, founded in 1948 to combat “urban blight” in San Francisco, made the redevelopment of the overcrowded and neglected

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<sup>49</sup> Mark Walker and Grace H. Ziesing, eds., *The San Francisco Central Freeway Replacement Project-Alternative 8B: Archaeological Research Design and Treatment Plan* (Rohnert Park, CA: Anthropological Studies Center, Sonoma State University, May 2002.), 89.

<sup>50</sup> Father John Cullen, “Parish Historical Report for Sacred Heart Church,” 1943, Archives of the Archdiocese of San Francisco.

<sup>51</sup> Father John Cullen, “Parish Historical Report for Sacred Heart Church,” 1945, Archives of the Archdiocese of San Francisco.

<sup>52</sup> Father John Cullen, “Parish Historical Report for Sacred Heart Church,” 1946, Archives of the Archdiocese of San Francisco.

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Western Addition a centerpiece of its work.<sup>53</sup> From the early 1950s through the early 1970s, agency projects demolished much of the old Western Addition. The first project focused on a large area bounded by Turk, Gough, Fulton, and Laguna streets, three blocks north of Sacred Heart Church. This work coincided with major freeway construction in the city. By 1957, the Central Freeway and associated on and off ramps cut a swath through the eastern Western Addition, removing eleven blocks of urban landscape from the Sacred Heart Church parish territory.

The gutting of the Western Addition diminished parish life. In 1955, Father John C. Mill's (pastor 1953-1958) annual parish report noted a decrease in mass attendance due to the changing neighborhood demographics, primarily an increase in the non-Catholic, African-American population.<sup>54</sup> Father Mills also noted the general reduction of the local population with the construction of the Central Freeway.<sup>55</sup> At this time, the congregation contained approximately 1,700 people, including about 100 African American families.<sup>56</sup> Parish school attendance was similarly lower, down to 335 students.<sup>57</sup>

Redevelopment projects in the parish accelerated and membership continued to decline through the tenure of the next pastor, Father Charles O'Connor (pastor 1958-1968). Rows of Western Addition Victorians and commercial buildings in the heart of the African-American Fillmore District fell for high-rise and mid-rise market rate housing and the Japan Culture and Trade Center (Japan Center).<sup>58</sup>

New immigration policy and shifts in population did bring new members to the congregation, however. With more liberal immigration rules beginning in 1965, the face of the Catholic Church in San Francisco and the Western Addition changed once again. Mexicans, Central and South Americans, Filipinos, Vietnamese, Korean, Chinese, Samoan, Tongan, Polish, and African Catholics joined formerly Irish, Italian, and German congregations throughout the city. At Sacred Heart, these changes added an influx of Filipino immigrants to the already-diverse Sacred Heart congregation, and the church prided itself on having accents ranging "from Limerick to Luzon."<sup>59</sup> The influx was not enough to increase overall numbers in the congregation, however, and in the mid- to late 1960s average weekly mass attendance was down to 860 worshippers.<sup>60</sup> Parish historical reports again credit the drop in attendance to the continued demolition of the Western Addition and influx of non-Catholic minority groups.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Mark Walker and Grace H. Ziesing, eds., *The San Francisco Central Freeway Replacement Project-Alternative 8B: Archaeological Research Design and Treatment Plan* (Rohnert Park, CA: Anthropological Studies Center, Sonoma State University, May 2002), 89.

<sup>54</sup> Father John Mills, "Parish Historical Report for Sacred Heart Church," 1955, Archives of the Archdiocese of San Francisco.

<sup>55</sup> Sacred Heart Parish, *Sacred Heart Parish September 2, 1885-1985*, 14.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> "'Best Children in the City' - Sacred Heart Pastor Says."

<sup>58</sup> David Gebhard et al, *The Guide to Architecture in San Francisco and Northern California* (Salt Lake City: Peregrine-Smith Books, 1985 ed.), 89-90.

<sup>59</sup> James Kelly, "At Fillmore and Fell, Serving the City's Crowded Heart," *Catholic Monitor*, May 20, 1960, Archives of the Archdiocese of San Francisco.

<sup>60</sup> Father Charles O'Connor, "Parish Historical Report for Sacred Heart Church," 1965, Archives of the Archdiocese of San Francisco; Father Eugene Boyle, "Parish Historical Report for Sacred Heart Church," 1966, Archives of the Archdiocese of San Francisco.

<sup>61</sup> Father Charles O'Connor, "Parish Historical Report for Sacred Heart Church," 1964, Archives of the Archdiocese of San Francisco.

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By the mid-1960s, the Catholic Church in San Francisco faced difficult questions about how to address a deteriorating urban situation in some of its parishes, minister to new immigrant groups, and determine its role among the social and political upheavals of the decade.<sup>62</sup> Given its location in one of the most diverse neighborhoods in the city and at ground zero for urban renewal, civil rights, and social justice issues, Sacred Heart was poised as an epicenter for the intersection of Catholic and secular social justice

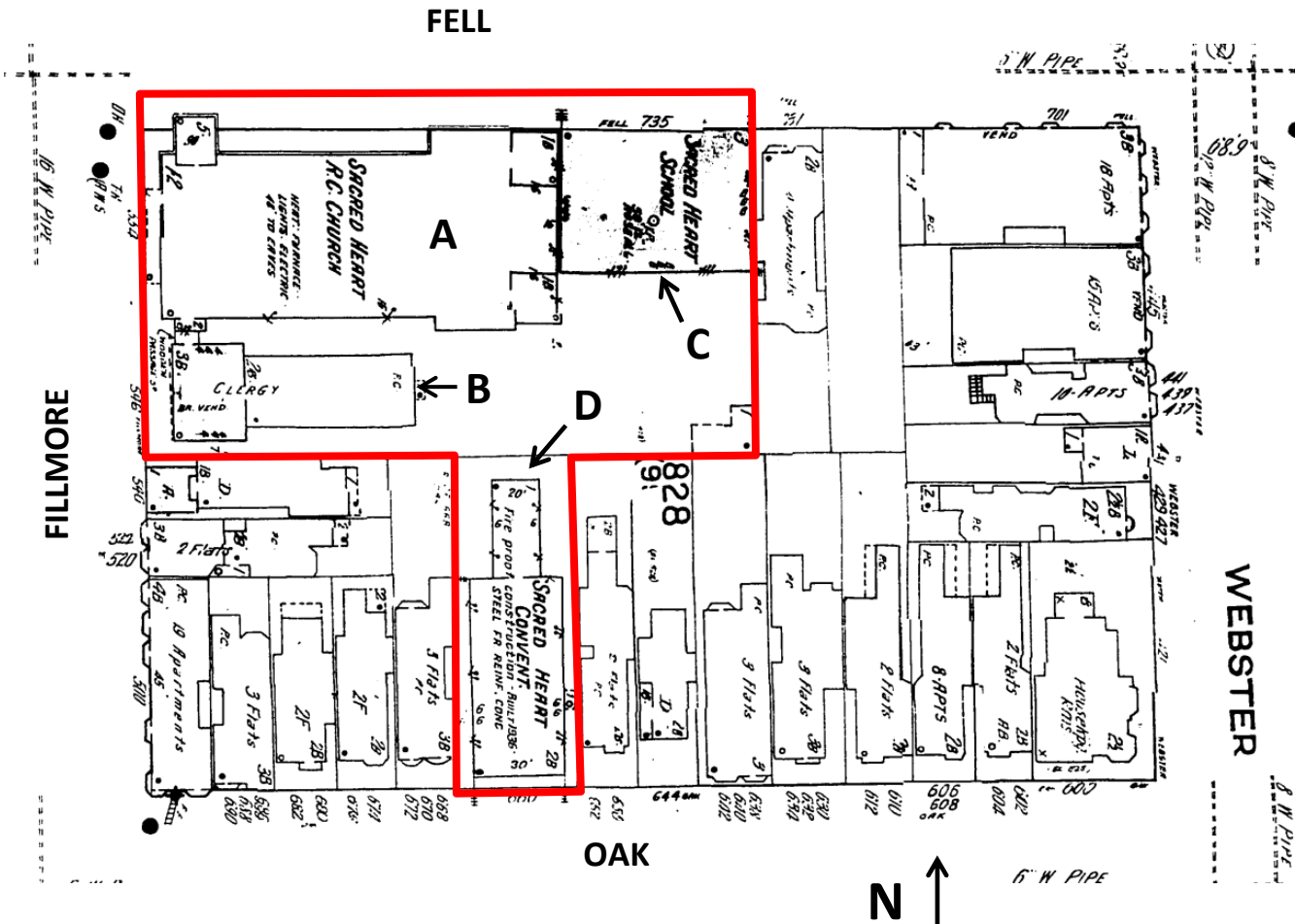


FIGURE 64. SANBORN MAP OF SACRED HEART WITH PROPERTY OUTLINED, 1950

- A – CHURCH (1898, 1909)
- B – RECTORY (1891, 1906)
- C – SCHOOL (1926)
- D – CONVENT (1936)

<sup>62</sup> O'Dell, "On Stony Ground," 31–32.



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activity. It was at this time that Sacred Heart came under the leadership of its most well-known and sometimes controversial pastor, civil rights activist Father Eugene Boyle (pastor 1968-1972). Father Boyle focused his ministry at Sacred Heart on the surrounding community, opening the church to groups aligned with a variety of leftist advocacy agendas. Father Boyle also converted the parish school into a community school, welcoming non-Catholic pupils (see context on Father Eugene Boyle and Social Activism at Sacred Heart).

This tradition of community-focused ministry continued beyond Father Boyle's departure as pastor in 1972, largely through the Sacred Heart School, the Dominican Sisters, and parish-based social service outreach. In 1978, Sister Mary Felipe, principal of the Sacred Heart School, transitioned into service as a dedicated parish social worker. She established the Community Service Project at the parish in 1979, which responded to students at the school who were hungry, malnourished, or poorly clothed. The Project also provided emergency food, shelter and counseling for Western Addition families.<sup>63</sup> One of the sisters' most ambitious projects was the Family School program, which operated as part of the Community Service Project. Initiated in 1985, the Family School served single-parent families living in the Western Addition regardless of faith, helping young, largely low-income residents further their education and career goals. The program operated out of the first floor of the Sacred Heart Convent on Oak Street and included on-site child care; basic and remedial math, reading, health, and life skills classes; and mental health and job counseling services.<sup>64</sup> The Family School and its partnerships with nearly a dozen social service and educational institutions epitomized the development of community-oriented social service and social justice work in the Sacred Heart Parish during the second half of the twentieth century. The church also operated or acted as a partner in social programs for seniors and substance abusers.

The threat of urban renewal and neighborhood change continued in the Western Addition in the later 1970s. Widespread opposition to the Redevelopment Agency's work led to lawsuits, and work on the next part of the program – an area bounded by Webster, Turk, Gough, and Fulton streets – went forward with more care. Nevertheless, most of this vast tract of Victorian-era housing was demolished and replaced with low-rise San Francisco Housing Authority housing projects in the early 1970s.<sup>65</sup> When all was said and done, Redevelopment Agency projects displaced more than 20,000 residents, shut down more than 800 businesses, and demolished approximately 2,500 Victorian-era buildings in the Western Addition.<sup>66</sup>

In 1985, Sacred Heart, then one of the more predominantly African-American parishes in the city, welcomed as pastor Father Kenneth Westray, Jr. (pastor 1985-2000), the first African-American priest to

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<sup>63</sup> Sister Mary Felipe, OP, "Proposal for the Family School, The Community Service Project," February 1985, 17, Archive of the Dominican Sisters of San Rafael, San Rafael, CA.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 1–3.

<sup>65</sup> David Gebhard et al, *The Guide to Architecture in San Francisco and Northern California* (Salt Lake City: Peregrine-Smith Books, 1985 ed.), 89-90.

<sup>66</sup> Peter Booth Wiley, *National Trust Guide-- San Francisco: America's Guide for Architecture and History Travelers* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2000), 291; Rubin, Danielle, "Moving Victorians in the Fillmore," n.d., [http://foundsf.org/index.php?title=Moving\\_Victorians\\_in\\_the\\_Fillmore](http://foundsf.org/index.php?title=Moving_Victorians_in_the_Fillmore) Note that the total number of buildings from all periods demolished in the A-1 and A-2 redevelopment areas numbered in the thousands.

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be ordained in the Archdiocese of San Francisco. Adding to the diversity of the congregation, a Nigerian Igbo Catholic community joined the parish in the 1990s.

### SACRED HEART'S FINAL YEARS (1989-2005)

While the Sacred Heart Parish weathered the 1906 earthquake undamaged, the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake caused some damage to the interior and exterior of the church. This damage, the prospect of an expensive seismic retrofit, and weekly mass attendance below 500 people put the parish on the Archdiocese's potential closure list beginning in 1993. Later archdiocese plans called for retention of the parish school, but demolition of the existing church in favor of a new, smaller church building. These potential plans led to efforts to landmark the Sacred Heart church. State legislators led by Assembly speaker Willie Brown stymied efforts with legislation banning designation of religious structures as historic landmarks. By 2001, the Archdiocese indicated it was considering closing the predominantly African-American Sacred Heart School due to low enrollment - 107 students (primarily non-Catholic) in kindergarten through eighth grade.<sup>67</sup> The Archdiocese combined the school with nearby St. Dominic's School in 2003.

In 2004, the Archdiocese of San Francisco announced that it would close the Sacred Heart Church due to the high cost of earthquake repairs and retrofitting for the masonry building and a dwindling congregation. The church closed at the end of the year and most former parishioners joined St. Boniface Catholic Church in the Tenderloin.

In 2005, lawyer and winemaker Fred Furth purchased the Sacred Heart Complex. Furth was a patron of the combined St. Dominic's and Sacred Heart Schools, and established the Megan Furth Academy, an independent Catholic school at the site.<sup>68</sup> In 2011, the Megan Furth Academy merged with the Mission Dolores Academy, another independent Catholic school in San Francisco; the combined academy sold its interest in all former parish buildings in 2012. The academy sold the school building to Noe Vista LLC, which currently leases the building to La Scuola Internazionale di San Francisco, a kindergarten through eighth-grade Italian immersion school. Noe Vista LLC also purchased the rectory and convent buildings in 2012. The LLC leases both buildings to The Blue Studio LLC. 251 Waller, LLC purchased the church building in 2012 and held it for two years before selling it to the present owner, 554 Fillmore St. LLC. A recreational roller skating organization, the Church of Eight Wheels, currently leases the church building.

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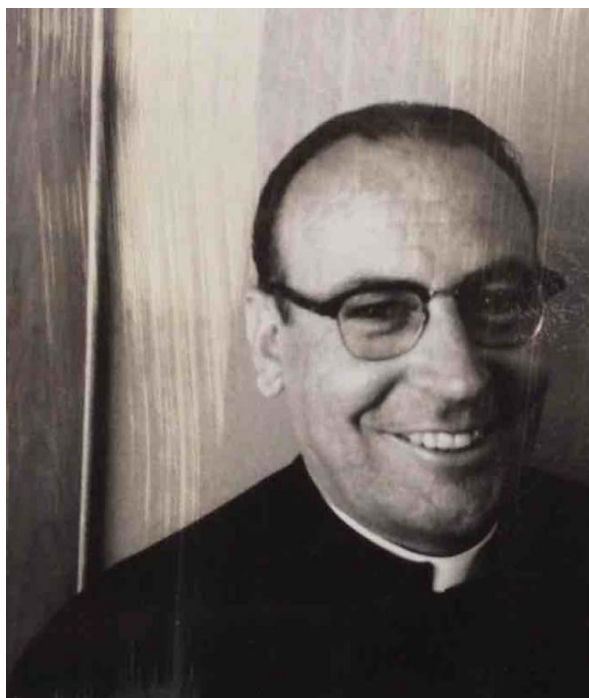
<sup>67</sup> See Don Lattin, "Archdiocese Considers Closing S.F. Churches," *San Francisco Chronicle (CA)*, August 4, 1993; Don Lattin, "13 Catholic Parishes to Close - S.F. Archdiocese Cites Repairs, Poor Attendance," *San Francisco Chronicle (CA)*, November 15, 1993; Lattin, Don, "Angry Calls Over Plans to Close 13 S.F. Churches," *San Francisco Chronicle (CA)*, November 16, 1993; Robert Gunnison, B., "Church Preservation Rejected by Senate - Law Limiting Landmark Designation Extended," *San Francisco Chronicle (CA)*, June 30, 1994; Ken Garcia, "Sacred Heart School Gets Dollar Sign From Above," *San Francisco Chronicle (CA)*, February 22, 2001.

<sup>68</sup> Carolyn Jones, "SAN FRANCISCO - Sacred Heart's Salvation - Lawyer Fred Furth Pays \$5 Million for Catholic Church," *San Francisco Chronicle (CA)*, July 28, 2005.

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### FATHER EUGENE BOYLE (1921-2016) AND SOCIAL ACTIVISM AT SACRED HEART, 1968-1972

Father Eugene Boyle presided over one of the most active, influential, and controversial periods of parish ministry and community involvement at Sacred Heart (Figure 65). Boyle was a prominent and influential civil rights activist in the Archdiocese of San Francisco and in northern California during the 1960s and 1970s. Locally, he exemplified the new clerical activism that emerged in the Catholic Church after the Second Vatican Council urged clergy and laity to be more active in the secular world.<sup>69</sup> Historian Jeffrey Burns has categorized this period as a transition for Catholics out of the insularity of the “Catholic ghetto” and into the “real ghetto” of America’s underprivileged and disenfranchised communities.<sup>70</sup> In his own words, Boyle sought to relocate the Catholic Church in San Francisco, putting it “at the center of broken reality, in the messy mainstream of man’s alienated history.”<sup>71</sup> In these efforts, Father Boyle organized and served as the public face for Catholic involvement in the Black civil rights movement, the



**FIGURE 65. FATHER EUGENE BOYLE. SOURCE: ARCHIVES OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN FRANCISCO. (UNDATED, CA. 1950)**

Vietnam War, urban renewal, fair housing, and the farm worker labor movement in San Francisco. Boyle was pastor at Sacred Heart from 1968-1972, and while at Sacred Heart he made the church a center of activism in the turbulent Western Addition and greater San Francisco. Boyle threw open the doors of the church to secular activist groups ranging from Vietnam Veterans against the War to the Black Panthers during a tense and transformative period in the social and racial landscape of the city.

Father Boyle’s activism within the Catholic Church and at Sacred Heart Parish built on, but also stood out from typical Catholic stances on civic issues. Historically, the Catholic Church in San Francisco had primarily engaged in public activism related to issues of religious freedom and tolerance. Over the course of the early twentieth century, however, clerical and lay groups within the Archdiocese increasingly engaged in politically-based social justice activism. This kind of activism was uncomfortable territory for many Catholics, and even after the Second Vatican Council encouraged Catholics to go “out into the world” and serve, church leaders remained divided on the role of the church in political matters. Catholic social justice activism, and activism of all kinds, also occurred against the backdrop of a

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<sup>69</sup> Jeffrey M. Burns, “Eugene Boyle, the Black Panther Party and the New Clerical Activism,” *U.S. Catholic Historian* 13, no. 3 (July 1, 1995): 140.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 158.

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socially and politically conservative city. By the mid-twentieth century, San Francisco had left its libertine Gold Rush days behind it and had yet to emerge as the counter-culture capital of the U.S. The Catholic Church in San Francisco wove in and out of social and political camps as their doctrines and policies dictated, resulting in public activities that mixed liberalism on issues such as labor with conservatism on other issues such as women's rights. Boyle's ebullient liberalism and commitment to community activism marked the leading edge of Catholic involvement in the social justice issues of the mid twentieth century.

### EARLY CIVIL RIGHTS AND FAIR HOUSING ACTIVISM (1958-1968)

Father Boyle's early career as a Catholic priest was typical for the era. He studied for the priesthood at St. Patrick's Seminary in Menlo Park and was ordained in 1946. After ordination he worked as an associate pastor in various parishes in the archdiocese. In 1956, Boyle was appointed to the Archdiocesan Mission Band and began preaching and offering adult education to Catholic parishes in California, Arizona, and Nevada. This marked the beginning of a career in public-centered ministry and education for Boyle, who later directed the Vallombrosa Retreat Center in Menlo Park; taught at St. Patrick's Seminary, St. Patrick's College, and the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley; and served as the Director of Peace and Justice for the National Federation of Priest Council.

Boyle's profile as a public intellectual began in 1958 with his local radio program, *Underscore: Catholic Views in Review* on KCBS. The program covered issues related to religion and modern life, including social justice. Partially through this program, Father Boyle emerged as a leading Catholic voice in the civil rights movement. At the time, the Archdiocese of San Francisco was struggling with the matter of civil rights, which it had paid only minimal attention to before World War II. As the city's diversity and racial tensions increased during and after the war, representatives from religious, labor, business, and government groups formed a local Council for Civic Unity (1944-1964). The council worked with local African American, Asian American and Latino community groups on issues of racial equality in housing, education, and employment. The Catholic Church was active in the council, but strained over how to translate their moral stance against racial discrimination into a political position. Many Catholics viewed the civil rights movement as separate from their mission and latent discriminatory attitudes among conservative sectors of the clergy and Catholic laity further complicated the Church's involvement.<sup>72</sup>

The Catholic Church's involvement in civil rights issues began in small steps, led largely by laity and individual clergy like Eugene Boyle. In 1960, local church lay leaders founded the San Francisco branch of the Catholic Interracial Council (CIC), a national organization of black and white Catholics focused on working against racial discrimination. The CIC had a secular as well as religious focus; they challenged Catholic attitudes on race and fought against discriminatory practices outside the Church.<sup>73</sup> Father Boyle

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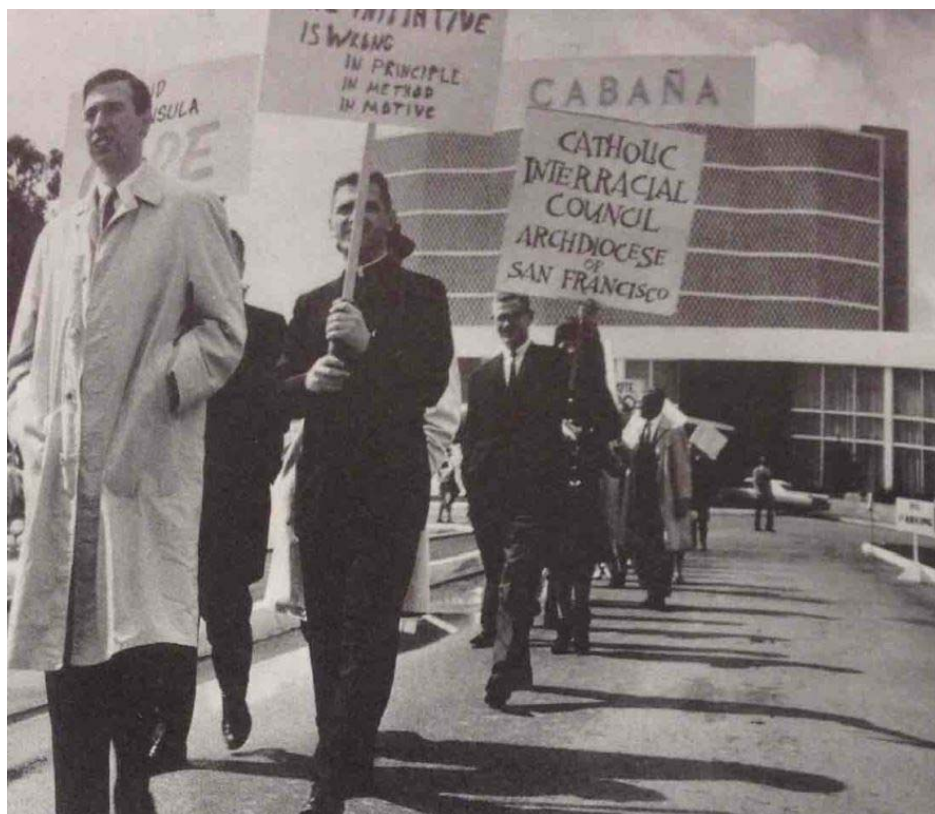
<sup>72</sup> Clay Mansfield O'Dell, "Catholics and Civil Rights," in *Catholic San Francisco: Sesquicentennial Essays*, ed. Jeffrey M. Burns (Menlo Park, Calif: Archives of the Archdiocese of San Francisco, 2005), 204–205.

<sup>73</sup> Burns, *San Francisco*, Volume 3, 15 Terry Francois, an African-American Catholic from St. Anne of the Sunset was pivotal in establishing the local CIC chapter. Francois, an attorney, was president of the local chapter of the NAACP and a member of the San Francisco Commission on Equal Opportunity Employment. He was later elected the first black Supervisor of San Francisco in 1964.

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began serving as chaplain to the CIC chapter in 1962.<sup>74</sup> During Father Boyle's tenure as CIC chaplain, the group's activities included a "Human Rights Day" march to San Francisco City Hall in 1963 in response to the bombing of Martin Luther King Jr.'s hotel and police brutality against civil rights demonstrators in Birmingham, Alabama.<sup>75</sup>

The CIC was also active in more controversial work like advocating for open housing policies in the city and fighting Proposition 14, an effort to repeal the California's fair housing law (Figure 66).<sup>76</sup> The fair housing issue divided San Francisco Catholics. Opponents of the repeal charged supporters with errors of conscience, and proponents hurled accusations of communist leanings. Archbishop Joseph McGucken eventually issued a statement two weeks before the election, calling unequal access to decent housing based on race "an insult to human dignity."<sup>77</sup> But San Francisco voters overwhelmingly passed Proposition 14. The repeal effort exemplifies the tensions among San Francisco Catholics, and by extension to the overwhelmingly Catholic city at large, during the civil rights era.



**FIGURE 66. CIC MARCHERS PROTESTING PROPOSITION 14 IN SAN FRANCISCO, 1964. SOURCE: O'DELL, "CATHOLICS AND CIVIL RIGHTS," IN BURNS, CATHOLIC SAN FRANCISCO**

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.; O'Dell, "Catholics and Civil Rights," 207.

<sup>76</sup> O'Dell, "Catholics and Civil Rights," 206; O'Dell, "On Stony Ground," 81.

<sup>77</sup> O'Dell, "Catholics and Civil Rights," 209; Burns, "Eugene Boyle, the Black Panther Party and the New Clerical Activism," 144. The California Supreme Court declared Proposition 14 unconstitutional in 1966 and the US Supreme Court upheld the decision in 1967.

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In response to the defeat of fair housing laws, Father Eugene Boyle and other CIC members urged the Archdiocese to establish the Social Justice Commission in 1964 to try to address Catholic divisions on such issues.<sup>78</sup> The Archbishop appointed Father Boyle chair of the Social Justice Commission upon its founding. During his time as chair, Boyle responded to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s call for support during the civil rights march from Selma to Montgomery and marched with Cesar Chavez and the National Farm Workers Association from Delano to Sacramento.<sup>79</sup> As a founder and chair of the Social Justice Commission, Father Boyle became the defacto Archdiocese spokesperson on issues of social justice and one of San Francisco's leading liberal Catholic thinkers and activists.<sup>80</sup>

Boyle's activism was not limited to the Catholic parishes and seminaries where he spoke and taught, however. In 1967, one year before becoming pastor at Sacred Heart, Boyle began teaching a seminar on social concerns at St. Patrick's College in Mountain View. In his first seminar, Boyle and his students compiled a 600-page study on the status of race relations in San Francisco, called "San Francisco: A City in Crisis." Known as the "Little Kerner Report," in reference to the national race relations study of the same name, the document condemned widespread racism in San Francisco and warned of social unrest if conditions remained unchanged.<sup>81</sup> The San Francisco Coalition on Race, Religion and Social Concerns published the report, and public response was polarized. Then San Francisco Mayor Joseph Alioto excoriated the report and its authors as being out of touch with the facts. The controversy played out in the local media for weeks.<sup>82</sup> Father Boyle continued teaching the seminar after arriving at Sacred Heart, holding class meetings in Sacred Heart rectory.<sup>83</sup>

Boyle was also active in a variety of secular social justice organizations. In the later 1960s, Boyle served on the board of directors for the Council for Civic Unity of San Francisco and the Bay Area Urban League. He was also an organizer, mediator, and advocate for the UFW beginning in 1964 and served on the Public Review Board for the UFW and the AFL-CIO beginning in 1973.<sup>84</sup> Boyle continued his work in conscience-driven, secular social justice activism during his time as pastor of Sacred Heart Parish, using the urban complex as a hub for civil rights, labor, and anti-war activism in the city.

### NEIGHBORHOOD CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVISM AT SACRED HEART (1968-1972)

Father Boyle arrived at Sacred Heart Church in 1968, coming into a parish that as he described it was, "if not in the heart of, it certainly was in the depth of the Black ghetto of the Fillmore District."<sup>85</sup> Taking stock, Boyle noted the poor condition of much of the local housing stock, the fact that fifty percent of

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<sup>78</sup> Burns, *San Francisco*, Volume 3, 15; O'Dell, "Catholics and Civil Rights," 209.

<sup>79</sup> Burns, *San Francisco*, Volume 3, 16; Burns, "Eugene Boyle, the Black Panther Party and the New Clerical Activism," 145.

<sup>80</sup> Burns, *San Francisco*, Volume 3, 15.

<sup>81</sup> The 1968 "Kerner Report" was the product of President Lyndon Johnson's National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorder, directed by former Illinois Governor Otto Kerner. The report attributed the string of urban riots between 1964 and 1967 in the US to white racial prejudice and warned of the dangers of a racially divided society.

<sup>82</sup> Burns, *San Francisco*, Volume 3, 16; Burns, "Eugene Boyle, the Black Panther Party and the New Clerical Activism," 145-147.

<sup>83</sup> Burns, "Eugene Boyle, the Black Panther Party and the New Clerical Activism," 154.

<sup>84</sup> Father Eugene Boyle, "Curriculum Vitae: Father Eugene Boyle," 1985, Archives of the Archdiocese of San Francisco.

<sup>85</sup> Father Eugene Boyle, Oral History Interview: Father Eugene Boyle, interview by Jeffrey M. Burns, July 21, 1987, 1, Archives of the Archdiocese of San Francisco.

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the families in the parish were single-parent households, and that the Catholic population of the parish was quite small.<sup>86</sup> He also noted that Sacred Heart, “like many other inner-city parishes ... was not really confronting or serving the situation of the minorities who had come in.”<sup>87</sup> Father Boyle’s arrival that year coincided with the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the height of the Vietnam War. As a priest focused on civil rights issues, Boyle took the struggling parish with a dwindling Catholic population in new directions. The pastoral mission of the church focused not just on spiritual guidance for its parishioners but institutional change for all residents of the parish.<sup>88</sup>

Boyle established a team ministry at the church, consisting of himself, assistant pastors James Kennedy and John Petroni, and Sister Margaret Cafferty, PBVM.<sup>89</sup> Women religious like Sister Margaret (1935-1997) played a significant role in carrying on the community-oriented and socially informed ministry and outreach work at the parish. Sister Margaret’s work as a Sister of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary was typical of the more direct, ministerial roles women religious were taking in the late 1960s. A San Francisco native, Sister Margaret grew up the daughter of a former coal miner and thus had a strong interest in labor activism and social justice. She entered the Sisters of the Presentation order in 1953. At Sacred Heart, her work included civil rights activism with the local African-American community and labor activism with the United Farm Workers. She also earned a master’s degree in social welfare from the University of California, Berkeley while working at the parish.<sup>90</sup> The Dominican Sisters at Sacred Heart were also active participants in the parish’s work through their roles at the Sacred Heart School.

### THE BLACK PANTHERS

The parish commitment to secular institutional change and neighborhood service led to unusual and often controversial partnerships. In 1969, the Black Panther Party approached Sacred Heart about using space on the property for their Breakfast Program for Children, one of the party’s ten points for community development.<sup>91</sup> The Panthers had approached most of the churches in the area, and according to Father Boyle, “finally came to us on a lark.”<sup>92</sup> The parish decided to open their basement parish hall and kitchen to the program, which began on March 10, 1969. Boyle and his pastoral team justified their welcoming of the Black Panthers with the real community need the program served and a belief that the media had misrepresented the Panthers as violent thugs. During this time, Boyle worked directly with Panther leadership, including Bobby Seal and Cathy Cleaver, wife of Eldridge Cleaver.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>89</sup> Burns, “Eugene Boyle, the Black Panther Party and the New Clerical Activism,” 149–150.

<sup>90</sup> After leaving the parish in the early 1970s, Sister Margaret worked with refugees from Central America and advocated for better conditions for employees in Catholic religious institutions. In her final years, she served as the executive director of the Catholic Conference on Urban Ministry at Notre Dame University and was the director of parish outreach at Catholic Charities of San Francisco. Sister Margaret also served as the executive director of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious from 1992 until just before her death in 1997. “Sister Margaret Cafferty,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 28, 1997, <http://www.sfgate.com/news/article/SisterMargaretCafferty3123011.php>; Pelosi, Nancy, “Tribute to Sister Margaret Cafferty, PVBVM” (US House of Representatives, May 7, 1997), <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CREC-1997-05-07/html/CREC-1997-05-07-pt1-PgE862-5.htm>.

<sup>91</sup> Kenny Freeman and Roy Ballard organized the San Francisco branch of the Black Panther Party as the Black Panther Party of Northern California in 1967. See UC Berkeley Library and Social Activism Sound Recording Project, “A Black Panther Chronology,” 2011, <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/MRC/pacificpanthers.html>.

<sup>92</sup> Father Eugene Boyle, Oral History Interview: Father Eugene Boyle, July 21, 1987, 4.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 7.

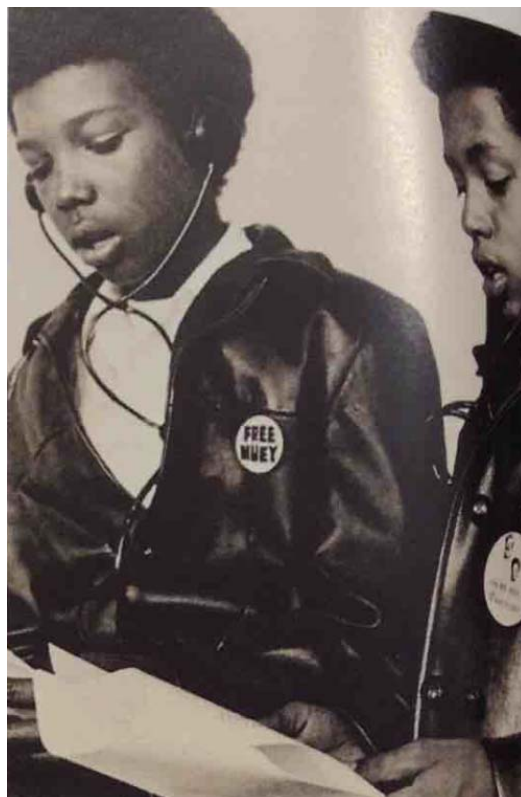
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Sacred Heart was one of about a dozen churches hosting the Black Panther Breakfast Program in the Bay Area, signing up shortly after the first church, St. Augustine's (Episcopal) in Oakland opened its doors in January 1969. The Sacred Heart location served between 75 and 100 local children per day, many of whom were students at the then-predominantly African-American Sacred Heart School.<sup>94</sup>

These were tense times in the Fillmore District and for race relations in the city at large. Later that year, the San Francisco Police Department raided the Black Panther Party headquarters on Fillmore Street after a member allegedly pointed a gun at police. The presence of the Panthers at Sacred Heart quickly attracted the attention of the San Francisco Police Department and the FBI. The most controversial moment in the relationship came in 1969 when San Francisco Police Department personnel stated before the McClellan U.S. Senate Committee on Investigations that Father Boyle was allowing the Black Panthers to distribute coloring books depicting the police as pigs, Panthers killing police officers, and featuring the slogan, "The only good pig is a dead pig." The Panthers had commissioned and printed a small number of the coloring books, but the organization never distributed them. It was later proved that the FBI planted the coloring books in the Sacred Heart church basement as part of the agency's counterintelligence program against the Panthers.<sup>95</sup>

Though Boyle spoke out publicly on television and in newspapers to explain the situation, the incident eroded liberal support for the program at Sacred Heart, which at this time survived largely on donations from outside the parish.<sup>96</sup> The program continued after the incident, and closed at an unknown date.

The focus on civil rights activism at Sacred Heart impacted the students at Sacred Heart School, many of whom became socially engaged in the movement. A group of Sacred Heart students marched to the Federal Building to protest the jailing of Huey Newton in the late 1960s (Figure 67).<sup>97</sup> Speaking years later, Boyle stood by



**FIGURE 67. SACRED HEART SCHOOL STUDENTS SHOWING SUPPORT FOR BLACK PANTHER HUEY NEWTON, CIRCA 1968. SOURCE: BURNS, HISTORY OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN FRANCISCO.**

<sup>94</sup> "Father Boyle Discusses Free Breakfast Program," *KPIX Eyewitness News* (KPIX, June 25, 1969), San Francisco Bay Area Television Archive, <https://diva.sfsu.edu/collections/sfbatv/bundles/206988>.

<sup>95</sup> Burns, *San Francisco*, Volume 3, 16; Burns, "Eugene Boyle, the Black Panther Party and the New Clerical Activism," 153–154 According to Burns, Senator Frank Church's Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities revealed in 1975 that the FBI's Covert Action Program to Destroy the Black Panther Party included planting the offensive coloring books in the Sacred Heart church basement.

<sup>96</sup> Burns, "Eugene Boyle, the Black Panther Party and the New Clerical Activism," 153.

<sup>97</sup> Garcia, "Sacred Heart School Gets Dollar Sign From Above."



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his decision to welcome the Panthers to Sacred Heart, stating, "... we felt that the way to truly force a group to become even more violent is to isolate them in a community, and we felt, at least we were making an outreach to them and at least trying with them in some way."<sup>98</sup>

### VIETNAM WAR ACTIVISM

Boyle tread more carefully in his activism over the Vietnam War. The Catholic Church in San Francisco, like the nation, was mixed in its stance on the Vietnam War. At the outset of the war in the 1950s the church was consistently supportive of US efforts to root out communism in Southeast Asia. Boyle noted in a 1987 oral history interview that directly speaking out against the government or advocating for peace carried the specter of communism for many Catholics. By the 1960s, however, public sentiments on the war were changing in the Catholic community. In 1968, the diocese saw anti-war activities ranging from "Bingo for Berrigan," to raise money for activist priests and brothers Daniel and Philip Berrigan's legal defense, to a small flotilla of boats manned by younger priests attempting to stop Navy vessels from departing San Francisco Bay.<sup>99</sup> Near the end of Boyle's tenure at Sacred Heart in 1972, the Archdiocesan Commission on Social Justice issued a resolution asking Congress to stop funding the war and later called for the resignation of Richard Nixon because of his wartime actions.<sup>100</sup>

These growing antiwar actions among Catholics coincided with Father Boyle's ministry at Sacred Heart, and he was supportive of war protest groups. Father Boyle was active himself with the National Federation of Priests Council in organizing efforts against the war.<sup>101</sup> At Sacred Heart, he started a group for Vietnam Veterans against the War, opened Sacred Heart for their meetings, and gave them office space in the building.<sup>102</sup> A group of conscientious objectors also met on site. Sacred Heart served as a site for student group meetings during the late 1960s when groups such as the Black Student Union, Students for a Democratic Society, and Third World Liberation Front led controversial protests at San Francisco State University.<sup>103</sup> Boyle noted that "Sacred Heart became kind of a keystone place," for discussions about the war.<sup>104</sup>

### FARM LABOR ACTIVISM

Father Boyle also made Sacred Heart a center for farm labor activism in the late 1960s. Labor activism was more familiar territory with the Catholic Church than civil rights or antiwar efforts. For much of the twentieth century, Catholic support of the labor movement was a San Francisco tradition.<sup>105</sup> The city had a significant working class, immigrant population many of whom were also Catholic, and the Church in San Francisco and in Rome were outspoken in supporting workers' rights to fair compensation and

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<sup>98</sup> Father Eugene Boyle, Oral History Interview: Father Eugene Boyle, July 21, 1987, 6.

<sup>99</sup> Daniel and Philip Berrigan organized the 1968 "Cantonsville Nine" protest, in they led a group into the Selective Service registration site at the Cantonsville, Maryland Knights of Columbus Hall and seized and burned draft board records. See O'Dell, "On Stony Ground," 148.

<sup>100</sup> Burns, *San Francisco*, Volume 3, 19–20.

<sup>101</sup> Father Eugene Boyle, Oral History Interview: Father Eugene Boyle, interview by Jeffrey M. Burns, July 30, 1987, 6, Archives of the Archdiocese of San Francisco.

<sup>102</sup> Father Eugene Boyle, Oral History Interview: Father Eugene Boyle, July 21, 1987, 11.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>104</sup> Father Eugene Boyle, Oral History Interview: Father Eugene Boyle, July 30, 1987, 7.

<sup>105</sup> Burns, "Eugene Boyle, the Black Panther Party and the New Clerical Activism," 145.

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working conditions.<sup>106</sup> The Church drew a firm line between itself and more left-wing labor activists with communist or socialist ideals; nonetheless, representatives of the Catholic Church were involved in nearly every major labor dispute in San Francisco from 1901 through the 1970s.<sup>107,108</sup>

The San Francisco Archdiocese was particularly active with rural labor issues in California. In 1950, four recently ordained priests – Fathers Ralph Duggan, Donald McDonnell, Thomas McCullough, John Garcia, and later Ronald Burke - founded the Spanish Mission Band and went into the fields to minister to workers coming into California under the bracero program.<sup>109</sup> As they experienced the terrible living and working conditions for migrant workers firsthand, the Mission Band became increasingly involved in social justice issues for workers, including unionization. In the course of their efforts, the Mission Band priests met and encouraged Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta, co-founders of the National Farm Workers Association (NFA, later UFW), in their organizing efforts.<sup>110</sup>

Official Catholic support for the farm labor movement grew over the course of the early 1960s. The San Francisco Archdiocesan Social Justice Commission and Catholic Interracial Council supported the NFA and Filipino-led Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee in their 1965 strike against California grape growers. Seven members of the commission, including future Sacred Heart pastor Father Eugene Boyle, marched with Chavez from Delano to Sacramento in 1966. The Archdiocese also committed funding to the NFA through the Commission shortly after its founding in 1964.<sup>111</sup>

Father Boyle had been active with the NFA movement since 1964, and accompanied Cesar Chavez on the NFA march from Delano to Sacramento in 1966 to draw attention to the plight of farmworkers. In the early months of the NFA's efforts to get fair contracts with California grape growers, Boyle helped mediate the first ever contract between the union and a grower, Perelli-Minetti of Delano.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> William Issel, "The Catholic Church and Labor from the 1890s to the 1950s," in *Catholic San Francisco: Sesquicentennial Essays*, ed. Jeffrey M. Burns (Menlo Park, Calif: Archives of the Archdiocese of San Francisco, 2005), 212.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 213. Pope Pius XI condemned communism in his 1937 encyclical, *Divini Redemptoris*, and codified a course of negotiation and compromise between labor and capital and a rejection of radical unionism.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 218. The Catholic Church in San Francisco was active in the 1901 teamster and waterfront workers' strike, the 1934 General Strike, opposition to the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act, and opposition to the 1958 California Proposition 18, which limited the powers of labor unions in the state.

<sup>109</sup> Burns, *San Francisco*, 17.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 17–18; U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, "Cesar Chavez Special Resource Study and Environmental Assessment" (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, March 2012), Appendix F: Historical Context, Cesar Chavez and the Farm Labor Movement, 232, 233., <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?documentID=55866> Father Donald McDonnell became a close confidant and friend of Chavez, advising him on the social justice teachings of Christ and the Church's stance on labor.

<sup>111</sup> O'Dell, "On Stony Ground," 155.

<sup>112</sup> Father Eugene Boyle, Oral History Interview: Father Eugene Boyle, interview by Jeffrey M. Burns, July 14, 1987, 8, Archives of the Archdiocese of San Francisco.



FIGURE 68. FATHER EUGENE BOYLE (CENTER) MARCHING AT A GRAPE BOYCOTT VIGIL IN 1969, LOCATION UNKNOWN. SOURCE: ARCHIVES OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN FRANCISCO

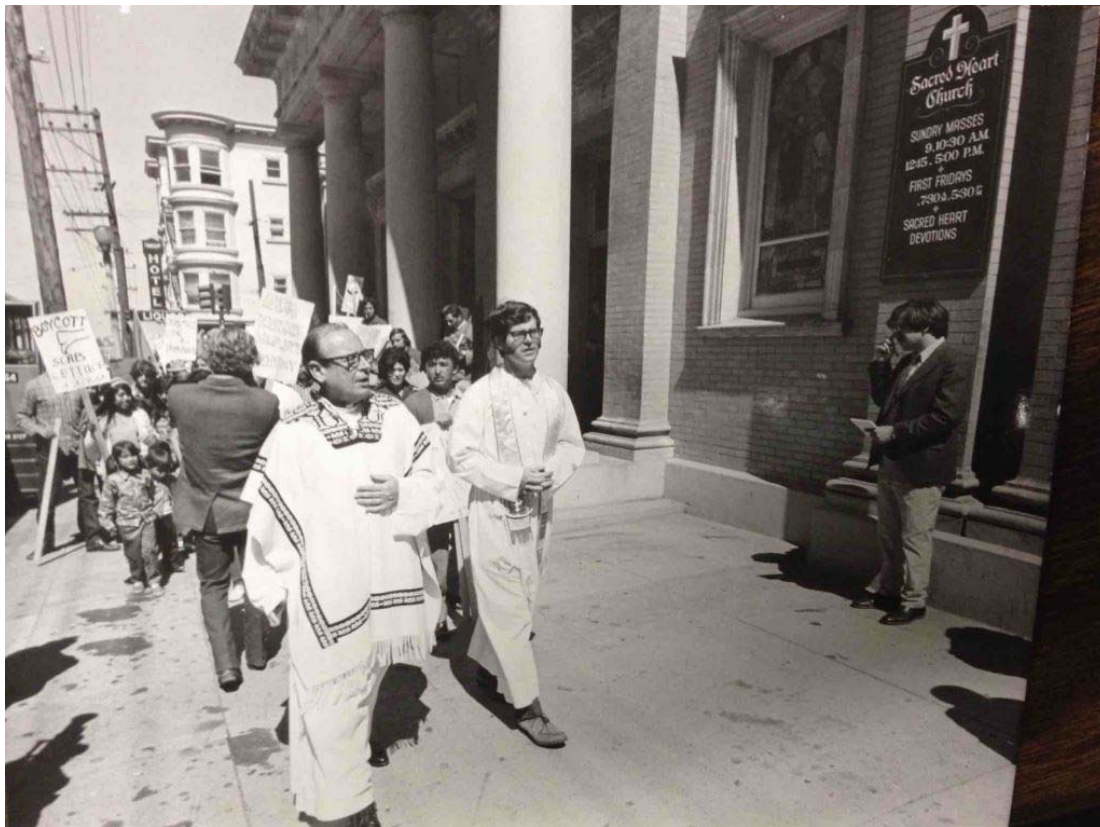


FIGURE 69. FATHER EUGENE BOYLE AT SACRED HEART MASS FOR UFW LETTUCE BOYCOTT, SEPTEMBER 21, 1970. SOURCE: ARCHIVES OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN FRANCISCO

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Boyle and Chavez became close friends and confidants during this period and Boyle was “instrumental in orchestrating Catholic support in the Bay Area” for the farmworker labor movement (Figure 68).<sup>113</sup> Some of this work occurred at Sacred Heart, a parish with strong Filipino and Latino representation in its congregation. With the successful end of the NFA’s national grape strike in the summer of 1970, the farm labor movement turned its attention to lettuce, one of the most historically contentious crops in California in terms of labor relations. In response to the grape strike, lettuce growers in the Salinas Valley preemptively signed contracts with the Teamsters’ Union as defacto representatives of agricultural workers. As the contract process included no input or representation from workers, and failed to address almost all of the UFW demands, the UFW called for a national lettuce boycott. The 1970 UFW “Salad Bowl” boycott in the Bay Area began at Sacred Heart Parish. Three days after the boycott announcement on September 17, about 500 agricultural workers came to the Bay Area to begin spreading the word about the effort. They met at Sacred Heart, and launched the effort with a Catholic mass, a stirring sermon from Father Boyle, a press conference, and a march (Figure 69). The boycott effort also had their first local headquarters at Sacred Heart.<sup>114</sup> Boyle continued marching and protesting with the UFW through the early 1970s. In these efforts, Boyle was often more strident than the Archdiocese as a whole, which supported the workers’ rights to organize, but encouraged cooperation versus conflict.<sup>115</sup>

### FIGHTING URBAN RENEWAL IN THE WESTERN ADDITION

Father Boyle was also pastor at Sacred Heart in the middle of urban renewal efforts in the Western Addition. As pastor, he was active in the Western Addition Community Organization, which fought urban renewal in the district and served on the Mayor’s Relocation Appeals Board and the Western Addition Project Area Committee. He also instituted a variety of youth programs at the parish, including a summer recreation program and transformed the parochial school into a community school open to all students.

### AFTER SACRED HEART: LABOR, POLITICS, AND GAY RIGHTS (1972-2016)

Boyle left Sacred Heart Parish in 1972 and continued his career in social justice activism. Boyle was instrumental in getting the AFL-CIO to come out in support of the farm workers, lobbying Monsignor George Higgins, Director of the Social Action Department of the National Catholic Welfare League to act on behalf of the UFW with the AFL/CIO. He also worked to establish the Agricultural Labor Relations Board in 1975, which then mediated disputes between agricultural workers and growers.<sup>116</sup> Boyle ran unsuccessfully for the State Assembly in 1974 (Figure 70), served as Newman Club chaplain at Stanford University (1975-1981), and directed the offices of Interreligious and Public Affairs and Ecumenical and Interracial Affairs for the Archdiocese of San Jose (1981-1985). Boyle became active with Dignity USA, an

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 7; Burns, *San Francisco*, Volume 3, 18.

<sup>114</sup> Father Eugene Boyle, Oral History Interview: Father Eugene Boyle, July 14, 1987, 9. The lettuce boycott was resolved in Marcy 1971 when the Teamsters gave up their contracts with growers. For video footage of the boycott mass and demonstrations at Sacred Heart, see “Catholic Mass for UFW,” *KQED News* (KQED, September 21, 1970), San Francisco Bay Area Television Archive, <https://diva.sfsu.edu/collections/sfbatv/bundles/189809>.

<sup>115</sup> Father Eugene Boyle, Oral History Interview: Father Eugene Boyle, July 14, 1987, 8; Burns, *San Francisco*, Volume 3, 18.

<sup>116</sup> Father Eugene Boyle, Oral History Interview: Father Eugene Boyle, July 14, 1987, 8.

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organization for GLBT Roman Catholics founded in 1969 in San Diego, and its San Francisco area chapter founded in 1972.<sup>117</sup> In 2000, Pope John Paul II named Father Boyle a Prelate of Honor, carrying the title of Monsignor. Monsignor Boyle retired from active ministry in 1996 and passed away in May 2016.



FIGURE 70. POSTER FROM FATHER BOYLE'S 1974 STATE ASSEMBLY CAMPAIGN FEATURING BOYLE AND CESAR CHAVEZ. SOURCE: SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, UNIVERSITY CALIFORNIA, SANTA BARBARA

<sup>117</sup> ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives at the University of Southern California, "Dignity/USA Records Collection Details," *Online Archive of California*, n.d., <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt638nd4bn/admin/>.

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### ROMANESQUE REVIVAL RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE IN SAN FRANCISCO<sup>118</sup>

The component buildings of the Sacred Heart Parish Complex are significant for embodying the distinctive characteristics of the Romanesque Revival style. In San Francisco, the Romanesque Revival style was widely popular for religious and civic buildings and one of the most common styles for Catholic church buildings in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As is common in Catholic parish groupings, the Sacred Heart church building has the most developed Romanesque Revival architectural scheme, marking a higher level of artistic investment in the holy site of worship. Architect Thomas Welsh looked to northern Italian examples of Romanesque architecture for much of the form and detailing at Sacred Heart, adopting the corbelled or “Lombardy” bands, divided façade, and classical elements common to the regional Romanesque style. The church has a characteristic Roman basilica plan with a gable roof; long, narrow nave; short vestibule; and a side tower. The ornamentation scheme is also typically Romanesque, consisting of smooth masonry wall surfaces, classical elements articulated in low relief, molded beltcourses dividing elevations into horizontal bands, signature arched or pedimented window openings, and arcaded corbel tables below the eaves. The Sacred Heart Church stands out as the most fully developed example of Italian-influenced Romanesque Revival liturgical architecture in San Francisco.

The rectory, school, and convent have more modest Romanesque Revival architectural detailing, incorporating elements of period secular forms like Roman palazzi to signal their integration within the complex and supportive roles in the work of the parish. The adjacent rectory continues Welsh’s Romanesque scheme on the added third story (1906), where round arch windows combine with the heavy brackets of the Renaissance Italian villa and classical pilasters. John J. Foley’s 1936 convent references the church and rectory with arched window and door openings and roofline corbeling. His 1926 school is more eclectic in its styling, combining Romanesque Revival features such as round arched windows, an arched entrance, and rusticated basement and first story, with more freely interpreted classical ornament.

The choice of Romanesque Revival style for the Sacred Heart Parish Complex buildings reflects the close symbolic ties between the style and ideals of religious life. The Romanesque Revival originated in the 1820s in Munich, Germany, and as its name implies, drew inspiration from the pre-Gothic, Romanesque religious architecture of western Europe.<sup>119</sup> The nineteenth-century revival of the Romanesque style was popular among political, religious, and education leaders and reformers for association with the faith, scholarship, and unified community of the early Christian church. Strong ties between American and German educational, cultural, and religious institutions brought Romanesque Revival architecture to the US by the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>120</sup> In the Catholic realm, Ludwig I, the former king of

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<sup>118</sup> This consideration of the history and significance of Romanesque Revival architecture in the US and San Francisco is adapted and expanded from the National Register nomination for Sacred Heart Church prepared by Kelly & VerPlanck in 2009.

<sup>119</sup> Bruce Alsopp, *Romanesque Architecture* (New York: The John Day Company, 1971), 10.

<sup>120</sup> Kathleen Curran, *The Romanesque Revival: Religion, Politics, and Transnational Exchange*, [Buildings, Landscapes, and Societies Series 2] (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 225, xxiv. Several of the earliest libraries in the U.S., such as the Astor Library in New York (now the New York Public Library, 1849-1854) and the first Boston Public Library (1855-58) had strong Romanesque influences.

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Bavaria, paid for the construction of dozens of Benedictine monasteries and churches in the U.S. during the early 1850s, most in the Romanesque Revival style.<sup>121</sup> Protestant faiths also embraced Romanesque Revival architecture, and early examples like Richard Upjohn's Bowdoin College Chapel in Maine (1844-1845) and St. George's Episcopal Church in New York (1846-1849) were often associated with reformist theological agendas.<sup>122</sup>

Romanesque Revival style proliferated in San Francisco in the late 1880s and early 1890s. Notable early extant examples in San Francisco include Chicago architects Burnham & Root's Chronicle Building at Kearny, Market, and Geary streets (1889) and Mills Building at Montgomery and Bush streets (1891). Examples by local San Francisco architects include George W. Percy and Frederick F. Hamilton's Sharon Building in Golden Gate Park (1888). Early public buildings also adopted the Romanesque Revival style, notably Thomas Welsh's San Francisco Girl's High School (1890s, destroyed 1906); and the San Francisco Supreme Court Building (ca. 1890, destroyed 1906).

In San Francisco, however, as in much of the country, Romanesque Revival proved most popular for churches, and the style was the preferred choice for Catholic churches in San Francisco in the late nineteenth century.<sup>123</sup> The first Church of the Holy Cross (1899, Figure 71), the first St. Agnes Church (1894, Figure 72), St. Cecilia's Church (1956, Figure 73), and Star of the Sea Church (1918, Figure 74) all in the western part of the city, were distinctly Romanesque in their form and design. Archdiocese architect Thomas Welsh was responsible for executing several early examples. His second St. Mary's Cathedral (1889, burned 1962) on Van Ness Avenue had many of the hallmarks of Romanesque architecture, including some Gothicized elements. San Franciscans often described the style of the building as "Chicago Gothic," associating it with both the Romanesque Revival architecture of that city and then-Archbishop Patrick Riordan's Chicago roots.<sup>124</sup> Other examples in the Romanesque mode include Shea & Shea's St. Brigid Church at 2151 Van Ness Avenue (1900, NR listed) and St. Paul's Church at 1660 Church Street (1901). Like Sacred Heart, these churches were built for San Francisco's large Irish and Irish-American Catholic parishes. Another Romanesque Revival-style church is St. Joseph's Church at 1401 Howard Street (1914, City Landmark #120), designed by John J. Foley, the architect for the Sacred Heart school and convent. In terms of stylistic development, the most comparable example to Sacred Heart, and one of the best examples of the style in San Francisco, is St. Mark's Lutheran Church at 1111 O'Farrell Street (1895, City Landmark #40). Designed by the San Francisco-based architect Henry Geilfuss, the church takes its cue from early German Romanesque churches. Similar in size to Sacred Heart, both were built in the fast-growing Western addition in the 1890s.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 260.

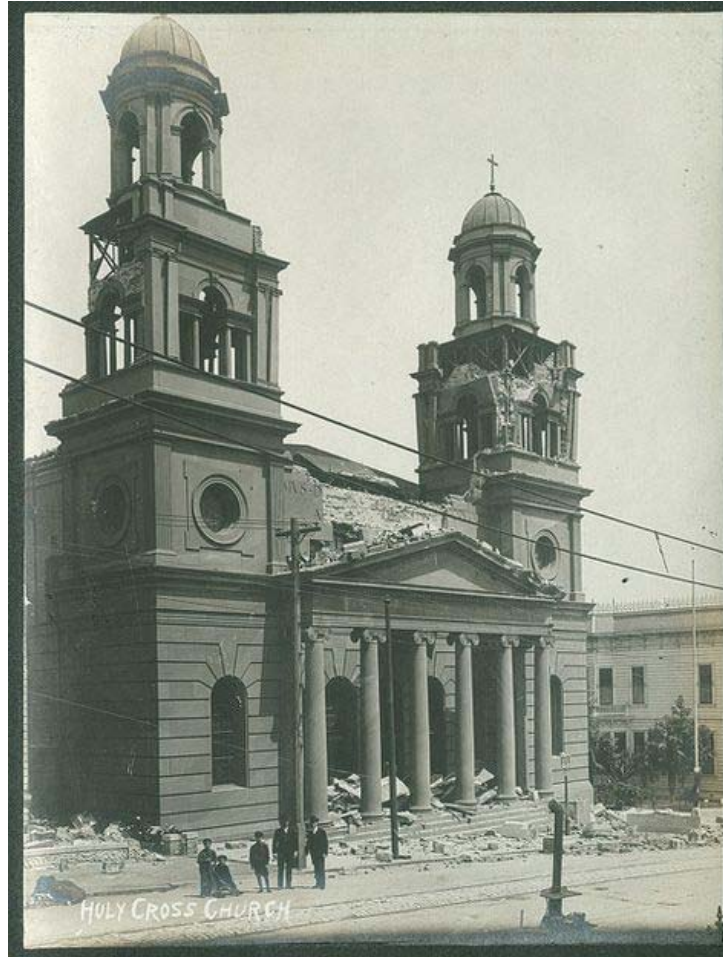
<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 262.

<sup>123</sup> Randolph Delehanty and Richard Sexton, *In the Victorian Style* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2006), 173.

<sup>124</sup> O'Dell, "On Stony Ground," 130.

<sup>125</sup> Protestant examples of Romanesque Revival religious architecture include one of the earliest expressions in the city, First Unitarian Church at 1187 Franklin Street (1889), designed by Percy & Hamilton. Trinity Presbyterian Church at 3261 23rd Street (Percy & Hamilton, 1892) in the Mission District is a more traditional Romanesque Revival structure executed in wood.

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**FIGURE 71. CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS (BUILT 1899); NEAR DIVISADERO AND EDDY STREETS AFTER 1906 EARTHQUAKE. SOURCE: DELGOYER LIBRARY, SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY**



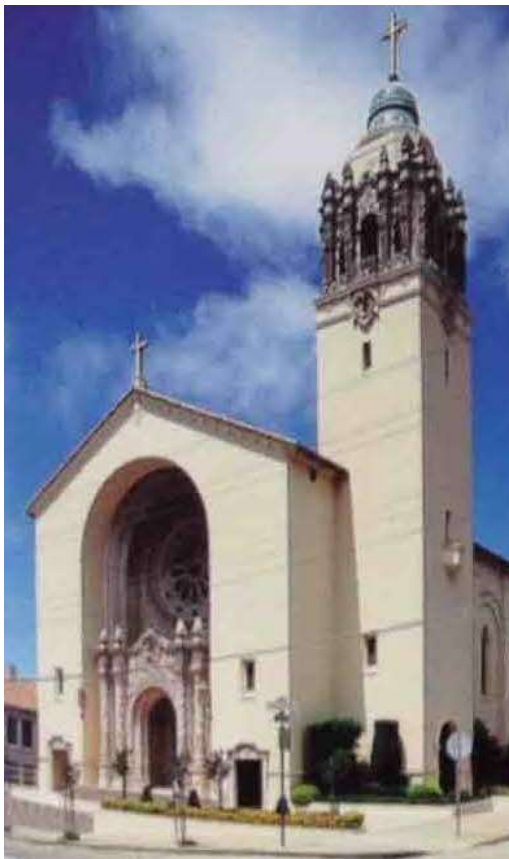
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**FIGURE 72 (LEFT). OLD ST. AGNES CHURCH, 1894. SOURCE: BURNS, HISTORY OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN FRANCISCO, VOLUME 2.**

**FIGURE 73 (BELOW, LEFT): ST. CECILIA'S CHURCH, 1956, MARTIN RIST, ARCHITECT (ROMANESQUE FORM WITH SPANISH BAROQUE DETAILS). SOURCE: BURNS, HISTORY OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN FRANCISCO, VOLUME 2.**

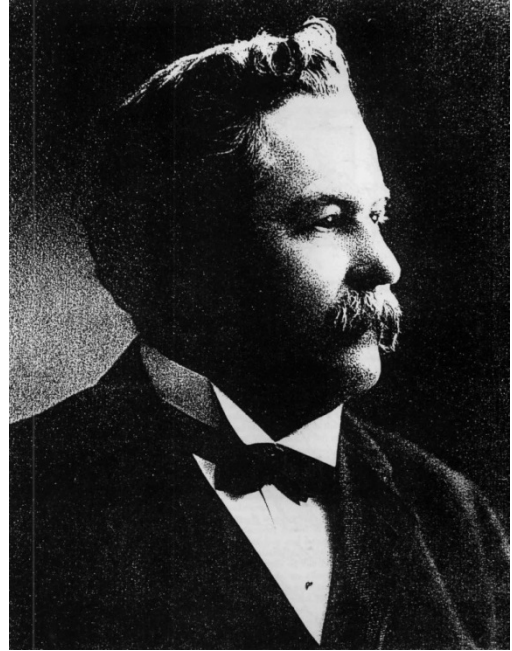
**FIGURE 74 (BELOW, RIGHT). STAR OF THE SEA CHURCH. 1918; SOURCE: BURNS, HISTORY OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN FRANCISCO, VOLUME 2.**



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### ARCHITECT THOMAS J. WELSH (1845-1918)

Thomas J. Welsh (1845-1918), the architect of Sacred Heart Church, had a prolific and successful architectural career in northern California (Figure 75). Between the start of his solo practice in 1870 and his death in 1918, Welsh designed over 700 known houses, apartment buildings, churches, schools, civic buildings, and commercial structures in California; 400 of these buildings were in the City of San Francisco.<sup>126</sup> Welsh's work demonstrates that he was well-versed in the popular styles of his day. His commissions included Italianate domestic architecture, Gothic Revival ecclesiastical architecture, and conservative Romanesque religious building designs. He also demonstrated his awareness of then cutting-edge design developments such as Romanesque Revival architecture in his ecclesiastical and civic work. Welsh's surviving works include three designated San Francisco Landmarks: the Irving M. Scott School (1895, City Landmark #138) at 1060 Tennessee Street; the Burr Residence (1878, City Landmark # 31) at Vallejo and Franklin streets and the McMorry-Lagan House (1884, City Landmark #164).



**FIGURE 75. ARCHITECT THOMAS J. WELSH.**  
**SOURCE: WELSH, THOMAS JOHN WELSH,**  
**ARCHITECT1845-1918**

Thomas Welsh was born in Australia on May 1, 1845. His family immigrated to San Francisco in the 1850s in the wake of the Gold Rush. After completing secondary school, Welsh worked as an apprentice carpenter and received architectural training as a draftsman at the San Francisco architecture offices of George Boardwell and Kenitzer & Farquharson. Welsh opened his own practice in 1870 and worked solo for more than thirty years. Throughout his long career, Welsh played a key role in mentoring up-and-coming architects, such as Julius Krafft who worked for Welsh for twelve years.<sup>127</sup> In 1903, Welsh formed a partnership with architect John W. Carey, which lasted until Welsh's death.<sup>128</sup> The 1906 earthquake and fire destroyed much of Welsh's work. Though he was somewhat active during the following decade in rebuilding efforts, he suffered a stroke in 1916 that ended his career. The firm of Welsh & Carey continued until Welsh's death in 1918.

A devout Catholic, Welsh served as the primary architect for the Catholic Archdiocese of San Francisco during the late nineteenth century, a critical period in its growth. He also held the position of chief architect for the San Francisco Board of Education from the mid-1890s into the first decade of the twentieth century. Through these positions, Welsh designed several of the most prominent examples of civic and religious architecture in San Francisco at the turn of the Twentieth Century. These included the

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<sup>126</sup> Pat Welsh, *Thomas John Welsh, Architect, 1845-1918: A Journey of Discovery* (San Francisco: PAW Productions, 1993), 14, 25. Welsh's surviving commercial work includes the wood-frame Pioneer Trunk Factory (1902) at 18th and Folsom streets and the Hotel Vendome (1907) on Columbus Avenue.

<sup>127</sup> *The Bay of San Francisco: A History* (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1892), 129-130.

<sup>128</sup> Welsh, *Thomas John Welsh, Architect, 1845-1918*, 59.

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centerpiece of Catholic faith in San Francisco: the second St. Mary's Cathedral (1898, burned 1962, Figure 76) on Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco's first Supreme Court Building (ca. 1890, destroyed 1906 Figures 79 and 80) and San Francisco's Girl's High School (destroyed 1906, Figures 81 and 82). Welsh also designed prominent regional Catholic buildings such as the Dominican Convent in San Rafael (1889, burned 1989).

Welsh designed a total of sixteen Catholic churches in San Francisco between 1879 and his death in 1918. The most prominent was the second St. Mary's Cathedral, but he also designed the first Sts. Peter and Paul Church (1884, destroyed 1906) and Our Lady of Guadalupe (1879, destroyed 1906, Figure 78). Welsh also oversaw the reconstruction of the first St. Mary's Cathedral at California Street and Grant Avenue after the 1906 earthquake and fire. He designed a bevy of Romanesque Revival Catholic churches in the city and region, including Holy Ghost Church in Fremont (1886, burned 1919); and the second St. Dominic's Church (1883, destroyed 1906, Figure 77). Only two of Welsh's Catholic church designs remain in San Francisco: the Romanesque Sacred Heart Church (1898) at Fillmore and Fell streets and the modest Gothic Revival St. Agnes Church (1905) on Masonic and Page streets.<sup>129</sup> Sacred Heart is Welsh's only extant building designed in the Romanesque Revival style.

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<sup>129</sup> "Death of Thos. J. Welsh," *The Architect & Engineer* (October 1918), 118.

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**FIGURE 76 (TOP, LEFT). WELSH'S SECOND ST. MARY'S CATHEDRAL (1889, DESTROYED 1962); SOURCE: WELSH, THOMAS JOHN WELSH, ARCHITECT 1845-1918**

**FIGURE 77 (TOP, RIGHT). WELSH'S OLD ST. DOMINIC'S CHURCH (1883, DESTROYED 1906). SOURCE: WELSH, THOMAS JOHN WELSH, ARCHITECT 1845-1918**

**FIGURE 78 (LEFT). WELSH'S OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE CHURCH (1879, DESTROYED 1906). SOURCE: WELSH, THOMAS JOHN WELSH, ARCHITECT 1845-1918**

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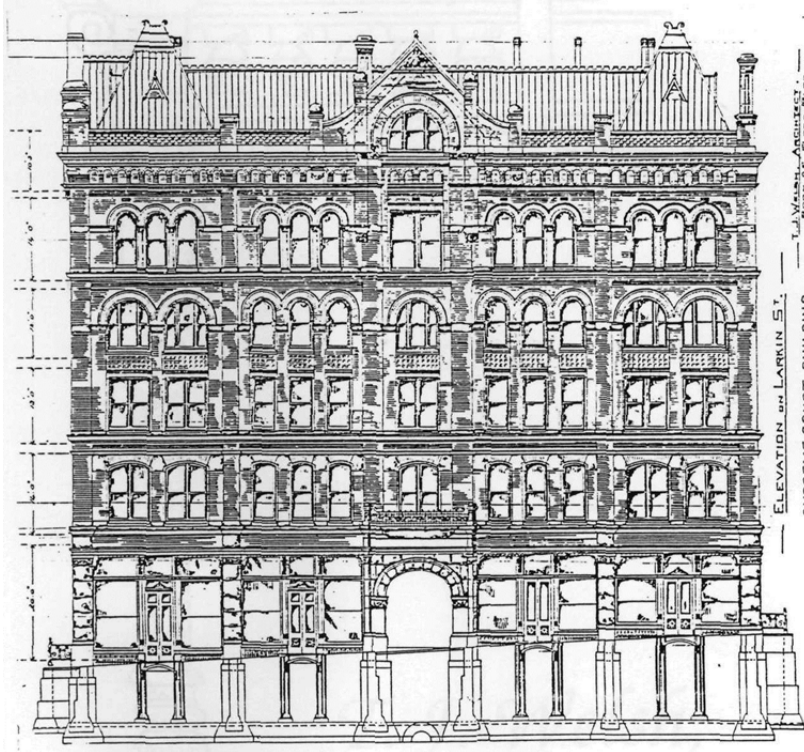
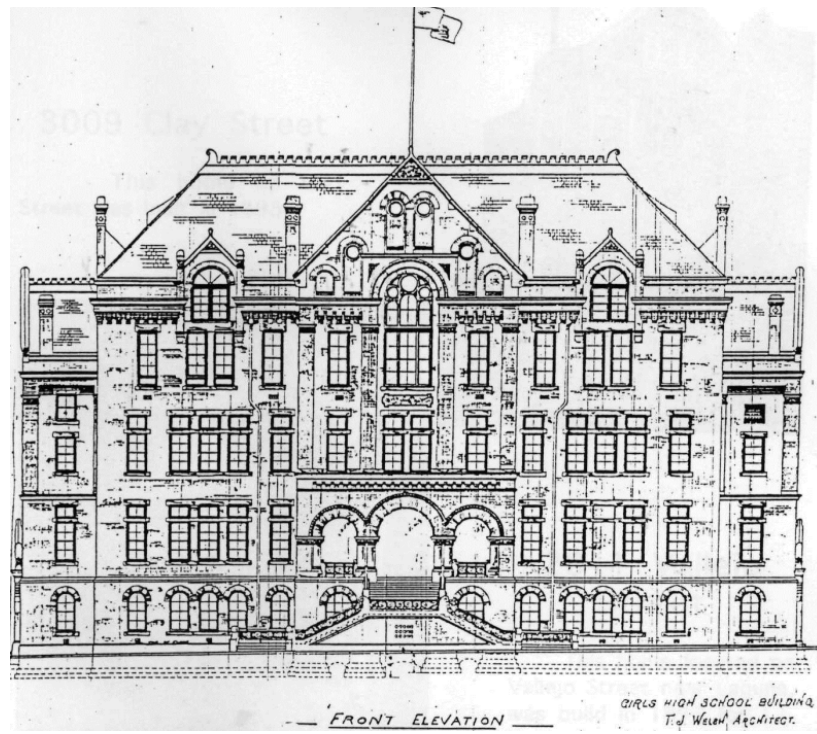


FIGURE 79. WELSH'S SAN FRANCISCO SUPREME COURT BUILDING, DESTROYED 1906. SOURCE: WELSH, THOMAS JOHN WELSH, ARCHITECT 1845-1918



FIGURE 80. WELSH'S SAN FRANCISCO SUPREME COURT (HALL OF JUSTICE) AS BUILT, 1906. SOURCE: SAN FRANCISCO SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

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**FIGURE 81. WELSH'S DESIGN FOR THE SAN FRANCISCO GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL, DESTROYED 1906. SOURCE: WELSH, THOMAS JOHN WELSH, ARCHITECT 1845-1918**



**FIGURE 82. WELSH'S GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL AFTER DAMAGE IN THE 1906 EARTHQUAKE. SOURCE: DELGOYER LIBRARY, SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY**

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### ARCHITECT JOHN J. FOLEY (1882-1946)

Architect John J. Foley was born in San Francisco in 1882 and studied architecture at the Armour Institute (now Illinois Institute of Technology). He apprenticed to architects in Chicago and San Francisco before earning his license in 1913. His work in Northern California was largely ecclesiastical, and most of his commissions were from the Archdiocese of San Francisco. These include St. Joseph's Church (1913, City Landmark #120); St. Philip the Apostle Church (1925); St. Emydius Church (1928) Holy Name Church, School, and Rectory (1938, 1941, 1942); Star of the Sea Convent and School; and St. Mary's Catholic Hospital (1911).<sup>130</sup> Most of Foley's work was in the Romanesque and Spanish Colonial Revival styles.

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<sup>130</sup> Francis William Wynn Kervick, *Architects in America of Catholic Tradition.*, [1st ed.] (Rutland, Vt., 1962), 50, <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015014054434>.

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## ARTICLE 10 REQUIREMENTS, SECTION 1004(B)

### CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION

**Check all criteria applicable to the significance of the property that are then documented in the report.**

- 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.

### SIGNIFICANCE

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

The Sacred Heart church, school, rectory, and convent are listed individually or as contributors to historic districts on the California Register of Historical Resources. The church was individually listed via a consensus determination of eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places in 2010. The rectory, school, and convent are listed as contributors to the Hayes Valley Residential Historic District, which was determined eligible for the National Register in 1996 through consultation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

### EVENTS

The Sacred Heart Parish complex is significant for its association with the growth and social development of the Western Addition and Catholic religious institutions in San Francisco in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Sacred Heart was the first Catholic parish established in western San Francisco and was an important religious, social, and education center for the neighborhood's predominantly Catholic population for over one hundred years. As the major Catholic institution in the Western Addition during San Francisco's "Catholic Century," Sacred Heart Parish was an important community institution for generations of immigrants, racial and ethnic groups, and working class residents moving from the working class neighborhoods downtown to the middle class enclaves of the western neighborhoods.

The significance of Sacred Heart as a social institution in the Western Addition was particularly pronounced during the late 1960s and early 1970s when the changing character of the neighborhood and its congregation put the parish at the center of local social justice and civil rights issues. From 1968-1972 under the leadership of Father Eugene Boyle, the parish complex was the site of a robust and



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often controversial program of Catholic and secular social justice activism in the civil rights movement, the farmworker labor movement, the Vietnam War, and urban renewal. Father Boyle opened the church to the Black Panther Party Breakfast Program and anti-war activists and involved the parish in the ongoing legal fights against urban renewal in the Western Addition. The church was also the site of the start of the 1970 UFW lettuce boycott in the city.

### PERSONS

The Sacred Heart Parish Complex is significant for its association with Father Eugene Boyle (1921-2016), a prominent and influential civil rights activist in the Archdiocese of San Francisco and in northern California during the 1960s and 1970s. Locally, Father Boyle exemplified the new clerical activism that emerged in the Catholic Church after the Second Vatican Council urged clergy and laity to be more active in the secular world. Father Boyle served as chaplain to the San Francisco Catholic Interracial Council, chair of the Archdiocese Social Justice Commission, and an organizer and mediator for the NFA/UFW. In these roles, Boyle was the public face for Catholic involvement in the Black civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, urban renewal, fair housing, and the farm worker labor movement in San Francisco. As pastor at Sacred Heart from 1968 to 1972, Boyle transformed the parish complex into a platform for applied, community-oriented social justice work, hosting the Black Panther Party Breakfast Program, meetings of anti-Vietnam War and San Francisco State University student activists, and the start of the 1970 UFW lettuce boycott in San Francisco. Parish leadership and members were also active in urban renewal-related social justice work in the Western Addition. Father Boyle's ministry at Sacred Heart occurred during the most active years of his conscience-driven social justice work and Sacred Heart was his only parish-based appointment during his activist career.

### ARCHITECTURE

The Sacred Heart Parish Complex is significant as a distinctive and well-executed example of a fully-realized Catholic parish grouping of church, rectory, school and convent rendered in the Romanesque Revival style. The parish grouping exemplifies the full range of services Catholic parishes committed to offering their parishioners - worship, ministerial care, and parochial education – and signaled the unity of Christian community through the early Christian associations of the Romanesque Revival style. The tightly grouped parish complex demonstrates a scheme of scaled architectural investment based on the importance of the component buildings. As the space of worship and focal point of the complex, Sacred Heart Church has the highest proportion of Romanesque Revival characteristics. The church building is one of the best developed examples of Romanesque Revival liturgical design in the city in both form and ornament. The school, rectory, and convent display more modest Romanesque Revival characteristics which signal the supportive role of the buildings and visually unify the parish complex.

The Sacred Heart Parish complex is additionally significant for its association with master architect Thomas J. Welsh, who designed over 400 buildings in San Francisco and was one of the chief practitioners of the Romanesque Revival style in the city. Welsh's Sacred Heart Church and rectory are rare surviving examples of his work; Sacred Heart Church is Welsh's only extant Romanesque Revival church design.

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### PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Sacred Heart Parish Complex has a period of significance that spans from the initial construction of the rectory building in ca. 1891 through the tenure of Father Eugene Boyle in 1972. This period encompasses the full development of the component buildings in the parish complex and the most vigorous period of social justice activism at the parish.

### INTEGRITY

The seven aspects of integrity are location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association in relation to the period of significance. The Sacred Heart Parish Complex and its individual components all retain sufficient integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association to convey their significance as a fully developed parish complex and examples of Romanesque Revival design. The parish complex and individual components also retain sufficient integrity to represent the period of social activism at the parish in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

### PARISH COMPLEX

The Sacred Heart Parish Complex retains integrity of location, design, and setting. The component buildings remain in their original locations and in the same relation to each other as in the period of significance. The late nineteenth and early twentieth-century residential and neighborhood-scale commercial setting for the buildings also remains consistent with the period of significance. The component buildings have undergone few exterior alterations since the end of the period of significance and retain sufficient integrity of design, materials, workmanship, and feeling to convey their historic religious, education, and residential uses. The parish complex has lost some integrity of association with conversion of the church to recreational use, however the high degree of integrity of setting, materials, design, workmanship, and feeling for the church building more than compensate for this loss. The other component buildings retain integrity of association with their historic uses as educational and residential facilities.

### CHURCH

As individual resources, the component structures in the Sacred Heart Parish Complex also retain integrity. The Sacred Heart Church retains the vast majority of its character-defining physical features, and possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The church remains in its historic location and the surrounding neighborhood remains a predominantly late nineteenth and early twentieth-century residential and small-scale commercial area. The church retains the historic form and massing achieved at its completion in 1909, as well as the complement of formal and decorative elements associated with its Romanesque Revival styling. The church has suffered some loss of integrity of design and materials with the removal of the stained glass panes from its rose windows, however, the window openings and historic muntins remain in place. The church has similarly lost some integrity of design with the insertion of a bay opening in the basement story for construction of a parking garage; however, this loss does not prevent the building from conveying its significance as a work of Romanesque Revival architecture or religious property. Because of the generally high level of physical integrity at the church, the property retains integrity of feeling and association.

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Alterations to the church interior after 2005 included removal of pews, organ, altars, Stations of the Cross, altar rail, confessionals, and other fittings. This has diminished the integrity of the publicly accessible spaces of the church, but the survival of the majority of the interior architectural detailing and mural schemes affords some integrity of design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association for the nave space.

### RECTORY, CONVENT, AND SCHOOL

The Sacred Heart rectory has had alterations to its primary elevation, including the stucco door surround, recession and refitting of the main entry doors, removal of a window hood from the three-part window on the second story, and a garage entrance cut into the basement story on the south side of the main elevation. Most of these changes occurred within the period of significance for the building. Collectively they do not diminish the integrity of the building to such a degree that it cannot convey its significance as a rectory building or as a companion piece of Romanesque Revival design to the adjacent church building. Interior inspection of the rectory (January 2016) was limited to the entry lobby, one of the only consistently publicly accessible spaces in the building. The lobby appears to retain some historic features, including doors and door surrounds, but the date of other finishes such as flooring and crown molding were indeterminate. Other areas of the rectory that were publicly accessible included the basement hall spaces. Both spaces have been substantially altered in the last thirty years to accommodate a series of daycare programs.

The Sacred Heart convent has undergone few to no significant exterior alterations since the end of the period of significance and retains all seven aspects of integrity. Interior spaces at the convent were not historically publicly accessible and are thus not eligible for landmark consideration (see Planning Code Article 10, Section 1004(c)).

The Sacred Heart School has had some alterations to the main entrance since the end of the period of significance. These consist of recessing the front entrance and reconfiguring the door fittings for disabled accessibility. As these alterations did not change the character of the door opening or significant elements of the associated façade, they have not diminished integrity of design workmanship, materials, feeling, or association to the degree that the building can no longer convey its significance. The interior of the Sacred Heart School has been renovated several times since the end of the period of significance. Based on observations during an interior site visit in January 2016, this work has involved the replacement and reconfiguration of most interior partitions and related finishes. There is little remaining significant historic fabric on the interior.

### BOUNDARY

Encompassing all of and limited to lots 12 (convent), 21 (rectory), 22 (church), and 22A (school) in Assessor's Block 828.

### 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

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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.

The character-defining exterior features of the landmark are defined as follows:

- Original locations and spatial relationships between the four component buildings
- The footprint, plan, and gable roof massing of the church building
- Massing of the school building, convent, and main block of the rectory
- Church: All elevations, historic architectural finishes, and historic materials identified as:
  - Height, form, massing, roof form, envelope openings, and materials of the campanile
  - Brick and terracotta wall materials, decorative patterning, and finish details
  - Primary entrance locations, configurations, doors, transoms, and surround ornament
  - All porch or vestibule configurations, materials, and ornament
  - Third-story-level connector between choir loft and rectory
  - All window openings, surrounds, and historic sash patterns and materials
  - All rooflines and roofline ornament, including cornices and balustrades
- Rectory, School, and Convent: Design features, architectural finishes, and materials on primary (visible) elevations, identified as:
  - Brick, stucco, and terracotta wall materials, decorative patterning, and finish details
  - Primary entrance locations, configurations, doors, transoms, and surround ornament
  - All historic, exterior vestibule configurations, materials, and ornament
  - All window openings, surrounds, and historic sash patterns and materials
  - All rooflines and roofline ornament
- Historic landscape features, defined as the concrete parapet and wrought iron ornamental fence along north side of church on Fell Street.

The character-defining interior features of the landmark are confined to the historically publicly accessible or publicly visible areas of the Sacred Heart Church: the narthex, baptistery, nave, choir loft, transepts, and historically visible areas of the sanctuary. The interior character-defining features are as follows:

- The interior volume of the narthex, baptistery, nave, transepts, choir loft, and sanctuary
- Interior elevations, architectural finishes, fittings, and features in the above spaces define as:
  - All wood flooring and bead board and oak wainscoting
  - All decorative wall features, including pilasters, cornice ornament, and laurel wall banding
  - All decorative ceiling treatments, including the coved nave ceiling, coffered ceiling treatment in transepts, and oak ceiling treatment in the narthex
  - Sanctuary details including arched openings, surrounds, and volumes
  - Choir loft and column supports
  - Eared, molded door surrounds; original doors; and all arched, pedimented, or banded window surrounds throughout

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- Decorative wall painting and murals throughout

Historically publicly accessible interior spaces in the rectory and school are not included in the character defining features for the parish complex because of subsequent and/or substantial alterations after the end of the period of significance for the complex. (See Integrity section and Appendix B – History of Alterations.) The interior spaces of the convent were never historically publicly accessible and are therefore not eligible for landmark consideration per Planning Code Article 10, Section 1004(c).

### PROPERTY INFORMATION

<b>HISTORIC NAME</b>	Sacred Heart Parish Complex
<b>POPULAR NAME</b>	Sacred Heart Church, Rectory, School, and Convent
<b>ADDRESS</b>	546 Fillmore Street (Rectory), 554 Fillmore Street (Church), 735 Fell Street (School) and 660 Oak Street (Convent)
<b>BLOCK &amp; LOT</b>	0828-12 (convent); 0828-21 (rectory); 0828-22 (church); 0828-22A (school)
<b>OWNER</b>	Noe Vista LLC (0828-22A) Noe Vista LLC (0828-12, 0828-21) 554 Fillmore St LLC (0828-022)
<b>ORIGINAL USE</b>	Religious, Education, Residential
<b>CURRENT USE</b>	Recreation, Education, Residential, Office
<b>ZONING</b>	Church, Convent: RM-1 – Residential, Mixed, Low-Density; Height and Bulk District 40X; Special Use District: Within ¼ mile of an existing fringe financial service School, Rectory: RM-3 – Residential, Mixed, Medium Density; Height and Bulk District 40X; Special Use District: Within ¼ mile of an existing fringe financial service

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### APPENDIX A: SACRED HEART PARISH COMPLEX SITE DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE

Date	Event
<b>December 1885</b>	Father James Flood purchases wood-frame former Methodist chapel on the corner of Linden and Buchanan Streets for use as a temporary church building.
<b>Early 1886</b>	Father Flood purchases a 137x171' parcel at the corner of Fillmore and Fell streets. He moves the former Methodist church to the site, and renovates it to better accommodate Catholic worship.
<b>1887</b>	Father Flood commissions Thomas Welsh to design a new, Romanesque, wood-frame church with classrooms and hall in the basement story. The former Methodist church is moved to the rear of the lot to serve as a rectory.
<b>1889</b>	The church purchases a 75' wide lot along Fell Street, completing the configuration Fell/Fillmore portion of the property as it is today.
<b>1890</b>	The parish begins preparing for a permanent complex of church buildings on the Fell and Fillmore street lot. They move the wood-frame Romanesque church to the north, then northeast corner of the lot to make room for construction of a permanent, masonry church building.
<b>Ca. 1891</b>	The parish constructs a new rectory building at 550 Fillmore, designed by contractor Hugh Keenan.
<b>Late 1891</b>	The parish publicly announces plans to construct a new masonry church, measuring 65' wide and 137' deep with a 125' campanile, fronting on Fillmore. Welsh & Carey are the architects.
<b>1893</b>	The Dominican Sisters began conducting a parochial school in the basement of the Sacred Heart church. Father Flood constructs a makeshift, 12-room house for the sisters on the parish property.
<b>1896</b>	Basement excavations for the new church begin.
<b>1897</b>	The cornerstone of the new church is laid.
<b>1898</b>	Construction is nearly completed. Due to a funds shortage, the parish constructs only 126' of the nave and encloses the rear, east elevation with a temporary wood frame wall. The Costello stained glass windows, designed by BeauVerre-Riordan Studios of Cincinnati, Ohio are installed, as are the Kavanagh, Everett, and Swift windows. Archbishop Riordan dedicates the church in September.
<b>Ca. 1899</b>	Sanborn maps show the wood frame church building designed by Thomas Welsh in use as a school building.
<b>1902</b>	The parish demolishes the Romanesque wood frame church (Welsh & Carey) for construction of a new parochial school building on Fell St. The parish also purchases the old Sutro Mansion (demolished 1914) on the corner of Hayes and Fillmore streets for use as a school in the interim. The Dominican Sisters take up residence in the Sutro attic.
<b>1904</b>	The campanile bell is dedicated and rung for the first time.
<b>1905</b>	Construction resumes to enlarge the basement and construct the transepts, sanctuary, and sacristies.

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Date	Event
<b>1906</b>	Work on the church halts in the aftermath of the earthquake and fire. The church survives the disaster undamaged. Sacred Heart College, displaced from their location in the Tenderloin, constructs a temporary, wood-frame, 3-story school building on the site of the present Sacred Heart School.
<b>October 1906</b>	A fire in the rectory severely damages the building and results in minor damage to the rear wall of the church.
<b>1906-1907</b>	The parish hires architects Welsh & Carey to rehabilitate and expand the damaged rectory, including adding an additional story and constructing meeting halls in the basement.
<b>1909</b>	Archbishop Riordan rededicates the completed church. The rose stained glass windows designed by Franz Mayer (now Mayer-Zettler) are installed.
<b>1910</b>	Parishioner Michael O’Sullivan paints backdrops for the altars in the sanctuary (no longer extant). The Moretti altars (no longer extant) are installed and blessed in May.
<b>Ca. 1915</b>	Parish constructs the wood-frame connector between the third story of the rectory and the choir loft of the church.
<b>1920</b>	Mural and landscape artist Achille G. Disi paints a series of small murals on the ceiling of the nave.
<b>1923</b>	The church installs a Hook & Hastings pipe organ. The organ blocks access to the connector between the rectory and choir loft.
<b>1926</b>	The parish completes construction of the present Sacred Heart School on Fell St. The Dominican Sisters are housed in a “rat ridden shed” off the school yard (possibly the former Methodist chapel building).
<b>1927</b>	Father John Cullen purchases two lots along Oak Street for construction of a new convent.
<b>1935-1936</b>	The parish constructs the present convent at 660 Oak Street, demolishing two existing dwellings on the site. John J. Foley is the architect.
<b>1984</b>	Parish develops paved parking area west of convent on open lot space.
<b>1989</b>	After the Loma Prieta earthquake, black netting is installed over the ceiling in the nave to prevent spalling plaster from falling on congregation.
<b>2004</b>	The Archdiocese of San Francisco announces plans to close Sacred Heart Church.
<b>2005</b>	The Archdiocese of San Francisco closes the parish and sells the Sacred Heart Parish buildings to the Megan Furth Academy, an independent parochial school. The Archdiocese removes selected liturgical art and fittings from the church (see Appendices B and C).
<b>After 2009</b>	Megan Furth Academy removes and sells selected liturgical art and fixtures from the church (see Appendices B and C).
<b>2011-2012</b>	Megan Furth Academy merges with Mission Dolores Academy and sells all four parish complex buildings. Noe Vista LLC purchases the school, convent, and rectory and leases them to nonprofit education and arts organizations. 251 Waller LLC purchases the church building.

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Date	Event
2014	554 Fillmore St. LLC purchases the Sacred Heart Church building. The owner leases the sanctuary space to the Church of Eight Wheels, a recreational roller skating organization.



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### APPENDIX B - HISTORY OF ALTERATIONS

<b>CHURCH (1898/1909)</b>	
1909	Structural reinforcement of the sanctuary space to accommodate new marble main and side altars weighing in excess of 55 tons. Installation of four, ten-inch beams to support concrete foundations under the altars and two, ten-inch beams at each side of the sanctuary. <sup>131</sup>
1922	New heating system, roof and window repairs, new pews, and new altar furnishings.
1923	Installation of Hook & Hastings pipe organ
Early-mid 20 <sup>th</sup> century	Installation of asbestos tile flooring; installation of plywood wainscoting in the nave (exact dates unknown).
1948	Enlarge sacristy, install new vestment cases, install new cabinets behind the main altar, remodel the altar and rear of the sanctuary, and construct new baptistery interior and new stairways to the choir loft from former baptistery. <sup>132</sup>
1975	Install partition walls in the hall space in the church basement to create a kitchen space. <sup>133</sup>
1989	Installation of black safety netting under the nave ceiling to protect the congregation from spalling plaster following the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake.
2005	Archdiocese removes fourteen Stations of the Cross paintings.
2009-2015	Owners remove Moretti altars from the sanctuary; stained glass rose window panes from the church transepts; choir light fixtures; all pews; baptism font; arched oak wall paneling from choir loft; organ; glazed oak doors between narthex and nave with etched cross and sunburst pattern; etched transom windows above the narthex entrances depicting Christ on the Cross, the Resurrection of Christ, and Joseph of Arimathea; daises on the north and south walls of the nave; brass sconces with frosted shades; brass light fixtures with brass shades perforated with a cross pattern; oak altar rail; and one confessional booth. Second confessional booth is converted to a bathroom. Altar niches in sanctuary are enclosed with temporary partitions. Selective exploratory demolition takes place in choir loft, baptistry, and nave.
2015	554 Fillmore St. LLC cuts large bay entrance in basement story of north transept and gut the church basement for conversion to a parking garage.

<sup>131</sup> San Francisco Department of Building Inspection, Building Permit No. 26124 September 30, 1909

<sup>132</sup> Sacred Heart Parish Historical Report, 1948, Collection of the Archives of the Archdiocese of San Francisco.

<sup>133</sup> San Francisco Department of Building Inspection, Building Permit No. 398400, April 9, 1975.

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<b>Rectory (1891/1906)</b>	
1917	Renovation and reorganization of rectory interior (no city permits on record) <sup>134</sup>
Between 1924 and 1954	Application of stucco door surround on the primary entrance, recession of main entrance, removal or obscuring of transom light in masonry above entrance, removal of decorative hood over the three-part window on the second story of the main elevation. <sup>135</sup>
After 1950	Insertion of a garage entrance on the south end of the basement story of the primary (street) elevation and door and sidelight replacement at the main entrance (exact dates unknown).
1989-late 1990s	Lessee renovations to the large hall space in the basement for use as a childcare facility.
2011	Seismic upgrade and rehabilitation of entry lobby space.

<b>School (1926)</b>	
1969	Removal of all interior classroom walls
Late 1970s	Add partition walls to create classrooms
2002	Add additional interior partition walls <sup>136</sup>
2013	Lower entry level of main entrance to sidewalk grade for ADA accessibility. Install elevator. Replace flooring throughout.

<b>Convent (1936)</b>	
1980	Install new windows
1984	Pave adjacent lot for parking

<sup>134</sup> Sacred Heart Parish, *Sacred Heart Parish September 2, 1885-1985*, 10.

<sup>135</sup> *Sacred Heart Parish*, Photograph, 1897, Archives of the Archdiocese of San Francisco; "Sacred Heart Rectory," *Catholic Monitor*, November 2, 1907, Archives of the Archdiocese of San Francisco.

<sup>136</sup> Ken Garcia, "Sacred Heart Gets an 'A' for Turnaround," *San Francisco Chronicle (CA)*, September 13, 2002.

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### APPENDIX C - LITURGICAL ART NO LONGER EXTANT

#### MORETTI ALTARS

In preparation for Sacred Heart's Silver Jubilee, San Francisco artist Attilio Moretti was commissioned to design three new marble altars carved from Carrera marble by the Italian firm of Gighli & Vanelli. Parishioner Mary Morrissey donated the \$15,000 needed to pay for the project.

Attilio Moretti (1852-1915), a prolific and sought-after liturgical artist in California, designed three marble altars for Sacred Heart Church. Moretti was born in Milan and moved to San Francisco with his family in 1865. He lived in Sacred Heart Parish on Hermann Street and had his studio at 223 10th Street. Moretti was primarily a painter, but also designed altars and chapels, and worked in stained glass. He is best known for his elaborate frescoes in the dome of Temple Sherith Israel in San Francisco, but was involved in campaigns of liturgical art in Catholic parishes across California.

In 1910, the *Examiner* described Moretti's high altar for Sacred Heart as "possibly the most beautiful specimen of modern sculpture of its kind in the United States. It is massive, being twenty-five feet long and thirty-seven feet high. In the center is a life-size painting of the Savior revealing the mystery of the Sacred Heart to Margaret Mary. The coloring of the painting is soft and the scene inspiring."<sup>137</sup> Interestingly, Moretti did not execute the altar painting. Rather, it was the work of well-known German liturgical arts company Franz Mayer & Co. of Munich. The *Examiner* described the side altars as "equally exquisite and the statues of St. Joseph and the Blessed Virgin perfect in detail." The three new altars were blessed and unveiled during an elaborate service held on May 21, 1910.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> "New Altars Works of Art," *San Francisco Examiner* (15 May 1910).

<sup>138</sup> "Sacred Heart Parish Will Celebrate Its Silver Jubilee: Three Rare and Costly Altars to Be Unveiled," *San Francisco Examiner* (15 May 1910).

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**FIGURE B-1. CARRERA MARBLE MAIN AND SIDE ALTARS FEATURING MARBLE WORK BY GIGHLI & VANELLI (ITALY) AND PAINTINGS BY SAN FRANCISCO ARTIST ATTILIO MORETTI (IN SITU 2004; CURRENT LOCATION UNKNOWN, PHOTO COURTESY CHRIS VERPLANCK)**



**FIGURE B-2. MAIN ALTAR (MARBLE, GIGHLI & VANELLI; PAINTING, ATTILIO MORETTI) DEPICTING JESUS REVEALING THE MYSTERY OF THE SACRED HEART TO MARY MARGARET (IN SITU 2004; CURRENT LOCATION UNKNOWN, PHOTO COURTESY KATHERINE PETRIN)**

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### FRANZ MAYER STAINED GLASS ROSE WINDOW PANES

In 1909, parishioners Mary Hartigan and Mary Adam Musto donated memorial rose windows for Sacred Heart's transepts. Hartigan donated a depiction of the Nativity for the north transept in memory of her husband, Patrick. Musto donated a window depicting The Resurrection for the south transept in memory of her father, Thomas.

The renowned stained glass studio of Franz Mayer & Co. (now Mayer-Zettler) of Munich designed and produced both rose windows. Founded in 1847, the Mayer glass studio was a primary supplier of stained glass art to the Roman Catholic Church in Europe and North America. The Archdiocese removed the rose windows before they sold the building in 2005.



**FIGURE B-3. FRANZ MAYER & CO STAINED GLASS ROSE WINDOW IN SOUTH TRANSPET DEPICTING THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST IN SITU IN 2005 (NO LONGER EXTANT, PHOTO COURTESY CHRIS VERPLANCK).**

### O'SULLIVAN MURALS

Parishioner Michael O'Sullivan painted murals on the sanctuary ceiling in 1910 to provide an ornate backdrop to the altars (no longer extant). According to period descriptions, the background of the murals "was a pale blue with old-gold trimmings. The upper part blends to a warm aurora which surrounds a chalice with the Sacred Host. A large Latin cross in warm, delicate purple forms a background to this design, from the center of which a flood of golden rays is streaming."<sup>139</sup> O'Sullivan's artwork also included groupings of cherubs amidst billowing clouds. Though not widely known, O'Sullivan had a successful local painting career. He decorated the interior of St. Ignatius Church on Fulton Street and St. Francis of Assisi in North Beach and the Irish government commissioned him to help decorate its exhibit at the 1915 Pan Pacific International Exposition. The O'Sullivan Murals do not appear to survive, though a full inspection of the sanctuary space was not possible in preparing this report.

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<sup>139</sup> "New Altars Works of Art," *San Francisco Examiner* (15 May 1910).

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### **San Francisco City and County**

Edwin M. Lee, Mayor

London Breed, District 5 Supervisor

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### **Photography and Illustrations**

Elaine Stiles, unless otherwise noted



# ARTICLE 10 LANDMARK DESIGNATION FACT SHEET

<b>Historic Name:</b>	Sacred Heart Parish Complex
<b>Address:</b>	546-548 Fillmore Street, 554 Fillmore Street, 735 Fell Street, 660 Oak Street
<b>Block/ Lot(s):</b>	0828/021, 022, 022A and 012
<b>Parcel Area:</b>	The boundaries of the landmark site encompass all of and limited to lots 12 (convent), 21 (rectory), 22 (church), and 22A (school) in Assessor’s Block 828.
<b>Zoning:</b>	RM-3 Residential-Mixed Medium Density and 40-X height and bulk district; RM-1 Residential-Mixed Low Density and 40-X height and bulk district
<b>Year Built:</b>	1897
<b>Architect:</b>	Thomas J. Welsh
<b>Prior Historic Studies/Other Designations:</b>	Listed in the National Register of Historic Places
<b>Prior HPC Actions:</b>	On October 5, 2016, the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) adopted Resolution No. 806 to initiate landmark designation of 546-548 Fillmore Street, 554 Fillmore Street, 735 Fell Street, 660 Oak Street, known historically as the Sacred Heart Parish Complex

<p><b>Significance Criteria:</b></p>	<p><u>Events:</u> Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. (National Register Criterion A).</p> <p><u>Persons:</u> Associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.</p> <p><u>Architecture/Design:</u> Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, and/or represents the work of a master. (National Register Criterion C)</p>
<p><b>Period of Significance:</b></p>	<p><b>ca. 1891-1936</b> – this period encompasses the full development of the component buildings in the parish complex.</p> <p><b>1968-1972</b> – this period encompasses the tenure of Father Eugene and the most vigorous period of social justice activism at the parish.</p>
<p><b>Statement of Significance:</b></p>	<p>The Sacred Heart Parish Complex is significant for its association with the growth and development of the Western Addition and Catholic religious institutions in San Francisco in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Sacred Heart Parish Complex is significant for its association with Father Eugene Boyle, who presided over one of the most active, influential, and controversial periods of parish ministry and community involvement at Sacred Heart. The component buildings of the Sacred Heart Parish Complex embody the distinctive characteristics of the Romanesque Revival style and are also significant for their association with master architect Thomas J. Welsh</p>
<p><b>Assessment of Integrity:</b></p>	<p>The Sacred Heart Parish Complex retains integrity of location, design, and setting. The component buildings remain in their original locations and in the same relation to each other as in the period of significance. The late nineteenth and early twentieth-century residential and neighborhood-scale commercial setting for the buildings also remains consistent with the period of significance. The component buildings have undergone few exterior alterations since the end of the period of significance and retain sufficient integrity of design, materials, workmanship, and feeling to convey their historic religious, education, and residential uses. The parish complex has lost some integrity of association with conversion of the church to recreational use, however the high degree of integrity of setting, materials, design, workmanship, and feeling for the church building more than compensate for this loss. The other component buildings retain integrity of association with their historic uses as educational and residential facilities.</p>
<p><b>Character-Defining Features:</b></p>	<p>See detailed list below.</p>



The Sacred Heart Parish Complex is significant for its association with the growth and development of the Western Addition and Catholic religious institutions in San Francisco in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Sacred Heart was the first Catholic parish established in western San Francisco and was an important religious, social, and education center for the district's predominantly Catholic population. The significance of Sacred Heart as a social institution in the Western Addition was particularly pronounced during the late 1960s and early 1970s when the complex was a center of secular and religious social justice and civil rights activism during a turbulent and critical time in the history of the neighborhood.

Sacred Heart Parish Complex is significant for its association with Father Eugene Boyle, who presided over one of the most active, influential, and controversial periods of parish ministry and community involvement at Sacred Heart. Boyle was a prominent and influential civil rights activist in the Archdiocese of San Francisco and in northern California during the 1960s and 1970s. Locally, he exemplified the new clerical activism that emerged in the Catholic Church after the Second Vatican Council urged clergy and laity to be more active in the secular world. Father Boyle organized and served as the public face for Catholic involvement in the Black civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, urban renewal, fair housing, and the farm worker labor movement in San Francisco. Boyle was pastor at Sacred Heart from 1968-1972, and while at Sacred Heart he made the church a center of activism in the turbulent Western Addition and greater San Francisco. Boyle threw open the doors of the church to secular activist groups ranging from Vietnam Veterans against the War to the Black Panthers during a tense and transformative period in the social and racial landscape of the city. Boyle's ebullient liberalism and commitment to community activism marked the leading edge of Catholic involvement in the social justice issues of the mid twentieth century. Father Boyle passed away May 24, 2016 at age 94.

The component buildings of the Sacred Heart Parish Complex embody the distinctive characteristics of the Romanesque Revival style, which was widely popular for religious and civic buildings in San Francisco. As is common in Catholic parish groupings, the church building has the most developed Romanesque Revival architectural scheme, marking a higher level of artistic investment in the holy site of worship. The church building stands out as the most fully developed example of Italian-influenced Romanesque Revival liturgical architecture in San Francisco. The rectory, school, and convent have more modest Romanesque Revival architectural detailing.

The church and rectory are also significant for their association with master architect Thomas J. Welsh, who had a prolific and successful architectural career in northern California. Welsh designed 400 buildings in the City of San Francisco. His work demonstrates that he was well-versed in the popular styles of his day; his commissions included Italianate domestic architecture, Gothic Revival ecclesiastical architecture, and conservative Romanesque religious building designs. He also demonstrated his awareness of then cutting-edge design developments such as Romanesque Revival architecture in his ecclesiastical and civic work. Welsh's surviving works include three designated San Francisco Landmarks: the Irving M. Scott School (1895, City Landmark #138) at 1060 Tennessee Street; the Burr Residence (1878, City Landmark # 31) at Vallejo and Franklin streets and the McMorry-Lagan House (1884, City Landmark #164).

## Character Defining Features

### Parish Complex:

- Original locations and spatial relationships between the four component buildings Church

### Church

All exterior elevations, form, massing, structure, architectural ornament and materials identified as:

- Form, massing, and roof forms of the rectangular plan nave, projecting transepts, sacristies, and sanctuary
- Form, massing, and height of square campanile with hipped, terra cotta tiled roof and a variety of arched and circular openings
- Porch configuration, three primary entrances with wood doors, and arched and squared window openings, circular opening at half story on the primary elevation
- Three elongated rectangular window openings on north and south nave elevations
- Circular window openings at the transepts
- Materials including buff colored face and ornamental brick, and buff colored, slip glazed terra cotta ornament
- Extant stained glass windows with wood sash at north and south nave elevations, transept, baptistery, narthex, and choir loft; including wood tracery at the nave and transept
- Bell located in campanile
- Metal roof ornaments in a cross shape at ridge of church and campanile
- Concrete wall topped by wrought iron fence at north elevation

### Rectory

The exterior elevations, form, massing, structure, architectural ornament and materials identified as:

- Rectangular plan and massing of the flat roof, brick main block
- Raised centered, recessed entrance and exterior vestibule
- Regularly spaced fenestration pattern on front, some with decorative mullions, and arched window openings at the third floor
- Wood window sash, including decorative muntin patterns where present
- Overhanging cornice supported by paired, oversized brackets that wraps around to north and south elevations
- Materials including buff colored face and ornamental brick; molded tin detailing at third story; and stucco ornament below third story and surrounding entrance

### School

The exterior elevation, form, massing, structure, architectural ornament and materials identified as:

- Rectangular plan and massing of the flat roof school building
- Centered, recessed entrance
- Regularly spaced fenestration pattern with arched and rectangular window openings
- Multi-paned wood sash windows; multi-pane wood sash fan lights at first story
- Plaster decorative features surrounding entrance and above first story windows; frieze separating basement and first floors, frieze separating first and second stories and frieze at cornice
- Deeply scored concrete at basement and lightly scored plaster of first through third stories

### Convent

- The exterior elevations, form, massing, structure, architectural ornament and materials identified as:
- Rectangular plan and massing of flat roof main building and chapel ell
- Raised, centered entrance with vestibule, arched main entrance and wood door at primary facade
- Regularly spaced fenestration pattern with rectangular openings at first floor and arched openings at second floor of primary facade
- Wood, multi-paned, casement window sash
- Smooth stucco cladding
- Decorative plaster details at window and door openings, including balconette and stucco cross on primary facade
- Frieze near cornice and slightly overhanging cornice with terra cotta roof tiles that wrap around to east and west elevations
- Extant stained glass windows that used to fill the chapel window openings

September 8, 2023

San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission  
S.F. Planning Department  
49 South Van Ness Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94103

RE: 546–548 Fillmore St., et al. (Sacred Heart Parish Complex)

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Dear Honorable Members of the S.F. Historic Preservation Commission:

I would like to state for the record that I strongly support the proposed Landmark Designation for the Sacred Heart Parish Complex (546–548 Fillmore St., et al.).

The presence of an irreplaceable group of community buildings such as Sacred Heart complex is an obvious treasure for the City & County of San Francisco. It is clear that the right thing to do is to preserve its architectural & functional integrity as much as possible, so that residents and visitors alike may partake of its beauty of the past, while experiencing the present (i.e., contemplated future uses for that hilltop community space).

As a native San Franciscan and lifelong Catholic, I was always aware of Sacred Heart Church as a historic parish founded largely by early Irish and German immigrants, and later serving the African-American Catholic community. I first went to Sacred Heart for Mass in 1987. In 1994 I had marriage preparation counseling with Fr. Ken Westray.

The church and building complex have stood as a sentinel—a silent witness to deep social and demographic upheaval over the years. Yet it still stands; and (for me, at least) remains a beacon of hope.

But the history of Sacred Heart Complex is practically nothing compared to its progenitor.

Have a look at the attached photo.

It looks like Sacred Heart Church, but it is not. It's the Temple of Venus and Rome, built inside the Roman Forum almost two thousand years ago. The church tower behind the temple looks similar to our very own Sacred Heart Church.

We San Franciscans are indeed blessed to have something like this right here in our beautiful city!

How many American cities would envy having even ONE such spectacular example of Romanesque architecture within their boundaries?

Yet the builders of Sacred Heart Complex knew what they were doing. For they didn't erect it amidst the ruins of a Roman Forum. Instead, they built it as a beacon on a hill—a timeless inspiration to anyone & everyone whose gaze alights upon it.

Its future function may be a mystery to us now, but we can be assured that its architects & builders intended it for the ages—for uses that *maximally benefit* the community and neighborhood.

Potrero Hill has its Julia Morgan-designed Neighborhood House, but the Western Addition has a far more spectacular beacon of the community.

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I was a young man then, but now I am old. I hope and pray that Sacred Heart Complex can be preserved for future generations, as it was meant to be.

I don't know what else I can do to help preserve this architectural and community treasure—an irreplaceable commune of buildings that's more often found in places like Italy or Malta than in the United States. The Sacred Heart Complex is one of those hidden gems that makes foreign visitors and residents alike take breath & exclaim: San Francisco is just like Europe!

Sincerely,



John M. Gregson, Ph.D.  
2327 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94116

(attachment)



**From:** [CPC-Commissions Secretary](#)  
**Cc:** [Ferguson, Shannon \(CPC\)](#); [Feliciano, Josephine \(CPC\)](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Historic Preservation Commission Hearing on September 20, 2023 - Sacred Heart Church -546-548, 554 Fillmore Street, 735 Fell Street, 660...  
**Date:** Monday, September 11, 2023 4:12:04 PM

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**Best,**  
**Josephine O. Feliciano, Planning Technician II**  
**Commission Affairs**  
San Francisco Planning  
49 South Van Ness Avenue, Suite 1400, San Francisco, CA 94103  
Direct: 628.652.7600 | [www.sfplanning.org](http://www.sfplanning.org)  
[San Francisco Property Information Map](#)

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**From:** Jan Robinson <[jan.robinson96@yahoo.com](mailto:jan.robinson96@yahoo.com)>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 11, 2023 8:47 AM  
**To:** CPC-Commissions Secretary <[commissions.secretary@sfgov.org](mailto:commissions.secretary@sfgov.org)>  
**Cc:** Robert Pritchard <[ropritchard@gmail.com](mailto:ropritchard@gmail.com)>; merle easton <[merle\\_easton@yahoo.com](mailto:merle_easton@yahoo.com)>  
**Subject:** Historic Preservation Commission Hearing on September 20, 2023 - Sacred Heart Church -546-548, 554 Fillmore Street, 735 Fell Street, 660...

This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

September 11, 2023

San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission  
S.F. Planning Department  
49 South Van Ness Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94103

SUBJECT: Sacred Heart Church Landmark Designation

Dear Commissioners:

As a longtime resident of San Francisco, and a member of the Committee to Save St. Brigid Church, I wish to once again voice my support for city landmarking of Sacred Heart Church. This magnificent building has been a highly visible part of the skyline since 1896. The State Office of Historic Preservation found Sacred Heart Church eligible for listing on the National Register of Historical Places in 2010.

In addition to Sacred Heart's long and important history which includes providing shelter to those who had lost homes after the 1906 earthquake, and also providing a base for the venerable Sacred Heart Gospel Choir for many years, I wish to add the following personal note.

I once attended an afternoon event at Geary and Gough Streets, but what caught my eye that day was the gleaming, golden form of Sacred Heart Church in the rays of the setting sun – it was a stunning and spectacular sight! Perched high on the hill overlooking the Hayes Valley, the building seems to have always been a part of the land. Its very outline proclaims “permanence”.

The City of San Francisco has lost far too many of its historic buildings, such as the Fox Theatre and City of Paris. Tragically, future generations will never see or experience such places - they are irreplaceable.

We, at The Committee to Save St. Brigid Church were successful in our landmarking efforts, and it means the world for us to know that our beloved church will be there for future generations, as San Francisco City Landmark 252.

I can think of no better way to honor those parishioners who donated to and built Sacred Heart Church, as well as those who fought so hard to save it, than to have the Commission also recommend it for city landmark designation. It is an artistic and historic treasure, fully deserving of every means of protection and preservation.

Thank you for your time and your consideration.

Jan Robinson  
1940 Washington St., Apt. C  
San Francisco, CA 94109



**From:** [Mo Spuhler](#)  
**To:** [Ferguson, Shannon \(CPC\)](#)  
**Subject:** Comment on case No. 2015-005890DES, Sacred Heart Church  
**Date:** Monday, May 08, 2017 11:36:09 AM

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Dear Ms. Ferguson,

Please pass on my comments in regards to the Sacred Heart Church building:

As a former resident of San Francisco, and now a visiting "tourist", I am writing to support landmark status for Sacred Heart Church.

Like all great cities, landmarks make San Francisco special. People travel from around the world to visit the City by the Bay, in part to see it's unique landmarks. Sacred Heart Church is a treasure hiding in broad daylight.

Amazingly this brick building has survived TWO major earthquakes, the era of "urban renewal" and "modernization", and— at least so far — the 21st century wrecking ball. Now is the time to ensure that Sacred Heart Church is always protected.

Visually, the building is a prominent milestone for SF residents that pass by in their daily travels, as it stands solemnly near the crest of the hill and is visible from much of San Francisco. It always makes a visit to the DMV memorable!

For tourists visiting the Alamo Square and Fillmore area and beyond, the church's unique architecture and soaring hilltop tower, make this San Francisco corner unforgettable.

Culturally, its history reflects the history of San Francisco as a whole, the church's congregation evolved over the years, it was a home to many diverse Catholic communities, as a place they prayed, and held their baptisms, weddings, and funerals. It is also important as the site of Catholic and secular social justice activism in the civil rights movement, the farm worker labor movement, the Vietnam War, and urban renewal. And it's parish complex was the site of the local Black Panther Party Breakfast Program, meetings of anti-Vietnam War and San Francisco State University student activists, and the start of the 1970 United Farm Workers Union lettuce boycott in San Francisco.

Imagine not protecting this building with landmark status...what might this corner look like without Sacred Heart? Can you imagine North Beach, the Mission or Nob Hill, without their churches? The Sacred Heart building must be protected and granted landmark status!

Thank you,  
Maureen Spuhler  
45 N. Main St.  
East Hampton, CT 06424

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**From:** merle easton <merle\_easton@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 06, 2016 4:46 PM  
**To:** Ferguson, Shannon (CPC)  
**Cc:** Mark Ryser; Joe Pecora  
**Subject:** FYI: Defining Feature- the Connector - Sacred Heart

The Third Floor Connector between the Sacred Heart Rectory and Church was there in 1910!

It is clearly visible in a photo on Page 158 of Joseph P. Pecora's book **The Storied Houses of Alamo Square**. The question of when the Connector was built was raised at yesterday's Hearing. After the Hearing he pointed out that the connector is shown on a postcard of the Church and Rectory in 1910. Joe gave a copy of the book to the Commissioners during the meeting.

Merle Easton

September 27, 2016

Via email:shannon.ferguson@sfgov.org

Members of the Historic Preservation Commission  
c/o Shannon Ferguson, San Francisco Department of Planning  
1650 Mission St., 4th Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94103

Re: Sacred Heart Campus Landmark Hearing  
October 5, 2016

Dear Committee Members:

I am Gerry Agosta of Noe Vista, LLC, owner of three (3) of the four (4) parcels/building that make up the Sacred Heart Campus which is proposed for Landmarking at the October 5, 2016 hearing. We own the Convent, Rectory and School, which we purchased over the period of 2009 - 2013. Since our purchases we have invested heavily in the buildings' infrastructure. The school has been made fully ADA compliant with the addition of an elevator, added bathrooms, ramps to rear, and a remodeled entry to remove stairs. The main Rectory systems (heating, electrical, plumbing) were replaced and a new foundation was installed, as well as, structural elements to bring the building up to current earthquake standards. The Convent had its heating and electrical systems updated, as well as, extensive rehabilitation to address long-deferred maintenance.

All of the work was completed in an historically sensitive manner. Chris VerPlanck was brought in to consult on the modifications to the School entry. In the Rectory, all significant elements which had to be removed during the structural upgrade were replaced in-kind. The Convent walls and floors were restored using the same materials and techniques as the original construction; e.g., marble plaster was used to repair the badly deteriorated chapel walls and painted beams were restored, not repainted.

The point we want to make is that we believe in the value of preservation, and we act upon our beliefs. We think the Sacred Heart Campus is worthy of Landmarking and support this action towards that end. But buildings, though made of concrete and steel, are not "set in stone"; buildings are living in the sense that must adapt. Buildings that change survive; those that do not are eventually abandoned.

Therefore, we would like to put into the official record an acknowledgement of some of the potential plans and future renovations which may be required to our buildings. These include:

- Possible expansion of the School into the rear yard
- Potential installation of a playground roof deck at School
- Installation of garage door at east side of School to access underground garage
- An ADA elevator at south side of Rectory (behind the character-defining facade)
- An ADA elevator and added stairs at sides of Convent.

These are some of the things we foresee needing in the future to keep the buildings relevant and economically feasible.

The final comment we have concerns a difference of opinion on the “extant” stained-glass in the Convent being a character-defining features of the building. Our position is the windows *cannot* be a character-defining feature because they are no longer installed in the building. The historic Report refers to the window as extant because they due exist, but they exist as art work, not windows.

A bit of history -

When Noe Vista entered into a contract to purchase the Convent the stained-glass was installed. Several months later, before we closed escrow, we reinspected the building and found the stain glass windows had been removed and replaced with plexiglass panels. The plexiglass windows remain today. We refused to complete purchase of the Convent until the windows were returned. The stained glass had made their way to Wisconsin where they had to be re-packed and shipped back to us. After completing the purchase of the Convent, we found a steel worker to make frames for the stained glass panels (which had suffered some damage when they were jack-hammered from the building, packaged, and shipped back and forth across the country). The stained glass panels now are displayed throughout the Convent and Rectory, some in front of their original openings; they are moved from time to time.

But our position is, they are not part of the building and therefore, by definition, could not be a character-defining feature of the building.

Thank you for you time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Gerry Agosta,  
Managing Member  
Noe Vista, LLC

Raymond Zabloutny MD  
584 Page St  
San Francisco CA 94117

*raymondzabloutny@mac.com*

Andrew Wolfram, President  
San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission  
1650 Mission St., Room 400  
San Francisco, CA 94109

Dear President Wolfram:

SUBJECT: Sacred Heart Landmark Designation

I strongly support the Article 10 city landmark designation for Sacred Heart, the former church located at 546 Fillmore Street. Built in 1896 the former Sacred Heart Church on Fillmore at Fell Street is visible throughout the Western Addition and beyond. The State Office of Historic Preservation found Sacred Heart Church eligible for listing on the National Register of Historical Places in 2010.

I have lived one block from Sacred Heart on Page Street for 38 years. I love to navigate home by the tower of the church. When I see the large rectory it reminds me of the 10 priests who resided there in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to serve the needs of the many Irish Catholic residents of our neighborhood. I was glad that it had evolved to serve the new African American residents, but disappointed when the diocese decided to close it. The church was built about the same year as my house at 584 Page Street. This property is already on the National Register. It is a vital identifying structure for the neighborhood that is visible from far away. I was very pleased when the Italian language school took over the old school building and added life to that block of Fell street. This fine building deserves to stay at the top of the Fell St hill. As a psychiatrist I believe that old buildings help anchor us to our neighborhood.

I urge the HPC Commission to recommend city landmark designation to The Board of Supervisors

Sincerely,



Raymond Zabloutny MD

cc: Tim Frye, Staff  
*tim.frye@sfgov.org*

June 19, 2015

Mr. Andrew Wolfram  
Historic Preservation Commission President  
c/o TEF Design  
1420 Sutter Street, 2nd Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94109

Re: Sacred Heart Church

Dear Mr. Wolfram:

I write to you today in support of landmarking Sacred Heart Church under Article 10 of the San Francisco Planning Code. I do this as a fifth generation San Franciscan, as a past-president of The Victorian Alliance of San Francisco, and as an individual devoted to reasonable architectural preservation.

The systematic and diabolic abuse administered to this valuable architectural resource mocks city laws and the sensibilities of those dedicated to saving it.

I come to this debate with some history. Almost five years to the date, I wrote to then mayor Gavin Newsom and others protesting the dismantling of the church's interior at the hands of those following the Megan Furth Academy. (See enclosed.) To my knowledge, the perpetrators suffered no negative consequences to such flagrant actions, though it galvanized a core group who doggedly pursued all cessation of further destruction and, ultimately, helped place before your commission the application for landmark status.

Please, recognize the unique contribution of this building, vote in favor of the application to landmark Sacred Heart Church, and then push other committee members to vote with you.

Sincere Regards,



Jason Allen Rouman  
Past-President, The Victorian Alliance of San Francisco  
4600 Argyle Terrace NW  
Washington, DC 20011

✓ cc: Tim Frye

Encl.



## THE VICTORIAN ALLIANCE

1036 Haight Street, San Francisco, CA 94117  
(415) 824-2666 [victorianalliance.org](http://victorianalliance.org)  
FOUNDED 1973

June 30, 2010

Mayor Gavin Newsom  
City Hall, Room 200  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102

RE: Sacred Heart Church / Megan Furth Academy

Dear Mayor Newsom,

In my role as President of The Victorian Alliance of San Francisco, I act as the voice of the organization on matters pressing to our members. At our committee meeting of June 23<sup>rd</sup>, the details of the travesty occurring at Sacred Heart Church become known.

When demolition companies and property owners hold The City and County of San Francisco's rules, regulations, and laws in such contempt for our collective architectural heritage and do not honor a "Stop Work Order," we are all the worse for it. The Victorian Alliance stands among those within the broader preservation community who demand an investigation into the actions of The Megan Furth Academy and Puma Logistics, the demolition contractors. Further, we wish to see The City file suit against the perpetrators of this destruction to seek restitution and a return of the artifacts removed from Sacred Heart Church.

Respectfully,

Jason Allen-Rouman  
President

cc. Mr. Dennis Herrera, Esq.  
Mr. John Rahaim  
Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi

June 23, 2015

Tim Frye, staff  
1650 Mission St., Room 400  
San Francisco, CA 94109

Subject: Land marking of Sacred Heart

Dear Tim,

My family and I are native San Franciscans, all baptized at the historic Sacred Heart Church on the corner of Fell and Fillmore Street. My family and I support the land marking of Sacred Heart Church.

When built in 1898 Sacred heart was the largest Catholic church in the Western Addition. The Eastern end was completed in 1909 and included the transepts and marble altars. It was a very busy Parrish, at its peak 6 Masses were held on Sundays for its 1800 families. It is part of a complex of buildings, including the rectory, the school and the convent.

Originally the population served was mainly Irish, then Italian but later became African American, even serving the popular Black Panther breakfast program in the 1960s. The church building withstood both the 1906 and in 1981 earthquakes with minimal damage to the plaster ceiling. The style of the 100 plus foot tower is Italian Lombardi. The nave is Romanesque with no side aisles. It was designed by Thomas Welsh, a prolific architect favored by the Catholic Church. He designed hundreds of buildings in San Francisco, including the St Mary's Cathedral on Van Ness that burned down in the 60s. Many were destroyed in the 1906 quake and fire. The tower can be seen throughout the community from all vistas of the city.

The church was closed in 2005 and then sold. The three marble altars, stained glass rose windows, pews and organ were removed, even when a stop work order was in place.

Thank you,

Francine Sosa-Lewis  
729 Adams Street  
Albany, CA 94706  
510-528-8182

Cc: Andrew Wolfram, President,  
Historic Preservation Commission  
1650 Mission St., Room  
San Francisco, CA 94103



# Committee to Save St. Brigid Church

a non-profit organization under Internal Revenue Code §501(c)(3)

P.O. Box 641318, San Francisco, California 94164-1318  
www.st-brigid.org (e-mail: stbrigidchurch\_sf@yahoo.com)

Telephone: (415) 364-1511



June 23, 2015

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Beatriz St. John \*

**Chairman Emeritus**

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**In Memoriam**

Joseph Howard Dignan

\* Pro Tem

Andrew Wolfram, AIA, LEED AP  
Commission President  
1650 Mission Street, Suite 400  
San Francisco, CA 94103

RE: Landmarking of Sacred Heart Church

Dear Mr. Wolfram and the Members of the Historic Preservation Commission:

On behalf of the Committee to Save St. Brigid Church, I am writing to express our organization's full support for the landmarking of Sacred Heart Church, Fillmore and Fell Streets, San Francisco, CA.

Built in 1898, Sacred Heart is a masterpiece of design from architect Thomas Welsh. Its golden-hued, Italianate form has been part of the fabric of the Hayes Valley and Western addition for over 100 years. Sacred Heart Church has stood through two major earthquakes, two World Wars, and the Great Depression. It is a highly visible part of the skyline of our City, and has had a long and important history - including providing shelter for the homeless, following the 1906 earthquake.

We would greatly appreciate your efforts in approving landmark status for Sacred Heart Church. In doing so, you would honor the struggle of those who fought so hard to save this magnificent building. Such an awe-inspiring edifice is truly irreplaceable, and deserves to be protected for all future generations of San Franciscans

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Beatriz St. John  
Chairperson

Cc: Tim Frye, Preservation Coordinator

---

**From:** Frye, Tim (CPC)  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 25, 2015 7:04 PM  
**To:** Ferguson, Shannon (CPC)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Sacred Heart Landmark Designation

-Tim

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Jim Gonzales <[jim.gonzalez@therealreal.com](mailto:jim.gonzalez@therealreal.com)>  
**Date:** June 25, 2015 at 6:35:50 PM PDT  
**To:** [andrew@tefarch.com](mailto:andrew@tefarch.com)  
**Cc:** [tim.frye@sfgov.org](mailto:tim.frye@sfgov.org)  
**Subject:** Sacred Heart Landmark Designation

James M. Gonzalez  
580 McAllister St. Apt. 412  
San Francisco, Calif. 94102  
June 25, 2015

Andrew Wolfram, President  
San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission  
1650 Mission St., Room 400  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
[andrew@tefarch.com](mailto:andrew@tefarch.com)

Dear President Wolfram:

I strongly support the Article 10 city landmark designation for Sacred Heart, the former church located at 546 Fillmore Street. Built in 1896 the former Sacred Heart Church on Fillmore at Fell Street is visible throughout the Western Addition and beyond. The State Office of Historic Preservation found Sacred Heart Church eligible for listing on the National Register of Historical Places in 2010.

I am a fourth generation San Franciscan, and would hate to see any iconic structure my relatives might have enjoyed, to cease to exist. I strongly urge the HPC Commission to recommend city landmark designation to The Board of Supervisors.

Respectfully,  
Jim Gonzalez

cc: Tim Frye, Staff  
[tim.frye@sfgov.org](mailto:tim.frye@sfgov.org)

--

Jim Gonzalez, Photographer

The RealReal, Inc.

email: [jim.gonzalez@therealreal.com](mailto:jim.gonzalez@therealreal.com)

---

**From:** Frye, Tim (CPC)  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 25, 2015 2:58 PM  
**To:** Ferguson, Shannon (CPC)  
**Subject:** FW: Sacred Heart Landmark Designation

- Tim

**Timothy Frye**  
**Preservation Coordinator**

Planning Department, City and County of San Francisco  
1650 Mission Street, Suite 400, San Francisco, CA 94103  
**Direct:** 415-575-6822 **Fax:** 415-558-6409  
**Email:** [tim.frye@sfgov.org](mailto:tim.frye@sfgov.org)  
**Web:** [www.sfplanning.org](http://www.sfplanning.org)



**Planning Information Center (PIC):** 415-558-6377 or [pic@sfgov.org](mailto:pic@sfgov.org)  
**Property Information Map (PIM):** <http://propertymap.sfplanning.org>

**From:** [tesw@aol.com](mailto:tesw@aol.com) [<mailto:tesw@aol.com>]  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 25, 2015 2:49 PM  
**To:** [andrew@tefarch.com](mailto:andrew@tefarch.com)  
**Cc:** Frye, Tim (CPC)  
**Subject:** Sacred Heart Landmark Designation

**Teresa M. Welborn**  
**2001 Oak Street**  
**San Francisco CA 94117**  
**415.752.8520 p [tesw@aol.com](mailto:tesw@aol.com) 415.418.6103 f**

June 26, 2015

Andrew Wolfram, President  
San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission  
1650 Mission St., Room 400  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
[andrew@tefarch.com](mailto:andrew@tefarch.com)

Dear President Wolfram:

**SUBJECT: Sacred Heart Landmark Designation**

I strongly support the Article 10 city landmark designation for Sacred Heart, the former church located at 546 Fillmore Street. Built in 1896, the former Sacred Heart Church on Fillmore at Fell Street is visible throughout the Western Addition and beyond. The State Office of Historic Preservation found Sacred Heart Church eligible for listing on the National Register of Historical Places in 2010.

We are losing many historic resources to gut and condo plus just plain demolition. I am a member of the Victorian Alliance. I care deeply about protecting our heritage for its value to all of us in San Francisco as well as its value to our tourist industry. People come world-wide to see our beautiful buildings. This outstanding church building should be landmarked.

I urge the HPC Commission to recommend city landmark designation to The Board of Supervisors.

Sincerely,

*Teresa M. Welborn*

cc: Tim Frye, Staff  
[tim.frye@sfgov.org](mailto:tim.frye@sfgov.org)

Robert O. Pritchard  
48 Pearl Street  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
June 25th, 2015

To: Mr. Andrew Wolfram, President  
San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission  
1650 Mission St, Room 400, SF, CA. 94103

Dear President Wolfram:

Subject: Sacred Heart Landmark Designation

This Letter is written from the Still Existing Sacred Heart Community (Deposed Sacred Heart Parish - Suppressed Dec 26th, 2009). We implore you to allow our Beloved Architectural & Spiritual Masterpiece - Sacred Heart Church to remain standing Sentinel & a Testament to our History as well as for the Family of Architect Thomas J. Walsh - His last S.F. Ecclesiastical Structure still in existence. Please note, we did not willingly leave our Beloved Sanctuary & our Parish. (Please review our Eviction) - (90 Day) After 120 years of Service to the Western Addition -

(2)

Like our Family of St. Bridgid Church,  
We were not allowed to Retrofit  
our Sanctuaries - doing capital campaign  
funds - (Blocked Twice).

We the Sacred Heart Community  
(at St. Boniface Church), strongly SUPPORT  
the Article 10 City Landmark Designation  
for Sacred Heart, the former church  
located at 554 Fillmore St. Construction  
commencing in 1896, Our Beloved  
Sacred Heart Church at the corner  
of Fillmore & Fell street is a highly  
visible "breath of fresh air architecturally"  
across the city from many vantage points!

The state office of Historic  
preservation found Sacred Heart Church  
eligible for listing on the National  
Register of Historic Places in 2010.

We urge the HPC to recommend  
City Landmark designation to the Board  
of Supervisors,

Sincerely,

Robert O Putek

Vice-President of the Sacred Heart Gospel  
Choir & Bd. member of Save Our Sacred Heart  
Preservation Group

cc: Tim Frye - staff

MRS. EDWARD B. GILMORE  
2472 UNION STREET  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA. 94123

6/28/15

Andrew Wolfram, President  
San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission  
1650 Mission St Room 400  
San Francisco, Ca. 94103

Dear President Wolfram

SUBJECT: Sacred Heart Landmark Designation

I strongly support the Article 10 city landmark designation for Sacred Heart, the former church located at 546 Fillmore St. Built in 1896 the former Sacred Heart Church on Fillmore at Fell Street is visible throughout the Western Addition and beyond. The State Office of Historic Preservation found Sacred Heart Church eligible for listing on the National Register of Historical Places in 2010.

I am a native San Franciscan and feel this church should be saved

I urge the HPD Commission to recommend city landmark designation to the Board of Supervisors.

Sincerely

Barbara Gilmore

c.c. Tim Frye, Staff



Elizabeth Hancock  
2190 Washington Street  
June 28, 2015

Andrew Wolfram, President  
San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission  
1650 Mission St., Room 400  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
[andrew@tefarch.com](mailto:andrew@tefarch.com)

Dear President Wolfram:

SUBJECT: Sacred Heart Landmark Designation

I strongly support the Article 10 city landmark designation for Sacred Heart, the former church located at 546 Fillmore Street. Built in 1896 the former Sacred Heart Church on Fillmore at Fell Street is visible throughout the Western Addition and beyond. The State Office of Historic Preservation found Sacred Heart Church eligible for listing on the National Register of Historical Places in 2010.

I urge the HPC Commission to recommend city landmark designation to The Board of Supervisors

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Hancock

cc: Tim Frye, Staff  
[tim.frye@sfgov.org](mailto:tim.frye@sfgov.org)

June 29, 2015

JOAN JOAQUIN-WOOD  
P.O. Box 330214  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94133-0214

Andrew Wolfram, President  
Historic Preservation Commission  
TEF  
1420 Sutter Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor  
S.F. CA 94109

Dear Mr. Wolfram:

Although the Sacred Heart Church at 546 Fillmore is no longer functioning as a church, I strongly urge you to support its designation with the Article 10 City Landmark recognition. This would be particularly welcomed by the black community of our City which has been largely driven out of their residences in the Fillmore District of San Francisco.

I remember well when that part of our city was a vibrant contributor to the overall charm here, as I lived nearby in Pacific Heights on Jackson Street. It is too late to bring back the cable cars which rambled right outside my window but not the memory of this church.

Thank you for your consideration.

Joan Wood, North Beach

Cc: Tim Frye, Planning Staff  
1650 Mission St., Room 400  
W.F. 94109

722 Lombard St #201  
San Francisco, CA 94133

June 29, 2015

Andrew Wolfram, President  
San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission  
1650 Mission St., Room 400  
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear President Wolfram:

SUBJECT: Sacred Heart Landmark Designation

I strongly support the Article 10 city landmark designation for Sacred Heart, the former church located at 546 Fillmore Street. Built in 1896 the former Sacred Heart Church on Fillmore at Fell Street is visible throughout the Western Addition and beyond. The State Office of Historic Preservation found Sacred Heart Church eligible for listing on the National Register of Historical Places in 2010.

I urge the HPC Commission to recommend city landmark designation to The Board of Supervisors

Sincerely,



Lance Carnes

cc: Tim Frye, Staff

Jan Robinson, 1940 Washington Street, Apt. C, San Francisco, CA 94109

June 29, 2015

Andrew Wolfram, President  
San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission  
1650 Mission St., Room 400  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
andrew@tefarch.com

SUBJECT: Sacred Heart Landmark Designation

Dear President Wolfram:

I wish to add my voice in support of the Article 10 city landmark designation for Sacred Heart, the former church located at 546 Fillmore Street. This magnificent golden building has been a highly visible part of the skyline since 1896. The State Office of Historic Preservation found Sacred Heart Church eligible for listing on the National Register of Historical Places in 2010.

Sacred Heart Church has had a long and important history. It sheltered people that were made homeless after the 1906 earthquake. It was also the home of the venerable Sacred Heart Gospel Choir, which has just celebrated their 40th year.

The City of San Francisco has lost far too many of its historic buildings, such as the Fox Theatre and City of Paris. Tragically, future generations will never see or experience such places - they are irreplaceable.

Please protect what remains of San Francisco's history by affording landmark protection for this Italianate masterpiece by architect Thomas Welsh.

I urge the HPC Commission to recommend city landmark designation to The Board of Supervisors

Sincerely,



Jan Robinson

cc: Tim Frye, Staff

tim.frye@sfgov.org

[Type here]

*Al Hunter  
1411 Eddington Lane  
Daly City, CA 94014  
June 29, 2015*

Andrew Wolfram, President  
San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission  
1650 Mission St., Room 400  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
*andrew@tefarch.com*

Dear President Wolfram:

SUBJECT: Sacred Heart Landmark Designation

I strongly support the Article 10 city landmark designation for Sacred Heart, the former church located at 546 Fillmore Street. Built in 1896 the former Sacred Heart Church on Fillmore at Fell Street is visible throughout the Western Addition and beyond. The State Office of Historic Preservation found Sacred Heart Church eligible for listing on the National Register of Historical Places in 2010.

*Growing up in Europe where beautiful old churches on hilltops are cherished landmarks and it would never come up that they would be torn down, I am shocked that San Francisco would so easily give up on such a wonderful and historic icon. I always love to see Sacred Heart from the many vantage points in the City from which it is visible. It gives the City character and a sense of history. It should not be lost!*

I urge the HPC Commission to recommend city landmark designation to The Board of Supervisors

Sincerely,

Al Hunter

cc: Tim Frye, Staff  
*tim.frye@sfgov.org*



THE VICTORIAN ALLIANCE OF SAN FRANCISCO

PO Box 14543, San Francisco, CA 94114  
(415) 824-2666 victorianalliance.org Founded 1973

Andrew Wolfram, President  
San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission  
1650 Mission St., Room 400  
San Francisco, CA 94103

June 30, 2015

Dear President Wolfram:

The Victorian Alliance is a non-profit City-wide organization committed to the preservation and restoration of late nineteenth and twentieth century historic buildings, landscapes and artifacts through advocacy and education, particularly within San Francisco.

The Victorian Alliance Membership voted unanimously at the General Membership Meeting on May 27, 2015 to send this letter of support. Our support for Sacred Heart has been ongoing since before the Church was closed by the Archdiocese in 2005.

The Sacred Heart Church on Fillmore at Fell Street served this community's religious and social needs from 1896 to 2005. In March of 2010, the State Office of Historic Preservation found Sacred Heart Church eligible for listing on the National Register of Historical Places (National Register).

The historic research for San Francisco landmark designation was prepared by Elaine Styles, Historian and has been submitted by the Historic Preservation Fund Committee.

We strongly support the Article 10 city landmark designation for Sacred Heart, the former church located at 546 Fillmore Street. The 115 foot high yellow brick Lombardi tower dominates the intersection at Fell St. and can be seen throughout the neighborhood and is recognized well beyond as a Western Addition landmark. It is exemplary architecture and the last standing work in San Francisco of prolific church architect, Thomas Welsh.

We urge your HPC Commission to recommend city landmark designation to the Board of Supervisors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. K. Reid', with a stylized flourish underneath.

Roger K. Reid  
President, Victorian Alliance of San Francisco

cc: Tim Frye, Diane Matsuda, Karl Hasz, Aaron Von Hyland, Richard Johns, Ellen Johnck, Jonathan Pearlman

---

**From:** Frye, Tim (CPC)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 01, 2015 4:47 PM  
**To:** Ferguson, Shannon (CPC)  
**Subject:** FW: Sacred Heart Landmark Designation

- Tim

**Timothy Frye**  
**Preservation Coordinator**

Planning Department, City and County of San Francisco  
1650 Mission Street, Suite 400, San Francisco, CA 94103

**Direct:** 415-575-6822 **Fax:** 415-558-6409

**Email:** [tim.frye@sfgov.org](mailto:tim.frye@sfgov.org)

**Web:** [www.sfplanning.org](http://www.sfplanning.org)



**Planning Information Center (PIC):** 415-558-6377 or [pic@sfgov.org](mailto:pic@sfgov.org)  
**Property Information Map (PIM):** <http://propertymap.sfplanning.org>

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**From:** Priscilla Williams [<mailto:priscasf42@att.net>]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 01, 2015 4:39 PM  
**To:** [andrew@tefarch.com](mailto:andrew@tefarch.com)  
**Cc:** Frye, Tim (CPC)  
**Subject:** Sacred Heart Landmark Designation

Dear President Wolfram:

I strongly support the Article 10 city landmark designation for Sacred Heart, the former church located at 546 Fillmore Street. Built in 1896 the former Sacred Heart Church on Fillmore at Fell Street is visible throughout the Western Addition and beyond. The State Office of Historic Preservation found Sacred Heart Church eligible for listing on the National Register of Historical Places in 2010. I urge the HPC Commission to recommend city landmark designation to The Board of Supervisors. We need to preserve old landmarks of our history in this age of building more and more high rises. We are losing the special character of our city by demolishing old and beautiful reminders of the past. Please act before it is too late.

Priscilla Williams

Joseph B. Pecora  
882 Grove Street  
San Francisco, Calif. 94117  
7-6-2015

Andrew Wolfram, President  
San Francisco Preservation Commission  
1650 Mission St., Room 400  
San Francisco, Ca. 94103

Dear President Wolfram:

This is in support of Article 10 City Landmark Designation for Sacred Heart Church located at the corner of Fillmore and Fell Streets.

“Majestically sited on the Fell Street hill, the Renaissance Revival styled Sacred Heart Church, noted for its Italian inspired bell tower, is one of the City’s most visible landmarks. Begun to serve a largely Irish American congregation, it was in use by 1898 but not completed until the addition of its transept in 1908,” according to its profile in *The Storied Houses of Alamo Square*.

The Architect: Sacred Heart was built to the design of Australian born Thomas J. Welsh, who excelled in both residential and church architecture.

Art and Architecture: The church’s classically designed façade, which includes a porch supported by granite columns, rises three stories to a cross capped pediment. The entire edifice, trimmed with terra cotta, is clad in a buff-hued Roman brick. Its lofty campanile echoes those found in Italian hill towns.

Much of the valuable art works and finishes of the interior were removed, but several stained glass windows lining the nave, contributed by prominent local families survive as does the tower’s 4,000 lb. bell.



Among its most well-known pastors were the Rev. Joseph P McQuaide (1905-1922), who served as a chaplain in both the Spanish American and First World Wars and the civil-rights activist Father Eugene Boyle (1968-1972) who invited the Black Panthers to operate their Breakfast Program for Children in the church basement.

This magnificent building is a symbolic reminder of the heavily Catholic presence in this neighborhood in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early to mid- 20<sup>th</sup> century. Six Sunday masses were held to accommodate its parishioners.

The major factor in its closing by the Archdiocese, and which puts its future at risk, is its designation as an unreinforced masonry building. I hope you will agree that Sacred Heart is deserving of landmark status.

Sincerely

  
Joseph B. Pecora

✓ COPY - TIM FRYE

---

**Subject:** FW: Sacred Heart Landmark Designation

**From:** Bathsheba Malsheen [<mailto:bathshebam@earthlink.net>]  
**Sent:** Saturday, July 18, 2015 8:36 PM  
**To:** [andrew@tefarch.com](mailto:andrew@tefarch.com)  
**Cc:** Frye, Tim (CPC)  
**Subject:** Sacred Heart Landmark Designation

Bathsheba J Malsheen  
195 Duboce Ave  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
July 19, 2015

Andrew Wolfram, President  
San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission  
1650 Mission St., Room 400  
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear President Wolfram:

I strongly support the Article 10 city landmark designation for Sacred Heart, the former church located at 546 Fillmore Street. Built in 1896 the former Sacred Heart Church on Fillmore at Fell Street is visible throughout the Western Addition and beyond. The State Office of Historic Preservation found Sacred Heart Church eligible for listing on the National Register of Historical Places in 2010.

I have lived in close proximity to Sacred Heart for over 30 years, and have always loved the beautiful Italian tower which serves as a beacon in the neighborhood. I remember how relieved I was in 1989 when I learned that the church's beautiful plaster ceiling had survived the earthquake.

I urge the HPC Commission to recommend city landmark designation to The Board of Supervisors

Sincerely,

Bathsheba J Malsheen, PhD

130 Hicks Street, #4F  
Brooklyn, NY, 11201

July 20, 2015

Andrew Wolfram, President  
San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission  
1650 Mission St., Room 400  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
*andrew@tefarch.com*

Dear President Wolfram:

SUBJECT: Sacred Heart Church Building Landmark Designation

I strongly support the Article 10 city landmark designation for Sacred Heart, the former church located at 546 Fillmore Street. Built in 1896 the former Sacred Heart Church on Fillmore at Fell Street is visible throughout the Western Addition and beyond. The State Office of Historic Preservation found Sacred Heart Church eligible for listing on the National Register of Historical Places in 2010.

I lived in the San Francisco Bay Area for over 40 years, moving to New York City in 2012. I had passed the church building many times on my way down Fell Street, so know it well. It certainly exhibits all the qualities of an individual San Francisco landmark: designed by a prominent but under represented architect, possesses excellent artistic value in its architectural design, is visually compelling in its siting, and within its history of serving the neighborhood, is integral to the narrative of the settlement patterns of the city. Landmark designation will formalize what is already evident to many citizens and those committed to honoring the heritage of the city.

I currently work for the New York City Landmarks Commission as a staff preservationist, but previously worked as a historian with California State Parks and as an architectural historian with Caltrans. I urge the HPC Commission to recommend city landmark designation to the Board of Supervisors

Sincerely,

Marianne Hurley

cc: Tim Frye, Staff  
[tim.frye@sfgov.org](mailto:tim.frye@sfgov.org)

signed hard copy to follow



# LANDMARK RESOLUTION RECOMMENDATION RESOLUTION NO. 1345

**HEARING DATE: SEPTEMBER 20, 2023**

**Record No.:** 2015-005890DES  
**Project Address:** 546-548 & 554 Fillmore Street, 735 Fell Street, 660 Oak Street (Sacred Heart Parish Complex)  
**Zoning:** RM-3 Residential-Mixed Medium Density and RM-1 Residential-Mixed Low Density, 40-X height and bulk district  
**Block/Lots:** 0828/021, 022, 022A and 012  
**Project Sponsor:** Historic Preservation Fund Committee  
**Property Owners:** Noe Vista LLC, 41 Dorman Ave Ste 5, San Francisco, CA 94124 and 554 Fillmore Street LLC, P.O. Box 14039, San Francisco, CA 94114  
**Staff Contact:** Shannon M. Ferguson 628-652-7354  
**Shannon.Ferguson@sfgov.org**

RESOLUTION TO RECOMMEND TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS LANDMARK DESIGNATION OF SACRED HEART PARISH COMPLEX (546-548 FILLMORE STREET, 554 FILLMORE STREET, 735 FELL STREET, 660 OAK STREET), ASSESSOR'S PARCEL BLOCK NO. 0828, LOT NOS. 021, 022, 022A, 012, AS LANDMARK NO. XXX CONSISTENT WITH THE PURPOSES AND STANDARDS OF ARTICLE 10

1. WHEREAS, Historic Preservation Consultant Elaine Brown Stiles, who meets the Secretary of Interior's Professional Qualification Standards, prepared the Landmark Designation Report for 546-548 Fillmore Street, 554 Fillmore Street, 735 Fell Street, 660 Oak Street (aka Sacred Heart Parish Complex), which was reviewed by Department Staff Shannon Ferguson, who meets the Secretary of Interior's Professional Qualification Standards, for accuracy and conformance with the purposes and standards of Article 10; and
2. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission, at its regular meeting of October 5, 2016, reviewed Department staff's analysis of 546-548 Fillmore Street, 554 Fillmore Street, 735 Fell Street, 660 Oak Street (aka Sacred Heart Parish Complex) historical significance per Article 10 as part of the Landmark Designation Case Report dated October 5, 2016 and initiated Landmark designation process through Resolution 806; and
3. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the 546-548 Fillmore Street, 554 Fillmore Street, 735 Fell Street, 660 Oak Street (aka Sacred Heart Parish Complex) nomination is in the form prescribed by the Historic Preservation Commission and contains supporting historic, architectural, and/or cultural documentation; and
4. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that 546-548 Fillmore Street, 554 Fillmore Street,

735 Fell Street, 660 Oak Street, (aka Sacred Heart Parish Complex), which includes the former rectory, church, school and convent buildings, is associated with the growth and development of the Western Addition and Catholic religious institutions in San Francisco in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; is associated with prominent and influential civil rights activist Father Eugene Boyle, pastor of the church from 1968 to 1972; and is a distinctive and well-executed example of a Romanesque Revival-style Catholic parish grouping; and as the work of architect of merit Thomas J. Welsh; and

5. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that 546-548 Fillmore Street, 554 Fillmore Street, 735 Fell Street, 660 Oak Street (aka Sacred Heart Parish Complex) meets the eligibility requirements per Section 1004 of the Planning Code and warrants consideration for Article 10 landmark designation; and
6. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the boundaries and the list of exterior character-defining features, as identified in the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet dated September 20, 2023, should be considered for preservation under the proposed landmark designation as they relate to the building's historical significance and retain historical integrity; and
7. WHEREAS, the proposed designation is consistent with the General Plan priority policies pursuant to Planning Code sections 101.1 and 302; and furthers Priority Policy No. 7, which states that historic buildings be preserved; and
8. WHEREAS, the Department has determined that landmark designation is exempt from environmental review, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15308 (Class Eight - Categorical); and
9. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends to the Board of Supervisors approval of landmark designation of 546-548 Fillmore Street, 554 Fillmore Street, 735 Fell Street, 660 Oak Street (aka Sacred Heart Parish Complex), Assessor's Block 0828, Lots 021, 022, 022A and 012 pursuant to Article 10 of the Planning Code.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Historic Preservation Commission at its meeting on September 20, 2023.



Jonas P. Ionin  
Commission Secretary

AYES: Vergara, Wright, Foley, Nageswaran, Matsuda

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ADOPTED: September 20, 2023



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

## Historic Preservation Commission

### Resolution No. 806

HEARING DATE OCTOBER 5, 2016

1650 Mission St.  
Suite 400  
San Francisco,  
CA 94103-2479

Reception:  
415.558.6378

Fax:  
415.558.6409

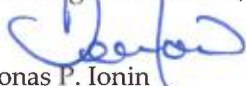
Planning  
Information:  
415.558.6377

**RESOLUTION TO INITIATE DESIGNATION OF 546-548 FILLMORE STREET, 554 FILLMORE STREET, 735 FELL STREET AND 660 OAK STREET, HISTORICALLY KNOWN AS THE SACRED HEART PARISH COMPLEX, LOTS 21, 22, 22A AND 12 IN ASSESSOR'S BLOCK 828, AS ARTICLE 10 LANDMARK.**

1. WHEREAS, Historic Preservation Consultant Elaine Brown Stiles, who meets the Secretary of Interior's Professional Qualification Standards, prepared the Landmark Designation Report for Sacred Heart Parish Complex, which was reviewed by Department Staff Shannon Ferguson and Tim Frye, who meet the Secretary of Interior's Professional Qualification Standards, for accuracy and conformance with the purposes and standards of Article 10; and
2. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission, at its regular meeting of June 15, 2016, reviewed Department staff's analysis of Sacred Heart Parish Complex's historical significance per Article 10 as part of the Landmark Designation Case Report dated October 5, 2016; and
3. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the boundaries and the list of exterior and interior character-defining features, as identified in the Landmark Designation Case Report dated October 5, 2016, should be considered for preservation under the proposed landmark designation as they relate to the building's historical significance and retain historical integrity; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby initiates designation of Sacred Heart Parish Complex, Assessor's Block 828, Lots, 21, 22, 22A, and 12 as an Article 10 Landmark pursuant to Article 10 of the Planning Code.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Historic Preservation Commission at its meeting on October 5, 2016.

  
Jonas P. Ionin  
Commission Secretary

AYES: Wolfram, Hyland, Hasz, Johns, Johnck, Matsuda, Pearlman

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ADOPTED: October 5, 2016

BOARD of SUPERVISORS



City Hall  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 244  
San Francisco, CA 94102-4689  
Tel. No. (415) 554-5184  
Fax No. (415) 554-5163  
TDD/TTY No. (415) 554-5227

## NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

### LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

### BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT the Land Use and Transportation Committee of the City and County of San Francisco will hold a public hearing to consider the following hearing matter and said public hearing will be held as follows, at which time all interested parties may attend and be heard:

**Date:** Monday, February 12, 2024

**Time:** 1:30 p.m.

**Location:** Legislative Chamber, Room 250, located at City Hall  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, San Francisco, CA 94102

**Subject:** **File No. 231045.** Ordinance amending the Planning Code to designate the Sacred Heart Parish Complex, located at 546-548 Fillmore Street, 554 Fillmore Street, 735 Fell Street, and 660 Oak Street, Assessor's Parcel Block No. 0828, Lot Nos. 12, 21, 22, and 22A, as a Landmark consistent with the standards set forth in Article 10 of the Planning Code; affirming the Planning Department's determination under the California Environmental Quality Act; and making public necessity, convenience, and welfare findings under Planning Code, Section 302, and findings of consistency with the General Plan, and the eight priority policies of Planning Code, Section 101.1.

In accordance with Administrative Code, Section 67.7-1, persons who are unable to attend the hearing on this matter may submit written comments prior to the time the hearing begins. These comments will be added to the official public record in this matter and shall be brought to the attention of the Board of Supervisors. Written comments should be addressed to Angela Calvillo, Clerk of the Board, City Hall, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 244, San Francisco, CA, 94102 or sent via email ([bos@sfgov.org](mailto:bos@sfgov.org)). Information relating to this matter is available with the Office of the Clerk of the Board or the Board of Supervisors' Legislative Research Center (<https://sfbos.org/legislative-research-center-lrc>). Agenda information relating to this matter will be available for public review on Friday, February 9, 2024.

For any questions about this hearing, please contact the Assistant Clerk for the Land Use and Transportation Committee:

John Carroll ([john.carroll@sfgov.org](mailto:john.carroll@sfgov.org)) ~ (415) 554-4445)



Angela Calvillo  
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors  
City and County of San Francisco

jec:vy:ams



**From:** [Arthur Levy](#)  
**To:** [Peskin, Aaron \(BOS\)](#); [Preston, Dean \(BOS\)](#); [Melgar, Myrna \(BOS\)](#)  
**Cc:** [Carroll, John \(BOS\)](#); [Board of Supervisors \(BOS\)](#)  
**Subject:** Landmark Designation - Sacred Heart Parish Complex, File No. 231045 (2015-005890DES)  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 21, 2024 9:05:15 AM

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This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

Dear President Peskin and Supervisors Preston and Melgar:

Sacred Heart is historically rich, architecturally distinguished, and a longstanding and prominent feature of San Francisco's history and skyline. I urge the Board of Supervisors to grant landmark status for this irreplaceable cultural and historical resource.

My personal connection with Sacred Heart is that my father grew up at 825 Oak Street. He was a second generation native San Franciscan, and I am a third generation native. Sacred Heart and the kids who went to school and worship there were part of his neighborhood, over 100 years ago. He spoke fondly of his friends from Sacred Heart and the time he spent there. I remember that whenever I see Sacred Heart's spire from far away or am nearby.

The Landmark Resolution should include the following protections:

1. The interior of the Church should be recognized as character defining and protected as part of Landmark status. Sacred Heart's interior is integral to the character of the Church and the original Welsh architectural design. This includes the frescoes painted by distinguished Italian artist Achille Disi. Loss of the Disi frescoes would result cause irremediable damage to the character of Sacred Heart Church.
2. <!--[endif]-->The connector bridge between the rectory and the church should also be recognized as a character defining feature of the structure and protected as part of Landmark status.
3. <!--[endif]-->The Board should not permit property owner and developer free rein to "replace in kind" any features without first obtaining City approval.

Thank you for your efforts to keep San Francisco's fabulous past alive for future generations.

Sincerely,

Arthur D. Levy

Arthur D. Levy  
Pacific Building  
610 - 16th Street  
Suite 420  
Oakland, California 94612  
Telephone: (415) 702-4551  
Facsimile: (415) 814-4080

**From:** [Tamala Motta](#)  
**To:** [Melgar, Myrna \(BOS\)](#); [Peskin, Aaron \(BOS\)](#); [Preston, Dean \(BOS\)](#); [Carroll, John \(BOS\)](#)  
**Subject:** Sacred Heart Church Complex landmark designation (2015-005890DES)  
**Date:** Thursday, February 15, 2024 11:09:26 AM

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To all,

My name is Tamala Motta and I'm a native San Franciscan. I'm writing you this letter today to ask that you please protect the historical architecture, inside and out, of the Sacred Heart Church, and please do not replace it with "like in kind" architecture! The work of Achilles G. Disi's existing ceiling work is so important to San Francisco and its residents. Please protect this landmark!!!

Thank you for your time and urgent attention to this matter,  
Tamala

Sacred Heart Church Complex landmark designation (2015-005890DES)

**From:** [Carroll, John \(BOS\)](#)  
**To:** [Michael Powell](#)  
**Cc:** [Melgar, Myrna \(BOS\)](#); [Low, Jen \(BOS\)](#); [Preston, Dean \(BOS\)](#); [Smeallie, Kyle \(BOS\)](#); [Peskin, Aaron \(BOS\)](#); [Angulo, Sunny \(BOS\)](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Sacred Heart Church Complex landmark designation (2015-005890DES) - BOS File No. 231045 - LUT February 26, 2024  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 14, 2024 9:44:00 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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Thank you for your comment letter.

I am forwarding your comments to the members of the LUT committee, and I will include your comments in the file for this ordinance matter.

I invite you to review the entire matter on our [Legislative Research Center](#) by following the link below:

-

[Board of Supervisors File No. 231045](#)

**John Carroll**

**Assistant Clerk**

Board of Supervisors  
San Francisco City Hall, Room 244  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
(415)554-4445



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**From:** Michael Powell <fillmo@sbcglobal.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 13, 2024 2:23 PM  
**To:** Carroll, John (BOS) <john.carroll@sfgov.org>  
**Subject:** Sacred Heart Church Complex landmark designation (2015-005890DES)

This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

Dear Mr Carroll,

I am writing you today with my concerns about the Sacred Heart Church Complex landmark designation. I am deeply concerned that the interior of this historic church would not be adequately protected.

The impressive Romanesque arches of the former Sacred Heart church (standing at the corner of Fillmore and Fell,) have been in place for more than 125 years. Its honey-coloured and intricate brickwork, soaring campanile and solemn façade make Sacred Heart an impressive sight. One of the most famous visual landmarks with the San Francisco skyline behind it. Of the many churches that the famous architect Thomas Welsh built, only this one remains. **It is imperative that it remains as a living archive of an irreplaceable part of San Francisco's architectural history.**

Sacred Heart is more than a building, however. It is a site tied to impactful activism and resistance, it still houses a painted ceiling by Professore Achille Disi – who worked on the Vatican and for Eugénie de Montijo, the wife of Emperor Napoleon III – is loaded with windows, bells and painted decoration of great historical significance! Sadly, it has been the victim of unconscionable vandalism. Its altars, furnishings and anything of worth that could be removed were ripped from it – the legality of which is the subject of a city investigation that has never been resolved.

I am concerned that there will be nothing that would protect any of the interior spaces of the church, including fixed artworks. Not the connector bridge between the church and the rectory. The windows will be removed and preserved. Worryingly, anything that is actually covered in the draft ordinance – basically, the exterior of the church – will be, according to the draft, preserved or “replaced in-kind” [my emphasis]. The ‘or’ is significant here. How does one replace finely crafted nineteenth-century artistry “in-kind”? Who will determine what is retained and what is replaced “in-kind” and how will this process happen? Will the possibility of replacing an aspect of the church “in-kind” include consultation of heritage specialists?

The resolutions in the draft ordinance are weak. Much of what has been proposed that is positive is not in an official document but instead only given as an informal agreement between the developer and a city planner. Yet, the agreement that will govern Sacred Heart is not bound to the current development. It is permanent. What happens if the church is sold to someone else? What happens if the developer's plan changes as the project progresses? What value is a handshake agreement then?

San Francisco has lost too many of its iconic landmarks to short sighted, well financed interests who have no interest in the city or its heritage. Too many famous places reduced to a mere plaque for a quick dollar. Too many interiors gutted for generic designs by cheap outside developers just trying to make a buck. This has got to stop. The community demands that you take the time to research this ( ). And if you actually represent the people of San Francisco and not just the interest of outside moneyed developers, and if you actually care about serving the needs of the city and its rich colorful history, I urge you to do the right thing and take the time to craft something that honors that commitment.

Thank you,

Michael Powell  
532 Ashbury St. SF CA 94117

**From:** [joseph welsh](#)  
**To:** [Melgar, Myrna \(BOS\)](#); [Peskin, Aaron \(BOS\)](#); [Preston, Dean \(BOS\)](#)  
**Cc:** [Carroll, John \(BOS\)](#)  
**Subject:** Sacred Heart Church Complex landmark designation (2015-005890DES)  
**Date:** Friday, February 9, 2024 11:53:34 AM

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February 8th, 2024

Dear Supervisors & Land Use and Transportation committee members:

Thank you in advance for your support for an ongoing issue now totaling 2 decades. If you weren't aware Sacred Heart Church is the last surviving ecclesiastical masterpiece by my Great Grandfather Thomas J. Welsh. He was the preeminent architect for the Archdiocese of San Francisco, even hired to design the original St. Mary's Cathedral that was sadly destroyed by fire in 1962. Holy Cross in Santa Cruz is another of his churches

<https://holycrosssantacruz.com/>

So, we now hope you will support The Sacred Heart community and its legacy, not just with the Landmarking itself, but by ensuring the current draft ordinance from the Planning department is revised to ensure protections of existing elements of the exterior and interior of our cherished church, which still contains rare and important works of art! We consider the current resolutions in the draft ordinance inadequate for a building so rich in history and culture, and ask that they be reconsidered to add further protections.

Sacred Heart is more than a building. It houses a painted ceiling by Achilles G. Disi – who worked on the Vatican itself! He also worked for Eugénie de Montijo, the wife of Emperor Napoleon III! A lot of the art has been removed from the church, but a lot also remains. To date, the Sanctuary still has the transept and Choir loft commemoration stained glass windows, Mrs. Mary Hartigan's bronze bell, and the intact painted decorations of great historical significance. Sadly, in 2010, it was the victim of unconscionable vandalism for the unauthorized removal of its three Atillio Moretti Carrara marble altars, the pair of Fritz Mayer Rose Windows, the Hook and Hastings Pipe Organ, the set of three etched Art Deco entrance doors with matching transoms, and all Church furnishings, lighting and anything of worth that could be removed were stripped from it by the Church. The legality of these actions were considered, voted on, and determined to be serious enough that they were the subject of a SF city investigation, but never were acted on by the then SF District Attorney.

We implore you to take a clear stance to support District 5, to safeguard our Achilles G. Disi ceiling and artworks. Thomas J. Welsh brilliantly designed Sacred Heart so that his architectural stylings flowed from the exterior into the interior finishes, so flawlessly, and into the lofty Sanctuary as well. Don't allow San Francisco to lose one more important treasure.

The following churches – Our Lady of Guadalupe its interior has been respected, Saint Brigid, thankfully in its entirety, Saint Joseph's basic interior has been respected, and integrated into a very thoughtful reuse.

Please ensure the current loose wording of the ordinance is revised, and that the vague and weak resolutions are amended to represent the importance of Sacred Heart.

Sincerely,  
Joseph Welsh, Jr.  
San Francisco, CA

Friday, 9 February 2024

**Supervisor Myrna Melgar**  
**Supervisor Aaron Peskin**  
**Supervisor Dean Preston**

San Francisco City Hall  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place San Francisco, CA 94102

**Re: Sacred Heart Church Complex landmark designation (2015-005890DES)**

Dear Supervisors Melgar, Peskin and Preston,

I understand that you will soon consider the proposition to grant Landmark status to the Sacred Heart church at Fillmore and Fell. Considering this, I thought it would be helpful to receive a submission on the artist who completed the painted decorations on the ceiling of the church, which are still in place.

The recommendation provided by the Planning department (September 20, 2023) does not include provisions to safeguard any aspect of the interior of the church, including the painted ceiling. By the Planning department's own admission, this determination was made through consultation with the current owner of the site,<sup>1</sup> whose plans, as far as I am aware, consist of building 7 apartments in the transept and roof space of the church, retaining the nave as a community space. While I strongly support the recommendation offered by the Planning department to grant the church Landmark status,<sup>2</sup> the historical significance of the interior of the church should be considered beyond what the developer may be able to offer. I hope what I provide here goes some way in establishing the significance of interior features of Sacred Heart.

Drawing upon my training as an art historian whose current project, in part, focuses on San Francisco in the late-nineteenth century, I have spent the last several months completing archival research in San Francisco on aspects of the interior of the church. As far as I am aware, no secondary scholarship exists on the interior features of Sacred Heart, and nothing of substance has been written on the artist who completed the work on its ceiling. I have uncovered important information pertinent to the Landmark determination for Sacred Heart, which I happily share here.

The artist in question is the Italian born Professore **Achille G. Disi**, who became an American citizen in 1917. The documents that I have uncovered reveal the unquestionable significance of his work. In America, Disi was **referred to by contemporary critics as a "genius",<sup>3</sup> and "the strongest champion of his genre living in the United States."**<sup>4</sup>

I ask that you revise and expand the resolutions that will govern the Sacred Heart church to include, and secure the future of, Disi's work.

Thank you for taking the time to read through my submission.

Sincerely,



Dr. Mark De Vitis, PhD  
Lecturer in Art History  
The University of Sydney

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<sup>1</sup> "After consulting with the property owner of the Church, the Department recommends including only exterior character defining features in the landmark designation ..." *Landmark Designation Recommendation Executive Summary*, San Francisco Planning, September 20, 2023, page 1.

<sup>2</sup> "The Department recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission recommend to the Board of Supervisors landmark designation of Sacred Heart Parish Complex ..." *Landmark Designation Recommendation Executive Summary*, San Francisco Planning, September 20 2023, page 2; and *Landmark RESOLUTION Recommendation Draft RESOLUTION NO. XXXX*, San Francisco Planning, September 20, 2023

<sup>3</sup> 'Ritorno in Citta Del Prof. A. G. Disi.' *L'Italia*, Volume 31, Number 58, 27 February 1917, page 4

<sup>4</sup> 'Cronaca Della Colonia Italian', *L'Italia*, Volume 25, Number 96, 22 April 1911, page 3

## Artist's Background: Disi's Illustrious Early Career in Europe

Achille Giacomo Disi was born in Rome in 1869.<sup>5</sup> His father was the sculptor, Antonio Disi.<sup>6</sup> As a student, Achille Disi was affiliated with the most illustrious artists and art institutions of the great city of Rome, and later Milan. He first studied at the prestigious Academy of Fine Arts of Rome (Accademia di Belle Arti di Roma), which was founded in the sixteenth century. Here, leading artists who taught Disi recognised his considerable talent, and he was engaged to work alongside his professors on projects of the highest level of significance – a clear sign of his talent.

Importantly, Disi studied with Luigi Bazzani (1836-1927). Bazzani, known as Il Bazzanetto, taught at the Accademia and at the Scuola delle arti Ornamentali,<sup>7</sup> and was celebrated for the several hundred studies he made of the ruins at Pompei, which have been identified as a “precious” resource.<sup>8</sup> Bazzani was also chosen to teach drawing and watercolour to the King of Italy, Vittore Emmanuele.<sup>9</sup> Recent exhibitions of Bazzani's work have taken place at the National Archaeological Museum of Naples and the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.<sup>10</sup> Bazzani won major commissions in the city of Rome, such as his work at San Lorenzo fuori le mura (one of the seven Pilgrim Churches of Rome and one of the five papal basilicas).<sup>11</sup>

Recognising Disi's talent, Bazzani began to include Disi in his projects. Disi spent three years working on a project at the **Basilica dei Santi XII Apostoli** with Bazzani, and another three years working with him on a project at **the Vatican**,<sup>12</sup> the eminence of which speaks for itself.

As a star pupil being given major opportunities, Disi was then able to establish a career of his own in Italy, France and across Europe. He was commissioned by the Silezni brothers to work on the **Hotel D'Angleterre, also known as the Palazzo Silenzi**.<sup>13</sup> The hotel attracted a glittering set of guests, whose comings and goings were commented on in the popular press. For example, in December 1905, Prince Leopold of Battenberg (Queen Victoria's grandson), Sir Augustus Hemming (the former Governor of Jamaica), the marquis and marquise Fioravanti, and the comte Manzoni, all stayed at the hotel.<sup>14</sup> It was a major commission for a young artist to receive, and likely resulted in further commissions from important patrons.

From Rome, Disi travelled to Paris and the French Riviera where he was commissioned to decorate the **Moorish Hall of the grand casino in Monte Carlo**,<sup>15</sup> and to work on the **villa of Eugénie de**

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<sup>5</sup> 'Population Schedule', *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930*. State of California, County of San Francisco, Ward 33A, Block 128, Sheet 15B. April 15, 1930.

<sup>6</sup> 'Bank of Italy's New Building Marks Boost for S.F.', *San Francisco Call*, Volume 109, Number 148, 28 June 1921, page 5.

<sup>7</sup> Angelo Libranti, 'Centenario della scuola delle arti ornamentali', *Strenna Dei Romanisti: Natale di Roma*. Roma: Editrice Roma Amor, 1980, pages 350-352

<sup>8</sup> Luciana Jacobelli, 'DAVVERO! La Pompei di fine '800 nella pittura di Luigi Bazzani', *Rivista di Studi Pompeiani*, Vol. 24 (2013), pp. 151-152, page 152.

<sup>9</sup> Luigi Bazzani, 'Italian Painter' *New York Times*. New York, N.Y.. 04 Feb 1927: page 19.

<sup>10</sup> Fikret K. Yegül, 'Pompeii and the Roman Villa: Art and Culture around the Bay of Naples.' *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 69, No. 1 (March 2010), pp. 136-139

<sup>11</sup> Tani, A. D. *Le chiese di Roma: guida storico-artistica: chiese stazionali*, Torino: Edizioni D'Arte E. Celanza, 1922, pages 137-138

<sup>12</sup> 'Bank of Italy's New Building Marks Boost for S.F.', *San Francisco Call*, Volume 109, Number 148, 28 June 1921, page 5.

<sup>13</sup> 'Adding to the Fame of the Mission Inn'. *Riverside Daily Press*, Volume XXIX, Number 207, 31 August 1914, page 3.

<sup>14</sup> *The Sphinx*, Vol. 13, No. 182, 1905, page 15.

<sup>15</sup> 'Adding to Fame of Mission Inn: Work of Artist Disi Unique in America', *Riverside Daily Press*, Volume XXIX, Number 207, 31 August 1914, page 3.



**Montijo, wife of Napoleon III and Empress of France.**<sup>16</sup> Having established himself as a young artist of renown, he then sought to extend the reach of his reputation.

## Disi's Prolific Work in Chicago

Disi and his wife arrived in the United States at some point in 1902, when he was in his early 30s.<sup>17</sup> They settled in Chicago and remained there for six years. In that time, Disi was awarded numerous important commissions – the most prestigious that were on offer in the city – and completed an astounding amount of work. He was given two of the main rooms (the “Dutch” and the “German” rooms) of the Auditorium Annex (now known as the Congress Plaza Hotel) to decorate.<sup>18</sup> Further commissions included the Illinois Theatre and the Grand Pacific Hotel,<sup>19</sup> the Iroquois, Marlow and Majestic theatres, and St. Mary’s Church.<sup>20</sup>

## Significant projects in California

Disi arrived in California in 1908 and quickly attracted admiration for his work. His first commission was for the glamorous Bismarck Café, which was in the newly completed Pacific Building on Market Street. According to its proprietors, it was the largest and finest café in San Francisco.<sup>21</sup> Disi’s work at the Bismarck was “praised by all” and the café management included his name in their advertisements, demonstrating the esteem in which he was held and that he was a selling point.<sup>22</sup> Disi went on to work on many major commissions across the city of San Francisco, including the Bank of Italy building [550 Montgomery, also called Clay-Montgomery Building, which was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1978, and was added to the National Register of Historic Places on June 2, 1978], the Paulist’s Church on California Street, and, of course, the ceiling of Sacred Heart.

Beyond San Francisco, Disi worked regularly in the state capitol, Sacramento. There, he was given commissions for the Capital National Bank, the Sacramento Valley Bank, the Land Hotel, the Country Club and the Godard Theatre.<sup>23</sup> Importantly, in Riverside, he worked on the remarkable Riverside Inn, also known as the Mission Inn, which is now registered as a heritage site by various agencies [City of Riverside Cultural Heritage Landmark (no. 1, February 5, 1969), California Historical Landmark (no. 761, October 21, 1961), and National Register of Historic Places (ref. # 71000173 added May 14, 1971)]. The inn was ostensibly a luxury hotel but also functioned as an important cultural centre. In 1925, the Los Angeles Times referred to it as being as much a museum as a hotel.<sup>24</sup> Disi’s work at the

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<sup>16</sup> ‘Bank of Italy’s New Building Marks Boost for S.F.’, *San Francisco Call*, Volume 109, Number 148, 28 June 1921, page 5

<sup>17</sup> ‘Alla Mostra Decorativa...’, *L’Italia* (Italian Daily News), Volume 23, Number 254, 30 October 1909, page 1

<sup>18</sup> ‘Adding to the Fame of the Mission Inn’. *Riverside Daily Press*, Volume XXIX, Number 207, 31 August 1914, page 3

<sup>19</sup> ‘Adding to the Fame of the Mission Inn’. *Riverside Daily Press*, Volume XXIX, Number 207, 31 August 1914, page 3

<sup>20</sup> ‘Bank of Italy’s New Building Marks Boost for S.F.’, *San Francisco Call*, Volume 109, Number 148, 28 June 1921, page 5

<sup>21</sup> *San Francisco Call*, Volume 106, Number 141, 19 October 1909, page 9

<sup>22</sup> ‘Un Artista Italiano Ohe Si Fa Onore’, *L’Italia*, Volume 22, Number 102, 1 May 1908, page 4

<sup>23</sup> ‘Ritorno in Citta Del Prof. A. G. Disi.’ *L’Italia*, Volume 31, Number 58, 27 February 1917, page 4. Godard’s J Street Theatre was opened in 1915 and over the course of its life was renamed several times. On March 8, 1930, it was renamed Sutter Theatre. On November 30, 1933, it became El Rey Theatre. In 1941, it was damaged by fire, only to be restored and reopened as the Rio Theatre (March 21, 1942). By the 1960s it was dedicated to showings of Mexican movies. On August 17, 1966, it was again renamed, and became the Cinema Theatre. In 1969, its main business was the screening of adult films, also with live burlesque performances. The theatre finally closed in the late 1960s and was subsequently demolished.

<sup>24</sup> L.J. VandenBergh, “Riverside Inn is Treasure House of Ancient Art,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 11, 1925, part III, page 1

inn was considered highly innovative for its technique, basically a form of fresco (painting into wet plaster rather than onto dry plaster), and his impressive work was met with awe and appreciation.<sup>25</sup> In the press his work at the inn was touted as being unique: “There is possibly only one other example of this character of decoration in America.”<sup>26</sup>

## **Disi at Sacred Heart: A Spatially Driven Spiritual Journey**

Disi completed the painting of the Sacred Heart ceiling in 1920. His work there comprises two Old Testament narratives – Cain and Abel, and Abraham and Isaac – and an impressive central scene of radiating rays of light containing two angels bearing the Paschal Lamb surrounded by a celestial aureole. In addition to this, Disi painted individual depictions of the Twelve Apostles and four angels in roundels with decorative flourishes, all of which sit beneath the flat of the ceiling in the deep cove that forms its outer perimeter.

Disi’s work at Sacred Heart demonstrates a unique vision, and the ceiling is treated boldly. Rather than crowding the ceiling with narrative or decorative elements, Disi thoughtfully deploys considerable tracts of painted colour, creating negative space between his three scenes. Though the forms he paints show his fluency with the styles of the Second Empire, he deviates from what is typical, to connect his work to the specifics of Sacred Heart itself, and particularly, the physical space of the church and the experience of moving through it. His work at Sacred Heart is highly specific to the site and unique within his oeuvre.

While his palette speaks to his European roots and desirable colour schemes of the late nineteenth century,<sup>27</sup> Disi does not replicate the spatial workings of the Second Empire or even the villas of Pompei. Remarkably, he leaves considerable painted expanses between his narrative scenes to encourage the viewer to make theological connections between them, generating a kind of experiential spiritualism of profound contemplation. In doing so, he intends to draw the two Old Testament scenes into dialogue with the depiction of the Paschal Lamb, which, though it occurs chronologically later than the other two, is the generating force of the scheme, and sits at its centre.

Both Old Testament scenes contain large areas of open sky, taking up about half of each composition. With each, these areas of sky are placed inwards, towards the depiction of the Paschal Lamb. This is particularly prominent with the Cain and Abel scene, for an arc is created at the horizon, which maps onto the curve of radiating light that extends from the depiction of the Paschal Lamb. This echoing of form, and the orientation of painted light towards painted light across the three scenes, combined with the large, non-figurative areas between narrative scenes, establishes a field where the viewer is asked to carefully consider the relationships between the works. Uncrowded and marked as requiring deep contemplation – afforded through the expansive framing – Disi shows the Paschal scene as a life-giving force, contrasting Cain’s self-interested violence with Christ’s self-sacrificing crucifixion. The fact that the instruments of Christ’s passion are depicted beneath Cain – framing the depiction of the brothers between allegories of Christ’s sacrifice – is rich in meaning. With the Abraham scene, Abraham’s devotion is meant to be an illustrative model, but Isaac is saved precisely because he is not Christ.

These theological meanings are played out further through the physical act of viewing the works in space. Entering the church, the Cain and Abel is closest to the entry point, with the Abraham and Isaac placed before the Sanctuary. This imparts a theological point. Beginning with Cain and Abel

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<sup>25</sup> Emily Ann McEwen, *Southern California’s Unique Museum-Hotel: Consuming the Past and Preserving Fantasy at Riverside’s Mission Inn, 1903-2010*. PhD in History, University of California, Riverside, 2014, page 125

<sup>26</sup> ‘Adding to Fame of Mission Inn Work of Artist Disi Unique in America’, *Riverside Daily Press*, Volume XXIX, Number 207, 31 August 1914, page 3

<sup>27</sup> ‘Sacred Heart Church is Beautifully Frescoed’, *The Monitor*, 2 October 1920, pages 2-3

who are representative of the fall of humanity, the viewer moves down the nave to then encounter the Paschal scene which offers redemption through Christ's sacrifice. Finally, the beholder encounters the Abraham scene, which foretells the subsequent and unique sacrifice of Christ, hence its placement closest to the altar, as it leads to the sacrament. This is reinforced through Abraham's gesture, which sweeps outwards, away from his body to encompass the space before the Sanctuary. Abraham leads the beholder from his painted narrative into physical reality, as he directs the viewer to the altar where mass is celebrated – and where a retelling of the Paschal image is performed in actuality. Ultimately, the deep non-figurative borders of the ceiling function as a painted pathway, leading between the three scenes, and as the beholder progresses through the space of the church, down the nave towards the Sanctuary, they are afforded a poignant journey through the theology of Christian belief that culminates with the eucharist.

Disi's work is very sensitively formulated as more than just a series of individual scenes. It is a careful management of space, both painted and physical, which are folded into one another as he envisages the meeting of the earthy and heavenly. This is furthered through his portrayals of the twelve apostles and angels, who look directly into the space of the church and thus break the barrier between painted and physical realities. His purpose is to engage the beholder, here through an exchange of gazes.

Disi's work at Sacred Heart is then an entire painted world, meant for the beholder to enter into – they are encouraged to look, think, understand and feel as if they are within, rather than outside of his vision. He immerses the viewer in complex ideas, which are clearly revealed and articulated through their movement and progress through the church.

## The Cultural Significance of the Artist

Disi and his wife became citizens of the United States on October 17, 1913, and both were deeply invested in their community. Beyond his work as an artist, Disi was an important figure in the Italian community in San Francisco and was instrumental in realising many civic and charitable projects. Achille sat on the executive committee of the group which was responsible for the fundraising and installation of the statue of Giuseppe Verdi in Golden Gate Park – a grand and important event that was widely reported on – and his wife sat on the board of the Choral Society.<sup>28</sup> Personally, he made notable contributions to the Verdi statue fund,<sup>29</sup> and donated his time and talent to produce a print that was available through subscription to raise money for those in need during the First World War.<sup>30</sup> He sat on the Board of Directors of the Italian School,<sup>31</sup> and various exhibitions of his work attracted warm praise. His exhibition at the Circle A Club in Portland “was commented upon as being one of the finest displays of its kind ever seen in Portland.”<sup>32</sup>

## Concluding Thoughts

As the draft ordinance currently stands, Disi's work in Sacred Heart – paintings of major cultural importance – are offered no guarantee for their safeguarding into the future. If the nature of the current project should change, or the church be sold at a point in the future, any in principle agreement would not necessarily stand, meaning the only actual security Disi's work may be offered must come through the inclusion of his work in the resolutions of the Landmark ordinance attached to Sacred Heart.

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<sup>28</sup> ‘Tetrazzini Coming Back to Sing’. *San Francisco Call*, Volume 94, Number 199, 17 February 1914, page 2

<sup>29</sup> ‘La Sottoscrizione pel monumento a Verdi’. *L'Italia*, Volume 27, Number 137, 19 May 1913, page 4

<sup>30</sup> ‘Un Magnifico Attestato’ *L'Italia*, Volume 31, Number 357, 24 December 1917, page 1

<sup>31</sup> ‘Per gli Esami della Scuola Italiana’. *L'Italia*, Volume 28, Number 131, 12 May 1914

<sup>32</sup> ‘Circle A, Portland's New Club’ *The Pacific Coast Architect*, May 1911, page 72

The quality of Disi's work at Sacred Heart – the care and brilliant evocation of complex themes – cannot be overstated. The rarity that his work survives here, when so much of his oeuvre has been lost, and in such a brilliant example of his artistic expression, warrants serious consideration. The protection of these works should be formalised, not left to chance, through their inclusion in a heritage order.

In his lifetime, Disi was described as a famous painter, an artist of the first rank, and it was written that he produced paintings to outlive the ages.<sup>33</sup> In our own day, these qualities of his work remain, even if they may be veiled, quite literally, by the net that now covers them.

My aim has been to show the importance of Disi as an artist. The plain fact of his significance is demonstrated by his commission across Europe and America. Moreover, through my analysis of the Sacred Heart scenes, it is clear his work is of the highest intellectual and artistic merit – their meaning contained not only within his acts of painting, but amplified across the entire physical space of the nave and Sanctuary of the church. They should be preserved in the space that is intrinsically connected to their meaning.

A journalist writing in 1917 may have best characterised the admiration Disi elicited during his lifetime, writing: “Disi knew how to surround his name with a precious and envied halo, which will hardly be able to darken or change, because his paintings remain as a guarantee, they will not change, but will remain to tell the story of the painter's artistic genius.”<sup>34</sup> This artistic genius still survives into our present. It is written across the ceiling of Sacred Heart. I urge those with executive powers at the Planning department and on the Board of Supervisors to revise the draft ordinance related to the Landmark designation of Sacred Heart to include Disi's work.



Professore Achille Giacomo Disi, c.1909  
Source: The Italian Daily News (L'Italia)

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<sup>33</sup> ‘Alla Mostra Decorativa’, *L'Italia*, Volume 23, Number 254, 30 October 1909, page 1; ‘Bank of Italy's New Building Marks Boost for S.F.’, *San Francisco Call*, Volume 109, Number 148, 28 June 1921, page 5;

‘Paintings to Outlive Ages’, *Los Angeles Times*, 30 August 1914, page 21

<sup>34</sup> ‘Ritorno in Citta Del Prof. A. G. Disi.’ *L'Italia*, Volume 31, Number 58, 27 February 1917, page 4



The Sacred Heart Ceiling, looking towards the Sanctuary



Achille Disi, *Cain and Abel*, Sacred Heart church, San Francisco, 1920

**From:** [Mark De Vitis](#)  
**To:** [Carroll, John \(BOS\)](#)  
**Subject:** Fw: Sacred Heart Church Complex landmark designation (2015-005890DES)  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 3, 2024 11:06:55 AM  
**Attachments:** [DeVitisM\\_SacredHeart.pdf](#)

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**From:** Mark De Vitis  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 4, 2024 6:04 AM  
**To:** (myrna.melgar@sfgov.org) <myrna.melgar@sfgov.org>; Aaron Peskin (Aaron.Peskin@sfgov.org) <Aaron.Peskin@sfgov.org>; dean.preston@sfgov.org <dean.preston@sfgov.org>; jonh.carroll@sfgov.org <jonh.carroll@sfgov.org>  
**Subject:** Sacred Heart Church Complex landmark designation (2015-005890DES)

Dear Supervisors,

I write in regards to the Sacred Heart Church Complex landmark designation (2015-005890DES). Several aspects of the draft ordinance require further consideration and amendment. In the attached letter, I present a rundown of my concerns, and evidence supporting the changes I have suggested.

Thank you for taking the time to read through my submission.

Regards,  
Dr. Mark De Vitis

**DR MARK DE VITIS** | Lecturer  
Art History | Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

**THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY**  
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Thursday, 4 January 2024

**Supervisor Myrna Melgar**  
**Supervisor Aaron Peskin**  
**Supervisor Dean Preston**

San Francisco City Hall  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place San Francisco, CA 94102

**Re: Sacred Heart Church Complex landmark designation (2015-005890DES)**

Dear Supervisors Melgar, Peskin and Preston,

I write in relation to the matter before the Board of Supervisors Land Use and Transportation Committee regarding the resolution to designate Sacred Heart Parish Church Complex (554 Fillmore Street) as a city landmark pursuant to Article 10 of the Planning Code.

Background: In my capacity as a historian – based in the Department of Art History at the University of Sydney, Australia – I can unreservedly affirm the historical significance of the complex. I am currently working on an edited collection to be published through Bloomsbury Academic which includes a focus on the work of Thomas J. Welsh (1845-1918), the architect responsible for Sacred Heart. Welsh was one of the most significant architects working in the Bay Area in the latter half of the nineteenth century, yet precious little of his work remains, as it was greatly impacted by the 1906 earthquake, subsequent quakes, and various fires, as outlined at the end of this document.

Below, I address three areas of concern in response to the draft landmark ordinance covering Sacred Heart.

1. Replacement in-kind: In section 4C of the draft ordinance, it is affirmed that “character defining” features (those covered by the ordinance) will be preserved or “replaced in-kind as determined necessary”. That “character defining” features may be “replaced in-kind” is ill-advised, based on the exceptional and particular qualities of the site, as evidenced by:
  - a. On November 16, 2010, the then Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution to preserve and restore all historic features of the Sacred Heart Church (File Number 100765, Resolution number 538-10).
  - b. Former members of the Board of Supervisors have acknowledged the importance of the architectural heritage of the church. For example, Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi was quoted in the SF Gate: “It’s incredible in regard to architecture, and every effort should be made to save it.” (SF Gate, 6/22/2005)
  - c. In 2012, Sacred Heart was nominated for the National Register of Historic Places. Page 8 of the report commissioned for the nomination affirms, “Sacred Heart Church also appears eligible for listing under Criterion C”. Criterion C is reserved for structures deemed eligible on grounds of Design/Construction. The report continues, characterising the church as distinguished by “innovative planning, advanced construction methods and superior use of materials.”

Based on the evidence presented in this report, Sacred Heart was listed on the National Register of Historic Places by the State Office of Historic Preservation, thereby affirming that it meets Criterion C as established by the U.S. National Park Service. Sacred Heart's "advanced construction" and "superior materials" are thus irreplicable on grounds of Design/Construction, as affirmed by the findings of state and national agencies.

- d. Welsh's work has been widely recognised as worthy of preservation: landmark status awarded to the McMorry-Lagan house (San Francisco Landmark #164); the Burr House in Pacific Heights is listed on the Historical Registry (San Francisco Historical Registry, #31); the Irving M. Scott School (1895) is listed as Historical Landmark #138; the Pioneer Trunk Factory (1902) is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. No church designed by Welsh is to yet receive landmark status (as they have been destroyed or rebuilt, see below), with church architecture being the primary focus of his work.

It is imperative that what remains at Sacred Heart is wholly preserved – the last opportunity to retain Welsh's church architecture.

Considering the evidence provided, replacing existing features "in-kind" contradicts the documented fact of the church's unique material reality. I ask that the condition given in the draft ordinance, that "character-defining" features may be "replaced in-kind", be removed from the ordinance.

2. The church interior: The draft ordinance suggests that there are no features of the interior of the church sufficiently important to warrant preservation. The church has been stripped of elements (potentially unlawfully: City and County of San Francisco Tallis Resolution, file number: 100765). Regardless, as it stands today, the interior of the church remains an expression of Welsh's cutting-edge work, work of the highest class. The interior design of Sacred Heart clearly and forcefully represents his vision as much as the exterior of the building. Failing to preserve the church's interior is akin to preserving the perimeter of a woodland while allowing its interior to be logged. Evidence for the historical significance of the interior of the church is offered below:
  - a. The registration document drawn up to have the church listed on the National Register of Historic Places by the United States Department of the Interior, explicitly states that "detailing on both the exterior and interior" are evidence of high artistic value (page 15).
  - b. Furthermore, the same document gives "The Sacred Heart Church retains ... its character-defining physical features, possessing all seven aspects of integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association" (p.16), while other reports document interior features such as "rare frescos" (City and County of San Francisco Certified Resolution 100765, 11/08/2010, p. 2)
  - c. Covering the Silver Jubilee of the parish, on Monday 22 February 1909, the San Francisco Examiner reported on additions made to the church by the original architect, Thomas J. Welsh in close detail, and affirmed the artistic merit of the interior of the church.

Since at least 1909, it has been recognised that the interior of the church possesses high artistic value and merit, and I ask that the remaining interior features of the church be acknowledged as "character-defining" and thereby covered in the ordinance.

3. Connecting bridge between the Rectory and the Sanctuary: In the draft ordinance, the connecting bridge is not listed as a "character defining feature" of the complex and thus there is no impetus for it to be preserved. Its high level of visibility, having been in place for a hundred years, means it is a distinctive feature of the Alamo Square neighbourhood. I ask that it be included as a "character defining" feature of the complex.



I am grateful to the Board of Supervisors for considering the information I have provided. I would ask that the ordinance be revised in acknowledgment of what is provided herein.

Sincerely,



Dr. Mark De Vitis  
Department of Art History  
The University of Sydney

**Major Welsh church commissions:**

Our Lady of Guadalupe Church (completed 1879-destroyed 1906)  
St Paul's Church, 29<sup>th</sup> and Day (completed 1880- destroyed 1906)  
St Brendan's Church (completed 1879-destroyed 1906)  
St Dominic's Church, Bush and Steiner (completed 1883-destroyed 1906)  
St Mary's Cathedral (completed 1898-destroyed by fire in 1962)  
SS. Peter and Paul Church, Filbert and Grant (completed 1884-replaced 1914)  
St Michael's Church, Livermore, (completed 1891-destroyed by fire in 1916)  
Holy Ghost Church, Fremont (completed 1886 – now destroyed)  
Holy Cross Church, Santa Cruz (completed 1890, damaged 1989 earthquake)  
Dominican Convent, San Rafael (completed 1889-destroyed 1989)

From: [myrna@sfblink.net](mailto:myrna@sfblink.net)  
To: [Melgar, Myrna \(BOS\)](#); [Peskin, Aaron \(BOS\)](#); [Preston, Dean \(BOS\)](#); [Carroll, John \(BOS\)](#)  
Subject: File 231045 Sacred Heart Complex Article 10 Designation  
Date: Monday, December 11, 2023 11:31:32 AM  
Attachments: [USEP - Bd of Sups File 231045 - Sacred Heart Land Use Comm. 2023](#)

This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

December 11, 2023

Supervisor Myrna Melgar  
Aaron Peskin  
Supervisor Dean Preston  
Land Use & Transportation Committee

Supervisor  
;

Supervisors  
Francisco City Hall

San Francisco Board of

San

Place  
Francisco Ca

1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett

San

Re: File 231045

Dear Friends:

I write you on behalf of the Historic Preservation Fund Committee (HPFC).

In 2015, the HPFC\* initiated, funded and managed a private consultant to prepare the Case Report for this nomination. Prepared in accordance with the Department's requirements and with its encouragement, the resulting 90 plus page document was provided to assist the Department move forward.

Following an initiation of designation by the then HPC in 2016, the nomination has been held by the Department for reasons not always clear to us. The Fund Committee is pleased that it is moving forward at long last.

\* The Historic Preservation Fund Committee is a 7 member grant making body, (including appointments by the Board of Sups and by the Mayor), which came into being to receive the \$2.5 million settlement of the citizen lawsuit over Forrest City Development's violation of the conditions of their approval to construct the shopping center mall on the site of the Category I Emporium Department Store.

However, when the draft ordinance re-emerged into public view in late September this year, we were again disappointed by the Department's continued lack of communication—either initiated or in response to our requests for clarifications—and astonished to see a seriously flawed document.

**I am taking the unusual step of seeking your intervention to correct the most troubling of the flaws. If left unaddressed, they set disturbing precedents which undermine not only the designation at hand but the professional conduct of the City's Article 10 preservation planning efforts going forward as well.**

I would like to offer three topics for your consideration.

***I REMOVE LANGUAGE ALLOWING UNLIMITED "REPLICATION" OF ANY, (POTENTIALLY ALL), ASPECTS OF THE STRUCTURES LANDMARKED. THIS HAS RECEIVED NO DISCUSSION OR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT IN ANY HEARING TO DATE.***

Language of the proposed ordinance provides that RE-CREATION of "character defining features" may be substituted for retention and conservation of the original features. No limits are placed on the scope or extent of replication permitted. Any, and potentially all features, on any, or all, of the 4 individual buildings which make up this proposed landmark, are allowed to be replicated.

"Character defining features", as listed in a designating ordinance, are the only aspects of a structure, once landmarked, that are clearly within the scope of the HPC to deliberate in future C of A proceedings. The point and purpose of Article 10 designation is to provide legal basis for oversight of the effects of future work upon named "character defining features".

The proposed language provides no guidance as to who makes the decision, how the judgement is made, the conditions needing to be met or the criteria that would apply. The concerns of future Commissions and project sponsors, as well as the public, are at risk when there are no standards or procedure to point to when attempting to engage over future issues which are certain to arise.

In addition, the language places too much discretionary power in the hands of staff. As has been already, unfortunately, demonstrated in this case (which I elaborate in point II below), staff can fall prey to the hazard of conflating their personal subjective opinions, piques and preferences with the consistent professional judgements based upon facts and reflecting intellectual integrity of analysis which should apply. The public, project sponsors and owners all deserve better! Department staff has a moral obligation to try harder to provide it.

Further, and in any case, with no explicit standards, criteria or guidance for the decision making process around when "replication" will be allowed, every instance becomes needlessly susceptible to "influence peddling".

**This starting provision has received no public discussion to date. It was not mentioned by Staff in their written report or verbal testimony to the HPC. It was unacknowledged in the discussion which occurred among HPC Commissioners** before they adopted Staff's recommendations without modification. In fairness to the Commissioners, with no mention by Staff, I wonder if many (any?) noted the language or recognized its radical impact, buried as it was in a confusing set of documents & appendices which contained multiple errors and contradictions.

Conceptually speaking, such language is unheard of in modern times. It takes us back to the 1950's, the 1940's and earlier; back before there was a landmark ordinance or any historic preservation planning or policies in San Francisco. Practically speaking, as those with experience on ANY side of the debates or work with historic structures knows, it is almost never possible to genuinely replace in kind. What results is an obvious pastiche.

**This provision should be removed from the ordinance. Its continued presence calls into question the underlying purpose of designation. It dramatically weakens the current designation and undermines all those which may be considered in the future.**

**The purpose of Landmark designation is to encourage and strive for retention and conservation of AUTHENTIC features and character;** not create "Disneylands". Disneyland may be a positive thing in places with no authentic historic resources. That is not the case here.

***II APPLY CONSISTANT AND TRANSPARENT STANDARDS WHEN IDENTIFYING "CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES".***

***RETURN THE HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT CONNECTING BRIDGE BETWEEN THE RECTORY AND THE SANCTUARY TO THE LIST OF CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES AS CALLED FOR BY THE CASE REPORT.***

"Character defining features" specific to any proposed Article 10 landmark must be identified in the designating ordinance. These constitute the universe of features to be considered when subsequent C of A's are sought.

The legitimate basis for identifying and the subsequent objective to retain any given Landmark's "character defining features" is not what an individual staff member, in a given year, or any individual Commissioner, currently serving, likes, thinks cute, fun, trendy or, on the other hand, which they dislike because it isn't grand enough, doesn't suit their preconceived preferences, or simply displeases them for other personal reason(s).

**The inclusion on, or exclusion from, the list of "character defining features" needs to be, (and is required to be), the result of good faith, open minded, professional research and carefully considered judgements, supported by logical and transparent application of consistent reasoning. These named features need to be relevant to the underlying reasons a structure warrants the imposition of public sector restrictions of private property. Owners, project sponsors and the public are entitled to expect and to rely upon that.**

There are 4 structures on this site, all of which are proposed for designation as landmarks. The oldest structure (the church itself) was constructed in 1898 and 1909. The residence of the priests who staffed the

Church and served the parish was constructed in 1891 and 1906; a school in 1926 and a convent in 1936.

An upper story architectural element connecting the priests' residence hall and the church itself was built, between 1913 and 1920 to connect the two buildings. (You will note it has a longer association with the complex than 2 of the 4 buildings which are proposed for retention (or in the current version, replication)). In addition, this connecting passageway is closely tied to the social and cultural aspects of the Sacred Heart "complex" which the Case Report presents (and Department staff has embraced) as the reason for inclusion of three of the buildings in the designation.

But in contradiction to their own arguments elsewhere, Staff explicitly asserts the connecting structure has no significance and effectively prohibits it from being taken into account in future Commission deliberations. They continue to offer no rationale or explanation for this contradiction and decline to respond meaningfully to requests for clarification.

The Case Report makes the case it is an integral part of the complex with genuine historic significance and identifies the connecting structure as a "character defining feature". Project sponsor has repeatedly stated they have no objection to and will be retaining it. But if it is not named now, it will not be clearly within the jurisdiction of the current or future Commissions to consider.

**I am confident you share my view that we need the general public, preservation advocates, property owners and project sponsors to perceive the decisions of your Board and all other Commissions as legitimate and believe them based on relevant considerations, consistently applied. If we accept obviously personal, subjective, unsubstantiated and opaque whims to be acceptable sources of regulatory provisions, as has occurred here, we obviously breed disrespect for governmental entities and ultimately disregard of their attempted regulations.**

**Delete the express language in which staff effectively ties the hands of future HPC's to encourage retention of this integral element.**

### ***III INTERIOR FEATURES: A LOST OPPORTUNITY***

When the proposal for landmark designation of the Sacred Heart complex was brought to hearing by Staff in 2016, MANY features of the interior of the Sanctuary were named as "character defining features". That is, many features were identified as those which current and future Preservation Commissions would review to determine whether impacts upon them in any future project were reasonable.

The current proposal, as brought to light by staff only in September states that there are NO features of the church interior sufficiently important to warrant oversight. As there has been no significant changes to it since 2016, this is a surprising change.

Project sponsor states their intention to retain most of the remaining major interior architectural features. However, if those features are not named in this designating ordinance as "character defining features", no current or future HPC will have a clear basis to guide their treatment in future projects and/or under future owners. Failing to name these features now, when an agreeable owner has committed to their retention, is an opportunity needlessly squandered.

I welcome your questions or requests for further information.

Mark Ryser, Chair

Historic Preservation Fund Committee

Cc: John Carroll

December 11, 2023

Supervisor Myrna Melgar  
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;

Land Use & Transportation Committee  
San Francisco Board of Supervisors  
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San Francisco Ca

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Mark Ryser, Chair  
Historic Preservation Fund Committee

Cc: John Carroll

**From:** [Carroll, John \(BOS\)](#)  
**To:** [Carroll, John \(BOS\)](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Sacred Heart Parish Church Complex Landmark Designation (2015-005890DES) - BOS File No. 231045  
**Date:** Monday, December 4, 2023 11:19:51 AM  
**Attachments:** [2015-005890DES- SFHeritage-Sacred-Heart-Landmark.pdf](#)

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**From:** Woody LaBounty  
**Sent:** Monday, December 4, 2023 10:45 AM  
**To:** Myrna Melgar ([myrna.melgar@sfgov.org](mailto:myrna.melgar@sfgov.org)) <[myrna.melgar@sfgov.org](mailto:myrna.melgar@sfgov.org)>; Aaron Peskin ([Aaron.Peskin@sfgov.org](mailto:Aaron.Peskin@sfgov.org)) <[Aaron.Peskin@sfgov.org](mailto:Aaron.Peskin@sfgov.org)>; [dean.preston@sfgov.org](mailto:dean.preston@sfgov.org); [jonh.carroll@sfgov.org](mailto:jonh.carroll@sfgov.org)  
**Subject:** Sacred Heart Parish Church Complex Landmark Designation (2015-005890DES)

Supervisors,

Currently assigned under the 30-day rule at the Board of Supervisors Land Use and Transportation Committee is a resolution to designate Sacred Heart Parish Church Complex (546-548, 554 Fillmore Street, 735 Fell Street, 660 Oak Street) as a city landmark pursuant to Article 10 of the Planning Code.

San Francisco Heritage supports this landmark nomination but requests clarification of an apparent contradiction in the landmark ordinance. We also request changing a phrase included in this and other recent landmark designation ordinances, which we believe could be poorly interpreted and negatively impact historic resources.

Much of the church's interior, a historically public space, merits inclusion in the landmark ordinance. In appreciation and good faith in the owner's plans and intentions to preserve significant interior elements, we are not here challenging the Planning Department's exclusion of interior features.

1. Clarifying and preserving inclusion of the wooden "connector" bridge in the designation

In Section 4(c), the draft landmark ordinance refers to the particular features of the Sacred Heart Church complex to be preserved as listed in the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet produced by Planning Department staff dated September 20, 2023. The ordinance then additionally enumerates a list of some of these features including, in Section 4(c)(1)(A)(xi), "Elevated, enclosed bridge connecting the rectory to the choir loft of the church."

But the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet's list of character defining features (beginning on that document's page 4) excludes this wooden connector "bridge" between the choir loft and rectory. The omission is intentional. As explained on page 7 of the packet's case report of October 5, 2016, staff asserts the connector "has not taken on significance over time."

San Francisco Heritage disagrees. The connecting bridge was an integral part of the complex within the determined period of significance and is prominent on the Fillmore side elevation.

The owner has expressed to us they have no objection to the wooden connector being included in the landmark ordinance.

San Francisco Heritage requests the “Elevated, enclosed bridge connecting the rectory to the choir loft of the church bridge” remain as part of the landmark ordinance in Section 4(c)(1)(A)(xi) and be expressly included in your approval.

2. Definition of who determines the need for “replacement in-kind”

Section 4(c) of the draft ordinance includes a vague phrase used frequently in recent city landmark ordinances which deserves clarification and change:

“The particular features that shall be preserved, or replaced in-kind as *determined necessary*, are those shown in photographs...” (italics added).

*The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Restoration and Guidelines for Restoring Historic Buildings* prioritizes protection, maintenance, and restoration of materials and features *before* any replacement is considered. “Determined necessary” here, and in other sections of the ordinance, does not define *who* decides on the need for replacement of historic features.

Review by preservation professionals at the Planning Department and possible approval by the Historic Preservation Commission are key protections offered by Article 10 landmark designations. Calling out that preservation expertise is required to determine the need for a “replacement in-kind” will prevent unnecessary destructive actions due to ignorance or willful subversion of the ordinance’s intent.

San Francisco Heritage requests modification of this phrase and is confident the City Attorney can suggest acceptable changes made as a condition of your approval.

The Sacred Heart Parish Church Complex is worthy of city landmark status. With attention to the two points above, San Francisco Heritage is very supportive of a designation under Article 10 of the Planning Code.

**Woody LaBounty**  
**President & CEO**



SAN FRANCISCO HERITAGE | [SFHeritage.org](http://SFHeritage.org)

On Unceded Ramaytush Ohlone Land

HAAS-LILIENTHAL HOUSE  
2007 FRANKLIN STREET  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94109

+1 (415) 441-3000 x15 (office)

[wlabounty@sfheritage.org](mailto:wlabounty@sfheritage.org)

*He/Him/His*

November 29, 2023

Supervisor Myrna Melgar  
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Much of the church's interior, a historically public space, merits inclusion in the landmark ordinance. In appreciation and good faith in the owner's plans and intentions to preserve significant interior elements, we are not here challenging the Planning Department's exclusion of interior features.

1. Clarifying and preserving inclusion of the wooden "connector" bridge in the designation

In Section 4(c), the draft landmark ordinance refers to the particular features of the Sacred Heart Church complex to be preserved as listed in the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet produced by Planning Department staff dated September 20, 2023. The ordinance then additionally enumerates a list of some of these features including, in Section 4(c)(1)(A)(xi), "Elevated, enclosed bridge connecting the rectory to the choir loft of the church."

But the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet's list of character defining features (beginning on that document's page 4) excludes this wooden connector "bridge" between the choir loft and rectory. The omission is intentional. As explained on page 7 of the packet's case report of October 5, 2016, staff asserts the connector "has not taken on significance over time."

San Francisco Heritage disagrees. The connecting bridge was an integral part of the complex within the determined period of significance and is prominent on the Fillmore side elevation.

The owner has expressed to us they have no objection to the wooden connector being included in the landmark ordinance.

San Francisco Heritage requests the “Elevated, enclosed bridge connecting the rectory to the choir loft of the church bridge” **remain** as part of the landmark ordinance in Section 4(c)(1)(A)(xi) and be expressly included in your approval.

2. Definition of who determines the need for “replacement in-kind”

Section 4(c) of the draft ordinance includes a vague phrase used frequently in recent city landmark ordinances which deserves clarification and change:

“The particular features that shall be preserved, or replaced in-kind *as determined necessary*, are those shown in photographs...” (italics added).

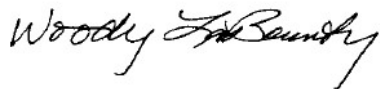
*The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Restoration and Guidelines for Restoring Historic Buildings* prioritizes protection, maintenance, and restoration of materials and features *before* any replacement is considered. “Determined necessary” here, and in other sections of the ordinance, does not define *who* decides on the need for replacement of historic features.

Review by preservation professionals at the Planning Department and possible approval by the Historic Preservation Commission are key protections offered by Article 10 landmark designations. Calling out that preservation expertise is required to determine the need for a “replacement in-kind” will prevent unnecessary destructive actions due to ignorance or willful subversion of the ordinance’s intent.

San Francisco Heritage requests modification of this phrase and is confident the City Attorney can suggest acceptable changes made as a condition of your approval.

The Sacred Heart Parish Church Complex is worthy of city landmark status. With attention to the two points above, San Francisco Heritage is very supportive of a designation under n Article 10 of Planning Code.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Woody LaBounty".

Woody LaBounty  
President & CEO