

From: [Board of Supervisors, \(BOS\)](#)
To: [BOS-Supervisors: BOS Legislation, \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: FW: BOS Item # 172167 January 9, 2018 Meeting Appeal of Determination of Exemption from Environmental Review - 2417 Green Street
Date: Monday, January 08, 2018 3:27:52 PM
Attachments: [New Fillmore Coxhead June 2017.pdf](#)

From: Bridget Maley [mailto:bridget@architecture-history.com]

Sent: Monday, January 08, 2018 1:09 PM

To: Board of Supervisors, (BOS) <board.of.supervisors@sfgov.org>; Somera, Alisa (BOS) <alisa.somera@sfgov.org>; angela.cavillo@sfgov.org; Peskin, Aaron (BOS) <aaron.peskin@sfgov.org>; Farrell, Mark (BOS) <mark.farrell@sfgov.org>; Breed, London (BOS) <london.breed@sfgov.org>; Cohen, Malia (BOS) <malia.cohen@sfgov.org>; Fewer, Sandra (BOS) <sandra.fewer@sfgov.org>; Kim, Jane (BOS) <jane.kim@sfgov.org>; hillary.ronan@sfgov.org; ahsha.safai@afgov.org; Sheehy, Jeff (BOS) <jeff.sheehy@sfgov.org>; Tang, Katy (BOS) <katy.tang@sfgov.org>; Yee, Norman (BOS) <norman.yee@sfgov.org>; STACY, KATE (CAT) <Kate.Stacy@sfcityatty.org>; Rahaim, John (CPC) <john.rahaim@sfgov.org>

Subject: BOS Item # 172167 January 9, 2018 Meeting Appeal of Determination of Exemption from Environmental Review - 2417 Green Street

Monday January 8, 2018 - 1:06 pm via email

Re: BOS Item # 172167 January 9, 2018 Meeting

Appeal of Determination of Exemption from Environmental Review - 2417 Green Street

Dear Supervisors and Madam Clerk:

I write in regard to the **Appeal of Determination of Exemption from Environmental Review - 2417 Green Street**. Unfortunately, I am unable to attend the meeting due to a prior commitment, but I felt it important to express my disappointment at the level of Environmental Review that occurred in this instance. I am also attaching a recent article I authored for the *New Fillmore*, titled "A Pair of Coxheads."

I agree with the appellant that the impacts of the proposed project at 2417 Green Street should be assessed with regard to the known historic resource at 2421 Green Street. Further, the project also abuts a designated San Francisco Landmark, the Casebolt House at 2727 Pierce. In fact, there are additional previously identified historic resources in this block as listed in the 1976 Citywide Survey and in *Here Today*. The Coxhead house at 2421 Green is one of the single-most important residential buildings in San Francisco and no review of the potential impact to this structure or other resources around the project site was undertaken and an Exemption from CEQA was issued. Further, the boundary of a previously identified potential Pacific Heights Historic District stops parcels away from the 2421 Green, and in my opinion, the steeply pitched block of 2400 Green Street should have been included in this preliminary historic district evaluation. The appellant's concerns about undermining the foundation of 2421 and this large scale proposal's impact on the overall character of the neighborhood are justified and should be considered thoroughly in a more detailed environmental assessment.

Please note, I have not been retained or paid to write this letter by the appellant, Mr. Kaufman. I took the time to do this because I believe that project sponsors should, as required by the Planning Department, understand the potential historic significance of their own property and the historic context and adjacent properties before making substantial, UNPERMITTED alterations to older residential properties in established neighborhoods with historic district potential. Unfortunately, this kind of illegal building activity in the City has become the norm, rather than an occasional incident. Recent examples were deftly noted just yesterday in the January 7, 2018 edition of the *San Francisco Chronicle* in an article titled "Homes in S.F., some historic, razed illegally." The number of disingenuous development "mistakes" occurring has reached an epidemic level in our City. We deserve better, our neighborhoods deserve better and most importantly, the next generation of San Franciscans deserve better. I would like my son to know the historic residential character of our City. I am not opposed to thoughtful change and carefully designed and planned projects, but too many BAD "mistakes" are destroying the residential and neighborhood character that makes our city a desirable place to live and a tourist destination.

I also firmly believe that piecemeal permitting, as evidenced by this project and the several highlighted in yesterday's *Chronicle*, is also a systematic problem across the City. I understand that some project sponsors might need to stagger expenditures over a period of time, such as for families who intend to actually RESIDE in our expensive housing stock. However, in this case, a known developer, with a poor track record of project compliance, plans to flip this property so there would be no need to piecemeal permits; there should be ONE SINGLE permit for this project that FULLY outlines the ENTIRE scope of the project. That fully defined project should be assessed for its impact on the adjacent historic resources and the neighborhood as a whole.

Please acknowledge receipt of this letter.

Sincerely,

Bridget Maley

Attachments

New Fillmore Coxhead June 2017

--

bridget maley
architecture + history, llc
san francisco, ca

A PAIR of COXHEADS

His own home and the one next door show his English influences

By BRIDGET MALEY

TWO NOTEWORTHY HOUSES along the south side of Green Street, where it slopes steeply toward the crest at Scott, emulate the craftsmanship of the English townhouses and rural cottages that influenced their design.

The James McGauley House, located at 2423 Green Street, was built in 1891, two years before its neighbor at 2421 Green Street. Both were designed by architect Ernest Coxhead, a British transplant. The house at 2421 Green was Coxhead's own, which he shared with his brother, Almeric. Around the corner at 2710 Scott Street, the Charles Murdock house, also built in 1893, rounds out the grouping. This set of residences reflects Coxhead's transition from his earlier ecclesiastical work to the residential projects that shaped the second phase of his California career.

Leaving England together, Ernest and Almeric Coxhead opened an architectural office in Los Angeles in early 1887. Almeric



Coxhead's own home at 2421 Green (left) and his design next door at 2423 Green would have been new and somewhat daring within the Victorian landscape of the time.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY SHAYNE WATSON

was the business manager, while Ernest was the primary designer. For the next several years, a series of commissions for the Episcopal Church, which was expanding throughout California, occupied their partnership. Before immigrating, Ernest had apprenticed with a London architect known for extensive work with church restoration. The London ecclesiastical projects clearly influenced his subsequent California designs.

By 1890, the brothers had relocated to San Francisco. Remarkably, in that year Ernest designed three San Francisco Epis-

copal churches: the Church of St. John the Evangelist, perhaps the grandest of his California church projects, which sat at the corner of 15th and Julian Streets in the Mission, and was destroyed by the 1906 fire; the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, at Union and Steiner Streets, just a few blocks from his early residences; and the Chapel of the Holy Innocents on Fair Oaks Street in the Mission.

The following year, amid continued ecclesiastical work, Ernest secured the McGauley commission. His 1891 house for his friend James McGauley, a banker, relied

heavily on the rural English cottage and its more urban counterpart, the townhouse, as executed by British architect Richard Norman Shaw. In its roof form, small dormers, heavy masonry chimney, large multi-paned windows, half-timbering and overall rustic character, the McGauley house mingles everyday elements and materials with exceptional craftsmanship to create what would have been a new, somewhat daring facade within the Victorian landscape of San Francisco. While employing British vernacular architectural language and embracing what was developing on the

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The homes mingle everyday elements and materials with exceptional craftsmanship.



East Coast as the Shingle Style, Ernest Coxhead's early San Francisco houses helped establish a local, architectural language that would eventually be known as the First Bay Tradition.

Two years later, in conjunction with his brother, Coxhead designed a house for their own use on the lot immediately to the east of the McGauley residence. The Coxhead brothers took advantage of the narrow lot, creating an almost tower-like, slender facade rising to a steeply pitched roof. The roof of the McGauley house runs parallel to the street; the Coxhead house roof is perpendicular. This was an ingenious approach to creating a sense of separation between the two houses, which are actually in close proximity. It also allowed for a sequence of stairs and walkways accessing each residence. Both houses are set on significant masonry retaining walls, elevating them above the

pedestrian level of the steeply pitched street.

The understated exterior of the Coxhead cottage masks a phenomenal interior that commences from a long, glazed entrance gallery running the length of the west elevation. The entry begins with a set of stairs and landings and turns through an archway, up another set of stairs to a long gallery that defines both the interior and exterior space. At the outside, it forms a pathway along the rear garden of the McGauley house, while at the interior it serves an entry hall accessing the front living room at the north end of the house or a sitting area and dining room adjacent to the south facing garden. This unique configuration offers both intimacy and spectacle, as surely the western-facing windows of the gallery would have looked directly into the neighboring McGauley rear garden. The experience of this interior space has an almost religious feeling; yet the separation

of the space and the sequence of movement through it is clearly residential.

Both houses feature expertly placed windows of varying sizes and shapes that generally employ small panes covering a fairly large expanse. The fenestration breaks up the exterior shingled walls creating cut-out elements in the wall surface. In the Coxhead house, the front windows terminate at end walls, furthering the punched opening effect. Each house has cleverly placed dormers to interrupt the large expanse of roof surface.

It is unclear how Coxhead and McGauley met, but McGauley does not appear to have lived in the house for very long. He married Minna Hoppe in San Mateo in 1898. Five years later, a *Chronicle* article detailed the couple's rather shocking divorce, with Mrs. McGauley claiming much anguish over her husband's "aboriginal manner of dressing while at home" and

complaining that he is "either mentally unbalanced or that he is a crank and possessed of a monomania upon the subjects of food, hygiene and religion."

Ernest Coxhead also married in 1898. His bride, Helen Brown Hawes, was the daughter of an Episcopalian minister. According to the *Chronicle* on June 19, 1898, their San Francisco wedding was a most pleasant affair. Esteemed architect Willis Polk was Coxhead's best man at the ceremony at St. Luke's Church. Helen died in 1909 at their home in San Mateo. Coxhead's biographers have speculated he never recovered from her loss.

In 1893, the same year he designed his own house, Coxhead executed a residence for Charles Murdock, an eastern transplant, California intellectual and printer, who collaborated with and published the works of many of the state's best writers, including Robert Louis Stevenson and Bret Harte. Located on Scott Street, just uphill from the other two houses, the Murdock commission used many of the same elements as the two Green Street houses: a shingled exterior, a steeply pitched roof, quirky dormers, a deeply recessed front entry and an understated ribbon of windows at the front elevation.

The three houses at Green and Scott are Coxhead's earliest extant San Francisco residential experiments, a far cry from the Victorian houses that preceded them. They compete in significance with other First Bay Tradition residential assemblies, including the houses marching up the 3200 block of Pacific Avenue and the grouping at the apex of the Vallejo Street steps on Russian Hill.



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From: [Mchugh, Eileen \(BOS\)](#)
To: [Calvillo, Angela \(BOS\)](#); [Somera, Alisa \(BOS\)](#); [BOS Legislation, \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: FW: File No. 171267, 2417 Green Street, January 9th 2018
Date: Monday, January 08, 2018 11:31:03 AM

-----Original Message-----

From: susan byrd [<mailto:susanbyrd.msw@gmail.com>]
Sent: Monday, January 08, 2018 11:30 AM
To: Board of Supervisors, (BOS) <board.of.supervisors@sfgov.org>
Cc: Deborah Holley <deborah@holleyconsulting.com>; Mark Lampert <Lampert@bvflp.com>
Subject: File No. 171267, 2417 Green Street, January 9th 2018

Dear Ms. Calvillo,

We are the other adjacent neighbors to the contested property being reviewed for CEQA challenge tomorrow, File No. 171267, 2417 Green Street.

Unfortunately, I have been called back East for a family emergency and my husband is home in bed with the flu. It is for this reason that I forward you below our statement to the board which we would have presented verbally tomorrow. We will be represented tomorrow by our planner, Deborah Holley, who works with attorney Scott Emblidge.

Ms. Holley is CC'd here.

Many thanks,

Susan Byrd
Mark Lampert
2417 Green Street
San Francisco, CA 94123

> Ms. Angela Calvillo
> Clerk of the Board
> City Hall, Room 244
> 1 Dr. Carlton B Goodlett Place
> San Francisco, CA 94102
>
> Re: File No. 171267
> 2417 Green Street
>
> To the San Francisco Board of Supervisors:
>
> As adjacent neighbors at 2415 Green Street, we are opposed to the proposed development at 2417 Green Street. Specifically we are in opposition to the determination of exemption from environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act issued as a Categorical Exemption by the San Francisco Planning Department.
>
> Ours is one of three adjacent Cow Hollow homes sharing a property line with 2417 Green, specifically three historic properties: To the East is our home, a turn of the century Victorian, which we remodeled in 2008 in strict keeping with Cow Hollow Neighborhood Guidelines and with no encroachment beyond the original footprint or character of the original home; To the South is the Historic Casebolt Mansion, owned by Louise and Carlos Bea, a jewel on any walking tour of the neighborhood; and to the West, the significant Ernest Coxhead home owned by Philip Kaufman and residence of the famed San Francisco architect himself. We have all lived here in Cow Hollow for over 20 years.
>
> At the exterior of these three homes and the property in question, and to the rear gardens of our Vallejo Street

neighbors, as well as sloping up and down Green Street, there is a swath of carefully cared-for gardens, a beautiful variety of plants and trees, homes built within the character of the neighborhood, and views to all directions of Cow Hollow, a special place in San Francisco's character and history. Any addition to the rear of the home at 2417 would significantly impact this cherished shared open space. The proposed inappropriate construction by a developer with no intention of living in the home but simply "flipping it" to the highest bidder could not be more out of character with the surroundings. The proposed plan is massive, contemporary, will block air and light. The structure as shown by the plans and the story poles would significantly encroach into the shared open space, devaluing everyone else's home, blocking the windows at The Coxhead home at 2421, blocking views neighbors have of the Coxhead home and the Casebolt mansion, sticking out like a sore thumb in a calm and peaceful green space so rare in a city, yet so characteristic of old San Francisco. Why? This particular development is not adding living units to the city. There is no need to make a very large four bedroom home even larger. There is no need to aggressively violate neighbors' air, light and views of one another's homes and gardens. Why? Simply put, for a quick profit. As in the San Francisco Chronicle article just this weekend, will every last inch of our unique neighborhoods eventually be consumed by massive contemporary generic homes? At 2417 Green street the scenario repeats just that.

>

> When we as a neighborhood group gathered to meet the developer and architect on March 30 of last year, we spoke in one voice and raised our specific request: Stay within the footprint of the original home and adhere plans to Cow Hollow Design Guidelines. We went on to tell our stories to the developer and the planning department, that as a group of neighbors we are communicative and supportive. Many of us have made improvements to our homes, always with the neighborhood character and our neighbors perspectives and needs in mind. We are not "anti-remodel," we are against careless, dangerous and unsightly development. We raised our very specific concerns: that the cherished shared green mid-block open space be respected and that the historic Coxhead home not be put in jeopardy by aggressive excavation.

>

> We have seen that the construction plan at 2417 Green Street, already with a number of building violations, is headed in the direction of exactly those specific concerns. The environment around the historic homes have been and will be endangered by this proposed development. The Exemption from CEQA was apparently inappropriate and must be re-considered. We appreciate your attention to this matter on behalf of the Cow Hollow neighborhood in this case, and also as a precedent for close examination of inappropriate construction throughout San Francisco.

>

> Respectfully submitted,

> Susan Byrd

> Mark Lampert

> 2417 Green Street

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January 8, 2018

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