



November 14, 2022

Ms. Angela Calvillo, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors  
Honorable Supervisor Walton  
Board of Supervisors  
City and County of San Francisco  
City Hall  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 244  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
Via email only

Re: **Transmittal of Planning Department Case Number 2022-008664DES**  
**St. James Presbyterian Church (240 Leland Avenue) Landmark Designation**  
BOS File No. 220716

Dear Ms. Calvillo and Supervisor Walton,

On November 2, 2022, the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission (hereinafter "HPC") conducted a duly noticed public hearing at a regularly scheduled meeting to consider Supervisor Walton's ordinance (Board File No. 220716) to landmark the St. James Presbyterian Church (240 Leland Avenue). The Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution No. 337-22 initiating landmark designation of the St. James Presbyterian Church, Assessor's Parcel Block No. 6246, Lot No. 012. At the hearing, the HPC voted to approve a resolution to recommend landmark designation pursuant to Article 10 of the Planning Code.

The proposed landmark designation, which involves amending the Planning Code, is not defined as a project under CEQA Guidelines Sections 15378 and 15060(c)(2) because it would not result in a direct or indirect physical change in the environment

Please find attached documents related to the HPC's action. Also attached is an electronic copy of the proposed ordinance and Legislative Digest, drafted by Deputy City Attorney Andrea Ruiz-Esquide. If you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Aaron D. Starr  
Manager of Legislative Affairs

Cc: Andrea Ruiz-Esquide, City Attorney's Office  
Natalie Gee, Legislative Aide  
Erica Major, Office of the Clerk of the Board  
Rich Sucre, Planning Department, Deputy Director of Current Planning  
Pilar LaValley, Planning Department  
[board.of.supervisors@sfgov.org](mailto:board.of.supervisors@sfgov.org)  
[bos.legislation@sfgov.org](mailto:bos.legislation@sfgov.org).

Attachments:

Draft Article 10 Landmark Designation Ordinance – St. James  
Planning Department Executive Summary, dated October 26, 2022  
Article 10 Landmark Designation Fact Sheet – St. James  
Historic Preservation Commission Resolution No. 1280



# LANDMARK DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**HEARING DATE: NOVEMBER 2, 2022**

**Record No.:** 2022-008664DES  
**Project Address:** St. James Presbyterian Church (240 Leland Avenue)  
**Zoning:** RH-2 (Residential-House, Two Family)  
 40-X Height and Bulk District  
**Cultural District:** Pacific Islander (proposed)  
**Block/Lot:** 6246/012  
**Project Sponsor:** Planning Department  
 49 South Van Ness Avenue, Suite 1400  
 San Francisco, CA 94103  
**Property Owner:** Presbytery of SF  
 240 Leland Avenue  
 San Francisco, CA 94134  
**Staff Contact:** Pilar LaValley (628-652-7372)  
 pilar.lavalley@sfgov.org

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

## Property Description

St. James Presbyterian Church is located on north side of Leland Avenue at junction with Cora Street, between Rutland and Delta streets, in the Visitacion Valley neighborhood (Assessor’s Block 6246, Lot 012). The subject property is located at the west end of the commercial portion of Leland Avenue that runs from Bayshore Boulevard to Cora Street. The surrounding block is characterized by one- to three-story, residential buildings interspersed with institutional buildings, such as the Visitacion Valley Branch Library, the Boys & Girls Clubs of San Francisco, and the Visitacion Valley Playground. Residential buildings are generally built to the sidewalk although there are a variety of building setbacks.

St. James Presbyterian Church was established in 1908 with 69 members. The current building, which replaced the congregation’s first chapel, was constructed in 1922 based on a design by renowned architect Julia Morgan. The Presbyterian Board of National Missions provided a \$2800 grant towards construction of the new church building that cost approximately \$9500. The new building was dedicated on March 13, 1923.

St. James Presbyterian Church is a two-story, Mission Revival and Arts and Crafts style, wood-frame building clad with smooth stucco and horizontal wood drop-lap siding. The three-part façade composition is expressed as a tall central mass with a front-facing gable roof with bracketed eave overhang flanked by shorter, narrow wings with side-facing gable roofs with open overhanging eaves. The building has a reverse T-shaped footprint with the side elevations setback from the side property lines to allow for windows in the sanctuary. Façade fenestration is limited to arched openings with either contemporary metal security doors or metal security gates and small stained-glass rosette windows at the narrow side wings and a wide window bay that extends full height at center of façade and is flanked by thick, stucco clad, pilasters. Within the window bay there are: a band of three, six-light, wood casement windows with simple wood trim; a large wood-framed opening with a stained-glass window; and a wood-framed arched opening with an arched, stained-glass window. The stained-glass at façade depicts the Parable of the Sower. On the side elevations, the upper floor, where sanctuary is located, is fenestrated by paired casement wood sash below a fixed transom; glazing is stained-glass of an Arts and Crafts-style rectilinear design.

At the interior, the sanctuary of St. James Presbyterian Church is located on the second floor with primary access from stairway at front of building. The Arts and Crafts-style sanctuary is a long open room with carpeted floor, contemporary wood pews, and an open wood paneled ceiling featuring curved bracket and exposed wood trusses with metal bolts and fasteners. Walls are plaster above wood wainscot with window openings framed with wood. At north end of room (opposite the stair landing) is a raised platform; wainscoting in this space is taller with inset painted plaster/wood panels and projecting cornice.

## Project Description

The Historic Preservation Commission is requested to make a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors regarding Landmark designation of the St. James Presbyterian Church, including interior of the sanctuary. The pending Landmark designation was initiated by the Board of Supervisors.

On June 7, 2022, Supervisor Walton introduced a proposed Resolution under Board of Supervisors (hereinafter "Board") File No. 220716 to initiate the Landmark designation of St. James Presbyterian Church. At hearing of the Land Use Committee of the Board on July 11, 2022, the committee voted unanimously to Recommend to the full Board approval of the Resolution to initiate Landmark Designation. On July 19, 2022, the Board voted unanimously to approve the Resolution, and on July 28, 2022, with the Mayor's signature, Resolution No. 337-22 initiating landmark designation of St. James Presbyterian Church became effective.

## Compliance With Planning Code

### Article 10 of the Planning Code.

The executive summary and analysis under review was prepared by Department preservation staff, who meet the Secretary of the Interior's professional qualifications. The Department has determined that the subject property meets the requirements for eligibility as an individual landmark pursuant to Article 10 of the Planning Code. The justification for its inclusion is explained in detail in the attached Landmark Designation Fact Sheet, and briefly in this Executive Summary.

**Significance:** St. James Presbyterian Church, 240 Leland Avenue, organized by Presbytery of San Francisco as its first Filipino ministry in late 1980s, was originally established in 1908 and is one of the oldest religious congregations in Visitacion Valley. The current building was constructed in 1922 based on design by renowned architect Julia Morgan. St. James is representative of broad patterns of San Francisco history and is historically significant for its association with early development of the Visitacion Valley neighborhood. St. James Presbyterian Church is also architecturally significant as an example of the work of architect of merit, Julia Morgan.

**Underrepresented Landmark Types:** The proposed landmark designation meets one of the Historic Preservation Commission's four priority areas for designation: property types in underrepresented geographies in the city. There are no other designated landmarks in the Visitacion Valley neighborhood. St. James Presbyterian Church was selected as the first prospective landmark for the neighborhood during an online campaign, co-sponsored by SF Heritage and the Visitacion Valley History Project, to address this lack of representation in the city's landmark program. Within this portion of San Francisco, the closest designated landmarks are: Arthur H. Coleman Medical Center (6301 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Landmark No. 279) and University Mound Old Ladies Home (350 University Street, Landmark No. 269).

**Integrity:** St. James Presbyterian Church (240 Leland Avenue), including the interior of the sanctuary, maintains a high level of integrity. See Page 2 of attached Landmark Designation Fact Sheet for further analysis.

**Character-Defining Features:** Exterior and interior character-defining features of St. James Presbyterian Church (240 Leland Avenue) are identified in the attached Landmark Designation Fact Sheet on Pages 2-3.

**Boundaries of the Landmark:** The proposed Landmark encompasses St. James Presbyterian Church at 240 Leland Avenue, Assessor's Parcel Block No. 6246, Lot No. 012.

### **General Plan.**

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.

**Planning Code Section 101.1** – establishes the Eight Priority Policies and requires review of permits for consistency with said policies. On balance, the proposed designation is consistent with the Eight Priority Policies, and furthers Policy Number 7, which states that landmarks and historic buildings be preserved.

## Landmark Designation Procedures

### Action by Historic Preservation Commission.

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.

### Article 10 of the Planning Code.

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 1004.2 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 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.

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.

If the Historic Preservation Commission approves the proposed designation recommendation, a copy of the resolution 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 1004.3). 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 1004.4).

## Racial and Social Equity Analysis

On July 15, 2020, the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission adopted [Resolution No. 1127](#) centering Preservation Planning on racial and social equity. Understanding the benefits, burdens, and opportunities to advance racial and social equity that proposed Preservation Planning documents provide is part of the Department's Racial and Social Equity Initiative. This is also consistent with the Mayor's Citywide Strategic Initiatives for equity and accountability and with the Office of Racial Equity, which required all Departments to conduct this analysis.

The proposed landmark designation of St. James Presbyterian Church makes no substantive policy changes to the Planning Code or the Planning Department's procedures. The proposed landmark designation produces few, if any, opportunities to advance racial and social equity.

Staff does not foresee any direct or unintended negative consequences from the proposed landmark designation.

## Public / Neighborhood Input

An email in support of the landmark designation was submitted to the Board of Supervisors during the Board review of the initiation to designate St. James Presbyterian Church. This is attached as part of the Board of Supervisors initiation hearing packet.

To date, staff has not received any public comments regarding the landmark designation.

## Issues & Other Considerations

- **Interior Character-Defining Features:** Inclusion of interior spaces as character-defining is warranted as these spaces, which historically functioned as publicly accessible church sanctuary, are representative of the religious institutional and community use for which the building is significant as well as retaining character-defining features that are characteristic of the work of renowned architect, Julia Morgan.
- **Property owner input:** On October 13, 2022, the Department sent mailed notice to the property owner regarding the landmark designation recommendation hearing scheduled for November 2, 2022.
- **Pacific Islander Cultural District:** The project site is located in the proposed Pacific Islander Cultural Heritage District, which was introduced by Supervisor Walton on September 27, 2022, and has been referred to the Historic Preservation Commission for recommendation. The proposed Pacific Islander Cultural Heritage District would encompass the area between San Bruno Avenue, Bayshore Boulevard, Geneva Avenue, Moscow Street, Persia Avenue, Mansell Avenue, and Visitacion Valley Avenue. The proposed cultural district would recognize the Visitacion Valley neighborhood as the home to the largest concentrations of Pacific Islanders in San Francisco and as the cultural center of the regional Pacific Islander community. At this time, the proposed Cultural District does not possess any specific land use controls that are specific to this project.

## Environmental Review Status

The proposed landmark designation, which involves amending the Planning Code, is not defined as a project under CEQA Guidelines Sections 15060(c) and 15378 because it would not result in a direct or indirect physical change in the environment

## Basis for Recommendation

The Department **recommends** that the Historic Preservation Commission recommend to the Board of Supervisors landmark designation of St. James Presbyterian Church as the building is individually eligible for its association with the early development of the Visitacion Valley neighborhood and as an excellent example of the work of architect of merit, Julia Morgan.

### Attachments

- Draft Resolution Recommending Landmark designation
- Exhibit A – Draft Landmark Designation Ordinance
- Exhibit B – Landmark Designation Fact Sheet – St. James Presbyterian Church
- Exhibit C – Maps and Context Images
- Exhibit D – Board of Supervisors Resolution No. 337-22
- Exhibit E – Board of Supervisors initiation hearing packet (BOS File No. 220716)



1 [Planning Code - Landmark Designation – St. James Presbyterian Church]

2 **Ordinance amending the Planning Code to designate St. James Presbyterian Church,**  
 3 **at 240 Leland Avenue, Assessor’s Parcel Block No. 6246, Lot No. 012, as a Landmark**  
 4 **consistent with the standards set forth in Article 10 of the Planning Code; affirming the**  
 5 **Planning Department’s determination under the California Environmental Quality Act;**  
 6 **and making public necessity, convenience, and welfare findings under Planning Code,**  
 7 **Section 302, and findings of consistency with the General Plan and the eight priority**  
 8 **policies of Planning Code, Section 101.1.**

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

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

17 Section 1. CEQA and Land Use Findings.

18 (a) The Planning Department has determined that the actions contemplated in this  
 19 ordinance comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (California Public Resources  
 20 Code Sections 21000 *et seq.*). Said determination is on file with the Clerk of the Board of  
 21 Supervisors in File No. \_\_\_\_\_ and is incorporated herein by reference. The Board of  
 22 Supervisors affirms this determination.

23 (b) Pursuant to Planning Code Section 302, the Board of Supervisors finds that the  
 24 proposed landmark designation of St. James Presbyterian Church, at 240 Leland Avenue,  
 25 Assessor’s Parcel Block No. 6246, Lot No. 012, 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  
2 herein by reference.

3 (c) On November 2, 2022, 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 July 19, 2022, the Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution No. 337-22,  
10 initiating landmark designation of St. James Presbyterian Church as a San Francisco  
11 Landmark pursuant to Section 1004.1 of the Planning Code. On July 28, 2022, the Mayor  
12 approved the resolution. Said resolution is on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors in  
13 File No. 220716.

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

17 (c) The Landmark Designation Fact Sheet was prepared by Planning Department  
18 Preservation staff. All preparers meet the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification  
19 Standards for historic preservation program staff, as set forth in Code of Federal Regulations  
20 Title 36, Part 61, Appendix A. The report was reviewed for accuracy and conformance with  
21 the purposes and standards of Article 10 of the Planning Code.

22 (d) The Historic Preservation Commission, at its regular meeting of November 2, 2022,  
23 reviewed Planning Department staff's analysis of the historical significance of St. James  
24 Presbyterian Church set forth in the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet dated October 26,  
25 2022.

1 (e) On November 2, 2022, after holding a public hearing on the proposed designation  
2 and having considered the specialized analyses prepared by Planning Department staff and  
3 the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet, the Historic Preservation Commission recommended  
4 designation of St. James Presbyterian Church as a landmark under Article 10 of the Planning  
5 Code by Resolution No. \_\_\_\_\_. Said resolution is on file with the Clerk of the Board in  
6 File No. \_\_\_\_\_.

7 (f) The Board of Supervisors hereby finds that St. James Presbyterian has a special  
8 character and special historical, architectural, and aesthetic interest and value, and that its  
9 designation as a Landmark will further the purposes of and conform to the standards set forth  
10 in Article 10 of the Planning Code. In doing so, the Board hereby incorporates by reference  
11 the findings of the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet.

12  
13 Section 3. Designation.

14 Pursuant to Section 1004.3 of the Planning Code, St. James Presbyterian Church is  
15 hereby designated as a San Francisco Landmark under Article 10 of the Planning Code.  
16 Appendix A to Article 10 of the Planning Code is hereby amended to include this property.

17  
18 Section 4. Required Data.

19 (a) The description, location, and boundary of the Landmark site consists of the City  
20 parcel located at 240 Leland Avenue (aka St. James Presbyterian Church), in Assessor's  
21 Parcel Block No. 6246, Lot No. 012, in San Francisco's Visitacion Valley neighborhood.

22 (b) The characteristics of the Landmark that justify its designation are described and  
23 shown in the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet and other supporting materials contained in  
24 Planning Department Record Docket No. 2022-008664DES. In brief, St. James Presbyterian  
25 Church is eligible for local designation as it is associated with events that have made a

1 culturally, historically, and architecturally significant contribution to the broad patterns of San  
2 Francisco history and represents the work of an architect of merit. St. James Presbyterian  
3 Church, originally established in 1908, was reorganized by the Presbytery of San Francisco  
4 as its first Filipino ministry in the late 1980s, with the current building constructed in 1922  
5 based on design by renowned architect Julia Morgan. Specifically, designation of St. James  
6 Presbyterian Church, originally established in 1908 and one of the oldest religious  
7 congregations in southeastern San Francisco, is proper for its association with early  
8 development of the Visitacion Valley neighborhood. Designation of St. James Presbyterian  
9 Church is also proper as it is architecturally significant as an example of the work of architect  
10 of merit, Julia Morgan.

11 (c) The particular features that should be preserved, or replaced in-kind as determined  
12 necessary, are those shown in photographs and/or described in the Landmark Designation  
13 Fact Sheet, which can be found in Planning Department Record Docket No. 2022-  
14 008664DES, and which are incorporated in this designation by reference as though fully set  
15 forth. Specifically, the following features are character-defining and shall be preserved or  
16 replaced in kind:

17 (1) All those exterior elevations, form, massing, structure, rooflines, architectural  
18 ornament, and materials of St. James Presbyterian Church, identified as:

19 (A) Two-story height;

20 (B) Smooth stucco and wood drop-lap horizontal siding;

21 (C) Window and door openings at front and side elevations;

22 (D) Front and side setbacks from property lines;

23 (E) Front- and side-facing gable rooflines with open, wood paneled,  
24 overhanging eaves, exposed rafter tails, bargeboards, and curved, blocky brackets;

25 (F) Wood windows, consisting of:

1 (i) Wood-framed, rectangular and arched stained-glass windows at  
2 façade, depicting the Parable of the Sower;

3 (ii) Stained glass rosette windows at front façade;

4 (iii) Paired casement wood sash below fixed transom wood sash  
5 windows with Arts and Crafts-style stained-glass at upper level of east and west elevations;

6 (iv) Four-lite paired casement wood sash below two-light wood  
7 transom sash, and three-lite paired casement wood sash, at east and west elevations;

8 (v) Six-lite wood sash windows at façade;

9 (G) Wood doors, consisting of paired wood panel and glazed wood doors  
10 at west elevation with wood transom window above;

11 (H) Stucco-clad pilasters, corner boards, and arched openings at façade;

12 and,

13 (2) The character-defining interior features of St. James Presbyterian Church  
14 are those depicted in photos and written description in the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet,  
15 all of which were historically accessible to the public, including:

16 (A) Stair leading to sanctuary from entrance at east end of front façade,  
17 including wood treads and risers, wood handrails and wood wainscot, and stair landing with  
18 wood wainscot, plaster walls, and open wood paneled and beamed ceiling;

19 (B) Sanctuary;

20 (i) Open wood paneled and beamed ceiling;

21 (ii) Wood trusses and curved brackets, including exposed metal  
22 bolts;

23 (iii) Wood framing around windows and doors, including at stair  
24 landing;

25 (iv) Wood wainscot, wood chair rail, and plaster wall finishes;

- 1 (v) Arts and Crafts-style, stained glass and paired casement sash
- 2 and transom sash windows and paired wood doors;
- 3 (vi) Wood paneled doors;
- 4 (vii) Configuration of spaces at north end of sanctuary with raised
- 5 recessed area at center flanked by enclosed, or partially enclosed rooms.

6

7 Section 5. Effective Date.

8 This ordinance shall become effective 30 days after enactment. Enactment occurs

9 when the Mayor signs the ordinance, the Mayor returns the ordinance unsigned or does not

10 sign the ordinance within ten days of receiving it, or the Board of Supervisors overrides the

11 Mayor’s veto of the ordinance.

12

13 APPROVED AS TO FORM:  
14 DAVID CHIU, City Attorney

15 By: /s/ Andrea Ruiz-Esquide  
16 Andrea Ruiz-Esquide  
17 Deputy City Attorney

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

n:\legana\as2022\1800206\01636168.docx



# ARTICLE 10 LANDMARK DESIGNATION FACT SHEET



St. James Presbyterian Church, south (front) façade, 2022  
Source: San Francisco Planning Department

<b>Historic Name:</b>	St. James Presbyterian Church
<b>Address:</b>	240 Leland Avenue
<b>Block/ Lot(s):</b>	6246/012
<b>Parcel Area:</b>	4,996 sq. ft.
<b>Zoning:</b>	RH-2 (Residential House – Two-Family)

	40-X
<b>Year Built:</b>	1922-23
<b>Architect:</b>	Julia Morgan
<b>Prior Historic Studies/Other Designations:</b>	None
<b>Prior HPC Actions:</b>	None
<b>Significance Criteria:</b>	<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>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>
<b>Period of Significance:</b>	The period of significance for St. James Presbyterian Church is 1922-1923 reflecting the date that the current building was constructed for the congregation by architect Julia Morgan.
<b>Statement of Significance:</b>	St. James Presbyterian Church, organized by Presbytery of San Francisco as its first Filipino ministry in late 1980s, was originally established in 1908 and is one of the oldest religious congregations in Visitacion Valley. The current building was constructed in 1922 based on design by renowned architect Julia Morgan. St. James is representative of broad patterns of San Francisco history and is historically significant for its association with early development of the Visitacion Valley neighborhood. St. James Presbyterian Church is also architecturally significant as an example of the work of architect of merit, Julia Morgan.
<b>Assessment of Integrity:</b>	<p>St. James Presbyterian Church maintains integrity. The seven aspects of integrity as defined by the National Park Service (NPS) and the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) are location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, and association.<sup>1</sup></p> <p>St. James Presbyterian Church, designed by Julia Morgan and constructed in 1922-1923, retains a high degree of integrity to convey its historical and cultural significance. The subject property retains a high degree of integrity of location, design, association, workmanship, setting, and feeling. The building has undergone some alterations over time. Most notable are alterations at the north end of the sanctuary, which may have been made in the 1950s in conjunction with an addition that was constructed at the north (rear) portion of the building. Other alterations include the removal and replacement of some original doors and windows, including original arched entry doors at façade.</p> <p>Overall, the Department has determined that St. James Presbyterian Church, inclusive of the interior of sanctuary, retains integrity to convey its historical and cultural significance.</p>

<sup>1</sup> “How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation,” National Register Bulletin, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1995, p. 44.



<p><b>Character-Defining Features:</b></p>	<p>(1) All those exterior elevations, form, massing, structure, rooflines, architectural ornament, and materials of St. James Presbyterian Church, identified as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(A) Two-story height;</li><li>(B) Smooth stucco and wood drop-lap horizontal siding;</li><li>(C) Window and door openings at front and side elevations;</li><li>(D) Front and side setbacks from property lines;</li><li>(E) Front- and side-facing gable rooflines with open, wood paneled, overhanging eaves, exposed rafter tails, bargeboards, and curved, blocky brackets;</li><li>(F) Wood windows, consisting of:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(i) Wood-framed, rectangular and arched stained-glass windows at façade, depicting the Parable of the Sower;</li><li>(ii) Stained glass rosette windows at front façade;</li><li>(iii) Paired casement wood sash below fixed transom wood sash windows with Arts and Crafts-style stained-glass at upper level of east and west elevations;</li><li>(iv) Four-lite paired casement wood sash below two-light wood transom sash, and three-lite paired casement wood sash, at east and west elevations;</li><li>(v) Six-lite paired casement wood sash windows at façade;</li></ul></li><li>(K) Wood doors, consisting of paired wood panel and glazed wood doors at west elevation with wood transom window above;</li><li>(L) Stucco-clad pilasters, corner boards, and arched openings at façade; and,</li></ul> <p>(2) The character-defining interior features of St. James Presbyterian Church are those depicted in photos and written description in the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet, all of which were historically accessible to the public, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(A) Stair leading to sanctuary from entrance at east end of front façade, including wood treads and risers, wood handrails, and wood wainscot, and stair landing with wood wainscot, plaster walls, and open wood paneled and beamed ceiling;</li><li>(B) Sanctuary;<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(i) Open wood paneled and beamed ceiling;</li><li>(ii) Wood trusses and curved brackets, including exposed metal bolts;</li><li>(iii) Wood framing around windows and doors, including at stair landing;</li><li>(iv) Wood wainscot, wood chair rail, and plaster wall finishes;</li><li>(v) Arts and Crafts-style, stained-glass and paired casement sash and transom sash windows and paired wood doors;</li><li>(vi) Wood paneled doors;</li><li>(vii) Configuration of spaces at north end of sanctuary with raised recessed area at center flanked by enclosed, or partially enclosed, rooms.</li></ul></li></ul>
--	---

## Statement of Significance Summary

St. James Presbyterian Church, 240 Leland Avenue, organized by Presbytery of San Francisco as its first Filipino ministry in late 1980s, was originally established in 1908 and is one of the oldest religious congregations in Visitacion Valley. The current building was constructed in 1922 based on design by renowned architect Julia Morgan. St. James is representative of broad patterns of San Francisco history and is historically significant for its association with early development of the Visitacion Valley neighborhood. St. James Presbyterian Church is also architecturally significant as an example of the work of architect of merit, Julia Morgan.

## Property Description and History

St. James Presbyterian Church is located mid-block on north side of Leland Avenue at junction with Cora Street, between Rutland and Delta streets, in the Visitacion Valley neighborhood. The subject property is located at the west end of the commercial portion of Leland Avenue that runs from Bayshore Boulevard to Cora Street. The surrounding block is characterized by one- to three-story, residential buildings interspersed with institutional buildings, such as the Visitacion Valley Branch Library, the Boys & Girls Clubs of San Francisco, and the Visitacion Valley Playground. Residential buildings are generally built to the sidewalk although there are a variety of building setbacks.

The subject building, which occupies most of the underlying 50-foot by 100-foot parcel, is two-stories and H-shaped in plan expressed as a tall center mass extending the length of the building with shallow wings projecting from sides at front and rear of building. The façade extends the full width of the parcel to abut the neighboring residential properties and a low red brick planter extends along front of building at the sidewalk. Clad in smooth stucco, the three-part façade composition is expressed as a tall central mass flanked by shorter, narrow wings. At façade, the tall central mass has a front-facing gable roof with thick, shaped/curved brackets supporting an open eave overhang. On side elevations of the main building massing, the roof is expressed with open eave overhang and simple exposed rafter tails rather than brackets, while the rear elevation has only an open eave overhang. Paired rafter tails occur at regular intervals along eaves on side elevations, denoting the location of laminated beams and trusses at interior. The short, narrow wings to each side of the central mass at façade have side-facing gable roofs with open overhanging eaves. The exposed east elevation of the east wing is clad with smooth stucco to match the front façade and the overhanging roof edge of the side-facing gable has a shaped, wood bargeboard resting on short, blocky wood brackets; side elevations of these wings have open eave overhangs with simple exposed rafter tails. The undersides of all eave overhangs are painted tongue-and-groove wood matching the interior ceiling.

Fenestration at façade is limited to arched openings with contemporary metal security doors and metal security gates, and small stained-glass rosette windows at the narrow side wings, and a wide window bay that extends full height of gable-end at center of façade, flanked by thick, stucco-clad, pilasters. Within the window bay is a band of three, six-lite, wood casement windows with simple wood trim, a large wood-framed opening with a stained-glass window, and a wood-framed arched opening with an arched, stained-glass window. The stained-glass in the large second floor and arched window openings depicts the Parable of the Sower, from one of Jesus'

parables that liken his preaching to a man sowing seeds. One of the glass panels contains the name of the Campbell Glass and Paint Co. According to newspaper articles and advertisements from the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century, Campbell Glass, based in Kansas City, Missouri, was a purveyor of fine art and stained-glass.<sup>2</sup> The history passed through the congregation is that these stained-glass windows were "...found in a Nevada ghost town and moved to St. James Presbyterian in 1923, when Julia Morgan designed the present church..."<sup>3</sup>

Narrow passageways extend along the side property lines, exposing the side elevations, which are clad with drop-lap wood siding. All window sash appears to be wood. The upper-level church sanctuary is fenestrated with symmetrically arranged, punched, wood-framed, window openings that consist of a pair of casement sash below a fixed transom. Glazing for the sanctuary windows is stained-glass in muted yellows and browns in an Arts and Crafts style, rectilinear design. Window sash have original hardware. One bay on west elevation of sanctuary features paired wood-paneled doors with stacked glazed lites; a glazed transom extends across opening above the doors. Other fenestration on side elevations consists of wood-frame, four-lite, paired casement sash below a two-lite transom, wood-frame, three-lite, paired casement windows, and several contemporary metal doors. At the rear of both side elevations are pop-outs that extend the upper level to the side property lines; these extensions of the building have flat roofs (the roofs of these additions are tucked under the eaves of the main building mass) and are supported by posts and brackets. At rear pop-out on east elevation, a wood stair leads to a porch that extends from south wall of the upper level. Along upper level of west elevation is a deteriorated wood deck, accessed from door in south wall of side extension and from paired doors in west wall of sanctuary.

The rear elevation is clad in drop-lap wood siding and fenestrated with paired casement sash in variety of lite configurations. At center of upper level are two large windows with paired casement sash below fixed transoms. The eave overhang is open but does not feature bargeboard, rafter tails, or brackets.

The church sanctuary occupies most of upper level. Primary access to sanctuary is via stairs at the front of the building from the arched opening at east entrance on façade. Behind this arched entrance is a small vestibule. Within the vestibule to the west is the stairway up to sanctuary, to the north is a contemporary door leading to the open passageway along east elevation of building, to the east is a blank wall with built-in shelves. The wood stairs to sanctuary are carpeted and stairway has wood paneled wainscot and plaster walls. The ceiling at upper stair landing is open with wood paneling matching the sanctuary and the roof eave overhangs. Both sides of the bracketed wood truss above wall delineating the south end of sanctuary from the stair landing are enclosed with horizontal, tongue-and-groove wood, matching the ceiling.

Sanctuary is a long open room with carpeted floor, contemporary wood pews (existing pews were given to the church in 1972 – several original pews are stored in the smaller chapel at rear of building), and an open beam and truss, wood paneled ceiling featuring exposed wood trusses and curved brackets. Walls are plaster above

---

<sup>2</sup> Advertisement for The Campbell Glass and Paint Co., 1900, a souvenir of Kansas City Fire Department. Additional newspaper articles provided by Visitacion Valley History Project indicate that this company started in Kansas City in 1879. In 1916, Campbell Glass and Paint Co. merged with another Midwest-based paint company and expanded further paint manufacturing and distribution with additional offices in Midwest and Southeast.

<sup>3</sup> Visitacion Valley History Project, Cynthia Cox et al., eds., *Images of America: San Francisco's Visitacion Valley* (San Francisco: Arcadia Publishing, 2005), 55.

wood wainscot with chair rail. The large, symmetrically arranged window openings are framed with wood. At north end of room (opposite the stair landing) is a raised and recessed platform; wainscotting in this space is taller with inset painted plaster/wood panels and projecting cornice. At rear corners of this recessed space are window openings with double-hung wood sash with stained-glass. To either side of this raised space, are plaster walls that enclose small office spaces. In contrast to south wall of the sanctuary, these plaster walls extend all the way up to ceiling rather than terminating at underside of wood truss. At the opposite (south) end of the sanctuary is a large opening to stair landing. To either side of this opening are paneled doors that lead to a small restroom (southwest corner of building) and a small office (southeast corner of the building). Contemporary light fixtures, AV equipment, and electrical conduit are attached to, or extend from, the ceiling trusses. Wood at ceiling, trusses, wainscot (except at raised platform at north end of sanctuary), and framing windows is unpainted (may have been treated with a stain or similar) and has a rich reddish-brown color, characteristic of wood often utilized on building interiors by Julia Morgan. At north end of room, many of the wood features, including ceiling over raised space and wainscotting within same, appear to be painted or stained to match the rest of the wood in the room.

At the north (rear) end of the upper floor are a series of small offices surrounding a smaller chapel/Sunday school room. This smaller chapel is located immediately behind the main sanctuary and is a rectangular room with vaulted wood paneled ceiling with laminated and bracketed center beam. All other office spaces at rear of building have plaster walls and utilitarian, contemporary finishes.

At the lower level of the building is a large assembly space with painted concrete post and beam construction and utilitarian finishes. There is an industrial-style kitchen and restrooms in southwest corner of the lower level. An office is located in southeastern corner, opposite the kitchen, and storage rooms are located at rear of the building. There is no interior stair connecting the two levels of the building. Access to the lower level is via a contemporary door on east elevation, via the side passageway, and pair of contemporary metal doors that lead to vestibule/pass-through at the arched opening at west wing of façade.

### Building History

The current building occupied by St. James Presbyterian Church, which replaced the congregation's first chapel, was constructed in 1922-1923 based on a design by renowned architect Julia Morgan. Construction of the new church building was financed by the congregation with the Presbyterian Board of National Missions providing a \$2800 grant towards the approximately \$9500 cost. The new building was dedicated on March 13, 1923.

The site's history as the location of St. James Presbyterian Church goes back to 1906 when residents of the Visitacion Valley neighborhood organized and constructed a small wood-frame building on the subject property to house a church and Sunday School.<sup>4</sup> A Building Permit for this work was issued in December 1906 to "construct a chapel" to be "24 by 36 by 20 feet tall" at cost of \$900.<sup>5</sup> These local efforts were in response to encouragement by a group from the University Mound Presbyterian Church in the neighboring Portola District.

Two years later, in 1908, St. James Presbyterian Church, with 69 members, was officially recognized by the Presbytery of San Francisco. In that same year, the congregation was issued a Building Permit to erect a 25-foot

---

<sup>4</sup> St. James Presbyterian Church, "A Historical Sketch on occasion of the Church's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (1956)," 1.

<sup>5</sup> San Francisco Building Permit #5551, issued December 12, 1906, to Lyman T. White, Trustee for permission to erect "a chapel."

by 50-foot building behind the chapel.<sup>6</sup> Most sources, including the 1913 Sanborn map of the neighborhood, describe this one-story building, located at rear of the property, as a “gymnasium.” Although some portion of this rear building is still present in the 1950 Sanborn map, where it is identified as a “shed,” other historic documentation indicates that this building was removed from the property sometime between 1922, when a permit was issued for an addition of dressing room and showers to the building,<sup>7</sup> and 1938, when the rear of the property appears vacant in an aerial photograph.

According to church records, in 1917, some additions were made to the original chapel building, including a kitchen and rooms for Seminary students visiting on weekends.<sup>8</sup> A Building Permit issued in August 1917 describes the alterations as: “. . .small addition to present building; addition to be 12 x 25 ft, two stories; includes 2 toilets, kitchen and hallway on lower floor; two rooms on upper floor, concrete foundation. . .work to be done by men of the church.”<sup>9</sup> Prior to construction of the current building in 1922-1923, the congregation’s original chapel building was “. . .moved off the property and around the corner onto Schwerin Street next to the school, where it still serves as a private residence.”<sup>10</sup>

Like the population in the surrounding neighborhood, which grew steadily in the decades following the 1906 earthquake and fire, the “. . .adult congregation and the Sunday School attendance at St. James outgrew the small church building.”<sup>11</sup> In 1922, plans were laid for construction of the present building. *Building and Engineering News*, a construction trades journal, noted in their July 15, 1922 edition that architect Julia Morgan had been awarded the design of a “two-story and basement frame church” for St. James Presbyterian Church. A Building Permit for this project, listing “Miss Julia Morgan” as architect, was issued July 14, 1922, for construction of a “church” to be 48-feet by 56-feet and two-stories with concrete foundation, wood-frame construction, and stucco and rustic (wood) wall coverings at exterior with plaster walls at interior.<sup>12</sup>

Morgan’s architectural plans, dated July 10, 1922, depict a T-shaped plan with open passages extending along both sides of the building. Primary access to upper floor was via stairway from double-door entrance at east side of front façade while double-doors at west end of façade provided access to the lower floor. A concrete path and wood stair along west elevation served as secondary exit from upper floor. Morgan’s floor plans for lower-level depict a kitchen, restrooms, circulation, and office (labeled as “Beginning Room”) at south end of building with a large open space, labeled “Sunday School,” occupying the remaining floor area. At the upper-level, Morgan’s floor plans depict stairway, landing, and “women’s coat room” along south end of space, consistent with current configuration, and the rest of the floor area occupied by the sanctuary. At north end of sanctuary, was a center raised platform space flanked by areas for “Pastor” and “Choir.” The north wall of the sanctuary and Sunday school marked the rear of the building. Morgan’s section drawings depict open wood paneled ceiling, bracketed wood trusses, wood wainscot, and plaster walls within the sanctuary, consistent with many of the existing details of this space.

---

<sup>6</sup> San Francisco Building Permit #15212, issued March 5, 1908, to Presbytery of San Francisco (owner), L.T. White for permission to erect “a Sunday School Room.”

<sup>7</sup> San Francisco Building Permit #108182, issued June 19, 1922, to St. James Presbyterian Church.

<sup>8</sup> St. James Presbyterian Church, “A Historical Sketch on occasion of the Church’s 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (1956),” 1.

<sup>9</sup> San Francisco Building Permit #77799, issued August 6, 1917, to St. James Presbyterian Church.

<sup>10</sup> St. James Presbyterian Church, “Early Church History Excerpted from Church Booklet dated April 16, 1953,” 2011.

<sup>11</sup> St. James Presbyterian Church, “Early Church History Excerpted from Church Booklet dated April 16, 1953,” 2011.

<sup>12</sup> San Francisco Building Permit #108670, issued July 14, 1922, to St. James Presbyterian Church.

At exterior, Morgan's architectural plans show stucco clad façade with wood siding at side elevations. Configuration of the façade and details at roof eaves match existing although there have been changes at doors and windows. At the side elevations, fenestration, particularly at sanctuary, was symmetrical with large window openings to provide natural light.

In general, it appears that the original building was constructed to Morgan's plans, although there were slight deviations, most notable at the façade and side elevation windows. Where there are other changes, these have likely occurred as result of more recent alterations, the most substantial of which was an addition at north end of building in the mid-1950s.

At the façade,

... Morgan's plans indicate a rose window [and three arched windows at second floor] on the front of the building. However, oral history is that a church member knew of a deserted church in a ghost town in Nevada, and the window that was installed at St. James was "liberated" from that church by him with the help of other men in the congregation. The stained-glass window depicts Jesus' parable of the sower and was manufactured by the Campbell Paint and Glass Company of Kansas City, Missouri.<sup>13</sup>

This multi-part stained-glass window was installed in place of the windows designed by Morgan, a change that appears to have occurred during the original construction as a historic photograph from the 1920s depicts the stained-glass windows in place. A smaller deviation Morgan's façade drawing is the deletion of a window box or similar feature below the ground floor windows.

At the sanctuary, Morgan's drawings depict a long open room arranged symmetrically with the large opening (shown with a door and sidelights in Morgan's floor plan) from the stair landing centered in the south wall and aligning with the raised platform for pulpit(s) at north end of room. Flanking the raised platform at north end of room were partially enclosed spaces with lower ceiling heights, labeled as "Pastor" and "Choir." In Morgan's plans, the long room is divided into five bays by bracketed wood trusses that span the width of the space (these bays extend from south wall of sanctuary to where the original raised platform and choir/pastor spaces began at north end of building for total of six trusses). Centered between each truss, or bay, at side walls, Morgan's plans show large, wood-framed, shallow arched, openings with multi-light paired casement sash below a multi-lite transom with five bays of windows on east elevation and four bays plus a door opening on west elevation. In contrast to Morgan's drawings, extant fenestration at sanctuary has square openings and stained-glass glazing. Details of existing window sash and trim, particularly at exterior, for majority of these windows, suggests that Morgan's arched openings were not constructed as drawn and that current shape and window sash within these openings are original. Only four of these window openings, on east and west walls extending from front toward rear of the building, are extant. Window openings at rear and lower level of the original building have higher level of alteration, although old window sash may have been reused (or copied) even within relocated window openings.

Morgan's section drawings indicate that the raised platform space at north end of sanctuary was further highlighted by tall, paneled wainscot (panels either plaster or board-and-batten) capped with double chair rail.

---

<sup>13</sup> St. James Presbyterian Church, "Early Church History Excerpted from Church Booklet dated April 16, 1953," 2011, 39.

At the north wall of this raised and recessed platform, above the tall wainscot, Morgan's plans include a small rosette window. Although the exact appearance of the interior of the sanctuary, particularly the north end of the room, at the time of construction is not known, comparison of Morgan's drawings against the current configuration and details of this portion of the building indicate that there have been alterations. Most notably, it appears that the original length of the room has been reduced by approximately one bay. Although the configuration of spaces at north end of sanctuary are consistent with original drawings – central raised recessed space flanked by enclosed, or partially enclosed, rooms – the existing details and finishes at north end of sanctuary, and the overall depth of this interior space, suggest that this portion of the room has been altered. Many of these alterations may date to the 1950s when an addition that included the smaller chapel and surrounding office was constructed at north end of the building. Unfortunately, no architectural plans for this work have been located so the extent and nature of the alterations cannot be determined. Several historic photographs, provided by Betty Parshall of the Visitacion Valley History Project, from the early 1950s appear to match existing condition of this portion of building, so exact dates and nature of alterations at this portion of the building is unknown.

Another difference from Morgan's plans is at the lower level where the large assembly space does not currently contain the rows of columns/posts that were originally depicted. Morgan's drawings note these columns as having concrete footings supporting bracketed posts. This space, which has been enlarged, has concrete beams spanning the width of the room supported by concrete posts/pilasters at exterior walls. Although Morgan was known for her knowledgeable use of reinforced concrete construction, the original plans, and the notations in building permit of wood-frame construction, suggest that the economical design for St. James did not originally include concrete structural framing. The existing concrete structural members were likely added during a structural upgrade and seismic strengthening of the building, although no documentation has been located to provide a date for this work.

In 1955, a Building Permit was issued to "add 1292 [square feet] of floor space on second floor classroom area and chapel" and to "add 960 [square feet] of floor space on first floor" with space "between floors to allow outside passage to rear of building."<sup>14</sup> Church records indicate that planning for this addition began in 1951, as the "church was thriving and additional space was needed for the crowded Sunday School program."<sup>15</sup> These same records note that

an addition was made at the rear of the church that included a small chapel and four classrooms. The addition did not change the original building except to provide doorways into the addition, and the small chapel replicates Morgan's open beam ceiling nicely.<sup>16</sup>

Although the note regarding the similarities between Morgan's open beam ceiling in sanctuary and the ceiling in the addition is accurate, there do appear to have been other changes made to the original building by the addition. There appears to have been efforts taken to make the changes match the original as much as possible, but there are physical clues. The enlarged building has a consistent roofline (roofing was replaced in 2000) making seams on the side elevations one of the only physical clues indicating where an addition was made. Many of the window sash in the newer portion of the building match those found in original section – this may

---

<sup>14</sup> San Francisco Building Permit #XXXXXX, issued May 13, 1955, to St. James Presbyterian Church, no architect listed, engineer CF Giuliano.

<sup>15</sup> St. James Presbyterian Church, "Early Church History Excerpted from Church Booklet dated April 16, 1953," 2011.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.



indicate that original sash was relocated and reused or that new sash was made to match historic sash. At north end of the sanctuary, where alterations were done with particular care to maintain and/or match original, the principal evidence of alteration is comparison of existing against Morgan's original plans. The other, subtle evidence is in the way in which the plaster walls at north end of sanctuary meet the open beam and truss as compared to the original condition of these features at south wall.

Other documented work to the building has included remodeling kitchen (1961), re-roofing (2000), and installation of a chair-lift at stairway to sanctuary (2014).

**Events: Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history (National Register Criterion A).**

St. James Presbyterian Church, 240 Leland Avenue, was originally established in 1908 and is one of the oldest religious congregations in Visitacion Valley. The original chapel, constructed in 1906, was replaced in 1922 by the current building. In the late 1980s, the Presbytery of San Francisco reorganized the church as its first Filipino ministry. St. James is representative of broad patterns of San Francisco history and is historically significant for its association with early development of the Visitacion Valley neighborhood.

Visitacion Valley lies in the southern quadrant of San Francisco, extending from Bayshore Boulevard to the east, the city boundary to the south, and McLaren Park to the northwest. Today, Visitacion Valley remains a low-density residential area home to a largely Asian American population with commercial corridors on Bayshore Boulevard and Leland Avenue, a shopping center, and some production, distribution, and repair sites.

The following historic context for the settlement and development of the neighborhood is excerpted from various sources, including the Historic Resources Technical Report for the Visitacion Valley Redevelopment Environmental Impact Report, prepared by Carey & Co. Inc.<sup>17</sup> Indented text is from Carey & Co. report.

The neighborhood physically extends beyond San Francisco's southern boundary into Daly City and Brisbane. Before Spanish settlers claimed the land now known as the City of San Francisco, it was home to the Yelamu tribe of the Ohlone Indians. The Yelamu villages of Amuctac and Tubsinte were located in the present day Visitacion Valley neighborhood. This southeastern section of the city was "discovered" by a group of Spanish soldiers and Franciscan friars in 1777 when the party, having become lost in a thick fog, decided to camp overnight and in the morning found themselves in a picturesque valley. The date was July 2, also known in the Catholic Church as the Feast of the Visitacion of the Most Blessed Virgin to her cousin St. Elizabeth. Thus, the Catholic Church claimed the land, named it Visitacion Valley and used the area for agricultural and grazing purposes. In 1834, the Mexican government seized these lands from the Church, and ownership was later granted to favored Californios.<sup>18</sup> Californios were Spanish-speaking inhabitants of New Spain's, and later Mexico's Alta California, the area later annexed by the United States following the Mexican-American War in 1848. Californios included the descendants

---

<sup>17</sup> Visitacion Valley Redevelopment EIR, Historic Resources Technical Report, Carey & Co. Inc., April 29, 2008, 4.

<sup>18</sup> Cynthia Cox et al., eds., *Images of America: San Francisco's Visitacion Valley* (San Francisco: Arcadia Publishing, 2005), 7-11. Quoted in Visitacion Valley Redevelopment EIR, Historic Resources Technical Report, Carey & Co. Inc., April 29, 2008, 4.



of European settlers from Spain and Mexico, as well as Mestizos and local Native Americans who adopted Spanish culture and converted to Catholicism.

The area that would become Visitacion Valley, along with the Bayshore district of Daly City, the city of Brisbane, and San Bruno Mountain, was all part of the Rancho Cañada de Guadalupe, La Visitacion y Rodeo Viejo, land grant that was awarded to Jacob Primer Leese, a trader from Ohio married to a sister of the powerful General Mariano Vallejo.<sup>19</sup> During this period, the valley was undeveloped with occasional use for grazing. In the 1840s, following US annexation, the rancho began to be subdivided for nurseries, dairies, and truck farms.<sup>20</sup>

Some of the earliest inhabitants of Visitacion Valley included Europeans hailing from countries such as France, Germany, Italy and Malta [the neighborhood once had the largest concentration of Maltese outside Malta], who began to cultivate the land with flower gardens, plant nurseries, and farms.<sup>21</sup>

Several of the “earliest landowners in Visitacion Valley were Francois Pioche, whose “French Gardens” nursery specialized in growing roses for sale, and Henry Schwerin, a German whose extensive acreage supported a dairy farm, a nursery specializing in ferns and tulips, and honeybees.”<sup>22</sup>

Though the rural character of Visitacion Valley continued well into the twentieth century, there was a gradual shift in land use over the years to accommodate increasing industrial and residential development. ... [“By the 1870s business had come to the Valley – Ralston’s silk ribbon factory; several breweries, including Mission Brewery, noted for its steam beer; two quarries; a gas plant; a fertilizer company.”<sup>23</sup>]

... The Spring Valley Water Company established its Bayshore pumping station at 31-33 Leland Avenue near the turn of the century; the pumping station regulated the flow of water from the reservoir on the top of the hill to the west near what is now McLaren Park. In 1905, Pacific Gas & Electric built a plant in Visitacion Valley and, with the arrival of Southern Pacific Railway Company’s freight station in the early twentieth century, Visitacion Valley became established as a major crossroads in the burgeoning industrial center of the Southern Pacific.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> Woody LaBounty, “Visitacion Valley,” Heritage in the Neighborhoods webpage, October 1, 2021, at [Visitacion Valley - San Francisco Heritage \(sfheritage.org\)](https://www.visitacionvalleyhistoryproject.org/neighborhood-history); Neighborhood History, Visitacion Valley History Project website: <https://www.visitacionvalleyhistoryproject.org/neighborhood-history>

<sup>20</sup> Woody LaBounty, “Visitacion Valley,” Heritage in the Neighborhoods webpage, October 1, 2021, at [Visitacion Valley - San Francisco Heritage \(sfheritage.org\)](https://www.visitacionvalleyhistoryproject.org/neighborhood-history).

<sup>21</sup> Cynthia Cox et al., eds., *Images of America: San Francisco’s Visitacion Valley* (San Francisco: Arcadia Publishing, 2005), 7; Neighborhood History, Visitacion Valley History Project website: <https://www.visitacionvalleyhistoryproject.org/neighborhood-history>

<sup>22</sup> Cox, et al., 7. Quoted in Visitacion Valley Redevelopment EIR, Historic Resources Technical Report, Carey & Co. Inc., April 29, 2008, 4. Neighborhood History, Visitacion Valley History Project website: <https://www.visitacionvalleyhistoryproject.org/neighborhood-history>

<sup>23</sup> Cynthia Cox et al., eds., *Images of America: San Francisco’s Visitacion Valley* (San Francisco: Arcadia Publishing, 2005), 7; Neighborhood History, Visitacion Valley History Project website: <https://www.visitacionvalleyhistoryproject.org/neighborhood-history>

<sup>24</sup> *The Visitacion: Story of Visitacion Valley, San Francisco* (San Francisco: Committee on Press and Publicity for the Benefit of the Church of the Visitacion, 1907). Referenced in Visitacion Valley Redevelopment EIR, Historic Resources Technical Report, Carey & Co. Inc., April 29, 2008, 8.

According to a history of Visitacion Valley compiled by the Schlage Lock Company, which was a major employer for the neighborhood and surrounding communities from 1925 to 1999,<sup>25</sup> “by 1905, the ‘finest building sites’ could be purchased for as little as \$125.00 - \$1.00 down and \$1.00 a week.”<sup>26</sup> Charles A. Louis was then the sales agent for the Reis Tract, at that time the largest housing development in the valley. In the years following the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire, from which Visitacion Valley emerged relatively unscathed, the area experienced a steady population increase as refugees from the city’s center stayed and settled in the community. Also at that time, the Southern Pacific Railway filled a portion of the bay in order to construct a roundhouse and extensive train yards that extended south of the county line. [“The Five, Six and Seven Mile houses offered lodging and recreation.”<sup>27</sup>]

Two streetcar lines in operation by 1910 – one running northeast along Bayshore Boulevard from Wilde Street and connecting to Market Street via Third Street, the other running along Geneva Avenue from Bayshore Boulevard to Mission Street – provided further catalysts for the development of the Visitacion Valley community.<sup>28</sup> [Large developments of] single-family houses were first built in the area in the 1930s.<sup>29</sup> These organized rows of modest one-family stucco houses followed a design pattern similar to the residential streets in other newer neighborhoods of San Francisco, such as the Sunset District.<sup>30</sup> Over the next 15 years, Visitacion Valley continued to change as farmland gave way to residential development, roads were paved, and Leland Avenue became the valley’s core commercial thoroughfare.

The neighborhood history compiled on the Visitacion Valley History Project website notes that:

Sunnydale was erected for World War II defense workers, and Joseph Eichler’s 1960s plan for luxury housing in two high-rises evolved into Section 8 housing at Geneva Towers, imploded in 1998. Churches include the Catholic Church of the Visitacion, replacing the six-acre estate of Peter Burnett, California’s first governor, and subsequently the San Francisco Auto Camp; St. James Presbyterian, remodeled by Julia Morgan, the Hearst Castle architect, in 1923; and Valley Baptist on Raymond, erected in 1919. Both the Visitacion Valley Community Center, spearheaded by Florence Friedman, and the John King Senior Center continue to meet a variety of neighborhood needs.<sup>31</sup>

Like many of the city’s western and southern neighborhoods, outward migration of displaced San Franciscans following the 1906 earthquake and fires spurred the development of valley institutions and small businesses. Historian Woody LaBounty notes that in the aftermath of San Francisco’s oldest neighborhoods, neighborhoods like Visitacion Valley flourished with

---

<sup>25</sup> Neighborhood History, Visitacion Valley History Project website: <https://www.visitacionvalleyhistoryproject.org/neighborhood-history>

<sup>26</sup> Mary A. Danforth, ed. “Schlage Lock and Key: Schlage’s Home Country. . . Visitacion Valley” (San Francisco: Schlage Lock Company, January-March, 1967), 4. Referenced in Visitacion Valley Redevelopment EIR, Historic Resources Technical Report, Carey & Co. Inc., April 29, 2008, 8.

<sup>27</sup> Neighborhood History, Visitacion Valley History Project website: <https://www.visitacionvalleyhistoryproject.org/neighborhood-history>

<sup>28</sup> Danforth, 2. Referenced in Visitacion Valley Redevelopment EIR, Historic Resources Technical Report, Carey & Co. Inc., April 29, 2008, 8.

<sup>29</sup> Jill Kneerim, *Visitacion Valley, San Francisco* (A Report to the Daniel Koshland Awards Committee of the San Francisco Foundation, San Francisco, 1985), 4. Referenced in Visitacion Valley Redevelopment EIR, Historic Resources Technical Report, Carey & Co. Inc., April 29, 2008, 8.

<sup>30</sup> Danforth, 8. Referenced in Visitacion Valley Redevelopment EIR, Historic Resources Technical Report, Carey & Co. Inc., April 29, 2008, 8.

<sup>31</sup> Neighborhood History, Visitacion Valley History Project website: <https://www.visitacionvalleyhistoryproject.org/neighborhood-history>

Leland Avenue developing as the robust commercial spine of the neighborhood with the Bayshore Hotel building, small groceries, produce markets, butcher shops, and dry goods stores occupying vernacular structures...<sup>32</sup>

Institutions quickly followed with the Catholic Church of the Visitacion founded in 1907 and St. James Presbyterian Church in 1908 (congregation began a Sunday School in 1906). In this way, St. James Presbyterian Church is part of the foundation of the neighborhood.

Historically, the Visitacion Valley neighborhood has had a working-class population. Initially this population was mostly French and German immigrants involved in agriculture. Irish, Spanish, and Italian immigrants come to the neighborhood to work in nearby factories, as well as for the Southern Pacific Railroad. With World War II, and construction of the nearby Hunters Point Naval Shipyard, there was an influx of African Americans who worked in the shipyards and lived in Sunnydale housing, which had been constructed as barracks to house workers. The African American population in the neighborhood increased further following WWII due to displacement from the Fillmore District and Western Addition as a result of activities of the Redevelopment Agency. Since the late 1980s, Chinese American and Filipino population of the neighborhood has increased. In a pictorial history of the neighborhood compiled in 2005, the population was described as being 50 percent of Asian and Pacific Islander heritage with the “Valley’s rich ethnic diversity further reflected in the ethnic congregations who worship here.”<sup>33</sup>

The Filipino Historic Context Statement notes that “establishment of a Filipino community in San Francisco is part of a larger pattern of Filipino immigration that began as early as the 1900s and continued in successive waves throughout the twentieth century.”<sup>34</sup> The South of Market (SoMa) neighborhood has long been home to the largest concentrations of Filipinos in San Francisco, recognized as the cultural center of regional Filipino community. This community, by the mid-1970s, was

concentrated in the city’s 6<sup>th</sup> District, which [at that time] encompassed the South of Market and Inner Mission neighborhoods. Filipinos also accounted for five percent of the population in Districts 7, 8 and 9, which [at that time] included parts of the Mission, Bernal Heights and Excelsior neighborhoods, as well as the city’s southwestern quadrant adjacent to Daly City.<sup>35</sup>

*Filipinos in America* also discusses San Francisco’s Filipino community in the years following World War II, noting:

The GI Bill brought all U.S. military veterans access to higher education, well-paying civil service jobs and low-interest home loans. Filipinos began to buy homes in the Richmond and Sunset districts on the west side, despite white-only racial covenants. Others moved from the SOMA southward into the Mission,

---

<sup>32</sup> Woody LaBounty, “Visitacion Valley,” Heritage in the Neighborhoods webpage, October 1, 2021, at [Visitacion Valley - San Francisco Heritage \(sfheritage.org\)](https://www.visitacionvalley.org/Heritage)

<sup>33</sup> Cynthia Cox et al., eds., *Images of America: San Francisco’s Visitacion Valley* (San Francisco: Arcadia Publishing, 2005), 8.

<sup>34</sup> Page & Turnbull, Inc., *San Francisco Filipino Heritage: Addendum to the South of Market Historic Context Statement* (prepared for the San Francisco Planning Department, March 13, 2013), 4.

<sup>35</sup> Rodolfo I. Necesito, *The Filipino Guide to San Francisco*, (San Francisco, Technomedia, 1977). Referenced in Page & Turnbull, Inc., *San Francisco Filipino Heritage: Addendum to the South of Market Historic Context Statement* (prepared for the San Francisco Planning Department, March 13, 2013), 4.

Bernal Heights, Excelsior/Outer Mission, Crocker Amazon, and Visitacion Valley neighborhoods and Daly City (of course).<sup>36</sup>

In 2008, Visitacion Valley was home to approximately 14,000 residents. The demographics have shifted from the valley's early European settlers. [In 2008] the population was comprised of 59 percent Asian American residents and the other 41 percent is made up of nearly equal percentages of Hispanics, Whites, and African Americans.<sup>37</sup>

Over the years, St. James has sponsored Scout and other youth groups, summer Bible camps, daycare, and numerous other supportive services. The congregation has also shared their building with other groups and religious organizations. Services for a Hispanic congregation currently meet in the building and a Samoan congregation held services in the building at some point (possible 1970s or 1980s).

St. James, organized by members of the community, has always reflected the neighborhood's residents. In its early decades, like the surrounding neighborhood, the congregation at St. James was mostly white. Beginning with WWII, which brought African American workers to surrounding shipyards and to the Sunnydale housing complex, through the 1970s, which saw increased African American population as well as Filipinos and Pacific Islanders, the neighborhood and congregation has diversified. In the 1970s, a church flyer, advertising the congregation, noted that the "church stands in most racially integrated area in the world" and "has people of many racial and religious backgrounds taking part in its services and social activities."<sup>38</sup>

A history of St. James, compiled in 2011,

As the demographics of Visitacion Valley changed, older members moved away or died, and their children did not stay in San Francisco. By the 1980's the congregation had shrunk and the remaining members were unable to fully support expenses. There were, however, several active Filipino members, and after much discussion the Presbytery elected to name St. James as a mission church to the large Filipino community in the neighborhood with the Presbytery providing financial support, and in 1990 a Filipino pastor was ordained. Currently (2011) the congregation is nearly 100% Filipino and has about 80 active congregants.<sup>39</sup>

In 2019, the congregation had dwindled even further, and a decision was made not to hire a new pastor following retirement of the sitting pastor. The church was closed for nearly two years (part of this closure overlapped with COVID-19 pandemic) prior to partial re-opening in late 2021 with a part-time pastor. The small congregation remains majority Filipino.

---

<sup>36</sup> Filipino American National Historical Society, Manilatown Heritage Foundation, and Pin@y Educational Partnerships, *Images of America: Filipinos in San Francisco* (Charlestown, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2011), 9.

<sup>37</sup> Carey & Co. Inc., Visitacion Valley Redevelopment EIR, Historic Resources Technical Report, April 29, 2008, 8.

<sup>38</sup> St. James Presbyterian Church, Flyer to neighbors, undated.

<sup>39</sup> St. James Presbyterian Church, "Early Church History Excerpted from Church Booklet dated April 16, 1953," 2011.

**Architecture/Design: 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 (National Register Criterion C).**

St. James Presbyterian Church is architecturally significant as an excellent example of the work of renowned architect of merit Julia Morgan. The first woman to attend and receive a degree from the prestigious Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, Morgan was also the first woman to receive a degree in civil engineering at University of California, Berkeley (1894) and to be licensed to practice architecture in California (1904). Adept at designing in variety of architectural styles and scales, Morgan is recognized as one of the leading proponents of First Bay Tradition, an architectural style unique to the Bay Area. After opening her own practice in 1904, Morgan “ran one of the most successful firms in California during the first half of the twentieth century,”<sup>40</sup> receiving nearly 800 commissions. Morgan’s first biographer describes the architect’s success as “based on empathetic imagination, fundamental understanding of the precepts of design, and profound respect for landscape, light, and materials.”<sup>41</sup> An “outstanding and prolific woman architect whose success is unsurpassed by other women in architecture of her time,”<sup>42</sup> Julia Morgan was posthumously awarded the American Institute of Architects (AIA) highest award, the AIA Gold Medal, in 2014, the first woman to receive this award, and a number of her buildings have been listed on local and national registers for their architectural significance.

Julia Morgan (1872-1957)

Julia Morgan was born in San Francisco, the second of five children of Charles Bill and Eliza Parmelee Morgan, and grew up in Oakland. Morgan maintained her residence in Oakland, principally at her family home, through the 1920s when moved her office and residence to San Francisco.

Morgan graduated with honors from the University of California, Berkeley with a degree in civil engineering in 1894. She was the first woman to earn a degree in this program at Berkeley and was often the only woman in her math, science, and engineering classes. Although Morgan had already developed an interest in architecture, which was supported by her immediate family and by her mother’s cousin, Pierre Le Brun, an architect in New York, Berkeley did not yet have an architecture program when she attended. During her time at Berkeley, which coincided with substantial growth in women’s involvement and enrollment in the student body, Morgan established ties with women’s groups, such as the YWCA, the Association of Collegiate Alumnae (became American Association of University Women), and Kappa Alpha Theta sorority, that would fuel her client base throughout her career. She also entered a mentorship with one of her instructors, Bernard Maybeck, who would remain a friend and mentor throughout Morgan’s career. Maybeck further supported her interest in architecture, providing a position in his office following her graduation and encouraging her to pursue architectural studies at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, then considered the most prestigious art and architectural school in the world.

With familial funding and professional support from Maybeck in the form of letters of recommendation and introduction, as well as tutoring on the arduous entrance examinations for the renowned school, Morgan went to Paris in 1896. During her time in Paris, Morgan also found a mentor and tutor in her professor, Bernard

---

<sup>40</sup> Sarah Allaback, *The First American Women Architects* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 141.

<sup>41</sup> Sara Holmes Boutelle, “Julia Morgan, Engineer and Architect,” *Old-House Journal* (March-April 1996), 22. [Old-House Journal - Google Books](#)

<sup>42</sup> Inge Schaefer Horton, *Early Women Architects of the San Francisco Bay Area* (Jefferson, NC and London: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2010), 314.

Chaussemiche, for whom she worked as a drafter.<sup>43</sup> The Ecole, which had never allowed a woman to study architecture, opened its entry process to female applicants in 1897. After three attempts on the examination, Morgan gained entrance to the prestigious program, the first woman to do so in the school's history, and became the first woman to earn the school's certificate in architecture.<sup>44</sup> Morgan earned this certificate in three years, although the typical duration for completion of such studies was five years.<sup>45</sup> Following graduation from the Ecole, Morgan collaborated with Chaussemiche on design and construction of a "grand salon" for a residence in Fontainebleau.<sup>46</sup>

Morgan returned to California in 1903 where she initially worked for John Galen Howard who was supervising the UC Berkeley Master Plan. Under Howard, she worked on several buildings for the UC Berkeley campus, providing decorative elements for the Hearst Mining Building, preliminary design proposal for Sather Gate, and primary designs for the Hearst Greek Theater.<sup>47</sup> Although remaining in Howard's office may have been appealing given the amount of work that the UC Berkeley project would generate and the number of connections with significant patrons – although they had met previously in Paris, Morgan worked with Phoebe Apperson Hearst for the first time while in Howard's office – Morgan was intent on establishing an independent practice. This desire may have been triggered as much by a deep independent streak as by the awareness that her work with any firm would be valued, or undervalued, in the same way Howard once described her to a colleague, saying that Morgan was "an excellent draftsman whom I have to pay almost nothing, as it is a woman."<sup>48</sup>

In 1904, Morgan passed the state certification test, becoming the first woman licensed to practice architecture in California, and opened an office in San Francisco. Independent commissions for the Mills College bell tower, known as El Campanile, along with houses in Berkeley, Grass Valley, Oakland, and San Francisco maintained the new practice.<sup>49</sup> Morgan's work on the bell tower was particularly important as it marked her first design in reinforced concrete, providing her with unique experience in the design and construction of a building type that would become increasingly sought after for its earthquake-resistance. The bell tower commission, along with design of a new library, also established Mills College as a long-term client, with Morgan eventually designing several buildings on the campus.

As was the case for Bay Area-based architects, business at Morgan's practice spiked following the 1906 earthquake and fires that destroyed whole swathes of the city's buildings and left thousands homeless. Although her San Francisco office, including her business records, drawings, and personal files, was destroyed in the fires,

---

<sup>43</sup> Julia Morgan Profile, Hearst Castle website, <https://hearstcastle.org/history-behind-hearst-castle/historic-people/profiles/julia-morgan/>

<sup>44</sup> U.C. Berkeley Environmental Design Archives "Julia Morgan: Hidden Engineer" Accessed June 8, 2020 <http://exhibits.ced.berkeley.edu/exhibits/show/juliamorgan/early-life-and-the-ecole>; Julia Morgan Profile, Hearst Castle website, <https://hearstcastle.org/history-behind-hearst-castle/historic-people/profiles/julia-morgan/>

<sup>45</sup> Karen McNeill, "'Women Who Build': Julia Morgan & Women's Institutions," *California History* California Historical Society (Summer 2012), 89. 41-74.

<sup>46</sup> Sara Holmes Boutelle, "Julia Morgan, Engineer and Architect," *Old-House Journal* (March-April 1996), 22. [Old-House Journal - Google Books](#)

<sup>47</sup> Karen McNeill, "'Women Who Build': Julia Morgan & Women's Institutions," *California History* California Historical Society (Summer 2012), 89.

<sup>48</sup> Sara Holmes Boutelle, "Julia Morgan, Engineer and Architect," *Old-House Journal* (March-April 1996), 22. [Old-House Journal - Google Books](#)

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.



and misplaced attempts at creating firebreaks, that swept through San Francisco following the earthquake, Morgan was operational only one week later, relocating her office to a “temporary workshop in the yard” of her family’s Oakland home.<sup>50</sup> The lack of structural damage to her buildings at Mills College – the bell tower and library – helped establish her design credentials in the reconstruction period as did her first major commission to rebuild the Fairmont Hotel where Morgan noted that her work “has all been structural.”<sup>51</sup> In addition to large commissions such as rebuilding the damaged Fairmont and Merchant’s Exchange Building, (along with Ira Hoover who was her junior partner from 1907-1909, the only period in her practice where she employed a partner), numerous commissions were for modest residences to re-house the thousands made homeless by the destruction in 1906. Residential design and construction of single-family homes would always constitute a significant portion of Morgan’s architectural practice even as larger, both in scope and remuneration, commissions were received. Morgan has been described as having had a “...knack of planning a house that suited her clients exactly” by starting her “...planning with interior requirements and preferences” with the result being “...convenient houses.”<sup>52</sup>

No matter the commission, Morgan was thoroughly involved, working closely with clients to ensure that each design met their unique requirements (unlike some of her contemporaries, Morgan focused on resolving interior plans before moving to the exterior design), choosing and inspecting materials carefully, and monitoring construction to ensure that every detail was built to her specifications. Historian Elinor Richey notes in her biographical sketch on Morgan that

...[Morgan] kept a captious eye on construction work. ... Nothing but first-rate work gained her approval. Far more than most architects, she knew the mechanics of construction and could interrupt a workman, saying, “Do it this way, friend.” ... She would order faulty work ripped out... Likewise, all materials she used were carefully selected and, on delivery, meticulously examined.<sup>53</sup>

With the exception of two years when Morgan employed Ira Hoover as a junior partner, Morgan maintained a solo practice from 1904 to 1947/early 1950s. From 1907 on Morgan’s office was located in the Merchant’s Exchange Building in downtown San Francisco. For many of those years, the office consisted of

four sections: a large drafting room for the engineers, draftsmen, and draftswomen (in which Julia kept her own drafting table at eh back); a small office for the secretary and office manager; Julia’s own tiny private office, and the library, which was available to all her staff.<sup>54</sup>

Morgan always employed women in her office but made sure that the staff of between 5 and 15, depending on the number of commissions at any given time, was never only women, noting that she did not want to be seen as a “woman’s” practice. All staff, regardless of gender, were paid fairly and generously with Morgan frequently sharing profits, although profit margins may have been somewhat slim given the frequency with which Morgan

---

<sup>50</sup> Victoria Kastner, *Julia Morgan: An Intimate Biography of the Trailblazing Architect* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2021), 92.

<sup>51</sup> Karen McNeill, “Gender, Architecture, and Professional Style,” *Pacific Historical Review* (Vol. 76, No. 2: May 2007), 253. Quoting Julia Morgan from Jane Armstrong, “Woman Architect Who Helped Build the Fairmont Hotel,” *San Francisco Call* (June 16, 1907).

<sup>52</sup> Elinor Richey, *Eminent Women of the West* (Berkeley, CA: Howell-North Books, 1975), 249-250.

<sup>53</sup> Elinor Richey, *Eminent Women of the West* (Berkeley, CA: Howell-North Books, 1975), 249.

<sup>54</sup> Kastner, 102.

accepted reduced fees on projects for various non-profit institutions.<sup>55</sup> Morgan had high expectations of her staff, expecting long hours of exacting work. Despite this, her office was popular with young architects of both sexes due to the “expert training they got under her perfectionist eye.”<sup>56</sup> Historian Victoria Kastner notes in *Julia Morgan: An Intimate Biography of the Trailblazing Architect* that Morgan’s work, and that of her office, “emphasized the central goals of the Ecole’s curriculum: developing excellent drawing skills; becoming knowledgeable about historic architectural precedents; and learning how to creatively combine traditional motifs in order to arrive at a new design.”<sup>57</sup> Historian Elinor Richey reiterates this description, noting further that Morgan was

...not merely turning out volume and satisfying clients; she was innovating design. Her residences partook of an original excellence that made her, along with Maybeck, leader of a new kind of domestic architecture that had become ubiquitous along the Northern California coast. These were simple shingle-surfaced houses with gable roofs and deep eaves which fitted into the landscape with an indigenous air. Characteristically, structural elements were integrated with design, both inside and out. ... The output of half a dozen or so architects was later branded The Bay Area Shingle Style, precursors of the distinctive San Francisco Bay Region Style.<sup>58</sup>

Morgan’s affiliation with the Hearst family, specifically with Phoebe Apperson Hearst and her son the newspaper tycoon, William Randolph Hearst Sr., is a throughline for her entire career, spanning three generations, and resulting in buildings that are among her most well-known and famous. Although Morgan’s long and fruitful collaboration with William Randolph Hearst, from whom she received her most famous commission – La Cuesta Encantada or “Hearst Castle” in San Simeon, her association with Hearst’s mother, Phoebe Apperson Hearst, was nearly as far-reaching. It was Phoebe that began Morgan’s affiliation with the Hearst family, with a commission to remodel and complete Phoebe’s Hacienda del Pozo de Verona in Pleasanton, California, and an introduction to her son, William. It was also Phoebe Hearst that encouraged affiliations between Morgan and several women’s groups, including the Young Women’s Christian Association’s (YWCA’s), which was in the beginning stages of an extensive West Coast building campaign. These affiliations would be amongst the most important in Morgan’s career.

Morgan would become William Randolph Hearst’s principal architect, designing the Los Angeles Examiner Building (1914-15), multiple buildings at Hearst’s northern California estate, Wynton, and the grand estate, known as Hearst Castle. Morgan’s design for the estate included all of the buildings, roadways, indoor and outdoor swimming pools, and other elements of the grounds. Morgan acted as far more than a designer for this project and oversaw every element of the project’s implementation from 1919 to 1947. Morgan’s first biographer, Sara Holmes Boutelle noted that Morgan enjoyed working with clients, be they families, women’s groups, or business tycoons, noting that her

---

<sup>55</sup> Karen McNeill, “Women Who Build: Julia Morgan & Women’s Institutions,” *California History* (Volume 89, Number 3, 2012), 46.

<sup>56</sup> Elinor Richey, *Eminent Women of the West* (Berkeley, CA: Howell-North Books, 1975), 249.

<sup>57</sup> Kastner, 102-3.

<sup>58</sup> Elinor Richey, *Eminent Women of the West* (Berkeley, CA: Howell-North Books, 1975), 249.



...collaboration with William Randolph Hearst over a quarter of a century reveals an uncommonly bonded architect-client relationship focused on building. Indeed, many clients were close friends ... calling on Morgan for more than one commission.<sup>59</sup>

Besides Hearst Castle, Morgan also worked on projects for Hearst's other properties including Jolon, Wyntoon, Babicora, the "Hopi" residence at the Grand Canyon, the Phoebe Apperson Hearst Memorial Gymnasium at Berkeley, the Los Angeles Examiner Building, several of his Beverly Hills residences, and Marion Davies' beach house in Santa Monica.<sup>60</sup>

While Phoebe Apperson Hearst's influence assisted in establishing Morgan's connection with the YWCA and other women's groups, Morgan already had other associations with the YWCA organization, including two close friends and sorority sisters. These connections, no less than Morgan's own talent and architectural qualifications, came together so that by late 1912, Morgan was the "de facto architect in charge of the YWCA's West Coast endeavors."<sup>61</sup> Over two decades Morgan would ultimately design more than 30 projects for the YWCA.<sup>62</sup> The largest of these projects was for a permanent conference camp, known as Asilomar at Pacific Grove, California. Morgan was announced as the supervising architect for this project in 1913 and "...would eventually design over a dozen buildings at the site over the ensuing twelve years, making it one of the largest Arts and Crafts-style compounds in the country."<sup>63</sup> At Asilomar Morgan "designed nearly everything: its stone entrance pillars, its social and dining halls; its chapel and its eight-hundred-seat auditorium; and even its lodges and employee residences..."<sup>64</sup> While Asilomar is resolutely Arts and Crafts-style, most of Morgan's other YWCA projects reflect various period revival styles popular in the first half of the 20th century, particularly Spanish Colonial and Mission Revival. With her Beaux-Arts training and experience utilizing the newly available inexpensive reinforced concrete, Morgan was adept at designing in these styles.<sup>65</sup> Several of the most notable of these YWCA projects include: Oakland YWCA (Renaissance Revival, 1913), Hollywood Studio Club (Spanish Colonial Revival, 1926), San Francisco Chinatown YWCA and Residence (Renaissance Revival, 1932 – SF Landmark No. 122), Honolulu, Hawaii YWCA (Spanish and Renaissance Revival, 1926).

Though her various connections via sorority sisters and officers of women's groups throughout the West Coast, Morgan also designed important buildings for many Bay Area women's clubs, including Berkeley Women's Club (now Berkeley City Club) (Renaissance Revival, 1929 – listed on National, California, and local registers), Saratoga Foothills Women's Club (First Bay Tradition, 1915 – listed on National and California registers), Sausalito Women's Club (First Bay Tradition, 1918). Over the course of her career, Morgan designed nearly one hundred buildings across California and the nation for women's organizations. Her commissions included social and civic clubs for women; academic, residential, and recreational buildings; primary schools; orphanages; hospitals, sanitariums, and nursing residences.<sup>66</sup> Architectural historian Karen McNeill has noted of these building programs that

---

<sup>59</sup> Boutelle, *Old House Journal*, 24-26.

<sup>60</sup> Julia Morgan Profile, Hearst Castle website, <https://hearstcastle.org/history-behind-hearst-castle/historic-people/profiles/julia-morgan/>

<sup>61</sup> Kastner, 105.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Kastner, 107.

<sup>64</sup> Kastner, 108.

<sup>65</sup> Elinor Richey, *Eminent Women of the West* (Berkeley, CA: Howell-North Books, 1975), 249.

<sup>66</sup> Karen McNeill, "Women Who Build: Julia Morgan & Women's Institutions," *California History* (Volume 89, Number 3, 2012), 45.

California women were not alone in their building programs, but the built environment they created stands out for one singular reason: the architect Julia Morgan. . . . She was an icon of the New Woman: a highly educated, independent, and single woman successfully pursuing a traditionally masculine career. . . . And while Morgan was not the only woman who designed buildings for women’s organizations. . . . she likely designed more buildings for women’s organizations than any other architect in the country. Her oeuvre thus provides the most expansive body of architecture designed of, by, and for women, resulting in a rich source base for exploring feminism from a spatial perspective.<sup>67</sup>

Morgan worked in many architectural styles with buildings in a variety of scales, but her projects are often characterized by her “ . . . use of the California vernacular with distinctive elements. . . . characteristic of the Arts and Crafts movement, including exposed support beams, horizontal lines that blended with the landscape and extensive use of shingles, California Redwood, and earth tones.”<sup>68</sup> Many of her design for churches are evocative of these characteristics even though most of her “ecclesiastical designs [were] for small-scale neighborhood buildings.”<sup>69</sup> During this period,

[p]opulation shifts to the outer edges of cities created a demand for new small churches, such as the Ocean Avenue Presbyterian in San Francisco, High Street Presbyterian and the United Presbyterian in Oakland, and the Thousand Oaks Baptist in Berkeley.<sup>70</sup>

Like these other neighborhood church projects, St. James Presbyterian Church also fits this description. Although commissions from the Hearst family were Morgan’s “most lucrative” she also “accepted projects from clients of modest income.”<sup>71</sup>

Although it does not match in scale or design quality some of Morgan’s better known and celebrated churches or institutional assembly spaces, the sanctuary at St. James Presbyterian Church is reminiscent of Morgan’s designs for St. John’s Presbyterian Church (Berkeley, 1910), Phoebe Apperson Hearst Social Hall (Asilomar, 1913), Merrill Hall (Asilomar, 1928), Grace Dodge Chapel (Asilomar, 1915), and Ocean Avenue Presbyterian Church (1923). Of this list, only the last, Ocean Avenue Presbyterian Church, is of a similar scale to St. James’, although all share distinctive interior characteristics, including open ceiling with wood beams and trusses with exposed metalwork and large wood-frame windows. In all these designs, even when economy of design and construction was paramount, such as for St. James Presbyterian Church where the building was constructed for approximately \$9500 (about \$160,000 in 2022 dollars), Morgan celebrated the visual quality of California Redwood with exposed structural members, designed to draw the eye to an altar or similar point of focus, and utilized natural light via large wood-framed windows to best advantage on construction sites with complicated topography or narrow city lots. St. James Presbyterian Church, while a modest example of Morgan’s ecclesiastical designs, is important within her body of work and within the history of the Visitacion Valley neighborhood and San Francisco as an

---

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, 44.

<sup>68</sup> Julia Morgan Profile, Hearst Castle website, <https://hearstcastle.org/history-behind-hearst-castle/historic-people/profiles/julia-morgan/>

<sup>69</sup> Sara Holmes Boutelle, *Julia Morgan, Architect* (New York: Abbeville Press Publishers, 1995), 70.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 69.

<sup>71</sup> Jan Cigliano Hartman, ed., *The Women Who Changed Architecture* (New York: Beverly Willis Architecture Foundation and Princeton Architectural Press, 2022), 35.

example that evokes both the design quality of said work and the equity within the body of her work. St. James Presbyterian Church is and was a neighborhood church with a design by an architect that placed equal value in the economical design of this simple church as with other, larger projects in her office.

## Bibliography

Allaback, Sarah. *The First American Women Architects* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008).

Boutelle, Sara Holmes. *Julia Morgan, Architect* (New York: Abbeville Press Publishers, 1995).

“Julia Morgan, Engineer and Architect,” *Old-House Journal* March-April 1996, 22-26. Accessed at [Old-House Journal - Google Books](#)

Carey & Co. Inc., *Historic Resources Technical Report*, prepared for Visitacion Valley Redevelopment EIR (April 29, 2008).

Danforth, Mary A., ed. “Schlage Lock and Key: Schlage’s Home Country...Visitacion Valley” (San Francisco: Schlage Lock Company, January-March, 1967).

Favro, Diane. “Sincere and Good: The Architectural Practice of Julia Morgan” *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research* (Vol. 9, No. 2, Summer, 1992): 112-118.

Filipino American National Historical Society, Manilatown Heritage Foundation, and Pin@y Educational Partnerships, *Images of America: Filipinos in San Francisco* (Charlestown, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2011).

Fuglie, Gordon L. *Julia Morgan: The Road to San Simeon – Visionary Architect of the California Renaissance* (New York: Rizzoli Electa, 2022).

Harris, Gloria G. *Women Trailblazers of California: Pioneers to the Present* (Charleston, SC: History Press, 2012).

Hartman, Jan Cigliano, ed. *The Women Who Changed Architecture* (New York: Beverly Architectural Foundation, Princeton Architectural Press, 2022).

Horton, Inge Schaefer. *Early Women Architects of the San Francisco Bay Area: The Lives and Work of Fifty Professionals, 1890-1951* (Jefferson, NC and London: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2010).

Kastner, Victoria. *Julia Morgan: An Intimate Biography of the Trailblazing Architect* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2021).

Kneerim, Jill. *Visitacion Valley, San Francisco* (A Report to the Daniel Koshland Awards Committee of the San Francisco Foundation, San Francisco, 1985).

LaBounty, Woody. “Visitacion Valley,” Heritage in the Neighborhoods webpage, October 1, 2021, at [Visitacion Valley - San Francisco Heritage \(sfheritage.org\)](#)

McNeill, Karen. “Building the California Women’s Movement: Architecture, Space, and Gender in the Life and Work of Julia Morgan (Ph. D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2006).

“Gender, Architecture, and Professional Style” *Pacific Historical Review* (Vol. 76, No. 2, May 2007): 229-268.

“Women Who Build: Julia Morgan & Women’s Institutions,” *California History* (California Historical Society, Volume 89, Number 3, July 2012: 41-74.

Necesito, Rodolfo I. *The Filipino Guide to San Francisco*, (San Francisco: Technomedia, 1977).

Page & Turnbull, Inc., *San Francisco Filipino Heritage: Addendum to the South of Market Historic Context Statement* (prepared for the San Francisco Planning Department, March 13, 2013).

St. James Presbyterian Church, “Early Church History Excerpted from Church Booklet dated April 16, 1953,” 2011.

St. James Presbyterian Church, “A Historical Sketch on occasion of the Church’s 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (1956).”

St. James Presbyterian Church, Flyer to neighbors, undated.

Richey, Elinor. *Eminent Women of the West* (Berkeley, CA: Howell-North Books, 1975).

Visitacion Valley History Project, Cynthia Cox et al., eds., *Images of America: San Francisco’s Visitacion Valley* (San Francisco: Arcadia Publishing, 2005).

Visitacion Valley History Project, Neighborhood History page, website. Accessed at <https://www.visitacionvalleyhistoryproject.org/neighborhood-history>

Wilson, Mark A. *Julia Morgan: Architect of Beauty* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Gibbs Smith, 2007).

Julia Morgan Profile, Hearst Castle website, <https://hearstcastle.org/history-behind-hearst-castle/historic-people/profiles/julia-morgan/>

U.C. Berkeley Environmental Design Archives “Julia Morgan: Hidden Engineer” Accessed June 8, 2020 <http://exhibits.ced.berkeley.edu/exhibits/show/juliamorgan/early-life-and-the-ecole>

*The Visitacion: Story of Visitacion Valley, San Francisco* (San Francisco: Committee on Press and Publicity for the Benefit of the Church of the Visitacion, 1907).



Photos



St. James Presbyterian Church, front (south) façade, view north, 2022  
Source: San Francisco Planning Department



St. James Presbyterian Church, front (south) façade, stained glass, view north, 2022  
Source: San Francisco Planning Department





St. James Presbyterian Church, front (south) and east elevations, view northwest, 2022  
Source: San Francisco Planning Department





St. James Presbyterian Church, upper level at east elevation, view south, 2022  
Source: San Francisco Planning Department



St. James Presbyterian Church, original stained-glass windows at upper level, east elevation, view south, 2022  
Source: San Francisco Planning Department





St. James Presbyterian Church, east elevation, 2022  
Source: San Francisco Planning Department

Left: View south toward front façade

Right: View north toward rear of building.





St. James Presbyterian Church, west elevation, 2022  
Source: San Francisco Planning Department

Left: View south toward front façade

Right: Detail view of west elevation.





St. James Presbyterian Church, sanctuary, view north (above) and view west (below), 2022  
Source: San Francisco Planning Department





St. James Presbyterian Church, sanctuary, view east (above) and view south (below), 2022  
Source: San Francisco Planning Department







St. James Presbyterian Church, raised platform area at north end of sanctuary, view northeast, 2022  
Source: San Francisco Planning Department



St. James Presbyterian Church, details of ceiling, trusses, and brackets in sanctuary, 2022  
Source: San Francisco Planning Department

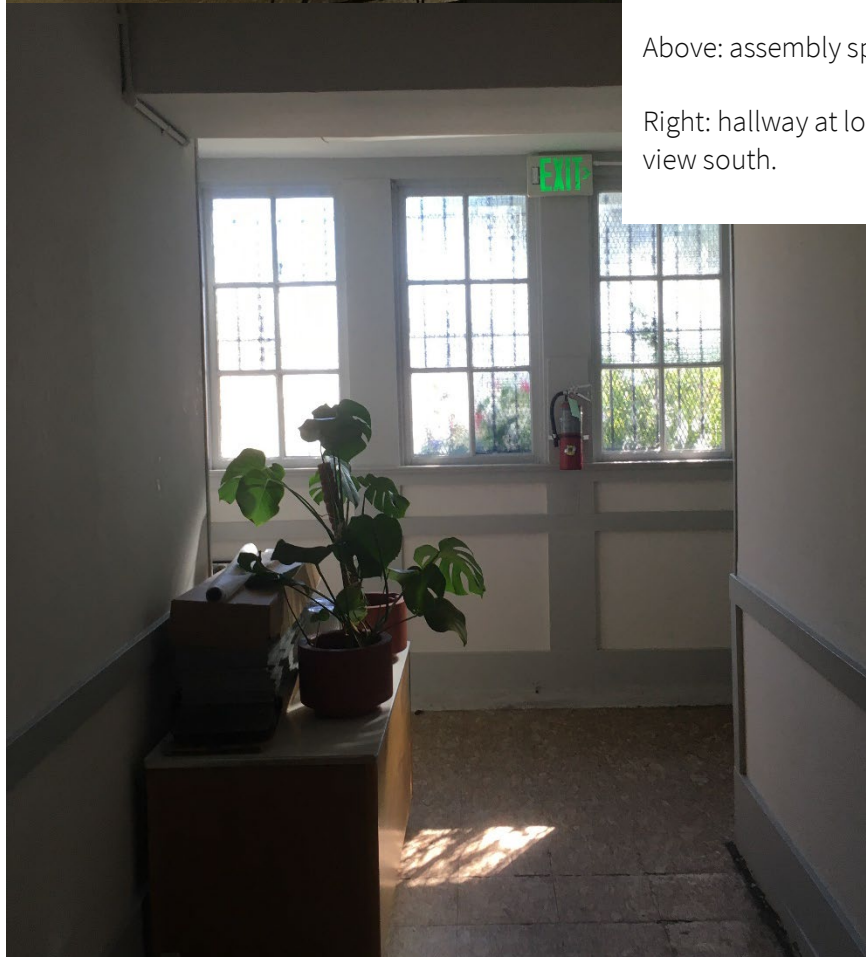




St. James Presbyterian Church, lower level interior, 2022  
Source: San Francisco Planning Department

Above: assembly space at lower level, view north.

Right: hallway at lower level (windows are at façade),  
view south.







St. James Presbyterian Church, front (south) façade, no date  
Source: Betty Parshall, Visitacion Valley History Project



St. James Presbyterian Church, front (south) façade, circa 1951  
Source: Betty Parshall, Visitacion Valley History Project



St. James Presbyterian Church, front (south) façade, circa 1920s  
Source: San Francisco Public Library, Historical Photograph Collection (AAB-1639)



St. James Presbyterian Church, front (south) façade, circa 1925  
Source: St. James Presbyterian Church: photo published in *San Francisco's Visitacion Valley* (2005)



St. James Presbyterian Church, interior at north end of sanctuary, circa 1945-1950  
Source: Betty Parshall, Visitation Valley History Project



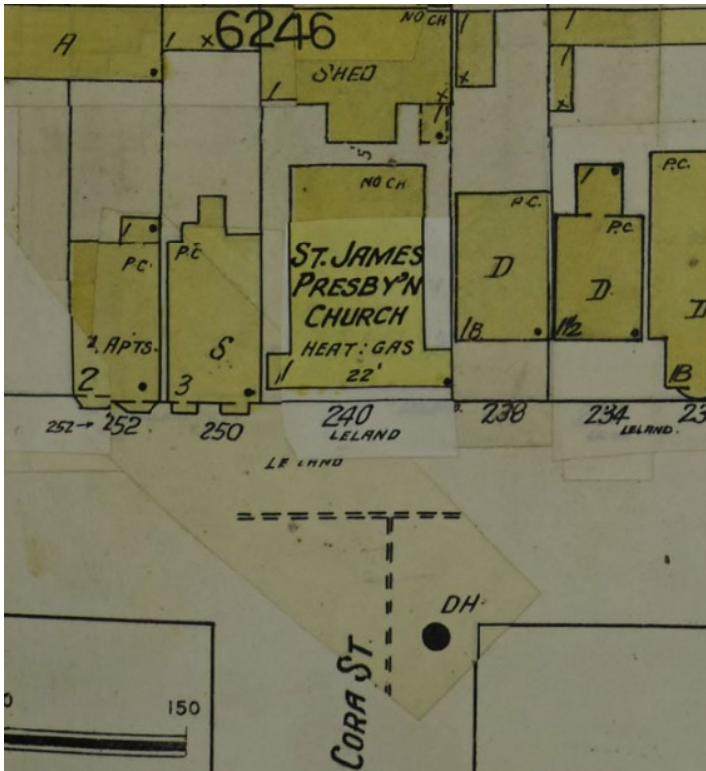


St. James Presbyterian Church, interior of sanctuary, view south, no date  
Source: Betty Parshall, Visitation Valley History Project

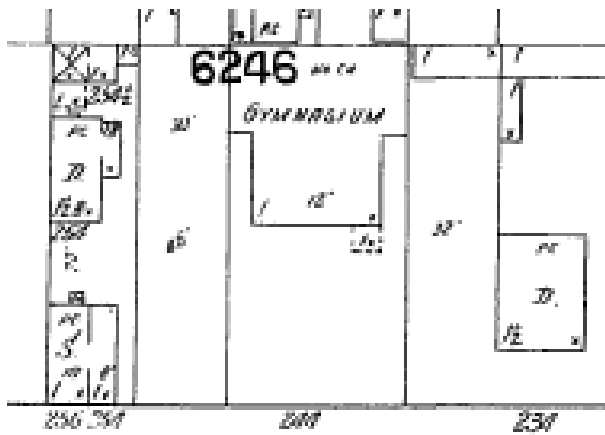


1938 Aerial Photograph – Image 34: San Francisco Aerial Views  
(Image Source: David Rumsey Historical Map Collection)

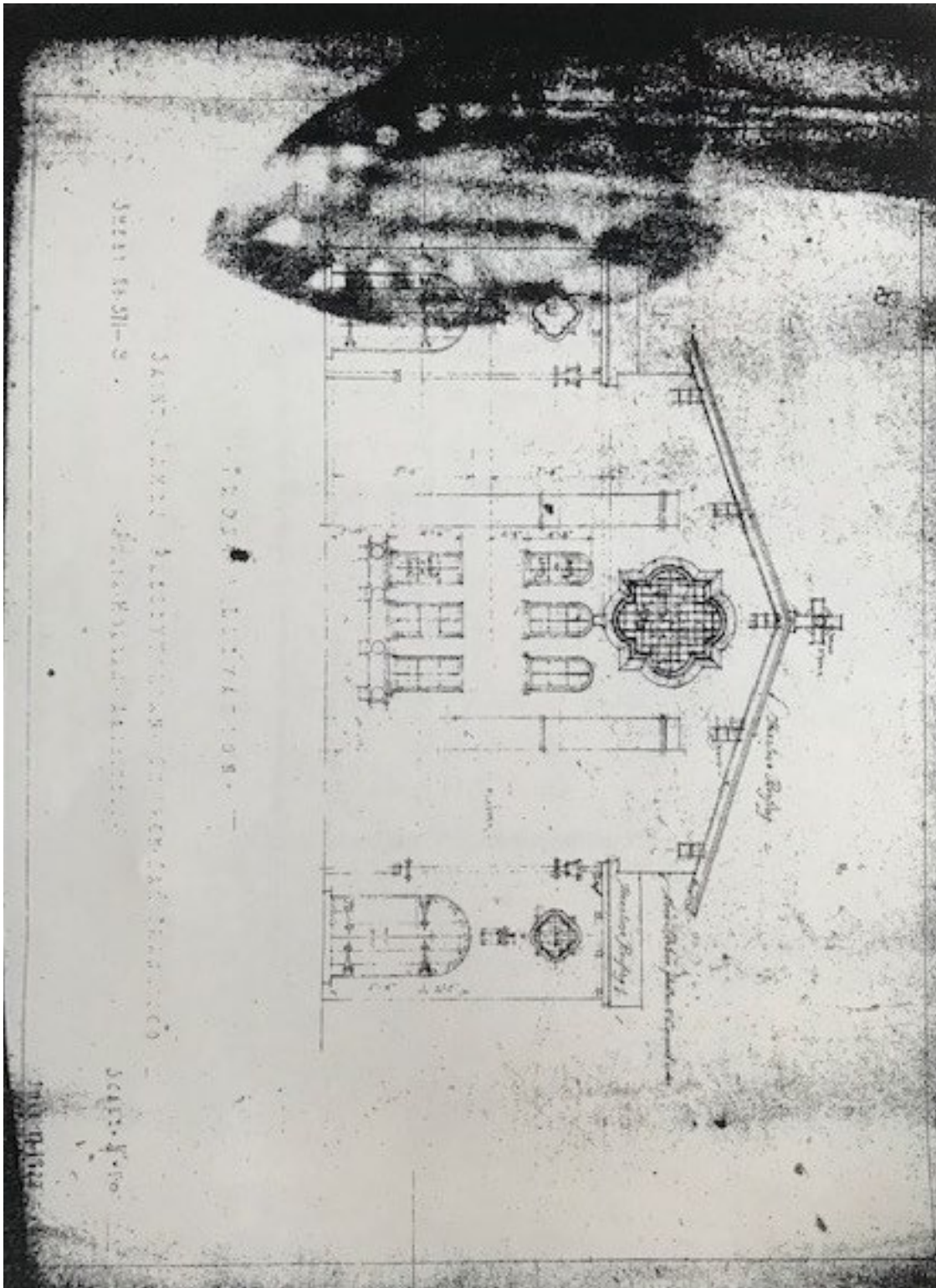
Excerpt showing Leland Avenue at Cora Street. Location and footprint of St. James Presbyterian Church and vacant rear yard. Extent of building prior to 1950s rear addition.



Detail from 1950 Sanborn Map  
Source: Library of Congress

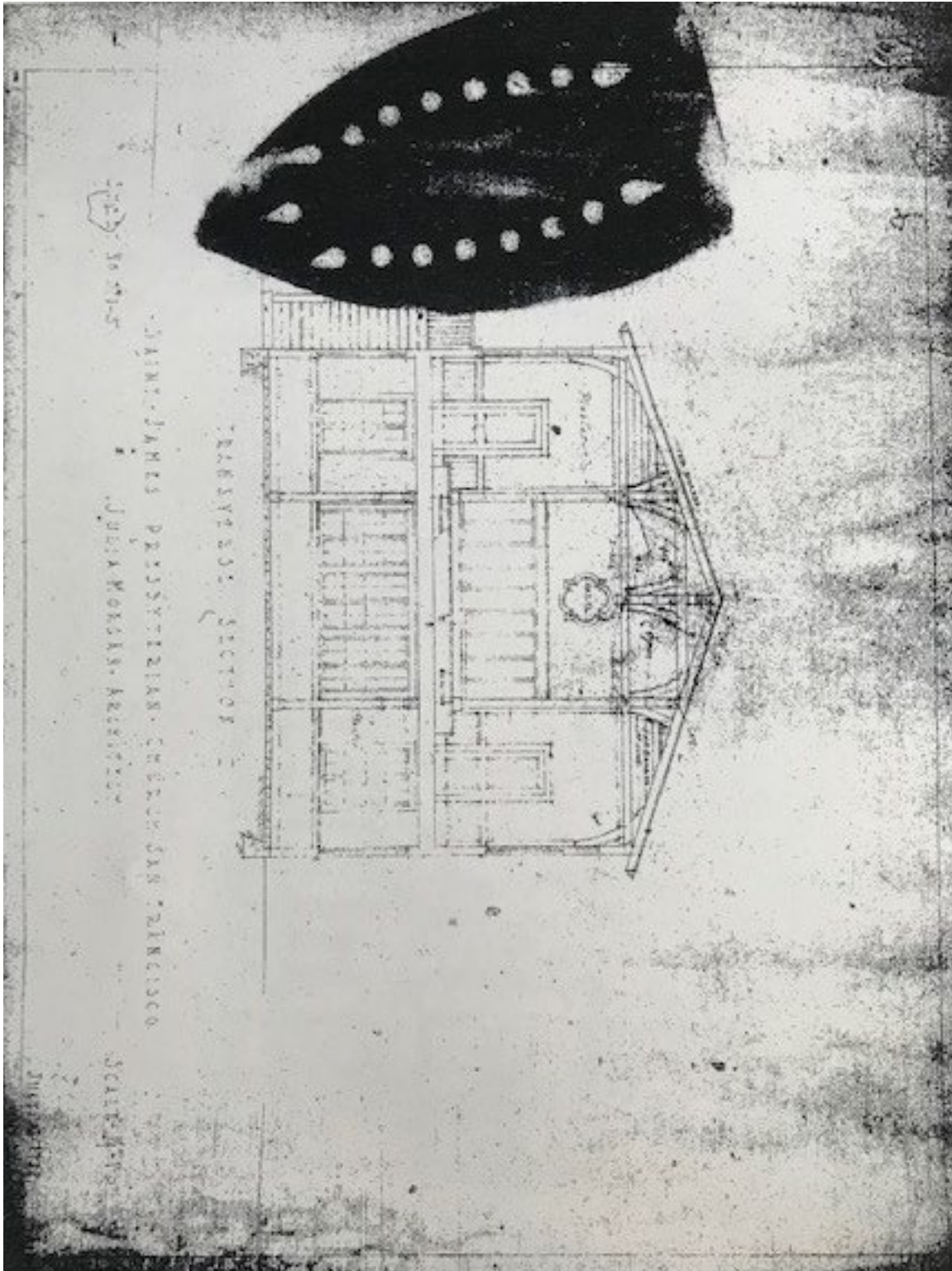


Detail from 1915 Sanborn Map  
Source: San Francisco Planning Department

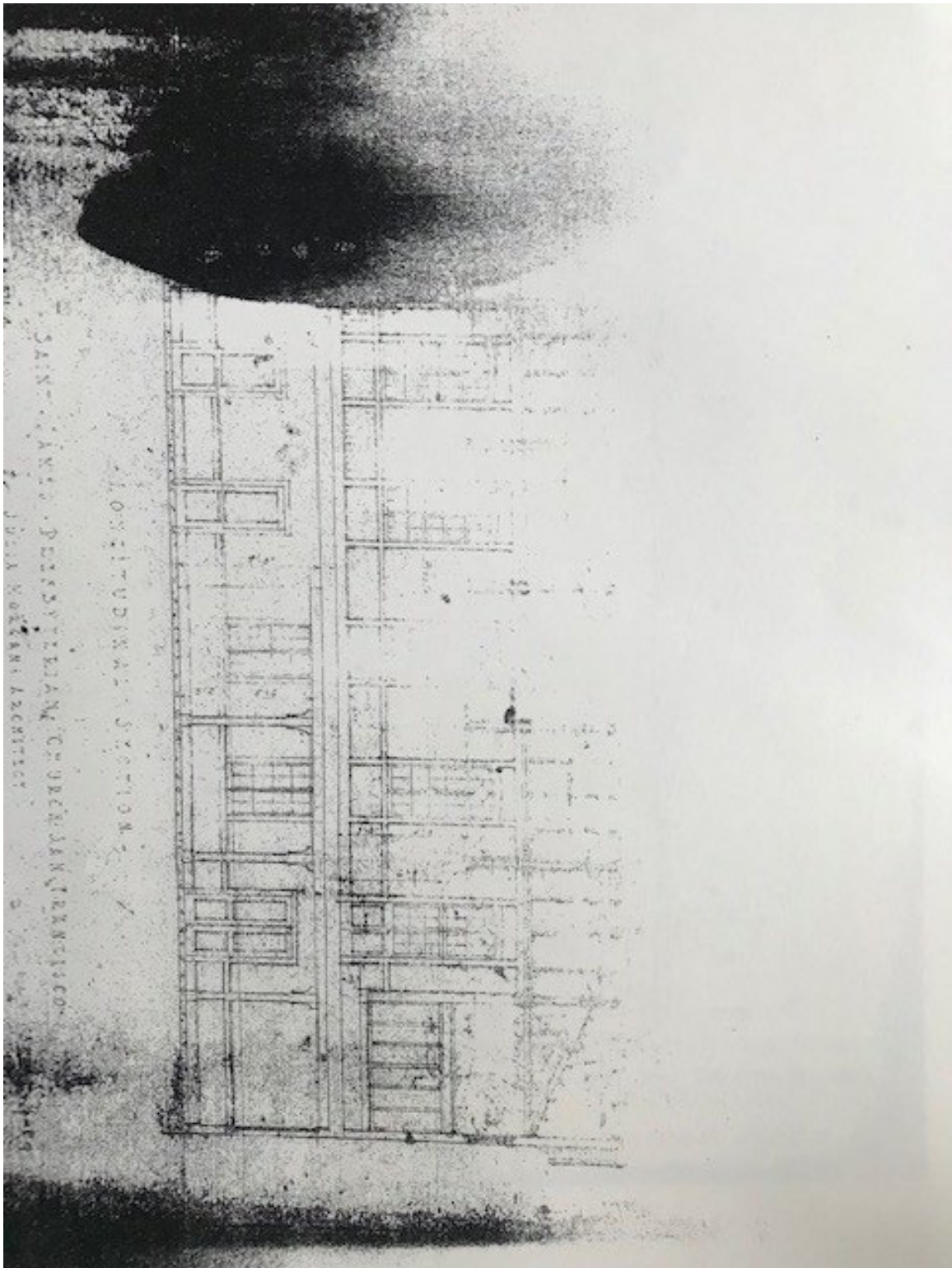


St. James Presbyterian Church, Julia Morgan original architectural drawings, Front Facade, July 10, 1922  
Source: Betty Parshall, Visitation Valley History Project. Copies of microfiche of Building Permit records held by San Francisco Department of Building Inspection.



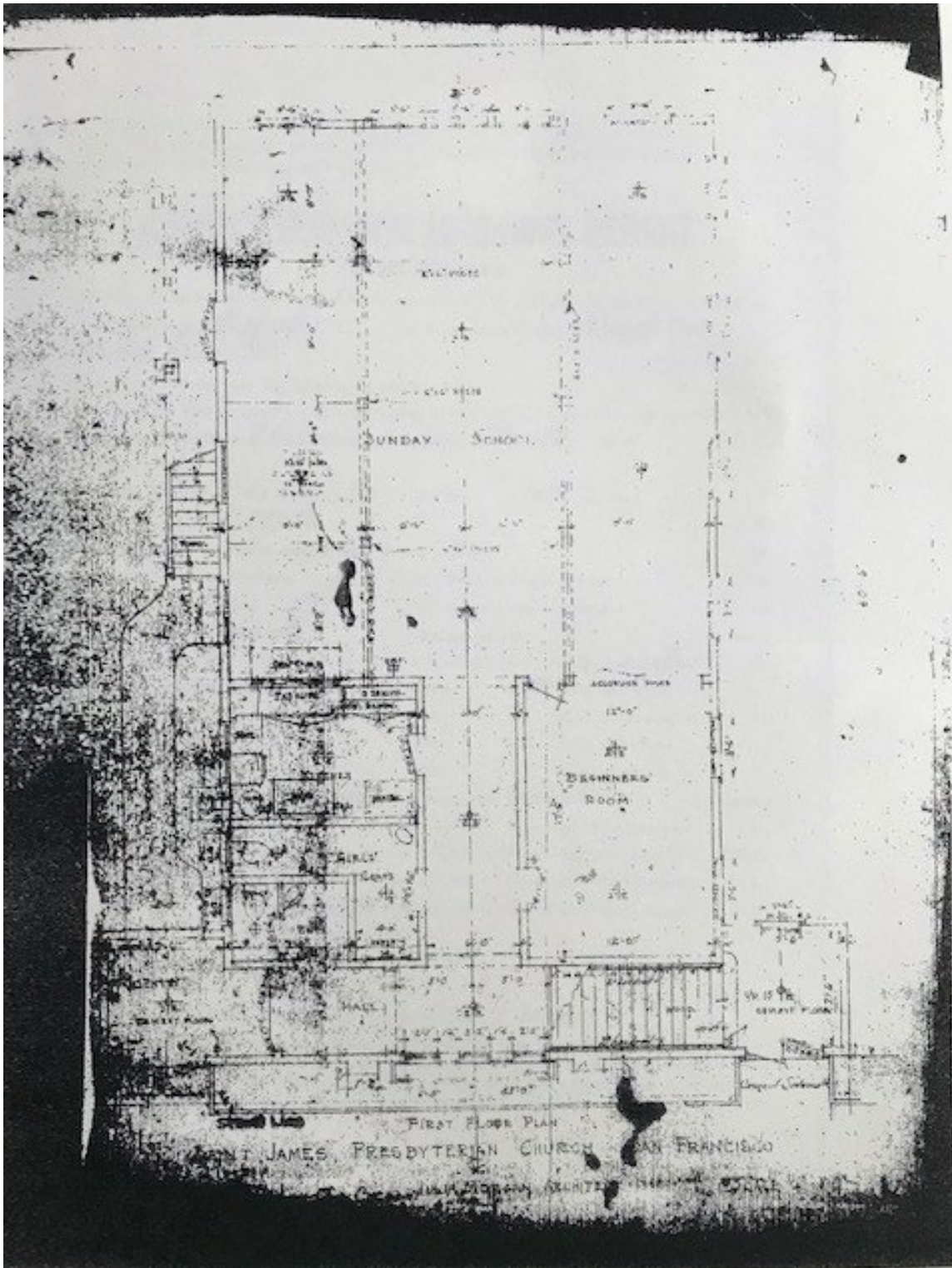


St. James Presbyterian Church, Julia Morgan original architectural drawings, Transverse Section, July 10, 1922  
Source: Betty Parshall, Visitation Valley History Project. Copies of microfiche of Building Permit records held by San Francisco Department of Building Inspection.

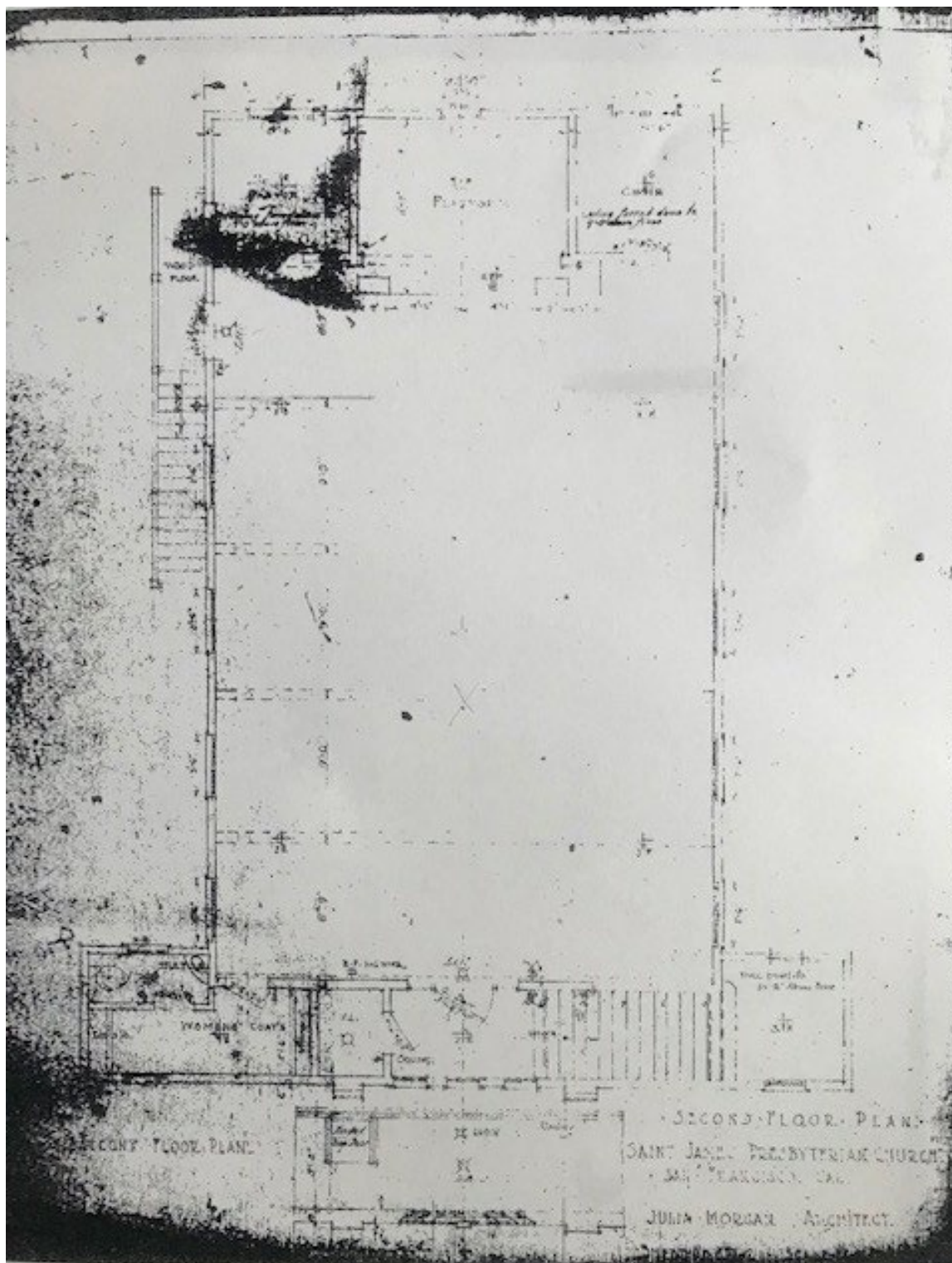


St. James Presbyterian Church, Julia Morgan original architectural drawings, Longitudinal Section, July 10, 1922  
Source: Betty Parshall, Visitation Valley History Project. Copies of microfiche of Building Permit records held by San Francisco Department of Building Inspection.





St. James Presbyterian Church, Julia Morgan original architectural drawings, First Floor Plan, July 10, 1922  
Source: Betty Parshall, Visitation Valley History Project. Copies of microfiche of Building Permit records held by San Francisco Department of Building Inspection.



St. James Presbyterian Church, Julia Morgan original architectural drawings, Second Floor Plan, July 10, 1922  
Source: Betty Parshall, Visitation Valley History Project. Copies of microfiche of Building Permit records held by San Francisco Department of Building Inspection.