

FOCUSED HISTORIC STRUCTURE REPORT
WOODS HALL
WOODS HALL ANNEX
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA
[17112]

PREPARED FOR: WOOD PARTNERS

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INTRODUCTION

The Mills Act Historical Property Contract requires all commercial properties that are assessed at a value of more than \$5M to include a Historic Structure Report (HSR) as part of the application. Representatives of the San Francisco Planning Department have indicated that the HSR could be limited in scope and should include, at minimum, a brief history of the building, a description of the building's historic condition, a summary of its existing condition including short-term and long-term recommendations for maintenance.

This Focused Historic Structure Report for Woods Hall and Woods Hall Annex serves to fulfill the requirements of the Mills Act and primarily focuses on conditions and treatment recommendations for the exterior of the building (Woods Hall) and its addition (Woods Hall Annex).

BRIEF HISTORY

Woods Hall and Woods Hall Annex were built in 1926 and 1935, respectively, for the San Francisco State Teacher's College (San Francisco Normal School). George B. McDougall, State Architect, initiated a master plan for the San Francisco campus, which was developed in phases as funding became available. Woods Hall Annex was completed with the assistance of the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Woods Hall and Woods Hall Annex originally served as the science building, and previously were named Anderson Hall and Anderson Hall Annex.

WPA artists completed murals for the building and addition ca. 1937. Maxine Albro created an elaborate mosaic mural over the entry to Woods Hall (later removed). John Emmett Gerrity completed a large mounted canvas mural in the interior lobby of Woods Hall. Small portions of the Gerrity mural were removed to make way for doorways and the mural was eventually painted over. Reuben Kadish executed the mural known as "A Dissertation on Alchemy," which is located at the top of the stairwell at the east end of Woods Hall Annex.



Figure 1 - Anderson (Woods) Hall under construction (ca. 1926). Source: San Francisco State University Archives.



Figure 2 - Anderson (Woods) Hall (ca. 1940). Source: San Francisco State University Archives.



Figure 3 - Aerial photograph of Anderson (Woods) Hall with Albro's mosaic mural in process (1937). Source: San Francisco State University Archives.



Figure 4 - Completed Albro mosaic mural on Anderson (Woods) Hall (ca. 1940). Source: San Francisco State University Archives.

In 1957 Woods Hall and Woods Hall Annex became part of a University of California extension campus. The building and addition were recently rehabilitated and converted into multi-unit residential housing as a part of the Alta Laguna project.

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

Woods Hall and Woods Hall Annex are individual San Francisco Landmarks under Planning Code Article 10; Woods Hall is Landmark No. 257 and Woods Hall Annex is Landmark No. 258. The building and addition are also contributors to the San Francisco State Teacher's College Historic District, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and subsequently in the California Register of Historical Resources.

As described in the San Francisco Landmark Designation, Woods Hall and Woods Hall Annex are significant for their association with historic events, including the “development of Normal Schools in California, for their association with the expanding role of state and federal government in education in the 1920s and 1930s, and for their association with the Works Progress Administration (WPA).” The Landmark Designation also states the buildings are significant for their architecture as “examples of a transitional style of Spanish architecture as employed by the Office of the State Architect, in particular by George B. McDougall.”



Figure 5 - John Emmett Gerrity, “Inventions of Man,” oil on canvas in Woods Hall (n/d). Source: Daughters of John Gerrity.



Figure 6 - Student body around the Sacred Palm, in front of Anderson (Woods) Hall (1940). Source: San Francisco State University Archives.



Figure 7 - Yearbook page with shots of Anderson (Woods) Hall and Annex (1928). Source: San Francisco State University Archives.



Figure 8 - John Emmett Gerrity working on "Inventions of Man" (1930). Source: Daughters of John Gerrity.

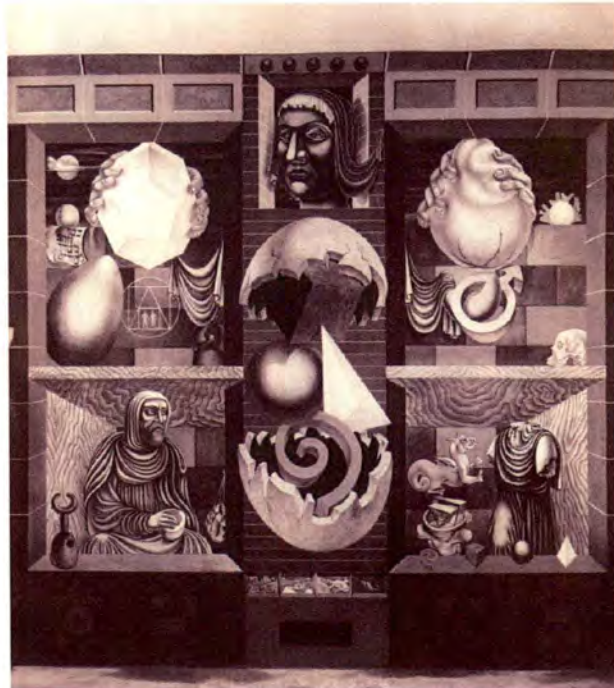


Figure 9 - Reuben Kadish, "Dissertation on Alchemy" in Anderson (Woods) Hall Annex (date unknown). Source: National Archives.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The following descriptions of the campus and individual buildings are primarily taken from the 2007 *San Francisco Planning Commission Landmark Designation Report for the U.C. Extension Center at 55 Laguna Street*. Where appropriate, other descriptions have been adapted from the 2005 *Page & Turnbull, Inc. Historic Resource Evaluation for the Laguna Extension Campus*, the 2009 *National Register of Historic Places nomination for San Francisco State Teacher's College*, or the 2012 *Page & Turnbull, Inc. HABS Level II Documentation Report*. Adaptations have been made based on the newly rehabilitated condition of the buildings.



Figure 10 - Woods Hall, April 2017. Photo by Page & Turnbull.

WOODS HALL

Woods Hall was built in 1926. The two-story building wraps around the corner of Haight and Buchanan Streets at the northwest corner of the campus. The site is relatively level along Buchanan, but on Haight is steeply sloped. The exterior elevations are very austere on the street side and function to focus the building inward toward the courtyard and campus. Woods Hall has two main wings linked by an elaborate entrance pavilion and has a combination hip and gable roof clad in red terracotta roof tile. The concrete walls are covered in stucco. Woods Hall is designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style with restrained cast concrete ornament.

WOODS HALL ENTRY PAVILION, EXTERIOR

The entry pavilion is sited at a forty-five degree angle at the corner of Haight and Buchanan. The entry is the building's primary architectural statement and functionally serves as a connector between the north and west wings. The entry pavilion is set back from the street and partially screened behind a concrete wall with two concrete urns. These urns are an important element which emphasize the portal and shape its relationship to the street. The wall conceals a short run of stairs and a modern... ramp [that provides accessibility to the main entrance. The wall was originally continuous but an opening was cut into its center when the building was rehabilitated. The opening and new steps provide direct access from

the corner of Buchanan and Haight streets.] The entry itself is deeply recessed within a barrel-vaulted vestibule. Pairs of Tuscan pilasters flank the vestibule entrance. The pilasters visually support the semi-circular arched barrel vault contained within a simple gable. The careful and individual detailing of the capitals are evidence of the fine workmanship that was lavished on the building entry.

[The doors into the building are glazed with aluminum frames.] The doors are set behind cast metal screens decorated with a profusion of abstract floral motifs culminating in a crest composed of an open book. The entry gable was the location of a WPA marble mosaic done by Maxine Albro. This mosaic, which is covered or has been removed, reflected the floral motif with the open book that is found in the entry gates.

The exterior street facades of Woods Hall are quite simple, consisting primarily of stucco-finished concrete walls punctuated by small wood...windows on the upper level and wood-frame...windows on the lower level. These are deeply recessed into the walls. [New windows were installed as part of the 2015 rehabilitation scope. The new windows are narrower than the original wood windows.] At the sidewalk level there is a series of light wells with gates that allow light into the first-story windows. The north wing connects into the neighboring Woods Hall Annex on the east.

Contrasting with the almost defensive character of the north and west facades are the amply fenestrated south and east facades that face toward the inner courtyard. Both wing facades are relatively similar and modestly treated. Both have stucco-finished concrete walls articulated by a regular grid of door and window openings on the first and second floors. The windows are mostly wood awning sash with a few casements. There are some replacement aluminum windows.

The angled entry pavilion's rear elevation is the most prominent feature on the courtyard side of the building. The gable end is occupied by an arched opening, technically called an aedicule, which is inset with a geometric grid, a motif later repeated in the belfry of Richardson Hall [the building diagonally across the Alta Laguna campus]. Columns frame the opening. Awning windows are found at both the first and second floor levels.¹

WOODS HALL, INTERIOR

Today, the interior of Woods Hall has been modified from classrooms and offices into small apartment units. The single-loaded corridors remain as does the large formal entry lobby.

“The lobby is the most architecturally important interior space of Woods Hall. Octagonal in plan, this double-height space retains its... roof rafters.... The ornamental cast-iron entry gate and the large barrel vault of the main entry are clearly visible from the octagonal lobby. This space was decoratively treated with an applied canvas mural by Bay Area artist, John Emmett Gerity. Completed as a WPA

¹ San Francisco Planning Commission, Landmark Designation Report for the U.C. Extension Center at 55 Laguna Street, formerly San Francisco State Teacher's College, Case No. 207.0219L, June 7, 2007, 8-9.



Figure 11 - Woods Hall Annex, from Haight Street. Photo by Page & Turnbull.

commission, the mural covered all eight walls of the octagonal space.²²

An interpretive plaque on the wall indicates that the mural was largely removed, though some parts remain, and has been left painted over.

Interiors of the housing units were not accessed during this evaluation.

WOODS HALL ANNEX

Built in 1935 as an addition to Woods Hall, Woods Hall Annex maintains the Spanish Colonial Revival style of the earlier buildings on the campus. It was built by the WPA as a part of the federal government's depression era public works programs. The Annex has plaster-covered concrete exterior walls and a side gable roof clad in terra cotta tile. Similar to other buildings on the campus, the walls that face the street are sparsely fenestrated, while the south wall, facing the courtyard, is amply fenestrated with full-height windows which allow light into the classrooms along this side of the building.

The most important architectural feature of the north elevation on Haight Street is the projecting entry pavilion. This entry pavilion features a cast stone arch [with two Romanesque columns on either side of the arch]. The main entry was flanked on either side by cast-metal light fixtures, which are now missing. The original doors have been replaced by contemporary wood doors. The second level is largely

²² San Francisco Planning Commission, Landmark Designation Report for the U.C. Extension Center at 55 Laguna Street, formerly San Francisco State Teacher's College, Case No. 207.0219L, June 7, 2007, 9.

blank with the exception of four window openings fitted with wood casement windows. Concrete retaining walls and grates provide light and air to basement windows below grade. Part of the north façade is obscured by olive and ficus trees.

Facing the interior courtyard, the south façade of the building responds to the steep slope of the site. The entry on this side has a large steel window. Directly above the entry is a large steel multi-light industrial oriel window that projects outward from the wall on concrete brackets. A grid of regularly spaced fenestration dominates the rest of the south façade.

The first and second floors contain distinctive interior architectural features and materials. The main, first floor, corridor is embellished with ample cornice moldings and door/window surrounds executed in plaster in the Spanish Colonial Revival mode. The main corridor has [one niche remaining] originally used as water fountains. These feature marble bases, tile backing and arched moldings above. The north wall of the main corridor has an ornate cornice molding running the length of the building. This feature is interrupted by a large arched opening flanked by square piers. Midway along the north wall of the corridor the main entry is capped by a lobed niche.

The main corridor on the second floor is not as elaborately finished as the first floor, although it has some distinctive materials and features including chamfered ceiling moldings, a running cornice molding, large square piers and small arched water fountain niches with ceramic tile backing, marble base and an eyebrow molding. The second floor corridor also has an arched barrel vault midway along its length. At the second floor landing of the [east] stair there is an important WPA mural, titled "A Dissertation on Alchemy," painted in 1935 by muralist Reuben Kadish.... It is considered one of the best examples of Kadish's work.³

Today the interior walls are painted white, with the exception of the second floor mural and west stairwell, and the concrete floors are carpeted. Rooms off the corridors have been modified and subdivided into workroom and gallery space for the occupying art center. The west stairwell exits into a public corridor with access through the building between Haight Street and the gardens in the public open space in the courtyard. Restrooms are new. The second floor boasts exposed steel trusses and plank sheathing in a vaulted ceiling in the large workspace. Steel channels cast into the concrete walls remain.

³ San Francisco Planning Commission, Landmark Designation Report for the UC Extension Center at 55 Laguna Street, formerly San Francisco State Teacher's College, Case No. 207.02191, June 7, 2007, 9-10.

EXISTING CONDITIONS, ALTERATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS ORGANIZED BY MATERIAL/COMPONENT

Woods Hall and Woods Hall Annex were surveyed by Page & Turnbull staff on April 6 and April 13, 2017. Weather was wet and cool, with overnight rain and intermittent drizzling during both days of survey. Visual survey was conducted from street and floor levels only using a digital camera and/or binoculars.

With the recent rehabilitation, both of the buildings are generally in excellent condition. Alterations are noted below based on available information and visual survey. Treatment recommendations are given with preference toward future maintenance work as the buildings are returned to service after the recent rehabilitation. All warranty information related to newly installed materials or paint should be referenced for end-of-service-life timelines for expected replacement.

WOODS HALL

CONCRETE & STUCCO

The exterior walls of Woods Hall are in good condition. Walls show no evidence of cracking or spalling and are recently painted. Proper gutter placement and operation is an issue. Some areas of mud splashback are evident around the building where water comes off the roof directly and not into gutters (which can deteriorate the paint and harm the walls over time). In one location, run off from the entry tower's gutters washes on to the roof of the Haight street wing and directly on to the ADA ramp and not into a gutter.

Gutter systems should be cleaned and regularly inspected for proper function. A solution for the run-off at the ADA ramp should be considered. The building exterior should be cleaned for debris and accumulated dirt, especially at drip ledges. Every 5-7 years, evaluate the exterior for cracks or spalls, patching as needed. Approximately every 10 years, repaint the exterior.

DOORS

The current aluminum doors at the exterior are new, having been replaced as part of the rehabilitation; they are in good condition. At the entry pavilion, the cast metal grillwork and sconces are also in good repair. The bolts securing the sconces into the concrete entry portal, however, are already showing rust and should be checked regularly for security.

ADA pathways to doorways are well-marked, but in fair condition. In multiple locations, ADA equipment was inoperable or malfunctioning. ADA hardware should be frequently verified for proper functionality.

Interior doors are all in good condition. Operability was not evaluated as doors are connected to living units.

WINDOWS

Windows are typically single pane, double hung wood windows in good or fair condition. Some non-



Figure 12 - The downspout from the upper roof sheds water onto this area of the lower roof, which bypasses the gutter and spills onto the ADA ramp into the Entry Pavilion. Photo by Page & Turnbull, 2017.



Figure 13 - The ADA pushplates at these courtyard doors only open the door this much. Photo by Page & Turnbull, 2017.



Figure 14 - Splashback on the exterior walls. Photo by Page & Turnbull, 2017.



Figure 15 - (above) A rusting bolt anchoring the sconces.
Photo by Page & Turnbull, 2017

Figure 16 - (left) The entry pavilion. Photo by Page & Turnbull, 2017



Figure 17 - Debris and trash in the lightwell. Photo by Page & Turnbull, 2017

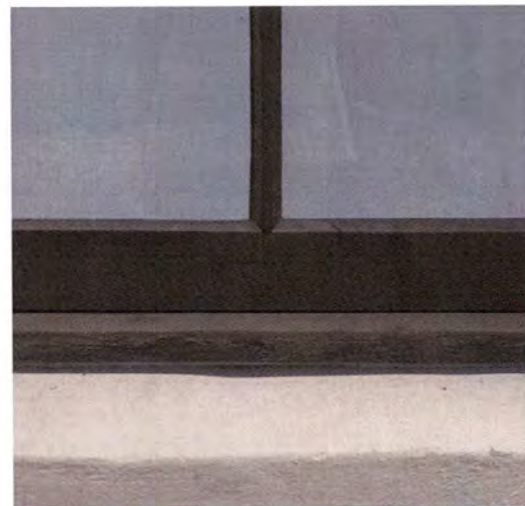


Figure 18 - UV degradation and fading of the paint on the windows in the courtyard. Photo by Page & Turnbull, 2017

historic insertions are fixed, non-divided, insulated glass windows. Windows along the courtyard, facing south and east, already show signs of UV damage (bleaching or delaminating) of the paint on the window sashes. No broken or cracked glazing was seen. Windows should be regularly inspected for glass breakage and any paint deterioration. Repaint or repair as needed. Windows should be repainted approximately every 10 years.

ROOF & GUTTERS

The clay tile roof is in good condition. There was no visible leaking on the building interior, but the attic areas were not accessed. Gutters are hidden underneath the drip edge of the tiles, and downspouts were actively shedding water during the evaluation. As mentioned above, however, some gutter areas are not functioning properly and should be assessed for proper function to prevent early deterioration of exterior wall finishes.

INTERIORS

Significant interior spaces are limited to the hallways and main lobby beyond the entry pavilion; all are in good condition. In the historic lobby and hallways floors are carpeted and walls are painted. In the main lobby, the pendant light fixtures are missing a bulb and have two that are not working. Light fixtures, especially those hanging over seating areas, should be regularly inspected for proper function and safety.

SITE

Site condition is good; areas are manicured and well taken care of. Lightwells at the windows along Buchanan and Haight streets should be regularly surveyed and cleaned for accumulating build-up of leaves, trash, and other debris.



Figure 19 - The main lobby interior carpeted and painted. Photo by Page & Turnbull, 2017



Figure 20 - Variety of windows on the south facade, all in good condition after the rehabilitation. Photo by Page & Turnbull



Figure 21 - The street entry with replaced doors. Photo by Page & Turnbull, 2017



Figure 22 - Visible bulging at the crack repair on the east facade of the Annex; there is the potential here for failure in the future. Photo by Page & Turnbull



Figure 23 - Areas under this tree on Haight Street could be cleaned, and will require it more regularly than others on the facade. Photo by Page & Turnbull

WOODS HALL ANNEX

CONCRETE & STUCCO

The painted exterior of the Woods Hall Annex is in good condition, including the features at the decorative entry portal. Walls, especially those along access walkways should be annually evaluated for evidence of cracking and spalling. Recent repairs are not completely flush within the historic surfaces and may prematurely crack or spall onto pathways below. Drip ledges and projecting elements along the walls should be regularly cleaned to prevent particulate accumulation or crusting over time, especially under the tree on Haight Street.

DOORS

Exterior doors are all recent aluminum replacements and are in good condition. Locking mechanisms and ADA operators should be regularly inspected for proper function.

WINDOWS

Windows are varied around the Annex. Wood casement windows along Haight Street are in good condition. The south facade's large steel industrial window, and steel awning windows at the basement level are also in good condition. Insulated aluminum windows fill the large, narrow openings spanning the height of the Annex, and they are also in good condition with operable awnings. As with the other painted windows on the site, all windows should be inspected periodically for finish deterioration or breakage and repaired as needed. Security of the steel window grates along Haight Street should also be evaluated regularly.



Figure 24 - The roof on Woods Hall Annex in good condition. Photo by Page & Turnbull

ROOF & GUTTERS

The clay tile roof is in good condition. No areas of debris accumulation are visible, and no leaks were evident in accessible areas inside the building. Functionality or stability of the chimney atop the gabled roof was not evaluated.

INTERIORS

The interiors of the Woods Hall Annex are in good condition. Rehabilitation construction was nearing completion at the time of the survey. Interior plaster work was freshly painted and installed carpet protected against ongoing work. Final cleaning and mechanical installations were the tasks remaining. As the building will function as an artists' studio and gallery, care should be taken not to damage features with the frequent installation and removal of art pieces, and plasterwork regularly evaluated after each major move and repaired as necessary.

The decorative water fountain niches remain in good, inoperable condition, as in both locations the sink and spouts had been previously removed. Interior doors have been replaced with new glazed or solid wood doors, and any new partition walls are similarly in great condition.

The mural at the top of the main staircase, "A Dissertation on Alchemy", is in fair condition. Some graffiti remains and should be cleaned. Cracking, areas of spalling, and a hole are also present. Each should be sensitively patched or repaired by a fine art restorer with fresco experience. An interpretive plaque has already been installed adjacent to the mural. At a minimum, stabilization of the damaged areas should be undertaken to prevent further damage.

SITE

As with Woods Hall, the building site is in good condition and well managed. Light wells should be checked for trash and debris and cleaned regularly.



Figure 25 - First floor corridor.



Figure 26 - Haight Street entry interior

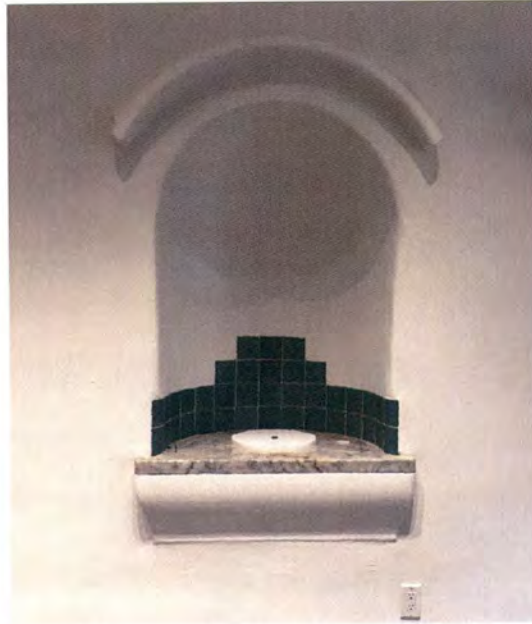


Figure 27 - Remains of the marble water fountain, first floor



Figure 28 - Second floor workspace with exposed trusses and sheathing



Figure 29 - "The Dissertation of Alchemy" on the second floor landing of the east stair.



Figure 30 - Spalling and cracks at the mural base



Figure 31 - Hole in the mural

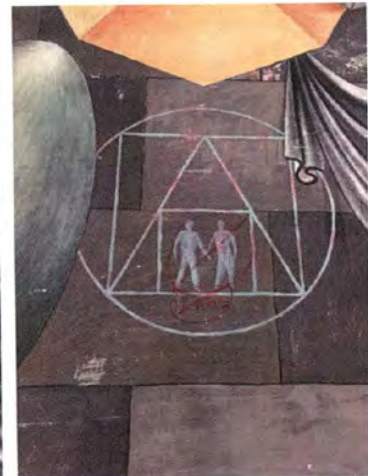


Figure 32 - Graffiti

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