

THE GARGOYLES OF SAN FRANCISCO: MEDIEVALIST ARCHITECTURE  
IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA 1900-1940

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by

James Harvey Mitchell, Jr.

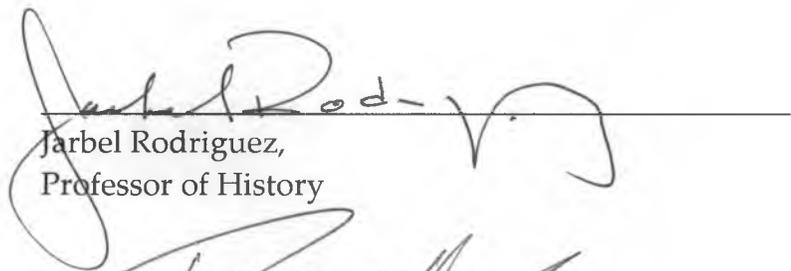
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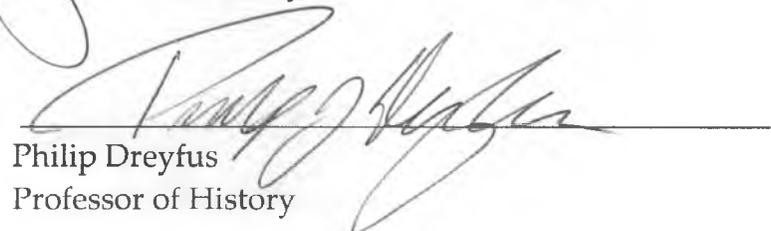
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THE GARGOYLES OF SAN FRANCISCO: MEDIEVALIST ARCHITECTURE  
IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA 1900-1940

James Harvey Mitchell, Jr.  
San Francisco, California  
2016

After the fire and earthquake of 1906, the reconstruction of San Francisco initiated a profusion of neo-Gothic churches, public buildings and residential architecture. This thesis examines the development from the novel perspective of medievalism—the study of the Middle Ages as an imaginative construct in western society after their actual demise. It offers a selection of the best known neo-Gothic artifacts in the city, describes the technological innovations which distinguish them from the medievalist architecture of the nineteenth century, and shows the motivation for their creation. The significance of the California Arts and Crafts movement is explained, and profiles are offered of the two leading medievalist architects of the period, Bernard Maybeck and Julia Morgan. The thesis concludes with a discussion of the ill-fated attempt to create a museum for medieval arts in the City, inspired by William Randolph Hearst's donation of a monastery building imported from Spain.

I certify that the Abstract is a correct representation of the content of this thesis.

  
Chair, Thesis Committee

5-16-16  
Date

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## INTRODUCTION

In the aftermath of the 1906 earthquake and fire which destroyed at least eighty per cent of the city, San Francisco experienced a profusion of building activity continuing without interruption until the slow slide into the Great Depression started in 1929. No stranger to idiosyncratic architectural styles, the city constructed in only three decades a wide variety of buildings incorporating medieval designs and ornamentation. "Moorish Palace" architecture was chosen to contain a massive National Guard armory; a Gothic cathedral built of poured concrete which included a scaled-down replica of the Sainte-Chapelle in Paris was undertaken on Nob Hill; a Masonic Temple arose at Van Ness and Market disguised as a trecento Italian *palazzo*; and the stones from a monastery imported from Europe by William Randolph Hearst, planned for reassembly in Shasta County but then left abandoned in Golden Gate Park, were gathered to house a never-realized San Francisco Museum for Medieval Art. Meanwhile the celebrated California Arts and Crafts architects Julia Morgan and Bernard Maybeck, working out of their offices in downtown San Francisco, created massively composed designs for the medieval halls of the Hearst residential

palaces at San Simeon and Wynton, as well as designing elaborate medieval fireplaces and arched wooden ceilings to decorate the interiors of dozens of well-to-do homes in the Bay Area.

This thesis will explore the sudden outburst of medieval interest in many varied architectural spaces in San Francisco during the first decades of the twentieth century, and seek to understand why it happened when it did, how it related to similar trends elsewhere in the country, and how urban medieval architecture managed to compete locally against more pervasive styles of heritage architecture usually described as Spanish Baroque or Spanish Colonial, and against neoclassicism. Do these modern medieval artifacts build upon the Gothic revivals of the nineteenth century, and are they part of a larger discursive field rather than elements in a series of eccentric events or architectural fads? We will establish that some buildings were meant to replicate or imitate medieval models, while others departed from their medieval provenance into full-blown flights of fantasy, hybridizing the Gothic with modernity and its increasingly innovative technologies. In so doing we will show that despite its geographic singularity and distance from much older cities on the East Coast, San Francisco was not only successful in applying medievalist design techniques to the

demands and concerns of modern urban architecture, but that it did so in an altogether distinctive and unique manner. We will show that rather than conforming to a common ideological or aesthetic agenda effecting a medievalist revival in architecture, the adoption of medieval designs was uniquely contingent upon the differing intentions of the builders themselves.

#### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

There are several contributing factors which helped facilitate the construction of medievalist buildings in the city, the most significant being the unprecedented building boom that followed immediately upon the 1906 earthquake and continued on into the 1930s.<sup>1</sup> The requirements for vast numbers of new buildings to replace the destroyed ones led also to contesting styles vying for public attention. Architectural historians have been quick to point out that the

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<sup>1</sup> To simplify matters I have adopted the term "medievalist" to designate urban medievalist architecture built in the approximate period 1890-1940. I use the term to distinguish it from the conventional Gothic Revival and Victorian Gothic styles of the nineteenth century.

first decades of the twentieth century were characterized mainly by eclecticism and historicism, rather than by any single dominant genre, historicizing or not, before modernism eventually won the day.<sup>2</sup> In this respect neo-medievalism can be seen as one style competing with several others, its obvious rivals locally being neo-classicism and the California heritage style called Spanish Colonial (or Spanish Baroque), both of which eventually emerged as favorites in the race for popular approval and elicited therefore the enthusiastic support of governmental planning authorities for public buildings.

A second area of influence is found in the circumstance that San Francisco, in comparison with other American cities, had already experienced a protracted period of distinctive and indeed idiosyncratic neo-medieval architectural design in the century preceding. In accordance with a common ordering held by historians, the Gothic Revival (1840 to 1860) was followed by the Victorian Gothic period (1870 to 1890), which arose in opposition to English Georgian and

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<sup>2</sup> Architectural historians are by no means united in their attempts to characterize stylistic periods, durations and derivations. In this paper I have followed the stylistic classification adopted by Leland M. Roth, *American Architecture: A History* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2001), which does not see modernism in architecture, based on steel and glass technologies, developing as a distinct and prevalent style until after 1940.

other early neoclassical styles prevalent in America since at least 1800.<sup>3</sup> Victorian Gothic (or “Carpenter Gothic”) churches, residences and public buildings were certainly ubiquitous in pre-Earthquake San Francisco. These structures utilized pre-fabricated Gothic arches, tracery and decorative elements, shaped from plaster molds or cut from wood, which were mass-produced in assembly-line fashion in Marin County, in workshops located in close proximity to the then still plentiful redwood groves.<sup>4</sup>

Despite the circumstance that the city already had its own characteristic version of Victorian Gothic providing some thrust perhaps towards a continuation of medieval styles, the fire of 1906 furnished an unexpected architectural rupture between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. While in other cities modes of construction and design trends developed more organically from earlier eras, San Francisco experienced a kind of caesura followed by an

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<sup>3</sup> See Note Two above. An especially decorative San Francisco version of Victorian Gothic has been also called “Gingerbread Gothic.” Most of it is lost now, but a good example may yet be seen in the interior of St. Matthew’s Lutheran Church, 3281 16th Street, built 1907.

<sup>4</sup> Mitchell Schwarzer, *San Francisco: Architecture of the San Francisco Bay Area: A History and Guide*. (San Francisco, CA: William Stout Publishers, 2007), 18.

architectural restart after 1906, affording in practical terms a clean break between the two periods. Thus medievalist architecture could move forward under new conditions, impelled not only by the radical innovations in construction technology afforded by the introduction of reinforced or structured concrete walls and sheet-glass windows, but also by the demand created by burgeoning urban populations for completely new types of buildings, for example public library branches and high-rise office buildings.

#### WHAT REVIVAL? WHOSE GOTHIC? WHICH MEDIEVAL?

Terminological confusion and misinterpretation beset almost all aspects of the literature written about historicizing architecture, nowhere more intensely perhaps than in the dozen or more guidebooks published to instruct and accompany the San Francisco visitor on her foot-tour through the streets of the city. The term "Gothic" is employed not only for any construction that exhibits pointy arches and decorative tracery, but also often for facades, portals and arcades which are obviously Romanesque, and indeed for any combination of the two styles as well. In such instances "Gothic" becomes synonymous with

“medieval.” In a similar fashion, “Gothic Revival” becomes a universal term of the same categorical vagueness, ignoring important underlying distinctions between French and English traditions, not to mention stylistic divergences from one century to another. Ignoring the more scholarly term “Carpenter Gothic”—a designation for the application of Gothic Revival elements most commonly applied to wooden structures built by North American house-carpenters, often with quite eccentric results—writers of local guidebooks clearly prefer the term “Victorian Gothic.” But because the term seems anachronistic when medievalist structures from a later period than the Victorian are referred to, authors often deploy the designations “neo-Gothic” or “Gothic Revival” for the modern era as if no other species of “Gothic” had pre-existed them. The larger context of medievalism is lost, as well as any sense of historical continuity, through the perceptual misrecognition that what changes is not the style but the labels, in consideration of the newer technologies employed, the innovative purposes for which the buildings were constructed, and the theoretical concerns which led to their construction in the first place. Such determining qualifications are among the primary concerns of this paper.

Periodization of movements, schools, periods and styles—medievalist and otherwise—is of course a conspicuously contentious matter for architectural historians. Often the problems confronting the guidebook writer and the historian struggling to categorize buildings of historical interest cannot be resolved by consulting an encyclopedia or a standard reference work. In San Francisco the situation is further complicated because most Victorian Gothic public buildings and non-residences went up in flames in 1906, leaving only a few surviving structures west of Van Ness Avenue.<sup>5</sup> Medieval San Francisco as it exists today therefore demands to be understood as a twentieth-century project. To avoid confusion, we will make use of the following terms in the course of this paper.<sup>6</sup>

**Gothic.** A style of European architecture that evolved from the Romanesque of twelfth-century France, flourished during the high and late

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<sup>5</sup> As for example Trinity Episcopal Church, First Unitarian Church, and the Swedenborgian Church, which were not built principally of wood. St. Matthew's Lutheran Church at 16th Street and Dolores, whose interior is a fine example of so-called "gingerbread Gothic," is a unique survivor south of Market Street. St. Paulus Lutheran Church also escaped the fire at 999 Eddy Street near Jefferson Square, but sadly burned down anyway in 1995.

<sup>6</sup> The terms are chosen from Cyril M. Harris, *American Architecture: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1998).

Middle Ages, and was succeeded by Renaissance architecture in the sixteenth century. It is characterized by pointed arches, ornately decorated fenestration, stained glass windows, rib vaults and flying buttresses.<sup>7</sup>

**Gothic Revival.** An architectural movement that began in the 1740s in England and flourished there and in North America in the following century, primarily from 1830 to 1880. Its most celebrated theorists and designers in England were Augustus Pugin, John Ruskin, George Gilbert Scott and son, Charles Barry, and William Morris. At their hands the movement grew rapidly in popularity in the nineteenth-century, as admirers of medieval English Gothic architecture rose to confront neoclassical styles derived from the Continent and prevalent at the time. Ideologically the Gothic Revival has been variously associated with religious conservatism and revitalization, socialism, and national identity and heritage.<sup>8</sup>

**French Gothic Revival.** A movement in nineteenth-century France with similar prerogatives, generally associated with the pioneering restoration work

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<sup>7</sup> Harris, *Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Gothic Architecture," 154.

<sup>8</sup> Harris, *Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Gothic Revival," 155.

of Eugène Viollet-le-Duc. It romanticized French Gothic architecture as a national heritage and source of religious inspiration, but at the same time it took an ideologically less demanding position regarding modern technologies, integrating iron and steel-frame construction where necessary as a replacement for stone-masonry or for structural support.<sup>9</sup>

**American Gothic Revival**, also referred to as **Carpenter Gothic**. America and Canada developed their own style in the nineteenth century, creating structures which adapted such Gothic elements as pointed arches, steep gables, and towers and applied them to traditional American light-frame wood construction. Often asymmetrical in plan, the style employed highly decorative woodwork, commonly referred to as “gingerbread” in its more elaborate forms.<sup>10</sup>

**Collegiate Gothic**. In the twentieth century churches and colleges were often built of sandstone or limestone, as at Bryn Mawr, Princeton University, Duke University, Yale University and Chicago University. At the hands of Ralph Adams Cram and other master builders, the style was often carefully derivative

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<sup>9</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica Online, s. v. "Gothic Revival," accessed 8 October 2013, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/239789/Gothic-Revival> .

<sup>10</sup> Harris, *Encyclopedia*, s.v. "American Gothic Revival," 48.

of English Gothic and English Perpendicular in appearance, but left room for French influences as well.<sup>11</sup> And it is not strictly limited to American college campuses: the Washington National Cathedral might also be considered representative of the Collegiate Gothic style.

**High Victorian Gothic.** An elaborated form of the Gothic Revival in its last phase in America, from about 1860 to 1890. It is also called **Late Gothic Revival**, and it emphasized multi-colored masonry, brickwork, and floor and roofing tiles, as well as massive gables and porches.<sup>12</sup>

**Neo-Gothic.** A bucket term describing almost any application of Gothic design after the Middle Ages. It is probably most usefully employed in reference to modern medievalist architecture after 1900, since other designations are more frequently applied to the nineteenth century.

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<sup>11</sup> Harris, *Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Collegiate Gothic," 67.

<sup>12</sup> Harris, *Encyclopedia*, s.v. "High Victorian Gothic," 173.

## MEDIEVAL SAN FRANCISCO

Historians and critics of urban architecture in America have generally concentrated on technology and design aesthetics, paying little more than tangential attention to the underlying social and cultural conditions that motivated the production of historicizing architecture. A useful analytic concept which emphasizes the underlying cultural background and provides a different, more theoretically oriented perspective for this area of architectural study is found in the newly developed academic subject of medievalism studies: the study of the Middle Ages as an imaginative construct in western society dating from whenever the actual Middle Ages may be said to have ended.<sup>13</sup> Rather than viewing a modern neo-Gothic structure as a building that replicates medieval design forms, for example, the work might also be seen as a contribution to “the

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<sup>13</sup> Medievalism is “the study of the Middle Ages, the application of medieval models to contemporary needs, and the inspiration of the Middle Ages in all forms of art and thought.” Leslie J. Workman, “Editorial,” *Studies in Medievalism* 3, no. 1 (1987), 1. The term itself however dates to the 1840s in England: see David Matthews, *Medievalism: A Critical History* (D. S. Brewer, Cambridge: 2015), x. Brewer argues that the popular interest for and profound influence upon the Middle Ages on European cultural affairs peaked in the same decade and has been in a state of decline since then, due in part to the professionalization of medieval studies within academic institutions 1870-1925, and its subsequent withdrawal from more public modes of discourse. A distinction obtains therefore between medievalism and medievalism studies.

continuing process of creating the Middle Ages,"<sup>14</sup> and understood also as "an occasion for dream-work in public culture."<sup>15</sup>

Such an approach therefore sees the Middle Ages not simply as a historical period, but as an unfinished project that accepts contemporary artifacts as moments of an ongoing process, and not just as a re-enactment or a reverence to something past and done with. As Michael Camille brilliantly puts it, "this should not preclude our wanting to understand the Middle Ages as a distinct historical period; we find, however that it is hardly ever as distinct or as separate as we might want to think, but always flowing into other periods, haunting other epochs, emerging where we least expect it, in romanticism, surrealism, and even post-modernity."<sup>16</sup>

The reception of medieval culture in post-medieval times therefore exists qualitatively as a post-modern "turn" to the meta-medieval, whose intellectual

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<sup>14</sup> International Society for the Study of Medievalism, "History." <http://www.medievalism.net/history.html> [accessed August 19, 2015].

<sup>15</sup> Kathleen Biddick, "Bede's Blush: Postcards from Bali, Bombay, Palo Alto," in *The Past and Future of Medieval Studies*, ed. John H. Van Engen (Notre Dame, IN.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 17.

<sup>16</sup> Michael Camille, *The Gargoyles of Notre-Dame: Medievalism and the Monsters of Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), xi.

matrix requires a detailed background investigation of contemporary attitudes and perspectives—including for example the question how medievalism encourages, coincides with, confronts, elaborates, impedes, rejects, or otherwise relates to romanticism and anti-modernism. The Middle Ages accordingly remain alive not only as a subject of scholarship or of enlightened historical interest, but thrive also in their apparently endless infiltration of all the popular media—Hollywood films, video games, poster art, rock music, tv series, comic strips, historical novels, iPhone apps and social media. Because new forms inevitably create a demand for new content, the media themselves transform medieval consciousness and thus become legitimate objects of study, often interlaced with traditionally scholarly modes of expression. Social trends, fashions and leisure behaviors constitute a whole additional performance arena, involving a diverse range of activities embracing medieval re-enactors, Comic-Con attendees disporting in cos-playing roles, and amateur beer-brewers and cooking enthusiasts experimenting with archaic concoctions and recipes.

To limit ourselves to medievalist architecture in San Francisco in the early twentieth century can therefore only serve as one particular contribution to the larger project of medievalism, which of course would require a much more

extensive elaboration to include a variety of social behaviors. In fact the city can boast of many activities of like-minded inspiration. Annual Bohemian Club performances at the turn of the twentieth century featured respectable business executives and community leaders dressed in medieval costume acting in satirical amateur theatrical productions held among the redwoods at Bohemian Grove in Marin County (*Figure 1*). The annual Christmas festival known as the Bracebridge Dinner, originally organized by Ansel Adams in 1927, constitutes a sort of medieval minstrel show still held annually in the Great Hall of the Ahwahnee Hotel in Yosemite Valley.<sup>17</sup> While local calligraphers formed clubs to refine and provide exhibition possibilities for their work on Carolingian miniscule, less sedentary enthusiasts gathered in 1966 to activate the Society of Creative Anachronism in Berkeley, as of 2014, an international living history group and non-profit educational corporation with 30,000 paid members and 60,000 total participants, united in their devotion to the recrudescence of the

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<sup>17</sup> Yosemite National Park, "Bracebridge Dinner." <http://www.yosemitepark.com/bracebridge-dinner.aspx> (accessed August 1, 2015).

Middle Ages not as they were, but “as they ought to have been.”<sup>18</sup> And the Northern California Renaissance Pleasure Faire, first located at what is now China Camp State Park in San Rafael and two years later at the Black Point Forest in Novato, attracted crowds that eventually numbered in the hundreds of thousands.<sup>19</sup> These Faires developed into local traditions involving school classes and support groups meeting throughout the year, thus beginning a movement that spread across the country.<sup>20</sup>

The medieval constructions that arose in San Francisco after the Earthquake should consequently be seen as only one area of interest in the larger field of medievalism, but the buildings do have the advantage of durability: while other more performative activities have fallen before the vicissitudes of changing taste and commercial enterprise, the buildings themselves, relics of an age pre-existing the International Style, now constitute a form of heritage

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<sup>18</sup> Wikipedia contributors, “Society for Creative Anachronism,” *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Society\\_for\\_Creative\\_Anachronism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Society_for_Creative_Anachronism) (accessed July 10, 2015).

<sup>19</sup> Wikipedia contributors, “Renaissance fair,” *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Renaissance\\_fair](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Renaissance_fair) (accessed July 10, 2015). The Northern California Faire is now held annually in the town of Gilroy in Santa Clara County.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

architecture, and in most cases they can be visited and enjoyed today in much the same fashion as when they were built.<sup>21</sup>

The next question is why they were built to begin with, and because they did not for the most part emerge from a popular movement or collective cultural enthusiasm, the answer rests in the symbolic expectations of their creators. Here the motivations have varied widely. As we will describe below, Bishop Nichols' call for a Gothic cathedral whose towers could be seen at the summit of Nob Hill from any viewpoint in the Bay of San Francisco is one imaginative envisioning; the decision to build a neo-Gothic office building in downtown Oakland in obvious imitation of the Woolworth Building in Manhattan is quite another. The desire of public institutions to express impermeable authority is apparent in the entrance to San Quentin, which imitates a crenellated medieval fortress (*Figure 2*), while William Randolph Hearst's employment of Julia Morgan to design

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<sup>21</sup> At least until another cataclysmic earthquake event. Almost all the buildings discussed in this paper have been designated city, state or national landmarks, see pages 27-28 below.

princely Renaissance interiors at the Hearst Castle served only the aesthetic interests of its patron.<sup>22</sup>

Indeed there is no reason to assume that what inspired medievalist architecture was different from the interests that motivated the two other styles of historicizing architecture prevalent at the beginning of the twentieth century—Spanish Colonial, called also Spanish Baroque, and neo-classical. As we will show, the purposes of these historicizing styles include cultural heritage,

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<sup>22</sup> If there is a predominant and unifying perspective that underlies the several buildings, it would perhaps be the desire of the sponsoring elites to enhance civic spaces with the prestige and authority they attributed to the Middle Ages. Accepting that contemporary perceptions of the Middle Ages oscillate between the absurdly grotesque on the one hand and the impossibly romantic on the other, David Matthews suggests in regard to architecture that “The recapturing and reinvention of the medieval built environment was a clearly a facet of what I am calling here the romantic Middle Ages, in that it powerfully and positively revalued an aspect of the medieval past. Neo-gothic was one of medievalism’s spectacular successes, offering an official form of medievalism espoused by the elite institutions of governance. Hence it is worth distinguishing this part of the revival as a subset, which I call the civic Middle Ages.” (Matthews, *Medievalism*, 27).

Although the characterization certainly seems to apply without difficulty to much of the institutional architecture built in San Francisco after 1906—one thinks of medieval design elements and ornamentation approved by government committees and implanted in local branch libraries, hospitals and public schools—the difficulty arises that many private residences and non-civic buildings are equally “romantic,” often to the point of utter eccentricity. The point is that Gothic design is never just “civic,” but has always been found appealing also for purely aesthetic reasons, which might be thought to predominate from time to time in the thoughts of the building planners. And of course the question arises why in California the civic virtues would be better represented—or any the more romantically—in medieval format compared to neo-classical or Spanish Colonial.

religious tradition, and institutional authority, which worked together in an era when immigration from Europe was yet in full-swing, and at a time when European religious affiliation, cultural influence, and educational and intellectual dominance in the world was far more present in the minds of Americans than it is today—as evidenced also by the fact that the most productive of the first-generation Bay Area architects had received their professional education in Europe.<sup>23</sup>

Cultural affiliation with Europe and respect for predominant European construction styles encouraged historicizing architecture to flourish locally as well in the rest of the country, but there is one particular area of ideological interest and aesthetic inspiration in which San Francisco and Northern California was to play a leading role nationally: the regional movement known to us today as California Arts and Crafts.

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<sup>23</sup> The prestige factor accruing to European tradition may provide a reasonable explanation for the existence of so many historically-themed buildings for public institutions built in the 1920s in San Francisco—such as the Board of Education buildings on Van Ness Avenue or Laguna Honda Hospital—while it was left to private corporations to advance the cause of architectural modernism and of the more efficiently fabricated, Bauhaus-influenced International Style, which gradually became more prevalent in the construction of high-rise office buildings and production facilities.

## CALIFORNIA ARTS AND CRAFTS

The influence of this aesthetic movement at the turn of the twentieth century is crucial for our understanding of medievalist architecture in San Francisco and throughout California as well; indeed it must be considered its most distinctive feature when compared with similar medievalist enterprise across the country. In view of its insistence upon native woods and stone varieties sourced from the local environment, its adoption of traditional handicrafts and building techniques in rejection of mass-produced or machine-made materials, as well as to its dedication to fine craftsmanship generally, the movement offered a unified stylistic approach not only to the design and appointment of residential interiors, but also to the external appearance of buildings as well. While it is true that the arts and crafts program was also fully operational within the context of Spanish Colonial and neo-classical architectural styles, yet in terms of its ideological affinity to the imagined ambience and life-style of the Middle Ages, it was of much more pervasive influence and relevance.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> As Mitchell Schwarzer writes concerning the medieval context of the California Arts and Crafts movement: "This Northern California offshoot of the English Arts and Crafts Movement promoted the values of rusticity, simplicity, and fidelity to local materials and lifestyle. English

If we consider the conventional forms of residential architecture in San Francisco during the late Victorian era, the transformative effect of Arts and Crafts principles and techniques becomes readily apparent, probably less obviously so from our modern perspective which compels us to view the movement as a historical instance confined to a very few decades. But during the period of Arts and Crafts ascendancy from the late 1890s to the years immediately following the First World War, such features in the interior furnishing of homes as oversized stone fire-places, lancet and leaded windows, tiled flooring and side-panels in the kitchen, and the wainscoting crafted of native woods to take the place of plaster walls and wallpaper, were considered radically innovative. Even more arresting was the appearance of an Arts and Crafts home from the outside: exterior walls clad simply with brown wooden shingles to replace painted wooden surfaces laced with turned and jig-sawn ornamentation, the most distinctive and indispensable hallmark of San Francisco Carpenter Gothic in the century preceding.

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Arts and Crafts ideology borrowed much more strongly from the Middle Ages than from Classical Antiquity." Schwarzer, *San Francisco*, 22.

For a time the prominence of the Arts and Crafts aesthetic also extended beyond the sphere of private homes into a number of public buildings in the Bay Area, among them the Swedenborgian Church in San Francisco, the First Unitarian Church in Berkeley, and Maybeck's Faculty Club on the University of California Berkeley campus, in all instances of which massively arched wood-beamed ceilings of fir, pine and redwood dominated interior spaces to simulate the effect of medieval halls. Similar appropriations inspired the first-generation of prominent "First Bay Tradition" architects, among them Joseph Worcester, Daniel H. Burnham, Charles F. McKim, Willis Polk, Ernest Coxhead, A. Page Brown, A. C. Schweinfurt, and John Galen Howard.<sup>25</sup> Adept in other historical styles as well, each incorporated to a varying extent the theoretical tenets and technical demands of what was then an extreme departure from standard Victorian design.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Leslie Mandelson Freudenheim, *Building with Nature: Inspiration for the Arts & Crafts Home* (Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith, 2005), 1. Elaborate roofs and ceilings been seen as characteristic of all the "First Bay Tradition" architects, a term which may have originated with the critic Allan Temko. The First Bay Tradition was followed by the "Second Bay Tradition" with Henry Higby Gutterson and John Hudson Thomas viewed as transitional architects.

<sup>26</sup> The list of "Arts and Crafts Architects" has been extended to include twenty-eight entrants by Robert Winter, *Toward a Simpler Way of Life: The Arts & Crafts Architects of California* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1997), Table of Contents. Although in this paper we

Viewed within the context of medievalism, California Arts and Crafts enjoyed an unusually elaborate theoretical program, proclaimed enthusiastically by its local proponents. The genesis of the movement has been ascribed to Joseph Worcester, a Swedenborgian minister by profession and an architectural critic, well-versed in the writings of John Ruskin, whom he knew and admired personally, and more prominently to William Morris, the father of the Arts and Crafts philosophical manifesto in England.<sup>27</sup> Worcester left Boston in 1864 and established himself early on as a force in the cultural and intellectual life of San Francisco, maintaining friendships with influential contemporaries including John Muir, Daniel Burnham, John Galen Howard, Charles Keeler, and other leading architects and prominent artists and intellectuals who had begun to gather in the Bay Area.<sup>28</sup> In 1876, seeking the solitary enjoyment of nature, Worcester built for himself a brown-shingle bungalow in distant Piedmont

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have come to regard Julia Morgan and Bernard Maybeck primarily as medievalist architects, they are more often than not labeled Arts and Crafts architects by many Bay Area historians. In point of fact most prominent San Francisco architects of the period both enjoyed and were proficient at all the trending styles of their time, Maybeck and Morgan included, making such characterizations ultimately impracticable.

<sup>27</sup> Freudenheim, *Building*, 1.

<sup>28</sup> Freudenheim, *Building*, 2-4. Charles Keeler says of Worcester, "His word was law in the select group of connoisseurs of which he was the center" (Keeler, quoted in Freudenheim, *Building*, 6).

which afforded a grand view of the Bay, in rejection of social status, contemporary fashion and the stylish homes of San Francisco.<sup>29</sup> His home became memorialized as the first shingled bungalow in the West, and it predated the popular resort houses and bungalows built by established East Coast architectural firms, in what was to become known as the California Bungalow Style.<sup>30</sup> Acting as the minister and leader of the city's Swedenborgian parish, it was Joseph Worcester also who set in motion the creation of what has long been considered the premier Arts and Crafts masterpiece, the Swedenborgian Church located in the Pacific Heights neighborhood of San Francisco, listed on the National Register of Historic Places.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Freudenheim, *Building*, 8-9. Early Arts and Crafts advocates were much concerned with the cultivation of virtues they viewed as inherent in Nature, learned from the study of the English Romantics, New England Transcendentalists, John Ruskin, and in Worcester's case the writings of Emmanuel Swedenborg. In meetings with John Muir held to discuss the preservations and protection of Yosemite Valley, and in the Yosemite paintings of many artists, the Romantic ideal of Nature as a source of revelation and spiritual regeneration was constantly addressed (Freudenheim, *Building*, 13-17).

<sup>30</sup> Freudenheim, *Building*, 8.

<sup>31</sup> Discussed below at page 50 ff. For a lengthy consideration of the Swedenborgian Church and its iconic significance for California Arts and Crafts, see Freudenheim, *Building*, 33-68. Freudenheim sees this Church and other buildings which it inspired San Francisco as seminal to the development of Arts and Crafts nationally.

Thanks in large part to Worcester's influence, and organized in the same year his church was under construction, the first Arts and Crafts society in America was founded 1894 in San Francisco, pre-dating similar societies founded a few years later in Boston and Chicago.<sup>32</sup> The Guild of Arts and Crafts of San Francisco, by including a quota of members from other established public works and trade organizations in the city, also acted as an architectural policeman to influence the design of homes and public buildings by publishing reviews of the plans of all structures exceeding \$1000 in cost.<sup>33</sup> Although the organization collapsed in 1897 as a result of internal dissension among its members, it received public attention by presenting two major public exhibitions to advance its ideological program, both of which were reviewed by journals with nationwide circulation.<sup>34</sup> Ascribing its provenance and ideological basis to British models, the *Overland Monthly* for example found that the local society and its exhibitions gained their "fundamental idea from the annual exhibition instituted

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<sup>32</sup> Freudenheim, *Building*, 69.

<sup>33</sup> Freudenheim, *Building*, 70.

<sup>34</sup> Freudenheim, *Building*, 71.

largely through the efforts of William Morris," while its intellectual agenda was attributable to "the indirect influence of the teachings of Ruskin."<sup>35</sup>

But the chief theorist for the nascent California Arts and Crafts movement was in fact Charles Keeler, who had moved to the Bay Area in 1887 from Wisconsin.<sup>36</sup> After studying biology at U.C. Berkeley, he distinguished himself as an author, poet, ornithologist, architectural critic, and influential advocate of the arts, and in 1891 he was appointed director of the natural history museum at the California Academy of Sciences. In his writings he actively pursued the idea of integrating architecture with nature, and he went on to become a leading member of the Ruskin Club in 1895 and the Hillside Club in 1898, both organized to nurture Arts and Crafts ideals in Berkeley.<sup>37</sup> Fueled by his vision of aesthetic utopian communities occupying the then virgin lands of California, and

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<sup>35</sup> Quoted in Freudenheim, *Building*, 70.

<sup>36</sup> Charles Augustus Keeler, *The Simple Home* (Santa Barbara: P. Smith, 1979), xxix.

<sup>37</sup> Keeler, *Home*, viii. The Hillside Club was founded in 1898 by a group of Berkeley women who wished to protect the natural integrity of Berkeley hillsides by promoting the development of the community in environmentally constructive ways, with an emphasis on landscape planning. In 1902, seeking more political clout, the club invited men to join, and Keeler served as its first male president until 1904. The Hillside Club maintains a clubhouse and continues its mission in Berkeley today as "a community-based membership organization supporting the arts and culture," online at: <https://www.hillsideclub.org> (accessed May 27, 2015).

exercising his involvement with what we today might refer to as environmental activism, Keeler was also a charter member of the Sierra Club, founded in 1892 by its first president, John Muir.<sup>38</sup>

In 1904, Charles Keeler published a book entitled *The Simple Home*, a short work which has been accepted as the founding document and principal manifesto of the California Arts and Crafts movement (*Figures 3 and 4*). Encouraging an architecture that would also be understood as a moral prescription for California living, the book argues that the Victorian home, overloaded with unnecessary ornamentation and machine-produced decoration—most Victorian houses were furnished with mass-produced, machine-made decorative articles manufactured in Marin County workshops—had produced not only aesthetic shoddiness, but indeed a concomitant degeneration in civic morals and a degradation of quality in all other arts.<sup>39</sup> The

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<sup>38</sup> Keeler, *Home*, xxiv.

<sup>39</sup> Keeler heaps vitriol on the Queen Anne style trending in San Francisco: “We must all have palaces to house us—petty makeshifts, to be sure, with imitation turrets, spires, porticos, corbels and elaborate bracket-work excrescences—palaces of crumbling plaster, with walls papered in gaudy patterns and carpets of insolent device—palaces furnished in cracking veneer, with marble mantels and elaborate chandeliers. It is a shoddy home, the makeshift of a shoddy age.” Keeler, *Home*, 4.

antidote for Keeler was devastatingly obvious: simple homes constructed of natural materials, appointed with traditional handicrafts, supporting the return to a simplified and morally perfected lifestyle in the embrace of Nature.

How did the Arts and Crafts agenda discover its own identity in correspondence with the actual Middle Ages? It is clear from Keeler's *The Simple Home* and from his other writings that medieval history is a constant sub-text, in which the twin values of rusticity and simplicity, and therewith a life-style shaped by nature that could only generate sublime architecture, are deeply embedded. In more personal terms, Keeler's account of his initial encounter with Bernard Maybeck in 1891, whom he had met by chance on the daily ferry-boat commute from Berkeley to San Francisco, reveals the extent to which both were devoted to a revival of medieval aesthetic traditions. Describing Maybeck as "a pioneer and restorer of the honorable ancient art of handcraft architecture," Keeler praises him for being "imbued with the artistic spirit of the Middle Ages."<sup>40</sup> Keeler relates how Maybeck designed a Berkeley studio for Phoebe

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<sup>40</sup> Charles Keeler, "Friends Bearing Torches." Charles Augustus Keeler Papers, 1858-1949. The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. The Maybeck narrative is an unpublished biographical essay, one chapter of "Friends Bearing Torches," a manuscript made up of sketches

Hearst which was “Gothic in style, with a succession of exposed heavy timber arches reaching from the ground to the peak,” and he portrays Maybeck’s Faculty Club on the U.C. Berkeley campus as “set in a glade amidst beautiful old live oak trees,” and reports approvingly that “the quaint medieval-looking timbered hall looks as if it had stood there for centuries.”<sup>41</sup>

Lastly we may again recognize the significance of the California Arts and Crafts movement to the progress of medievalist architecture in the Bay Area, and also as the most important single factor distinguishing it from similar endeavors elsewhere in the country. Before 1906 it had bestowed upon medieval-themed architecture a clearly defined program and ascribed to it a set of ethical imperatives which went beyond issues of mere aesthetics on the one hand, or beyond cultural affiliation or symbolic expression of institutional authority and prestige on the other, to include ecological responsibility, landscape planning, the planned settlement of neighborhoods, use of local resources and a reasoned

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of the lives of great early Californians written by Charles Keeler. The section on Maybeck is also available online at <http://www.oregoncoast.net/maybeckgothicman.html> (accessed June 1, 2015).

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* Keeler tells how Maybeck built a home for him on land he had purchased in the Berkeley hills, one of his best-known “Gothic houses,” as Maybeck called them. It was his first independent commission in San Francisco, done for Keeler without charge, and the house exists to this day. Keeler dedicated his 1904 manifesto *The Simple Home* to Maybeck in response.

program to escape the stultifying effects of mass-production through the resurgence of traditional handicrafts. Unlike other, more popular nationwide styles such as Richardson Romanesque or Collegiate Gothic, it informed medievalism with a mission and a practical sensibility that hoped to elevate its inhabitants from the status of observers and to engage them as active participants inside a larger theoretical program.

Clearly the manner in which these ideals came to expression in San Francisco produced a unique contribution to the field of architectural medievalism in America, but as a cultural movement it quickly expired after 1906 when the ensuing emergency conditions led to practical demands incompatible with its own ideological program. Some critics have seen California Arts and Crafts as inaugurating a new medieval revival in the Bay Area, but except for a lingering influence on interior residential design, the movement was dead in the water after the Earthquake and Fire.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> We have noted that it is commonly the case that critics have referred to the First Bay Tradition architects as agents of the Arts and Crafts movement, completely ignoring their accomplishments as medieval designers. That Bernard Maybeck and Julia Morgan, for example, were by training and instinct serious students and indeed highly skilled practitioners of specifically medieval building and design technique, is all but universally ignored. There is a passing reference to a

## NEW BUILDINGS AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE

There are four categories of local buildings which combine medieval design structure and decoration: churches, residences, office buildings, and other public buildings aimed at specific community groups, such as schools, libraries, hospitals, or more specific interests like the Berkeley Women's Club and a mortuary in Oakland designed by Julia Morgan. Our list includes some of the more prominent examples commonly found in local architectural guidebooks; all of them have been designated as state, national or city landmarks, excepting St. Dominic's Catholic Church and the Maybeck Erlanger house.<sup>43</sup> We include in our

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Bay Area "medieval revival" in Robert Winter, *Toward a Simpler Way of Life: The Arts & Crafts Architects of California* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), 94. And in her essay on the San Francisco architect William Raymond Yelland, Lauren Weiss Bricker notes that "In the San Francisco Bay Area the Medieval Revival had been, since the early years of the twentieth century, a common thread that joined a number of architects in producing a regional expression." But in the absence of a common program and because the relevant buildings were usually built for very different reasons, it seems exaggerated to speak of a medieval revival.

<sup>43</sup> The City of San Francisco maintains a list of locally designated "City Landmarks and Historic Districts," similar to the National Register of Historic Places but at the local level. A list of the 237 city landmarks can be viewed online at the San Francisco Planning Department Historic Preservation website, <http://www.sfplanning.org/index.aspx?page=1825> (accessed May 3, 3012). Due to space restrictions our provisional list can offer only the most basic information about the buildings. Expanding our geographical coverage to include the East Bay or Northern California would likely double the scope of this paper. Because of their exceptional importance I have

list two earthquake survivor-buildings from the last decade of the nineteenth century, Trinity Episcopal Church and the Swedenborgian Church, whose construction was important for the post-Earthquake era.

Our survey contains a brief description of the medieval features of each building, and an explanation of why mediievally themed architecture was determined upon, so far as discoverable. The results will show that rather than confirming the notion of a medieval revival in the 1920s, the buildings were constructed for a number of different reasons, the single unifying factor being perhaps an appreciation of, or a fascination with, medieval design aesthetics. Due to space limitations the selection is confined mainly to buildings within the City and County of San Francisco, and for the same reason we have not included many stylistically hybridized buildings which are more eclectic in design, but which contain extrusive medieval features.

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included the "Cathedral Building" in Oakland and the Maybeck Christian Science Church in Berkeley, both of which were designed by architects working in San Francisco.

## CHURCHES

### GRACE EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL

San Francisco's *pièce de résistance* for French Gothic architecture stands high above the urban landscape looking down from Nob Hill atop the highest elevation in the downtown area, centered as it were in the living-room of wealth and power, where local millionaires had built baronial mansions and gathered to socialize in private clubs.<sup>44</sup> Today the intended effect of universal visibility from almost all points in the city and across the Bay is vitiated by any number of equally lofty hotels and apartment buildings that encircle the Cathedral, but clearly its physical placement and its deployment of Gothic spires and towers were meant to enhance verticality and establish visual dominance over the entire city. This atmosphere of high architectural drama is incorporated in the original plans executed by the Cathedral's first architect, George Frederick Bodley, a

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<sup>44</sup> The Pacific Union Club at 1000 California Street is the last mansion from this era. It was built in 1886 as a townhouse for the silver magnate James C. Flood, and it is the only Nob Hill building to have survived the 1906 earthquake, excepting the Fairmont Hotel.

pupil of England's foremost nineteenth-century medievalist architect George Gilbert Scott (*Figures 5 and 6*).

The site of the Cathedral comprises a whole city block between California and Sacramento, and Jones and Taylor Streets; the land was donated in 1906 by the Crocker Family after their palatial residence had burned to the ground. William H. Crocker was the youngest son of Charles Crocker, best known for his prominent role in the building of the Central Pacific Railroad, and founder of the commercial bank known today as the Crocker Bank.<sup>45</sup> A masterpiece of architectonic gigantism, the Crocker mansion was ridiculed by local architect Willis Polk as the ugliest building in the city, and he also offered to burn it down as a civic gesture.<sup>46</sup> In the wake of events, Polk's civic-mindedness proved unnecessary, however, and following the inferno the scorched plot was transferred in 1907 into the ownership of Grace Cathedral, where Crocker and his wife Ethel were parishioners.

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<sup>45</sup> San Mateo County Historical Association, "2010 History Makers—The Crocker Family." <http://www.historysmc.org/main.php?page=hmcrocker> (accessed January 15, 2015).

<sup>46</sup> San Francisco Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board, "Final case report, Phelan Building, 12/16/81." [http://ec2-50-17-237-182.compute-1.amazonaws.com/docs/landmarks\\_and\\_districts/LM156.pdf](http://ec2-50-17-237-182.compute-1.amazonaws.com/docs/landmarks_and_districts/LM156.pdf). (accessed January 15, 2015).

Grace Church parish was founded in 1849, in consequence of the California Gold Rush. It existed first as a clapboard and shingle chapel, then as a wooden church near the intersection of Powell and Jackson Streets, replaced in 1862 by a brick Victorian neo-Gothic structure consecrated at California and Stockton Streets.<sup>47</sup> The thought to re-invent Grace Church as a diocesan cathedral had been debated locally in the 1890s, following a trend reflected in policy decisions made by the Episcopal Church to construct similar buildings in New York City (St. John the Divine) and Washington, D.C. (the National Cathedral), both of which had been chartered in the same decade.<sup>48</sup> After the destruction of downtown Grace Church in the 1906 fire, the presiding Bishop of California, William F. Nichols, seized the opportunity and conferred with Charles Crocker and his wife in June, just two months after the catastrophe.<sup>49</sup> Sharing Nichols' vision of a soaring Gothic cathedral atop Nob Hill whose spires would be visible to all citizens and to those ships navigating their way through San Francisco Bay,

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<sup>47</sup> Nigel A. Renton, "Celebrating a Historic Centennial: Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, 24 January 2010." *Anglican and Episcopal History* 79, no. 2 (June 2010). <https://www.questia.com/library/journal/1P3-2066684491/celebrating-a-historic-centennial-grace-cathedral> (accessed January 15, 2015).

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

the Crocker were soon persuaded to donate their Nob Hill property to the diocese as a site for the new cathedral.<sup>50</sup>

In 1908 the Cathedral construction committee announced its appointment of George F. Bodley of London as chief architect. Praised in the local press as “England's greatest authority on Gothic architecture,”<sup>51</sup> Bodley’s reputation as a leading ecclesiastical architect was based not only on his work on several prominent Gothic Revival churches in England, but also on his plans commissioned in 1906 for the National Cathedral in Washington, best described as a neo-Gothic structure closely modeled on the English Gothic style of the late fourteenth century.<sup>52</sup> But Bodley’s plans for Grace Cathedral were never realized due to his unexpected death in 1907, and Lewis P. Hobart (1873-1954) was appointed cathedral architect in his place in 1910.<sup>53</sup> Like Bernard Maybeck and

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<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> “Eminent Architect to Plan Grace Cathedral,” *San Francisco Call* 101, no. 125 (April 4, 1907): 16. Reprinted as “Architect for Grace Cathedral,” in *The American Architect and Building News* 93, no. 1694 (June 1908): 88.

<sup>52</sup> Michael Lampen, “Years of Grace, Part I: Chapel to ‘Cathedral’.” [http://www.gracecathedral.org/enrichment/crypt/cry\\_20010221.shtml](http://www.gracecathedral.org/enrichment/crypt/cry_20010221.shtml) (accessed March 5, 2009).

<sup>53</sup> Michael Lampen, “Architecture and Fabric.” Unpublished article forthcoming on the Grace Cathedral website (<http://gracecathedral.org>). Michael Lampen has been Cathedral archivist for

Julia Morgan, Hobart had received graduate training at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, the world's leading architectural school at the time, where principles of medieval design and construction were offered as courses of study.<sup>54</sup> Hobart immediately put forward a completely new design for the cathedral, revising its orientation from a north-south axis to an east-west axis along California Street.<sup>55</sup> He also made the significant decision to employ contemporary construction materials—specifically steel-girders and reinforced concrete—thereby introducing an altogether new engineering technology in the history of cathedral building.<sup>56</sup> After a period of intensive fundraising, construction was begun in 1928, and the third largest Episcopal cathedral in the nation was declared finished in 1964, becoming the last large-scale neo-Gothic structure built in the United States.<sup>57</sup>

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many years. Lewis Hobart was married to a socialite cousin of William Crocker, which may have facilitated his appointment.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.* Bodley had foreseen the use of steel girders, a conventional technique in the late Victorian era, but not the use of structural concrete, which was still a largely experimental technology in the pre-War era.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.* The Cathedral was built in four campaigns; 1928-30, 1931-34, 1939-43, 1961-64.

Stimulated by the need to produce an earthquake-resistant structure and to save the costs accruing from traditional masonry, Grace Cathedral is not only the first but also the last poured-in-place, reinforced concrete, Gothic-style, cathedral-sized building in the United States, Canada and Europe.<sup>58</sup> The roofs rest upon steel frames with rebar reinforcement in the vaulting; the interior walls and columns are poured concrete.<sup>59</sup> Concrete was poured into pre-shaped wooden forms for the walls, and prepared plaster or latex molds were adopted for more detailed features.<sup>60</sup> Cast stone (pre-cast concrete) was used in the exterior portals and to finish some interior walls, and raw concrete was left

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<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.* But not in South America and Africa. Grace Cathedral has a floor-length of one hundred meters, and concrete Gothic Revival churches of a similar dimension include the Cathedral of St. Peter in Guayaquil, Ecuador, (1937); the Metropolitan Cathedral of Fortaleza, Brazil (1978); St. Peter in Manizales, Colombia, (1939); Christ Church Cathedral, Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania (consecrated 1905); and Christ Church Cathedral. Lagos, Nigeria (1946). Some interesting architectural hybrids exist also, for example the Lutheran Hallgrímskirkja cathedral church in Reykjavík, Iceland, which appears wildly modern from the exterior and elegantly Gothic in the choir and nave. Hallgrímskirkja also achieves visual pre-eminence over Reykjavík in the same manner that Bishop Nichols and Bodley unsuccessfully intended for San Francisco, atop the highest hill.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.* Lampen indicates the choir vaulting sustained only minor damage in the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, and it is likely that fiberglass panels may be used for future repairs or replacements.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

exposed on the exterior walls and interior columns, bush-hammered (brushed) for textural effect.<sup>61</sup>

Grace Cathedral was inspired by the artistic taste and sense of tradition prevalent in the Episcopal Church in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>62</sup> Influenced by the Oxford Movement of the Church of England during the Victorian era, neo-Gothic architecture for American Episcopalians encouraged an idealized view of medieval religious devotion and piety.<sup>63</sup> No less an authority than Ralph Adams Cram (1863-1942), the recognized dean of the movement in the United States, reviewed and approved Hobart's plans, including the innovative construction technologies he had chosen.<sup>64</sup> As an additional revision to Bodley's original concept, Hobart abandoned the English

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<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.* The Oxford Movement was a program undertaken by High Church members of the Church of England, which later became known as Anglo-Catholicism. Mostly associated with the University of Oxford, its advocates argued for the reinstatement of older Christian traditions of faith and ritual, and their incorporation into Anglican liturgy and theology. If this was a significant ideological inspiration for Grace Cathedral, it did not last long, as Hobart's choice of French Gothic in the 1920s might have been viewed theologically as more Roman Catholic in sensibility.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

style in favor of French Gothic. The early designs had envisioned a high central spire featuring an octagonal lantern, depicted in a banner article in the *San Francisco Call* newspaper in 1913, a particularly traditional English structural feature popular amongst the Oxford Movement.<sup>65</sup> But Grace Cathedral became pointed toward late twelfth-century and early thirteenth-century French Gothic architecture, and in its final realization it now includes a cross-shaped floor plan, lofty twin facade towers, buttressed bays, abbreviated transepts, a polygonal apse, and a fleche mounted on the roof above the central crossing.<sup>66</sup> The chief influence was no longer English, but rather derived from the great Gothic cathedrals of northern France, notably Amiens, Notre-Dame in Paris, Beauvais, Chartres, and the smaller cathedrals at Senlis and Soissons.<sup>67</sup> Elements of the interior design were appropriated from a variety of French and Spanish sources, and the enclosed side-chapel at the south transept named the Chapel of Grace is

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<sup>65</sup> Lyman Grimes, "New Grace Cathedral Most Imposing Church in the West." *The San Francisco Sunday Call*, San Francisco, May 28, 1911. The four drawings in the article contrast Hobart's French design for the Cathedral façade with the previous English-style plans.

<sup>66</sup> Lampen, *op. cit.*

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

a direct imitation of the Sainte-Chapelle in Paris.<sup>68</sup> In place of a constructed central spire as originally planned by Bodley, the tall fleche demarking the crossing derives from nineteenth-century restorations at Paris and Amiens.<sup>69</sup>

Other features contributing to the medieval atmosphere of the Cathedral include enlarged clerestory windows with complex late Gothic tracery (the tallest of their kind in America); 7,290 square feet of stained glass windows, based largely on medieval patterns; a series of murals along the side aisles and transepts depicting scenes of early church history; and an exact reproduction of the seventeen-foot-tall doors to the Florence Baptistery by the Renaissance master goldsmith Lorenzo Ghiberti, created in the mid-fifteenth century, standing at the front entrance.<sup>70</sup>

It will be seen from this short review that the building history of Grace Cathedral represents a focal point and a center of interest in the life of Medieval San Francisco, not only in terms of architectural gigantism—its presentation of the authentic proportions of medieval cathedral building and the ravenous

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<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

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

interior of colored space lurking to enthrall the visitor—but also in the extensively authentic offering of the many historic features and artifacts within. Given however that the construction of any cathedral represents a kind of architectural sensationalism, why did the creators of Grace Cathedral choose a medieval design in preference to the other available options: neo-classicism, Spanish Colonial, or an altogether modernist approach? We have mentioned two factors: the desire by Bishop Nichols to create a landmark set on the highest hill overlooking the Bay of San Francisco, suggesting an affinity with the characteristic verticality of Gothic design, and the philosophical affiliation with the Oxford Movement in the parent Church of England.<sup>71</sup> Some decades later it was clear that neither of these intentions would be achieved. What we are left with instead is a marvelous centerpiece and indisputably the showpiece for Medieval San Francisco, where visitors can respond to the full dimensionality of

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<sup>71</sup> Which of course does not explain why Hobart rejected Bodley's English Gothic plans in favor of a French cathedral model. He may have seen it as a more interesting opportunity to build higher with reinforced concrete. In keeping with the plan to set a visual landmark for the city, Hobart also changed Bodley's orientation of the cathedral so that the façade towers faced east, a maneuver which might work better with the massive facades typical of the French Gothic cathedrals. Or possibly he bowed to the will of contemporary Francophile philanthropists such as Alma Spreckels: enraptured by French culture, the wife of Hawaiian sugar magnate Adolph Spreckels funded the construction of the Legion of Honor museum, the groundbreaking for which occurred in 1921.

neo-Gothic cathedral architecture in a somewhat streamlined presentation, and where they can view and enjoy a variety of medieval features and artefacts associated with it.

#### ST. DOMINIC'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

The reputation of Medieval San Francisco is enhanced considerably by this stunning church at the corner of Bush and Steiner Streets. It and Grace Cathedral are without doubt the purest representations of High Gothic in San Francisco. St. Dominic's was built in the years 1923-1928, and its principal architect was Arnold Sutherland Constable (1885-1981), the chief designer of the Seattle-based Beezer Brothers firm, and later the head of his own firm in San Francisco during the first thirty years of the century.<sup>72</sup> Born in England and educated at King's College, University of Durham, Constable was thoroughly submersed in the English Gothic Revival before moving to Seattle, Washington, where he opened

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<sup>72</sup> Pacific Coast Architecture Database (PCAD), "Structures: Roman Catholic Archdiocese of San Francisco, Saint Dominic's Church #4, San Francisco, CA."

<https://digital.lib.washington.edu/architect/structures/7001/> (accessed February 2, 2015).

his office in 1908.<sup>73</sup> Other notable ecclesiastical buildings which he designed in the Bay Area include Mission San Jose in Fremont, and Dominican College in San Rafael.<sup>74</sup>

Constable's passion for English Gothic style is clearly evident in his 1923 design of the church building, the High Altar and the Baptismal font, and much of its interior decoration.<sup>75</sup> The altar reredos was carved from Botticino marble at Pietrasanta, Italy, and shipped to the United States in seventy-six crates.<sup>76</sup> A particularly outstanding feature of the church is the Lady Chapel, built in beautifully executed English Perpendicular style. Alphonse Peeters et Fils of Liege, Belgium, carved the statues of the Virgin in the Lady Chapel, and the altar in the Lady Chapel is of Carrara marble obtained through Amadeo Magnini of Florence.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> St. Dominic's Catholic Church, "Sermon in Stone." <http://www.stdominics.org/parish/art> (accessed February 3, 2015).

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

St. Dominic's suffered considerable damage in the Loma Prieta earth-quake of October 17, 1989.<sup>78</sup> Decorative elements on the beams of the ceiling fell to the floor, while the original lantern of the church was destroyed and parts of the tower were undermined.<sup>79</sup> Funds for a \$6.6 million seismic upgrade project were raised by June, 1991, and construction was completed by July, 1992.<sup>80</sup> Seismic retrofitting also included the erection of nine flying buttresses of reinforced concrete to support the walls of the building. The buttresses rise from concrete piers deep underground and connect at a ring beam that encircles the church at the roof line, and they have considerably altered the outward appearance of the church.

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<sup>78</sup> St. Dominic's Catholic Church, "Parish History." <http://www.stdominics.org/parish/history> (accessed February 3, 2015).

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

## TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Two important survivors of pre-Earthquake Victorian Gothic, Trinity Church and its neighbor the First Unitarian Church, merit special attention in our pantheon of Medieval San Francisco. Both stand in close proximity west of Van Ness Avenue close to Geary Boulevard. At the corner of Bush and Franklin Streets, Trinity Episcopal is the more impressive of the two, a massive, castellated building built in 1893 under the direction of architect A. Page Brown (1859-1896).<sup>81</sup> The Victorian Gothic interior of the church remains intact and unremarkable, but the heavy walls and a large square tower built of rough-hewn sandstone with parapets and battlements, worthy of the spectral appearance of Hamlet's father at Elsinore Castle, dominate the exterior. Trinity Church and the San Francisco Armory are the two striking examples of medieval castle architecture in the city.

Trinity Church represents indeed the opposite of façade architecture; as with castles everywhere, the building itself is the message. What precisely the

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<sup>81</sup> Pacific Coast Architecture Database (PCAD), "Episcopal Diocese of California, Trinity Church #4, San Francisco, CA." <https://digital.lib.washington.edu/architect/structures/3651/> (accessed February 3, 2015).

message is has been the object of some debate. California historian Kevin Starr argued that the recreation of Early English architecture appealed to a San Francisco public of the 1890s at a time "...when a passion for historical analogy came to a provincial Pacific metropolis eager to see itself in the context of world history."<sup>82</sup> But Starr exaggerates when he writes:

Modeled on Durham Cathedral in England, Trinity Episcopal is an archaeologically exact recreation of Norman ecclesiastical architecture. To enter this wondrous church, passing from rough-hewn granite-gray Colusa sandstone without to a cool-finished surface within, is to experience a number of things at once: the Oxford Movement historicism of late-nineteenth-century Episcopalianism, with its special reverence for the medieval English tradition.

A more critical analysis affirms that Trinity Church was by no means an "archaeologically exact recreation of Norman ecclesiastical architecture." After his study of Norman originals Brown had simplified his design significantly, for example by trimming the crenellations on the parapet to a more decorative height, or by reducing the length of the nave and otherwise altering the

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<sup>82</sup> Kevin Starr, *Inventing the Dream: California Through the Progressive Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 186.

proportions of Durham Cathedral, due to the size restrictions of its San Francisco location.<sup>83</sup>

Other writers have emphasized the sense of immutability projected by the church's rocky coarseness, agreeing with Kevin Starr that Brown "like a great many architects on the Pacific Coast would see this process of decorative simplification as a modern adjustment, appropriate to the West's youth and remarkable natural surroundings. From a formal point of view, its lack of ornamentation accentuated the weight of the coursed rubble walls, adding to its look of permanence. Its survival of the Great Earthquake and Fire of 04/18/1906 proved its durability."<sup>84</sup>

## FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH

The church was dedicated on Sunday morning, February 9, 1889, at 1187 Franklin Street, superseding its earlier location established during the ministry of

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<sup>83</sup> Pacific Coast Architecture Database (PCAD), "Episcopal Diocese of California, Trinity Church #4, San Francisco, CA." <https://digital.lib.washington.edu/architect/structures/3651/> (accessed February 3, 2015).

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

Thomas Starr King on Geary Street at Union Square.<sup>85</sup> It was designed by the firm of Percy and Hamilton and it displays a mixture of modified Romanesque and Gothic elements.<sup>86</sup> Features include a square tower with gargoyles at the four corners, lancet windows and two rose windows. The original building remains largely unaltered except for a slightly revised square turret which lay at the base of a large bell tower, and a twenty-foot steeple destroyed in the fire and earthquake of 1906 which was never re-built.<sup>87</sup> There is a small Romanesque turret positioned above the crossing.

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<sup>85</sup> NoeHill in San Francisco. "Historic Sites and Points of Interest in San Francisco: San Francisco Landmark #40—First Unitarian Church." <http://noehill.com/sf/landmarks/sf040.asp> (accessed February 5, 2015). "The day was rarely beautiful, and the congregation completely filled the building, while many went away disappointed that even standing room could not be filled." *The Unitarian*, 12, February 1897 (Chicago: Published for the Proprietors by C.H. Kerr & Co, 1897), 54.

<sup>86</sup> "George W. Percy and Frederick F. Hamilton, both natives of Maine, operated the most successful architectural partnership in San Francisco during the Victorian era (1880-1899). Both Percy and Hamilton s had experience of working with Maine granite and were fluent in the Richardsonian Romanesque style." NoeHill in San Francisco, "Bay Area Architects: Percy & Hamilton." [http://noehill.com/architects/percy\\_and\\_hamilton.aspx](http://noehill.com/architects/percy_and_hamilton.aspx) (accessed February 9, 2015).

<sup>87</sup> NoeHill in San Francisco, "San Francisco Landmarks." ["http://noehill.com/sf/landmarks/sf040.asp](http://noehill.com/sf/landmarks/sf040.asp) (accessed February 9, 2015).

The church is built mainly of rough-hewn, dark blue-gray sandstone, with terra cotta trim and a blue slate roof.<sup>88</sup> The façade is asymmetrical, with the middle entrance framed by a round tower on the left and a higher, square turret base on the right.<sup>89</sup> The entrance is consists of two heavy granite Gothic arches, supported on three light-gray Corinthian columns, while the arched portals are deep set, leading to large, mediievally-shaped wooden doors.<sup>90</sup> Virtually all the design assets are deployed in a decidedly non-medieval, asymmetrical fashion, but which are sufficient integrated to form a coherent whole.

The First Unitarian Church therefore represents a significant contribution to Medieval San Francisco in its eclectic use of various design elements that we readily identify as Gothic or Romanesque, but which historians and authenticity enthusiasts might regard as asynchronous and therefore incompatible. The result is a kind of hybridization of different moments of Gothic design, the juxtaposition of which may have seemed innovative at the time First Unitarian

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<sup>88</sup> City of San Francisco Planning Commission, "Resolution No. 6669: A Proposal to designate the First Unitarian Church as a Landmark." San Francisco, 1970. [http://ec2-50-17-237-182.compute-1.amazonaws.com/docs/landmarks\\_and\\_districts/LM40.pdf](http://ec2-50-17-237-182.compute-1.amazonaws.com/docs/landmarks_and_districts/LM40.pdf) (accessed February 10, 2015).

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

was built, even if today we are so much accustomed to this mixing of stylistic elements we barely take notice.

### NOTRE DAME DES VICTOIRES

There are three churches in Medieval San Francisco whose design is based on European models. The Chapel of Grace at Grace Cathedral is a two-thirds facsimile of the Sainte-Chapelle in Paris,<sup>91</sup> while St. John the Evangelist Episcopal Church re-imagines in wood and shingle the parish church of St. Stephen's in Norwich, England.<sup>92</sup> An altogether anomalous situation is found in the French Catholic church of Notre Dame des Victoires at 566 Bush Street. Planned by the architect Louis Brouchaud and completed in 1913, this church is a smaller replica of the Basilica of Notre-Dame de Fourvière in Lyons, France.<sup>93</sup> Unique in its

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<sup>91</sup> "The Sainte-Chapelle is approximately half again as large (150%) as the Chapel of Grace." Grace Cathedral, Michael Lampen, "Cathedral in Glass." <http://www.gracecathedral.org/visit/cathedral-history-art/gospel-in-glass.php> (accessed February 11, 2015).

<sup>93</sup> Claudine Chalmers, *French San Francisco* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publications, 2007), 99.

provenance, the French model for its local reconstruction is itself a medievalist structure designed by the renowned French Revivalist architect Pierre Bossan, built between 1872 and 1884 over an ancient Roman forum.<sup>94</sup> Like the Sacré-Coeur in Paris, the basilica of Lyon was constructed as a monument to the might of the Roman Catholic Church in reaction to the Prussian defeat of France in 1870 and the birth of the anti-clerical Third Republic.<sup>95</sup> The basilicas in Lyon and San Francisco share a neo-Byzantine style and prominent hillside venues.<sup>96</sup>

Erroneously designated in the San Francisco Planning Commission landmark report as a Romanesque building, Notre Dame des Victoires is more correctly described as a neo-Byzantine (or Byzantine Revival) structure with some Romanesque interior features.<sup>97</sup> It is set on an elevated base with a double

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<sup>94</sup> Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon, "Points d'actu. Basilique de Fourvière: attention travaux!" [http://www.pointsdactu.org/article.php3?id\\_article=965](http://www.pointsdactu.org/article.php3?id_article=965) (accessed February 12, 2015).

<sup>95</sup> Sacred Destinations, « Notre-Dame-De-Fourviere, Lyon. <http://www.sacred-destinations.com/france/lyon-notre-dame-de-fourviere> (accessed February 11, 2015).

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> City of San Francisco Planning Commission, "Resolution No. 9915. Designating the Notre Dames des Victoires Church and Rectory as a Landmark." San Francisco, 1970. [http://ec2-50-17-237-182.compute1.amazonaws.com/docs/landmarks\\_and\\_districts/LM173.pdf](http://ec2-50-17-237-182.compute1.amazonaws.com/docs/landmarks_and_districts/LM173.pdf) . (accessed February 10, 2015). London's Westminster Cathedral is a well-known exemplar of a

staircase leading up to the entrance, set between twin cupolas on both sides. The interior consists of a barrel-shaped central bay framed by red marble columns supporting a barrel-vaulted ceiling decorated with Romanesque and neo-classical elements. As an embodiment of French cultural heritage—in 1887 Pope Leo XIII signed a decree which placed the “Eglise Notre Dame des Victoires” under the charge of the Marist Fathers and assigned to it the designation of “French National Church”—the building is in local terms an interesting variation on the more familiar expressions of ecclesiastical heritage architecture.<sup>98</sup> American denominations more closely associated with Anglo-Saxon religious traditions lean without hesitation toward Gothic or Romanesque, but the unanticipated intrusion of neo-Byzantine in San Francisco, even when it appears as a somewhat exotic intrusion within the medievalist genre, is in fact no less medievalist in style.

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Byzantine Revival church in England, and the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York also incorporates neo-Byzantine elements.

<sup>98</sup> Art and Architecture—San Francisco, “Notre Dame des Victoires Church.”

<http://www.artandarchitecture-sf.com/notre-dame-des-victoires-church.html> (accessed February 11, 2015)

## ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Despite the universal approval of local architectural enthusiasts—Susan Cerny calls it “one of the great small churches in the city,” and Sally Woodbridge is much impressed because “it was apparently based on an English country church in the county of Norwich”—St. John’s is the only entry in our list of prominent medievalist churches in San Francisco that has not as yet achieved landmark status.<sup>99</sup> Along with Grace Cathedral and Notre Dame des Victories it is also the only other entry that imitates an existing medieval building in Europe, in this case St. Stephen’s Church of Norwich, England. Although its San Francisco reincarnation omits the stone walls and tall lantern of its English progenitor, the choir and nave and the placing of the stained glass windows are directly imitative.

Designed by Ernest Coxhead and Herbert B. Maggs, St. John’s is located at 1661 Fifteenth Street (at Julian between Mission and Valencia) and was

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<sup>99</sup> Susan Dinkelspiel Cerny and Beth A. Armstrong, *An Architectural Guidebook to San Francisco and the Bay Area* (Layton, UT: Gibbs Smith, 2007), 86, and Sally Byrne Woodbridge and John Marshall Woodbridge, *San Francisco Architecture* (Berkeley, CA: Woodbridge Publications, 1991), 80. First Unitarian Church is a California Designated Landmark, and the Swedenborgian Church is a National Landmark. The rest are San Francisco Landmarks.

consecrated in 1910.<sup>100</sup> Unlike its English counterpart, St. John's is constructed entirely of wood with grey shingles and white trim on the exterior, with short Gothic spires lining the pointed roof. The interior boasts a high-gabled ceiling supported by hammer beams over the central aisle. As the only existing example of English Perpendicular available locally, and exhibiting great care in its execution and attention to imitative detail, St. John is a notable asset to the family of neo-Gothic buildings in the city, and its omission from the registry of official landmarks constitutes a grievous omission.

#### ST. BRIGID CATHOLIC CHURCH AND SACRED HEART CHURCH

In a city which is in its medievalist architectural predilections clearly committed to neo-Gothic architecture, these two Roman Catholic parish churches provide the city's most significant examples of Romanesque Revival. Both are earthquake survivors, both enjoy landmark status, and both have recently been shut down by the local Archdiocese. St. Brigid stands at the corner of Van Ness and

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<sup>100</sup> The Episcopal Church of St. John the Evangelist, "About: History."  
<http://www.saintjohnsf.org/#xabout-xnavabouthistory> (accessed February 13, 2015).

Broadway and was built in 1902 by the firm of Shea & Shea and Henry A. Minton. It is a somewhat simplified, asymmetrical Romanesque church with Richardsonian characteristics, and it is remarkable for its employment of recycled San Francisco curbstones and crossing stones in the construction of its exterior walls.<sup>101</sup> The elaborately carved stone Romanesque entrance portal is arguably the finest in the city; only the more secular but no less imposing ceramic-tiled entrance arch at the former Masonic Temple at Van Ness and Market can compete. The church was decommissioned in 2001 and today stands empty at Broadway and Van Ness Avenue.<sup>102</sup>

Sacred Heart Church occupies a sloping hilltop site at the southeast corner of Fillmore and Fell Streets. It forms a complex of four stylistically consistent buildings which include the church, the adjacent rectory, an adjoining school building and a convent. Because of its commanding location and its towering campanile, the church is visible from many areas of the city. Set in yellow brick, the church was designed by San Francisco architect Thomas John Welsh and

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<sup>101</sup> NoeHill in San Francisco, "San Francisco Landmark #252, Saint Brigid Church." <http://noehill.com/sf/landmarks/sf252.asp> (accessed February 14, 2015).

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

constructed in 1897, and it remains the most coherent example of Italianate Romanesque Revival in San Francisco.<sup>103</sup> Citing the high cost of required seismic repairs, the Archdiocese decided to close Sacred Heart in 2004 in the face of widespread opposition, and today the four properties remain vacant.<sup>104</sup>

#### FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST SCIENTIST, BERKELEY

Long recognized and universally praised by architectural historians as Bernard Maybeck's masterpiece, the church was completed in 1916 at Dwight Way and Bowditch. It is a remarkable collation of a number of different architectural styles, merging Gothic, Romanesque, Byzantine and traditional Japanese. Robert Bernhardt calls it a "masterpiece of eclecticism," whose structure consists of a church of redwood resting on a concrete base:

Gothic appears in the window tracery, in the gold-painted panels of the four great trusses which span the interior, in the

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<sup>103</sup> NoeHill in San Francisco, "National Register #10000112 Sacred Heart Church." <http://noehill.com/sf/landmarks/nat2010000112.asp> (accessed February 14, 2015).

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

ubiquitous quatrefoil panels to the rear of the readers' stands; in the delicate gold tracery in front of the organ loft.

Romanesque is found in the rounded truss column capitals of the sanctuary and in the exterior fluted columns, capped with figures of medieval carollers. Byzantine makes its appearance in the downspout at the front portico, in the richly painted designs on the wood-panelled interior walls, and on the elaborately bracketed truss columns....

The Japanese influence is concentrated on the exterior, in the portico roof, in the detached wooden beams resting on columns adjoining the west end of the portico, in the wooden trellises at the far west facade, and in the row of concrete columns to the right of the portico. Climbing wisteria vines surrounding the trellises add a note of delicacy. Five heavy wooden brackets under the west rooflines also show their Oriental origins.<sup>105</sup>

Maybeck's agility in navigating his way through these ostensibly incompatible stylistic platforms and yet rallying them together into a harmonious collectivity has often been remarked, and Esther McCoy's estimation is shared by many: "Maybeck moved with confidence from Renaissance plan to flamboyant Gothic tracery, from Romanesque columns to Japanese timber work, to Byzantine decoration. No one has ever carried the burden of the past more

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<sup>105</sup> Robert Bernhardt, *The Buildings of Berkeley* (The Holmes Book Company, Oakland, Ca: 1972), 68.

weightlessly."<sup>106</sup> Nonetheless the dominant aspect of the building is quintessentially medievalist in design and intention. Although the church largely makes use of distinctly non-medieval materials including poured concrete, redwood wainscoting and furnishings, and opaque Belgian glass manufactured for factories and office buildings, the effect is not only harmonious but quite profoundly medieval, encouraged by a profusion of improvised Gothic tracery and arches, and by an arched wooden ceiling with massive beams in the auditorium.

#### THE SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH

Of especial importance for our consideration of medievalist buildings in San Francisco is the Swedenborgian Church, constructed between 1894 and 1900 at the corner of Washington and Lyon Streets. Designated a National Landmark in 2004, it is actually a complex of buildings consisting of the church, two

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<sup>106</sup> Esther McCoy, *Five California Architects* (Praeger Publishers, New York: 1960), 24.

residential buildings, a retaining wall and two distinct gardens.<sup>107</sup> The church has several unique features, including a bell tower made of red and dark brick laid in Flemish bond, an exposed structural system in the sanctuary framed by long lengths of unpeeled madrone trunks cut from the Santa Cruz Mountains, a ceiling composed of diagonal redwood boards with beams and rafters rough-cut for a rustic appearance, a red-brick fire-place and chimney, and one window of “milky medieval leaded glass” and another on the sanctuary’s south wall in which medieval glass fragments from Westminster Cathedral are embedded.<sup>108</sup>

The Swedenborgian Church has been seen and universally praised as the definitive architectural representation of the California Arts and Crafts movement, due to its imaginative insistence on simplified designs with minimal ornamentation, its use of natural materials from the local environment as well as traditional handicraft and building techniques, and its rejection of mass-produced or machine-made materials and its emphasis upon fine

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<sup>107</sup> United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, “National Register of Historic Places Registration Form: Swedenborgian Church,” 4.

<http://www.nps.gov/nhl/find/statelists/ca/Swedenborgian.pdf> (accessed February 22, 2015).

<sup>108</sup> *Op. cit.*, 5, 6.

craftsmanship.<sup>109</sup> An additional determining factor results from the fact that the church was a collaborative effort involving several architects and craftsman in the Bay Area, conforming to the synergistic ideals of the arts and crafts handicrafts platform. As a result of this generic labelling process—the National Register of Historic Places assigns to the Swedenborgian Church an “Architectural Classification: Late 19th & Early 20th Century American Movements: Bungalow/Craftsman”—its medievalist aspect has almost totally escaped attention. In fact the Church appears to have been modelled on a medieval Italian village church in the Po Valley near Verona, as shown in sketches made *in situ* by the stained-glass artist and designer Bruce Porter, who also created a number of leaded windows for the San Francisco church.<sup>110</sup> It has been assumed that Bernard Maybeck produced the actual architectural drawings

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<sup>109</sup> *Op. cit.*, 12.

<sup>110</sup> Roger R. Olmsted and T. H. Watkins, *Here Today; San Francisco's Architectural Heritage* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1968), 33. There is an old photograph of the original Italian church, which is clearly medieval in provenance, in Robert Winter, *Toward a Simpler Way of Life: The Arts & Crafts Architects of California*, (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1997) 12.

for the Swedenborgian Church based on Porter's sketches, while he was employed in the local firm of A. Page Brown.<sup>111</sup>

We have discussed the relationship between California Arts and Crafts and local medievalist architecture elsewhere,<sup>112</sup> but there is another aspect in the construction of the Swedenborgian Church which seems portentous for developments in the next century: its innovative use of concrete. The elevated position of the gardens and buildings is made possible by a massive, stuccoed retaining wall built of poured concrete, which raises the entire complex above street level enabling a quiet and secluded site.<sup>113</sup> In the interior of the church smoothed concrete surfaces were left smooth and unpainted to create a more natural, stone-like feel to the material, while hallway walls are stuccoed with concrete and produce a rougher effect. These applications are examples of early experimentation with new wall-building and surfacing techniques that facilitated

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<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> Pages 18ff. above

<sup>113</sup> United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, "National Register of Historic Places Registration Form: Swedenborgian Church," 8.

the construction of Grace Cathedral and the Hearst Palace at San Simeon in the 1920s, whose high walls and columns are reinforced concrete.

## PUBLIC AND RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE

The destruction of the city in 1906 coupled with steadily increasing population numbers necessitated the rapid construction of a wide variety of public and semi-private buildings continuing on into the 1920s, and a large percentage of these were medievalist in design. They included schools and colleges, libraries, hospitals, a national guard armory, a Masonic Temple, and—the most significant contribution to all of twentieth-century American architecture—high-rise commercial office buildings. In this period of historicizing, ornamental architecture, other public buildings were not normally conceived as medieval fabrications or reproductions, but happily incorporated medieval design elements, for example the Romanesque arches and arcades gracefully embedded in Balboa High School and Galileo High School (now Galileo Academy of Science and Technology). It would be interesting to catalog the several hybrid buildings

in the city which exhibit at least partially medieval design characteristics, but we will confine ourselves here to a few of the more outstanding thoroughbreds.

### THE SAN FRANCISCO ARMORY

The National Guard Armory at 1800 Mission and 14th Streets was built in 1912-1914 as an armory and arsenal for the United States National Guard. It was designed by State Architect John F. Woolett to house a varying number of Bay Area Army and Guard units, replacing an earlier armory located at 815 Ellis Street prior to 1906.<sup>114</sup> A triple-winner in the landmark designation arena, it is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register of Historical Resources, and as a San Francisco City Landmark. Far exceeding its routine military objectives, the Armory also operated a social and recreation center complete with a seventy-five foot swimming pool, originally in the expectation that a range of amenities and sporting activities would help recruit

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<sup>114</sup> San Francisco Planning Commission, "Resolution 8376: State Armory and Arsenal." [http://ec2-50-17-237-182.compute-1.amazonaws.com/docs/landmarks\\_and\\_districts/LM108.pdf](http://ec2-50-17-237-182.compute-1.amazonaws.com/docs/landmarks_and_districts/LM108.pdf) (accessed February 25, 2015).

men into the service of the California National Guard.<sup>115</sup> From the 1920s through the 1940s, the building functioned as the city's main sports venue. At least two prizefights were held in the Drill Court twice each week, which became known as the Madison Square Garden of the West.<sup>116</sup>

The Armory also served as a center of operations for the National Guard in their suppression of the 1934 San Francisco General Strike, where soldiers actively participated in the event known as "Bloody Thursday."<sup>117</sup> The building was decommissioned as an armory in 1976, after which the National Guard moved its headquarters to Fort Funston.<sup>118</sup> Only sporadically occupied until late 2006, the Armory was eventually purchased for \$14.5 million by kink.com, a San

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<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>116</sup> Page and Turnbull, "Mission Street Armory Historic Resource Evaluation." [http://www.armorystudios.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/HRE\\_01-24-06-1-1.pdf](http://www.armorystudios.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/HRE_01-24-06-1-1.pdf) (accessed February 25, 2015).

<sup>117</sup> San Francisco News, "3 Killed, 31 Shot in Widespread Rioting," July 5, 1934. <http://www.sfmuseum.org/hist4/maritime17.html> (accessed February 25, 2015).

<sup>118</sup> Armory Studios, "History." <http://www.armorystudios.com/history/> (accessed February 25, 2015).

Francisco-based internet pornography producer which specializes in bondage and sado-masochistic pornography.<sup>119</sup>

Local historians have regarded the Armory as an example of the Moorish Revival or Moorish Palace style, an exotic Orientalist genre incorporating thoroughly romanticized imaginings of traditional Islamic architecture and characterized by horseshoe arches, multifoil arches, window tracery.<sup>120</sup> Minarets and towers are a common occurrence, which in the case of the Armory stand at attention at each corner of the building. Given that the heyday of the Moorish Revival was long past, it is somewhat surprising to see its re-emergence in 1916.<sup>121</sup> Historian Robert M. Fogelson sees it not only as an attempt to appease neighborhood outrage at the prospect of yet another armory building masquerading as a medieval castle, at a time when the repudiation of the

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<sup>119</sup> Wikipedia, s.v. "San Francisco Armory." [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San\\_Francisco\\_Armory](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San_Francisco_Armory) (accessed February 25, 2015).

<sup>120</sup> Cyril M. Harris, *Dictionary of Architecture and Construction* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2006), s.v. "Moorish Revival," 643. Because the Moorish Revival was in essence a Victorian parody of medieval Islamic architecture, we may also regard it as medievalist in nature.

<sup>121</sup> Another exception being several Hollywood movie theaters built in America in the 1920s, such as the Alhambra Theater on Polk Street, which has also been designated landmark status.

castellated style was taking hold across the country in the 1910s and 1920s.

Clearly the time for a change in armory design had arrived:

Consider what happened in San Francisco in 1912, when the State Architect's office... released the plans for the new state armory on Mission and Fourteenth Streets. The plans—which called for a formidable structure, “an adaptation of the medieval Florentine style,” wrote the *San Francisco Call*—generated a storm of protest. Local architects and nearby residents insisted that the building was “too severe, too austere, to serve the light and decorative purpose for which an armory is intended,” a position inconceivable twenty years earlier. They thought it looked “too much like a car barn.” ...In the face of so much opposition, Woollett agreed to revise the plans. The revised version added numerous decorative features to “tone down the martial facade,” to “eradicate the carbarnesque effect,” and, observed the *Call* sarcastically, to “make the building appear a little more frolicsome, as befits the rigorous service of the national guard of California.” The new, much less formidable design satisfied the critics and won prompt approval by the state armory commission.<sup>122</sup>

Apparently medieval militancy was slipping out of vogue, and although the adjective “frolicsome” seems hardly adequate given the ponderous immensity of the new San Francisco Armory, the “Moorish” turrets and towers lend it a distinctly playful ambience

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<sup>122</sup> Robert M. Fogelson. *America's Armories: Architecture, Society, and Public Order* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1989), 189-190.

## SAN FRANCISCO ART INSTITUTE

Designed by the architectural firm of Bakewell and Brown and known at the time as the California School of Fine Arts, the San Francisco Art Institute at 800 Chestnut Street was built in 1926 and dedicated in January, 1927. Passing through the churrigueresque (Spanish Colonial) entrance archway on Chestnut Street, the visitor passes into a cloistered courtyard, with corridors leading to studio, office and gallery space, and on the fourth side by a high wall shielding the area from street noise. A colonnaded arcade with tall Romanesque arches is built along three sides of the garden, surrounding an octagonal tiled fountain in the center. A ninety-nine-foot Italian Romanesque bell tower intersects at the northwest corner, towering above the garden and all other buildings on the campus.

There at least three unique features that contribute to the considerable significance of the Art Institute in the general array of medievalist buildings in the city, the first and most obvious being that it is the sole venue with an enclosed cloister garden. One of the most popular and ancient hallmarks of European religious communities—the St. Gall monastery plan from about 800

C.E. projects a sizeable claustrum or enclosed, arcaded cloister inside its ideally conceived community—its modern counterpart on Chestnut Street offers the same sense of separation from the distractions and agitations of the outside world. The construction of a stylistically authentic Italian Romanesque bell tower with two open Romanesque arches at its apex is probably the most impressive in San Francisco, and a third element of interest is found in the fact that the entire complex is built of poured concrete, developing a technology that begins locally with the Swedenborgian Church in 1893, and with the same smooth-surface finishing of concrete walls meant to provide the appearance of natural stone. The same methods are employed and further refined with the construction of Grace Cathedral, America's only cathedral built of poured concrete, which begins in 1927, the same year as the Art Institute is finished.

#### RUSS BUILDING AND CATHEDRAL BUILDING, OAKLAND

Although neo-Gothic design principles applied to different kinds of public structures were certainly apparent in New York City in the second half of the nineteenth century—the Brooklyn Bridge completed in 1883 is an arresting

example—the distinction of becoming the first neo-Gothic skyscraper erected anywhere accrues to the Woolworth Building in downtown Manhattan.<sup>123</sup> Subsequently termed the “Cathedral of Commerce,” it remains at sixty stories among the twenty highest buildings in New York to this day, and its status as one of the first high-rise office buildings of any kind ever built opened a whole new arena of possibilities for medievalist architecture.<sup>124</sup> The appearance of high-rise office buildings, combined with the roughly contemporaneous invention and deployment of reinforced concrete, provided the Gothic Revival of the nineteenth century with a technological gateway into modernism. The Woolworth Building was stunning enough in the public imagination to inspire several stylistic imitations in different American cities, and the spin-off for San

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<sup>123</sup> United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, “National Register of Historic Places: Downtown Oakland Historic District.” <http://pdfhost.focus.nps.gov/docs/NRHP/Text/98000813.pdf> (accessed February 28, 2015).

The term skyscraper first came into use during the 1880s, shortly after the first ones were built in the United States, a development resulting from the coincidence of several technological and social developments. It originally applied to buildings of ten to twenty stories, but in the course of the twentieth century the term was used to describe high-rise buildings of unusual height, generally greater than forty or fifty stories. Encyclopædia Britannica Online, s. v. “skyscraper.” <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/547956/skyscraper> (accessed March 05, 2015).

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

Francisco is found in two office buildings which have since been officially landmarked and remain fully operational nearly a century later.

Patterned more like the ground-breaking Flatiron Building of 1902 at Madison Square in New York City, the Cathedral Building in Oakland—originally called the Federal Realty Building—was the first skyscraper west of the Mississippi River.<sup>125</sup> Its narrow, triangular design is meant to conform to its location on Latham Square, where Telegraph Avenue branches off diagonally from Broadway. Similar to the Woolworth Building, its principal neo-Gothic features—arched windows, mansard roof and pointed spires—appear mainly at the top or crown of the building, where they are disproportionately oversized to effect a more realistic perception at street level.<sup>126</sup> The chateausque Cathedral Building was constructed 1913-1914 and designed by architect Benjamin Geer McDougall, who most certainly did not foresee its present conversion from office

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<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

space to luxury condominiums, presently underway in 2015.<sup>127</sup> From the outside the building looks nonetheless as “medieval” as ever.

The process of Manhattanization beginning in the 1960s has diminished its visibility considerably, but at one block in length and thirty-one stories in height, the Russ Building at 235 Montgomery Street enjoyed for decades its reputation as the tallest skyscraper not only in San Francisco, but also anywhere west of Chicago.<sup>128</sup> A steel-frame construction with terra-cotta cladding, it was built in 1927 and designed in neo-Gothic English perpendicular style by George Kelham.<sup>129</sup> The cathedral-like appearance is enhanced by Gothic arches and detailing in travertine, groin vaults in the lobby, gargoyles, and niches for saints on either side of the front entrance. The sides of the building rise in a series of step-backs that culminate in a castellated central tower, and a vaulted Gothic ceiling in the elevator lobby looks down upon a floor of patterned travertine and

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<sup>127</sup> Eve Mitchell, “Inside Bay Area, My Town: Oakland.” [http://www.insidebayarea.com/oaklandtribune/localnews/ci\\_1043004](http://www.insidebayarea.com/oaklandtribune/localnews/ci_1043004) (accessed February 28, 2015).

<sup>128</sup> George H. Douglas, *Skyscrapers: A Social History of the Very Tall Building in America*. (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co, 1996) 240-241. It remained the highest building in San Francisco until the completion of the Bank of America Building at 555 California Street in 1969.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*

marble. A pair of snarling gargoyles are positioned high above the front entrance portal, looking malevolently downwards to passersby on the sidewalk below.

### GREEN'S EYE HOSPITAL

Most observers will regard Medieval San Francisco as a home mainly for neo-Gothic architecture for two reasons: there exist no buildings that replicate Romanesque models and because the city seems to have remained staunchly impervious to the Richardson Romanesque, a style which originated on the East Coast at the end of the nineteenth century and captivated many medievalist architects across the country. A strikingly attractive example of how local builders devised their own distinctive version of Romanesque is provided by Green's Eye Hospital at 1801 Bush Street, built in 1928 and designed by architect Frederick H. Meyer. It incorporates all four elements of what we might refer to as San Francisco Romanesque: a shortened Italian bell tower, an embellished curved-arch portal entry, round-arched windows, and yellow or cream-colored stuccoed exterior walls with white trim. In the present case these features are arranged symmetrically between Mediterranean tile-roofed wings that flank the

entrance to form an L-shaped plan. It is not clear if Green's Eye Hospital may be correctly regarded as a prototype for this somewhat minimalist regional variant of Romanesque Revival—similar schemes start sprouting up in schools, libraries and hospitals all around the Bay Area and across California in the 1920's—but in terms of sheer attractiveness it would be hard to find its equal.<sup>130</sup>

#### SHARON ARTS BUILDING

The third of three buildings on our list to have survived the earthquake and fire of 1906, the Sharon Building enjoys the additional distinction of being the only building built in Richardsonian Romanesque style left standing in the City of San Francisco.<sup>131</sup> As such it is also the only such example found in the immediate Bay Area, excepting the original Stanford University campus in Palo Alto.<sup>132</sup> The

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<sup>130</sup> If the City's designation criteria emphasized aesthetics as much as historical significance, then Green's Eye Hospital should have achieved landmark status by now. The building has nonetheless been kept up nicely and functions today as a yoga and fitness center.

<sup>131</sup> Harold Kirker mentions the existence of two commercial banks built in Richardsonian style in pre-Earthquake San Francisco, but without detail or illustration: Harold Kirker, *California's Architectural Frontier: Style and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century* (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1960), 100-101.

<sup>132</sup> The Richardsonian style never achieved any of the same measure of popularity it received as it swept across the country from Boston, where it had originated in the 1870's before the influence

sandstone building was erected in Golden Gate Park by architects George W. Percy and Frederick F. Hamilton at the center of a playground called the “Children’s Quarters.”<sup>133</sup> The facility featured a carousel topped with a neo-classical circular dome, and the playground is commonly regarded as the first to be built inside a public park anywhere in America.<sup>134</sup> The Sharon Building served

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of the Beaux-Arts styles. After considerable success in Oklahoma and Texas, the dispersion seems to have petered out before advancing to the West Coast, perhaps because it required the assistance of specially trained masons.

Concerning the Stanford campus, “In the fall of 1886, Leland Stanford engaged the Boston architectural firm of Shepley, Ruten & Coolidge to develop the plans for the buildings of the University. During the summer of 1886, Gen. Francisco Walker, president of MIT, and Frederick Law Olmsted, noted landscape architect, had met with Leland and Jane Stanford to develop a campus master plan. A grassy plain near the Stanford home and stables was chosen as the site upon which the University would be built. Stanford suggested to Olmsted that the structures be an adaptation of the adobe buildings of California merged with a ‘higher’ form of architecture.”

The same “higher form” of Romanesque was also chosen for Stanford Memorial Church, which stands at the heart of the quadrangle. The Church is based roughly on the design used by Richardson for his masterpiece, Boston’s Trinity Church, combining sketches he made of the twelfth-century Spanish cathedral Salamanca.

Stanford Historical Society. “Sandstone and Tile—Always in Style: A Tour of Stanford Architecture.” 11, no. 2-3 (Winter-Spring 1987), 6-7.

<sup>133</sup> NoeHill in San Francisco, “Historic Sites and Points of Interest in San Francisco: Landmark #124—Sharon Building Golden Gate Park.” <http://noehill.com/sf/landmarks/sf124.asp> (accessed June 5, 2015).

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

originally as a canteen for children and mothers.<sup>135</sup> It was severely damaged by the earthquake in 1906 and by a fire in 1974, but was restored to its original appearance after each of the disasters.<sup>136</sup> Today as in 1888 the carousel stands adjacent to the building, now known as the Sharon Art Studio, a community arts center offering classes in the fine and applied arts.<sup>137</sup>

#### MASONIC TEMPLE

Our brief tour of medievalist architecture in San Francisco concludes at 25 Van Ness Avenue, where in 1911 a new Masonic Temple was erected to the instructions of the architectural firm of Bliss and Faville. Superseded in 1958 by a more modern temple on Nob Hill, this earlier fabrication presents something of a hodgepodge of medievalia. The massive structure is shaped generally like a thirteenth-century Italian palazzo. An oversized statue of King Solomon, looking

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<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> Cf. <http://www.golden-gate-park.com/sharon-building-sharon-arts-studio.html> (accessed June 5, 2015).

more like a Victorian representation of King Arthur, perches upon a projecting niche off the corner of the building, where the royal presence looks broodingly down upon the traffic at Market and Van Ness.<sup>138</sup> A row of triply-arched Venetian windows extend across the front, each with a heraldic shield ascribed to the Knights Templar emblazoned above it.<sup>139</sup> At street level the Temple's most significant exterior feature is the elaborate, two-story high Romanesque portal which towers over the main entrance. Its several layers contain an earnest committee of allegorical figures, sculpted in ceramic tile-work and presided over by *Veritas*, *Caritas* and *Fortitudo*. Bear-like gargoyles on either side serve double-

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<sup>138</sup> "It is by Adolph Alexander Weinman, the New York Sculptor. The canopy itself is adorned with sculptured angels, and with enshrined allegorical figures, of the man with the capital represents the Builder; the one with the Book, Social Order; the one with the lyre, Reverence for the Beauty of the World; the one with his hands on his breast, Reverence for the Mystery of the Heavens." Frank Morton Todd, *The Chamber of Commerce Handbook for San Francisco, Historical and Descriptive; a Guide for Visitors*. (San Francisco: San Francisco Chamber of Commerce under the Direction of the Publicity Committee, 1914) 209.

<sup>139</sup> "The dominating feature of the exterior is the machicolated parapet, carried around the top instead of a cornice. It is in the style of the one on the tower of Palazzo Vecchio of Florence, and other structures of that period, and has a medieval militant suggestion, as of the piety of the Temple Knights whose gilded shields hang on the face of it." *Op cit.*, 210.

duty as caryatids. Adding to the general confusion, it is said that there used to be a giant stuffed camel located inside the front door.<sup>140</sup>

## RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE

Medievalist residential interiors were introduced in the Bay Area beginning in the 1890s and became increasingly fashionable in the first two decades of the new century, in tandem with the growing popularity of the California Arts and Crafts movement.<sup>141</sup> Interior ceilings, surfaces and staircases were constructed solely of wood and natural stone; living rooms featured arched wood-beamed ceilings, mullioned windows, enlarged feudal fireplaces of rough-hewn rock; while surfaces of hand-crafted medieval tiling prevailed in many kitchens.

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<sup>140</sup> "Why is Our Rent Control Board Housed in a Masonic Temple? An Accident of History at 25 Van Ness." San Francisco Citizen blog article, <http://sfcitizen.com/blog/2011/08/04/why-is-our-rent-control-board-housed-in-a-masonic-temple-an-accident-of-history-at-25-van-ness/>, (accessed March 5, 2015).

<sup>141</sup> For the correspondence between Arts and Crafts and medievalist architecture in California see pages 14-24 above.

As we have suggested above, it is comparatively easy to identify the most prominent, large-scale medievalist buildings in a given urban area, but it becomes almost impossible for the architectural historian to proceed in the same manner in reference to residential interiors. Because the houses in question in the Bay Area were usually built of wood, many if not most of them disappeared unphotographed in the wake of the 1906 fire, or were nivellated by brush fires that raged from time to time in the Berkeley and Oakland hills, or were simply renovated and re-modelled eventually into something different. In addition these homes typically do not appear the slightest bit medieval on the exterior; they are in fact generally quite plain in appearance with reduced or flattened gables, and more often than not clad very simply with brown shingles.<sup>142</sup> And of course they were and remain private homes, safe from the intrusion of visitors and photographers.

A pleasing exception to this somewhat furtive habitus of home interiors is found in the work of Bernard Maybeck and Julia Morgan, whose reputations

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<sup>142</sup> Stuccoed exterior walls began to replace shingles after 1906, stimulated by the intention to build more fire-proof structures. The so-called neo-Tudor style began to appear more often in the suburbs from the 1920s, fabricating walls in which Tudor wall designs were appointed with wood boards framing white stucco surfaces.

were in this period sufficiently elevated as to encourage illustrated documentation and public discussion of a good number of their undertakings. Although several other architects and builders and crafts persons collaborated to create medievalist residential interiors in the Bay Area, both Morgan and Maybeck produced with very obvious enthusiasm certainly the most notable buildings of this kind in Northern California, in addition to a wide variety of public buildings. As the most outstanding and influential medievalist architects in the Bay Area, it therefore seems appropriate to describe their accomplishments individually.

## TWO LEADING MEDIEVALIST ARCHITECTS

### BERNARD MAYBECK

It is fortunate for the cause of medievalism in San Francisco that its two most celebrated and nationally recognized architects in the first half of the twentieth century were actively engaged for the length of their professional careers in designing medievally-themed homes and buildings. Bernard Maybeck and Julia Morgan shared a common educational background based on the formal study of civil engineering and their graduation from the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. Both were closely associated with the engineering department at U.C. Berkeley, Maybeck as an engineering professor and Morgan as an undergraduate and assistant to Maybeck; both worked for a time together at Maybeck's office in San Francisco; and both collaborated from time to time on common project proposals.<sup>143</sup> Although Morgan's productive yet demanding association with William Randolph Hearst put her in a somewhat uniquely privileged position compared with the less sensational career paths followed by many of her peers,

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<sup>143</sup> Cf. note 126 below.

she and Maybeck continued to enjoy a congenial working relationship based on their common experience and interests, as well as their shared approach and commitment to medieval design techniques.

Born of German immigrants in New York City in 1862, Bernard Maybeck was apprenticed by his father to an architectural studio in Paris at the age of nineteen.<sup>144</sup> He soon applied for entrance to the prestigious Ecole des Beaux Arts, the premier architectural institute of its day, where he placed twenty-second among 250 applicants, only fifty of whom were accepted.<sup>145</sup> In the 1880s architectural education at the Ecole afforded an eclectic and utilitarian approach to building design, liberal in the sense that it rejected the replication of conventional forms based on historical notions of inherent beauty.<sup>146</sup> Materials study at the time emphasized the use of structural steel, and lectures were held on principles of Gothic architecture by Henri Lemmonier, under the lingering

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<sup>144</sup> Sally Byrne Woodbridge, *Bernard Maybeck: Visionary Architect* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1992), 16.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>146</sup> Woodbridge, *Maybeck*, 17.

influence of Viollet-le-Duc.<sup>147</sup> Unfortunately none of Maybeck's student work at the Ecole has survived and little is known of his experiences there, other than that he traveled often around France to view the Gothic cathedrals, and that he had a particular appreciation for the ancient abbey church of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, located close to his lodgings in Paris.<sup>148</sup>

Returning to New York City in 1886, Maybeck worked for established architectural firms there and in Kansas City before eventually moving to Berkeley, where he was hired to teach architectural drawing at the University of California in 1892, the same year in which he opened his own office in San Francisco.<sup>149</sup> Maybeck's sixty-five year architectural career in the Bay Area provided him the opportunity to excel in a variety of different styles, characterized always by a subjective flair for unexpected artistic elements bordering quite often on the fantastical, making his work substantially unique. His most famous work is unquestionably the Palace of Fine Arts, built as a single

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<sup>147</sup> Woodbridge, *Maybeck*, 17.

<sup>148</sup> Woodbridge, *Maybeck*, 18-19.

<sup>149</sup> Mark A. Wilson and Joel Puliatti, *Bernard Maybeck: Architect of Elegance*, (Layton, Utah: Gibbs Smith, 2011), 35.

feature of his general design for the Panama-Pacific Exposition of 1915.<sup>150</sup> The only one of the ten “palaces” built for the Exposition still left standing—it was overhauled and reconstructed 1962-1975 with more permanent materials—Maybeck took his inspiration from Greek and Roman architecture in creating what may be aptly described as a fictitious ruin resurrected from Antiquity.<sup>151</sup>

Maybeck’s skill at medievalist design is best observed in his celebrated Christian Science Church in Berkeley, but it is no less visibly present also in the interiors of many private residences built around the Bay Area over a period of a half-century. His houses owed much to the decorative style known as California Arts and Crafts, which often featured Mediterranean clay tiles on the roof, wood-shingled or unadorned natural stucco walls, wood paneling and ceilings made from native wood species, and which also employed a variety of stylistically consistent furniture and handicrafts to grace the simple, uncluttered hallways and living spaces.<sup>152</sup> Between 1896 and 1924 Maybeck designed at least two

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<sup>150</sup> Wilson and Puliatti, *Maybeck*, 155-56.

<sup>151</sup> Wilson and Puliatti, *Maybeck*, 166.

<sup>152</sup> Wilson, *Maybeck*, 45. Exterior stucco walls became gradually more prominent in the 1920’s after many shingled houses succumbed to fire. Several Maybeck homes were destroyed in a major fire that ravaged Berkeley in 1923.

dozen residences in the Bay Area, which he himself referred to as his "Gothic houses."<sup>153</sup> Five were built in San Francisco over a seven-year period between 1909 and 1916, each with its own distinctive style, detailing and overall form. They were among the first homes built in their respective neighborhoods, and therefore free of the need to harmonize with their neighboring buildings, or to obey the strictures of municipal planning codes.<sup>154</sup>

Two of the more widely reviewed Maybeck homes in San Francisco include the Roos House from 1909 at 3500 Jackson Street, and the Erlanger house from 1916 at 270 Castenada Avenue. The Roos House combines a half-timbered Tudor paneling outside with lancet windows and Gothic detailing inside, foreshadowing the historicist language Maybeck continued to refine through the 1920s.<sup>155</sup> To create spatial drama the house employed a favorite device of changing ceiling heights from living room to dining room. All the interiors of the Maybeck houses in San Francisco are generally regarded as fine examples of

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<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>154</sup> Sennott, R. Stephen. *Encyclopedia of 20th Century Architecture* (New York: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2004), s.v. "Maybeck, Bernard R. 1862-1957," 821-822.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*

California Arts and Crafts furnishing technique. A particularly well-known example is the Erlanger House built in 1916, whose interior is essentially a free-form variation on an English Tudor manor hall.<sup>156</sup> It incorporates the usual characteristics of Maybeck's earlier medievalist home designs, and is striking for its display of paneled interiors of redwood, its oversized Renaissance fireplace, oak flooring and cabinetry, and high arched wood beam ceiling.

Maybeck never simply imitated medieval architecture; instead his method was to use the Middle Ages as a laboratory for his own imagination, which at times was capable of advancing into almost fantastical territories.<sup>157</sup> An early example of Maybeck's revisionist agenda is found in the monumental Hearst Hall at the University of California, Berkeley, built in 1899 and now razed. A range of laminated Gothic arches vaulted over a single massive hall delivered a patently expressionist ambience, and although the space was planned as a community living room for women students, it was eventually converted into a

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<sup>156</sup> Wilson, *Maybeck*, 69.

<sup>157</sup> Extending apparently into his private life as well, shown in this charming family photo taken outside Maybeck's home in the Berkeley hills around 1910 (*Figure 7*).

gymnasium.<sup>158</sup> On the other hand, the Faculty Club on the Berkeley campus dating from 1902 constitutes a fanciful medievalist simulation of a Viking drinking hall, perhaps urging the all-male faculty on to more heroic gender expectations.

But Maybeck's great masterpiece in terms of hybridizing medieval forms is the First Church of Christ, Scientist, at Dwight Way and Bowditch in Berkeley, 1909-1911. As the architectural historian Mark Wilson explains, the detailing of the building creates a tapestry of design elements chosen from at least seven different styles: Gothic, Romanesque, Byzantine, Mediterranean, Japanese, Arts and Crafts, and Modern Industrial.<sup>159</sup> Although the church is constructed largely of modern materials including poured concrete and opaque Belgian glass, the overall effect is not only harmonious but distinctly medieval, encouraged by somewhat fantastically improvised Gothic columns, tracery and arches, and a massively beamed wooden ceiling in the auditorium supported by four concrete piers.<sup>160</sup> The church is not only distinguished by the configuration of materials

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<sup>158</sup> Sennott, *Encyclopedia*, 822.

<sup>159</sup> Wilson, *Maybeck*, 141.

<sup>160</sup> For a more detailed description of the Christian Science church, see pages 29-30 above.

which were at the time regarded modern and highly innovative, but also in terms of their application to decorative as well as structural purposes—for example, the manner in which square-shaped concrete columns culminate in polychromed Byzantine patterns from which the supporting roof arches then emerge, or elsewhere by roughly shaped figures imitating Romanesque capitals, sculpted not of stone but of concrete.<sup>161</sup>

Maybeck was interviewed about his masterwork in 1953 at age ninety-one. When asked to characterize the style of the church, he replied: “This is twelfth-century stuff, as near as you can make it today.”<sup>162</sup> Impressed by the sincerity and faith of the Christian Scientist women who had commissioned him to build their church, Maybeck compared their devotion and commitment to the cathedral builders of the Middle Ages: “I asked myself, what a man from the twelfth century would do if he came today and built this church for the Christian Scientists. So I just put myself in the feeling of that fellow from the twelfth

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<sup>161</sup> Maybeck’s altogether original use of translucent panels of Belgian glass framed in industrial sashes is a well-documented example of how the architect adapted modern materials to traditional purposes, at a time when stained glass windows were considered all but mandatory for churches.

<sup>162</sup> Wilson, *Maybeck*, 148-151.

century."<sup>163</sup> However intense Maybeck's appreciation of the religious sensibility of the Middle Ages or of the aesthetic qualities of its Gothic architecture, his concept of "twelfth-century stuff" appears more than a little doubtful, since there is much about the church that is very distinctively unmedieval—not least its horizontal, not vertical, orientation chosen apparently to conform to the more egalitarian or communitarian experience of Christian Scientist religious services. In all events the church has been universally recognized as an architectural tour de force, and by most critics as Maybeck's greatest artistic achievement. And in spite of its diverse, eclectic, and even modernist elements, one imagines a visitor from the twelfth-century would have felt at home inside its broadly articulated medieval contours, while finding much to marvel at.

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<sup>163</sup> Bernard Maybeck, Taped interview with Robert Schutz for KPFA radio. Part Two, February 12, 1953. (Berkeley, CA: Archives of the Berkeley Historical Society). One recalls in this respect Charles Keeler's description of Maybeck as "A Gothic man in the twentieth century," cf. page 30 above.

## JULIA MORGAN

Julia Morgan was born in Oakland in 1872 and graduated 1894 from the College of Civil Engineering at the University of California, Berkeley. There she became acquainted with Bernard Maybeck, who recognized her talent and encouraged her to continue her studies in Paris.<sup>164</sup> She was the first woman to gain acceptance to the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, placing thirteenth out of 376 applicants, where in 1901 she also became the first woman to graduate with a certificate in architecture.<sup>165</sup> Morgan returned to the Bay Area and was employed by John Galen Howard, architect for the rapidly developing U. C. Berkeley campus. She opened her own office in San Francisco in 1905, becoming the first woman in America to establish an independent architectural practice.<sup>166</sup> During the course of her long career she designed over 700 buildings in California, including a large

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<sup>164</sup> Sara Holmes Boutelle, *Julia Morgan, Architect*, (New York: Abbeville Press, 1988), 23-24. Maybeck had begun teaching in the University's College of Engineering in 1892. Sally Woodbridge describes Morgan as Maybeck's protégé, which may be pushing it a bit (Woodbridge, *Maybeck*, 118). They collaborated on three projects in future years: the Women's Gymnasium at U.C. Berkeley (1927), the Hearst mansion at Wynton, and the Principia College buildings in Illinois (1928-38).

<sup>165</sup> Boutelle, *Morgan*, 30.

<sup>166</sup> Boutelle, *Morgan*, 41-42.

number of private residences and a wide variety of institutional buildings such as churches, schools, hospitals, college and university buildings, swimming pools, and a series of YWCA buildings.<sup>167</sup> In 1951 she retired and closed her office in downtown San Francisco at the age of seventy-nine.

Morgan's contribution to medievalism in Bay Area architecture is as diverse as it has proved durable. Gothic tracery and ornamentation, pointed arches, Romanesque columns with carved capitals, arched wooden ceilings are present in one form or another in almost all of her work, even where the buildings themselves are not expressly medieval in their overall appearance or general character. The campus buildings at Mill College are a good example of her eclectic and often understated approach: the exteriors are much less ornate in appearance than what we might commonly associate with the Middle Ages, yet medievalist moments in ornamentation appear consistently throughout the interiors, as they do also in many of the private homes she built in different

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<sup>167</sup> Boutelle, *Morgan*, 7. As a lifelong advocate for women's causes Morgan designed multiple buildings for institutions serving women and girls, including YWCA's, the Berkeley Women's Club and the Phoebe Apperson Women's Gymnasium and Swimming Pool at the U.C. Berkeley campus, both of which are still in use today. A generic listing of Julia Morgan's most important buildings can be found online at <http://www.bluffton.edu/~sullivanm/jmindex/genericindex.html> (accessed May 10, 2015).

towns around the East Bay. Expressly medieval in shape and building design are the Chapel of the Chimes in Oakland and the Berkeley Women's Club in Berkeley. The former was completed in 1928 and displays a Romanesque facade outside with stylistically authentic Gothic chapels inside.<sup>168</sup> The Berkeley Women's City Club of 1929 is outfitted with interior medieval rooms and ornamentation, and it is dominated by a reinforced concrete tower, looming over one of the very few enclosed cloister gardens in the Bay Area.<sup>169</sup>

Morgan is of course best known for her commissions from William Randolph Hearst, most famously for *La Cuesta Encatada*, now popularly known as the Hearst Castle, in San Simeon. She began work on the sumptuous and expansive private residential compound overlooking the Pacific coast at San Luis Obispo County in 1919, a gargantuan project which continued for nineteen years. The palatial estate is a pastiche of historic architectural styles dominated by Spanish Revival, covering fifty-six bedrooms, sixty-one bathrooms, nineteen

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<sup>168</sup> The Chapel of the Chimes is a mausoleum and crematorium; it contains several chapels for funeral services. Mitchell Schwarzer describes it as "one of the most complex interiors in the Bay Area. An off-kilter grid of ascending and descending corridors and stairways leads to a seemingly endless sequence of cloisters, gardens, and chapels. Vaulted ceilings, clerestories and skylights add to the mysterious spatiality and luminosity." (Schwarzer, *Architecture*, 154.)

<sup>169</sup> The only cloister in San Francisco County is found at the San Francisco Art Institute.

sitting rooms, 127 acres of gardens, indoor and outdoor swimming pools, tennis courts, a movie theater, an airfield, and the world's largest private zoo.<sup>170</sup> At San Simeon Morgan realized what was perhaps her greatest medievalist achievement: the design of a number of interior rooms, halls and chambers which were furnished in stylistically accurate fashion to display period artifacts from Hearst's own medieval collection. The splendid interiors were meant to represent their imagined counterparts from the Middle Ages. The most impressive of these spaces are Hearst's private sitting room and bedroom; the Gothic Study, Assembly Room, Doge's Suite, and the Refectory.<sup>171</sup> The Doge's Suite, a luxury bedroom suite for guests, features a Venetian Gothic loggia, a covered exterior gallery which Morgan designed to serve as a balcony.

Other projects she designed for Hearst included a commercial building in San Francisco, the Wyntoon estate in Siskiyou County, a residence with thirty-four bedrooms for his mistress Marion Davies in Santa Monica, the Babicora

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<sup>170</sup> *Fodor's Northern California 2011*, (New York: Fodor's Travel Publications, 2011), 88.

<sup>171</sup> Mark A. Wilson, *Julia Morgan: Architect of Beauty*, (Salt Lake City, Utah: Gibbs Smith, 2007), 129.

Hacienda in Mexico, and the never-realized San Francisco Medieval Museum.<sup>172</sup> Wyntoon was built as a villa estate 50,000 acres of forested land in Siskiyou County near Mount Shasta. The estate originally featured a seven-story German-style medieval castle designed by Bernard Maybeck (*Figure 8*). Built in 1902, the castle burned down in 1930.<sup>173</sup> Hearst hired both Maybeck and Morgan to draw up plans for a new castle, but financial problems compelled a less extravagant concept than either proposed. Eventually Morgan was commissioned to oversee the construction of a “Bavarian village,” described by Mark Wilson as “roughly medieval German or Austrian.”<sup>174</sup> In total Morgan had created sixteen different designs for the Wyntoon estate, and some of the architectural drawings she made for the new castle might themselves be regarded works of art (*Figures 9 and 10*). They reveal her passion for medievalism and certainly justify the pronouncement

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<sup>172</sup> The Babicora Hacienda was Hearst’s ranch in Chihuahua, Mexico, comprising a million acres. The history of the ill-fated San Francisco Medieval Museum is described in detail below.

<sup>173</sup> Wilson, *Morgan*, 131.

<sup>174</sup> Wilson, *Morgan*, 133.

made by Walter Steilberg after her death: "I think Julia Morgan was strictly a medieval architect."<sup>175</sup>

## THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF MEDIEVAL ART

The history of any large city in America might well include a special chapter reserved for failed projects and plans dedicated to the improvement of the civic life of its citizens, no matter how long-forgotten. Popularly considered a friendly refuge for dreamers and visionaries, San Francisco has had its fair share of such imagined ventures, and few have been more unfortunate in their failure than the proposed Museum for Medieval Arts, given the high level of commitment by the city government, by its original sponsor and donor William Randolph Hearst, and by the project's principal architects and planners, Julia Morgan and Walter Steilberg.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> Walter Steilberg Walter, "The Work of Walter Steilberg and Julia Morgan." Oral history transcript in the collection, "The Julia Morgan Architectural History Project, Volume One." (Berkeley CA: Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley, 1976), 23.

<sup>176</sup> Walter Steilberg was a Bay Area architectural engineer who worked together with Julia Morgan on many projects. He also supervised the removal of the monastery of Santa María de

The collaborative partnership of Julia Morgan and Hearst derives mainly from the construction of the Hearst Castle at San Simeon, but both parties were also the two major players in one of the more remarkable episodes pertaining to the project of medievalism in San Francisco. The first chapter of this story originates in Spain, where in the later twelfth century monks of the Cistercian order began building a monastery which they named Santa María de Óvila.

#### SANTA MARÍA DE ÓVILA

*This little monastery of Santa María de Óvila is great religious architecture;  
and I believe it will give its wordless message to all of us.*

—Walter Steilberg, Lecture at the San Francisco Museum of Art, 1941.

The origins of the planned Museum for Medieval Arts rest therefore not in San Francisco, but in medieval Spain, in the ancient walls which once housed a

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Óvila to the United States, and contributed the most authoritative account of the project, cf. notes 181 and 186 below.

Cistercian monastery called Santa María de Óvila. It was founded in 1181 on the banks of the Tagus River near the town of Trillo in modern Guadalajara Province, approximately ninety miles northeast of Madrid.<sup>177</sup> Originally chosen for its remote location about fifty miles from the border with Muslim-controlled territory, Santa María was intended not simply as a house of religious practice and contemplation, but also as a projected bulwark of Christian faith in the service of Castilian political strategy.<sup>178</sup> The new monastery was accordingly one of several establishments which Alfonso VIII of Castile promoted along the borders of territory recently conquered from the Moors, in areas which would attract newly arrived settlers, or provide safe haven in the event of raids or warfare.

Since it was not the history but only the physical aspect of the monastery that concerned the museum planners in San Francisco, we offer here only a brief timeline covering the main points of the monastery's history from its founding in 1181 to its transference to America in 1931.

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<sup>177</sup> Francisco Layna Serrano, *El Monasterio de Ovila* (Guadalajara: Aache Ediciones, 1998), 81-82.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.* It was assumed that because these remote areas were thinly settled, the monasteries would help to stabilize and identify the borderlands as Christian territory.

1186: The first monks moved to Óvila to live.

1214-1230: A Romanesque church was constructed under Enrique I.

1400-1700: The monastery flourished from the end of the thirteenth through the early fourteenth centuries. In the fifteenth century the Romanesque church was demolished and replaced by a Gothic church. In the early seventeenth century a fire destroyed the monastery library and archives, rendering the early history of Santa María accessible only through secondary sources.

1820: The monastery was secularized and the monks expelled; however it was returned to them in 1823.

1833: The monastery was again secularized and closed, part of a government policy which effected the dissolution of 900 monastic institutions in Spain.<sup>179</sup>

Santa María de Óvila remained in the hands of local land owners and was used mainly for agricultural storage until 1931, when it fell under the covetous scrutiny of William Randolph Hearst. According to an account provided by journalist Robert Mix:

In September 1930, Arthur Byne, an authority on Spanish architecture, happened upon the abandoned monastery, which was being used as a barn. He reported back to his boss, Hearst, who was in one of his legendary acquisitive moods. Hearst decided to buy the sprawling

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<sup>179</sup> This timeline is derived from the narrative account found in Francisco Layna Serrano, *El Monasterio de Óvila*, (Guadalajara: Aache, Ediciones, 1998), the only published history of Santa María de Óvila.

structure, ship it to Siskiyou County and erect it at the family estate at Wyntoon on the McCloud River.

It took eight months to take the monastery apart. Each stone was numbered, cataloged and recorded on a master floor plan. The huge limestone blocks were carried down a hillside by mule, ferried across the Tagus and hauled to Madrid by ox cart and narrow-gauge railway. There, the stones were loaded into crates and sent to the port city of Valencia. Eleven ships carried the stones to the United States. The project cost Hearst about \$1,000,000.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Robert Mix, "Medieval Museum for San Francisco," online at Vernacular Language North, Page 12 (1937-1941): [http://www.verlang.com/sfbay0004ref\\_jm\\_12.html](http://www.verlang.com/sfbay0004ref_jm_12.html) (accessed November 15, 2012). Mix relies on information contained in a *San Francisco Examiner* article from July 14, 1995, by Craig Marine entitled "Monks to Restore Hearst Relic: Rubble of 12th century Monastery Has Sat in Golden Gate Park since '41." The article explains that while many of the Hearst stones remained scattered in the Park, those pertaining to the chapter house in Santa María de Óvila were scheduled to be collected and shipped to a newly founded Cistercian organization in Northern California called "Abbey of New Clairvaux in Vina," which is described in detail at <http://www.newclairvaux.org/index.html> (accessed November 5, 2012), to be incorporated into their ongoing construction plans.

The most significant source of information for the projected Museum of Medieval Art is found in "The Work of Walter Steilberg and Julia Morgan, Volume I," The Julia Morgan Architectural History Project, Bancroft Library, Regional Oral History Office, University of California, Berkeley. This is a 400-page type-written transcript existing in only one copy which includes several interviews with Walter Steilberg, an architectural engineer who worked with Julia Morgan on many projects. The manuscript also contains an unpublished article entitled "Walter Steilberg: Architect" by Helena Steilberg Lawton. Contained in this article is a complete transcript of Steilberg's 1941 lecture to the De Young trustees in which he describes in detail his journey in 1931 to Santa María de Óvila, where he had been sent by Hearst and Morgan to report on the progress of transporting the monastery stones to California. Both the oral history interviews with Walter Steilberg and the Lawton article may also be found online at University of California, the California Digital Library, oral history transcript, "The Julia Morgan Architectural History Project": <http://www.archive.org/details/histprojinterviews01julirich>.

An article by Dr. Margaret Burke entitled "Santa María de Óvila: Its History in the Twentieth Century in Spain and California," in *Studies in Cistercian Art and Architecture, Volume Two*, edited

Hearst's original intention then was to reconstruct the monastery buildings on his mountain estate at Wyntoon in Northern California, under the supervision of San Francisco architect Julia Morgan. Arthur Byne, an international art dealer with an office in Madrid, was contracted to organize and supervise the removal of the buildings from Spain to California. Morgan then appointed Walter Steilberg, her chief civil engineer on a number of past projects, to travel to Spain in February, 1931, and report back to her on the transport of the materials from Trillo to Madrid, where they would be trans-shipped to Valencia and from there to the United States. In a lecture given at the San Francisco Museum of Art in

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by Meredith Parsons Lillich (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 1982), 78-87, relies heavily on correspondence, reports, drawings and an architectural model which were located at the time of her research in the De Young Museum Archives. These materials were subsequently consigned to different libraries and archives in California, mostly added to collections dedicated to Julia Morgan and William Randolph Hearst. The article by Burke and the Steilberg oral history interviews remain the best sources for the Museum for Medieval Arts, and all other published writings we have found on the subject derive from them.

The authoritative Morgan biography by Sara Homes Boutelle, *Julia Morgan, Architect* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1988), also explains briefly the medieval museum project from Morgan's perspective. Correspondence between Hearst and Morgan and other materials concerning the project are found in Series 4. Project Records, 1901-1958, "Julia Morgan—Sara Holmes Boutelle Collection, 1877-1958," Robert E. Kennedy Library, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, California. Further correspondence and visual materials in the Steilberg and Morgan collections at the College of Environmental Design Archives, University of California, Berkeley. We have not been able to locate the architectural model that was "carefully constructed under Morgan's watchful eyes by sculptor Cecilia Bancroft Graham" (Mix, *op. cit.*). Boutelle, writing in 1988, says that the model is to be found in the archives of the De Young Museum, which has remained unresponsive to our inquiries, (Boutelle, *Julia Morgan*, 239).

September, 1941, Steilberg speaks of his initial impressions of the immense architectural significance of the different structures at Santa María. “The thirteenth-century chapter house, a vaulted room about thirty-nine by forty-five, is perhaps the masterpiece of the group. Both this room and the refectory have remarkably beautiful proportions and it is my considered opinion that they are unexcelled by any of the many similar examples of Gothic work which I have seen in other parts of Spain and in France, Germany and England.”<sup>181</sup>

Steilberg’s enthusiasm for the quality and historic value of the architectural relics must have fueled Hearst’s and Morgan’s eagerness to proceed with the project, since the monastery was known to them only by the photos and

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<sup>181</sup> Walter Steilberg, “A Lecture at the San Francisco Museum of Art, Fall, 1941,” appended to Helena Steilberg Lawton, *Walter Steilberg, Architect: The Man, His Times, His Work*, The Julia Morgan Architectural History Project, Volume One. (The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, Regional Oral History Office. Berkeley, CA: The Regents of the University of California, 1975), 321-322. The complete text of this lecture is the primary source of information for the retrieval of the monastery stones and their projected incorporation in the Museum of Medieval Arts, along with the detailed letter of March, 1931, written by Steilberg to Morgan cited below (note five). Helena Lawton, Steilberg’s daughter and the organizer of her father’s papers, indicates that he gave several lectures around town on the topic of the medieval museum.

Concerning the refectory, Steilberg states in the same lecture: “I wrote to Miss Morgan—I have a copy of the letter somewhere—that I considered the refectory as fine a room of its size as I’ve seen anywhere, and I’m not excepting Sainte-Chapelle in Paris” (76). The refectory was twenty-seven by ninety feet.

drawings and written descriptions sent to them by Arthur Byne, who had proposed the project to Hearst as early as 1929. Byne subsequently brokered the deal with the local property owners and the largely passive Spanish authorities. Steilberg's mission was to travel to Spain and report back on cost estimates and the progress of the dismantlement and the initial loading of the monastery stones, as well as to oversee the cataloging of the stones.<sup>182</sup>

Steilberg begins his report with a meticulous description of the construction site in a letter written to Morgan from Madrid after his visit to Trillo:

The Tagus is about 100' wide at this point in its turbulent and winding course.... A miniature railway runs from the opposite bank to the Monastery several hundred yards from the river; small push cars, about the size of those used in mines, are used to haul the stones to the ferry two cars at a time being put on the rails on the ferry; the ferry is hauled across the stream by pulling on the cable which also serves to keep the 'barca' from being swept away; on the far shore the cars are pushed into position for hauling up the incline along the aide of the cliff by means of a windlass. Having arrived at the end of the road at the top of the cliff the stone is loaded onto trucks which take it to Madrid.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> Each stone was numbered and its structural position noted on a figured chart, a crucial device for reconstructing the building.

<sup>183</sup> Walter Steilberg, Letter to Julia Morgan of March 10, 1931, *The Julia Morgan Architectural History Project*, 325.

The sensitivity of Steilberg's position as an on-site observer of what potentially could be viewed as wholesale theft of Spanish cultural property in a period of national political turmoil—it is unclear which authorities Byne might have had to pay off to gain an export permit—is revealed by the opening statement to Morgan in the same letter: "Mr. Byne has repeatedly spoken of the need of secrecy in this matter; therefore I am not trusting, in this talkative country, to the discretion of any typist, and shall send all of my reports in pencil in hope that someone in the office can put them in legible form for you."<sup>184</sup> Steilberg later writes in the same letter that Byne "fears interference by the authorities at any time."<sup>185</sup> Such trouble would likely be inflicted by "busy-body politicians" whose intervention could halt the project, even though the entire undertaking had been presented "to the national art commission and they were

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<sup>184</sup> Steilberg, *Letter to Julia Morgan of March 10, 1931*, 321. Steilberg is generally approving of Byne's efficiency in organizing and overseeing the project, and neither Hearst, Morgan or Steilberg seem to have expressed any doubts about the ethical propriety of their removal of the monastery from Spain.

Modern commentators have frequently been less tolerant: "The abdication of the Spanish king and the ensuing disorganization allowed the demolition to proceed, despite its blatant illegality" writes Jack Leibman, "The Monastery Stones—Final Chapter," *San Francisco City Guides*, 2006, [http://www.sfcityguides.org/public\\_guidelines.html?srch\\_text=monastery+stones&submit=Search&submitted2=TRUE](http://www.sfcityguides.org/public_guidelines.html?srch_text=monastery+stones&submit=Search&submitted2=TRUE), (accessed November 15, 2012).

<sup>185</sup> Steilberg, *Letter to Julia Morgan of March 10, 1931*, 326.

entirely agreeable to him [Byne] taking this forgotten and shamefully neglected and abused group of buildings, but is quite possible that some of the politicians, in an effort to discredit those in power, may bring pressure to bear upon the press to halt the work at once."<sup>186</sup>

The principal monastery buildings had not yet been removed when Steilberg arrived on the scene on March 9, 1931. Following the typically medieval monastery plan the individual buildings at Santa María de Óvila were arranged around a cloister edged with arcaded walkways. The church was located on the north side of the cloister, while on the east side adjoining the south transept of the church stood the monks' wing. These buildings included the sacristy, the library, the chapter house and likely a commons room for the monks. The second

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<sup>186</sup> Steilberg, *Letter to Julia Morgan of March 10, 1931*, 326. There is no further record of this meeting with these or any other Spanish authorities, and the only critical voice at the time appears to have found expression in Francisco Layna Serrano, *El Monasterio de Ovila*, a monograph published at the author's own expense in 1932. Dr. Layna Serrano was a physician who came from Ruguilla, a village that once belonged to the monastery at Ovila. He was also a local historian of Guadalajara Province exercised at those whom he describes as "*buscadores de tesoros norteamericanos*," (13). He began to write this, the only authoritative history of Santa María de Óvila, in 1929, reacting to rumors that the government might sell off the monastery. For a description of Layna Serrano's attempt to save the monastery see Margaret Burke, "Santa María de Óvila: Its History in the Twentieth Century in Spain and California," in *Studies in Cistercian Art and Architecture*, Cistercian Studies 66, Volume One, ed. by Meredith Parsons Lillich, (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 1982), 79.

floor above these rooms housed a spacious dormitory, with an easy access to the church for services day and night. On the south wing opposite the church stood the refectory, kitchen, pantry, and probably a calefactorium (warming room). On the west side was the bodega, a utilitarian building covering a long subterranean vault for wine storage, with a dormitory for lay brothers located on the second floor.<sup>187</sup>

When Steilberg arrived at Ovila the deconstruction of the cloister was well underway and the gallery vaulting had already been dismantled (*Figures 11–14*). A working crew of sixty-men was employed for this purpose, and the number would soon expand to a hundred.<sup>188</sup> Byne provided food and accommodations at the site for the skilled craftsmen, carpenters and masons, while unskilled laborers commuted to work from their homes in the local countryside, some walking two hours every day to get there.<sup>189</sup> Great care was required to dismantle the arches, since wooden centering structures had to be built to support the stones while

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<sup>187</sup> This description of the monastery plan is taken from Burke, "Santa Maria," 80.

<sup>188</sup> Burke, "Santa Maria," 82.

<sup>189</sup> Burke, "Santa Maria," 82.

they were removed, imitating in reverse the process by which the arches had been originally erected.<sup>190</sup>

In addition to assessing the current state of affairs, Steilberg was tasked with making recommendations concerning the purchase of additional materials not covered in the original contract and with examining Byne's numbering system for the objects that were. The monastery was in a semi-ruinous condition, and although some buildings could be de-constructed whole, other materials, including Gothic tracery and ornamental work, were simply laying about, and there were also free-standing arches without supporting walls: these needed to be inspected and evaluated for their transportability.<sup>191</sup> Steilberg compares the Spanish stone material with American varieties similar in appearance that might be used to supplement the reconstruction process—Indiana limestone, Boise limestone, Chatworth Park stone—and urges Morgan to consider hiring “the

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<sup>190</sup> The technique is illustrated with photos taken by Steilberg included in “Reminiscences of Walter Steilberg,” *The Julia Morgan Architectural History Project*, 325.

<sup>191</sup> Steilberg, *Letter to Julia Morgan of March 10, 1931*, 326.

Spanish superintendent and masonry foreman to come to California and set up the stone," since they are both "very fine craftsmen."<sup>192</sup>

Steilberg's letter is evidently the only record written at the time that reveals Hearst's intended use for the monastery stones, which must have been communicated orally to Julia Morgan and then by her to Steilberg. All of the building materials were to be shipped to Wynton, Hearst's private estate on the McCloud River in rural Siskiyou County, California. Phoebe Apperson Hearst was the original builder of Wynton; she had conceived it as a private hunting lodge in the country, and the famous trio of San Francisco architects Willis Polk, Bernard Maybeck and Julia Morgan all designed different structures for Wynton beginning in 1899.<sup>193</sup> The primary building envisioned by Phoebe Hearst was an altogether phantastical, over-sized Gothic palace designed to resemble a castle on the Rhine River. Bernard Maybeck, always ready for any sort of outré medievalist enterprise, hired the young Morgan to assist him. and

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<sup>192</sup> Steilberg, *Letter to Julia Morgan of March 10, 1931*, 327.

<sup>193</sup> Mark A. Wilson, *Julia Morgan: Architect of Beauty* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Gibbs Smith, 2007), 132-135.

he completed the castle in 1902 at a cost of \$100,000.<sup>194</sup> After fire destroyed Maybeck's creation in 1929, Hearst envisioned an even more extravagant castle eight stories in height with sixty-one bedrooms, and which would include a movie theater and a 150-foot-long pool.<sup>195</sup> Since the estate at San Simeon was just nearing completion, Julia Morgan was contracted to carry on with the Wynton phantasy about the same time as Byne was offering to deliver the medieval monastery from Spain. In his 1931 letter, Steilberg indicates that the church of Santa María de Óvila was to serve as the library at Wynton, and he suggests that the "magnificent" Gothic vaulting taken from the monastery chapter house (thirty by forty-five feet) would serve as an appropriate roof for Hearst's indoor swimming pool.<sup>196</sup>

Years later, in a 1960 letter to the San Francisco City Architect at a time when hopes for a Medieval Museum incorporating the monastery stones were again revived, Steilberg gave an exact inventory of Hearst's original purchase.<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> Wilson, *Morgan*, 137.

<sup>195</sup> Jack Leibman, *op. cit.*

<sup>196</sup> Steilberg, Letter to Julia Morgan of March 10, 1931, 327, 326.

<sup>197</sup> Walter Steilberg, Letter to Charles Griffith, City Architect, San Francisco, 1960, *The Julia Morgan Architectural History Project*, 330-331.

After writing that “much of the Monastery of Santa María de Óvila, possibly a fourth of the stonework of the entire group, had been taken away for other building purposes long before I first saw the buildings in 1931,” Steilberg lists the actual acquisitions as follows:

(a) The Chapel, sixteenth century, ceiling with vault ribs, entrance doorway and the vault ribs of the adjoining side, side chapels and sacristy— “None of the wall stones of this building were removed from the site; the walls were merely rubble which had been plaster-finished.”<sup>198</sup>

(b) The Refectory, twelfth century. “A particularly magnificent example of early transitional Romanesque-Gothic work and both interior and exterior were in a fair state of preservation. All of the vault ribs and vault cell stones as well as the simple capitals of the Refectory were crated; so were the carved capitals of the entrance doorway....”<sup>199</sup>

(c) “A Cloister arcade along one side of the chapel, rather badly damaged by weather. Only the vault ribs and impost capitals of this arcade were crated.”<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> Steilberg repeatedly uses the word chapel to designate the monastery church.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*

(d) The Chapter house, "a very fine example of 13th century Gothic. This masonry was much more precise in its cutting and finish than that of the Refectory. All of the vault ribs, vault cell stones and capitals of the columns were crated; as were the small window arches and splayed reveals."<sup>201</sup>

(e) "A rather complex triple doorway was on the Cloister side of the Chapter house, the modeling and plate tracery of which indicated that it was probably of 14th or 15th century origin. This work was also crated."<sup>202</sup>

(f) "Dormitory arch stones were wrapped in matting."<sup>203</sup>

The inventory shows that Hearst rejected one significant recommendation made by Steilberg: the bodega, "a splendid room twenty-seven feet by ninety feet, with a fine simple 'tunnel' vault. For my part," Steilberg argued in his 1931 letter to Morgan, "I would rather have it than the chapel."<sup>204</sup> After presenting the matter to Hearst, Morgan cabled back, "WILL TAKE BODEGA," but Hearst later

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<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>204</sup> Steilberg, Letter to Julia Morgan of March 10, 1931, 326-7. Steilberg actually has very little positive to say about the abbey church. In an interview with Sally Woodbridge he calls the refectory a "magnificent room" and evaluates it and the refectory as "the best room there" (Sally Woodbridge interview with Walter Steilberg, in "Reminiscences of Walter Steilberg," *The Julia Morgan Architectural History Project*, 122).

reversed his decision, wondering perhaps what practical use could be made of a ninety-foot Gothic basement tunnel at the Wyntoon estate.<sup>205</sup> The bodega thus became the one major building of the original monastery that still remains at the site in Spain. It has been noted that the wine vault and the refectory were the earliest permanent buildings at Santa María de Óvila, possibly because such utilitarian structures necessary for the day-to-day life of the community were often the first to be built.<sup>206</sup>

Steilberg was clearly more impressed with the wine vault than with the church, whose deteriorating masonry was probably a contributing factor. He was however quite enthusiastic about the church portal: "The renaissance portal of the chapel marks the beginning of a new style in the architecture of the monastery; it is a very fine example of the so-called 'Plateresque' work of northern Spain and might be by the same artist who did the portal of the university at Alcala de Heneras some fifty miles away."<sup>207</sup> Arthur Byne

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<sup>205</sup> Burke, *Santa Maria*, 83-84.

<sup>206</sup> Burke, *Santa Maria*, 84.

<sup>207</sup> Steilberg, Letter to Julia Morgan of March 10, 1931, 322. Plateresque, which means literally "in the manner of a silversmith," was an artistic and architectural movement in Spain which emerged in the late fifteenth century and spread over the next two centuries.

accordingly advised Hearst that the portal could be purchased for \$1,500, comparatively speaking a grand bargain since “in the open market this portal is worth \$8,000 to \$10,000.”<sup>208</sup> Hearst bought it, and today it is located on the campus of the University of San Francisco, the only part of the monastery that has been re-erected within the city of San Francisco (*Figures 15 and 16*).

A specific characteristic of the monastery of Santa María de Óvila that doubtless influenced Steilberg’s estimation of the esthetic merits and historical relevance of the individual buildings was its status as a trans-national Cistercian foundation. This meant that in the oldest architecture there was a distinct lack of decoration and ornamentation commonly found elsewhere in European church buildings, since the Cistercians regarded simplicity as beneficial for their meditative religious practice. Because of the ideal of monastic seclusion, the public was not usually permitted access to any building besides the monastery church, which explains why the church portal may have stood out as a highlight more than it otherwise might have.<sup>209</sup> One of the effects of Cistercian simplicity of

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<sup>208</sup> Burke, “Santa Maria,” 84.

<sup>209</sup> “From Spain to California – Ancient Monastery to Rise Again,” in *Architecture and Engineer*, 7 (July 1944), 33.

style and absence of ornamentation is that the natural structure of the construction becomes more apparent: Steilberg acknowledges this when he states that "...the refectory is a magnificent room. I don't think they'll ever get any money, though, from Mr. Hearst or any of his people [*to reconstruct it in its original form*]. It'll only come from someone who recognizes that the best of medieval architecture doesn't have to depend on any kind of embellishment at all. It can be just straight structure, and that's what that room is."<sup>210</sup> Although we know little of what Julia Morgan thought privately about Hearst's ideas, it is clear that Steilberg had his own critical perceptions.

It is evident from his letter to the City Architect that none of the original edifices were imported wholly intact, and that therefore none of them could have been reconstructed in America solely from the original fabric.<sup>211</sup> Steilberg reports further that much of the stonework had suffered abuse due to exposure to the

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<sup>210</sup> Sally Woodbridge interview with Walter Steilberg, in "Reminiscences of Walter Steilberg," *The Julia Morgan Architectural History Project*, 122.

<sup>211</sup> Letter to the San Francisco City Architect, in "Reminiscences of Walter Steilberg," *The Julia Morgan Architectural History Project*, 330. The wall of a medieval building often consisted of an inner and an outer wall, frequently with rubble loaded in between. It was generally the inner wall and the vaulting that in this case was exported to America. When it was proposed to reconstruct elements of the monastery in Golden Gate Park, Morgan's plan foresaw recreating the outer wall in stucco.

elements, a result of the tile roofs having been stripped off the monastery buildings by local villagers. Use of the buildings as manure pits encouraged the growth of small trees and shrubs which cracked the stones causing further damage. Steilberg also describes the rigorous measures employed under his personal supervision to test the stones against cracks and imperfections.

Over a period of about eight months, each stone was accordingly inspected, numbered, catalogued, and its place noted on a master floor plan. The limestone blocks were hauled down a hillside by mules, ferried across the Tagus, hauled by ox cart and narrow-gauge railway to Madrid, loaded there into crates and then shipped to the port city of Valencia. Steilberg made a motion picture to send back to Morgan in San Francisco showing in detail the disassembly of the monastery: the same ten-minute film was shown at his De Young Museum lecture in 1941 referenced above, but is now presumably lost. Steilberg also took a number of photographs to document the proceedings for Hearst and Morgan, which show for the most part the workers engaged in dismantling the structures and preparing them for shipment.

More significantly, an earlier set of photos taken before the demolition began in 1931 was commissioned by Layna Serrano and included in his book, and these may constitute the only photographic record of how the buildings imported by Hearst originally appeared.<sup>212</sup> These include images of the chapter house facade, the cloister, the refectory, and the church and its Renaissance portal, now standing on the University of San Francisco campus. The Layna Serrano portfolio supports Steilberg's contention that "the special architectural value of this group as a whole in that it represents the growth of medieval architecture from its very beginning to its end in the sixteenth century, and it even includes an example of the renaissance style which followed."<sup>213</sup> More significantly the pictures bare witness to the loss of an important artifact of European architectural history, surviving for the most part today as fragments scattered around Golden Gate Park in San Francisco.

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<sup>212</sup> Layna Serrano, *Monasterio de Ovila*. The originals are archived in the private collection of José Miguel Merino, an architect of Cáceres known as an expert in Spanish antiquities. They were also reproduced in the second edition of Layna Serrano's work which appeared in 1999.

<sup>213</sup> Walter Steilberg, *Letter to Julia Morgan*, 321.

Walter Steilberg left Spain at the end of March 1931, and by July 1st the monastery of Santa María de Óvila had been packed up and shipped to California. During this three-month period officials of the newly formed Spanish Republican government threatened to torpedo the project: as Byne wrote later, it was then forbidden to ship a single antique stone from Spain, even the size of a baseball.<sup>214</sup> An injunction forced a halt to the operation, but Byne's attorney was able to convince the Minister of Labor that allowing the project to continue would have a positive effect on the nation's unemployment crisis.<sup>215</sup> And so it happened that the stones arrived later that year in eleven shiploads at the Port of San Francisco, where they were inspected by Steilberg and deposited in the largest warehouse in the city.<sup>216</sup>

As we have indicated, Hearst's intention was to reconstruct the monastery refectory on his mountain estate at Wyntoon in Northern California, but after determining that the cost would be prohibitive, he donated the stones instead to the DeYoung Museum in Golden Gate Park. The stones were placed into storage

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<sup>214</sup> Burke, "Santa Maria," 95.

<sup>215</sup> Burke, "Santa Maria," 84.

<sup>216</sup> Burke, "Santa Maria," 84.

at the Museum and remained there for many years until Hearst proposed incorporating them into the new museum for medieval art which he was prepared to help finance. Utilizing artifacts chosen from Hearst's extensive private collection, the plan was to build a museum that could compete in size and quality with the recently opened Cloisters branch of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The City and County of San Francisco welcomed the gift; a site was selected in Golden Gate Park; and Julia Morgan was commissioned to draw up the plans.

The proposed Medieval Museum was Julia Morgan's most important commission in the late 1930s and early 1940s, and because she labored over it for five years, it has been suggested that it was the one project dearest to her throughout her professional career.<sup>217</sup> Now in her seventies, she and her engineer Walter Steilberg oversaw the numbering and the removal of the stones to a site at the DeYoung Museum, where they were stored outdoors in crates with excelsior packing.<sup>218</sup> A series of fires set presumably by arsonists burned and produced

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<sup>217</sup> Boutelle, *Julia Morgan*, 238.

<sup>218</sup> Mix, *op. cit.*

cracks in the stones in 1940 and 1941, rendering many of them unusable for construction purposes: a number of these were subsequently scattered in the Japanese Teagarden.<sup>219</sup> Among the Spanish monastery materials was the thirty-four-foot tall Gothic portal to the entrance of abbey church, which was eventually set up in the DeYoung Museum in 1965 and later donated to the University of San Francisco.<sup>220</sup> Further adverse developments conspired to put an end to the project in 1941 when Hearst, concerned with declining corporate revenues at the outset of the Second World War, felt compelled to withdraw his support.<sup>221</sup> A plea for public funding was delivered personally in front of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors by Walter Steilberg in 1941, but was ultimately rejected in favor of financing an Asian Art Museum to be housed in a newly-built wing of the DeYoung Museum.<sup>222</sup> Thus the dream of a medieval art museum in San Francisco, which seemed initially to have very favorable prospects for success, fell victim to a series of ill-fated events ranging from arson and

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<sup>219</sup> Boutelle, *Julia Morgan*, 239.

<sup>220</sup> Boutelle, *Julia Morgan*, 239.

<sup>221</sup> Mix, *op. cit.*

<sup>222</sup> Mix, *op. cit.*

vandalism to the outbreak of war and the rapidly changing economic realities of the times.

### WYNTOON ESTATE

While the stones were en route to California, Julia Morgan and her staff had embarked on a journey of a different order: to mastermind the creation of Wynton Castle in Siskiyou County. Hearst had now decided that the chapter house should now function as a vestibule or entrance way into his mansion, where as the refectory, originally intended as his library, would now house his "armory," as he referred to his sizeable collection of medieval armor.<sup>223</sup> The monastery church would serve as an "assembly hall" where, similar to the floor arrangement at San Simeon, Hearst would receive his guests and associates at dinner-time.<sup>224</sup> The space was large enough to include a sitting room at the main

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<sup>223</sup> Burke, "Santa Maria," 83. Margaret Burke's description remains the best source of information about the disposition of Hearst's and Morgan's initial plans for Wynton. Her conclusions are based on a study not of documentation such as reports and correspondence from the original planners, but on the actual floorplans drawn up by Morgan. At the time Burke wrote in 1980, these were archived at the De Young Museum in San Francisco.

<sup>224</sup> Burke, "Santa Maria," 83.

apse, another at the crossing, and at the east end of the transept a grand piano would be stationed for entertainment.<sup>225</sup> In addition to the medieval components of the castle, the master plan included bedroom suites on the upper floors, and Hearst's private chambers were to be located in a tower specially constructed over the entrance way. According to Morgan's original Wynton drawings, the top of the eight-story tower was reserved for Hearst's private study, commanding an imposing view across the forest and river below.<sup>226</sup>

A major revision occurred in the second round of architectural planning. Hearst had come to the realization that the monastery church was too large and too high—it measured 150 feet long by fifty feet in height—to serve his purpose as a gathering space for house guests.<sup>227</sup> After considerable deliberation he arrived at a more utilitarian resolution: the Cistercian abbey church would now be transformed into an indoor swimming pool.<sup>228</sup> The west end of the nave would feature the diving board, allowing a plunge into eleven feet of water,

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<sup>225</sup> Burke, "Santa Maria," 83.

<sup>226</sup> Burke, "Santa Maria," 83.

<sup>227</sup> Burke, "Santa Maria," 84.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*

while the apse and transept wings would contain water only a few feet deep, suitable for children and less experienced swimmers.<sup>229</sup> What would have been the choir at the north end of the church was to serve as a ladies' dressing room, while around the exterior of the apse would be strewn two or three feet of sand, creating a "beach" for sun-bathing.<sup>230</sup>

Despite the appalling loss of sacrality, it would nonetheless be accurate to conclude that both Hearst and Morgan did, at least indirectly, conceive of Wynton Castle as a kind of private medieval architectural museum. The rooms would be suitably decorated with medieval furniture and display artifacts imported from Europe, similar to those which showcased the recently completed medieval rooms at San Simeon.<sup>231</sup> Margaret Burke suggests on the basis of her study of the Morgan floor plans that if the swimming pool were covered with temporary flooring, the church building could have doubled as a spacious exhibition hall, and also the bowling alley and the gymnasium or squash courts

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<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>231</sup> Burke, "Santa Maria," 84.

which were to be covered with sixteenth-century rib vaulting.<sup>232</sup> Walter Steilberg confirms that the thought to create a medieval museum in some fashion was in Julia Morgan's mind from the start: "I don't say she egged him on, but she said, 'This is a fine piece of work, and I think it would be a fine thing for you to use it at Wynton and have a medieval museum there.'"<sup>233</sup>

These grandiose plans for Wynton continued throughout 1931, even to the point where a steam shovel was ready to begin work leveling the ground for the castle.<sup>234</sup> But a sudden decline of business revenues brought the entire project to a halt later the same year: the Depression had taken hold of the economy in earnest and Hearst's media enterprises suffered accordingly.<sup>235</sup> Although conditions

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<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>233</sup> Sally Woodbridge interview with Walter Steilberg, *The Julia Morgan Architectural History Project*, 61. Steilberg comments further in the same interview that Morgan thought privately that she was building a museum at San Simeon and not a private residence, which in fact is what it has become today (62). Elsewhere Steilberg characterizes both Hearst and Morgan as "long-distance dreamers," suggesting that their work together was indeed intended for future generations, (60).

<sup>234</sup> Burke, "Santa Maria," 84.

<sup>235</sup> Burke, "Santa Maria," 85. In the oral interview cited above (note 41), Steilberg opines that Hearst was not much interested in Wall Street, and he recalls anecdotally how slowly the realization arose among any of those persons involved with the designing of Wynton that a major economic depression was underway in the United States:

were not severe enough to restrict Hearst from importing more art works from Europe, it became clear to him that he would never be able to fund the construction of a private castle for himself incorporating anywhere near the architectural extravagance he had anticipated.

#### PLANNING THE NEW MUSEUM

The immediate problem for Hearst was what do with the million dollars' worth of medieval stonework he had purchased and imported from Spain. Throughout the 1930s the materials remained stored in the same San Francisco warehouse where they had arrived, accumulating storage fees totaling \$5,000 annually.<sup>236</sup> During the decade the Hearst Corporation succeeded in selling off many of its

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*Woodbridge: I remember you pointed out that this was, of course, the bottom of the Depression, 1931, and I suppose it seemed rather frivolous to be bringing a monastery across. [laughs].*

*Steilberg: I didn't realize—I was working until near the end of '31 on the drawings for Wynton. I don't know, I should have gotten it through my head that there was a depression on, because there were only three people, I think, in the Pullman when I went east. The conductor came in jubilantly in Kansas City and said, "Oh, I got another one." (Sally Woodbridge, Interview with Walter Steilberg, *The Julia Morgan Architectural History Project*, 80)*

<sup>236</sup> Burke, "Santa Maria," 84. Steilberg however puts the cost of storing the material much higher: he says that the material "was stored in the Haslett warehouse in San Francisco. I think he had storage bills of \$100,000 or so at a time" (Sally Woodbridge, Interview with Walter Steilberg, *The Julia Morgan Architectural History Project*, 80).

unprofitable ventures and under-utilized properties, but attempts to sell off the monastery stones remained, perhaps unsurprisingly, unrealized.<sup>237</sup> Finally in 1941 Hearst proposed donating the stones to the City of San Francisco under the provision that the City would use them to reconstruct as far as practicable the original monastery buildings, and that these would form the main attraction of a Museum of Medieval Arts to be operated by the De Young Museum in Golden Gate Park and built near it.<sup>238</sup> The reaction by the De Young administrators and city officials was universally positive, echoing perhaps the sentiment expressed in a letter to Hearst by the Museum's director Walter Heil, who wrote that this was the most thrilling news that had he had received in his tenure in office.<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.* The approval by the De Young administrators had the favorable consequence for Hearst that the stones were removed from costly private storage downtown and simply stacked around Golden Gate Park, wrapped in crates and excelsior. This proved fatal for the medieval arts project, since the stones were vandalized and almost destroyed by arsonists' fires, making the cost of the project much higher than it would have otherwise been.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.* The De Young Museum opened in 1895 and because of its location in Golden Gate Park became the administrative property of the City Parks Commissioner. As proscribed by the San Francisco City charter, it is overseen by a self-elected Board of Trustees, currently numbering forty-four members.

In the 1930's the De Young trustees may have been looking enviously at the Metropolitan Museum of Art's medieval branch called The Cloisters, then under construction near the northern tip of Manhattan island on a hill overlooking the Hudson River. Architecturally the Cloisters incorporated parts from five different French cloistered abbeys and was funded largely

A *San Francisco Chronicle* article reported on May 22, 1941, that the Board of Supervisors had approved in session the day previous the acquisition of the monastery stonework donated by Hearst, and that plans had already been undertaken by Julia Morgan for a site along the main drive of Golden Gate Park.<sup>240</sup> The article reported further that Mayor Fleischhacker and Museum Board Chairman George Cameron told the Supervisors that they anticipated a total cost of \$300,000 to \$400,000, a substantial portion of which might be defrayed through W.P.A. funds.<sup>241</sup> Proponents of the new museum, the *Chronicle* continued, affirmed that it “would be of immense educational value for students

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by John D. Rockefeller, Jr., with many of the artifacts on display donated from private collections. Steilberg at least was attentive to its architectural exigencies, mentioning that the New York museum required at least as much stone replacement as its San Francisco counterpart would require. (Sally Woodbridge, Interview with Walter Steilberg, *The Julia Morgan Architectural History Project*, 74). On another occasion Steilberg states that “there is a larger percent of that [*San Francisco*] monastery that can be reconstructed than there was to work with in the reconstruction of medieval buildings in *The Cloisters in New York City*,” Helena Steilberg Lawton, “Walter Steilberg Architect: The Man, His Times, His Work, “ in *The Work of Walter Steilberg and Julia Morgan, Volume I*, *The Julia Morgan Architectural History Project*, Bancroft Library, Regional Oral History Office, University of California, Berkeley, 313.

<sup>240</sup> “Monastery: A ‘Castle in Spain’ Will Be Reconstructed near the De Young Museum,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 22, 1941.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*

of art, architecture and history, would be an inspiration and course of pride to all San Franciscans, and would prove unequaled as a tourist attraction."<sup>242</sup>

The euphoria among the planners was to continue for several years to come, no more so than for Julia Morgan, who devoted herself to the project during the War years and on until her retirement in 1947 far beyond any contractual obligations that might have obtained. The City initially commissioned some preliminary drawings and floor plans from her for the museum.<sup>243</sup> In July, 1945, Morgan received more good news both for herself and her architectural engineer Walter Steilberg: additional funds would soon be appropriated by the City.<sup>244</sup> After finishing some small jobs in 1946, she concentrated exclusively on the medieval museum, and from early 1947 to her retirement at the end of the same

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<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>243</sup> "Remembering Walter Steilberg, An Interview with Norman L. Jensen, John E. Wagstaff, George C. Hodges, and Edward B. Hussey," in *The Julia Morgan Architectural History Project, Volume One*. (The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, Regional Oral History Office. Berkeley, CA: The Regents of the University of California, 1975). "She might have gotten a little money from the city to draw up a proposal or a presentation or a proposal for its use," George C. Hodges, 186.

<sup>244</sup> Taylor Coffman, *Building for Hearst and Morgan: Voices from the George Looz Papers* (Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Hills Books, 2003), 511. Looz worked as Morgan's construction engineer in the 1930's.

year the city-funded project was her only commission.<sup>245</sup> The account ran through July 1947 and shows that during the seven-month period \$10,200 were paid in operating costs, two-thirds covering the services of Walter Steilberg.<sup>246</sup> The same account was closed in August and was never reopened, and the City funding dried up for the time being.<sup>247</sup>

Hearst had stipulated that the medieval arts museum be built in Golden Gate Park, and the first problem for the De Young trustees was to decide where to put it. Steilberg's remarks in conversation with Sally Woodbridge indicate in what mysterious directions the debate must have proceeded:

This lady [*Frieda Klussmann, evidently a De Young trustee or donor*] who is responsible for the cable cars in some way got it fixed in her mind that this monastery was "up on a high hill" and it must be put up again "on a big hill."

Well, it was nothing of the sort; it was on the flood plain here, you see [*Steilberg refers to the Tagus River valley in Spain*]. I think she had seen the one in New York—The Cloisters there—and it just fixed in her mind that that was the thing to do with it. Well, there wasn't any such location available. This was to have been in Golden Gate

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<sup>245</sup> Coffman, *Building*, 516.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*

Park, across that main street from the park, a hill on the other side. It was a beautiful location.<sup>248</sup>

The first of several architectural drawings made by Julia Morgan for the new museum shows precisely its intended location in Golden Gate Park, on a small hill behind the Japanese Tea Garden, within easy walking distance of the De Young Museum (*Figure 17*). This important drawing shows not only the initially assigned location for the museum, but it also tells us how Morgan began envisioning the project, and how in her mind's eye at least she conceived it as a reconstruction of the original monastery in Spain. This is evident from the fact Morgan copied from the original plan made before 1931 by Arthur Byne *in situ*, rearranging only the position of the various buildings in conformity to the altered topography of the site (*Figure 18*). The ever-practical Steilberg records his approval of the chosen site but pokes fun at Morgan for not accepting his provision for a parking lot:

Miss Morgan designed it for that place, because she thought it could be a fine place for it. I think she was a little optimistic about it. I

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<sup>248</sup> Sally Woodbridge, Interview with Walter Steilberg, *The Julia Morgan Architectural History Project*, 118.

worked over the plan and worked out an arrangement whereby there would be a parking lot. Well, she didn't like that. She said she wanted it to be a place where people would walk, as on a pilgrimage [laughs]. People don't walk 'as on a pilgrimage' any more—not enough of them, anyway.<sup>249</sup>

Morgan's early drawings incorporate the largely imaginative quality of the undertaking. Walter Steilberg makes it abundantly clear that it was clear from the outset that the museum was never conceived of as an actual reconstruction or a reproduction of the original monastery:

... There was no intention of using the stonework for anything but the interior—with the exception of the entrances doorway to the chapel and the roof corbel stones of the refectory; otherwise, as is evident in Miss Morgan's drawings, the exterior walls would have been stucco finished (over modern reinforced concrete). Possibly the display of this design (especially with the normal tendency of newspapers to exaggerate) has led to the assumption that there is a complete monastery in storage.<sup>250</sup>

Among the numerous floor plans and interior drawings made by Morgan's office between 1941 and 1947 there are two representations of the museum which

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<sup>249</sup> Sally Woodbridge, Interview with Walter Steilberg, *The Julia Morgan Architectural History Project*, 119.

<sup>250</sup> Letter to Charles Griffith, City Architect, 1960, *The Julia Morgan Architectural History Project*, 329.

taken together give the best impression of how it was supposed to look in its completed state: a large elevation drawing in color depicting the frontal exterior, and a detailed wooden architectural model of the entire construction (*Figures 19 and 20*).<sup>251</sup> The latter was made in 1941 to Morgan's specifications by sculptor Cecilia Bancroft Graham.<sup>252</sup> It shows clearly how, in keeping with Spanish Cistercian tradition, the individual buildings were appended to and branched off from the cloister, making it the center and focal point of the monastery.<sup>253</sup>

Although the external appearance of the museum is clear enough from Morgan's designs, what exactly was intended to be displayed inside the museum is less clear. Certainly Hearst and Morgan must have discussed the matter, and it seems possible that there may have been stipulations regarding the acquisitions taken from Hearst's own collection contained in the original proposal presented

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<sup>251</sup> The elevation drawing is archived in the Julia Morgan collection at Kennedy Library, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, California. It is available for inspection but we were not able to obtain a reproduction. The photo of the architectural model is shown here from Boutelle, *Julia Morgan*, 239. Boutelle reports that the original model was located in the archives of the De Young Museum as of 1982. Its current disposition is unknown.

<sup>252</sup> Mix, *op. cit.*

<sup>253</sup> There is a handwritten note in pencil to Morgan from Hearst emphasizing the importance of the cloister in the projected museum ("Julia Morgan Collection at Kennedy Library," California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, CA).

to the City in 1941, but no documented information is currently available. In all events the opulently decorated medieval rooms stuffed to the bursting point with medieval *objets* which they created together at San Simeon must have certainly been on their minds.

#### END OF THE DREAM

For those so firmly enthused and committed to the medieval museum project its demise must have come as a terrible disappointment. There are three apparent reasons, the most immediate being the intervention of World War Two, which brought municipal planning of all types to an instant halt while government agencies were suddenly required to turn to defense and military operations. Secondly, the uncertainty and the financial strain occasioned by the War effort almost automatically dried up funding for civic projects as well as almost all major private building contracts. Speaking about Steilberg's lecture to the Museum Board in 1941, Helena Steilberg Lawton evokes the atmosphere of the time:

And also, WTS made in that lecture a plea from his heart to the people of San Francisco to agree to reassemble the monastery's stones at a dire point in the war when courage born of faith—any faith—could be reborn and flower in the lyrically soaring arches of a resurrected Santa María de Óvila.

But the plea was made at the Museum on September 24, 1941, and less than three months afterwards came Pearl Harbor: military action, with matters of the spirit relegated to the army chaplains, was the inevitable consequence, and Santa María remained, silent and fragmented, in her packing cases.<sup>254</sup>

Finally, to complicate matters almost irredeemably, there occurred a series of arsonist-induced fires which damaged the monastery stones where they lay unattended in Golden Gate Park since being removed from indoor storage downtown in 1941. They were first stored somewhere in the vicinity of the Japanese Tea Garden in crates packed with excelsior, easily flammable.<sup>255</sup> In 1941 there occurred the first of four fires, the causes of which were never known,

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<sup>254</sup> Helena Steilberg Lawton, "Walter Steilberg, Architect: The Man, His Times, His Work," *The Julia Morgan Architectural History Project*, 321. The lecture was entitled "Moving a Monastery from Spain to San Francisco" and is reproduced in full as an appendix to Lawton's text.

<sup>255</sup> Sally Woodbridge, Interview with Walter Steilberg, *The Julia Morgan Architectural History Project*, 81.

although arson was always officially assumed.<sup>256</sup> The damage from these fires meant that much of the stonework became cracked and charred, rendering the stones useless for construction purposes.<sup>257</sup> To make matters worse, the descriptive cataloging numbers had been burned off, and the stones lay scattered about the site in heaps.<sup>258</sup> In Steilberg's words, "It was worse than the worst jigsaw puzzle anyone could imagine."<sup>259</sup>

The charred stones were next brought to a storage area behind the De Young Museum where they were exposed to three more arsonist fires, the worst

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<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.* Steilberg's views are a bit more explicit: "It could be spontaneous combustion, so the fire chiefs tell me; but there was also a good deal of suspicion of its being incendiary, because the youngsters had been whipped up to a sort of fury by Frieda Klussmann: 'Don't let them put any more buildings in the park. We want the park without buildings.'"

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.* Steilberg says the site "was shamefully neglected during the war. Of course, the war provided an excuse for anything; you could do anything and get away with any neglect or anything else, and nobody thought anything of it." He speaks also about "the sketches Miss Morgan made when she went out there after the fire. Now there is evidence of the drive of that little lady and the persistence of her dream about things, you know. This thing was all in ruins and everything, and yet she went out there day after day and made sketches of every little detail that she could get to." Apparently the drawings were to help reconstruct the parts of the monastery into a coherent whole.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.*

occurring in 1959.<sup>260</sup> After that, many of the “Hearst stones,” as they were now referred to in the frequent newspaper stories on the matter, were used to build ornamental retaining walls in the Japanese Tea Garden and in Strybing Arboretum (Botanical Garden), where they remain to this day (*Figure 21*). The debate about what to do with the other stones went on for years. The Renaissance portal was set up in the De Young Museum in 1965, and by 1982 the final determination was made to donate the remaining stones comprising the Chapter house to the Abbey of New Clairvaux, a Cistercian retreat center in Northern California.<sup>261</sup>

As we have seen, actual work on the Medieval Arts Museum project ceased when the City ceased funding it in 1947, the same year in which Julia Morgan

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<sup>260</sup> In a letter to the *San Francisco Examiner* newspaper dated June 11, 1959, Steilberg writes: “Much of this stone masonry has now been seriously damaged by four fires. The first in 1941 did relatively little damage and a second fire some years later was not serious; but the last two fires which occurred in Dec. 1958 and May 1959 have so added to the destruction that I now doubt that enough can be saved to restore even one of the rooms,” (quoted in the *Letter to Charles Griffith, City Architect, San Francisco, 1960* cited above, 335). The 1959 fires prompted the Board of Supervisors to launch yet another inquiry concerning the disposition of the stones, during the course of which Steilberg reversed his position and arrived at the conclusion that both the chapter house and the refectory could be successfully reconstituted.

<sup>261</sup> For a view of the reconstructed and apparently not yet fully completed Chapter House at the Abbey of New Clairvaux see <http://www.sacredstones.org/index.html>. The Abbey is open to visitors, and there is an instructive YouTube video on the reconstruction of the Chapter House in Vina, California, at <http://youtube/UWydxG6l8y8>.

gave up her office in the Merchants' Exchange Building. The Board of Supervisors made a decision to finance an Asian Arts Museum in favor of the Medieval Museum, but the only account of it we have been able to uncover is a brief passage in Helena Lawton's biography of her father:

Walter Heil, then director of the Museum and a close friend of WTS's [Steilberg], the Museum's Board, and the San Francisco Board of Supervisors were presented with a tremendously difficult decision: Avery Brundage had offered his magnificent Asian art collection to the deYoung, and the choice was either acceptance and housing of that collection or reconstruction of the monastery. All, even WTS, felt regretfully that with San Francisco's strong rapport with Asia—stronger than its sympathy with medieval Europe—it would be easier to raise the supplementary funds for installation of the Brundage Collection. WTS concurred that this reasoning was sound; amazingly he felt little bitterness at the loss of a project which was very dear to him, and he was also, in time, philosophical in accepting the brutal fact of the massive destruction of a great portion of the stones by fire, in later years.<sup>262</sup>

Nonetheless, the dream of a medieval arts museum for San Francisco endured well beyond Julia Morgan's retirement. Attempts were made to raise

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<sup>262</sup> Lawton, "Reminiscences," *Julia Morgan Architectural History Project*, 312-313. Lawton does not indicate the year when this happened, saying only that "The date can easily be pinpointed by the deYoung Museum" (312). Because any archived materials relating to the medieval museum were released into different university archives around California after the reorganization of the De Young and California Palace of the Legion of Honor museums in the 1980's, and because the De Young Museum has not responded to our inquiries, we have not been able to investigate further.

private funds to finance its construction, spurred on perhaps by the periodic debates in City departments about what to do with the stones, which of course had passed into the City's ownership in 1941 and whose ultimate fate remained undecided until 1982. Walter Steilberg, acting as chief consultant for probably all of these attempts, remained committed to the end. In response to an inquiry from the City Architect in 1960, Steilberg wrote a detailed report concerning the condition of the stones, in which he discusses how the chapter house and refectory might be rebuilt, and also how the fire-cracked stones might at least be utilized to good effect in garden areas around Golden Gate Park.<sup>263</sup> One can only imagine how he felt surveying the scattered ruins of the monastery whose dismantlement and exportation he had personally supervised in Spain some thirty years earlier.

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<sup>263</sup> Steilberg, *Letter to the City Architect*, 331. It appears from the letter that there was still an interest, or at least an ongoing uncertainty, in the City Architect's office about resurrecting the monastery buildings. In 1964-65 the Museum Society raised \$40,000 to erect the Renaissance portal of the monastery church and display it inside the De Young, while in March, 1980, the Hearst Foundation provided grant money to finance a new attempt at identifying the carved stones (Burke, "Santa Maria," 85).

## THE GARGOYLES OF SAN FRANCISCO

Finally, any review of medievalist architecture would be negligent if it did not include some mention of those silent and ominous watchdogs protecting Gothic and neo-Gothic buildings everywhere, the gargoyles. In this respect San Francisco is also not lacking—although it might be more accurate to speak of chimeras, since their medieval employment as rainspouts does not yet seem to have gained local acceptance.<sup>264</sup> To offer some local examples: a number of metal gargoyles may be observed projecting themselves in several directions from the fleche at the top of Grace Cathedral, while two more are embedded in the Romanesque portal of the old Masonic Temple at Van Ness and Market. Others peer down from the entrance of the Russ Building downtown and from the high red-brick walls of San Francisco General Hospital. But for the most part gargoyles seem to be far more numerous in the East Bay, where they have settled

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<sup>264</sup> "Chimera, or *chimère*, in architecture, is a term loosely used for any grotesque, fantastic, or imaginary beast used in decoration." *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, s. v. "Chimera", <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Chimera-Greek-mythology>, accessed November 29, 2015. Used correctly, the term gargoyle refers to mostly grotesque figures carved as spouts to convey water away from the rooves or sides of buildings.

on a large number of houses built by Morgan and Maybeck, even though in many cases these zoomorphic oddities appear to have been appended by their owners at a later date.

## APPENDIX



*Figure 1.* The Middle Ages spring to life as a king receives wise counsel in a Bohemian Club Masquerade held in Bohemian Grove in 1909. Source: Bancroft Library, Collection "Bohemian Grove, ca. 1906-1909 (BANC PIC 1957.023—ALB), page 9. Online at: Online Archive of California <http://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/tf7r29p3kg/?&brand=oac4> [accessed February 26, 2016].



*Figure 2.* Castellated main entrance to San Quentin Prison. Source: Wikimedia Commons, released to public domain. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:San\\_Quentin.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:San_Quentin.jpg) [accessed February 24, 2016].

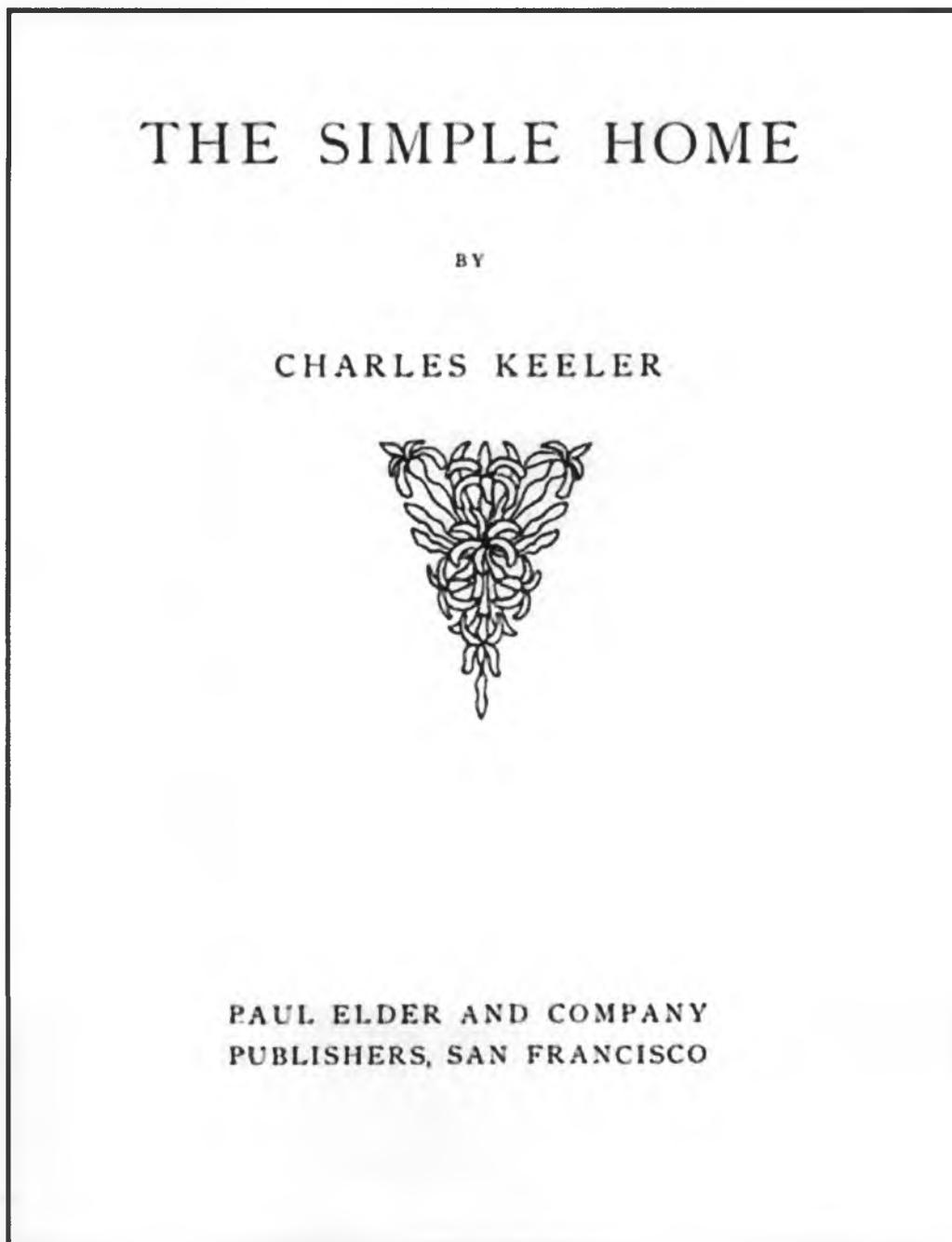


Figure 3. Frontispiece, Charles Keeler, *The Simple Home*, 1904.

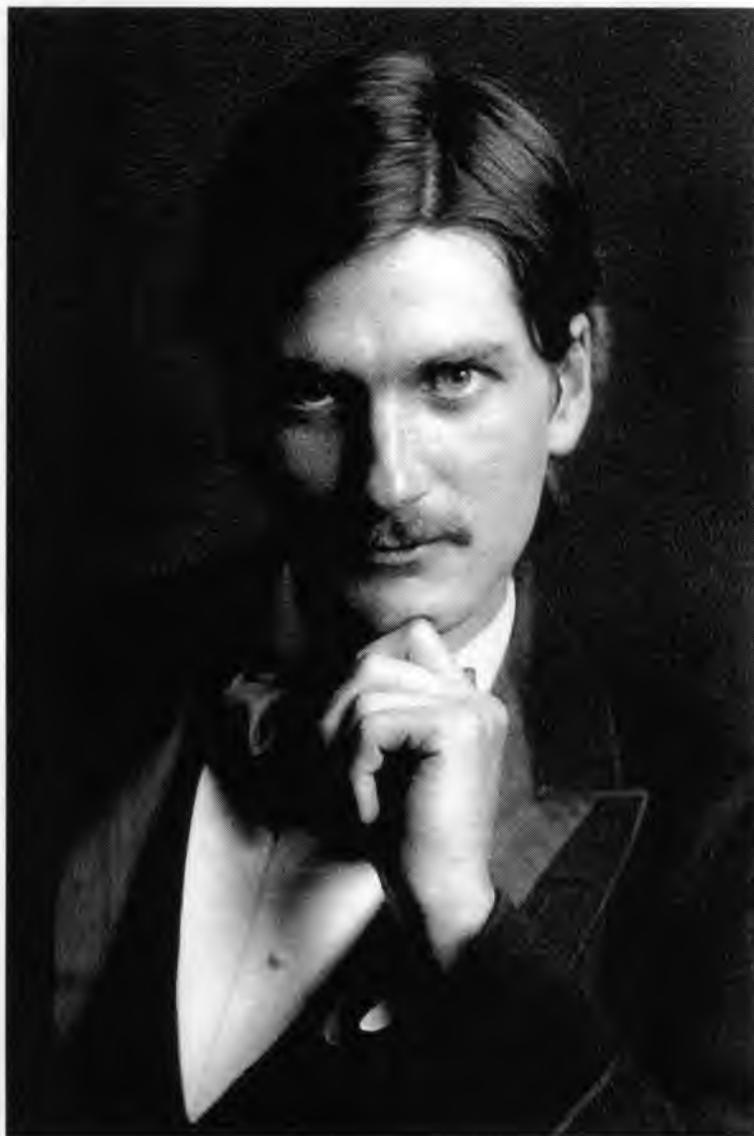


Figure 4. Charles Keeler, about 1895. Source: Charles Augustus Keeler Papers, 1858-1949 (BANC MSS C H 105). The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. Online at: Online Archive of California, <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/tf629008j4/?layout=metadata&brand=oac4> [accessed February 27, 2016].



Figure 5. Original design for Grace Cathedral with central spire by George Frederick Bodley. The original orientation is north-south, with the main entrance on California Street. Source: *The San Francisco Sunday Call Magazine Section*, May 28, 1911. Online at the Library of Congress, "Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers" site: <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85066387/1911-05-28/ed-1/seq-3> (accessed February 25, 2016).



*Figure 6.* Bodley's plan for the interior of Grace Cathedral seen from the nave and central crossing toward the choir. Source: see Figure 5.



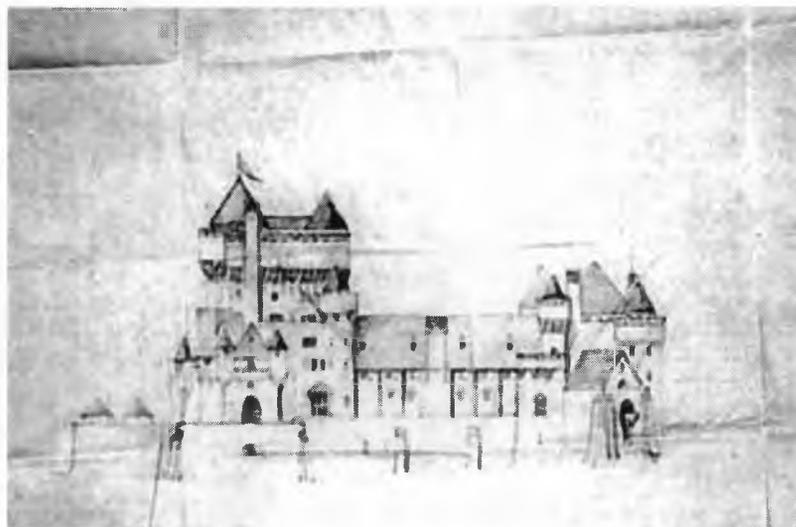
*Figure 7.* "Maybeck family pageant: Annie, Ben, Kerna and Wallen, c. 1910." Photographer unknown, Bernard Maybeck Collection, (1956-1), Environmental Design Archives, University of California, Berkeley.



*Figure 8.* Wyntoon Estate in 1906 as designed by Bernard Maybeck. It burned down in 1929. Photographer unknown. Source: Enos Brown, "'Wyntoon,' a Mediaeval Castle in Shasta, California," *American Homes and Gardens* 2-3, (February 1906): 101.



*Figure 9.* Maybeck and Morgan collaborative design for the reconstruction of Wynton Estate, 1930. Bernard Maybeck Collection, (1956-1), Environmental Design Archives, University of California, Berkeley. Used with permission.



*Figure 10.* An early sketch for Wynton by Julia Morgan, 1929. Julia Morgan Papers, 1835–1958 (MS 010). Robert F. Kennedy Library, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. Used with permission.



*Figure 11.* Spanish workers dismantling the chapter house of Santa María de Óvila, photo by Walter Steilberg during his on-site inspection in 1932. Source: The private archives of Don Jose Miguel Merino in Cáceres, Spain, reproduced in Francisco Layna Serrano, *El Monasterio de Ovila*, (Guadalajara: Aache Ediciones, 1998).



*Figure 12.* Dismantling Santa María de Óvila, Walter Steilberg, 1932. Source: see Figure 11 above.



*Figure 13.* Dismantling Santa María de Óvila, photo by Walter Steilberg, 1932. Source: see Figure 11 above.



*Figure 14.* Dismantling Santa María de Óvila, photo by Walter Steilberg, 1932. The stones are wrapped in burlap and moved on narrow-gauge tracks to a truck loading point. Source: see Figure 11 above.



*Figure 15.* Entry portal to abbey church, Santa María de Óvila. The photo was probably taken by Walter Steilberg in 1932 during his inspection visit. Wikimedia Commons, released to public domain, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santa\\_Mar%C3%ADa\\_de\\_%C3%93vila](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santa_Mar%C3%ADa_de_%C3%93vila) [accessed February 24, 2016].



*Figure 16.* The abbey church portal as it stands today on the University of San Francisco campus. Photo by author, September 2011.

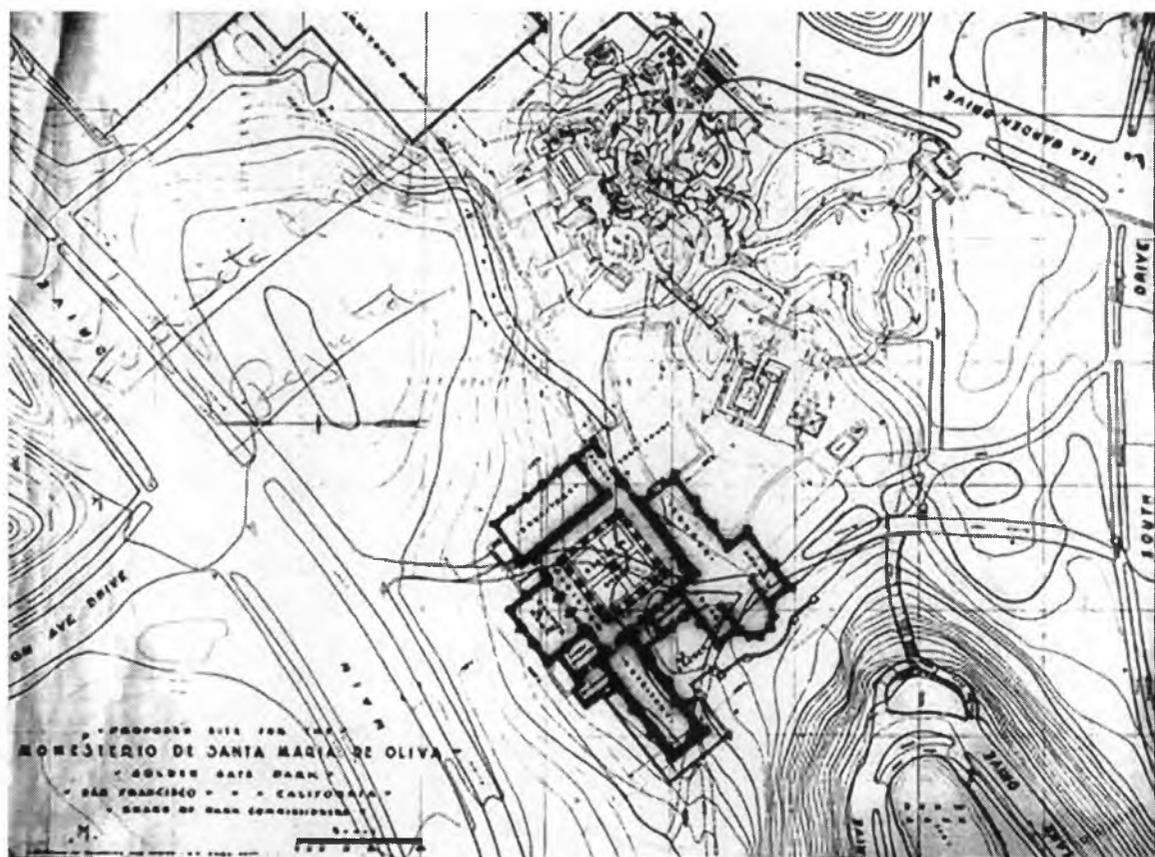


Figure 17. Julia Morgan's floorplan drawing for the proposed Medieval Arts Museum in Golden Gate Park presented to the Park Commissioners after 1940, utilizing the monastery stones imported from Santa María de Óvila in Spain. Julia Morgan Papers, 1835-1958 (MS 010). Robert F. Kennedy Library, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. Used with permission.

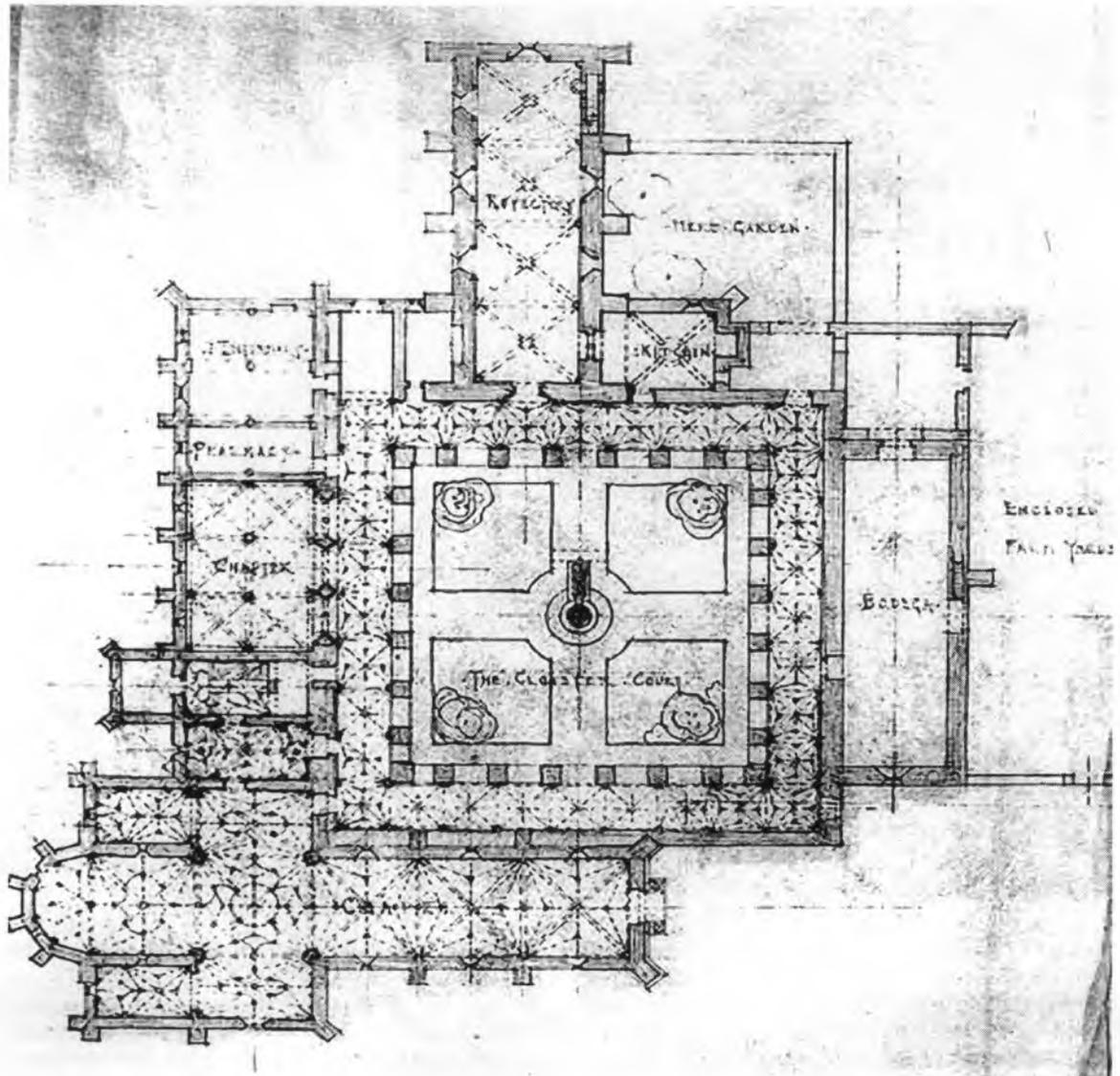


Figure 18. The plan of Santa Maria de Ovila drawn in situ by Arthur Byne, probably in 1929. Julia Morgan's plan to rebuild the monastery in Golden Gate Park followed the original design very closely, using the cloister garden as the center. Source: The private archives of Don Jose Miguel Merino in Cáceres, Spain, reproduced in Francisco Layna Serrano, *El Monasterio de Ovila*, (Guadalajara: Aache Ediciones, 1998).



*Figure 19.* Elevation drawing for the Museum for Medieval Arts in San Francisco by Julia Morgan. Because the stones were by 1945 in parlous condition, the walls of the monastery were to be covered with cement on the outside and visible only from the inside. The tower of the De Young Museum can be seen through the treetops in the background. Julia Morgan Papers, 1835–1958 (MS 010). Robert F. Kennedy Library, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. Used with permission.



*Figure 20.* Architectural model of the projected Museum for Medieval Arts in San Francisco, created by Cecilia Bancroft Graham. 1941. Source: Archives of the DeYoung Museum, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. Reproduced in Sara Holmes Boutelle, *Julia Morgan, Architect* (New York: Abbeville Press 1988).



*Figure 21.* Stones from the monastery in Spain can be seen today in random arrangements around Golden Gate Park, as here in the Strybing Arboretum. Photo by author, 1979.

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