



UTILITAS • FIRMITAS • VENUSTAS

Northern California Chapter  
Society of Architectural Historians

The Newsletter

Volume 15, Number 1  
May 2012

## Join NCCSAH Tour of Stained Glass in Historic San Francisco Churches, June 2

NCCSAH is offering a tour of San Francisco churches to view their stained glass and learn the history of American glass from the 1880s to World War I. We've chosen six buildings that represent a broad spectrum of American glass: St John's Presbyterian, St Mark's Lutheran, First Unitarian Universalist, Trinity Episcopal, Calvary Presbyterian, and the Sherith Israel synagogue. Many of the windows are excellent examples of the various styles. We will also learn about the church buildings themselves, as all are architecturally important, some done by well-known architects such as Albert Pissis and A. Page Brown.

Because of the difficulty in parking near many of the churches, the tour will meet at the CPMC garage on Clay St (between Fillmore & Webster) at 9:30 am, Saturday, 2 June. The hospital garage offers loads of parking on Saturday at a discounted rate. A bus will take us to four of the churches in the morning, after which we will enjoy box lunches at Alta Plaza Park. Following lunch we'll walk a block to Calvary Presbyterian, and then to Sherith Israel, where the tour will end at about 4



*St. Mark's Lutheran Church. Photo by William Kostura*

pm. The final stop on the tour is only two blocks from the hospital garage, making it easy for drivers to return to their cars. A reception at a nearby private home with a good collection of Victorian furniture follows the tour. You may find binoculars useful in viewing some windows located high above eye level.

Cost of the tour, including the bus and a box lunch, is \$35 per person for members, \$45 for nonmembers. We are limited to 30 people. If you wish to reserve space, please use the coupon on page 6.

*Turn to page 2 for a feature on San Francisco stained glass and the buildings on the tour.*



*Congregation Sherith Israel: Moses and the Twelve Tribes, attributed to Emile Pissis*

## Through a Glass Brightly: Touring San Francisco Stained Glass

There have been two great ages of stained glass: the Middle Ages and the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. American stained glass really began with the windows that William J Bolton made in the mid 1840s for Holy Trinity Episcopal Church (today, St Ann's Church), in Brooklyn Heights. The traditional materials and techniques of creating stained glass windows that were used during the Gothic period in England and Europe were resurrected in the 19<sup>th</sup> century but with artistic innovations, such as new types and multiple layers of glass.

Nineteenth century San Francisco was a wealthy city, and most of its more prosperous churches installed stained glass windows. Many of those, however, did not survive the 1906 earthquake and fire.

The six churches on the NCCSAH tour of American stained glass include some of the city's oldest congregations. In each instance, the present structure represents an end stage of movement through a succession of locations that reflected the westward growth of the city. In half the subjects, sanctuaries incorporate elements removed from their

earlier homes, including windows. A purely fortuitous consequence of following the population beyond Van Ness Avenue was that each church was out of reach of the ravaging fires that followed the 1906 earthquake.

This tour includes many examples of pre-quake windows.

---

### **Glossary**

*Pot metal glass:* clear glass colored by the addition of metallic oxides while liquid.

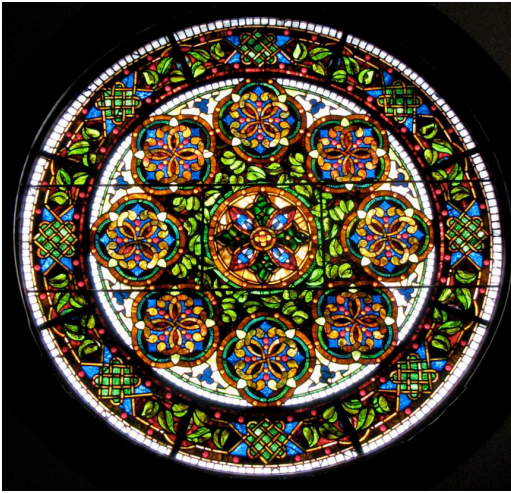
*Opalescent glass:* semi-opaque, milky, streaky glass created by the addition of various substances while liquid.

*Cathedral glass:* colorless or tinted glass with a pattern rolled into the glass while semi liquid

---

All photographs in this feature are by Ian Berke





*St. John's Presbyterian.*

### **St. John's Presbyterian Church**

*San Francisco Landmark #83.  
National Register listed 1996.*

A splinter group from Calvary Presbyterian founded St. John's Presbyterian Church, in 1870. This brown shingle church at Lake and Arguello is the third home for this congregation and was built at the juncture of Presidio Heights and the Richmond District, when these areas of the city were in early stages of development.

Dodge & Dolliver designed the present church. Other works by this firm include the Odd Fellows Hall in San Francisco and numerous schools, public libraries and civic buildings in Northern California, including the San Mateo Court House and Tamalpais Union High School in Mill Valley.

Inaugural services at the new St. John's took place just three days before the great 1906 earthquake. After repair to minor damage, the sanctuary reopened to the congregation one year later. St. John's is said to be the oldest church building in the Inner Richmond and one of two surviving Shingle Style churches in San Francisco. It incorporates interior features recycled from its two previous churches. These include the Gothic style arch spanning the pulpit, pews, pulpit furnishings, an organ, and many windows.

This church is the perfect starting point for the tour because this one building has examples of most of the types of American stained glass: Aesthetic Movement, geometric, opalescent, and others. The largest window, the east window, is an image of St. John in the wilderness being fed by ravens. An elaborate architectural canopy tops the scene, and an equally elaborate border underlines it. This is a masterpiece and is signed and dated by a local window firm. Signed windows, much less dated, are rarely seen, and this one is a very early use of opalescent glass. The other windows include a suite of figural pot metal windows with handsome Aesthetic Movement designs and an intricate opalescent round window.

### **St. Mark's Lutheran Church**

*San Francisco Landmark #41. CPF Preservation Design Award, 2007.*

Located on O'Farrell Street between Gough and Franklin, St. Mark's Lutheran Church traces its origins to the first Lutheran ministry among German speaking Forty-Niners in San Francisco. Earliest services took place in private homes, then in a Congregational church purchased in 1859. St. Mark's built its own church on Union Square, in 1862-3.

Following the movement of population into the Western Addition, St. Mark's acquired its present site and engaged German-born architect Henry Geilfuss, who designed the distinctive red brick structure in a blend of Romanesque and Gothic Revival styles (dedicated 1895). Geilfuss was active—and prolific, designing hundred of buildings from the time of his arrival in San Francisco (1876) into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Known especially for residential design, he counted many German families among his clients. His notable works include the Westerfeld House, the Brune-Reutlinger House, and the Bay-view (South San Francisco) Opera House.

St. Mark's survived the 1906 earthquake and fire with minor damage and became a refuge for displaced residents. The 1989 earthquake also caused relatively minor damage. Under mandate from the City of San Francisco to secure unreinforced masonry buildings, the congregation of St. Mark's made the commitment to an \$11 million restoration and seismic retrofit. Following completion of the 18-month project, rededication of St. Mark's took place on December 10, 2006.



*St. Mark's Lutheran Church*

St Mark's has a complete program of windows that were installed nearly simultaneously, probably at the time of, or soon after, construction. Because of the cost of stained glass, this was uncommon for all but the wealthiest congregations. These tall, geometric cathedral glass windows are each topped with a small rose window, the centers of which have a beautifully worked religious symbol—a lamb, a dove, an alpha & omega—on alternating deep red and blue backgrounds. The visual effect of the unity of design is impressive.

### First Unitarian Universalist Church

*San Francisco Landmark #40.*

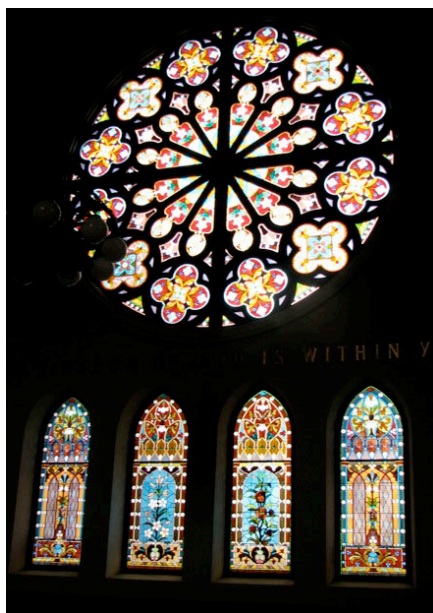
Founded in 1850, the First Unitarian Universalist Church is one of San Francisco's pioneer churches. Its distinguished history includes the ministry of Thomas Starr King (1860-1864), whose vigorous advocacy helped keep California loyal to the Union.

The present structure at Franklin and Geary, dedicated in 1889, is the third home for this congregation. The firm of Percy & Hamilton (Sharon Building in Golden Gate Park; 7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventist Church, California and Broderick; Stanford University Museum) designed the stately Richardson Romanesque church. Just beyond the fire line in 1906, the

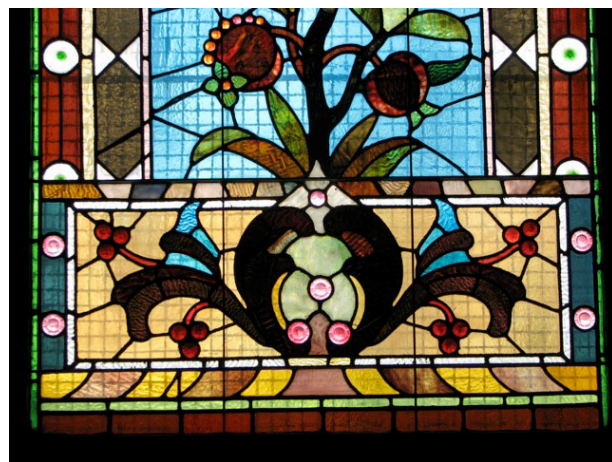
building suffered only earthquake damage that resulted in the loss of its steeple. The tower's reconstruction in its present form is about twenty feet shorter than the original.

First Unitarian has a spectacular collection of Victorian pot metal geometric and floral windows. The two large rose windows, opposite each other, are dramatic with their kaleidoscopic patterning and color. The lancet windows have stylized foliage images surrounded by elaborate borders. Stylistic unity suggests that installation of the windows occurred at the same time, rather than over a period of years.

In 1968, Callister, Payne & Rosse designed a major addition in a contemporary style, expressed in concrete and red-



*First Unitarian rose window and lancets*



*First Unitarian Church*

wood, that contains a chapel, meeting rooms and school facilities. The historic core received substantial seismic improvements in the 1960s and again in the late 1990s.

### Trinity Episcopal Church

*San Francisco Landmark #65.*

The solemn Norman Style building at Gough and Bush is home to Trinity Episcopal Church, which, established in 1849, claims the distinction of being the oldest Episcopal congregation on the Pacific Coast. At the inaugural services two hundred people pledged \$7,000 for construction of a church. The resulting wooden structure stood at Jackson and Powell streets. The congregation relocated twice more before building the present church, whose cornerstone was laid in 1892.

The firm of A. Page Brown (best remembered today for the Ferry Building) won the competition for the new Trinity. The actual design task fell to A.C. Schweinfurth. While Gothic features are present, the dominant character is Romanesque Revival, evidenced by massive walls with crenellated parapets and towers, all expressed in rough-hewn Colusa sandstone.

Trinity Episcopal has mostly German figural windows, known as Munich style, with their beautifully painted figures. The major attraction, however, is the Tiffany figural window high in their north wall. The central image is of the three Marys, with an angel, wings spread, overlooking the group, all surrounded by one of Tiffany's typical elaborate borders. This is the only Tiffany window remaining in the city (others were destroyed in 1906) and is an ex-



cellent example of the revolution that both Louis Comfort Tiffany and John LaFarge brought to stained glass.

### **Calvary Presbyterian Church**

*San Francisco Landmark #103. National Register listed 1978.*

Founded in 1854, Calvary Presbyterian Church built its first permanent home in 1855, in what is today's financial district. In 1869, the parish moved to a new church on the present site of the St. Francis Hotel.

By 1900, the congregation decided to move to its present location, at Fillmore and Jackson, and engaged McDougall Brothers, architects. The first service at the new site was on Thanksgiving 1902. Formal dedication took place in February 1904. Construction of the new church incorporated over one million bricks from the old church on Union Square, and the original pews, metal balcony supports and finished woodwork adorned the interior. Virtually undamaged by the 1906 earthquake, Calvary offered temporary sanctuary to less fortunate religious communities.

Calvary Presbyterian has hybrid windows, enamel-painted scenes set within handsome opalescent borders. The painted portions are familiar biblical scenes, taken from then well known 19th century paintings and prints. The artist attempts to duplicate an oil painting on a single large piece or pieces of glass, in a fashion that was popular in Renaissance, and slightly later, European glass. The lead lines are confined mostly to the opalescent glass borders. This style is quite different from the glass in any of the other churches on the tour. These windows were manufactured by Ford Brothers, a Minneapolis firm, and appear to have been installed simultaneously.

Major renovation of the sanctuary, in 1988, included restoration of stained glass windows on the south side. Calvary completed seismic and ADA upgrades in 2002.

### **Congregation Sherith Israel**

*National Register listed 2010*

Located in Pacific Heights, Congregation Sherith Israel grew out of the large community of European Jews drawn to Gold Rush San Francisco. Meetings in 1851 to organize a synagogue actually resulted in the formation of two congregations: Emanu-el and Sherith Israel.

Like other churches on this tour, Sherith Israel hoppedscotched across town, from North Beach to Union

Square to Pacific Heights. In those years, the community evolved toward Reform Judaism. To build its present temple, the congregation engaged Albert Pissis, already a distinguished San Francisco architect, whose works include the Hibernia Bank, the Emporium and the Flood Building.

The staid, rather formal Romanesque Revival exterior, rendered in Colusa sandstone, does not prepare the visitor for the exuberant, rich and colorfully detailed sanctuary, which includes examples of two distinct styles of glass. The first is opalescent, with beautifully drawn figures and bright, elaborate borders. The second phase was installed in the early '20s and is 20th century Gothic, suggestive of medieval glass.

At the balcony level two enormous demilune windows illustrate clearly and dramatically the differences between the two styles. The west wall window is a masterpiece of opalescent glass, depicting Moses with the twelve tribes, assembled in Yosemite Valley, with Half Dome in the background. Recent research points to Emile Pissis, brother of the temple's architect, as the designer. The east window, Feed the Hungry, is 20th century Gothic. Italian-born artist Attilio Moretti, working with the Pissis brothers, designed the frescoes.



*Congregation Sherith  
Israel: A Prophet*

Sherith Israel survived the 1906 earthquake with very minor damage. After swiftly completed repairs, the building served as a temporary courthouse whose most famous proceedings were the graft trial of boss Abe Ruef. No damage resulted from the 1989 earthquake, but the City soon required public assembly structures, including churches, to meet higher seismic standards.

Construction to bring the building into compliance with current seismic codes began in April 2010. One

*Concluded on page 7*

**Inge Schaefer Horton**

***Early Women Architects of the San Francisco Bay Area: The Lives and Works of Fifty Professionals, 1890-1951***

Jefferson, North Carolina and London:

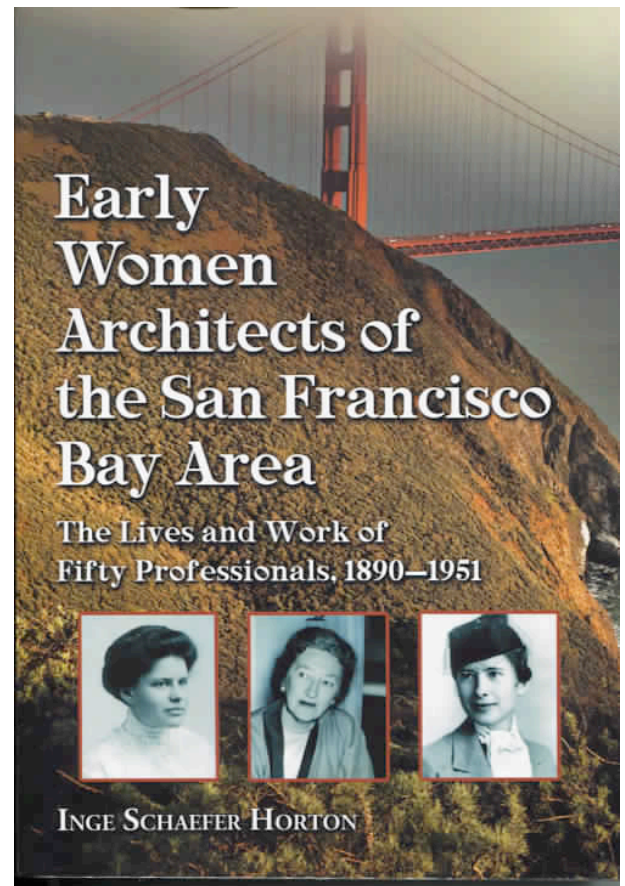
McFarland & Company, Inc., 2010.

The first wave of literature on American women architects was energized by the feminist movement of the late 1960s and 1970s. Monographs on Julia Morgan, Lilian Bridgeman, Lulah Maria Riggs and others were published. At the same time, exhibitions with accompanying catalogs sought, in the words of Suzanna Torre, architect and editor of *Women in American Architecture: A Historic and Contemporary Perspective* (1977), “to expose those ideologies imbedded in our knowledge that have rationalized and justified the marginal role of women in the public sphere of social life.”

While Inge Horton’s book is hardly devoid of such concern, with thirty-plus years of hindsight, she is able to take a more dispassionate view of the reasons for women’s constrained position within the architectural profession. In her words, Horton sought “to bring back to life the careers and work of pioneering women in architecture, provide role models for young women interested in pursuing architecture as their professional field, and to inform women architects of their professional legacy. . . .”

Horton’s study focuses on conditions for female architects in the San Francisco Bay Area from the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the post World War II period. These years are bracketed by the opening of architectural studies to women at the University of California (Julia Morgan was admitted as a Special Course Student in 1890, earning an engineering degree in ’94), and changing social conditions following the conclusion of World War II.

The book is arranged into three sections. It opens with an extended discussion of the cultural boundaries within which women architects functioned, followed by an analysis of known works by women architects and the challenge of identifying their previously unknown works. Virtually one half of the book is devoted to portraits of fifty women architects, selected from a database of more than 300 figures Horton has identified. A series of appendices follows. The text is extensively illustrated, in many cases with photographs taken by the author.



Perhaps the most significant contribution of this book is Horton’s research methodology. Beginning with the premise that her subjects are largely outside the realm of traditional histories of American architecture and architects, Horton pursues innovative paths to find reliable data on her subjects. These include U.S. Census records, City Directories, obituaries, archival collections (albeit limited), diaries and oral history interviews. This methodology is not unique (it is fairly standard in genealogical research), yet it is certainly atypical in the world of architectural history. She provides an excellent model not only for future studies of women architects, but gender or race-based studies where the subjects may have been excluded from published histories.

Horton set out to learn about “everyday women architects.” These women contrast with the prominence of Julia Morgan, whose fame not only derived from her talent but the fact that much of her practice was comprised

*Review continued on page 8*



# Fall Caltrain Depot Tour Proves Successful. . .Again



A reprise of the popular tour of historic Caltrain depots on the San Francisco Peninsula last October drew an enthusiastic group. First offered in 2005, the tour appealed to train buffs, as well as fans of historic architecture. Taking advantage of approximately one-hour headways, the group moved easily from station to station, detraining at five that offered a variety of historical styles. New to this year's itinerary was the fine Art Deco Palo Alto depot.

We offer our thanks to the guides who shared their rich knowledge at each stop: Vern Bruce, Millbrae Historical Society; Russ Cohen, Hillsborough/Burlingame Historical Society; Steve Staiger, historian, Palo Alto Historical Society; Robert Marshall, CEO, South Bay Historical Railroad Society; and Rod Diridon, Director, Mineta Transportation Institute.



*Tour participants pose for group shot before Burlingame station (photo by Russ Cohen). Historian Steve Staiger expounds on the Art Deco Palo Alto depot (far left). Robert Marshall, South Bay Historical Railroad Society, answers questions at Santa Clara Station (Photos by Ward Hill).*

## *Stained Glass, continued from page 5*

year later, after completion of the first phase, the congregation moved back into the sanctuary. Some restoration in the sanctuary and restoration of some of the stained glass windows was part of the seismic upgrade. Additional structural upgrades are planned.

Our thanks to Ian Berke, whose particular interest in American stained glass was the impetus for this tour, during which he will talk about the history and styles of stained glass based on the examples in the six churches we will be visiting. Architectural historians Michael Corbett, William Kostura, Stanford University Professor Paul Turner and Ward Hill will provide insights into the architecture of the churches.

**Please use form on page 8 to sign up for the tour and the form on the last page for membership dues.**

## Subjects Of Interest

Wolfe & Wolfe Prairie Open Homes Tour.  
August 18, 2012, 10:00 AM – 4 PM.  
Wolfe & Wolfe made the Prairie Style the signature style of their San Jose practice, 1912-1916. Some of the finest examples of their work will be on view on a 10-mile drive through San Jose. Tickets available from Preservation Action Council of San Jose. For more information: [www.frankdeloswolfe.com](http://www.frankdeloswolfe.com)

Vernacular Architecture Forum (VAF) annual conference, "Nature +City: Vernacular Buildings & Landscapes of the Upper Midwest", in Madison, Wisconsin June 6-10, 2012. For more information: [www.vernaculararchitectureforum.org/conferences/2012/index.html](http://www.vernaculararchitectureforum.org/conferences/2012/index.html)

This fall, Acanthus Press will publish *Great Houses of San Francisco*, a book by Erin Feher. Some 300 historic photographs, architectural drawings and plans accompany in-depth narratives on thirty distinctive and eclectic homes, built between 1875 and 1945, that reveal the richness of San Francisco's residential landscape. More information: [www.acanthuspress.com/ps-69-4-great-houses-of-san-francisco.aspx](http://www.acanthuspress.com/ps-69-4-great-houses-of-san-francisco.aspx)

Ward Hill has completed a book on the houses of the San Francisco Peninsula, which Acanthus will publish in 2013.

Exhibition: "Carefree California: Cliff May and the Romance of the Ranch House." First major exhibition based on the work of Cliff May, who popularized the ranch house and made it an icon of casual California

California Council for the Promotion of History 32nd Annual Conference: "California on the Move", October 18-20, 2012, Woodland, CA. Explores the movers and the movements that exemplify and define our state. For more information: [www.ccphhistoryaction.org/conference.html](http://www.ccphhistoryaction.org/conference.html)

## Book Review, continued from page 6

of institutional projects and that she served prominent clients like William Randolph Hearst. Most of the built environment is made-up of buildings designed by lesser-known figures – whether male or female. Horton's particular interest is to convey an accurate picture of women's contributions to Bay Area architecture and city planning--a task she accomplishes with great skill and thoroughness.

Lauren Weiss Bricker, Ph.D. is professor of architecture at the California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, and director of the Archives-Special Collections in the College of Environmental Design, Cal Poly Pomona. She is the author of *The Mediterranean House in America* (Abrams, 2008), and co-author of the catalog *Steel and Shade: The Architecture of Donald Wexler*, which accompanied an exhibition of the same title (Palm Springs Museum of Art, 2011). She is currently working on *The Modern American House*, scheduled to be published by W.W.

### Registration for Stained Glass Tour

[please print]

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Registration: \$35 members/ \$45 nonmembers

Total Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to NCCSAH and mail to:

Ward Hill  
NCCSAH Stained Glass Tour  
3124 Octavia Street, #102  
San Francisco, CA 94123

For more information please contact Ward Hill at [whill@pacbell.net](mailto:whill@pacbell.net).

Cost includes the shuttle bus and a box lunch. Space is limited; reserve your place now.





UTILITAS • FIRMITAS • VENUSTAS

The mission of the NCCSAH is to further the objectives of the Society of Architectural Historians of which the Northern California Chapter is an official affiliate; promote the study and discussion of our region's architectural history and its related fields; visit significant works of architecture; and increase public awareness and appreciation of our architectural heritage. Membership is open to anyone interested in architectural history and its related fields who agrees to pay the annual dues and subscribe to the by-laws of the organization.

#### **NCCCSAH Officers**

President, Ward Hill  
Vice President, Ian Berke  
Treasurer, Rich Sucre  
Secretary, Don Andreini  
Preservation Officer, Rich Brandi

**Remember you do not have to be  
a member of the National SAH to  
become a member of NCCSAH**

**Join or Renew Now!!**

**Individual \$20.00**

**Student \$10.00**

**Make Checks to NCCSAH**

Please send your ideas or comments  
concerning The Newsletter to:

Don Andreini  
NCCSAH Newsletter Editor  
[dandreini@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dandreini@sbcglobal.net)

#### **To become a member of the Northern California Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians**

or to renew your dues return this form  
and your dues check for \$20 made out to NCCSAH  
to

Ian Berke, NCCSAH  
Ian Berke Real Estate  
2824 Clay Street  
San Francisco, CA 94115

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Fax Number \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_