

Newsletter - September 2013

Tigers on Market Street

Market Street may seem like an unlikely habitat for butterflies but the corridor of London plane trees, canyon of tall buildings, and sources for water from urban fountains there have created an unplanned riparian area that has become the home of Western Tiger Swallowtails. First noted by lepidopterist Harriet Reinhard in 1987, this phenomenon is an incredible story of wildlife adaptation within the heart of the city.

While the ecological footprint of cities is widely studied, we often overlook the efficacy of the collective ecosystem of our open spaces, shorelines, parks, and street plantings. What can we do to perpetuate and enhance nature's presence in the city? How can we redesign Market Street to include habitat for the Swallowtail and other wildlife? How can better understanding this phenomenon help us to design our cities differently?

For the last two years, Amber Hasselbring and Liam O'Brien have studied the Western Tiger Swallowtail Butterfly on Market Street. Hasselbring is a San Francisco-based artist, naturalist and the Director of Nature in the City while Liam O'Brien is an illustrator, lepidopterist and conservationist. Together, they are working to find ways in which to support and expand Market Street as a habitat to this extraordinary butterfly.

All this you would have learned if you had joined Liam and Amber on a walking tour September 8 to explore Market Street through the perspective of the swallowtail. They will continue to document this natural phenomenon and report their progress.

TIME TO *PLANT Natives!*

Every year in the Fall you get another chance to have a beautiful, hardy and sustainable garden. There's no better time to reformulate your garden: take out all the plants that don't work and put in California native plants that are sure to succeed in our San Francisco climate zone.

The California Native Plant Society (CNPS Yerba Buena Chapter) Native Plant Sale will be held October 26th from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. this year at 350 O'Shaughnessy off Del Vale (the Miraloma Park Clubhouse). You'll be able to ask experts on native plant gardening what selections would be best for your location. This sale is a once-a-year opportunity to find native plant species that aren't usually available at garden centers. The focus of the sale is native plants local to the Yerba Buena Chapter area: San Francisco and northern San Mateo County, including Montara and San Bruno Mountains. These are the species already adapted to our area's climate, soils, and habitats--and are also important to our local fauna.

Many of the plants for sale will have been grown by chapter volunteers from seeds, cuttings, or divisions-- from garden plants or other sources from our chapter area. Great efforts are made to learn the provenance of the plants at our sale, as we understand the importance of maintaining a local gene pool. Growing locally native plants in your garden is an important way to:

- Attract pollinators, including native bees, butterflies, moths, and birds--for your pleasure and their benefit
- Provide for endangered species (such as by growing host and nectar plants for the Green Hairstreak butterfly)
- Enhance corridors for native wildlife
- Use less water (thereby less energy pumping that water)
- Save money on utility bills
- Reduce the use of fertilizers and pesticides
- Have a beautiful, colorful, lively garden
- Inspire your neighbors to do the same!

Fall is THE ideal time for planting; putting plants in the ground in anticipation of the Fall rains allows their root systems to be strong in Spring. The Annual Plant Sale is Yerba Buena Chapter's primary source of funding, enabling the group to put on our programs and deliver the message that is their mission. Get great plants for your garden and help support CNPS!

Summer Picnic on the Waterfront

SFT's summer picnic went indoors this year but not before President Jennifer Clary refreshed our memories on a walk around the sites of recent Port waterfront planning. Two dozen SFT members trailed around after Jennifer seeing recently built new housing, rebuilt piers and new water's edge parks along the Embarcadero. After so much fresh air, walkers joined at least four dozen more SFT members for a nice meal at Delancey Street restaurant opposite Piers 30 and 32.. This was the biggest crowd ever for SFT's mid-summer event. They packed into the "back room" to hear former mayor Art Agnos lay out the reasons that a NO vote must be achieved to overturn Prop B and Prop C on the November ballot. "NO wall on the waterfront" is the battle cry for all San Franciscans who realize that waterfront zoning controls are under threat by a number of large development projects.

NO and NO on the 8 Washington Project

"The devil is in the details on 8 Washington Street," wrote former Planning Director Allan Jacobs in an article in the Examiner.

Titled the 8 Washington Parks, Public Access and Housing Initiative, or Measure C, the developers claim that new housing will wonderfully transform several private tennis courts surrounded by chain-link fence.

The proposed ballot measure is 13,000-plus words which very few voters will actually read. Jacobs asks them to recognize that first and foremost, the proposal would raise waterfront height limits from the existing 84 feet to 136 feet to allow the construction of a tall condo tower which would be more than 50 feet higher than the former Embarcadero Freeway, a massive structure that was finally torn down after walling off this section of San Francisco's waterfront for decades. If it passes, this measure could lead to additional proposals for tall towers on the waterfront from the Ferry Building to Fisherman's Wharf.

The proposal would also reduce public open space and recreation and create no affordable-housing units on-site. The proposal is for 134 luxury housing units that will cost millions but not a single affordable units on site. The developer would have to contribute to The City's affordable-housing fund but why is the developer getting away

with calling this a “housing initiative” when affordable housing units were entirely left out of the plan.

“San Francisco’s now-famous urban design plan addressed issues of height and bulk of buildings citywide, very much including the waterfront,” Jacobs wrote. “The piecemeal game playing that is central to what we are being asked to approve is a terrible way to make public policy — all the more so because it benefits a few high-end developers.”

In the 1960’s, San Franciscans rose up to fight the rampant construction of **high rise apartment buildings, offices, hotels, and other commercial projects** that would have created a wall along the northern waterfront. People knew the height of buildings should follow the contour of the land to protect the priceless views of our Bay enjoyed by the public from publicly owned lands, such as Coit Tower and to protect the public’s sense of being near the water as we walk along our beautiful waterfront. In 1962, then newly elected Supervisor Jack Morrison took action by winning approval of a 40-foot height limit on the water side and an 84-foot limit on the inland side of the Embarcadero. This was our legacy for the future. The public trust that comes with this decision is our responsibility to keep.

In total disrespect and disregard for this public trust passed on for generations, the Mayor and Board of Supervisors waived the height requirements for a project at 8 Washington Street, a 136 foot tall, 134 unit luxury condominium building. If built, this project will be twice the height of the Embarcadero Freeway! The condominium units will average \$5 Million.

Ask the Big Questions About the Proposed Warriors Arena

Don’t believe it when they say “It’s a done deal.” There’s still time to reach out to decision makers to convince them that building a 12-story high entertainment arena, 90,000 square feet of retail space and a 500 space parking garage over open Bay waters is a bad idea. San Francisco Waterfront Alliance has been working to inform people that this is not just about the Warriors stadium (although that alone is bad enough).

Go to <http://www.sfwaterfront.org/> for a list of actions you can take right now to help protect our Bay and waterfront from the massive development that would tip the balance of livability in this beautifully restored new neighborhood of the City. Piers 30 and 32 need a foresighted plan that will not cause gridlock on the Embarcadero and create another Pier 39 of commercial tourism.

ParkMerced Offers "a School, a House, a Garden"

On Saturday September 7th as part of the Architecture in the City Week there was a tour of ParkMerced, visited by a group of Dutch Architects, Planners and Landscape Architects. With award-winning housing designer Mr. Edwin Oostmeijer we walked into a courtyard with kids frolicking within a beautiful internal garden setting with hedges, trees, and an inflatable pool, the kids ran around the space with squirt guns while the parents enjoyed sitting in a low-height natural setting 70 years in the making by the famous modern landscape architect Thomas Dolliver Church. The Dutch group was astounded that there was a proposal to destroy such a wonderful example of community styled garden rental apartments that form the backbone of Dutch design for social and communal housing. Many were concerned when explained the real estate basis and "predatory-equity-lending" that occurred in Parkmerced during the Stellar Management and now Fortress Investment ownership. They asked why the city or government could not buy or own it as a cooperative, and wanted to know why infill, or alternative preservation models could have been utilized. We explained to them the EIR/CEQA process the joint impacts of SFSU-CSU's masterplan and Parkmerced's Vision. We explained how the essentials of the community such as the prior Frederick Burke Public School was closed and left in neglect and eventually demolished for the benefit of SFSU. We talked about the future of families in SF, and the concerns when housing especially rental housing of this scale and scope is not developed with the public's interests in mind. The Dutch architects comprehend the issue well as they have much better success in the development and design of low-scale low-impact design, simple materials, and the essential need of public housing with a garden. Joel was supportive of destroying the Parkmerced community in favor of high-end high-density rental and for-sale housing that will be un-affordable to the majority of families trying to find a place to live and save for their kids college education.

Since the 1940's and 1950's, the backbone of workforce housing in the western part of the City was the Stonestown Apartments and Parkmerced. The majority of workforce housing in the Twin Peaks and west-of-Twin-Peaks neighborhoods now consists of for-sale housing stock. With the costs of living going astronomically off the charts, and the schools lacking in funds due to the missing taxation of real-estate transactions especially the Twitter, Google, and quick-high-profile re-selling and flipping of properties like Parkmerced we lose the insight of how to adequately fund the transit, infrastructure, schools and housing needs of the general public. We need the political will to tackle housing 1st, it is the essential need, and if we do it right and tax the corporations according to the schools needs, we should have plenty of financial support for the rest of the schools in the system. By dividing the funds equally we will not have the "red-lining" that the gentrification of local school assignments deliver. The Parkmerced community had an excellent public school Frederick Burke Elementary within walking distance adjacent to a public transit hub, and to state otherwise has nothing to do with green-sustainable future development, only "green-\$-greed" of developers and real estate interests. The un-intended consequences of fast-paced current high-end development of expensive new housing misses the imperative issue of the desire for housing with a garden, a simple utilitarian functional community of shared cooperative gardens that provide layered spaces that Parkmerced provided for families for years.

- SFSU-CSU Institutional Growth and Impacts on housing purchase of Stonestown and parts of Parkmerced (Westside)
- Lack of essential rental housing (AB1229) Atkins and major concerns currently on lack of affordable rental housing
- Transit Impacts 19th Ave. Transit Study (occurring currently)
- Frederick Burke Elementary (destroyed so SFSU-CSU could get their hands on more property from SFUSD)
- 800 Brotherhood Way (Public right-of-way and park flipped to million dollar condos and no EIR/CEQA)

Alice Carey Dies - Architect and Historic Preservationist

By John King

11:51 PM

<http://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/Alice-Carey-dies-architect-avid-preservationist-4701831.php>

Alice Carey helped save notable buildings.

Alice Carey, an award-winning preservation architect and advocate who was involved in the restoration of some of the Bay Area's most important buildings, died in San Francisco on July 27 of lung cancer. She was 64.

During her career, Ms. Carey helped breathe new life into such landmarks as San Francisco City Hall, Jordan Hall at Stanford University and the Marin County Civic Center. She also had the most basic form of hands-on experience: Before returning to college to study architecture, she worked as a carpenter and had her own small construction firm.

"She was not someone who just wrote reports and recommendations. She had a rare hybrid of skills," said Katherine Petrin, an architectural historian who became friends with Ms. Carey in 2000, when the two were fighting to save the New Mission Theater in San Francisco.

That battle was a success and the long-vacant theater is being restored as a five-screen movie house with dining. It is not the only example of Ms. Carey using her free time to defend slices of the past, from the Tonga Room at the Fairmont Hotel to the statuesque 1916 brick Metropolitan Club at 640 Sutter St.

"It's not easy to navigate that line between advocacy and maintaining a firm," Petrin said. One advantage, Petrin suggested: "Alice really was a gracious person with such a great sense of humor."

Born in Brooklyn and raised in Toledo, Ohio, Ms. Carey headed west after high school and worked in construction before earning a master's degree in architecture from UC Berkeley. She started Carey & Co. in 1983. The firm now resides in a 1908 fire station that it restored.

Within five years, Ms. Carey had been named to San Francisco's Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board. After the Loma Prieta earthquake in 1989, her firm oversaw the preservation aspects of the renovation of several civic buildings, including City Hall and the War Memorial Opera House - two of the projects that together have earned Carey & Co. nearly three dozen state and national awards.

"She was a master at working with the client to convince them to do the right thing in terms of preservation and rehabilitation," said Wayne Donaldson,

chairman of the U.S. Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. "She'd sit down with a client, walk through the details and by the end, the owners thought it was their idea."

Another favorite project was close to home: Ms. Carey purchased an aged one-room schoolhouse in Napa County's Pope Valley with her husband, architect Paul Fisher. They restored it as a weekend home while growing grapes and olives on the surrounding land.

"She was passionate about stewarding the best of San Francisco's historic resources," said Aaron Peskin, a longtime friend who presided at the couple's wedding while he was president of the Board of Supervisors.

A memorial for Ms. Carey will be held at 2 p.m. Aug. 21 at the Neptune Society Columbarium, One Loraine Court, San Francisco.

SFT NEWSLETTER ARTICLE 9-16-13

By: Howard Wong, AIA



The Fontana Towers at Aquatic Park was an early loss for land-use battles. But the resulting planning war was won with passage of the waterfront 40-foot height limit---by the narrowest of margins.



The "Saving the Bay" movement linked citizens and the environment, showing how the Bay could become a river. At right, the Reber Plan was one post-World War II Bay development. Plan.



Proposed bridge from Telegraph Hill to Angel Island to Tiburon---stopped by citizen lobbying to Washington DC. This was one of many bridge proposals in San Francisco Bay---when cars reigned.



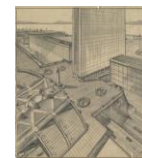
Citizen opposition rose to fight the proposed U.S. Steel high-rise project on the waterfront---south of the Ferry Building.



The 1963 Downtown Plan had two high-rises flanking the Ferry Building's tower.



The proposed 1951 World Trade Center demolished the Ferry Building for a nine-block development.

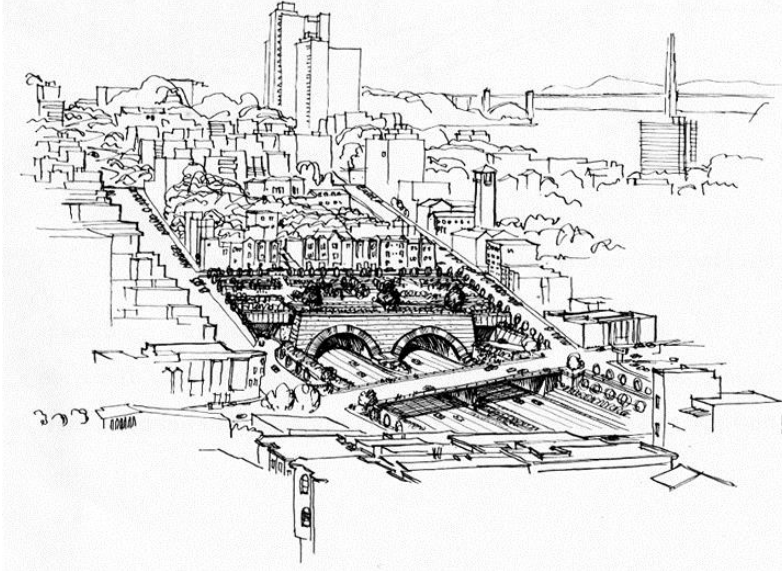


The 1951 World Trade Center was topped by a 30-story tower of "magnificent grandeur".

HISTORY OF RUSSIAN HILL, TELEGRAPH HILL & WATERRONT BATTLES

- San Francisco Bay, its waterfront, public vistas and beauty are no less vital public assets than Yosemite Valley, Muir Woods and Point Reyes National Seashore. For decades, developers have attempted to exploit waterfront sites---scheming with money, public relations and political intrigue. Our Mediterranean village-like character attracts 16 million visitors and \$8.5 billion annually---our economic mainstay. History teaches us that an intact, beautiful waterfront is eminently more valuable---spiritually and economically---for everyone and for future generations.
- We need to remember the fascinating history of waterfront battles---jogging the memories of friends, colleagues and officials---when Russian Hill residents fought the Fontana Towers (stopped five other towers) and fought for the waterfront 40-foot height limit. Below are the 8-lane

tunnels under Russian Hill that were never built. Note the Art Institute's tower in the picture. See the historical articles below.



Below: Proposed seven towers at Aquatic Park. The twin Fontana Towers were built.



- FOUND SF: The Fontana Towers and Waterfront Battle.
- http://foundsf.org/index.php?title=Height_Limit_Revolt_Saves_Waterfront_Vistas
- NOTE: At Foundsf.org, search for "Height Limit Revolt Saves Waterfront Vistas".
- Residents of Russian Hill and Casper Weinberger (a Republican conservationist) stopped towers along the waterfront. A coalition fought for the waterfront 40-foot height limits. Later, height limits were initiated on Russian Hill.
- FOUND SF: The Freeway Battles
- http://foundsf.org/index.php?title=The_Freeway_Revolt
- NOTE: At Foundsf.org, search for "The Freeway Revolt".
- For decades, Telegraph Hill Dwellers, San Francisco Tomorrow and many others fought the freeways.
- **Over time, by tapering heights downward towards the waterfront, public vistas and San Francisco's beauty will be preserved for everyone.**



The freeway revolt stopped the Embarcadero Freeway in mid-construction at Broadway.



Average citizens rose to fight the freeways--sparking a national movement for city livability.



Proposed freeways were extensive, walling the waterfront and cutting through neighborhoods.



The Embarcadero Freeway would have created a waterfront barrier all the way to the Golden Gate Bridge.