



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Landmark Designation Case Report

Hearing Date: November 19, 2014
Case No.: 2014.0951L
Project Address: 182-198 Gough Street
Zoning: (NCT) Hayes-Gough Neighborhood Commercial Transit
Block/Lot: 0837/014
Property Owner: Hirsch Family Trust
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PROPERTY DESCRIPTIONS & SURROUNDING LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

182-198 Gough Street, historically known as the R. L. Goldberg Building, is located at the southeast corner of Gough and Oak streets in San Francisco's Civic Center area. The building is a steel-frame, two-story mixed-use building with three ground story storefronts and two dwelling units at the upper story. Built in 1911, it was designed with Classical Revival influences by prominent architect, Bernard J. Joseph. The footprint of the building occupies the entirety of its 3,300 sq. ft. lot, with the primary facade facing west onto Gough Street. The attached draft Landmark Designation Report contains a detailed building description on pages 6-30.

The subject building is located in a transitional area between the Civic Center and Hayes Valley neighborhoods. Its immediate surroundings are characterized by two- to five-story residential and mixed use buildings constructed in the years following the 1906 Earthquake and Fire. Several institutional buildings are also located in the vicinity, including the French American School and San Francisco Conservatory of Music. San Francisco Fire Department Station 36 is also located at the eastern end of the subject block.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The case before the Historic Preservation Commission is the consideration of the initiation of landmark designation of 182-198 Gough Street as a San Francisco landmark under Article 10 of the Planning Code, Section 1004.1, and recommending that the Board of Supervisors approve of such designation.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW STATUS

The Planning Department has determined that actions by regulatory agencies for protection of the environment (specifically in this case, landmark designation) are exempt from environmental review, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15308 (Class Eight - Categorical).

GENERAL PLAN POLICIES

The Urban Design Element of the San Francisco General Plan contains the following relevant objectives and policies:

- OBJECTIVE 2: Conservation of Resources that provide a sense of nature, continuity with the past, and freedom from overcrowding.
- POLICY 4: Preserve notable landmarks and areas of historic, architectural or aesthetic value, and promote the preservation of other buildings and features that provide continuity with past development.

Designating significant historic resources as local landmarks will further continuity with the past because the buildings will be preserved for the benefit of future generations. Landmark designation will require that the Planning Department and the Historic Preservation Commission review proposed work that may have an impact on character-defining features. Both entities will utilize the Secretary of Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* in their review to ensure that only appropriate, compatible alterations are made.

SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING CODE SECTION 101.1 – GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY AND IMPLEMENTATION

Planning Code Section 101.1 – Eight Priority Policies establishes and requires review of permits for consistency with said policies. On balance, the proposed designation is consistent with the priority policies in that:

- a. The proposed designation will further Priority Policy No. 7, that landmarks and historic buildings be preserved. Landmark designation of 182-198 Gough Street will help to preserve an important historical resource that is architecturally significant as an example of a Classical Revival style mixed use building. The property may also be significant for its association with Reuben (Rube) Lucius Garrett Goldberg, a Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist and author who commissioned the building's construction.

BACKGROUND / PREVIOUS ACTIONS

This item was calendared at the HPC's request following public comment at its regularly scheduled hearing on June 18, 2014 in support of Article 10 designation. The draft Landmark Designation Report was prepared by Edward Yarbrough, senior architectural historian of ICF International, on behalf of the requestors, Jacqui Naylor and Beverly Upton.

OTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED

If the Historic Preservation Commission decides to initiate designation of the subject property as an Article 10 landmark at its November 19, 2014 hearing, the item will be forwarded to the Board of Supervisors with a recommendation supportive of designation. The nomination would then be considered at a future Board of Supervisors hearing for formal Article 10 landmark designation.

APPLICABLE PRESERVATION STANDARDS

ARTICLE 10

Section 1004 of the Planning Code authorizes the landmark designation of an individual structure or other feature or an integrated group of structures and features on a single lot or site, having special character or special historical, architectural or aesthetic interest or value, as a landmark. Section 1004.1 also outlines that landmark designation may be initiated by the Board of Supervisors or the Historic Preservation Commission and the initiation shall include findings in support. Section 1004.2 states that once initiated, the proposed designation is referred to the Historic Preservation Commission for a report and recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to approve, disapprove or modify the proposal.

Pursuant to Section 1004.3 of the Planning Code, if the Historic Preservation Commission approves the designation, a copy of the resolution of approval is transmitted to the Board of Supervisors and without referral to the Planning Commission. The Board of Supervisors shall hold a public hearing on the designation and may approve, modify or disapprove the designation.

In the case of the initiation of a historic district, the Historic Preservation Commission shall refer its recommendation to the Planning Commission pursuant to Section 1004.2(c). The Planning Commission shall have 45 days to provide review and comment on the proposed designation and address the consistency of the proposed designation with the General Plan, Section 101.1 priority policies, the City's Regional Housing Needs Allocation, and the Sustainable Communities Strategy for the Bay Area. These comments shall be sent to the Board of Supervisors in the form of a resolution.

Section 1004(b) requires that the designating ordinance approved by the Board of Supervisors shall include the location and boundaries of the landmark site, a description of the characteristics of the landmark which justify its designation, and a description of the particular features that should be preserved.

Section 1004.4 states that if the Historic Preservation Commission disapproves the proposed designation, such action shall be final, except upon the filing of a valid appeal to the Board of Supervisors within 30 days.

ARTICLE 10 LANDMARK CRITERIA

The Historic Preservation Commission on February 4, 2009, by Resolution No. 001, adopted the National Register Criteria as its methodology for recommending landmark designation of historic resources. Under the National Register Criteria, the quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, feeling, materials, workmanship, and association, and that

are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or properties that have yielded, or may likely yield, information important in prehistory or history.

PUBLIC / NEIGHBORHOOD INPUT

There is no known public or neighborhood opposition to designation of 182-198 Gough Street as an Article 10 landmark. The Department received a letter from the Hayes Valley Neighborhood Association (dated 18 August 2014) expressing support for landmark designation of the building. The Department will provide any public correspondence received after the submittal of this report in the Historic Preservation Commission's correspondence folder.

PROPERTY OWNER INPUT

On August 19, 2014 the Department received an email from Kenneth S. Hirsch, representative of the Hirsch Family Trust, owners of the property, stating his preference that the building not be designated as a landmark (attached). Department staff met with Mr. Hirsch on October 29, 2014. At that time Mr. Hirsch reiterated his preference that the building not be designated pursuant to Article 10 of the Planning Code.

STAFF ANALYSIS

The case report and analysis under review was prepared by Department preservation staff based upon the attached draft Landmark Designation Report as well as staff research. The draft Landmark Designation Report was prepared by Edward Yarbrough, senior architectural historian of ICF International.

The Department has determined that the subject property meets the requirements for Article 10 eligibility as an individual landmark. The justification for its inclusion is outlined below under the Significance and Integrity sections of this case report.

SIGNIFICANCE

Architecture

The Department finds that 182-198 Gough Street is eligible for local designation due to its significant architectural expression as an early 20th century mixed-use building designed with Classically-inspired ornament and containing extraordinarily rare, intact storefronts.

On its upper floors, the building features rusticated stucco cladding, bay windows flanked by pilaster panels, molded window surrounds with keystones, and a bracketed cornice and shaped parapet. The ground floor contains three historic storefronts displaying a remarkable state of preservation, including their original bulkheads, display windows, vestibule paving, doors, and transom. Based on comparisons with similar properties surveyed as part the Department's Neighborhood Commercial Buildings Survey in 2014, the storefronts at 182-198 Gough Street rank among the best preserved storefronts of their age.

The building was designed by architect Bernard J. Joseph. A definitive biography of Joseph remains to be written, but his involvement with the design of several prominent buildings in San Francisco could qualify him as a master architect. An initial review indicates that Joseph's best-known work was produced in partnership with Gustave Albert Lansburgh, including the Newman and Levinson Building (1909) on Stockton Street (Article 11, Category 1 Building), Hammersmith Building (1907) on Sutter Street (Landmark No. 117), Manx Hotel (1908) on Powell Street (Article 11, Category IV Building), and the second Emporium department store, located at 835 Market Street (Article 11, Category I Building). The draft Landmark Designation Report also identifies Joseph as the co-designer of the original Orpheum Theater on O'Farrell Street (1909—no longer extant).

Persons

The Department finds that the building may have tangential significance based on its association with Rueben (Rube) Lucius Garrett Goldberg, but its primary significance is derived from its architectural expression.

According to the Landmark Designation Report, the building was commissioned by Rube L. Goldberg, a Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist famed for his illustrations of elaborate contraptions designed to perform otherwise simple tasks. Goldberg was born in San Francisco and received a degree in engineering from U.C. Berkeley in 1904. After brief period of employment with the City of San Francisco Water and Sewers Department, Goldberg joined the staff of *The San Francisco Chronicle* where he submitted drawings and cartoons which were first published in 1905.

In 1907 Goldberg moved to New York where he was hired by the *New York Evening Mail* to draw daily cartoons. His drawings proved popular, and over the next few years he also began to appear on stage. Flush with his early success, Goldberg returned to San Francisco and commissioned the construction of the subject property, which includes his name, "R. L. Goldberg," inscribed on the building's frieze.

According to the Landmark Designation Report, one of the two residential units was used by Goldberg as his residence and studio during visits to San Francisco, while the other was occupied by his father, Max Goldberg, who at various times served as a police commissioner, fire marshal and banker. However, the only documentary evidence in support of the Goldbergs' residency at the property is a childhood reminiscence from Rube Goldberg's granddaughter, during which she recalls him describing the property. The report also does not identify other properties which may have a more intimate association with Goldberg's productive life.

Goldberg spent most of his career in New York City, and the Landmark Designation Report acknowledges that Goldberg's association with 182-198 Gough Street became less frequent after 1916—although he continued to own the property until his death in 1970.

Research performed by Department Preservation staff could not confirm Goldberg's use of the property as an occasional residence and studio, nor its use as a residence by Goldberg's father. For example, the 1914 city directory identifies Leonard Jones (steward), Frederick Littman (machinist) and William Black as residents of the property. There are two Max Goldberg's listed in the directory of that year, neither of which is identified with the subject property.

Likewise, the 1915 city directory identifies Frederick Eggers (Sherriff of San Francisco) and Allen Walter (musician) as tenants. None of the four Max Goldbergs in the city directory of that year are shown at 182-198 Gough. Based on this research, it appears more plausible that the building was constructed as an income producing property, rather than as an occasional residence for the Goldberg family.

Considered as a whole, the Department finds that 182-198 Gough Street is eligible as an individual landmark due to its significant architecture, but cannot confirm its significance based on the building's association with Rube Goldberg.

The period of significance identified in the Landmark Designation Report is 1911 – 1970, which reflects its initial construction through the death of Rube Goldberg. Based on the analysis above, Department staff find that a period of significance of 1911 appears more appropriate, as it is based on the building's original construction and architectural significance rather than its association with Goldberg.

INTEGRITY

Based on a review of the building permit history and visual inspection, the building appears to be extraordinarily well preserved. Building permits for the property are few and indicate the first alteration to the property was made in 1958 for the installation of an exterior sign advertising a laundry. Another permit was issued to repair damage resulting from an automobile collision in 1977. The building was re-roofed in 1996. Other apparent alterations include the installation of awnings above the storefronts. Overall, the building retains a remarkable level of integrity relative to its 1911 construction. In particular, the retention of its three historic storefronts with nearly all original features intact is exceedingly rare for a commercial building of this age. A detailed discussion of integrity is contained in the draft Landmark Designation Report on page 48-49.

Overall, the Department finds that the building retains outstanding integrity relative to its eligibility for Article 10 landmark designation,

CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

Whenever a building, site, object, or landscape is under consideration for Article 10 landmark designation, the Historic Preservation Commission is required to identify character-defining features of the property. This is done to enable owners and the public to understand which elements are considered most important to preserve the historical and architectural character of the proposed landmark.

The Landmark Designation Report does not explicitly identify any character-defining features of the building, although the Department expects to receive an updated draft of the report from the consultant in the near future. Below is a preliminary list of character defining features based on a review by Department preservation staff.

The character-defining *exterior* features of the building are identified as:

- All exterior elevations, rooflines and ornamentation
- Rusticated stucco cladding

- Ground floor storefronts featuring recessed and angled entry vestibules with fully glazed wood doors crowned with ventilators; marble risers with hexagonal tile thresholds; black ceramic tile bulkheads
- Corner commercial entry featuring an angled, cut corner configuration, a square column at the corner, black ceramic tile bulkhead and paneled ceiling
- Recessed residential entries including paneled wood walls, tiled thresholds, fully glazed wood doors topped with ventilators and bracketed hoods
- Keystones above secondary entrances and window bays on the Oak Street facade.
- Continuous transom above the storefronts and residential entries on the Gough Street facade featuring fixed and awning sashes with minimally opaque glazing
- Intermediate cornice above the transom featuring block modillions
- Combination angled and flat bays at the second story, including angled bays featuring spandrel panels and cornices, as well as flush bays featuring garland surrounds and keystones.
- Double-hung, wood sash windows at the second story
- Roofline featuring a bracketed cornice and shaped parapet

The character-defining *interior* features of the building include portions of the ground floor storefronts, which have historically been accessible to the public:

- Window display areas for the storefronts at 182 and 190 Gough Street featuring paneled walls and ceilings and rear transoms.
- Raised display window platforms in the storefront at 190 Gough Street

ISSUES

The Landmark Designation Report states that the interior portions of both residential units retain a high degree of integrity, including coved ceilings, door and window surrounds, fireplace mantels, stair railings, picture rails, wood flooring, light fixtures and bathroom fixtures. Based on a review of photos included with the report, Department staff concur that many of these features do appear original to the building. However, as historically private interior spaces, the interior portions of these residential units are not eligible for landmark designation as character-defining features of the building.

Section 1004(c) of the Planning code states that:

(c) The property included in any such designation shall upon designation be subject to the controls and standards set forth in this Article 10. In addition, the said property shall be subject to the following further controls and standards if imposed by the designating ordinance:

- (1) For a publicly-owned landmark, review of proposed changes to significant interior architectural features.

- (2) For a privately-owned landmark, review of proposed changes requiring a permit to significant interior architectural features in those areas of the landmark that are or historically have been accessible to members of the public. The designating ordinance must clearly describe each significant interior architectural feature subject to this restriction.

In prior cases regarding the designation of interior spaces, the Department has determined that examples of spaces that have been historically accessible to members of the public may include features such as a historic lobby or ground floor commercial space, as well as the interiors of public buildings such as a fire station or church that has been converted into a private residence. However, the Department, in consultation with the City Attorney, has determined that the Planning Code does not allow for designating the interiors of private residential units.

BOUNDARIES OF THE LANDMARK SITE

The proposed landmark site encompasses the entire lot – Assessor’s Block 0837, Lot 014 – on which the subject building is located.

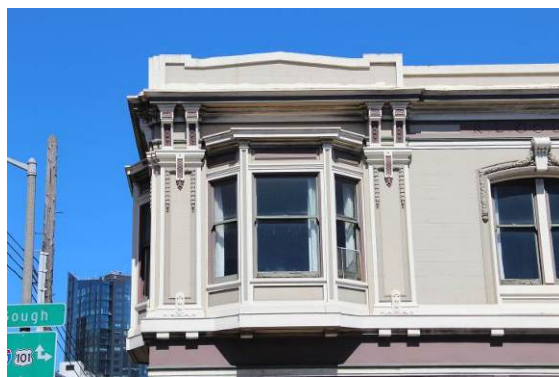
PLANNING DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

Based on the Department’s analysis, 182-198 Gough Street is individually eligible for Article 10 Landmark designation for its significant architectural expression as an excellent example of a type, period and method of construction displaying high artistic values, and for its outstanding integrity. The Department recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission approve the proposed designation of 182-198 Gough Street as a San Francisco landmark.

The Historic Preservation Commission may recommend approval, disapproval, or approval with modifications of the proposed designation of 182-198 Gough Street as a San Francisco landmark under Article 10 of the Planning Code to the Board of Supervisors pursuant to Planning Code Section 1004.1. If the Historic Preservation Commission approves the designation, a copy of the motion of approval is transmitted to the Board of Supervisors, which holds a public hearing on the designation and may approve, modify or disapprove the designation (Section 1004.4). If the Historic Preservation Commission disapproves the proposed designation, such action shall be final, except upon the filing of a valid appeal to the Board of Supervisors within 30 days (Section 1004.5).

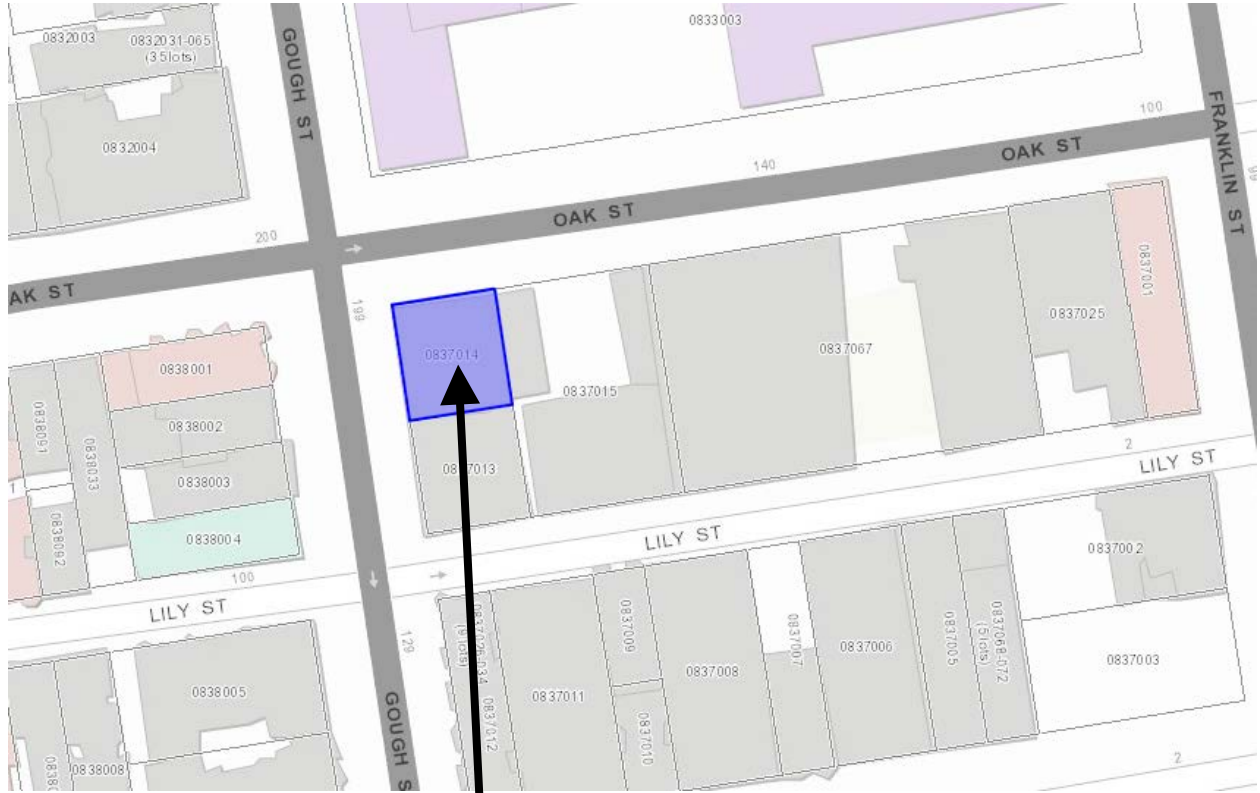
ATTACHMENTS

- A. Draft Landmark Designation Report
- B. Draft Motion initiating designation
- C. Email from Kenneth S. Hirsch



R. L. Goldberg Building, 182-198 Gough Street

Parcel Map



SUBJECT PROPERTY



Zoning Map

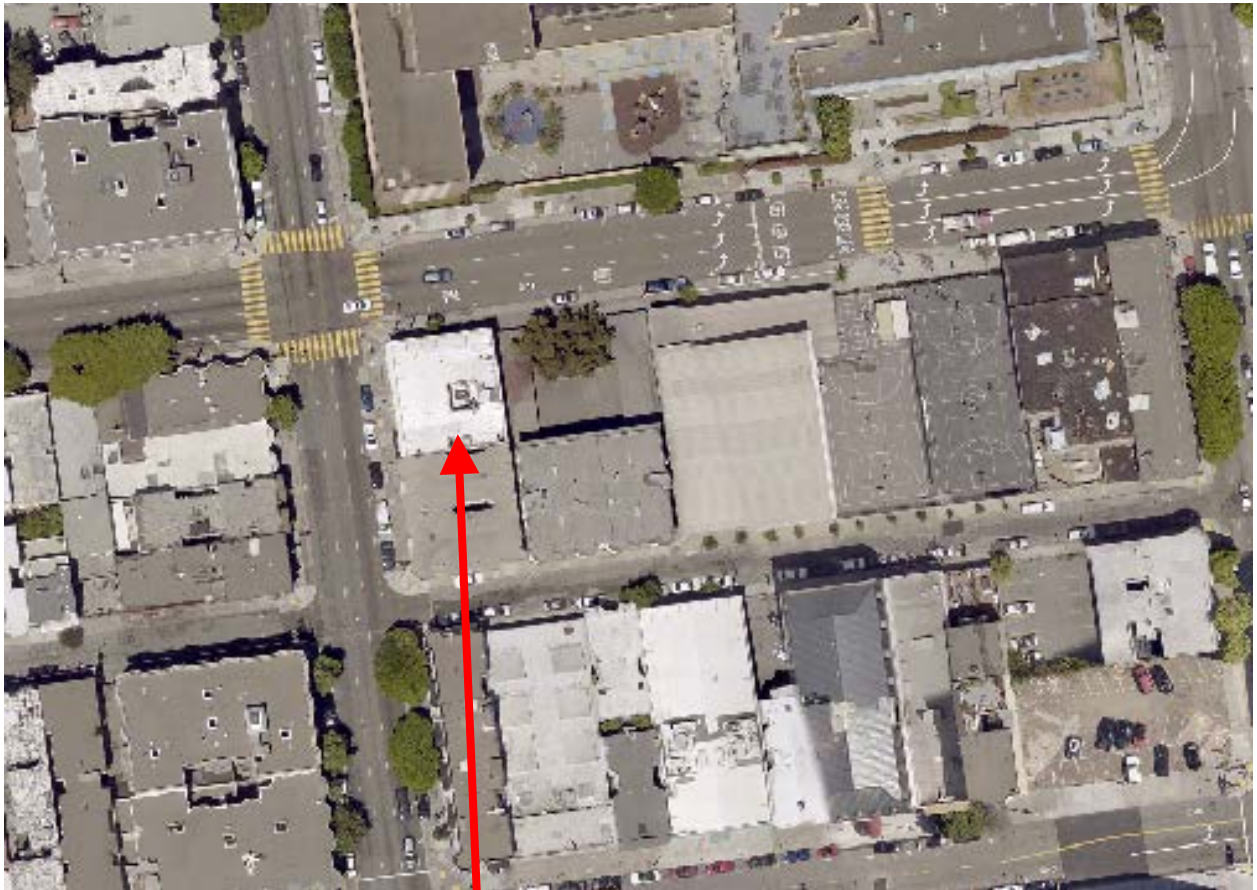


SUBJECT PROPERTY



Article 10 Landmark Designation
Case Number 2014.0951L
R. L. Goldberg Building
182-198 Gough Street

Aerial Photo



SUBJECT PROPERTY



Article 10 Landmark Designation
Case Number 2014.0951L
R. L. Goldberg Building
182-198 Gough Street

Draft

LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT



R. (Rube) L. Goldberg Building

182–198 Gough Street

Draft Landmark Designation Report
November 5, 2014

Landmark No. XXX

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Cover: R.L. Goldberg Building façade photographed by Alexandra Baer

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) is a seven-member body that makes recommendations to the Board of Supervisors regarding the designation of landmark buildings and districts. The regulations governing landmarks and landmark districts are found in Article 10 of the Planning Code. The HPC is staffed by the San Francisco Planning Department.

This draft Landmark Designation Report is subject to possible revision and amendment during the initiation and designation process. Only language contained within the Article 10 designation ordinance, adopted by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, should be regarded as final.

The R. (Rube) L. Goldberg Building

182 - 198 Gough Street

Built: 1911
Architect: Bernard J. Joseph

OVERVIEW

The R. L. Goldberg Building is located at 182 – 198 Gough Street at the southeast corner of the intersection with Oak Street. There are three commercial spaces on the first floor, two residential on the second floor in this two story building with basement. The building’s association with the Pulitzer-Prize winning cartoonist, sculptor, and author Rueben (Rube) Garrett Lucius Goldberg spanned 59 of his 87 year life. 194 Gough Street served as his San Francisco residence and studio while 186 Gough Street was designed for and occupied by his father, Max Goldberg, a former police commissioner and fire marshall of the City of San Francisco. Rube Goldberg retained the property until his death in 1970. (Joseph B. Mendelson, Attorney for Petitioner 1972)

The R. L. GOLDBERG BUILDING., as it is labelled in the cornice, is also an exceptional example of an Edwardian era building with Classical influences partially derived from the Beaux Arts style, and the work of master architect, Bernard J. Joseph. Built in 1911, the five-unit building, with two residences upstairs and three commercial spaces at street level, is remarkable for both sophistication of design and for historical integrity. Although the period of significance spans from 1911 to 1970, the years of Rube Goldberg’s ownership and use, the building conveys significant architectural qualities and historical integrity in both the exterior and interior from the period of construction due to the lack of alterations to the building after construction.

Construction History

The R.L. Goldberg Building occupies the entirety of a corner lot at the eastern edge of the Hayes Valley neighborhood. It has changed very little since its construction in 1911.

In *The San Francisco Call* on November 19, 1910 an entry stating “Johanna F. Lutz to Reuben L. Goldberg, lot at the SE corner of Oak and Gough streets, S 60byE55 [sic], \$10”¹ records the transaction during a time when vacant land was still relatively plentiful. The transfer of the vacant lot just three blocks from the Civic Center campus suggests that, like much of the central City in 1910, the future site of the R. L. Goldberg Building was amongst the numerous vacant lots that abounded in the aftermath of the 1906 Earthquake and Fire.

Construction of the commercial-residential building was well underway by the summer of 1911. Under the “Building Contracts” column in the *The San Francisco Call*, August 16, 1911, the stucco building’s finished masonry work is recorded:

R. L. Goldberg with Smyth Bros.. – Exterior and interior plaster and cementing, etc., for a two story and basement class C building at SE corner of Gough and Oak streets, S 60 by E 55; \$1,550.²

The *Building and Industrial News* describes the building and work in greater detail:

(3127) Gough and Oak SE S 60 x E 55. Exterior and interior plaster and cementing, etc., for a two-story and basement class C bldg.

Architect Bernard J. Joseph, 1st Natl. Bank Bldg., S.F.

Contractor Smyth Bros, Monadnock Bldg., S.F.

Filed Aug. 15, '11. Dated, Aug. 8, '11.

Interior lathed and plastered 550

Completed and accepted 600

Usual 35 days after 400

Cost \$1,550

Bond, \$775. Sureties, Fidelity and Deposit Co., of Maryland. Forfeit, none. Limit, 30 days. Plans and specifications filed.³

The Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of 1913 shows the R. L. Goldberg Building in plan. The three first story commercial spaces are described as a saloon at the corner unit, 198 Gough, and the other two units as stores. The building is confirmed as “STEEL FRAME” and the three light wells are shown with “TIN CL.,” to reflect the tin cladding that tops the copings. The two neighboring buildings are both shown as multi-family residential buildings with no commercial spaces.⁴

The San Francisco Department of Building Inspection shows a history of minor alterations to the building since its construction in 1911 and no history of alterations requiring permits prior to 1958. Examples include applications in 1958 to install an exterior-hung sign for a coin-operated laundry in 1958, an

¹ “Real Estate Transactions,” *The San Francisco Call*, November 19, 1910, 11.

² “Building Contracts,” *The San Francisco Call*, August 16, 1911, California Digital Newspaper Collection, San Francisco Call, Volume 110, Number 77.

³ *Building and Industrial News*, August 22, 1911, 11.

⁴ Volume 4, Sheet 330. “San Francisco, California.” 1913. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps

alteration permit to repair damage from an automobile collision in 1977, and re-roofing in 1996. The R. L. Goldberg Building is remarkable for its lack of alterations since construction in 1911, a state of preservation particularly rare in commercial-residential buildings.

BUILDING DESCRIPTION

Exterior

Gough Street/West Façade The R. L. Goldberg Building includes two residential units upstairs and three commercial units downstairs. The Gough Street façade includes primary entrances to the three commercial spaces and two upstairs dwelling units. s.



Figure 1 "R. L. Goldberg Building" is incised with Roman italic letters in the cornice of the west façade.

Steel frame building technology allowed Edwardian and Beaux Arts architecture to span greater wall openings for larger windows and to more readily support larger, more open rooms within. The R. L. Goldberg Building is an excellent example of this building technology and these design features. The three commercial spaces, for example, are each single structural units on the first floor without the interior structural walls required to span the generous retail and service venues. The upstairs residential rooms are also large with paired double-hung windows or tripartite, double-hung, chamfered bay windows, allowing natural light to flood the interior between broadly spaced structural bays. The R. L. Goldberg Building is made of three structural bays, each approximately 20 feet wide and 55 feet deep. A light well descends to the roof of the central commercial bay below, permitting light into the central retail space through a skylight and lined with fenestration on the light well walls to illuminate the residential units. Two smaller light wells increase light to the southernmost commercial and residential units that abut the neighboring apartment building.

The R. L. Goldberg building's exterior exhibits both the proportions and classical reserve of the Edwardian era but with a theatrical infusion of Roman classicism taken from the Beaux Arts style. Classical Revival styles were popular and widely executed in rebuilding projects following the 1906 Earthquake and Fire. The Classical Revival style emphasized proportion and ornament according to actual classical precedent in contrast to Victorian era styles. Beaux Arts examples in civic, operatic, and theater buildings, the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition, and mansions from Pacific Heights to Hillsborough testify to the style's regional popularity and association with power and status. However, the Beaux Arts stylistic elements were rarely employed, compared with more conventional Edwardian-era classical elements, particularly, on buildings of more modest scale like the R. L. Goldberg Building.



Figure 2 The Gough Street, west façade of the R. L. Goldberg Building.



Figure 3 Classical elements from the Beaux Arts palette including the measured use of moldings to create crisp cornice and panel elements create an impression of exceptional refinement and design quality to R. L. Goldberg Building's edifice.

Architect Bernard J. Joseph paired the scale and proportion of an Edwardian commercial building with the lush classicism of the Beaux Arts. Decorative brackets paired over paneled pilasters, garlands draped through elegantly curved keystones, across gradually curved window-surround lintels, and part-way down paneled window-surround styles (i.e., vertical element of a panel frame) are amongst the carefully designed and executed features. The architect successfully employed the Beaux Arts style's elaborately decorated surfaces and commitment to both classical elements and symmetry but without the imperial scale in which the style is typically exhibited. The success of the design is a testimony to the mastery of the architect and may also reflect the preferences and sophistication of Rube Goldberg as a visual artist.



Figure 4 View of the commercial facades on Gough Street, viewed to the north-northeast.

The three commercial facades of the R. L. Goldberg Building embody the emphasis on maximizing diffuse daylight and visibility from the street that wide structural bays permitted. Components of the building's commercial edifice include the bulkhead, sash, cladding materials, vestibule, and paving at the base, display windows and platforms, door with transom window, and awnings above, and transom windows with fixed and awning sash from the awnings up to the first floor ceiling level. Due to changing uses over time, commercial edifices are particularly prone to alteration. However, the R. L. Goldberg Building's commercial edifices reflect a remarkable state of preservation.



Figure 5 Black tile bulkhead with lozenge and bead narrow course as seen here at the east end of 198 Gough Street's commercial facade on Oak Street.

The bulkhead tile cladding of the R. L. Goldberg building appears to be an early 20th Century type material and may be original. Black tiles were particularly popular at the time, as found at the subject property. Below the first course of black square tiles, is a narrow tile course containing a white lozenge and bead pattern. The square black tiles are stacked four courses high for most although raised paving in some areas obscures a portion of the bottom tile course.



Figure 6 The marble threshold tread with white square mosaic vestibule floor at 194 Gough Street.

The very gradual elevation increase from south to north is reflected in the vestibule thresholds which are one step high at the south end of the façade to at grade at the north end of the Gough Street façade where the corner entrance is located. The vestibule threshold for both commercial and residential entrances on Gough Street are composed of marble tread and riser with a white mosaic tile floor.

Residential and commercial vestibule entrances are differentiated by the shape. Where residential vestibules are recessed with right-angle walls from the façade, commercial entrances broaden to the sidewalk, allowing better viewing into display cases and welcoming onlookers to enter and explore merchandise for sale.



Figure 7 The commercial facade of 182 Gough Street with the residential entrance to 186 Gough St. seen to the north (left).



Figure 8 The commercial facade of 188 Gough Street flanked by the residential entrances to 194 Gough St. (left, Rube Goldberg's residence) and 186 Gough St. (right, Max Goldberg's residence).

The raised window platform space or displace space is defined on the interior by a drop tripartite window frame with a sill in alignment with the sill of the transom window over the front door. The framing is mimicked by paneled display sidewalls and ceiling, lending the space an elegant, highly finished appearance.



Figure 9 The tripartite transom windows and wood paneling of the 188 Gough Street. This finished carpentry remains in all the display windows of the three commercial spaces.

The commercial facades of the R. L. Goldberg Building retain retractable fabric awnings. Adjustable fabric awnings allowed shopkeepers to protect goods from the damage of direct sunlight, to reduce glare within retail spaces to improve visibility of merchandise, and to reduce solar heat gain for greater comfort.



Figure 10 The commercial facade of 198 Gough St. viewed to the south.

The transom windows of the R. L. Goldberg Building's commercial facades are perhaps the most remarkably preserved historic elements. Both framing and glazing are original, Interior-operating awning sashes still function. The glazing is colorless but minimally opaque to show merchandise in true color but disperse and refract otherwise damaging sun rays to more evenly light the interiors. The transoms are optimally practical, starting from the lintel of the display windows and top of the fabric awnings up to the top of the commercial interiors' ceilings. The transom windows stretch from end to end of each commercial space and, in the case of 198 Gough Street, the corner unit, extending around the corner onto Oak Street in concert with the display window below.



Figure 11 Primary façade window with Beaux Arts decorations of garlands, shaped keystone, and curved lintel. Two sets of paired windows in this form center the second stories of both the Gough Street façade and the Oak Street elevation.

The Edwardian building possesses the style's classical influences borrowed particularly from Beaux Arts antiquarianism. Stylistic evidence on the R.L. Goldberg Building include exacting replication of classical features such as roped garlands over subtly arched windows broken by pronounced curvilinear keystones. The placement of fenestration and decorative applications are symmetrical. The revival of more exacting classical proportion and the selection of classical elements mimicked scrupulously, such as the entablatures over the residential entrances with triglyphs astride on the subject property, is a hallmark of the Edwardian-era design..



Figure 12 The entrance to the residence at 194 Gough Street where Rube Goldberg resided and worked during his stays in San Francisco.

A classicism based in Beaux Arts studies of actual Greek and Roman architecture was a rising architectural fashion in urban centers across the country and amongst those with the means to employ noted architects. In San Francisco in particular antiquarian classicism was becoming increasingly popular. Led by architects to privileged clientele and for large civic projects, architects Arthur Brown, Willis Polk, Gustave Lansburgh, Bernard J. Joseph, and the early work of Bernard Maybeck reflect the Beaux Arts-influenced classicism trend in a city that was at once rebuilding from disaster and preparing to host the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition. Joseph, though less well documented than the others, designed and co-designed buildings such as the Emporium, Orpheum Theater, and the Gunst Building (now demolished). The 28 year old Rube Goldberg commissioned a building of particular sophistication relative to the neighborhood and to mixed-use buildings of similar scale in San Francisco.



Figure 13 The living room designed for Max Goldberg was illuminated by this bay window on the southern end of the west facade at 186 Gough Street. The paneled pilasters on either side of the fenestration topped with garlands and paired brackets create the illusion of a projecting wing and emphasize the symmetry of the façade because the feature is repeated at the north end of the façade. Note the relieved cornice molding that contributes to the illusion of the end feature's projection.

At the time of the R.L. Goldberg Building's construction the Civic Center remained largely a vast open space with many civic operations still run out of the still-standing east wing of the otherwise collapsed City Hall. Arthur Brown's Beaux Arts design was still an unrealized plan in 1911 and would not be completed until 1915.

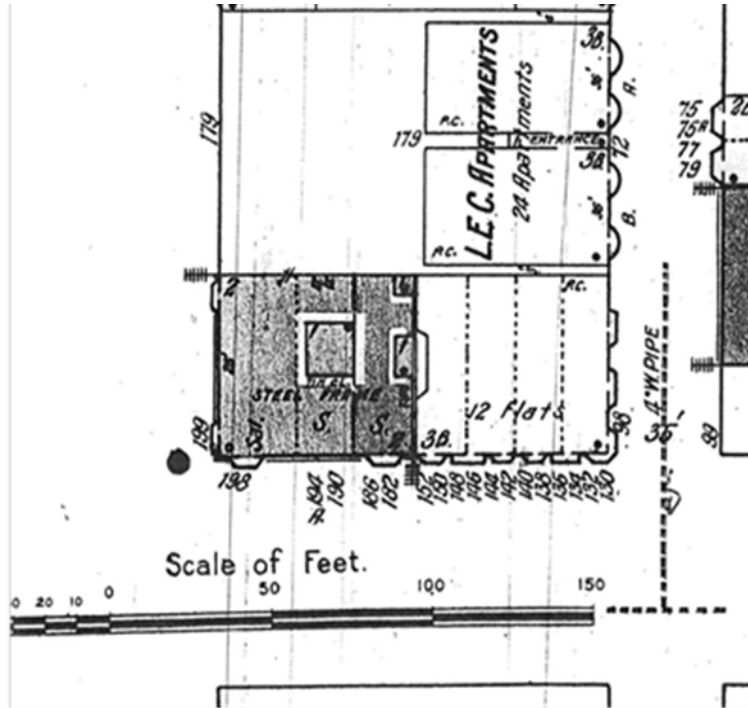


Figure 14 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 4, Sheet 330, 1913.

The rectangular-plan building, clad in stucco, is capped by a flat roof. The foundation is not visible from the street. The primary façade faces west toward Gough Street and is 4 bays wide. A secondary elevation faces north toward Oak Street. The first story features a restored storefront in the left bay with a recessed, corner entrance and metal-frame, fixed windows set high on the wall. The center bay features a storefront with recessed center entry and wood-frame plate glass windows. The center storefront is flanked by recessed entrances with bracketed cornice caps leading to the residential units on the second floor. The residential unit entrances have glazed wood doors. The right bay contains a storefront nearly identical to the center storefront. A continuous divided wood transom glazed with ribbed glass set in a hopper or awning configuration runs along the top of the first story.



Figure 15 Steel frame visible at the utility area at the east end of the building. Note the I-beam and brick-veneer pilaster containing the steel column at the intersection of the northern and central structural bays. View of the east wall, photographed to the northeast.

The second story is clad in stucco scored to look like ashlar masonry. The story features chamfered bay windows in the end bays with double-hung wood sash, spandrel panels, pilaster surrounds, and cornices. Both windows are framed by paneled pilasters with keystones at the capitals and roped garland at the top of the paneling. The center bays contain paired, double-hung, wood sash, keystones, and garlands outlining the top of the surround. The façade terminates in a projecting cornice with paired brackets framing the end bays. A sign centered on the frieze reads "R. L. Goldberg Building." A parapet wall rises above the cornice line and has shaped parapets with end piers above the end bays.

The Oak Street elevation is 3 bays wide. The first story features an asymmetrically divided fixed wood sash with keystone set high on the wall in the first bay. The second bay features a secondary entrance with glazed wood door and keystone in the second bay under an identical window. The third bay features another secondary entrance with a flat lintel and keystone and flush wood door with a transom. The entrance is flanked by small, square, fixed wood sash. The upper story features semi-hexagonal bay windows in the first and third bay with identical sash and detailing to those on the façade. The center bay has an arched window opening with bracket keystone fitted with double-hung, wood sash. The elevation terminates in a shaped parapet wall with peaked sections with end piers over the bay windows. A single-story two-car garage with flat roof and dentil cornice is attached to the rear (east) elevation.

North Elevation

The north, Oak Street elevation is also a refined Edwardian edifice but clearly presents a secondary face to the street. Above the corner entrance to the commercial space the commercial transom windows wrap around from the façade to Oak Street for about 20 feet. The ground floor has private utilitarian entrances to the northernmost commercial space and, near the northeast corner, secondary access to both residences.



Figure 16 View of the corner entrance of the 198 Gough Street.

The fenestration of the commercial level, like the residential above, maximizes the infusion of natural light with tall transom windows running in a continuous band across the full width of the façade. The preserved feature gives light to the two residential street entrance stairwells as well as the commercial spaces. Original transom glazing is opaque, allowing the full spectrum of light to enter without allowing direct, more harmful and glaring sun rays to create shadows and damage merchandise and upholsteries. Large panes form the rest of the commercial façade with the exception of a glazed ceramic tiled bulkhead rising an average of one and one half feet from the pavement to the sill of the display windows. The corner post is boxed in finished wood and likely houses a structural steel corner post.

Rectangular concrete patchwork on the sidewalk just outside 198 Gough Street suggest a coal storage room that extends from the basement to approximately five feet under the sidewalk. Its existence and extent could not be confirmed.



Figure 17 Original marble step and mosaic tile landing at 190 Gough Street. All five thresholds on the façade retain their original marble and tile finishes. Note the black tile with weather course that runs the length of the façade.

Oak Street/North Elevation

Decorative trim on the Oak Street elevation on this corner building's second story retains the same fenestration sequence and sophisticated decorative elements as on the façade. On the secondary elevation's first story a smooth stucco wall scored to appear like finely finished stone is punctuated by high square windows and service doors carefully placed at in relation to one another and second story fenestration.

The western three quarters of the first floor elevations is occupied by the commercial unit at 198 Gough Street. The commercial façade wraps around with all the elements of the primary façade including bulkhead, display windows, retractable fabric awning, and transom windows. In the middle of the first story wall, two pairs of square windows each accented with pronounced keystones align perfectly with the two pairs of windows on the second floor. Beneath the eastern pair, is a service entrance to the commercial space.

Beneath the eastern bay window are two square windows astride another service entrance with a transom window and keystone above. These first floor elements are aligned with the bay window above and provide access and light to a service entrance for both residential units above. Within is an unfinished room for waste with a utilitarian stairway leading up to workrooms off the kitchens of the two residences.

Alterations to the Oak Street elevation are minor and reversible. They include the removal of glazing only and replacement by vent louvers from two windows above the commercial unit's service door and painted-over transom windows above the unit's corner entry.



Figure 18 View of the Oak Street elevation, the entirety of the second floor that is visible here was the residence of Rube Goldberg. The north-facing elevation is replete with windows and northern light, a perfect work environment for the visual artist.



Figure 19 Pair of square raised windows with keystone and incised stucco in imitation of stone set high on the Oak Street elevation's first story.



Figure 20 Service door at the east end of the Oak Street elevation. The door is topped by a keystone and flanked by high-set square windows with prominent sills.



Figure 21 View from Oak Street of the east elevation (left) and the Oak Street, north elevation (right), the garages are a part of the neighboring property.



Figure 22 The east elevation of the R. L. Goldberg Building. The garages in the foreground belong to the neighboring property.

Roof and Light Wells

The roof is pierced by three light wells, each generously lined with windows and the central with a skylight.



Figure 23 The large, central light well, note pressed tin cladding on the interior is impressed as faux bricks.

Interior

The interior of the R. L. Goldberg Building encompasses approximately 3,300 square feet, not including the basement. On the second floor are two residential apartments, on the first floor three commercial units and a utility room and secondary exit at the northeast corner, and below grade are three basements, each connected to the commercial space above.

Residential Level, Second Story

Of the two residences on the second floor, the larger unit is 194 Gough Street and was the residence of Rube Goldberg. Natural light floods the residential units. Natural light appears to have been a priority for the artist. It is not known which room was used by Rube Goldberg as his studio but large windows along the north elevation likely provided ample defuse light.



Figure 24 The architectural features in Rube Goldberg's living room have not been altered. This bay window facing Gough Street is one of two in the living room. The other bay window faces Oak Street.



Figure 25 Rube Goldberg's living room with the bay window facing Oak Street and original fireplace mantel. The gas heater insert appears to be from the third quarter of the 20th Century but appears to be a reversible addition that did not damage the original materials or workmanship of the fireplace. Note original wallpaper on the east wall of the living room.



Figure 26 A view down the hallway of Rube Goldberg's apartment shows original finish on the woodwork including wainscoting, surrounds, picture rails, and floor. The hallway, like the rooms off of it, has high cove ceilings. A second gas heater from the third quarter of the 20th Century is set in the hallway.



Figure 27 The cove ceilings and original woodwork in Rube Goldberg's San Francisco residence.



Figure 28 A view from the landing above the stairwell leading down to the front entrance at 194 Gough Street. Note the bright interior of the silver-roof light well.



Figure 29 The bronze handle and speaking-horn at the top of the stairwell at 194 Gough Street is unlike Rube Goldberg's elaborate machinations that accomplished a mundane task with great effort. These devices allowed him to communicate with the person at the front door downstairs and to pull the lever to open the door if they are welcomed guests without having to descend the steps himself.



Figure 30 High ceiling in the commercial units on the first floor require a high stairwell from the front doors to the flats of the Goldbergs' residences. Pictured is Rube Goldberg's entry stairs with original woodwork and lath and plaster.



Figure 31 Early 20th Century wallpaper is retained in a portion of this bedroom at 194 Gough Street and is the first wall treatment over the lathe and plaster. Note the original surrounds, hardwood floor, and cove ceiling.



Figure 32 This wall sconce in the restroom in 194 Gough Street is amongst many original light fixtures in both residential units.



Figure 33 An original ceiling light fixture in a bedroom at 194 Gough Street.



Figure 34 Hardware of brass and bronze from 1911 remain in the residential and much of the commercial units of the building.



Figure 35 An original sink in Rube Goldberg's bathroom.



Figure 36 The bathroom in Rube Goldberg's apartment. The toilet is in a separate room from the bath room.



Figure 37 Max Goldberg's living room retains original mantel, hearth tiles, picture rail, cove ceilings, surrounds, and hardwood flooring.



Figure 38 The hallway, hardwood floors, fretwork balustrade, newel post, surrounds and other finished carpentry in 186 Gough Street where Max Goldberg resided.

Commercial Level, First Floor

The interior of the commercial spaces retain original fenestration configuration and, in the case of transoms and



Figure 39 Interior view of the corner commercial space at 198 Gough Street at the corner of Oak Street. Note original finished carpentry on the ceilings of the display area and transom windows of the former saloon. Some doorway framing has been replaced in-kind in a recent rehabilitation by the current tenant.



Figure 40 A detail of the wood ceiling moldings and a vent in the front window of 198 Gough Street.



Figure 41 The original storefront at 190 Gough Street viewed from within.



Figure 42 Original finished carpentry preserved in the display window of 190 Gough Street.



Figure 43 Looking up at the hip-form skylight in the center of the ceiling of 190 Gough Street. The skylight is set at the foot of the central lightwell.



Figure 44 The basement of the central commercial unit, 190 Gough Street, has been finished in drywall. Original stair balustrade and wood door surrounds were left in place.



Figure 45 Impressions on the basement wall reveal that the foundations are cast board-formed concrete.

Hayes Valley Neighborhood

Bounded by Grove Street to the north, Franklin Street to the east, Market Street to the southeast, and Webster Street to the west, Hayes Valley is one of the largest neighborhoods within the Western Addition. Similar to Duboce Triangle, most of Hayes Valley lies within the boundaries of the Market and Octavia Neighborhood Plan Area. Laid out in 1856 as part of the Western Addition, the name Hayes Valley historically referred to a 160-acre tract of land belonging to Colonel Thomas Hayes, an early landowner and developer. Consisting of some of the most tightly woven and intact nineteenth century residential fabric in the Western Addition, Hayes Valley consists largely of Italianate, Eastlake, and Queen Anne style flats and dwellings, with early twentieth-century commercial development and apartment infill located along Market, Haight, and Hayes streets. Most of Hayes Valley escaped the fire associated with the 1906 Earthquake and today contains some of the oldest extant dwellings in San Francisco. (Page & Turnbull, Inc. 2007)

HISTORY

RUBE GOLDBERG, AN INTRODUCTION

Rube Goldberg made a lasting mark on the cultural history of the United States, ultimately reaching millions of households during a period when the newspaper was the most influential form of media. His comic genius spanned many facets of visual storytelling, from cartoons exaggerating and revealing

human nature to inventions with chain reactions that might require a well-placed bellows and a patient, hungry lion to accomplish the simple task of not waking a sleeping wife upon the return of a wayward husband.

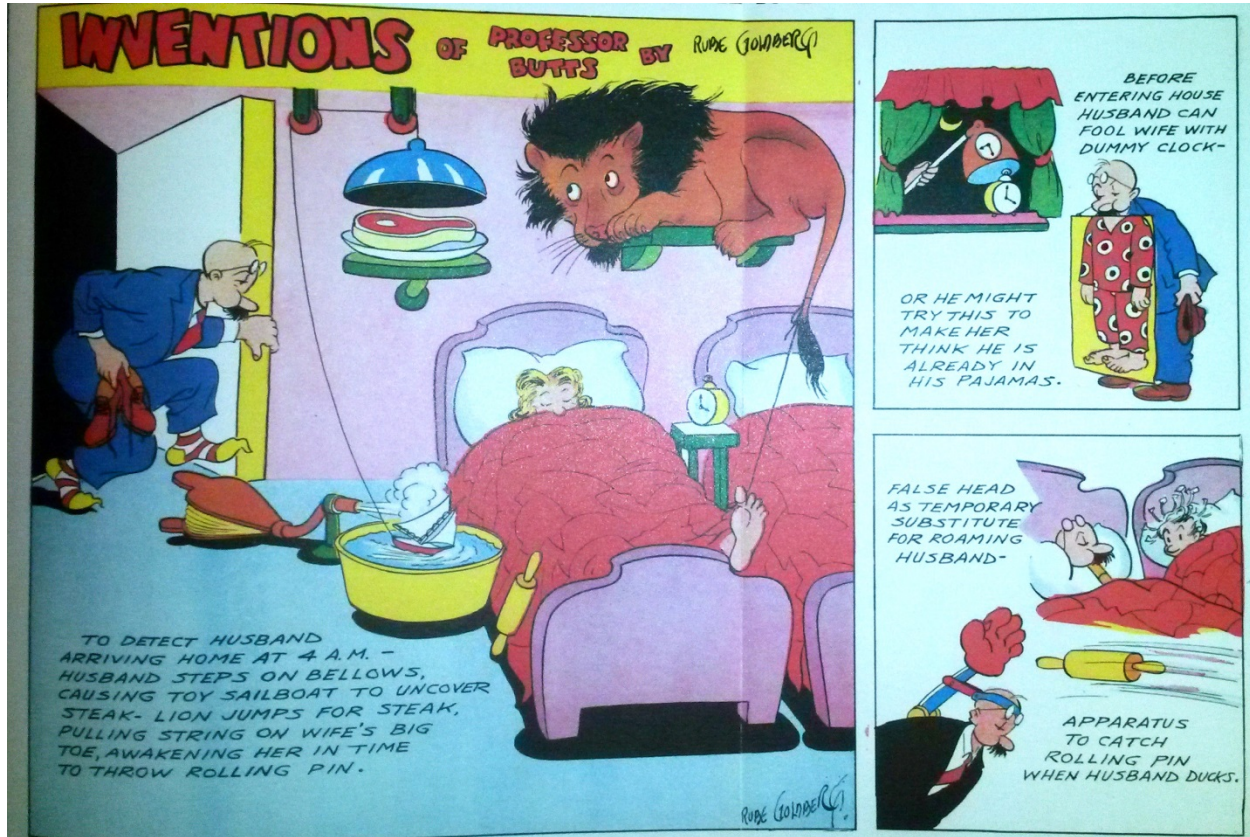


Figure 46 Inventions of Professor Butts, a chain reaction invention (Source: Jennifer George and Adam Gropnik, *The Art of Rube Goldberg* [New York: Abrams Books 2013], 13)

His work is intelligent and urbane without taking itself too seriously, the art reflecting the personality of the artist. Some work was intended purely for belly laughs while other work was primarily for adults, sometimes pushing social morays of sexual representation or political commentary. But most were a complex combination of both purposes. His was a visual arts translation of the vaudeville tradition, laugh-out-loud humor with social observations and commentary lending lasting substance and interest. Many cartoons of his contemporaries seem naïve and dated compared to the vigor and edginess of his representations in cartoon, animation and sculpture. With friends like Charlie Chaplin and Groucho Marx, Rube Goldberg was an influential celebrity of the early to mid-20th Century who shaped American cultural ideas of humor and social and political commentary. Like Charlie Chaplin's satire of Adolf Hitler in his role as Adenoid Hynkel in "The Great Dictator," Rube Goldberg's preposterous contraption for the "Automatic Hitler Kicking Machine" from 1942 or his Pulitzer Prize-winning "Peace Today" drawing of a teetering atomic bomb from *The New York Sun*, July 22, 1947 did not shy away from controversy or his personal anger or fears.

A trained engineer, Rube Goldberg showed a nation dedicated to rationalism and science during the machine age how to laugh at and perhaps even question the devices marketed in the name of convenience or efficiency in the home and at work. Many of his most absurd chain reactions seemed to be rooted deeply in the American psyche of the early and mid-20th Century. He testifies in *The Rube Goldberg Plan for the Post-War World* (Franklin Watts, 1944) to be the “the world’s great science cartoonist.” He sincerely called for simplicity in all things even writing stating:

A good writer regards his manuscript as a rough draft. He goes over it again and again to tighten it to eliminate unnecessary wordage, to simplify it. Only when he has completed that step will he consider his manuscript polished and complete. A good engineer should look upon each design as a rough draft that needs polishing and simplification. He should look back to see what he has designed *in* that can be designed *out*.

He reveals his complicated and improbable chain-reaction inventions that accomplish so little to be more than a laugh. Rube Goldberg invites his readers to explore his unpretentious and hilarious worlds thoughtfully, question societal precepts, and open ourselves up to a healing laugh.⁵

THE SAN FRANCISCAN 1883 TO 1907

Reuben Garret Lucius Goldberg (Rube Goldberg) was born in San Francisco on July 4, 1883. His father, Max Goldberg, was a Prussian Jewish émigré, landing in the United States before the Civil War. His mother, Hannah, nee Cohen, died when Rube was in his early teens leaving Max to raise (eldest to youngest) Garret, Rueben, Walter, and Lillian.

Max was a powerful personality and loomed large in Rube’s life. The widowed Max was a consummate investor in resources in the West and rose to prominence in San Francisco as a Republican Party operative and campaign manager, police commissioner, fire marshall and banker. Max embraced the West adopting colloquialisms such as “looka here” and “I reckon” and wearing a broad-brimmed Stetson hat. Max Goldberg was portrayed under such a hat in the mural that climbs the stairs of Coit Tower in San Francisco.

⁵ Jennifer George and Adam Gropnik, *The Art of Rube Goldberg* (New York: Abrams Books 2013), 15 – 19.



Figure 47 A gold San Francisco Police Department badge given in honor of Max Goldberg's service in the year he moved into his residence at 186 Gough Street in the building his son built. (Source: Jennifer George and Adam Gropnik, *The Art of Rube Goldberg*)

The Goldberg's attended temple at Sherith Israel where Rueben Goldberg studied for his *bar mitzvah*.⁶ Two months later (FROM WHAT?) he is cited in the article "Israel Lights Chanuka Candles: Honor to Ancient Heroes" as a celebrant in Ms. Miriam B. Levy's class at Sabbath School at the "Geary Street" temple. Temple Beth Israel that stood at 1839 Geary Street served the then largely Jewish neighborhood that stretched from The Fillmore District to Hayes Valley.⁷

⁶ "Society," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, October 18, 1896, 33.

⁷ "Jewish Children Make Their Vows," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, June 7, 1897, 8.

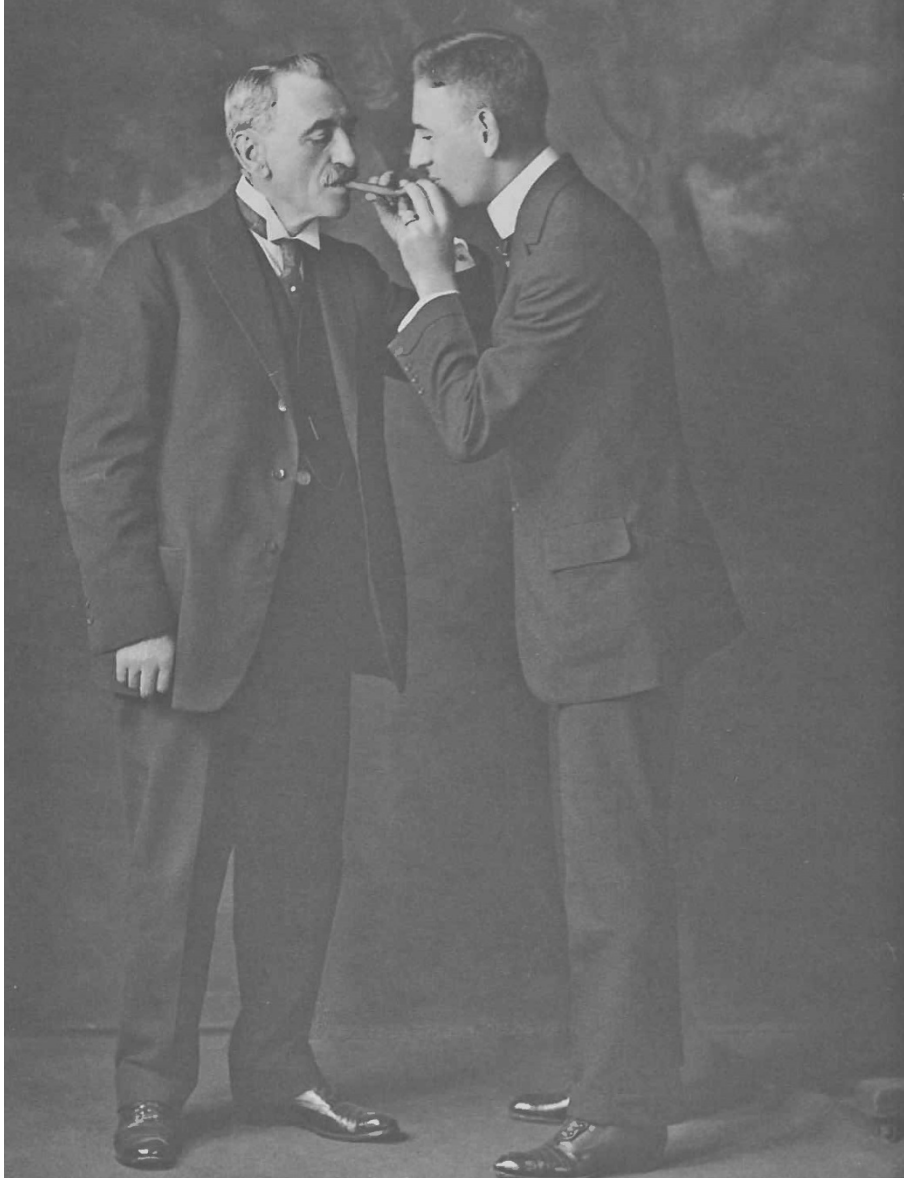


Figure 48 Rube (right) lights Max's cigar, ca. 1911 (Source: Jennifer George and Adam Gropnik, *The Art of Rube Goldberg*)

Max Goldberg remained a very influential person in Rube Goldberg's life, particularly prior to Rube's marriage to Irma in 1916 when he was 33 years old. So when Max, who had encouraged and paid for Rube's art lessons, steered Rube to study engineering instead of art, Rube obeyed. He commuted from his family home in San Francisco to Berkeley during his entire three and a half years of study at the University of California, Berkeley. After graduating with a degree in engineering in 1904, Rube went on to work as an engineer for the City of San Francisco Water and Sewers Department, recording the location of the sewer system in civil engineering drawing sets.⁸

Max Goldberg stated in retrospect:

⁸ Jennifer George and Adam Gropnik, *The Art of Rube Goldberg* (New York: Abrams Books 2013), 39-40.

My idea of an artist was a fellow who loafed the greater part of the time, and, when he had nothing better to do, hung around street corners and asked people for quarters.⁹

After six months Rube left the Sewers Department to become an office boy in the sports department of *The San Francisco Chronicle* newspaper and taking a two-thirds pay-cut in the move. While there he began to submit drawings and cartoons to the editor until he was finally published in early 1905.

On April 18, 1906 at 5:12 AM the San Francisco earthquake hit hard. Although Max Goldberg's house was not badly damaged, the San Francisco Chronicle building was destroyed by the earthquake and fire that followed. He worked from home producing cartoons to help soothe the shaken confidence of San Franciscans. ??? Rube Goldberg stayed with *The San Francisco Chronicle* but was disillusioned with his prospects. As he recounted in 1928:

I was completely sold on the idea that the big city [New York] was the only place where a fellow in my line had a chance to make good in a real way.¹⁰

RUBE GOLDBERG: A TALE OF TWO CITIES

Figure 49 Rube Goldberg ca. 1915 Jennifer George and Adam Gropnik, *The Art of Rube Goldberg* [New York: Abrams Books 2013], 14)

In October 1907 Rube Goldberg took the train to New York to seek employment as a cartoonist. He was turned down by five newspapers until the *New York Evening Mail* hired him to draw daily cartoons for \$50.00 per week; *The San Francisco Chronicle* had paid him \$8.00 per week. He continued to draw sports cartoons as well as humor and human interest work. Between 1908 and 1910 when Rube Goldberg bought the lot at the corner of Gough and Oak streets in San Francisco, he drew 450 "Foolish Questions" cartoon panels and had them published in a book.

1910 would also be the year he made his first appearance on the stage at the Colonial Theater in New York. Cracking jokes, drawing cartoons, and interacting with the audience, Rube Goldberg even traveled doing performances from 1910 to 1915 up and down the East Coast while continuing to work as a cartoonist. Remarkably he also bought and developed the R. L. Goldberg Building in San Francisco in 1910- 1911 during this especially prolific time in his life.

At 28 years of age, Rube Goldberg was a returning successful newspaper cartoonist in 1910 when he bought the property. Still a bachelor, Rube returned frequently to the city of his birth and from his initial success as a cartoonist from employment in New York City beginning in late 1907; his fortunes would increase dramatically in 1916 and following. Built to house himself in one residential unit, 194 Gough Street, during numerous and extended working-visits to San Francisco and his widowed father and mentor Max Goldberg in the other, 186 Gough Street, the residences are large and well appointed. Like the three commercial units below, the residential units are deep, extending some 55' from the west façade to the rear wall on the east. (Samuelson 2013)

The Goldbergs, father and son, had connections in local entertainment and the police department. Since Rube had made New York City his primary residence by 1915, it is not surprising that the Crocker

⁹ Jennifer George and Adam Gropnik, *The Art of Rube Goldberg* [New York: Abrams Books 2013], 65)

¹⁰ Ibid, 41.

Langley City Directory of 1915 shows 194 Gough Street residents Frederick Eggers, Sherriff of San Francisco and Allen Walter, a musician, as tenants. It is likely that, like Rube Goldberg, Officer Eggers and Mr. Walter were part-time tenants of the space. At 186 Gough, that same year, a Monta Brown (widow of John) is listed. Her relationship to Max Goldberg, who also occupied 186 Gough is not known. (Samuelson 2013). Other tenants are also listed in the two bedroom 186 Gough Street and three bedroom 194 Gough Street.

Rube Goldberg hired Bernard J. Joseph, Architect, to design his building. Although no records of their correspondence could be located, there are blueprints of plans for the first and second floor. As a trained engineer himself and survivor of the San Francisco 1906 Earthquake and Fire, Rube Goldberg is likely to have had a professional opinion in the selection of a structural steel frame and stucco cladding both to better withstand lateral seismic forces and to retard fire. Although steel frame construction was in wide use for commercial and mixed residential-commercial properties by 1911, San Francisco did not adopt seismic requirements for new construction for more than a decade after the subject property's 1911 construction. Wood frame buildings often with poor lateral force performance, such as those built over parking garages, continued to be built after 1906.

Rube Goldberg's return visits to San Francisco were as a celebrity. In an article headlining M. H. de Young's purchase of John D. Spreckel's *The Morning Call*, *The San Francisco Chronicle* took the opportunity to reflect on their own successes, "Among the artists whose merits were first recognized by the 'Chronicle' and who won their first fame on this paper are ... 'Rube' Goldberg..."¹¹ But his fame was more generally recognized by San Franciscans, beyond a former employer's self-congratulatory statement that they had "first recognized" his talents. The July 17, 1915 article "Personal and Hotel Gossip" begins with the statement:

Rube Goldberg, San Francisco cartoonist, who achieved brilliant success in New York, is visiting his people in San Francisco, and will be here a month. Goldberg is a member of the art staff of the New York Mail and during his visit here will do a number of exposition cartoons for his paper. The local artist has taken up motion pictures as a sideline, making his own films from his own drawings.¹²

The article exemplifies the long working-visits that Rube Goldberg took from his New York residence to his San Francisco apartment.

Animation was a new entertainment technology in 1915 and Rube Goldberg was at its forefront. The Orpheum Theater, which was designed by Bernard J. Joseph and G. Albert Lansburgh, advertised that among their live performances was a movie, the "Animated Cartoons" of Rube Goldberg.¹³

Jennifer George, Rube and Irma Goldberg's granddaughter, recounts the bedtime story that her grandfather told her repeatedly.

I was eleven years old in 1970 when my Papa Rube died. I have many memories of him, some fuzzy and fading, others clear and sharp, as if they happened yesterday. One of those memories, a recounting of the 1906 earthquake, falls in the latter category and was told to me frequently by my grandfather at bedtime. I write

¹¹ "M. H. de Young Purchases The Morning Call: Publication to Cease August 31 and Be Consolidated with The Chronicle," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, August 15, 1913, 1.

¹² "Personal and Hotel Gossip," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, July 17, 1915, 16.

¹³ "Orpheum," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, June 11, 1916, 25.

about it in my preface to *The Art of Rube Goldberg*, the best-selling coffee table book that was released by Abrams Books last year.

The story mesmerized me. My grandfather explained how the ground shook, lamps swung overhead, and his bed rolled from one side of his room to the other – then just as suddenly as the earth moved, it stopped. According to my grandfather, San Francisco was never the same. He told me about the fires that raged, the lack of clean water, the smoke that lingered in the air – his city in ruins. He vowed that one day if he was lucky enough, successful enough, that he would build a building, with his name on the top, to prove that the city would rise again – and that he was a part of it.

He talked about the building, his building – its stone exterior, its bay windows, the pediment with his name carved into its façade. The building had two apartments, one for me, my two pussycats, and all my stuffed animals; the other for him and my grandmother. He would elaborate about the stores in the bottom of the building. One would sell only whipped cream – his favorite dessert. One would be reserved just for him. An art studio – filled with drawing tables and stools, paper and pencils, clay and wife – all the things we did together. And I would nod off, imagining my life in this special building, this magical place, built in part I thought just for me.

I heard this story, my fairytale, so many times, that I could recite it almost verbatim. Yet I never knew, until last November [November 2013], that the building in my bedtime story, built in San Francisco in the aftermath of 1906 earthquake, the one with my grandfather's name set in its eaves, actually existed.¹⁴

¹⁴ Jennifer George to London Breed, March 1, 2014.

ARTICLE 10 LANDMARK DESIGNATION

This section of the report is an analysis and summary of the applicable criteria for designation, integrity, period of significance, significance statement, character-defining features, and additional Article 10 requirements.

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION

Criteria

Check all criteria applicable to the significance of the property that are documented in the report. The criteria checked are the basic justification for why the resource is important.

Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

Association with the lives of persons significant in our past.

Embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

Has yielded or may be likely to yield information important in history or prehistory.

Statement of Significance

Characteristics of the Landmark that justify its designation:

The R. L. Goldberg Building at 182 – 198 Gough Street derives its significance from its close association with the life and work of Reuben “Rube” L. Goldberg and its sophisticated Edwardian and Beaux Arts architectural design by master architect Bernard J. Joseph.

Association with significant person

Built in 1911, the R. L. Goldberg Building is closely associated with the life and career of nationally famous cartoonist and artist Rube Goldberg. Incised “R. L. GOLDBERG BUILDING,” in the cornice, the building was named by and for its original owner, popularly known as Rube Goldberg. A native San Franciscan, Rube Goldberg bought the property and commissioned the design and construction of the building to house himself and his widowed father, Max Goldberg, in the two apartments on the second floor and for income from leasing the commercial units on the first story. Built with large windows for natural lighting for the prolific cartoonist, Rube Goldberg took extended visits to his West Coast home, drew there, and retained the property until his death in 1972.

Rube Goldberg built the R. L. Goldberg Building at the time that his career as a cartoonist was beginning to rise and shortly after his move to New York City. His first cousin, Hannah Samuelson, recounts that the building was his San Francisco residence and studio during his lengthy visits. (Samuelson 2013)

Significant Architecture

The R. L. Goldberg building is an exceptional example of an Edwardian era commercial and residential structure with Beaux Arts decoration. An unusually successful and rare example of Beaux Arts character-defining features on a commercial building of modest scale, the building reflects theatrical design elements from the architect, Bernard J.

Joseph, who helped design the Orpheum Theater and perhaps from Rube Goldberg himself who associated with leading actors, directors, and composers of Broadway in New York and some of the earliest film animators. The building reflects the mastery of the architect, retains a high degree of historic integrity, and is an outstanding example of its type in the years following the 1906 Earthquake and Fire and leading up to the 1915 Panama-Pacific World Exposition. The commercial storefronts of the R. L. Goldberg Building are remarkably unaltered since construction in 1911. Framing has been restored around display windows, minor repairs made to tilework bulkhead and vestibule flooring but all three the storefronts retain original materials from 1911.

Period of Significance

Although Rube Goldberg built and retained ownership of the R. L. Goldberg Building from 1911 to 1972 (i.e., two years after his death when dispersed to his heirs), his use of the building appears to be greatest from 1911 to 1916, the year he married New York heiress Irma Seeman. The materiality of the building reflects few changes over time and strongly evokes its original design and period of greatest association with Rube Goldberg. However, its significance to Rube Goldberg is reflected in his lengthy ownership of the building bearing his name until his death in 1970. He continued to use the building after 1916 but appears to have made fewer trips to San Francisco after his marriage.

Integrity

The seven aspects of integrity are location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, and association in relation to the period of significance established above. Cumulatively, the building retains sufficient integrity to convey its association with Rube Goldberg and its exceptionally successful design as a mixed-use building of the Edwardian era and Classical Revival style.

Location, Feeling, Setting, Association

The R. L. Goldberg Building at 182 – 198 Gough Street was constructed in 1911. Located on the corner of Gough and Oak streets, the building has not been moved. Both neighboring buildings remain the same and appear in the same footprint since at least 1913 when they appear in a Sanborn Insurance Map. Buildings across Gough Street also appear to have relatively minor alterations. Located just two blocks north of Market Street, the building is near the Market Street Masonry Landmark District, a City of San Francisco designation denoting the historic integrity of the neighborhood to the south, and two blocks west of the Civic Center National Historic Landmark District. The Beaux Arts inspired R. L. Goldberg Building is readily associated with the Beaux Arts Civic Center design, although on a much more modest scale.

The commercial storefronts still function as transparent and approachable sales venues, readily integrating the mixed-use building into similar building types, particular buildings across Gough Street from the R. L. Goldberg Building. The refined classical entrances to the residences, also facing Gough Street, retain their relationship to the street and are unaltered.

Design, Materials, Workmanship

The exterior of the building retains design features that were originally constructed in 1911 on the second floor and integral to the architects and owner's design concepts. The more elaborately decorated second story exteriors on the Gough Street façade and the Oak Street side elevation have no apparent alterations. This is also true of the first story along Oak Street. The façade has minor alterations to the framing materials of the display windows on a portion of the northernmost and the central commercial bays. These alterations to the materials and workmanship of those window frames do not depart from the original building design and are too minor of an alterations to significantly affect historical integrity. Storefront elements that are extant include vestibule shape, paving, bulkhead paving, raised window

display platforms, rear transoms of window display areas, bulkheads, metal sash systems in continuous transoms, , retractable fabric awnings, and ribbed glass transom. Although awning fabrics are not original and framework around display windows have been replaced in-kind, storefront materials and design are unchanged and retain a high degree of historical integrity.

The interior of both residential units retain their original lay-outs, decorative woodwork including door and window surrounds, hardwood floors, fireplace mantels, picture rails, and many bathroom porcelains. The kitchens in both units have not been altered with the addition of later cabinets and counters. Both units still have original bronze levers, reminiscent of a Rube Goldberg contraption, to unlock and pop open their front doors without having to descend the stairs.

In the apartment at 194 Gough Street which Rube Goldberg had designed for himself, many original materials were retained. Early 20th Century wallpapers and paints from the period of significance when Rube Goldberg occupied the unit have been preserved *in situ*.



Figure 50 A sheet of early 20th Century wallpaper and writing on the raw plaster stating "10 rolls," presumably of wallpaper, are preserved in apartment 194 Gough Street where Rube Goldberg residing when visiting San Francisco.

Move this photo to interior section.

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All photography provided by Edward Yarbrough unless stated otherwise.



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Historic Preservation Commission Motion No. XXX

HEARING DATE NOVEMBER 19, 2014

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MOTION TO INITIATE AND RECOMMEND TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ARTICLE 10 LANDMARK DESIGNATION OF 182-198 GOUGH STREET, HISTORICALLY KNOWN AS THE R. L. GOLDBERG BUILDING, LOT 014 IN ASSESSOR'S BLOCK 0837, AS LANDMARK NO. XXX.

1. WHEREAS, consideration of initiation of Article 10 Landmark Designation of 182-198 Gough Street was calendared at the Historic Preservation Commission's request following public comment at its regularly scheduled hearing on June 18, 2014; and
2. WHEREAS, a draft Landmark Designation Report for 182-198 Gough Street was prepared by Edward Yarbrough, who meets the Secretary of the Interior's professional qualifications for architectural history; and
3. WHEREAS, the draft Landmark Designation Report was reviewed by Department staff and determined to have sufficient information to support the Article 10 landmark designation of 182-198 Gough Street; and
4. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that 182-198 Gough Street is an architecturally significant example of an early 20th century mixed use building designed by prominent architect, Bernard J. Joseph, featuring superior Classically inspired ornamentation and three extraordinarily rare and intact historic storefronts; and
5. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the construction 182-198 Gough Street was commissioned by Rueben (Rube) Lucius Garrett Goldberg, a native of San Francisco and a Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist famed for his illustrations of elaborate contraptions; and
6. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the building may have some significance for its association with Rube Goldberg, but that its primary significance is derived from its architectural expression and outstanding physical integrity; and
7. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the 182-198 Gough Street meets the eligibility requirements per Section 1004 of the Planning Code and warrants consideration for Article 10 landmark designation; and
8. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the boundaries and the list of character-defining features, as identified in the Landmark Designation Case Report, should be

considered for preservation under the proposed landmark designation as they relate to the building's historical significance and retain historical integrity.

MOVED, that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby approves initiation of landmark designation of 182-198 Gough Street, Assessor's Block 0837, Lot 014 pursuant to Article 10 of the Planning Code.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Motion was adopted by the Historic Preservation Commission at its meeting on November 19, 2014.

Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES:

NAYS:

ABSENT:

ADOPTED: November 19, 2014

From: [Kenneth S. Hirsch](#)
To: [Brown, Mary \(CPC\)](#)
Subject: Rube Goldberg Building, 182-198 Gough St., SF
Date: Tuesday, August 19, 2014 11:51:03 AM

Mary - Following are some comments posted to an SFGate article about the building.

Rube had two brothers, Garrett and William. I've looked in the old city directories, and here's what I've found: Before the earthquake, both Garret and William lived with their father and brother at 1288 McAllister. In 1906, Garrett opened a wholesale paints business at 429 Grove. Starting in 1907, Garrett M. Goldberg, manufacturers and importers of paints and oils has a business address of 477-481 Grove. His brother Walter is working as a salesman and clerk for his brother's company. Both are living at the post earthquake family address of 1310 McAllister. In 1909, Garrett's business moved to the SE corner of 7th and Folsom. In 1911, Garrett's residence address moved to 318 Laurel, where it remained through at least 1920. Walter appears to have never left home and continued working for his brother's company.

While some of these addresses are nearby, it does not appear that any of the immediate Goldberg family ever lived there through 1920. I would suspect that if the family did finance the building, it was as an investment property. All of the family seems to be fairly well-to-do at this time (except maybe poor Walter), so it doesn't make sense that they would live in a small apartment like this. Maybe it was a place for Rube to stay if he was in town, but that's a stretch of the imagination that would require some proof and it hardly matches the story we are being told. < less

For those just reading this, I have done some investigation and I could find no indication that Rube Goldberg built or lived in this building - see further down in the comments. The Assesor-Recorder shows this building being built in 1911. Reuben Goldberg the artist lived at 1288 McAllister in 1904 and 1905. He doesn't show up after that in the city directories (through 1914), although his father is at 1310 McAllister after 1906. He moved to New York in 1907 and eventually settled on Central Park West, according to Wikipedia.

I have gone a little further and searched the Crocker Langley city directories for 1904-1914 and I found no listings for Reuben Goldberg, Max (his dad) or Hanna (his mom) at any address on Gough or Oak street. Their family home before the earthquake was at 1288 McAllister where Max is listed as a bank president and Reuben is a student in 1904 and an artist for the Chronicle in 1905. From 1907-1914, Max (who seems to have gone into insurance after the earthquake - good idea!) is listed as living at 1310 McAllister. This might possibly be the same location with a new address after the quake, or it could be a nearby address.

This claim of Rube Goldberg's connection to this building when it was built seems

dubious to me. I'm not saying it's impossible, but proof is needed. « less

UC Berkeley College of Mining graduate ca 1904 :)

My preference would be to NOT have it designated as a landmark building.

Ken

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