

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF NORTHEAST WATERFRONT

The Northeast Waterfront Landmark District is San Francisco's oldest industrial district comprised of masonry maritime shipping, drayage and warehousing buildings, whose dates range from the Gold Rush clipper ship days of the 1850s to the concrete ship repair and maintenance facilities of World War II. The district's boundary begins at the former site of the first deep water landing of Yerba Buena, the small village that became San Francisco, and travels eastward into what was part of the Bay of San Francisco. During the Gold Rush, sections of Telegraph Hill were quarried and dumped into the Bay to create new land for development.

The district includes simple functional buildings that exhibit fine craftsmanship with minimal ornamentation. Where detail occurs, it is often found around the large arched door openings, which were originally designed for access by horse-drawn carts and commercial trucks. Some of the earlier brickwork contains suggestions of classical detailing, such as capitals and pilasters. Some of the brick facades have been obscured by stucco cladding. Arches are common at the ground floor and are frequently repeated on upper floors. The earliest buildings have deeply recessed windows that produce strong shadow lines. Larger industrial sash windows began to be incorporated into buildings from the 1920s and onward.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

The preservation of significant historic and cultural properties is a vital component of planning and managing the built and natural environment in San Francisco. Landmarks and landmark districts are unique and irreplaceable assets to the City and its neighborhoods. Landmark districts are regulated by Article 10 of the Planning Code. Since 1967 San Francisco's Historic Preservation Program has identified and protected a wide range of the City's rich history as depicted in its buildings, districts, places, structures, or objects.

As staff to the Historic Preservation Commission, the Planning Department's preservation planners work with property owners, city departments, and the general public to promote the preservation of these resources through incentives, long-range preservation planning efforts, public outreach, and technical assistance.



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This guide highlights a small selection of the area's historical buildings. To learn more about landmark districts and historical buildings, visit sfplanning.org.

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This material is based upon work assisted by a grant from the Department of the Interior; National Park Service. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the Department of the Interior.

HISTORIC WALKING TOUR GUIDE

NORTHEAST WATERFRONT LANDMARK DISTRICT



9 BLOCKS 53 PARCELS DESIGNATED IN 1983

This commercial and industrial historic district reflects waterfront storage and maritime activities from the Gold Rush era to World War II. It features a large collection of warehouses and industrial buildings constructed of brick and reinforced concrete.



1 GIBB-SANBORN WAREHOUSE, SOUTH
855 Front Street
SF Landmark #91

In 1855, Scottish immigrant and Gold Rush pioneer Daniel Gibb purchased these two corner properties and built twin warehouse buildings. After Gibb's death, the property was sold to New York native and gold miner, John Sanborn. Sanborn excavated a vault for opium storage, which was legal at that time, under the sidewalk of the north building in 1879. In 1899, Sanborn's wife commissioned an addition at the south warehouse and requested the same brick and granite as the existing building.

Both buildings used locally made bricks and feature load bearing arches at the basement level. From the exterior, the arches appear to be filled windows, when in fact, they are a structural necessity. The interiors of both buildings were completely destroyed during the 1906 Earthquake and Fire. Only the exterior walls remained and the damage can still be seen in the lighter replacement brick used during post-1906 reconstruction.



2 GIBB-SANBORN WAREHOUSE, NORTH
915 Front Street
SF Landmark #92



3 FULLER COMPANY GLASS WAREHOUSE

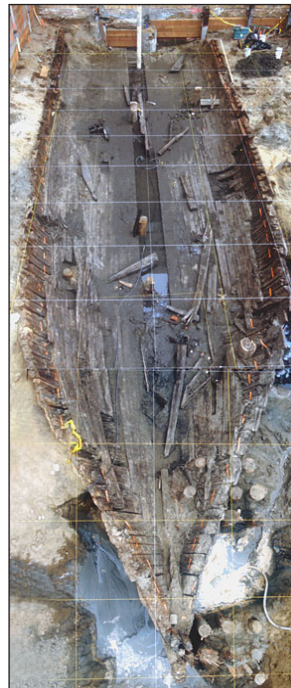
50 Green Street

This Classical Revival warehouse building was designed in 1907 by prominent architect Willis Polk and partner G.A. Wright. It is one of the best remaining examples of the brick warehouses that dominated the Embarcadero waterfront in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The surrounding area was San Francisco's center for maritime and warehouse commerce from the 1850s to the 1960s. The building is also listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



4 GIUSTI BUILDING/ FARNSWORTH'S LAB
202 Green Street
CA Landmark #941

In a simple laboratory in this building Philo Taylor Farnsworth invented the first working all-electronic "television system" in 1927. The 21-year-old inventor and several assistants successfully transmitted the first all-electronic television image and developed a number of other patents that became essential to modern television. The "Genius of Green Street," as he was known, died in 1971.



BURIED SHIPS

Underground throughout the District

As a result of the Gold Rush, more than 500 ships were abandoned as crews left for a chance to strike it rich in the gold fields. Some ships were salvaged and re-used for the construction of bars, hotels, churches, and even a jail in the area. Over time, the unused ships sank and quarried debris from Telegraph Hill was used to fill the shallow waters over the ships. At last count, 47 ships have been discovered underground.

Left: The *General Harrison* ship was buried at Clay and Battery Streets during the waterfront landfill in 1850. In 2001, it was discovered twenty feet underground during a construction project. The ship was partially unearthed and then re-buried. An outline of its location can be seen on the sidewalk, about four blocks south of the district.