

# HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF TELEGRAPH HILL

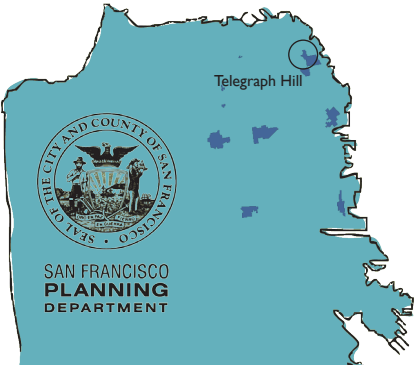
The Telegraph Hill Landmark District consists of two important types of buildings and some unique open spaces. The first type includes eleven 1850s structures on the east slope, as well as others built through 1870. These small early buildings were not designed by architects, but were built by tradesman. A second type of important buildings were constructed 1935-1941, including several structures known to have been designed by experimental architects, such as Richard Neutra. This second type resulted in a collection of innovative modernist designs out of which rose the Second Bay Tradition style of architecture.

The setting of this district is defined by steep cliffs created by a nearby quarry. The quarried rock was used for ballast on outbound sailing ships and for filling in the Bay east of the Hill. Since the landscape was too steep for roads, wooden walkways and a hidden network of footpaths and gardens were built. From the Gold Rush to the Depression, the difficult access to the hillside and cliffs, above the City's most active waterfront area, produced a community of waterfront workers housed in one-room shacks and tiny Gothic Revival cottages. These very early houses were modest in style and small in scale; however, they are among the few remaining of the earliest residential developments near San Francisco's northeast waterfront. In the early 1930s, improved roads, retaining walls and the building of Coit Tower caused land values to soar and new owners built sleek modern houses and apartments. Today, Telegraph Hill hosts some of the best views of the waterfront, and

## 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.



The locator map above shows the Landmark Districts found throughout the City of San Francisco.

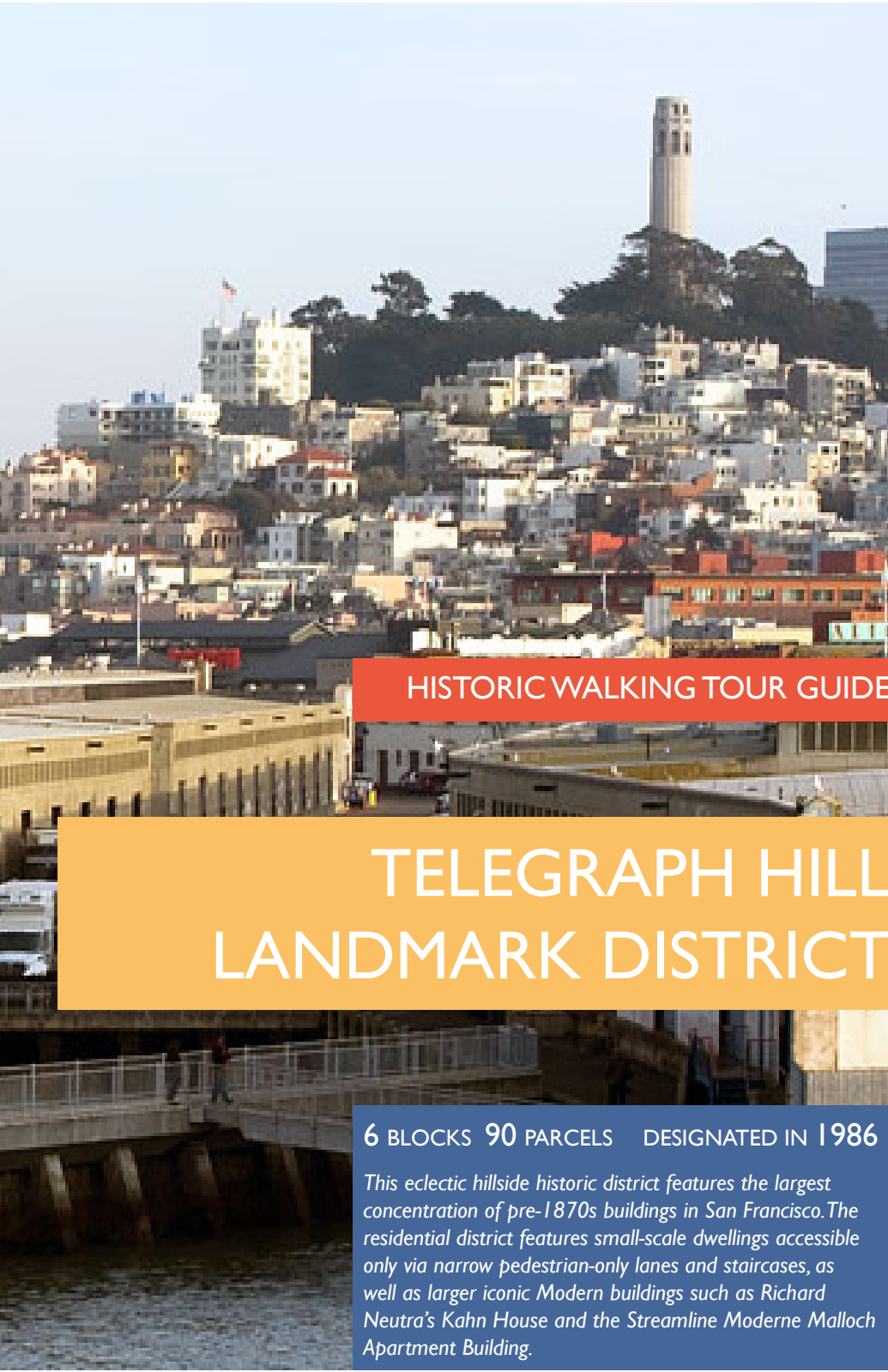
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This guide highlights a small selection of the area's historical buildings. To learn more about landmark districts and historical buildings, visit [sfplanning.org](http://sfplanning.org).

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*Cover photo courtesy of noehill.com.*

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.

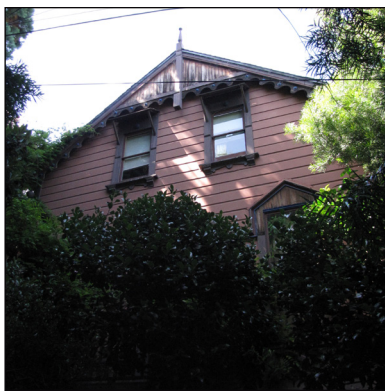
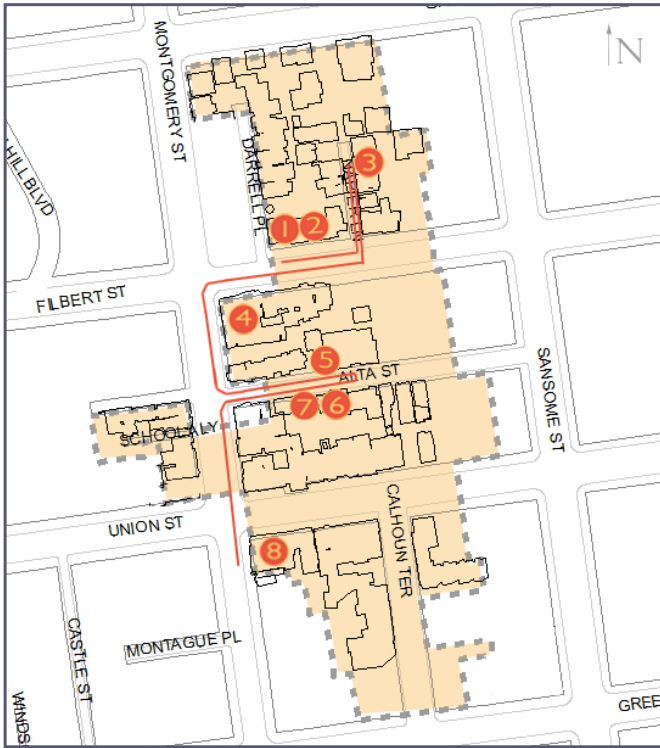


## HISTORIC WALKING TOUR GUIDE

# TELEGRAPH HILL LANDMARK DISTRICT

**6 BLOCKS 90 PARCELS DESIGNATED IN 1986**

*This eclectic hillside historic district features the largest concentration of pre-1870s buildings in San Francisco. The residential district features small-scale dwellings accessible only via narrow pedestrian-only lanes and staircases, as well as larger iconic Modern buildings such as Richard Neutra's Kahn House and the Streamline Moderne Malloche Apartment Building.*



**1 PHILLIP BROWN HOUSE**  
228 Filbert Street

This Carpenter Gothic style cottage was built in 1869. Its construction has been attributed to the original owner, Phillip Brown, who had a store at ground-level with his home above. It is built in a simple style, with decorative bargeboards, a finial at the apex of the gable and simple gothic-arched window hoods.



**2 ROSS COTTAGE**  
230 Filbert Street

This one-story cottage was built around 1858 by owner William Ross, a laborer and longshoreman. Its simple design is rectangular in plan with wood siding and little ornamentation. Its small scale form and construction details are typical of Telegraph Hill's early development.



**3 NAPIER LANE**

This narrow, boardwalked street is one of the most charming examples of an 1870s neighborhood. The homes here date from 1875-1890. 10 Napier Lane was constructed in a simplified Italianate style in 1875.



**4 MALLOCH APARTMENT BUILDING**  
1360 Montgomery Street

Just before WWII, the district welcomed a dozen new buildings in experimental designs, including this high-style Streamline Moderne apartment building. It was designed in 1936 by architect Irvin Goldstine for father/son builders Jack and John Rolph Malloch. The Mallochs lived in the two penthouses and rented the other ten units. The building features raised plaster panels by artist Alfred Dupont. In 1947, the building was the setting for *Dark Passage*, a film noir starring Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall.



**5 "DUCK HOUSE"**  
60 Alta Street

This small apartment building was designed by architect William Wurster in 1936. Wurster was a pioneering architect of San Francisco's Second Bay Tradition style. In the 1930s, the house was frequented by Eleanor Roosevelt who often visited her friend, Mayris Martin, the building's second owner. The house is most famous for its association with popular *San Francisco Chronicle* columnist-turned-author Armistead Maupin, who lived in the ground floor apartment, while writing his famous series, *Tales of the City*.



**6 ANDREWS HOUSE**  
31 Alta Street

One of the oldest extant houses in San Francisco, this house was built in 1852 by ship captain Richard Andrews, in a vernacular Greek Revival style. The balconied facade is a characteristic feature of houses in this area dating from the 1850s.



**7 COONEY HOUSE**  
291 Union Street

Though its exact date of construction is unknown, this house was shown on the U.S. Coast Survey in 1853. Built by original owner, John Cooney, in a Gothic Revival style, it housed his ground-floor store and upper-level living quarters. It featured typical Gothic Revival characteristics such as bargeboards and a front-facing gable. Sometime during the 1880s, the current flat-front Italianate facade was added.



**8 1254-1262 Montgomery Street**

This raised, two-story Italianate apartment building was originally built in 1861 as a one-story wooden cottage, similar to those found throughout the District. Over time, the building has evolved into this six-unit apartment building.