

FILE NO. 90-77-15

ORDINANCE NO. 218-77

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DESIGNATING THE KOSHLAND HOUSE AS A LANDMARK PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 10 OF THE CITY PLANNING CODE

Be It Ordained by the People of the City and County of San Francisco:

Section 1. The Board of Supervisors hereby finds that the Koshland House, 3800 Washington Street, being Lot J in Assessor's Block 989 has a special character and special historical, architectural and aesthetic interest and value, and that its designation as a Landmark will be in furtherance of and in conformance with the purposes of Article 10 of the City Planning Code and the standards set forth therein.

(a) Designation. Pursuant to Section 1004 of the City Planning Code, Chapter II, Part II of the San Francisco Municipal Code, the Koshland House is hereby designated as a Landmark, this designation having been duly approved by Resolution No. 7564 of the City Planning Commission, which Resolution is on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors under File No. 90-77-15.

(b) Required Data. The descriptions of the location and boundaries of the landmark site; of the characteristics of the landmark which justify its designation; and of the particular features that should be preserved; as included in the said Resolution, are hereby incorporated herein and made a part hereof as though fully set forth.

Passed for Second Reading
Board of Supervisors, San Francisco
MAY 23 1977

Ayes: Supervisors Barbagelata, Feinstein, Francisco, Gonzalez, Kopp, Mendelsohn, Molinari, Nelder, Pelosi, Tamaras, von Beroldingen.

Noes: Supervisors

Absent: Supervisor KOPP

Alf Bowman Clerk

90-77-15
File No.

JUN 9 1977
Approved

Read Second Time and Finally Passed
Board of Supervisors, San Francisco

MAY 31 1977

Ayes: Supervisors Barbagelata, Feinstein, Francisco, Gonzalez, Kopp, Mendelsohn, Molinari, Nelder, Pelosi, Tamaras, von Beroldingen.

Noes: Supervisors

Absent: Supervisors BARBAGELATA MENDELSOHN

I hereby certify that the foregoing ordinance was finally passed by the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco.

Alf Bowman Clerk

George P. Brown Mayor

SAN FRANCISCO

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

RESOLUTION NO. 7584

WHEREAS, A proposal to designate the Koshland House at 3800 Washington Street as a Landmark pursuant to the provisions of Article 10 of the City Planning Code was initiated by the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board on August 25, 1976 and said Advisory Board, after due consideration, has recommended approval of this proposal; and

WHEREAS, The City Planning Commission after due notice given, held a public hearing on October 14, 1976, to consider the proposed designation and the report of said Advisory Board; and

WHEREAS, The Commission believes that the proposed Landmark has a special character and special historical, architectural and aesthetic interest and value; and that the proposed designation would be in furtherance of and in conformance with the purposes and standards of the said Article 10;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, First, the proposal to designate the Koshland House at 3800 Washington Street as a Landmark pursuant to Article 10 of the City Planning Code is hereby APPROVED, the precise location and boundaries of the Landmark site being Lot 3 in Assessor's Block 909 which is occupied by the Koshland House.

Second, That the special character and special historical, architectural, and aesthetic interest and value of the said Landmark justifying its designation are set forth in the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board Resolution No. 148 as adopted on August 25, 1976, which Resolution is incorporated herein and made a part hereof as though fully set forth;

Third, That the said Landmark should be preserved generally in all of its particular exterior features as existing on the date hereof and as described and depicted in the photographs, case report and other material on file in the Department of City Planning Docket LM76.7

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Commission hereby directs its Secretary to transmit the proposal for designation, with a copy of this Resolution, to the Board of Supervisors for appropriate action.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the City Planning Commission at its regular meeting of October 14, 1976.

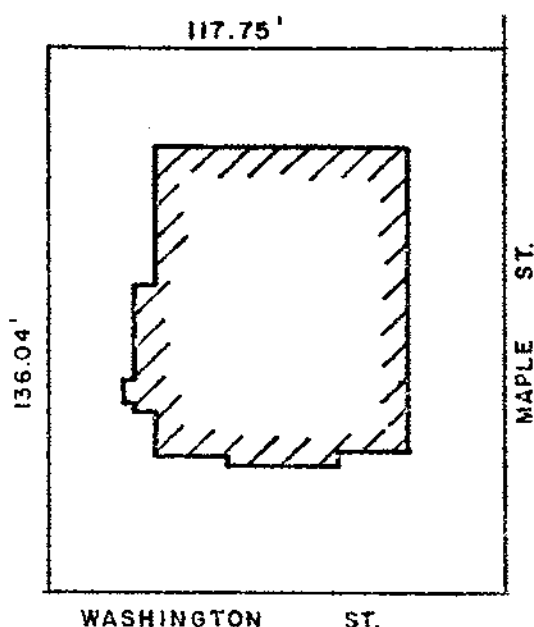
Marie Zeller
Acting Secretary

AYES: Commissioners Bierman, Dearman, Finn, Lau, Starbuck.

NOES: None

ABSENT: Commissioners Mellon, Rosenblatt.

PASSED: October 14, 1976



OWNER: Emily L. Buck
LOCATION: 3800 Washington Street, northwest corner of Washington and Maple Streets. Lot 3 in Assessor's Block 989.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The Koshland House - its Washington Street facade a copy of the Petit Trianon at Versailles - was erected for the Marcus Koshlands. Mr. Koshland was a native San Franciscan, prominent in its business community; Mrs. Koshland, also a native of the City, was a "positive force in the city's cultural life" for over sixty years.

HISTORY:

From the time of its construction, 1902-1904, to the present, the Petit Trianon has had only two owners: Mr. and Mrs. Marcus Koshland and Mr. and Mrs. Walter Buck.

Two years after its completion, the main house withstood the earthquake so well that not a dish broke although the front columns and cornice above collapsed but were subsequently restored. For a few nights, perhaps 60 people found refuge there, among them friends who had been staying at the St. Francis, and relatives.

Marcus Simon Koshland (SF 1858 - SF 1925) was a member of S. Koshland & Company, the wool importing and exporting firm founded by his father, Simon Koshland (Ichenhausen, Bavaria 1825 - SF 1896), a man known for his integrity in business, who had come from Philadelphia to Sacramento in 1850. He attended Lincoln Grammar School and Boys' High School; his first job was sorting wool at the Mission Woolen Mills. Throughout his life, his business and his religion were his principle interests. In his memory, his widow and children commissioned the enamel and gesso Ark of the Covenant by Frank Ingerson and George Dennison for Temple Emanu-El. His family was also important to Mr. Koshland; well into the twentieth century, members would gather in the late afternoons at Mrs. Simon Koshland's house, 1808 Pine Street, which his father had bought from the Real Estate Associates in 1875.

Mrs. Marcus Koshland, born Cora Schweitzer (SF 1868 - SF 1953), had the idea of building a copy of the Petit Trianon for their home after a trip to Europe. She was deeply involved in the construction and decoration but didn't make decisions without consulting her decorator, Mr. J. Henry Atkins. She kept the original decorations throughout her lifetime. She opened the Petit Trianon in 1904 with a Marie Antoinette costume

HISTORY:
(cont'd)

ball. The invitations for the ball were brought from Paris by Michel Weill and were delivered to those invited by hand.

Mrs. Koshland's pioneer father, Bernard Schweitzer, of Schweitzer & Company wholesale fancy and furnishing goods, had settled here in 1852; her sister was Mrs. Solomon Ehrman. Mrs. Koshland attended local public grammar schools and Girls' High. She married Mr. Koshland in 1890. Their three children -- Daniel Koshland, past president of Levi Strauss, inspirer of its "third world" hiring program, and a founder of the San Francisco Foundation; Robert J. Koshland, also with Levi Strauss and a health facilities planner; and Mrs. Louis Sloss, like her mother, a contributing music lover -- grew up in the house.

Mrs. Marcus Koshland was "a positive force in the city's cultural life" for over 60 years. She was a founder of the San Francisco Symphony Association and served on its Executive and Finance Committees for virtually the rest of her life. She was elected a Director of the San Francisco Opera Company before its first season in 1923 and continued on that Board till her death. She served on the Board of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and was instrumental in its sponsoring quartet concerts in the Museum auditorium. She was among the half dozen who paid for Isaac Stern's musical education.

Concerts were given in the "Petit Trianon." While the ballroom has a stage designed for concerts, better acoustics were found in the rotunda. Isaac Stern and Samuel Lipman played there. The San Francisco String Quartet played several times. The Quartet had been founded in 1933-1934 by San Francisco Concertmaster Naoum Blinder and pianist Edith De Lee. The second violin was William Wolski, assistant concertmaster, or Frank Houser, concertmaster after Blinder retired. The violist was first Nathan Firestone, then Ferenc Molnar, successively first violas of the San Francisco Symphony. On cello, one found Willem Dehe or, in later years, Boris Blinder, San Francisco Symphony's first cellist and brother of the concertmaster. Occasional soloists with the Quartet included pianist William Kapell and conductors Pierre Monteux playing second viola and Leonard Bernstein at the piano. To pay for hiring a public hall for their concerts, Mrs. De Lee devised the scheme of giving each concert also in a private stately home and inviting people who would pay for their tickets. Thus the San Francisco String Quartet would play five pairs of concerts annually, one in a different stately home each time, and the other in the Community Playhouse (Marine's Memorial), the St. Francis Hotel or the San Francisco museum. Usually, one of the stately homes was Mrs. Koshland's. Occasionally she permitted a public chamber concert, like the piano-string quartet concert of February 17, 1946.

She especially loved the company of musicians, who found her a charming hostess. At her request, Mr.

HISTORY:
(cont'd)

and Mrs. Naoum Blinder called her "Mother." Composer and Mrs. Igor Stravinsky stayed at the house. San Francisco Symphony conductor, Pierre Monteux, was there constantly. The roster of stellar artists entertained there includes violinist Jascha Heifitz, Yehudi Menuhin and Josef Szigeti, conductor George Szell, and cellist Gregor Piatogorsky. Members of the Budapest Quartet would gather for cards. All the musical world came to the "Petit Trianon" as did members of the literary world and such dignitaries as Chaim Weizmann, the first president of Israel.

Not only was this tiny woman's "driving passion... her love of music," but "her philanthropies were limitless -- and for the most part, unheralded." She helped found Garden Hospital, Homewood Terrace and Emanu-El Residence Club. She joined women's wartime committees. As a member of the Women's Auxiliary of the Adult Probation Board, she found jobs for ex-prisoners. And John McLaren considered her "to be his good right hand in developing park and garden projects throughout the city."

In addition to all this, Mrs. Koshland entertained on the more usual social occasions as befitted the house. She gave memorable coming-out parties for her grandchildren; one had a butterfly theme. She arranged flowers beautifully and delegated the job only to Germain Chazalet, her butler for 35 years, whom she had trained in the art. And for Chanukkah there was always a beautiful candle-lighting party, at which the organ was played, a rabbi read aloud, children lit the candles, and everyone drank hot mulled wine.

After Mrs. Koshland died in 1953, the "Petit Trianon" was purchased by Walter E. and Emily Buck, but they tended to spend more time at their Woodside house. Mr. Buck was vice-president of the American Distilling Company, with offices in the Russ Building.

They redecorated the San Francisco house, taking out shelves and painting the mahogany library white, removing the dark green, gold-tooled leather from the dining room, and developing small card rooms in the basement.

ARCHITECTURE:

The Koshlands commissioned a copy of the Petit Trianon from the architect Frank S. Van Trees, who had served a three-year apprenticeship in the office of A. Page Brown, preceded by time in Fred E. Wilcox's office. However, Mrs. Koshland was so dissatisfied with Van Trees that she herself finished the work, assisted by Atkins & Torrey.

The Washington Street facade of the building faithfully copies the French garden facade of the Petit Trianon, which Ange Jacques Gabriel built for Louis XV in 1762-1764. Both have a simple, elegant composition of square building with four fluted corinthian columns, a classic entablature and a flat roof with balustrade. Van Trees departed

ARCHITECTURE:
(cont'd)

from Gabriel's design by curving his symmetrical pair of stairs down from the terrace to meet seven white marble steps leading up from the sidewalk. Instead of a balustrade, on each side of each curving flight of stairs there is a solid wall of plain stone topped by a broad, flat railing that defines the graceful curve of the stairs.

Like the Petit Trianon, the house is square; and the entablature, cornice and balustrade appear on each side. Exterior materials are uniform on all sides, principally rectangular-cut stone with small horizontal grooves. The total appearance is stately and magnificent. However, in many other respects, 3800 Washington differs from the Petit Trianon. The three walls not facing Washington Street have straight entablatures, cornices and balustrades, without projections. The basement windows are rectangular with wrought iron grills in Baroque style, and their inset moldings are banded with extensions of the main wall stones.

The Maple Street facade has a blind railing and balusters below three monumental Art Nouveau stained glass windows depicting female-headed terns. These are the work of Bruce Porter (SF 1865 - SF 1954). Educated in California, London, Paris and Venice, Porter collaborated with Gelett Burgess to publish the literary magazine Lark from 1895-1897 -- in which he also wrote poems. A friend of Robert Louis Stevenson, he conceived the Stevenson monument in Portsmouth Square. He was also known for his stained-glass windows and his murals. For the Swedenborgian Church of the New Jerusalem, he furnished sketches of an Italian village church near Verona on which Maybeck based his architectural drawings. He then designed the circular dove window in the east wall and the Christopher window in the south wall. He also designed the Koshland's landscaping: lawn in front, trees along the sides, formal garden in back with a quartet of yews, formal symmetrical flower beds and central sculpture of Pan.

This rear garden is reached from the main floor of the house by a single straight staircase coming down from the center of five monumental glass doors or windows.

The west side of the building is least like the Petit Trianon. A side door and steps leading up to it are shielded by an elegant metal and glass enclosure. The driveway is on this side, and west of it, and to the rear of another lot, is a garage for three cars surmounted by a white wooden caretaker's house with a balustrade matching that of the main building.

The interiors make no attempt to copy the Petit Trianon. The dominant feature is a pillared marble rotunda which opens through all floors to a skylight in the roof. Beneath the skylight is a fountain with fish pond. Other rooms on the

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3800 Washington Street
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ARCHITECTURE: main floor include conservatories on either
(cont'd) side of the main entrance, reception rooms,
a large library, and a dining room. The base-
ment contains a ballroom with platforms at both
ends, a huge kitchen, several small rooms.

SURROUNDING Residential uses are found in the entire surround-
LAND USE ing area, except Presidio Hill School across the
AND ZONING: street. The whole area is zoned R-1, proposed
for RH-1.

RESEARCH: Prepared by: Mrs. Anne Bloomfield.