

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME Delia Fleishhacker Memorial Building - Official Historic
Name
HISTORIC Mothers House - Common Historic Name
AND/OR COMMON Visitors Center - Present Common Name

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER San Francisco Zoological Gardens
Zoo Road and Sloat Boulevard
CITY, TOWN San Francisco VICINITY OF 6th
STATE California CODE 06 COUNTY San Francisco CODE 075

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Recreation and Park Commission, City and County of San Francisco
STREET & NUMBER McLaren Lodge, Fell and Stanyan
CITY, TOWN San Francisco VICINITY OF California

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Records Office, City Hall
STREET & NUMBER 450 McAllister, Civic Center
CITY, TOWN San Francisco STATE California

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
DATE
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
CITY, TOWN STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The style of the Mothers House echoes that of the Italian Renaissance in Tuscany about 1500. Constructed in 1925, the building is a single rectangular volume of one level, 104' by 40.6' in plan and 24' high to the gutter line. It is classified as a Type 5 structure, typified by concrete foundation, steel frame, wood joists and rafters, and reinforced structural tile in-filling. The exterior walls are stucco. The hipped roof is of red Mission tile.

The east-facing entrance elevation is a three-bay composition, the central bay emphasized in width by broad steps leading to a recessed loggia 8 by 46 feet. The five arches of the loggia are supported by Corinthian columns and pilasters. Above the central arches of the loggia is a long frieze depicting a group of cherubs at play. Side walls of the loggia are ornamented with mosaics done by Helen, Margaret and Ester Bruton for the Public Works of Art Project. The northern mosaic depicts St. Francis with the animals. That on the south is a scene of children and animals. The side bays of the entrance elevation are ornamented by recessed apses containing planted urns.

The side walls of the structure are kept simple. The rear, or westfacing elevation, is characterized by a large central window-door. This is embellished by an ornate carved arch supported by two Corinthian columns. At the base of the window is a two-tiered, semicircular planter of concrete and stucco. A decorative grill of wrought iron protects the window. Each of the side bays contains a small frieze complementing in miniature the main frieze above the entrance.

The interior of the building is plaster with some wood panelling. The floor is hardwood. The lofty single major space within has a heavily beamed, painted ceiling.

Fleishhacker Playfield opened officially on Labor Day weekend, 1925. An article in the San Francisco Chronicle (Monday, September 7, 1925) describes the Mothers Building:

A feature of the new playfield is the mother house presented to the City by Herbert and Mortimer Fleishhacker.

The mother house is a handsome structure finished inside in heavy walnut settles and tables, the latter topped with Italian tiling. The hangings and reed furniture in the main hall are in mulberry and thistle tones...A wealth of potted ferns indoors and blooming plants outside give an added beauty to the structure.

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The original furniture is still intact and, except for the reed chairs, remains in the building. This includes four tables with tile inlay, four wooden benches, two long high-backed wooden benches along the west wall, and two octagonal wooden tables.

The walls of the main room are panelled half way to the ceiling in darkly painted brown wood. The door frames are decorated with geometric designs painted in red, green, yellow, black, brown, white and blue which echo the Italian tiles of the tables.

Murals which now occupy wall space above the panelling were begun in 1933 and completed in 1938. Painted by Helen Forbes and Dorothy Pucinelli, they depict four scenes of Noah and animals. These murals, done as a Federal Art Project, cover nearly 1200 square feet. Those on the north and south are 9' by 28'; the east and west murals are 10' by 60'. "Building the Ark" is shown on the north wall, "Loading of the Animals" on the west wall, "Landing of the Ark" on the south wall, and "The Ark's Passengers Disembark" on the east wall.

The Mothers House was erected on a tract of land located at the junction of Sloat Blvd. and the Great Highway, now the S.F. Zoo. Comprised of 60 acres, the land was purchased from the Spring Valley Water Company in 1922-23. The cost was \$4,000 per acre, or approximately \$244,500.

In 1925, the Fleishhacker Pool and Playfield were completed. The swimming pool is the largest in the world, 1000' by 100'. The depth is 3' on the south end and 9' on the north. In the latter section there is a diving pool 50' square and 16' deep with towers designed to accommodate all heights of diving feats. With a capacity of 6,000,000 gallons, the pool could accommodate 10,000 bathers.

Named Fleishhacker Playfield in honor of San Francisco philanthropist and Park Commission President, Herbert Fleishhacker, the new public park also contained an athletic field with one baseball diamond and six tennis courts. The Mothers Building and a large wading pool were built at a cost of approximately \$50,000 donated by Herbert and Mortimer Fleishhacker in honor of their mother, Delia.

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The wading pool was removed during the 1940s and the playfield was replaced by a Children's Zoo in the early 60s. However, the Mothers Building remained in continuous use until the late 1960s. Upon retirement of the matrons who had assisted mothers and young children, the main portion of the building was closed, with access to bathrooms via side doors.

In 1973 the Mothers Building reopened as a Visitors Center and served that function until 1978. It housed exhibits and provided space for educational programs and receptions related to Zoo activities. It now serves as a shop for the sale of Zoo-related merchandise and supplements the Zoo's budget. For the future, it is a recommendation of the Zoo Master Plan that "the beautiful and fragile Mothers Building, with its delightful murals of Noah's Ark, be designated a City landmark and rehabilitated for use as a museum".

The Pool has fallen into irreparable disrepair and was closed by order of the Board of Health in the early 1970s. It will be demolished and the reclaimed land used to improve the Zoo in accordance with the Zoo Master Plan.

All that will remain of the original Fleishhacker Playfield and Pool is the Mothers Building.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

see attached continuation sheet

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1/3 acre
UTM REFERENCES San Francisco South, CA 1:24000

A	10	543840	4176300	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Road Boundaries are Sloat Boulevard; Skyline Boulevard; and Great Highway Extension

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE Sara Pickus (431-9430) for:
Tom Malloy, Assistant Director

ORGANIZATION <u>Recreation & Park Commission</u>	DATE <u>June 1979</u>
STREET & NUMBER <u>McLaren Lodge, Fell & Stanyan Streets</u>	TELEPHONE <u>415-558-3355</u>
CITY OR TOWN <u>San Francisco</u>	STATE <u>California</u>

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL STATE LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE Kerry McEllen

TITLE _____ DATE 7-18-79

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I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Carol O Skell DATE 12-31-79

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST: _____ DATE 12/22/79

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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This development reflected a changing perception of the role of City government which was now seen as obligated to involve itself in the lives of its citizens in an active way. And it reflected new patterns of recreational activity in which the family unit typically went on full-day outings.

Together with existing public and private facilities and natural features, there developed in this period a continuous recreation zone along the western rim of the City. Lincoln Park, Sutro Baths, the Cliff House, Playland, Golden Gate Park, Fleishhacker Playfield, Pool (and later Zoo), and Balboa Park were all linked together by the beach. Excellent public transportation carried vast numbers of people to these facilities.

The July 16, 1925, issue of the Municipal Record, dedicated to recreation, stated: "Today San Francisco is spending millions of dollars to conjure away exhibitions of temper under the direction of the park and playground commission and Board of Education. The Children are being trained in sportsmanship. The citizens have voted 10 cents on every hundred dollars of assessed valuation shall be devoted to park purposes and that 5 cents shall be used for playgrounds." The same Municipal Record attributed San Francisco's prodigious park legacy to its Spanish heritage in which a pueblo or villiage was entitled to approximately seven square miles of land, or for San Francisco virtually the entire northern tip of the peninsula. This gave the City ample lands to sell for profit and others to be retained for municipal uses, including a park system.

The Patron: Herbert Fleishhacker

Herbert Fleishhacker was born on November 2, 1872, of German and American descent, in San Francisco. His parents, Delia (Stern) and Aaron, had one other child, Mortimer, who was six years older than Herbert. After eight years of public grammar school and one year of study at Heald's Business College, Herbert, at the age of 14, joined his father's business. His years in the paper business with A. Fleishhacker & Company included positions as bookkeeper, manager of manufacturing operations, and as a very successful traveling salesman. When he left to form his own company, he established the first papermill in the northwest, in Eugene, Oregon. When he returned to California he organized power companies and manufacturing plants until his ventures numbered over a dozen different businesses.

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In 1905 he married May Belle Greenebaum, and in 1907 he entered banking as manager of the London, Paris & American Bank. Ltd. Sigmund Greenebaum, his father-in-law, was the bank's president. Successful in banking, Herbert directed a merger in 1909 which created the Anglo & London Paris National Bank. Herbert Fleishhacker became the president of this bank in 1910. In 1914 the Anglo-California Trust Company was incorporated with Mortimer as president and Herbert as vice president.

By 1927, Herbert was president of the San Francisco bank with the largest foreign exchange business. It was one of California's largest banking institutions and had overseas operations in commercial centers in both Europe and Asia. At this time his business interests extended to over twenty other companies including steel, sugar, timber, life insurance, food, tractor, shipping and oil operations. He acted as an officer of many of these enterprises. In the 1927 publication, Financing an Empire, History of Banking in California, volume 3 it was said that "...representing millions of dollars and with operations extending to all parts of the world, Herbert Fleishhacker has become widely recognized as one of the most influential, progressive and valuable citizens of the Golden state."

His City home in the 20's was the St. Francis Hotel. His children were Mrs. Marjorie Fleishhacker Mitau, Herbert, Jr., and Alan. He was appointed to the Park Commission (1919; president, 1920) and to the Sesquicentennial Exposition Association (by President Coolidge in 1926).

Architect

The Mothers building was designed by George W. Kelham, A.I.A., who was responsible for the San Francisco Public Library, Federal Reserve Bank, numerous City skyscrapers, and much else. Kelham served as Chief, Department of Architecture, Panama-Pacific Exposition, 1912-15; he was appointed supervising architect for the University of California upon the retirement of John Galen Howard. Kelham designed the City's first real skyscraper, the Standard Oil Building at Sansome and Bush, in 1921. The Russ Building, one block away on Montgomery, was his second skyscraper, followed in 1929 by his most notable tower, the Shell Building, at Bush and Market, which was not surpassed in height until the 1960s. Among other buildings designed by his office are the American Bank, Anglo, London & Paris National Bank, Balfour-Guthrie Building, California State Automobile Assoc.,

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Walton N. Moore Building, San Francisco Golf & Country Club, Standard Oil (Los Angeles), Claremont County Club (Oakland), Central National Bank (Oakland) and Continental National Bank (Salt Lake City).

Kelham was born in Manchester, Mass., and studied architecture at Harvard, Paris and Rome. He began the practice of architecture in New York in 1891 and came to San Francisco in 1906 to supervise the reconstruction of the Palace Hotel following the earthquake.

Kelham's impact on the San Francisco skyline was the most significant of the architects then practicing in terms of the number and size of the buildings he designed. Much of his work reflected the traditions of the Italian Renaissance. The Mothers House is an excellent example of this influence on a smaller scale than much of his other work.

Kelham was a member of the San Francisco Chapter of the A.I.A. and the Society of Beaux Arts Architects of New York. He was also a Trustee of the San Francisco Public Library and a member of the Pacific Union Club.

The Artists

A. Mosaics: Helen, Margaret and Ester Bruton

The Bruton sisters were born in the last decade of the 19th century in the East Bay community of Alameda. They were for many years identified with Bay Area art, creating murals, mosaics, prints, etc., and were credited, along with Ray Boynton, with adapting the ancient medium of frescoes and mosaics "to modern motifs."

Helen was the designer of the Mothers House mosaics. Her other works include tile panels for the prize-winning Mudd Memorial Library, USC, and mosaics symbolizing the seven arts at the Art Gallery, University of California, Berkeley, (in collaboration with Flo. Alston Swift). The Art Gallery mosaics were included in a film made by Paramount Pictures of federal project murals throughout the United States.

The sisters studied in California, New York and Paris, and their extensive travels included several months in Tahiti. They exhibited frequently and received numerous prizes.

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B. Murals: Helen K. Forbes and Dorothy W. Pucinelli

Dorothy Pucinelli has been described as "one of San Francisco's most versatile women artists," working in oils, water color, tempera, lithographs, sculpture, stage settings and interior decoration. She is represented by works in the California Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco Museum of Art, Merced, California Post Office, etc.

Born in Texas in 1901, Pucinelli studied at the California School of Fine Arts and was a pupil of Rudolph Shaeffer and Beniamino Bufano.

Helen Forbes did the preliminary sketches for the murals, spending nearly a year in studies of animals for this project. She used as models animals at hand in the Zoo and visited western ranches, even sketching, reportedly, a herd of "Sacred Cows."

Forbes taught in the Art Department at University of California, Berkeley, and is represented in the San Francisco Museum of Art, the San Diego Fine Arts Gallery, Mills College, Oakland, Merced Post Office, etc. She was born in San Francisco in 1891 and died in 1945. Her art studies commenced at the Mark Hopkins Institute (now California School of Fine Arts) and were continued in Germany and France.

Both women were members of San Francisco's Art Association, Art Center, Society of Women Artists and Society of Mural Artists.

A newspaper reporter in 1934 wrote of the murals-in-progress,

"...The Mothers House lounge, because of its design and proportions, gives the promise of being the most attractive public room in the City when the Forbes-Pucilleni frescoes are completed."

Summary of Significance

The pool and Playfield were an important part of the grand scheme of expansion and improvement of the City park system during the 1920s and 1930s, when there was a continuous recreation zone along the western edge of the City.

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Designed to enhance the comfort of mothers and young children spending the entire day in recreation, the Mothers House is probably the only structure of this type in the West. Whether there are any remaining examples on the East Coast is unknown.

The Pool and Playfield were named after Herbert Fleishhacker, a wealthy banker and great civic patron of recreation in San Francisco. Fleishhacker was President of the Board of the Park Commission and was motivating force behind the idea of the recreation area. The Mothers Building was donated by Herbert and his brother Mortimer Fleishhacker in honor of their mother, Delia.

The Mothers Building was designed by the noted architect George W. Kelham. Kelham's impact on the San Francisco skyline was greater than any other architect of his time. He was also chief architect for the Panama-Pacific Exposition in 1915 and succeeded John Galen Howard as supervising architect for the University of California.

It appears to have been a deliberate act to commission solely women artists to execute both the interior murals and the exterior mosaics for the Mothers House since a tiny percentage of the PWA art projects in San Francisco was done by women artists. One of the artists is still alive and well in San Francisco and returns from time to time to freshen the colors of the murals she helped create more than 40 years ago.

The building is a good example of the Italian Renaissance style favored by Kelham and others of the Beaux-Arts school. It has remained in almost continuous, though changing use, and is in good condition. Minor alterations have left the original design intact. Its continued use is called for in the San Francisco Zoo Master Plan.

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May 27, 1919, p. 305.
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Interviews and Acknowledgements, April 1979

Peggy Burks, Director, Zoological Society, San Francisco Zoo
Mel Baker, Head Gardener, San Francisco Zoo
Gladys Hansen, Librarian, San Francisco Room, Public Library
Dr. William Mottram, Veterinarian, San Francisco Zoo
John Nihill, Director, Public Relations, Park and Recreation Department
Linda Rhodes, Architect, Master Plan, San Francisco Zoo
Fred Roemer, Head Keeper, San Francisco Zoo
Jay Turnbull, Staff Architect, Heritage Association, San Francisco

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DELIA FLEISHACKER MEMORIAL BUILDING (MOTHERS HOUSE)
San Francisco Zoological Gardens, San Francisco City and County, California

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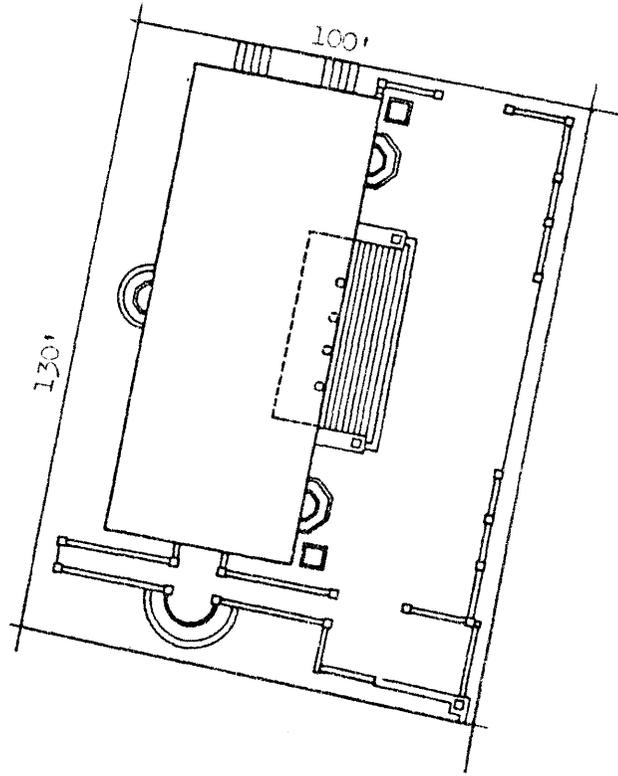
Revised Verbal Boundary Description

The Delia Fleishhacker Memorial Building is located on the grounds of the San Francisco Zoological Gardens at a point approximately 150 feet south of the main entrance to the Zoo at Sloat Boulevard and 45th Avenue in the city of San Francisco, California. The nominated property occupies a portion of San Francisco County Assessor's Parcel Number 7281; the boundaries of the nomination are a 100' x 130' rectangle which encompasses the building and its associated original design elements as shown on the attached sketch map.

SLOAT BLVD.

ENTRANCE TO ZOO

TO BEACH AND GREAT HIGHWAY



FLEISHHACKER ZOO

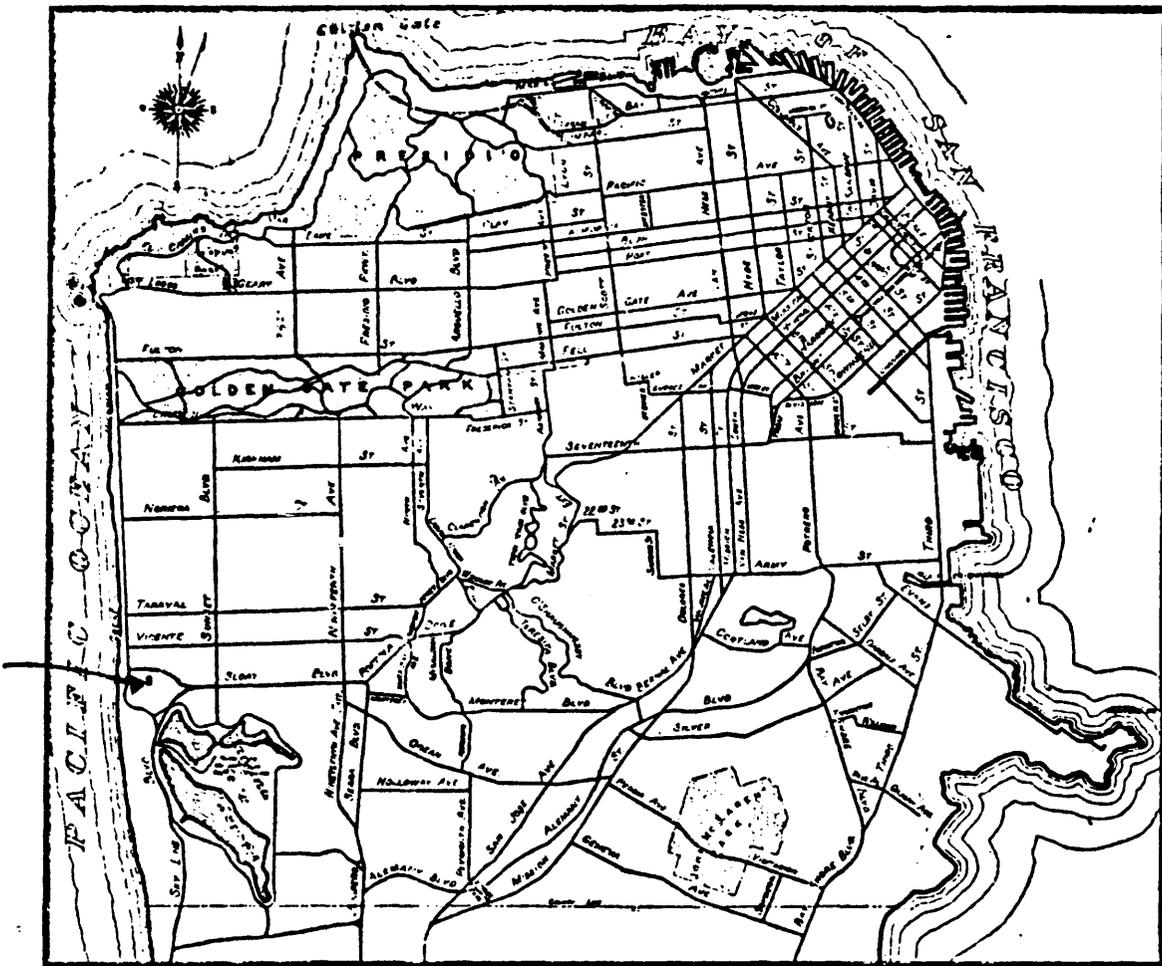
DEC 26 1979

DELIA FLEISHHACKER MEMORIAL BUILDING



DELIA FLEISHHACKER MEMORIAL BUILDING

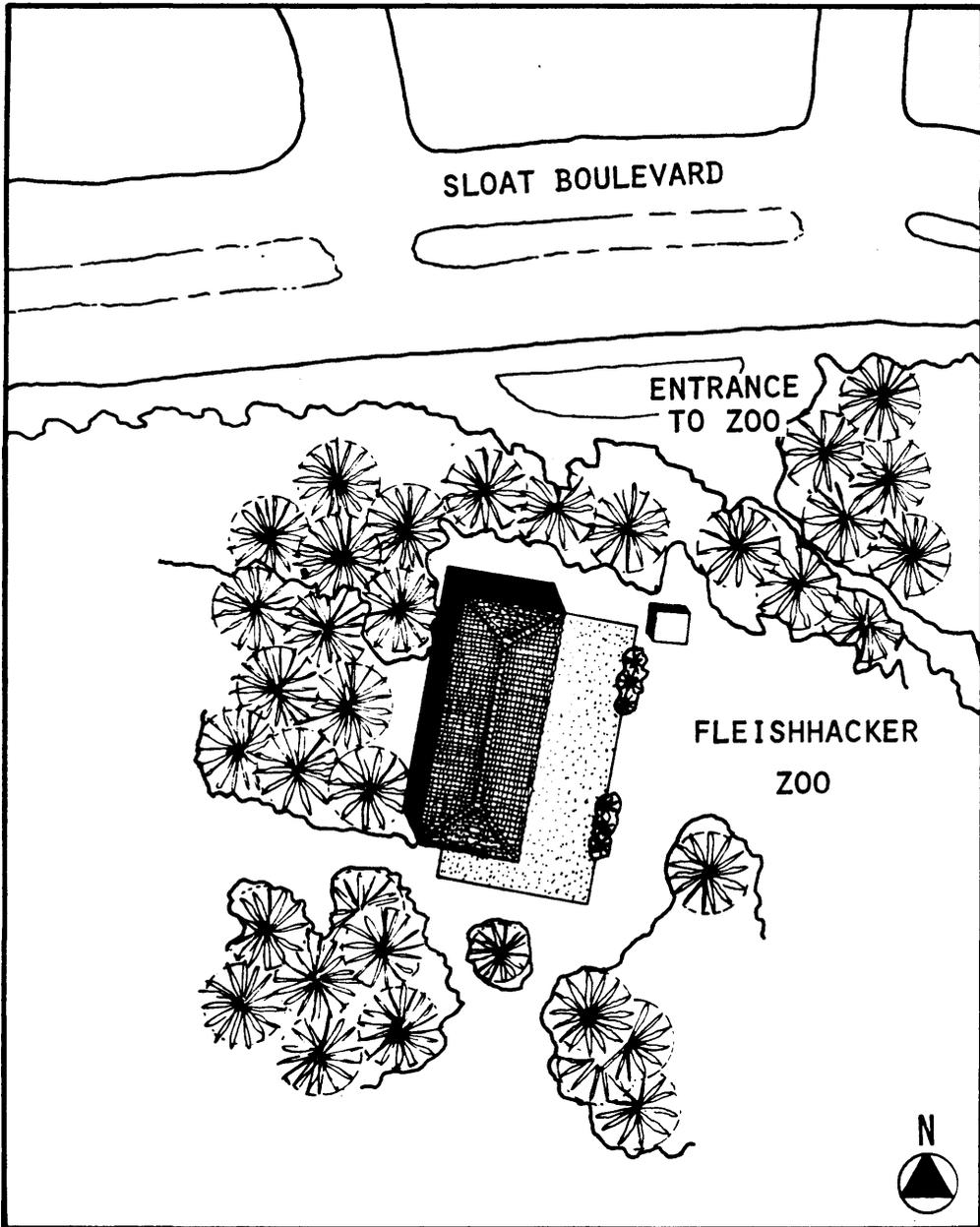
ALSO KNOWN AS MOTHERS' HOUSE



Map prepared by:
City and County of San Francisco
Department of Public Works
Bureau of Engineering

DELIA FLEISHHACKER MEMORIAL BUILDING

ALSO KNOWN AS MOTHERS' HOUSE



◀ TO BEACH AND GREAT HIGHWAY

Mothers Building - circled in red

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Summary of Recommendations

LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS

It is a Recommendation of this Plan that the Zoo expand to its maximum potential size.

Presently less than 35% of the land in the Zoo is used for exhibits. It is recommended that the majority of presently landscaped areas be incorporated into exhibits, where appropriate, thereby increasing the land area available for exhibits from 35% to 65%.

Until the Southwest Treatment Plant is either constructed or planned in phase with Zoo construction, no major exhibits or facilities should be built in the southern expansion area as it might necessitate costly demolition and disruption of Zoo operations.

It is recommended that Zoo development and construction should be carefully phased to insure growth in a manner compatible with highly sensitive ongoing Zoo operations.

LANDSCAPE RECOMMENDATIONS

The climate, primarily wind, requires the creation of a wind break along the Great Highway and the planting of trees in an effective system to insure protection of the Zoo collection and visitors.

Long meadow vistas, reminiscent of Golden Gate Park, should be established as exhibits or open space for visitor relaxation and to enhance the park-like atmosphere.

Plant materials, land forms and related structures in each exhibit should simulate as much as possible the habitat of the animal or bird being exhibited. Landscape elements should be self maintaining wherever possible. Most animal exhibits should be enlarged and their environments enriched to enhance breeding, animal privacy, visitor appreciation, education and to promote efficient maintenance.

Chain link, while a reasonable and economic enclosure system, should be eliminated from visitors viewing areas. Moats and other non-visible separation systems should be utilized.

COLLECTION RECOMMENDATIONS

The Zoo collection should be organized as a composite of zoogeographic and systematic systems. There should be fewer rather than more specimens exhibited, but exhibited in larger groupings in larger areas, when appropriate.

The present collection is comprised primarily of large mammals. This Plan recommends development of a more comprehensive collection, including a good distribution of small animals. Exhibits should accurately display the life and behavior of the animals on exhibit. Nocturnal exhibits and tropical environmental exhibits, allowing unique opportunities for public viewing, would be a major asset for the Zoo.

The Children's Zoo should be realigned westward to include the rare Carousel, one of San Francisco's