

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**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

historic Moss Flats Building

and/or common 1626 Great Highway

2. Location

street & number 1626 Great Highway N/A not for publication

city, town San Francisco N/A vicinity of congressional district 6

state California code 06 county San Francisco code 075

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Steven D. Zakula

street & number 1330 Francisco Street

city, town San Francisco N/A vicinity of state California 94123

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Recorder's Office

street & number City Hall

city, town San Francisco state CA 94102

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Here Today has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1967 federal state county local

depository for survey records San Francisco History Room, Public Library

city, town Civic Center
San Francisco state CA 94102

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____ N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Moss Flats Building is a three-unit residence facing the Pacific Ocean, originally detached but now with an adjoining structure on the adjoining lot to the south. It has a large rear garden not visible from the street. In plan it is a long narrow rectangle with a long narrow jog out of the south side. On the south is a one-story enclosed entry about 6x6', but the building as a whole is three stories plus an attic under a gabled roof. About midway down the length of the roof, a second gable of equal height crosses the main gable at a 90° angle. Because of the jog, the main gable's peaks on either side of the cross gable are not on the same axis but on parallel ones.

A bay with agled sides covers the full width of the facade up to the base of the gable. At each floor of the bay, two windows light the central face and one lights each side face. Along the jog, on the south wall is a bank of four windows at each level. All these windows are four-paned, hinged casements; those facing west open out at the bottom and those facing south open at the side. At the end of the jog is the single, glassed entry door with sidelights, under a gable decorated with a sunburst of uncolored art glass. This door provides entry only to a kind of weather lock made imperative by the strong winds blowing off the ocean. The main door is behind, in the main house wall. Above it is a stairlanding window, large, square, and trimmed with a broken pediment with finial. Two small windows complete the fenestration visible from the street; surrounds one lights the attic gable and the other lights the top of the staircase.

The rough siding shingles are replacements of the original ones. A dim 1928 photograph seems to indicate the house once had additional flat, jigsaw-cut window surrounds with some indication of keystone, at least over the second-story bay windows, and by interpolation over the lower floor ones as well. Certainly the enclosed, relatively low entry porch dates only from about 1960, but it replaces an earlier one indicated on the 1928 Sanborn map and lost before 1943. For security a shingled wall with appropriately paneled door has been added between the Moss Flats and the next house north.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates Jan. 1906

Builder/Architect Charles M. Depew, builder

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Moss Flats Building is significant as one of the few remainders from the early development of the ocean frontage as a beach and health resort, and as a building constructed for the heir to the owner of Oakland's well-known Gothic Revival Moss Cottage.

Its survival can be attributed to its uniqueness within the temporary beach community. With the exception of two or three now-vanished hotels at least six blocks further south, the Moss Flats Building seems to have been the only three-story structure on the beach south of Golden Gate Park. At the time of its construction, everything else in the vicinity was formed of obsolete and abandoned streetcars, imaginatively and otherwise adapted for use as clubhouses, restaurants and beach cabins, many with abundant gardens. If there were any year-round residents, they were artists or health seekers. By contrast, the Moss Building was substantial new construction, of typical beach-cabin style, multiplied by three stories. Originally intended as three beach rentals, its generous size, three-flat plan and strong construction permitted it to remain as permanent housing that produces income.

Less than nine years before the Moss Building was erected, a newspaper reporter called what is now the Sunset district "the great desert of San Francisco." He found "along the edges . . . a few homes owned by people living there for their health . . . but living there would seem to be like spending one's life out of the world." (1) A Col. Dailey cited in this account lived in an abandoned real estate shack and took over an abandoned horse car on which to serve refreshments to the various beach visitors: bicyclists in Golden Gate Park, day trippers, and health-seeking salt-water swimmers who had gradually been pushed to the ocean front by increasing Bay pollution. (2) So many people imitated Dailey by converting obsolete streetcars into restaurants, clubs and part-time beach cabins that the ocean-front community south of Golden Gate Park was dubbed "Carville." Only after the April 1906 fire and earthquake did refugees begin to make the beach houses permanent. As late as 1900, the three-mile-wide western strip of San Francisco had provided only 1200 customers for the gas company. (3) A later real estate brochure recalled the stages of beachside development: first, tourists at the Cliffhouse; then inpecunious "Bohemian spirits" in discarded streetcars, then gardens around the cars, and construction of the first Great Highway. After that came the 1906 earthquake and fire refugees, who discovered the pleasure and health of year-round living at the beach and began to construct permanent "homes." (4) The Oceanside Improvement Club, founded in 1903, was instrumental

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet 2.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 0.07

Quadrangle name Point Bonita, CA

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	0	5	4	3	3	7	0	4	1	7	8	6	8	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property occupies Assessor's lot 38 of block 1895 and is 25 x 120 feet in size. Boundaries are drawn along historic lot lines.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county N/A code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Anne Bloomfield

organization N/A

date 28 Jan. 1982, revised 1 Nov.

street & number 2229 Webster Street

telephone (415) 922-1063

city or town San Francisco

state CA 94115

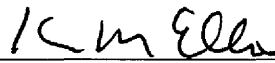
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 1-17-83

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 2/24/83


Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
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Moss Flats Building

Continuation sheet San Francisco

Item number 8

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For NPS use only
received
date entered

8. SIGNIFICANCE (cont.)

in having water, gas and electricity lines extended to the area by 1910, but had not yet achieved a sewer. In 1908 and again in 1913 publicity spoke hopefully of getting rid of the cars, (5) but they clung to life for a few more years. A 1908 writer still spoke of the breakers just below Carville that "divide a sea of water from a sea of sand." (6)

This context illuminates the courage it took in early January 1906 to contract for building a three-story, three-flat substantial structure more than four whole blocks south of Golden Gate Park. The owner was J. Mora Moss, prosperous downtown physician acting as guardian of the estate of Alfred T. Moss, a patient at Napa State Hospital for the Insance and perhaps his younger brother. Perhaps Dr. Moss believed he could provide income for Alfred by prescribing clean beach air for his patients. Dr. Moss (born in Kentucky, 1866) was nephew and heir of the Joseph Mora Moss who built the Gothic Revival Moss Cottage (1864) in Oakland's Mosswood Park, which had been his estate. The childless elder Moss (1809-1880) took the future doctor into his household some time between the 1870 and 1880 Censuses. His widow died in 1904, probably freeing money for the construction of the Moss Flats. Dr. Moss and his son J. Mora Moss lived on Russian Hill in one of the few Green Street houses that escaped the 1906 fire. No Moss lived permanently in the Moss Flats, nor did any other owner before 1943. It must be presumed always to have been income property. That the income originally was to come from vacation or holiday rentals is attested by interior simple woodwork typical of such houses.

The builder was Charles M. Depew, an experienced carpenter-builder-contractor who also experimented with businesses called the Depew Planing Mill, the Reversible Window Company, and the Pumice Stone Construction Company. The Moss Flats had no architect, but Depew copied the then-popular Bay Area Shingle style developed by such giants as Maybeck, Coxhead and Polk. The earliest known photograph, from 1928, shows the Building covered in unpainted shingles, and with some flat, jigsaw-cut, decorative window surrounds typical of Bay Area Shingle style. Three of these surrounds remain today; others can be recreated easily. The plan, shape and simplicity of the original building are intact.

1. "A Veritable Desert," (see Bibliography).
2. O'Brien (see Bibliography).
3. Real Estate Circular, Oct. 1901: 2/3.
4. Baldwin & Howell (see Bibliography).
5. Cowan (see Bibliography)
6. Adams (see Bibliography).

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Continuation sheet Moss Flats Building
San Francisco Item number 9 Page 2

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES.

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Baldwin & Howell, "Ocean Boulevard Lots: From Carville to Real Homes,"
undated brochure, California Historical Society collection.

Broyer, Mrs. N.O., interview 23 Jan. 1982.

Cowan, Natalie J., "Carville, San Francisco's Oceanside Bohemia,"
California History 57 (Winter 1978/79): 308-319.

Hearfield, David III, interview 10 Dec. 1981.

Magee, Thomas, The Real Estate Circular, Oct. 1901: 2/3; June 1903: 2/2.

Moss, J. Mora, Trustee, "Sacramento Valley Railroad Account Book, 20
May 1858-30 April 1864," ms, California Historical Society
collection.

O'Brien, Emmett H., "Passing of Carville, the Odd City on Ocean Beach,"
San Francisco Chronicle, 15 March 1908: 12.

Sanborn Map Company, San Francisco, 1928, vol. 11: 1161.

San Francisco Daily Morning Call, 7 Jan. 1906: 55/3 (building contract).

San Francisco Recorder, Deeds Book 2118, ms: 323-324.

San Francisco Water Department, Service Installation Request for 1622
Great Highway.

U.S. Census, 1870, Alameda County, Oakland Township: 239a, lines 19-31.

---, 1880, Alameda County, Oakland Township: 474, lines 2-14.

---, 1900, San Francisco, Roll 106, Enumeration District 241: 306A,
lines 2-5

---, 1900, Soundex: Alfred T. Moss.

"A Veritable Desert in the City of San Francisco," San Francisco Daily
Morning Call, 23 May 1897: 27.

LOTS MERGED
 LOT 21A INTO LOT 21 - 1946
 " 32 " " 31 "

SUNSET BLK. 817

REVISED '62
 REVISED '64
 " '71
 " '74

LAWTON

ITEM 10
 Geographical Data

Building covers site
 marked with arrow.

Moss Flats Building
 1626 Great Highway
 San Francisco
 San Francisco County,
 California



LA PLAZA
 GREAT HIGHWAY

1600	120	23	23	70	1201
3125	60	62.50	67.50	1	37.50
3125	42	60	43	2	25
23	120	41	44	3	70
23		40	4		25
25		39	5		25
25		38	6		25
25		37	7		25
25		54	8		25
25		53	9		25
25		34	10		25
30		33	11		25
37.50	120	31	12		25
120 or		46	13		25
101.625		47	14		25
100.359		29	15		25
110.359			15	120	25
117.074		49		95	25
102.93		51	48	95	25
141.116					25
140.116					25
129.138			50	104	25
121.138	26A			114	25
119 or			18		25
	26				25
116.73 or			19		25
	25				25
115.106			20		25
	24				25
113.175			21		25
	23		22		25
62.846		62.50			62.50
	112.113			114	4200

MORAGA

48TH AVE.