

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0676781

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED MAR 26 1979  
DATE ENTERED MAY 21 1979

**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 Mish House

AND/OR COMMON

**LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER 1153 Oak Street  
CITY, TOWN San Francisco STATE California  
VICINITY OF CODE COUNTY CODE  
5 06 San Francisco 075

**CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" 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 Mish Associates ✓  
STREET & NUMBER 18 Bartol  
CITY, TOWN San Francisco STATE California  
VICINITY OF

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Recorder's Office  
STREET & NUMBER City Hall  
CITY, TOWN San Francisco STATE California

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE San Francisco City Landmark (#62)  
DATE 1974  
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board; Dept. of City Planning  
CITY, TOWN San Francisco STATE California

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

## CHECK ONE

## CHECK ONE

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED DATE 1897

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Mish House is a fine example of the Stick-Eastlake style. It was originally located on a landscaped corner site. At that time the stairway extended out straight to the sidewalk. There was a detailed mansard roof, as well as mansard caps between the first and second stories. The mansard had a squeezed pediment over the side bay (like the one still on the first story). Corners were surmounted by a configuration of finials. The rectangular bay in the front was crowned by a tall roof, giving it the appearance of a tower. At the base of this roof was an oval window. Both the "tower" and the window were surmounted by finials. An iron railing ran along the top of the mansard roof, as well as over the mansarded portico.

The house was moved in 1897 from its corner site, to a lot approximately 150 feet away on the other side of Oak Street. The original stairway was probably replaced by a diagonal one that was parallel to the facade. This would have been necessitated by the new site on which the house was closer to the sidewalk. The mansard may have been removed at this time, but in any case was gone by the 1920's. The railings, too, no longer exist.

The following is a description of the Mish House in its present condition:

The first and second stories are raised above a ground floor. A stairway, parallel to the facade, leads to a columniated portico. The railing of the stairway is decorated with sawn trapezoids. The columns of the portico are fluted at the bottom of the shaft, and plaster capitals with hanging garlands support brackets that in turn support a squeezed pediment. The latter has dentils at the base and has a decorative grid pattern with inscribed circles. The portico has a small mansard roof covered with fish-scale shingles, with a molding along the top edge. The entrance to the Mish House is a pair of oak doors with stylized oval windows.

Above the entry portico is a pair of double-hung windows framed by the "sticks" that give this style its name. The sticks in the Mish House are actually colonnettes; they have a bowed section at the bottom crowned by a band, a thin shaft, a capital, and then support slender ribbed forms that extend upward to the molding along the top of the windows. The windows above the portico are each segmentally arched, as is the frame, which creates a decorated transom area. Above this are dentilated brackets supporting a squeezed segmental pediment with a mansard cap. The latter has an ornamental railing along the top.

The wider rectangular bay dominates the front facade. It has three double-hung windows on each floor. The entire bay, from the ground floor to the cornice seems to form a unit. At the edges of the bay on the ground floor there are pillars with hollowed-out decoration which reach the bottom of the first floor. They support thinner pil-

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lars with square plaster capitals from which floral garlands hang on each side. The capital supports a dossier and brackets that in turn support a squeezed pediment similar in form (though broader and less "squeezed") and decoration--detailed with a grid pattern--to that of the portico. It culminates in a knob and finial flanked by scrolls. The windows on the ground floor are divided by flat ribbed sticks with brackets and medallions at the tops. Between the ground floor and the first story there are little square decorations. The windows on the first floor are divided by colonnettes identical to those described above. On the first story there is an arched transom above the three windows. There is half of a sunburst in each of the outer sections of the transom and a floral form in the center.

Above the first story of the rectangular bay there is a mansard roof which recedes behind the squeezed pediment and finial. At the base of the second story windows is a frieze of circles with trefoils. The windows are framed by the colonnettes with a rectangular transom. Centered within the latter is a segmental arch that echoes the extensions and the arched transom of the first floor. There is floral decoration in this area and spherical decoration at the sides. Above this is a stringcourse and brackets that support a large cornice. There are rosettes between the brackets. The sides of the rectangular bay have slender segmentally arched windows.

At the edges of the facade there are long slender pillars that consist of a decorated section on the ground floor and then a thinner continuous shaft that spans the first and second stories. It culminates in a capital towards the top of the second floor which supports a decorated dossier and brackets. Above these is the large cornice that extends all the way around the top of the building. There are friezes of rosettes along the base of the cornice.

The side of the Mish House has a rectangular bay in the southern half with another two-story rectangular bay south of this that only includes the ground floor and first story. The rectangular bay is similar in form to the one on the front facade, differing in having only a double-hung window on the ground floor. The most frequent decoration on this bay is the sunburst. The two-story bay has a pair of double-hung windows on the ground floor and two pairs of double-hung windows surmounted by segmentally arched transoms on the second. A continuous mansard roof covered with fish-scale shingles runs along the first story of the tall rectangular bay and the top of the smaller two-story bay to its left. Above the latter on the second story are

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two individual double-hung windows.

North of the bays there are two individual windows on both the ground floor and the first story. The second story has two individual double-hung windows and one pair of double-hung windows. The ground floor windows are framed by flat sticks, brackets, and moldings reminiscent of pediments. The other windows are framed with colonnettes and surmounted by squeezed pediments, regular ones on the first story, and segmental ones on the second. A continuous molding runs between the ground floor and first story.

The Mish House is a wood frame structure covered with shiplap siding. The roof, once a mansard, is now flat and sheathed in asphalt shingle. The house is painted with oil-base semi-gloss enamel; dark blue with trim in crimson, rust brown, off-white, mustard, silver and gold.

# 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/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

## SPECIFIC DATES

1885

## BUILDER/ARCHITECT

McDougall and Son

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of the Mish House lies in two areas: Its association with one of the important early families to settle in San Francisco, and its architectural excellence.

The Mish House was built in 1885 as a single family dwelling. As noted in the California Architect and Building News, it was originally located at the corner of Oak and Divisadero(sic), the architect was McDougal and Son, and it was built at a cost of \$15,000.<sup>1</sup> The Mishes were early pioneers in San Francisco, having been English by birth. Sarah Mish operated a dressmaking and millinery business downtown, and from 1854 on occupied several locations on Kearny, Geary, Market, and Dupont(now Grant) Streets. Besides her retail business in San Francisco, Mrs. Mish carried on wholesale business all along the coast.<sup>2</sup> Her husband, Phenes Mish was also a well-known merchant in the city, importing drygoods from 1852 through the 1880's.<sup>3</sup> His company was called P. Mish and Sons and had an agent in New York who purchased for him.<sup>4</sup> Mr. Mish was president of Congregation Sherith Israel from 1881 to 1885.

The City Directory first listed Sarah and Phenes Mish at 407 Divisadero(the original corner site) in 1887. Phenes Mish died in 1895, and thereafter Sarah Mish was listed as his widow. According to the earliest available block books, those of 1894, Mrs. Mish owned two lots in the vicinity of Oak and Divisadero. One was an irregularly shaped lot on the northwest corner of Oak and Divisadero, which must have been the original site of the Mish House. An undated photograph at the California Historical Society shows the house on a corner lot which is believed to be 407 Divisadero. The other piece of property owned by Sarah Mish was the lot on which the house now stands. It was moved to this site in 1897. In September of that year this entry appeared in the California Architect and Building News, "Oak

<sup>1</sup> California Architect and Building News, September, 1885.

<sup>2</sup> Illustrated Review, San Francisco Bay City Publishing Co., 1887, p.152.

<sup>3</sup> San Francisco City Directories, 1852-90.

<sup>4</sup> San Francisco Journal of Commerce, Illustrated Edition, 1874, pp.7-8.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

California Architect and Building News, September, 1885.

California Architect and Building News, September, 1897.

Illustrated Review. San Francisco Bay City Publishing Co., 1887.  
(Continued)

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .16 acres

QUADRANGLE NAME San Francisco North

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 1,0 | 54,9 | 6,0,0 | 4,1 | 8,0 | 5,6,0  
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B    |    |    |    |    |     
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C    |    |    |    |    |   

D    |    |    |    |    |   

E    |    |    |    |    |   

F    |    |    |    |    |   

G    |    |    |    |    |   

H    |    |    |    |    |   

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

On Oak Steet between Divisadero and Broderick Streets.  
 Block 1218, Lot 29.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Fred Wasserman

ORGANIZATION

The Preservation Group

DATE

December 5, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

18 Bartol

TELEPHONE

(415) 788-1000

CITY OR TOWN

San Francisco

STATE

California

# 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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Knorr* 3-6-79

TITLE

DATE

## FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

*Charles Allen*  
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 5-21-79

ATTEST: *[Signature]*  
 CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE 5-18-79

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and Divisadero. Moving a house. Owner: Mrs. S. Mish. Architect; MacDougall Brothers. Contractor: John H. McKay. Cost: \$1700."<sup>5</sup> Retail stores and multiple dwellings were then built on the original site.

Sarah Mish died on January 2, 1916. In 1928 the Mish heirs sold the lots and building. In June of 1929 the house, which had been converted into lodgings or a rooming house as early as 1920, was converted into apartments; at first five, and later as many as 14. The original staircase, probably removed when the house was relocated, was replaced with a concrete one. Enclosed room extensions were built projecting out from the eastern exterior wall and the large rooms were divided to create the new apartments. The mansard roof may have been removed at this time, or perhaps earlier. Garages were built in the rear yard for the tenants.<sup>6</sup> There was a fire in the house in the 1950's and it had degenerated into a greatly deteriorated condition over the last twenty years. Despite its condition, San Francisco recognized the Mish House as an important part of its heritage and designated it as a city landmark in 1974. In 1975 the house was restored by the Preservation Group.

The Mish House is one of the finest examples of the Stick-Eastlake style in San Francisco. This style was particularly popular in the city in the 1880's. Certain themes have been developed in the house that, taken together, account for its high quality. Verticality is emphasized in the form and decoration. There are tall two-story pillars at the corners of the structure that accentuate height. This is reiterated in the rectilinearity of the bay which creates a total vertical unit. The colonnettes, sticks, and fluting in the various members clearly articulate this verticality in their slender repetition.

The manipulation of scale is an important part of the design and is seen throughout the building in the colonnettes, columns, and pillars. The colonnettes with fluted bases were Italianate elements, but as was characteristic of the Stick style, they have been adapted and used in a very creative fashion. The colonnettes have been compressed and surmounted by extensions that reach the transom. The result is a successful combination of compression and elongation that subtly augments the overall sense of verticality.

<sup>5</sup>California Architect and Building News, September, 1897.

<sup>6</sup>Information from Thomas P. Radant, heir to the Ayers Estate, in 1969. It had been told to him by Charles L. Ayers who had owned the Mish House until his death in the early 1960's.

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This division of the component elements into a short base and long shaft serves several functions. It is a decorative device, as mentioned above it articulates the verticality, and it also sets up a dialogue between the various parts of the building because this same motif is found in the colonnettes of the windows, the columns of the portico, and the large corner pillars.

Not only the colonnettes, but all of the ornament is treated in a creative and playful manner. Columns and pillars are found with several decorative variations. Classical pediments are squeezed, moldings are used to allude to pediments, dentils are used freely. Like the colonnettes, decorative fancy has been combined with a real understanding of how the ornamental elements would interact. Certain forms like the arch are repeated in various configurations. Thus, a squeezed pediment echoes an arched tympanum or an arched window, creating a thematic visual unity in the building.

The mansard roofs unify the structure and give it a unique flavor. This is still very strong despite the loss of the grand mansard roof in the early part of this century. Thus, in the Mish House the Stick style, Eastlake ornament, and French Second Empire roofs were combined to create a unique Victorian house.

The Mish House was restored by the Preservation Group in 1975. The foundation was structurally redesigned as were the interior walls to comply with current seismic regulations in the building code. Historic accuracy was the guiding consideration in the restoration. A room that had been added on the east side of the Mish House was removed. Fifty new windows and frames replaced ones that had disintegrated or were missing. On the interior the original 14-foot ceilings that had been subdivided into two stories were restored.

The Mish House has been incorporated into the plan of the Phelps Place Historic Plaza. This design groups four historic structures around a landscaped courtyard, separated from the street by a wrought iron fence. Now that the central plaza area is opened up, the side elevation of the Mish House is once again visible, restoring the house to its original uncrowded elegance.



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Radant, Thomas, heir to the Ayers Estate. Interview in 1969.

San Francisco City Directories, 1852-1916.

San Francisco Journal of Commerce, Illustrated Edition, 1874.



MISH HOUSE



1" = 200 FT.

RECORDED  
MAR 26 1979

# BAY OF SAN FRANCISCO

PERS 1 TO 64 - ASSR BLK 3900

