

PH0352179

DATA FILED

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED MAR 29 1976
DATE ENTERED APR 26 1976

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
** Whittier Mansion
AND/OR COMMON
California Historical Society Building

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
2090 Jackson Street
CITY, TOWN
San Francisco
STATE
California
VICINITY OF
5th
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
NOT FOR PUBLICATION
COUNTY
San Francisco
CODE
075
CODE
06

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"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input 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	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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
California Historical Society
STREET & NUMBER
2090 Jackson Street
CITY, TOWN
San Francisco
VICINITY OF
STATE
California

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
San Francisco City Hall
STREET & NUMBER
Polk Street
CITY, TOWN
San Francisco
STATE
California

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Junior League of San Francisco, City Wide Survey
DATE
Early 1960's
DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS
Special Collections Room, Main Library
CITY, TOWN
San Francisco
VICINITY OF
McAllister & Larkin Streets
STATE
California
FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED Ext.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

(The following architectural description of the former Whittier house is the "preview account" in the San Francisco Chronicle for December 24, 1894. The parenthetical remarks indicate later changes, or revisions as the house was built.)

Edward R. Swain, the architect, has just completed the drawings and plans for the residence of W. F. Whittier, which is to be erected at the northeast corner of Jackson and Laguna Streets on a site commanding a magnificent view of the Bay and the Golden Gate. The house, which will be completed at a cost of about \$90,000, will be ready for occupancy in November, 1895. It will be the first residence in town built entirely of stone. (Apparently this refers only to the exterior shell for steel beams were used on the interior. Furthermore, the Flood brownstone mansion at 1000 California Street was built in 1884 to 1886.)

The lot is 80 x 127:8-1/4 feet, fronting on Jackson Street. The main portion of the house will be 55 x 75 feet, with a wing on the east side, the full width of the lot. The first story up to the water table will be of Sespe stone, and all above that line, including the chimney and pediment will be in red Arizona stone. The roof will be covered with red Spanish tiles.

The architecture of the house, which will be a two-story structure with basement and attic (actually three stories with attic), is Renaissance in feeling. A handsome portico, seventeen feet wide, projects nine feet from the face of the building. It will be very handsomely carved and highly ornamented. The base stone on which the porch rests, including the steps and platforms leading to it, are of red beach granite. The treads of the steps will be of the same stone, polished. The vestibule, finished in handsome foreign marbles, will be ten feet wide and six feet deep. The floor will be in mosaic.

Passing the doors, one will step into an entrance hall twelve feet square, which leads through an arch into the main hall, 22 x 30. The main staircase will be on the right of the main hall. Both halls will be finished in natural colored Eastern oak, with beamed ceiling. The design, which will be in keeping with the general design of the building, will consist of a pilaster and arch finish. From the main hall access will be had to the dining room by means of a lobby 8 x 12 feet. The dining room door is opposite the front door. On the right of the entrance hall is the reception-room, entered through doorways, which will be handsomely draped with portieres. Arches for statuary are on either side of the entrances. (Only one door, and no arches, was constructed.) The room is octagonal in form and sixteen feet in diameter. The round corner window will project somewhat beyond the octagon, and the space between will be upholstered for seats. The reception-room will be finished in 'vernis martin', a light wood veneered and spangled with gold.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	MAR 29 1976
DATE ENTERED	APR 26 1976

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE

1

7. Statement of Description

The living room, 20 x 48, will be on the left of the entrance hall. At a distance of fifteen feet from the front it will be divided by an arch, the side openings of which will be hung with portieres. The room will be finished in east coast Mexican mahogany. The handsome mantel will be eight feet wide. There will be a large open fireplace with facings in "jaune antique claire" Numidian marble. (A reddish striated marble was used.) The hearth will be in Florentine mosaic. This room will also have a beamed ceiling.

To the rear of the living room in the northwest corner of the house, the visitor will be ushered into the smoking or lounging room, a circular apartment commanding a magnificent view of the bay and surrounding landscape. The lounging room will be finished in oriental style in vermillion wood. Through this room access may be had to the dining room. This will be a very handsome apartment, 18 x 25, exclusive of a bay window thirteen feet long and four feet deep. It will be finished in natural white oak. (Oak was not used; the wood is thought to be Philippine tamaro or Guatemala prima vera.) There will be a wainscoting nine feet high, finished with buffets and backed with plate glass mirrors. The mantel will be finished with oak and faced with "Rose Carnagione" Numidian marble. The ceiling will be domed and paneled in plaster. Just above the wainscoting a frieze, in oils, will add greatly to the appearance of the dining hall. Adjoining the dining room will be the butler's pantry, 13 x 6, in ash, with china cases, silver safe, filters and other paraphernalia. The kitchen, 16 x 24, will be in the northeast corner of the building. It will be finished in oak, and instead of the usual pantries, the necessary shelves and bins will extend along the side of the room to a depth of six feet. (The oak finish has been painted over.)

Next to the kitchen, on the Jackson Street side, is a servants' dining room, 12 x 14, which will be entered from a passage off the rear hall. The side entrance to the house also communicates with this passage.

Just off the main hall is the rear hall with the rear stairs, near these stairs is a passenger elevator, five feet square, which will

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	MAR 29 1976
DATE ENTERED	APR 26 1976

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE

2

7. Statement of Description

run from the basement to the attic. In the front part of the basement will be rooms for coal, furniture and general storage. In the central portion of the basement, under the main hall and part of the living room will be an apartment in oak (prima vera was used), 30 x 50, which may be used for suppers and dances. It may be reached from the main stairs. The rear of the basement will be taken up with the servants' rooms, cold storage, laundry, servants' bathroom and other departments of the household.

On the second floor will be six handsome bedrooms (or sitting rooms), to three (two in actuality) of which private bathrooms will be attached. The recesses for the fixtures in the bathrooms will be lined with various fancy marbles, and the floors will be of hard wood. The various chambers will be finished in primavera, birch, cherry and bird's eye maple. (This wood trim has been painted over.) W. F. Whittier's suite will be in the northwest corner of the second story. It will consist of a large bedroom, a sitting room, dressing room and bathroom. W. R. will revel in luxury on the third or attic story. The whole width of the building on that floor will be taken up by his apartments, including a chamber, bathroom, dressing room and sitting room, 18 x 40, in waxed redwood of natural colors (actually mahogany). There will be a large open fireplace and a (partially) hardwood floor. On this floor, also, are a guest chamber, a truck room, servant's room, servant's bathroom, a big linen closet and the "sporting room". The latter is 8 x 13, and in it will be stored the guns, rods and other implements of the chase which the Messrs. Whittier may require in their sport. (A "billiard room" not mentioned in the "preview", was ultimately placed in a large space, with a superb view to the north, on this floor.)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	MAR 29 1976
DATE ENTERED	APR 26 1976

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE

1

8. Statement of Significance

Stylistically, the Whittier house was built at a time when the fashions of the later Nineteenth Century were beginning to give way to a resurgence of more correct Period styling. Thus, the general massing of the structure with its strongly emphasized circular corner towers is Richardsonian and Queen Anne. The color of the stone (red Arizona sandstone) is also suggestive of the mid-western and western derivations from Richardson's richly textured and colored stone effects. However, the rigid symmetry of the facade suggests a new interest in formality alien to the late Nineteenth Century's fascination with asymmetry and "picturesque" effects. A Classical portico, using the Ionic order, is part of a return to Period sources in antiquity and the classicizing Baroque, which swept the United States by 1895-1900.

There are hints here, too, of the pedantry of architecture at the turn of the century. The curious temple-front enrichment of the facade's second story center, as if an Ionic temple front had been squashed against the massive stone facade, immediately brings to mind certain late Roman, near-Eastern buildings -- notably Petra, as does the color of the stone. This is obviously not so forcefully Baroque as Petra's buildings, but it has the same rock-cut effect, sculptural rather than tectonic. The exterior reveals consistently the influence of carefully studied details from books of photographs and engravings after older European buildings. Edward Swain went to the same lavishly bound folios which inspired so many architects of his time, and which now languish in libraries of the history of architecture rather than on the shelves of practicing architects. Some of the details are ancient Roman, some are Renaissance, some Manerist, and some Baroque. All are executed with finesse and thoughtful attention to their place in the ensemble.

The final exterior effect of the building, which has begun to suffer the usual fate of sandstone in dissolution of sharp corners and crisp details, is unfortunately not entirely felicitous. Arresting of physical dissolution has been attempted with surface coatings of preservatives which have slightly changed the color values of the facade, where they have been used. The building looked aggressively massive in early photographs, when the softening effects of ground

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	MAR 29 1976
DATE ENTERED	APR 26 1976

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE

2

8. Statement of Significance

foliage were absent. It has never been surrounded by trees, although there were at one time two large palms in front. Even now it presents a rather formidably "architectural" appearance. There is perhaps, a too studied arrangement in certain parts; and the proportions of the windows in the top central pediment of the facade are dispiritedly squat.

The building has suffered few radical renovations in its checkered history of ownership. It represents a remarkable continuation into our era of the architectural grandeur of the very late Nineteenth Century. Its excellent materials, in many instances verging on the magnificent, provide a notable indication of craftsmanship at the time. The bizarre mixture of interior furnishings which characterized these houses has almost entirely disappeared. The present combinations of mid-Nineteenth Century and even earlier furniture with later pieces seems more agreeable today than the equally eclectic but somewhat less felicitous combinations assembled when the house was built.

Not mentioned in the Chronicle "preview" is the charming house of stone, just north of the basement. Its south facade has Ionic columns, giving it an agreeable Classical pavilion quality. The house consists of a large room, with closet and small kitchen and bath; it is presently occupied by the caretaker of the premises.

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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input checked="" 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

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The mansion, headquarters of the California Historical Society, was built in 1894-1896 as a private residence for widower William Franklin (W. Frank) Whittier and his children. Frank Whittier was born in January 17, 1832, and came over the Isthmus of Panama to California in 1854.

Plans for 2090 Jackson Street were drawn by Edward R. Swain. Swain was born in 1852 and died on April 10, 1902. He was trained in David Farquharson's office in San Francisco, and began practice for himself in 1877. During the 1890's he assisted A. Page Brown on the "new" Ferry Building. (On that building's cornerstone he is called "Supervising Architect.") He was connected with various buildings for the Midwinter Fair of 1894 and did the handsome McLaren Lodge in Golden Gate Park erected in 1896.

William Franklin Whittier died on January 20, 1917 and his daughter, Mrs. Weir, inherited the 2090 Jackson Street property. On April 29, 1941, the house was purchased by Dos Deutsche Reich for use as a consulate for the then-governing Nazi Regime. After occupying it on April 30, 1941, Fritz Wiedemann, Consul, resided in and conducted his government's business in the mansion. Nevertheless, the Nazi stay at 2090 Jackson was very brief for in June of 1941 the Federal Government ordered the closure of all German and Italian consulates in the United States and all propaganda agents out of the country by July 10, 1941. Thus, after only two months of occupancy, the consulate was closed on June 30, 1941. Subsequently, the property was held in trust by the Alien Property Custodian. It was later turned over to the United States Attorney General's office and was purchased at auction on March 10, 1959 by a private party. There were subsequent owners and from 1952 to 1956, the property was leased to Mortimer Adler's Institute of Philosophical Research which occupied the first and second floor. The property was purchased by the California Historical Society in 1956.

