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ARCHITECTURE

Lafayette Park
San Francisco, California

Historic Resources Evaluation

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INTRODUCTION

The San Francisco Recreation and Park Department has requested Carey & Co. to prepare a Historic Resource Evaluation Report for Lafayette Park, located in San Francisco's Pacific Heights neighborhood. The 11.5 acre park contains a 575 square-foot restroom building and a 260 square-foot maintenance shed. In addition, the park, which slopes steeply to the north, has various amenities and landscape features, including a playground, tennis courts, picnic areas, lawns, paths, stairs, retaining walls, benches, and planting areas. The park was created during the nineteenth century, with major updates undertaken in 1936, 1964, and 1982. This report evaluates the park's significance according to national, state, and local standards.

SUMMARY

Lafayette Park appears to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR), and as a local landmark under Criteria A/1 and B/2, for its association with land title disputes that erupted throughout the western part of the city in the wake of the passage of the Van Ness Ordinance of 1855; for its association with Samuel Wirt Holladay, a socialite and high profile attorney who specialized in said land title disputes; and for its association with the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the federal relief program that financed millions of dollars of jobs and improvements to public spaces in San Francisco during the Great Depression. Major contributing features include the retaining wall, the paths and stairways, the maintenance shed and bathroom buildings, two tennis courts, a dedicated playground space, and the distinctive formality of the western half of the park and dense, informal vegetation of the eastern half of the park. The park retains good integrity and continues to convey all three aspects of its historical significance.

METHODOLOGY

Carey & Co. reviewed existing documentation before conducting a site visit to Lafayette Park on September 9, 2010. During the site visit, Carey & Co. walked the entire grounds of the park and its perimeter, noting character-defining features and making a preliminary integrity assessment. Carey & Co. documented the visit with digital photographs, which also provide references for developing the site description and evaluating integrity. Carey & Co. undertook primary and secondary research to develop the historic context statement. Primary sources include photographs and maps from the History Center at the San Francisco Public Library as well as a number of online resources, including Calisphere and the David Rumsey Map Collection; historic newspapers and periodicals; city directories and the United States census; and plans of Lafayette Park that the Department of Recreation and Park provided to Carey & Co. Secondary sources focus primarily on the development of urban parks in the United States and San Francisco, the Great Depression and the WPA.

This report includes three appendices:

Appendix A: Guides to Resources

Appendix B: Site Visit Photographs

Appendix C: DPR 523 A & B forms

SITE DESCRIPTION

Lafayette Park encompasses the four-block area bounded by Sacramento Street to the south, Laguna Street to the west, Washington Street to the north, and Gough Street to the east. The City Planning Department described the terrain as “A mound with its summit in Lafayette Park, (320+’) falling steeply to the north (the Pacific Heights Slope) and gradually to the east, south and west.... This mound is part of a ridge extending west from Polk Street into the Presidio.”¹

A concrete retaining wall encloses the park, and access points occur at the four corners of the park as well as at the center point of each side. Stairs at the four corners of the park and along Gough provide access to pathways, while the center access points along Washington and Sacramento Streets are flush with the sidewalks. Plantings vary significantly, from robust evergreen pine trees, to eucalyptus, magnolia, palm, willow, and other deciduous tree types, as well as California native plants and grasses, lavender, boxed hedges, and a variety of other small shrubs and flowering plants. Benches and water fountains are located throughout the park.

Concrete stairways flanked by formal beds of plants, shrubs, and flowering bushes provide access to the park at the four corners and from Gough Street. Two flights comprise the stairs at Sacramento and Gough Street. The first seventeen steps lead to an asphalt pathway that runs parallel to Sacramento Street. Seventeen more steps located several feet to the west along the pathway, lead to lawn areas. At Sacramento and Laguna Streets, just two steps lead to a path that forks and curves to the north and to the east. Similarly, four steps at Laguna and Washington Streets lead to a pathway that forks and curves to the south and east. Twenty-six steps at Washington and Gough Streets lead to one path that runs parallel to Washington Street, and one that is curved, but runs largely parallel to Gough Street. Four flights of stairs totaling forty-six steps lead from Gough Street to a pathway that bisects the entire park from east to west, essentially following the would-be route of Clay Street from Gough to Laguna.

The west and east sides of the park have distinctly different landscapes, with the west side being more open and formal, while the east side features dense vegetation and more rugged spaces. A pattern of more

¹ San Francisco Department of City Planning, “Land Planning Division Planning Area Studies,” Vol. 1, Planning Area 5.2 – Lafayette Park (San Francisco, 1958).

or less symmetrical, curvilinear pathways cuts through the gentle slope of the west side of Lafayette Park and leads to such facilities as the bathroom, children's playground, maintenance building, and picnic area, which are all located in close proximity to each other in the central west area of the west side of the park. Small concentrations of dense vegetation occur to the east of the northwest entrance, near the Laguna Street entrance, and bordering the formal recreation areas. Trees also line the Laguna Street edge; otherwise, trees occur somewhat sporadically on the western half of the park.

The western half of the park also hosts two buildings: To the west of the playground stands a one-story concrete, utilitarian building with an asphalt shingle covered hipped roof that ends in a slight wide eave overhang with exposed rafter tails. Doors occur at the center of the north, south, and east sides. The north and south doors are metal, while the east door is wood with inset panels. Metal mesh transoms surmount the north and east doors. Windows are located on the east and west sides of the building; sheets of metal cover the openings on the west side. While the southern window on the north side features chicken wire, and fixed glass encloses the northern window on this side.

To the east of the children's playground stands a single story, stucco clad concrete restroom building with an asphalt shingle covered hipped roof that ends with exposed and carved rafter tails. Shaped wing walls on the east façade hide wood frame, rounded arch doorways to the restrooms. A third rounded arch doorway occupies the center of the east façade. All doors are wood. Square window openings filled with iron bars puncture the east and west walls – four on the west side and five on the east. Concrete pathways lead to the side entrances from the asphalt pathway that runs parallel to the building.

Other notable features on the western half of the park include the children's playground, a picnic area to its immediate north, and a Victorian style, three-tiered drinking fountain by Murdock between the recreational area and the bathroom.

In contrast to the western half of the park, dense vegetation dominates the eastern half of the park. At the apex of the hill, a grove of eucalyptus, pine, and palm trees a circular open spaces. A pair of concrete stairs directly to the north of this area leads to a two-tiered viewing area. Also located at the apex of the hill are a metal storage shed and five large chunks of concrete, some with fluting, suggesting that they are remnants of a former building or structure on the site. The remainder of the northern slope features little more than a pathway and dense vegetation. Two oval lawn spaces framed by groves of trees are located on the eastern slope of the hill, and two asphalt surfaced tennis courts enclosed by chain link fencing are also located on the southern slope of the east side of the park.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

San Francisco, the Masses, and Public Parks

San Francisco's early American settlement was disorderly, to say the least. Tens of thousands of people descended upon the quiet and tiny pueblo of San Francisco after gold was discovered in the Sierra Nevada in 1848. Within thirty years, the city's population exploded from a few hundred to well over 200,000.² Californios sold some of their rancho lands to eager settlers, but squatters claimed property rights as often as not. The Land Act of 1851 did little to help matters; the lengthy and expensive judicial process to settle title claims was inefficient for the rapidly rising boomtown by the bay. In 1855, the City of San Francisco thus introduced its own legislation to settle land claims: the Van Ness Ordinance, San

² Gunther Barth, *Instant Cities: Urbanization and the Rise of San Francisco and Denver* (New York, 1975), xxi.

Francisco's first attempt at city planning. As summed up by Anne and Arthur Bloomfield, "this law provided for the laying out of streets from Larkin west to Divisadero, and the reservation of land here and there for public use. A surveying commission... chose the streets we have now, plus twenty-eight school lots, twenty-five firehouse lots, a hospital space, and nine parks, including Lafayette and Alta Plaza, in what we know as Pacific Heights."³

The park element of the Van Ness Ordinance reflected a growing trend in urban America to find ways to curb the perceived rise of moral decay. Mid-nineteenth-century cities like New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Buffalo, Chicago, and San Francisco were crowded, dangerous – both in terms of crime or riots and disasters like fire – unsanitary and increasingly diverse demographically. And as working conditions shifted from agrarian and skilled craftsmanship to industrial wage labor, urban residents, especially, sought to engage in leisure activities during their non-work hours. With the rise of gas light, a thriving urban night life also emerged. Taverns, brothels, opera houses, and other cheap amusements flourished. Conditions like these posed a threat to the social order.

Starting in the mid-nineteenth century, park advocates nationwide espoused a belief that parks could eliminate social ills and counter the negative impacts of an urban environment on the city's population. Summarized by urban park historian Terence Young, "Park boosters characterized the improved society that was supposed to emerge with parks by four social ideals...: public health, prosperity, democratic equality, and social coherence." Stated another way, parks provided fresh air and free spaces for recreation and exercise for all, higher real estate values, tourism, increased commercial activity, and a means for social control through regulated rules of conduct.⁴

Park advocates fell into two camps. Romantics, led by America's preeminent landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmsted, believed in the overwhelming power of nature to renew the human spirit. Parks, with their rolling hills and copious greenery, should be sufficiently large to shield users from views of the city; they provided an urban escape into the wilderness. Rationalists, on the other hand, understood parks to be manufactured spaces with functional components that served the needs of an increasingly diverse urban society and fostered social control. They advocated formal flower beds that were obvious attempts to illustrate beauty as well as children's playgrounds, baseball diamonds, and museums, all of which kept the children off the streets and out of trouble, and provided adults with culturally enriching leisure alternatives to morally dubious spaces like taverns and concert halls. Following the Civil War rationalistic parks surpassed romantic notions in popularity, reflecting trends like the increased presence of women in public spaces, rapid industrialization and the growth of a dynamic labor movement, and increased immigration from eastern and southern Europe.⁵

Despite the passage of the Van Ness Ordinance and complaints since the Gold Rush Era that San Francisco lacked public green spaces, the city's park movement took off slowly. The frenzied pace of development contributed to this, as did the tendency of San Franciscans to claim public spaces for all sorts of crowded and often rowdy gatherings for public expression of politics, ethnic pride, and other

³ Anne Bloomfield and Arthur Bloomfield, *Gables and Fables: A Portrait of San Francisco's Pacific Heights* (Berkeley, 2007), 253.

⁴ Terence Young, *Building San Francisco's Parks: 1850-1930*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 2-5.

⁵ Young, *Building San Francisco's Parks*, 6-12. See also some classic works on urban parks and leisure, including Roy Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours for What We Will: Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City, 1870-1920* (New York, 1983); Roy Rosenzweig and Elizabeth Blackmar, *The Park and the People: A History of Central Park* (Ithaca, 1992); and Kathy Lee Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia, 1986).

causes.⁶ Other residents, and most famously the developers of South Park and Robert B. Woodward in the Mission, offered private park spaces that people could enjoy for a small fee. The conservative fiscal and cultural politics of San Francisco's People's Party, which grew out of the Vigilance Committee of 1856 and controlled the city's government and coffers for the next decade, also deterred any park development.⁷

Finally, in the late 1860s, San Francisco began to develop its public park system, beginning with Golden Gate Park. Golden Gate Park combined the romantic and rationalist theories of park design. The vast size of the park in a remote location of the city, and the monumental undertaking it was to transform a landscape of sand dunes into a park heavily influence the design of the park. The eastern end hosted dedicated leisure spaces, like a children's playground, while bridges, lakes, paths, and open spaces characterized the western end. Over time, particularly in preparation for the Midwinter Fair of 1894 and during the Great Depression, Golden Gate Park gained more dedicated recreation and leisure spaces.⁸

Meanwhile, the city's many small parks languished until the turn of the century. Before 1900, the city's parks and squares came under the supervision of the Department of Streets, Sewers, and Squares, which had far greater practical concerns to attend to before addressing green space. In 1900, however, a new city charter passed and created the Board of Park Commissioners, with John McLaren serving as superintendent of the twelve existing properties. The new board also advocated for new parks in neglected areas like the Mission District and areas south of Market Street. Although the board designed formal plantings for many of the parks, the landscapes San Francisco's small park generally followed the romantic style of park design. Larger parks, like Lafayette Square and Mission Dolores Park, featured dedicated playground spaces and other amenities.⁹

The San Francisco Earthquake and Fires of 1906

Unless otherwise noted, the following account of the earthquake and fires of 1906 is excerpted from the San Francisco Planning Departments historic context statement for the Mission District, "City within a City: Historic Context Statement for San Francisco's Mission District," (November 2007), 55-61:

"San Francisco was woefully unprepared for the great quake of 1906. In the pre-dawn darkness of April 18th, miles below the San Francisco Peninsula, two geologic plates along the San Andreas Fault suddenly slipped and lurched past each other by thirteen feet. The massive shock waves propagated through the earth's crust and reached the surface within seconds. The earthquake, estimated at 7.8 on the Richter scale, arrived with violent undulations at 5:12 a.m. and lasted for close to a minute. The people of San Francisco were awoken that early morning by unimaginable chaos and calamity. The shock waves buckled streets and rails, snapped water and gas pipes, knocked houses off their foundations, collapsed numerous masonry buildings, and wreaked havoc within those structures that withstood the onslaught. Many of the severely damaged and destroyed buildings were located on the poorly compacted "made land" of sand and debris that had been used to fill the bays, marshes, and creeks; these soft lands liquefied, intensifying the shock waves.

⁶ For more on early San Franciscans' use of public space see Philip J. Ethington, *The Public City: The Political Construction of Urban Life in San Francisco, 1850-1900* (Berkeley, 1994); and Mary Ryan, *Civic Wars: Democracy and Public Life in the American City During the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley, 1997).

⁷ Young, *Building San Francisco's Park*, 34-44; Barbara Berglund, *Making San Francisco American: Cultural Frontiers in the Urban West, 1846-1906* (Lawrence, 2007), 58-94.

⁸ See Young, *Building San Francisco's Parks*, most of which is dedicated to the history, design, and development of Golden Gate Park.

⁹ Young, *Building San Francisco's Parks*, 170-208

“When the shock waves subsided, despite the damage, much of San Francisco had survived. But no sooner had the stunned and terrified populace begun to attend to the urgencies of the injured and trapped, than an even greater calamity unfolded. Approximately 52 separate fires erupted throughout the South of Market, a dense landscape of industry, manufacturing, warehouses, and cheap housing built on unstable sands and marshes. The ruptured gas lines, overturned furnaces, and damaged industrial plants of the badly shaken area set blazes that spread with ferocious intensity. The primarily wooden building stock went up like kindling. Despite half a dozen major fires in San Francisco that had occurred during the Gold Rush era, widespread use of wood construction had continued, in part because masonry materials were neither readily available nor safe in earthquakes....

“Though enough water remained in undamaged reservoirs to fight the initial fires, thousands of localized breaks in water lines throughout the City made firefighting largely futile, despite the valiant efforts of the Fire Department. The fires spread and merged unchecked throughout the day, consuming the entire urban core, and then continuing west and north into residential neighborhoods. Attempts to use explosives to create firebreaks often compounded the critical situation; the explosives, where improperly set, caused new blazes, and they also ruptured additional water lines....

“San Francisco was a wasted land on April 21st, 1906. The firestorm left behind apocalyptic ruins, within which virtually nothing remained standing. More than 3,000 lives were lost and more than half of the City’s 410,000 residents were left as refugees without homes or many, if any, possessions. Four-fifths of the city’s buildings totaling 28,000 had burned to the ground, including the entire urban core of nearly five square miles: the downtown commercial center, the vast industrial and working-class tableland of South of Market, and the first ring of outlying residential neighborhoods....¹⁰

“For the immediate needs of the refugees, eleven relief camps were set up on public parks throughout the City, including at Mission Dolores Park. In Golden Gate Park, the Army constructed a virtual town, with large residential barracks, tented housing, latrines and bathhouses, laundries, and other services. This Army relief town was accessible for the North of Market refugees, but fewer of the Mission or South of Market refugees trekked out to the sandy wastes.” Within months the tent cities were deemed unsanitary and refugees were removed to other parks. “Later, the relief agencies constructed and sold approximately 5,300 earthquake shacks in the relief camps, designed as affordable interim housing for those with moderate incomes. Those of the poorest classes who could not afford them had to fend for themselves.”¹¹

Parks and the WPA in the 1930s

Between 1930 and 1933 more than 100,000 workers, almost a third of the workforce, lost their jobs in San Francisco. The growing number of unemployed workers placed a new demand on recreational programming and facilities. By using federal funds to employ workers in the early 1930s, and later by establishing a partnership with the Civil Works Administration in 1933 and the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in 1935, the Recreation Department upgraded their facilities, developed new programming, and created a lasting legacy of neighborhood parks and recreation facilities. Reduced to the simplest of terms, the federal government disbursed over \$25 million to San Francisco between 1935

¹⁰ Ibid., 60.

¹¹ San Francisco Planning Department, “City within a City,” 60-61; “Refugees are Removed,” *San Francisco Call*, July 25, 1906, p. 4.

and 1939, to which the city added over \$4.5 million. A quarter of these funds were spent on materials and three quarters were spent on labor, representing nearly 30.5 million hours of labor, “the equivalent of a force of 10,000 men working 381 eight-hour days.”¹²

In 1935, President Roosevelt established the WPA with the aim of putting the country back to work. The WPA attempted to tap the productive power of the unemployed while also “building up the spirit and morale” of the community. It offered the first employment opportunity in years for thousands of workers, and the administration partnered with local governments to determine useful projects for the local community. In Northern California, WPA projects included hundreds of public buildings, road, streets, bridges, murals, parks, playgrounds, and swimming pools. The WPA also sponsored work training programs, historical surveys, recreation activities, art projects, and scientific research.¹³

Through a partnership with the WPA, various San Francisco agencies were able to proceed with a host of improvement plans that had previously lacked funding.¹⁴ Thirty-one parks and three other miscellaneous landscaping projects benefited from WPA funds. Fleishhacker Zoo, which was already under construction, garnered the most funds, at \$3.2 million, while the government funded over \$2.5 million in projects to both the Golden Gate Park and the Golden Gate International Exposition (GGIE) grounds. Aquatic Park was the next largest undertaking, at \$1.8 million, and from there the cost of park projects declined precipitously. The remaining thirty projects averaged \$64,872, with Old St. Mary’s Park receiving just \$1,173 at the low end, and Kezar Pavilion and Stadium receiving \$163,488 at the high end. Park projects totaled \$12,356,515.¹⁵ According to WPA San Francisco Branch Manager William Mooser, Jr., the administration’s work with the city “can be measure by more than mere improvements to the City’s recreational facilities, W.P.A. contributions are evidenced in the increased number of cultural and educational activities in which many thousands more of San Francisco’s citizenry are participating than previously.”¹⁶ In this regard, the joint program accomplished more than the construction of new and improved playgrounds, clubhouses, and parks, but was also able to promote local community development, provide educational programs, and offer free entertainment that had a lasting influence on the community.

Lafayette Park

Samuel Holladay (1823-1915) challenged the city’s claims to ownership of land that is now known as Lafayette Park and sued for title. Holladay had arrived in San Francisco from New York in 1849 and quickly established himself as an attorney and large landholder. After passage of the Van Ness Ordinance, he built a reputation for litigating title claims, and as attorney for the City and County of San Francisco from 1860-1863, Holladay successfully defended the city’s claims to at least seven locations designated for schools, parks, and the county jail.¹⁷ In the mid-1860s Holladay found himself applying this experience and knowledge in defense of his own title claim to lands that encompassed the

¹² Clyde E. Healy, *San Francisco Improved* (San Francisco, 1939), 3-4

¹³ William R. Larson, “What the Works Progress Administration has done for Northern California,” in *Northern California’s three years of achievement under the Works Progress Administration, 1935-1938*, (San Francisco, 1939).

¹⁴ William Mooser, Jr., *Report on Progress of the Works Program in San Francisco; January 1938* (United States Works Projects Administration, 1939); San Francisco Recreation Commission, *Recreation: Its Character Building Influence, Its Part in the Community Life*, (San Francisco, 1939); San Francisco Recreation Commission, *Supervised Grounds*, (San Francisco, Nov. 1936).

¹⁵ Healy, *San Francisco Improved*, 35-36.

¹⁶ Mooser, *Report on Progress of the Works Program*.

¹⁷ S. W. Holladay, “Autobiography and Reminiscence of Samuel Wirt Holladay, San Francisco, 1901,” Society of California Pioneers, Online Archive of California (www.oac.cdlib.org, accessed October 7, 2010).

site of Lafayette Park. Holladay argued that the city did not have a right to the land under the Van Ness Ordinance and, moreover, the ordinance did not allow the city to dedicate four square blocks to public use. San Francisco, however, argued that Holladay's claims to the land were provisional in 1855, not settled, and therefore the city had a right to ownership under the Van Ness Ordinance. The city also defended its right to dedicate such a large expanse of land to a public park. This legal battle continued for seventy years, mostly in Holladay's favor.



Holladay Mansion at the southeast corner of Washington and Octavia Streets, or the highest point of Lafayette Park. Constructed in 1866, photo 1924. Courtesy of the BANC.

In the meantime, a private estate and a public park grew up in tandem. Holladay fenced in six parcels between Gough and Octavia, including the peak of the Clay Street hill. He dug a well at the northeast corner of Clay and Octavia in 1869, then constructed a water tower, stable, gardens, and Italianate Victorian mansion, which he occupied from 1870 until the early 1900s. Holladay Heights (sometimes spelled "Holliday"), as the Holladay family referred to their estate, became a center for social, political, and literary gatherings, with such notable figures as Bret Harte, Mark Twain, Leland Stanford, and William Crocker frequenting the grounds. According to one journalist, the house "was a landmark that might be seen from any point within ten miles."¹⁸ By 1897, Holladay sold off a parcel of his land fronting Gough Street. Reverend Robert C. Foute, rector of Grace Church, constructed his residence at 1915 Gough Street; since 1914, the St. Regis Apartment Building, designed by master architect C. A. Muessdorffer, has occupied this site (now 1925 Gough Street). A second house was constructed at the northwest corner of Gough and Clay (2001 Gough), where prominent San Francisco resident, and journalist and proprietor of the *San Francisco Bulletin*, Robert A. Crothers lived from 1918 until about 1930.¹⁹

Progress on the development of Lafayette Square, later renamed Lafayette Park, occurred more slowly. The City had several other title claims besides Holladay's to fight before much work on developing the

¹⁸ Louis J. Stelman, "Reopening the Holladay Mansions," *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 30, 1911, p. 5.

¹⁹ Holladay, "Autobiography;" "Death Comes to City's Oldest Lawyer," *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 17, 1915, p. 18; Jeanne Alexander, Neighborhood Parks Council, "Lafayette Park," <http://www.sfnpc.org/lafayetteparkhistory>, accessed August 26, 2010; San Francisco City Directories; California Register of Voters, www.ancestry.com (accessed October 27, 2010).

park land could begin. Most of these fights were settled in favor of the city by 1900, resulting in a park bounded by Octavia, Washington, Laguna, and Sacramento, as well as a patchwork of land to the east of Octavia, including the would-be continuation of Clay Street through the center of Holladay's claim and three parcels of land each to the north and south of Holladay's claims, comprised the new park. At this point, the city could move forward with development plans. Until 1900, however, the Department of Streets, Sewers, and Squares oversaw the city's small parks, but had little time or money to attend to them. Thus, Lafayette Square remained little more than an "unimproved sand hill" through the 1890s. With the creation of the Board of Park Commissioners in 1900, formal development of the small parks finally got underway.²⁰



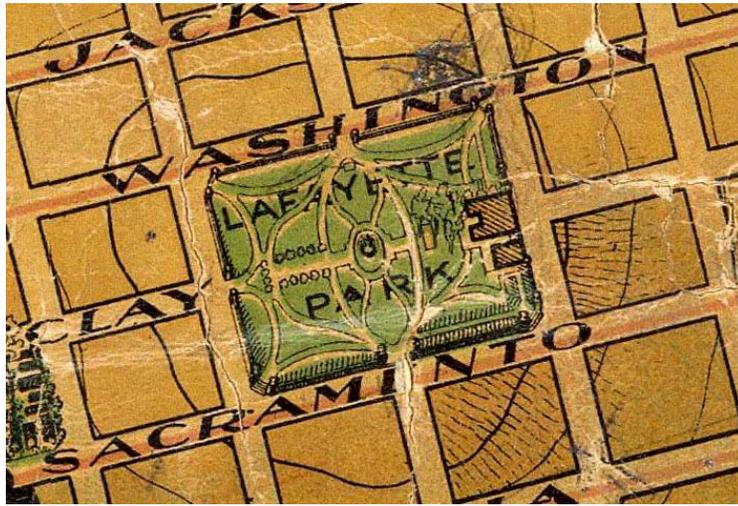
Left to right: Washington Street, Octavia to Gough, with Lafayette Park on the right, 1906; Tent camp as seen from Sacramento Street; Washington at Laguna, with Holladay mansion at the top of the hill. Courtesy of CHS.

Historic photographs and maps provide some idea of how many improvements at Lafayette Park had been made six years later, by the time the earthquake and fires of 1906 struck: Most of the retaining wall that frames the park had been constructed, though only a makeshift wood retaining wall supported the eastern end of the Washington Street side of the hill. Some pathways were laid out as well, including one from the southeast corner of Washington and Laguna, which forked to the east and south, and a pathway heading north from Sacramento Street with two forks lead to the west existed by 1906. Some plantings – trees, shrubs, grass – were in place too. Other photos, however, reveal a rugged site of little more dirt and weeds. Despite the slow progress of formal landscaping, the streets facing Lafayette Park attracted wealthy residents who constructed ornate mansions.

Lafayette Park became the site of class conflict following the earthquake and fires of April 1906. Like many other parks and public spaces in the city, Lafayette Park, served as an emergency refugee camp. Displaced residents quickly set up canvass tents and make-shift kitchens to accommodate basic domestic needs. Originally, the City told camp residents that they could remain in their temporary accommodations until August 1907. By the fall of 1906, however, the Parks Commission was building temporary wooden shelters and ordering refugees to vacate the tent camps. Refugees at all the camps invariably protested the government's change of heart, but at Lafayette Park the protests took on a particularly classist tone. Mrs. J. W. Scott led the refugee protest in Lafayette Park against removal. Dripping with diamonds and other jewels to emphasize her family's wealth and refinement, Scott chastised the local government's decision to refuse to build cottages or allow refugees to remain at

²⁰ "Lafayette Park," *San Francisco Call*, July 23, 1893, p. 3; "For Lafayette Square," *ibid.*, July 26, 1895, p 8; Terence Young, *Building San Francisco's Parks, 1850-1930* (Baltimore, 2004), 181-182.

Lafayette Park as a cowardly act that reflected the “whims of the rich” who lived in the surrounding neighborhood. Despite ongoing protests, only two tents remained in Lafayette Square by February 1907.²¹



“Chevalier” Commercial, Pictorial, and Tourist Map of San Francisco, 1911 (detail). Courtesy of David Rumsey Collection.

Little development of note occurred at Lafayette Park between the aftermath of the earthquake and fires and the onset of the Great Depression. A tourist map from 1911 illustrates the plan of Lafayette Park as a symmetrical grouping of paths leading to the center, also the apex, of the park where fountain stood. A colonnade of trees lined the western approach, while two buildings, less formally planted trees, and a water tower disrupted the symmetry of the eastern portion of the park. The map is not accurate from the center to the east, but the access points and pathways do appear to reflect reality on the western portion of the map. In 1912 the Park commission funded construction of a convenience station (or bathroom) at Lafayette Park, and stone sidewalks with granite curbing were constructed in 1913. The Holladay mansion and its gardens remained standing, but grew increasingly eerie as the vacated property deteriorated from neglect.²²

Developer Louis Lurie introduced one potentially substantial change to the park. He acquired the Holladay property in the 1920s and tried to compel the City to open Clay Street to Octavia Street. The road was intended to provide access to an apartment building Lurie planned to construct on the site of the former Holladay mansion. While Lurie had the Board of Supervisors on his side, neighborhood residents and the Park Commissioners, led by Herbert Fleishhacker, vehemently opposed Lurie’s development schemes. He finally abandoned them and instead sold the Holladay property to the City and County of San Francisco in 1935.²³

²¹ “Jeweled Woman Leads Refugees,” *San Francisco Call*, September 27, 1906, p. 16; “Refugees Protest,” in *ibid.*, September 29, 1906, p. 2; “Mrs. Scott Speaks,” in *ibid.*, October 6, 1906, p. 3; “Ruef is Playing Double Game,” in *ibid.*, October 16, 1906, p. 9; “Relief Corporation Meets,” in *ibid.*, October 31, 1906, p. 16; “To Move Refugees,” in *ibid.*, November 17, 1906, p. 2; “Want Relief Fun to Repair Parks,” in *ibid.*, February 7, 1907, p. 4

²² Stelman, “Holladay Mansion;” “Park Commission States What It Needs for Year,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 29, 1912, p. 15; “Wants Permanent Walks Installed,” in *ibid.*, May 6, 1913, p. 4.

²³ “Public or Private Business,” *San Francisco News*, September 23, 1927, in Lafayette Park folder, SFPL; “Park Building Vote Deferred,” March 26, 1929, in *ibid.*; “Lafayette Square: Lurie Plan Opposed,” *San Francisco Chronicle*,

Lafayette Park was one of the many San Francisco parks that the city target for improvements during the Great Depression. Drawings from 1934 show that the city at least wanted to created a dedicated path through the old Holladay property, which Louis Lurie still owned, from the apex of the hill to the south of Clay Street, then diagonally to Gough Street, at the northeast edge of Holladay's property. Two events occurred in 1935 that allowed the city to pursue more ambitious plans: President Franklin Roosevelt established the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and Louis Lurie sold the Holladay land to San Francisco.

With the entire four blocks of the park finally at the city's disposal, and with federal funds available to fund projects, Lafayette Park underwent over \$89,000 worth of improvements, representing over 100,000 hours of labor between 1936 and 1938. All of the existing paths on the west side of the park were resurfaced, as was the children's play area. New work in this section of the park consisted of converting the original convenience station into a utility shed, building a tennis court directly to the shed's east, and constructing a new, larger convenience station to the east of the tennis courts. On the eastern half of the park, the city merely maintained the areas it had owned since the nineteenth century, meaning it retained the lawn areas parallel to Washington and Sacramento Streets, which flanked the Holladay property, and resurfaced the paths that framed these areas. Several drinking fountains were installed throughout the park.

The former Holladay property underwent the most extensive changes during the WPA-improvement era. Holladay's mansion and water tower were demolished; however, the Department of Public Works retained and resurfaced all of the pathways and stairs associated with the old estate. The department also retained large pine, eucalyptus, and palm trees that framed the space where the house stood and an open lawn area immediately to its east. The city dedicated the open area where the mansion stood as a play area for mothers and young children. A second playground dedicated to teenagers was planned down the hill and to the east of the young children's playground. A card table area that stepped down to a viewing area (both pre-existing spaces with stairs already built) was planned for the space to the north of the circular drive that had fronted the west side of the house, and two tennis courts were constructed on the southern half of the former Holladay property. Trees and shrubs enclosed all of these dedicated areas, and one or two benches were installed in each area as well. The Crothers residence on Gough Street, just north of Clay, was also demolished (though this may have occurred earlier), and the city finally addressed the extension of Clay Street. Rather than open the road, the Park Department built a steep stairway from the middle of the Gough Street edge to a pathway that continued west through the center of the park all the way to Laguna. It also forked to the northeast, where it connected with the pathway leading to the steps at the corner of Washington and Gough.²⁴

WPA-funded work on Lafayette Park continued through 1942, with minor design changes occurring from the original 1938 drawings and the final 1942 drawings. Namely, the tennis court just to the north of the children's play area on the west side of the park was surfaced, but not striped. In addition, the original turn-of-the-century pathway running parallel to Sacramento Street from the second flight of stairs at the Sacramento/Gough Street entrance was not resurfaced. Otherwise, the only other notable difference between the original plans and executed projects is that the play areas for young children and teenagers on the east side of the park became general play areas or lawns.

March 24, 1929, p. 17; "Holladay Purchase Approved," in *ibid.*, May 7, 1935, p. 8; "Suit Ends after 60 Years," in *ibid.*, June 2, 1935, p. 5; Alexander, "Lafayette Park."

²⁴ Board of Parks Commissioners, "Proposed Landscaping – East Half: Lafayette Square" (1938), San Francisco Department of Recreation and Park; block map, San Francisco Parks: Lafayette Park folder, SFPL.

Thaddeus M. Grabow, Assistant Superintendent of Parks, oversaw the work completed at Lafayette Park during the 1930s and 1940s. Born in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1888 to Polish immigrant parents, Grabow completed his undergraduate studies at the University of Illinois (campus unknown), where he was also a cadet in the University of Illinois regiment. Grabow was living in Oakland and working for the engineering firm C. W. Leavitt when he was drafted into the military and served as a lieutenant of engineers during World War I. After the war, Grabow studied landscape architecture at the University of California, Berkeley, and in 1924 he became the City of Berkeley's Superintendent of Parks. Two years later, frustrated by Berkeley's limited budget and lack of vision for a park system – for instance, Grabow wanted the city to purchase Wildcat Canyon, which has subsequently become the centerpiece for Tilden Regional Park – Grabow resigned. In 1928 Grabow found employment with San Francisco's Parks Department, where he remained for the next thirty years and served primarily as superintendent of engineering for Golden Gate Park. Grabow died in San Francisco in 1959.²⁵

Post-WPA Developments

Lafayette Park has undergone few significant changes since the WPA period. The pathways have never changed, though some have deteriorated. In 1960 the San Francisco Department of Public Works, Bureau of Engineering, undertook a topographical survey of the park, including the planting program, in preparation for the installation of a new irrigation system, which was installed in 1964. Plans for the new irrigation system did not include significant alterations to the vegetation at Lafayette Park, and an aerial photo from 1979 confirms that the trees, plants, and shrubs landscaping remained intact. More significant changes occurred in 1981, with major upgrades to the dedicated recreational areas. Tree roots compromised the tennis courts, so the roots were removed and the courts resurfaced and striped. The playground area underwent a complete renovation. Most of the asphalt area that had always hosted the playground equipment was dug up and replaced with a lawn area. New playground equipment was constructed on the asphalt area just to the north, which was originally dedicated to a third tennis court. Additional alterations to the park include new plant beds at all the entrances and some tree/shrub/plant removal, most noticeably two rows of manicured bushes that lined the perimeter of the park from 1925 Gough Street to Sacramento, and west along Sacramento to Octavia Street. Trees have also been thinned out to the north of the playground, where a picnic area is now located.



Left: View of children's play area and maintenance building, 1963 of 1964.
Right: Sacramento and Gough Street entrance, 1964. Courtesy of SFPL.

²⁵ United States Federal Census (1920 and 1930), www.ancestry.com (accessed January 20, 2011); World War I Draft Cards, in *ibid*; "Grabow Slated for Park Superintendent," *Oakland Tribune*, December 10, 1924, p. 3; "Berkeley Park Head Resigns," in *ibid*, September 13, 1926, p. 15; Capt. Grabow Weds Mrs. Loretta Watts," in *ibid*, March 1, 1927, p. 15; Mrs. Irene Farrar to *Oakland Tribune*, December 15, 1959, p. 22; "Thaddeus M. Grabow," obituary, *San Mateo Times*, September 10, 1959, p. 27.

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The regulatory background outlined below offers an overview of federal, state, and local laws and regulations and the criteria used to assess the historic significance and eligibility of a building, structure, object, site, or district for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR), and in the local register of historic properties.

FEDERAL REGULATIONS AND CRITERIA

National Historic Preservation Act, as Amended (1966)

The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) defines the Federal Government's role in historic preservation and establishes partnerships between states, local governments, Indian tribes, and private organizations and individuals. It authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to expand and maintain the National Register of Historic Places and establishes the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) and state and tribal historic preservation offices. It also requires federal agencies to consider the effects of their undertakings on historic resources and to give the ACHP a reasonable opportunity to comment on those undertakings.

National Register of Historic Places, Criteria of Evaluation

National Register Bulletin Number 15, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, describes the Criteria for Evaluation as being composed of two factors. First, the property must be "associated with an important historic context."²⁶ The National Register identifies four possible context types, of which at least one must be applicable at the national, state, or local level. As listed under Section 8, "Statement of Significance," of the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, these are:

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important to prehistory or history.²⁷

Second, for a property to qualify under the National Register's Criteria for Evaluation, it must also retain "historic integrity of those features necessary to convey its significance."²⁸ While a property's significance relates to its role within a specific historic context, its integrity refers to "a property's physical features and how they relate to its significance."²⁹ To determine if a property retains the physical characteristics corresponding to its historic context, the National Register has identified seven aspects of integrity:

²⁶ U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, National Register Bulletin 15 (Washington, DC, 1997), 3.

²⁷ U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *How to Complete the National Register Registration Form*, National Register Bulletin 16A (Washington, DC, 1997), 75.

²⁸ National Park Service, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 3.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 44.

Location is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred.

Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property.

Setting is the physical environment of a historic property.

Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property.

Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory.

Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.

Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.³⁰

Since integrity is based on a property's significance within a specific historic context, an evaluation of a property's integrity can only occur after historic significance has been established.³¹

Certain resources are not usually considered for listing in the National Register:

- a. Religious properties
- b. Moved properties
- c. Birthplaces and graves
- d. Cemeteries
- e. Reconstructed properties
- f. Commemorative properties
- g. Properties that have achieved significance within the past fifty years

These properties can be eligible for listing, however, if they meet special requirements, called Criteria Considerations (A-G), in addition to meeting the regular requirements (that is, being eligible under one or more of the four significance criteria and possessing integrity).

Generally, such properties will qualify for the National Register if they fall within the following seven criteria considerations:

- a. A religious property deriving primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance; or
- b. A building or structure removed from its original location but which is significant primarily for architectural value, or which is the surviving structure most importantly associated with a historic person or event; or

³⁰ Ibid., 44-45.

³¹ Ibid., 45.

- c. A birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance if there is no appropriate site or building directly associated with his or her productive life; or
- d. A cemetery which derives its primary significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events; or
- e. A reconstructed building when accurately executed in a suitable environment and presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan, and when no other building or structure with the same association has survived; or
- f. A property primarily commemorative in intent if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own exceptional significance; or
- g. A property achieving significance within the past 50 years if it is of exceptional importance.

STATE REGULATIONS AND CRITERIA

California Environmental Quality Act Statute and Guidelines

When a proposed project may cause a substantial adverse change to a historical resource, CEQA requires the lead agency to carefully consider the possible impacts before proceeding (Public Resources Code Sections 21084 and 21084.1). CEQA equates a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource with a significant effect on the environment (Section 21084.1). The Act explicitly prohibits the use of a categorical exemption within the CEQA Guidelines for projects which may cause such a change (Section 21084).

A “substantial adverse change” is defined in Guidelines Section 15064.5(b) as “physical demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource or its immediate surroundings such that the significance of a historical resource would be materially impaired.” Furthermore, the “significance of an historic resource is materially impaired when a project “demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics of a historical resource that convey its historical significance and that justify its inclusion in, or eligibility for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources;” or “demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics that account for its inclusion in a local register of historical resources...” or “demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics of a historical resource that convey its historical significance and that justify its eligibility for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources as determined by a lead agency for purposes of CEQA.”

For the purposes of CEQA (Guidelines Section 15064.5), the term “historical resources” shall include the following:

1. A resource listed in, or determined to be eligible by the State Historical Resources Commission, for listing in the CRHR (Public Resources Code §5024.1, Title 14 CCR, Section 4850 et seq.).
2. A resource included in a local register of historical resources, as defined in Section 5020.1(k) of the Public Resources Code or identified as significant in a historical resource survey meeting the requirements of Section 5024.1(g) of the Public Resources Code, shall be presumed to be historically or culturally significant. Public agencies must treat any such resource as significant

unless the preponderance of evidence demonstrates that it is not historically or culturally significant.

3. Any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript which a lead agency determines to be historically significant or significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California, may be considered to be a historical resource, provided the lead agency's determination is supported by substantial evidence in light of the whole record. Generally, a resource shall be considered by the lead agency to be "historically significant" if the resource meets the criteria for listing in the CRHR (Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, Title 14 CCR, Section 4852) as follows:
 - A. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage;
 - B. Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past;
 - C. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values; or
 - D. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history. (Guidelines for the California Environmental Quality Act)

Under CEQA §15064.5, "generally, a project that follows the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring and Reconstructing Historic Buildings or the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation with Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings shall be considered as mitigated to a level of less than a significant impact on the historical resource."

California Register of Historical Resources, Criteria of Evaluation

The California Office of Historic Preservation's Technical Assistance Series #6, *California Register and National Register: A Comparison*, outlines the differences between the federal and state processes. The context types to be used when establishing the significance of a property for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources are very similar, with emphasis on local and state significance. They are:

1. It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States; or
2. It is associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history; or
3. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values; or

4. It has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important to prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nation.³²

Like the NRHP, evaluation for eligibility to the CRHR requires an establishment of historic significance before integrity is considered. California's integrity threshold is slightly lower than the federal level. As a result, some resources that are historically significant but do not meet NRHP integrity standards may be eligible for listing on the CRHR.³³

California's list of special considerations is shorter and more lenient than the NRHP. It includes some allowances for moved buildings, structures, or objects, as well as lower requirements for proving the significance of resources that are less than 50 years old and a more elaborate discussion of the eligibility of reconstructed buildings.³⁴

In addition to separate evaluations for eligibility for the CRHR, the state automatically lists on the CRHR resources that are listed or determined eligible for the NRHP through a complete evaluation process.³⁵

California Historical Resource Status Codes

The California Historic Resource Status Codes (status codes) are a series of ratings created by the California Office of Historic Preservation to quickly and easily identify the historic status of resources listed in the state's historic properties database. These codes were revised in August 2003 to better reflect the historic status options available to evaluators. The following are the seven major status code headings:

1. Properties listed in the National Register or the California Register.
2. Properties determined eligible for listing in the National Register or the California Register.
3. Appears eligible for National Register or California Register through Survey Evaluation.
4. Appears eligible for National Register or California Register through other evaluation.
5. Properties recognized as historically significant by local government.
6. Not eligible for listing or designation.
7. Not evaluated for National Register or California Register or needs reevaluation.

LOCAL CRITERIA

San Francisco City Landmark and Historic District Criteria

The San Francisco Planning Department's Preservation Bulletin No. 5, "Landmark and Historic Designation Procedures," defines a landmark as "any structure, landscape feature, site or area having historic, architectural, archeological, cultural, or aesthetic significance in the history of San Francisco, the State of California, or the nation."³⁶

³² State of California, Department of Parks and Recreation, Office of Historic Preservation, *California Register and National Register: A Comparison*, Technical Assistance Series 6 (Sacramento, 2001), 1.

³³ California Office of Historic Preservation, *California Register and National Register*, 1.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁵ All State Historical Landmarks from number 770 onward are also automatically listed on the California Register. [California Office of Historic Preservation, *California Register of Historical Resources: The Listing Process*, Technical Assistance Series 5, (Sacramento, n. d.), 1.

³⁶ City and County of San Francisco, Planning Department, "Landmark and Historic Designation Procedures," Preservation Bulletin No. 5 (April 2008), http://www.sfgov.org/site/uploadedfiles/planning/projects_reports/

Article 10 of the Planning Code for San Francisco sets forth proposals for city landmark designations with the aid of the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) Criteria in evaluating a resource's historic significance.³⁷ The Criteria for the National Register of Historical Places evaluates a resource's historic significance based on the following four criteria that are very similar to the California Register:

Criterion A (Event): Resources associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.

Criterion B (Person): Resources associated with the lives of persons important to local, California or national history.

Criterion C (Design/Construction): Resources that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction, or that represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values.

Criterion D (Information Potential): Resources that have yielded or have the potential to yield information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California or the nation.

Preservation Bulletin No. 5 defines a historic district as “any area containing a significant concentration of structures, landscape features, sites or objects having historic, architectural, archaeological, cultural or aesthetic significance which are contextually united.”³⁸ It is developed around a central theme or period of significance, and a high percentage of buildings that contribute to an understanding of its development by retaining integrity.³⁹

EVALUATION

A/1 Association with events or broad trends in local, state, or national history

Lafayette Park appears to be eligible for the NRHP/CRHR under Criterion A/1 in association with multiple events in San Francisco history. It was designated a city park in 1867 in accordance with the Van Ness Ordinance of 1855. As noted in the context statement, the Van Ness Ordinance sparked numerous lawsuits. While it lies outside the scope of this report to identify all of the properties associated with the Van Ness Ordinance and which of those properties convey a significant link to it (most likely not all of them would), aspects of Lafayette Park's history and resulting landscape render it an exceptional example of this important moment in San Francisco's planning history. The city's designation of Lafayette Park sparked one of the most celebrated and longest-running land title disputes in the city's history, pitting attorney and socialite Samuel Holladay against the city for nearly seventy years; the legal battle even continued after Holladay's death. The land title disputes resulted in a park that divides distinctly into two parts: a nineteenth-century style landscape of formal paths, discrete concentrations of vegetation, and designated recreation areas on the western half, and a less formal, densely vegetated eastern half with significant improvements dating to the Great Depression. The privately owned apartment building and surrounding property disrupts the perfect rectangle of the square, lending the park a unique perimeter and again reflecting the land title dispute; Samuel Holladay sold the

presBulletin05landdesproc.pdf (accessed July 30, 2009), 1.

³⁷Ibid, 5-6.

³⁸ City and County of San Francisco, Planning Department, Preservation Bulletin No. 5, p. 1.

³⁹ City and County of San Francisco, Planning Department, “Historic and Conservation Districts in San Francisco,” Preservation Bulletin No. 10 (January 2003) <http://www.sfgov.org/site/uploadedfiles/planning/preservation/PresBulletin10DISTRICTS.pdf> (accessed July 30, 2009), 1.

parcel while the courts still recognized his title. He wanted to ensure that some mark of the title dispute remained.

Lafayette Park more or less achieved its current design during the Great Depression, when the Recreation Department partnered with the federal Works Progress Administration to undertake significant public improvement projects throughout the city and fund jobs for tens of thousands of unemployed individuals. While Lafayette Park served as a refugee camp in the aftermath of the earthquake and fires of 1906, it was one of many parks in the city to fill this function. Similarly, the class conflict marked this period was not exclusive to Lafayette Park. For instance, the presence of Chinese at any refugee camp invariably created tension, if not outright ethnic conflict.⁴⁰ More research would have to be completed to understand how Lafayette Park's post-earthquake history stands out as particularly important for it to be considered significant in association with this local event.

B/2 Association with significant persons

The history of Lafayette Park is closely associated with Samuel Wirt Holladay, a prominent attorney, property owner, politician, and socialite in nineteenth-century San Francisco. He specialized in land title claims, and his own title claim case against the City of San Francisco for six parcels on the east side of Lafayette Park stands out as among the most notorious title disputes in the city's history, if not the most notorious. Although Holladay's mansion has been demolished, the very design of Lafayette Park, with its formal western half and heavily wooded eastern half, stems directly from this seven-decade dispute and illustrates an integral part of Samuel Holladay's biography and legacy in the history of San Francisco. Moreover, certain pathways appear to be linked to Holladay's estate. They include the Octavia Street approach to the Clay Street path, the circular pathway at the apex of the hill, where Holladay's mansion stood; the triangular pathway to the west of the circle, the three sets of stairs to the north and south of these pathways, and the narrow pathway from Washington Street to the top of the hill.

C/3 Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, represents the work of a master, or possess high artistic values

Lafayette Park embodies distinctive features of late nineteenth-century/early twentieth-century urban parks designed according to rational principles. The entrance steps and formal pathways – particularly along the western half – clearly directed park users where to promenade and where to picnic or play. Unlike romantic style parks, Lafayette Park also included a dedicated children's playground early on, giving urban kids an alternative play space to the city streets. These elements underscore the moral uplift and social control potential that park advocates sought during the turn of the century. Although the park retains these features, it does not stand out as a particularly significant example of nineteenth-century landscape design – either Romantic, pragmatic, or a mix of the two. Thaddeus Grabow is associated with the improvements completed between 1934 and 1942. While he appears to have achieved a certain level of local prominence and enjoyed a long career with the San Francisco Park and Recreation Department, he does not stand out as a master landscape architect. Moreover, his major accomplishments are more likely associated with Golden Gate Park. Therefore, Lafayette Park does not appear to be eligible for the NRHP/CRHR under Criterion C/3, as a good example of a particular type of park design, as the work of a master, or as a park of artistic distinction.

D/4 Potential to yield information significant to history or prehistory

Remnants of a building are located just to the southwest of the site where Holladay's mansion stood. They appear to be fluted concrete. Historic photos of the Holladay mansion reveal a wooden Italianate

⁴⁰ Erica Y. Z. Pan, *The Impact of the 1906 Earthquake on San Francisco's Chinatown* (New York, 1995), 42-29.

building. Thus, the remnants do not appear to be associated with the Holladay estate and the park does not appear to be eligible for the NRHP/CRHR under Criterion D/4.

Integrity

Contributing features associated with each theme and period of significance can be found in Appendix A, along with a detailed integrity analysis of contributing features associated with each theme and period of significance.

Lafayette Park retains good integrity. It has undergone some alterations during its 143-year existence. Most notably, Samuel Wirt Holladay's mansion and ancillary buildings at the top of the hill have been demolished. The Gough Street stairway and tennis courts have been constructed, and some of the vegetation has changed too. Also gone is the pathway that led from the top of the Gough and Sacramento Street entrance stairs west to Octavia Street. Other notable changes include the replacement of pruned and shaped shrubs running parallel to Sacramento and Gough Streets with deciduous trees, more sparsely planted. The beds flanking the entrance stairs are also not historic, and trees have been thinned out at various places, particularly by the picnic area, to the east of the Sacramento and Laguna Street entrance, and along the pathway from the Laguna Street entrance. The park underwent irrigation upgrades in the 1960s, and the children's playground area was upgraded in the early 1980s.

Despite these alterations, the park's landscape retains its overall integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Indeed, several of the changes mentioned above – the loss of the Holladay estate and introduction of the Gough Street Stairs and the tennis courts, for example – also mark the endpoint of the seventy-year battle of the city to gain full title over the park land and introduce another theme and period of significance, the WPA years. The irrigation program did not noticeably alter the park, and alterations to the children's playground area introduced minor changes to the landscape. For the most part, the park remains unchanged since the early 1940s and conveys the multiple themes of its historic significance.

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Appendix A

Guide to Cultural Landscape Resources

Lafayette Park
San Francisco, California

Historic Resource Evaluation

by Carey & Co., Inc.

GUIDE TO CULTURAL LANDSCAPE RESOURCES

Theme: Van Ness Ordinance and the creation of Lafayette Park, 1867-1910

Contributing Resources:

- Retaining wall defining perimeter of park
- Two flights of stairs at Sacramento and Gough
- Stairs at Sacramento and Laguna
- Laguna/Clay Street entrance
- Stairs at Laguna and Washington
- Stairs at Washington and Gough
- Washington Street entrance
- Sacramento Street entrance (westernmost of two)
- Pathways along western half of park and northern/southern edges of eastern half of park
- Children's playground and recreation area
- Planting scheme

Integrity: Fair to Excellent

The retaining wall shows signs of poor condition in some places, but it has undergone few alterations during its 100+ years. The Public Works Department demolished a portion of the wall along Gough Street in c. 1938 to create a wider opening for the new Gough/Clay Street park entrance and stairs. Other changes appear to be limited to painting and/or patching of piers on the second flight of stairs at the Sacramento and Gough Street entrance; and the southern pier at the Laguna/Clay Street entrance has been destroyed. A portion of the wall along Sacramento Street, near Octavia, has been reconstructed and features square rather than rounded piers, in conformance to the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*. Thus the retaining wall retains a high degree of integrity in all seven categories – location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Two paths dating to c. 1900 are no longer extant, including a short path that runs parallel to Gough Street from the top of the first flight of stairs at the Sacramento and Gough Street entrance as well as a path that runs east to west, parallel to Sacramento Street, from the top of the second flight of stairs at this entrance. All other paths from c. 1900 have been resurfaced at least once, but their plan remains unchanged. The stairs have not changed. Thus, overall the paths retain a high degree of integrity in all seven categories – location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

The playground and the area immediately surrounding it have been dedicated to children and recreation since the park was first developed at the turn of the twentieth century. The equipment currently located in the playground area, however, dates to the early 1980s or later. Thus, the land-use pattern for this section of the park retains integrity of location, setting, design, feeling, and association, while the actual materials and workmanship retain no integrity and are not historic.

The planting scheme related to the c. 1900 period of significance retains a fair level of integrity. While little of the original planting material appears to survive, the current design appears to conform to precedents set during the early twentieth century. Historic photos of the western half of the park reveal an open landscape of large lawns with palm trees scattered throughout the park and formal clusters of eucalyptus, elm, pine, and cypress trees, among other hearty plants. Manicured trees or bushes also dotted some walkways. While this last attribute no longer exists, the western half of the park retains the general balance of open space and clusters of hearty vegetation, achieving an overall formal feeling.

Photographs and original plans of the eastern half of the park are not available, but a planting scheme from the WPA era shows extant trees, plants, and shrubs, which likely reflect the original planting scheme for the park. During this early period, the six parcels between Gough and Octavia and fronting Clay Street – or where Clay Street would cut through if the city opened it – were privately owned. The three remaining parcels fronting Washington Street featured a large lawn area with clusters of shrubbery along the northern edge. The vegetation is denser now, particularly between the two pathways parallel to Washington Street, but the general character of this area remains largely the same. The three remaining parcels fronting Sacramento Street featured a continuous growth of dense bushes along the north side, two clusters of trees at the eastern and western ends of a large lawn area, and manicured bushes or trees evenly spaced along the southern and eastern edges of the park property, parallel to Sacramento and Gough Streets. The dense bushes largely remain, but the tree clusters and manicured trees or bushes were removed some time between 1979 and the present. Taking into account the changes that have occurred on the northern and southern quarters of the eastern half of Lafayette Park, the planting scheme retains fair integrity.

Theme: Samuel Holladay Estate Designed Landscape, 1870-1935

Contributing Resources:

- Octavia Street pathway
- Circular pathway at apex of hill
- Smaller circle to south
- Pair of stairways to the north of the circle
- Stairway to the south of circle
- Narrow pathway from Washington Street park entrance to apex
- Heavy vegetation of eucalyptus trees, palms, and other trees and shrubs

Integrity: good

Samuel Holladay initially owned six parcels of land front Clay Street if it were cut through from Gough Street to Octavia Street. He constructed a house and ancillary structures on the northwestern-most parcel (NE corner of Octavia and Clay), and landscaped the northwestern parcel and its neighbor to the east. Hedges, eucalyptus, pine, cypress, palm, and other hearty trees dominated the northwestern parcel, while eucalyptus trees, in particular, created a natural enclosure around a great lawn on the adjacent parcel to the east. The two southwestern parcels remained unimproved and not landscaped. Holladay sold the southeastern parcel during the 1890s and a building has stood on this site ever since (though not the same building). By the time Luis Lurie bought the Holladay estate, the northeastern parcel had also been sold and prominent newspaperman, Robert A. Crothers' residence stood on it; Lurie purchased this parcel too.

All of the buildings and structures associated with the Holladay Estate were demolished in 1936, but the San Francisco Department of Public Works generally retained the designed landscape of the estate and incorporated it into the WPA improvements completed at Lafayette Park during the 1930s and early 1940s. The pathways have all been resurfaced, but not otherwise altered. The old growth eucalyptus, palm, pine, elm, and cypress trees at the apex of the hill and on the eastern slope, which once created a natural screen between the house and the park and framed a large lawn area to the east of the house, largely remain standing. The Public Works Department planted more trees and bushes to create dense, natural boundaries around the oval lawn area to the east of the Holladay estate. In general, the extant

designed landscape of the Holladay estate retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, and feeling. The destruction of the house and outbuildings compromises the landscape's integrity of setting and association.

Theme: Works Progress Administration, 1934-1942

Contributing Resources:

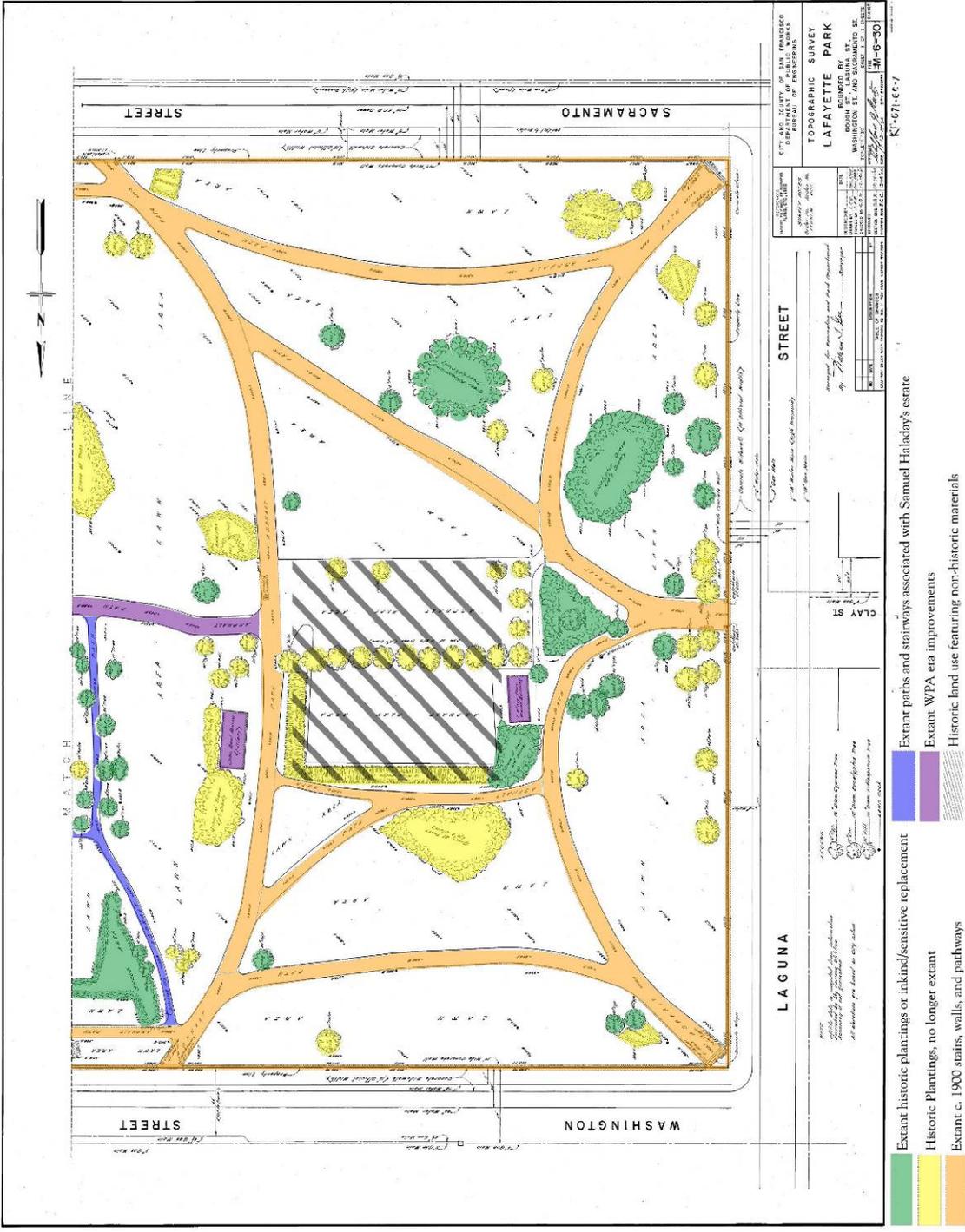
- Gough Street entrance and stairs
- Clay Street pathway
- Tennis courts
- Bathroom
- Maintenance Shed
- Benches
- Water Fountains
- Vegetation, especially around children's play area, and dense vegetation on eastern half of park to demarcate lawn areas and to frame tennis courts

Integrity: Excellent

Lafayette Park has undergone almost no substantial alterations since the WPA improvements were completed in 1942. The tennis courts stand on the two southwestern parcels of Holladay's property holding, which were had not been improved. Thus, the tennis courts, pathways, and vegetation date to the WPA era. On the two parcels to the north, which comprised the part of the Holladay Estate that Holladay used, the Department of Public Works removed all buildings. Holladay's plantings were retained and, particularly on the eastern of the two parcels, filled in. The dense vegetation encircled two open lawn and recreation areas. These areas remained essentially unchanged, though a temporary storage structure and remnants of a building from another part of the city stand on the western part of the northwestern-most parcel. Some hedges have also been removed and new vegetation has been planted near the stairs leading to the upper pathway on the northeastern half of the park. The Gough Street steps have not been altered, but the hedges flanking it were removed and new beds have been planted. Plantings near the bathroom have also been removed, with replacements planted only along the western facade. As noted earlier, the children's play area, which was remodeled and expanded during the WPA era, has since been remodeled. None of these alterations amount to significant changes in the WPA-era improvements; therefore, the resources related to the WPA-era period of significance retain excellent integrity in all seven categories.

Appendix A: Lafayette Park, Western Half, Guide to Cultural Landscape Resources

Lafayette Park, HRER



Appendix A: Lafayette Park, Eastern Half, Guide to Cultural Landscape Resources

Lafayette Park, HRER



- Extant historic plantings or inkind/sensitive replacement
- Historic plantings, no longer extant
- Extant c. 1900 stairs, walls, and pathways
- Extant paths and stairways associated with Samuel Haladay's estate
- Extant WPA era improvements
- c. 1900 Pathways, no longer extant



Park entrance at Sacramento and Gough. Looking northeast.



From top of first flight of stairs at Sacramento and Gough. Looking west.



Second flight of stairs at Sacramento and Gough Street entrance. Looking north.



Looking north from top of second flight of stairs at Sacramento and Gough Street entrance.



Looking northwest from grassy area to north of top of Sacramento and Gough Street entrance.



Eastern slope where it meets apartment building located within park, at Gough and Clay. Looking north.



Dirt pathway to the east of tennis courts. Looking north.



Eastern tennis court, from southeast. Looking northwest.



Eastern tennis court. Looking south-southeast.



Eastern tennis court. Looking south-southeast.



Western tennis court. Looking southwest.



Western tennis court. Looking south-southwest.



Western tennis court from above. Looking southeast.



Path to the north of tennis courts. Looking east-northeast.



Path to the north of tennis courts. Looking west.



Grassy area to the north of tennis courts.



Intersection of Clay and Octavia Streets. Looking west.



Looking northeast from Octavia and Clay Street intersection. Approximate location of former Holladay mansion.



Looking north from Octavia and Clay Street intersection.



Looking west from Octavia and Clay Street intersection.



Looking southwest from Octavia and Clay Street intersection.



Looking south from Octavia and Clay Street intersection.



Building remnants, possibly from Holladay estate.



Former site of Holladay mansion at peak of Lafayette Park hill. Looking north.



Former site of Holladay mansion at peak of Lafayette Park hill. Looking north.



Viewpoint to north of former Holladay estate. Looking east.



Viewpoint to north of former Holladay estate. Looking northwest.



Western set of stairs to/from "card table area" to north of form Holladay estate. Looking south.



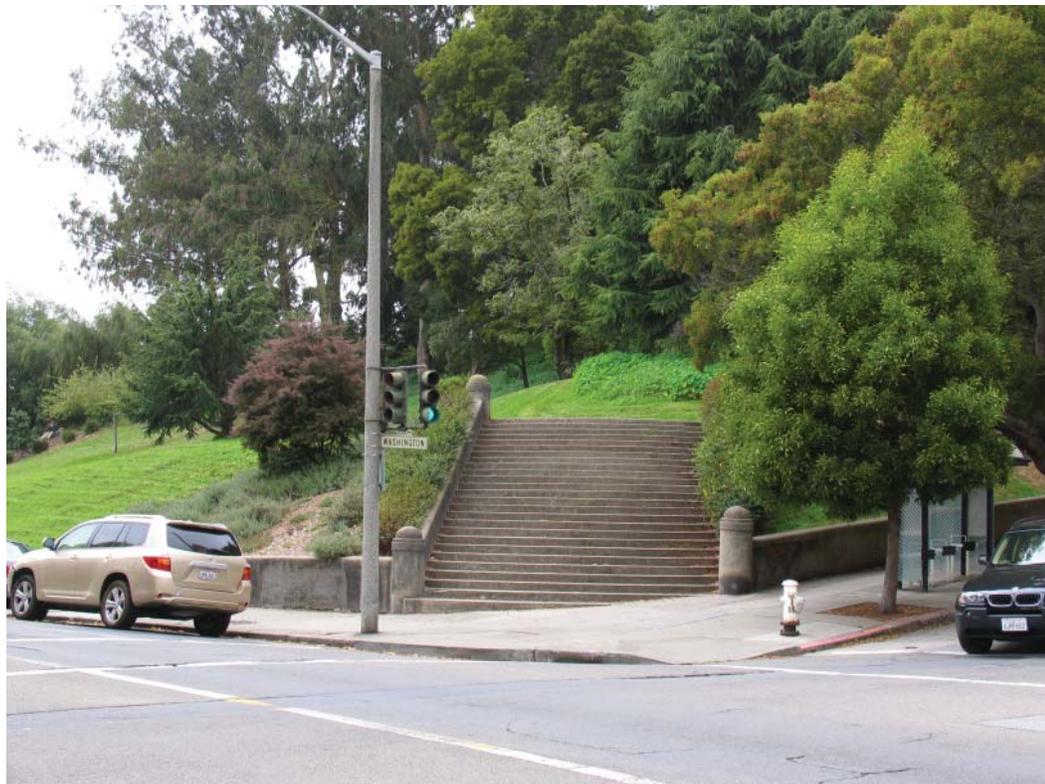
Eastern set of stairs to/from "card table area" to north of former Holladay estate. Looking south.



"Card table area" to north of Holladay estate. Looking southeast.



Detail of north slope, eastern half of park. Looking east-southeast.



Park entrance at Gough and Washington. Looking southeast.



Detail of flower bed flanking southeast side of stairs at Gough and Washington Street entrance. Looking northwest.



Pathway at top of stairs to Gough and Washington Street entrance. Looking south.



Eastern slope of park fronting Gough from Washington to Clay Streets. Facing southwest.



Gough Street stairs. Looking west.



Retaining wall, north slope. Looking west from Gough.



Retaining wall, north slope, towards Octavia Street. Looking southwest.



Washington Street entrance. Looking southwest.



Pathways from Washington Street entrance. Looking southeast.



Entrance steps at Washginton and Laguna Streets. Looking southeast.



Flower bed flanking south side of Washington and Laguna Street entrance. Looking southeast.



Paths from Washington and Laguna Street entrance. Looking southeast.



Picnic area. Looking northwest.



Maintenance building. North and east facades, looking southeast.



Maintenance building. West facade, looking east-northeast.



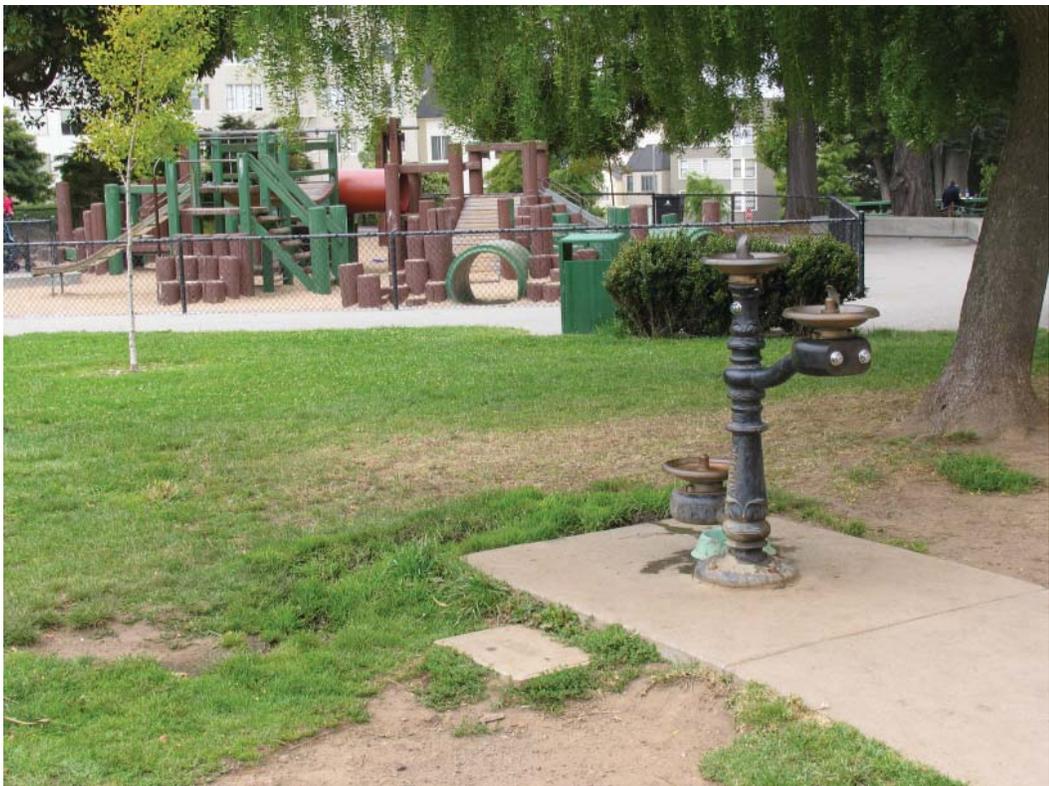
Maintenance building. South and east facades, looking northwest.



Designed planter to south of maintenance building. Looking southwest.



Playground area. Looking west.



Playground area and Victorian style drinking fountain. Looking west-northwest.



Restroom. West and south facades, looking northeast.



Restroom. South and east facades. Looking northwest.



Restroom. East and north facades, looking southwest.



Restroom. Detail of eave and rafter tails.



Path to stairs at peak of western slope. Looking east-southeast.



Path to stairs at peak of western slope. Looking northwest.



Entrance at Sacramento and Laguna Streets. Looking northeast.



Looking north from entrance at Sacramento and Laguna Streets.



Laguna Street entrance. Looking east.



Eastern entrance on Sacramento Street. Looking northeast.



Western entrance on Sacramento Street. Looking northwest.



Looking west from western entrance on Sacramento Street.



Pathway running parallel to Sacramento Street. Looking west.



Lawn and pathways, southwest quadrant of park. Looking southwest.

Appendix C

DPR 523 A & B Forms

Lafayette Park
San Francisco, California

Historic Resource Evaluation

by Carey & Co., Inc.

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

*Resource Name or # Lafayette Park

- B1. Historic Name: Wake Robin Lodge
- B2. Common Name:
- B3. Original Use: Residence and main building at resort B4. Present Use: single-family residence

*B5. **Architectural Style:** Octagon house in Bay Tradition Style

*B6. **Construction History:** Constructed c. 1901. Annex added to northwest side in 1905; demolished, n.d c. (1969?). Covered porch added c. 1908; remodeled, n.d. (1969?). Sleeping porches enclosed, n.d.; windows installed, n.d., and subsequently remodeled, 1992. Balcony installed, n.d. New windows on south and southeast facades, n.d. New windows north and northeast facades, n.d. New window north façade, 1992. Additions to northeast and northwest, n.d. (1969?). Studio, c. 1980s. Connector between studio and house, 1992.

*B7. **Moved?** No Yes Unknown **Date:** **Original Location:**

*B8. **Related Features:**
Stone stairway to the west of house, leading down to creek.

B9a. Architect: unknown

b. Builder: unknown

*B10. **Significance:** persons of significance **Theme:** Jack London **Area:** Glen Ellen, CA

Period of Significance: 1905-1911

Property Type: Residential

Applicable Criteria: 2

HISTORIC CONTEXT

San Francisco, the Masses, and Public Parks

San Francisco's early American settlement was disorderly, to say the least. Tens of thousands of people descended upon the quiet and tiny pueblo of San Francisco after gold was discovered in the Sierra Nevada in 1848. Within thirty years, the city's population exploded from a few hundred to well over 200,000. Californios sold some of their rancho lands to eager settlers, but squatters claimed property rights as often as not. The Land Act of 1851 did little to help matters; the lengthy and expensive judicial process to settle title claims was inefficient for the rapidly rising boomtown by the bay. In 1855, the City of San Francisco thus introduced its own legislation to settle land claims: the Van Ness Ordinance, San Francisco's first attempt at city planning. As summed up by Anne and Arthur Bloomfield, "this law provided for the laying out of streets from Larkin west to Divisadero, and the reservation of land here and there for public use. A surveying commission... chose the streets we have now, plus twenty-eight school lots, twenty-five firehouse lots, a hospital space, and nine parks, including Lafayette and Alta Plaza, in what we know as Pacific Heights."

(See continuation sheet)

B11. Additional Resource Attributes:

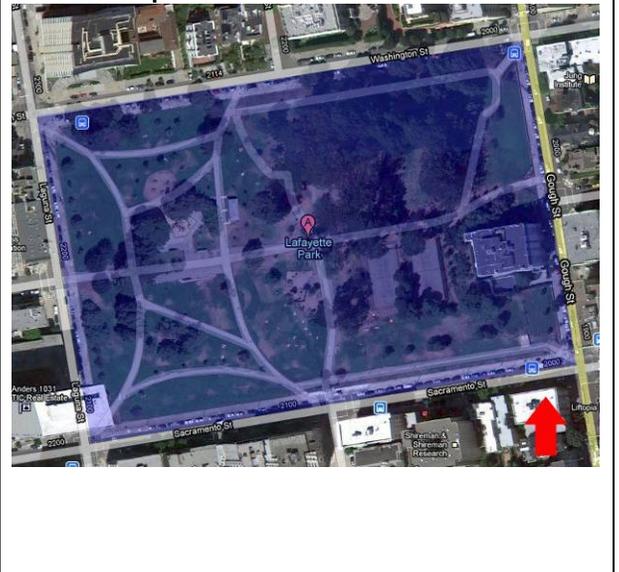
*B12. **References:**

See continuation sheet.

*B14. **Evaluator:** Carey & Co., Inc.

***Date of Evaluation:** October 22, 2010

Location Map



*Recorded by: Carey & Co., Inc.

*Date: October 29, 2010

Continuation Update

Continuation of P3a. Description:

park element of the Van Ness Ordinance reflected a growing trend in urban America to find ways to curb the perceived rise of moral decay. Mid-nineteenth-century cities like New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Buffalo, Chicago, and San Francisco were crowded, dangerous – both in terms of crime or riots and disasters like fire – unsanitary and increasingly diverse demographically. And as working conditions shifted from agrarian and skilled craftsmanship to industrial wage labor, urban residents, especially, sought to engage in leisure activities during their non-work hours. With the rise of gas light, a thriving urban night life also emerged. Taverns, brothels, opera houses, and other cheap amusements flourished. Conditions like these posed a threat to the social order.

Starting in the mid-nineteenth century, park advocates nationwide espoused a belief that parks could eliminate social ills and counter the negative impacts of an urban environment on the city's population. Summarized by urban park historian Terence Young, "Park boosters characterized the improved society that was supposed to emerge with parks by four social ideals...: public health, prosperity, democratic equality, and social coherence." Stated another way, parks provided fresh air and free spaces for recreation and exercise for all, higher real estate values, tourism, increased commercial activity, and a means for social control through regulated rules of conduct.

Park advocates fell into two camps. Romantics, led by America's preeminent landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmsted, believed in the overwhelming power of nature to renew the human spirit. Parks, with their rolling hills and copious greenery, should be sufficiently large to shield users from views of the city; they provided an urban escape into the wilderness. Rationalists, on the other hand, understood parks to be manufactured spaces with functional components that served the needs of an increasingly diverse urban society and fostered social control. They advocated formal flower beds that were obvious attempts to illustrate beauty as well as children's playgrounds, baseball diamonds, and museums, all of which kept the children off the streets and out of trouble, and provided adults with culturally enriching leisure alternatives to morally dubious spaces like taverns and concert halls. Following the Civil War rationalistic parks surpassed romantic notions in popularity, reflecting trends like the increased presence of women in public spaces, rapid industrialization and the growth of a dynamic labor movement, and increased immigration from eastern and southern Europe.

Despite the passage of the Van Ness Ordinance and complaints since the Gold Rush Era that San Francisco lacked public green spaces, the city's park movement took off slowly. The frenzied pace of development contributed to this, as did the tendency of San Franciscans to claim public spaces for all sorts of crowded and often rowdy gatherings for public expression of politics, ethnic pride, and other causes.¹ Other residents, and most famously the developers of South Park and Robert B. Woodward in the Mission, offered private park spaces that people could enjoy for a small fee. The conservative fiscal and cultural politics of San Francisco's People's Party, which grew out of the Vigilance Committee of 1856 and controlled the city's government and coffers for the next decade, also deterred any park development.

Finally, in the late 1860s, San Francisco began to develop its public park system, beginning with Golden Gate Park. Golden Gate Park combined the romantic and rationalist theories of park design. The vast size of the park in a remote location of the city, and the monumental undertaking it was to transform a landscape of sand dunes into a park heavily influence the design of the park. The eastern end hosted dedicated leisure spaces, like a children's playground, while bridges, lakes, paths, and open spaces characterized the western end. Over time, particularly in preparation for the Midwinter Fair of 1894 and during the Great Depression, Golden Gate Park gained more dedicated recreation and leisure spaces.

Meanwhile, the city's many small parks languished until the turn of the century. Before 1900, the city's parks and squares came under the supervision of the Department of Streets, Sewers, and Squares, which had far greater practical concerns to attend to before addressing green space. In 1900, however, a new city charter passed and created the Board of Park Commissioners, with John McLaren serving as superintendent of the twelve existing properties. The new board also advocated for new parks in neglected areas like the Mission District and areas south of Market Street. Although the board designed formal plantings for many of the parks, the landscapes San Francisco's small park generally followed the romantic style of park design. Larger parks, like Lafayette Square and Mission Dolores Park, featured dedicated playground spaces and other amenities.

*Recorded by: Carey & Co., Inc.

*Date: October 29, 2010

Continuation Update

Continuation of B10. Significance:

The San Francisco Earthquake and Fires of 1906

Unless otherwise noted, the following account of the earthquake and fires of 1906 is excerpted from the San Francisco Planning Departments historic context statement for the Mission District, "City within a City: Historic Context Statement for San Francisco's Mission District," (November 2007), 55-61:

"San Francisco was woefully unprepared for the great quake of 1906. In the pre-dawn darkness of April 18th, miles below the San Francisco Peninsula, two geologic plates along the San Andreas Fault suddenly slipped and lurched past each other by thirteen feet. The massive shock waves propagated through the earth's crust and reached the surface within seconds. The earthquake, estimated at 7.8 on the Richter scale, arrived with violent undulations at 5:12 a.m. and lasted for close to a minute. The people of San Francisco were awoken that early morning by unimaginable chaos and calamity. The shock waves buckled streets and rails, snapped water and gas pipes, knocked houses off their foundations, collapsed numerous masonry buildings, and wreaked havoc within those structures that withstood the onslaught. Many of the severely damaged and destroyed buildings were located on the poorly compacted "made land" of sand and debris that had been used to fill the bays, marshes, and creeks; these soft lands liquefied, intensifying the shock waves.

"When the shock waves subsided, despite the damage, much of San Francisco had survived. But no sooner had the stunned and terrified populace begun to attend to the urgencies of the injured and trapped, than an even greater calamity unfolded. Approximately 52 separate fires erupted throughout the South of Market, a dense landscape of industry, manufacturing, warehouses, and cheap housing built on unstable sands and marshes. The ruptured gas lines, overturned furnaces, and damaged industrial plants of the badly shaken area set blazes that spread with ferocious intensity. The primarily wooden building stock went up like kindling. Despite half a dozen major fires in San Francisco that had occurred during the Gold Rush era, widespread use of wood construction had continued, in part because masonry materials were neither readily available nor safe in earthquakes....

"Though enough water remained in undamaged reservoirs to fight the initial fires, thousands of localized breaks in water lines throughout the City made firefighting largely futile, despite the valiant efforts of the Fire Department. The fires spread and merged unchecked throughout the day, consuming the entire urban core, and then continuing west and north into residential neighborhoods. Attempts to use explosives to create firebreaks often compounded the critical situation; the explosives, where improperly set, caused new blazes, and they also ruptured additional water lines....

"San Francisco was a wasted land on April 21st, 1906. The firestorm left behind apocalyptic ruins, within which virtually nothing remained standing. More than 3,000 lives were lost and more than half of the City's 410,000 residents were left as refugees without homes or many, if any, possessions. Four-fifths of the city's buildings totaling 28,000 had burned to the ground, including the entire urban core of nearly five square miles: the downtown commercial center, the vast industrial and working-class tableland of South of Market, and the first ring of outlying residential neighborhoods....

"For the immediate needs of the refugees, eleven relief camps were set up on public parks throughout the City, including at Mission Dolores Park. In Golden Gate Park, the Army constructed a virtual town, with large residential barracks, tented housing, latrines and bathhouses, laundries, and other services. This Army relief town was accessible for the North of Market refugees, but fewer of the Mission or South of Market refugees trekked out to the sandy wastes." Within months the tent cities were deemed unsanitary and refugees were removed to other parks. "Later, the relief agencies constructed and sold approximately 5,300 earthquake shacks in the relief camps, designed as affordable interim housing for those with moderate incomes. Those of the poorest classes who could not afford them had to fend for themselves."

Parks and the WPA in the 1930s

Between 1930 and 1933 more than 100,000 workers, almost a third of the workforce, lost their jobs in San Francisco. The growing number of unemployed workers placed a new demand on recreational programming and facilities. By using federal funds

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*Date: October 29, 2010

Continuation Update

Continuation of B10. Significance:

to employ workers in the early 1930s, and later by establishing a partnership with the Civil Works Administration in 1933 and the Works Progress Administration in 1935, the Recreation Department upgraded their facilities, developed new programming, and created a lasting legacy of neighborhood parks and recreation facilities. Reduced to the simplest of terms, the federal government disbursed over \$25 million to San Francisco between 1935 and 1939, to which the city added over \$4.5 million. A quarter of these funds were spent on materials and three quarters were spent on labor, representing nearly 30.5 million hours of labor, "the equivalent of a force of 10,000 men working 381 eight-hour days."

In 1935, President Roosevelt established the WPA with the aim of putting the country back to work. The WPA attempted to tap the productive power of the unemployed while also "building up the spirit and morale" of the community. It offered the first employment opportunity in years for thousands of workers, and the administration partnered with local governments to determine useful projects for the local community. In Northern California, WPA projects included hundreds of public buildings, road, streets, bridges, murals, parks, playgrounds, and swimming pools. The WPA also sponsored work training programs, historical surveys, recreation activities, art projects, and scientific research.

Through a partnership with the WPA, various San Francisco agencies were able to proceed with a host of improvement plans that had previously lacked funding. Thirty-one parks and three other miscellaneous landscaping projects benefited from WPA funds. Fleishhacker Zoo, which was already under construction, garnered the most funds, at \$3.2 million, while the government funded over \$2.5 million in projects to both the Golden Gate Park and the Golden Gate International Exposition (GGIE) grounds. Aquatic Park was the next largest undertaking, at \$1.8 million, and from there the cost of park projects declined precipitously. The remaining thirty projects averaged \$64,872, with Old St. Mary's Park receiving just \$1,173 at the low end, and Kezar Pavilion and Stadium receiving \$163,488 at the high end. Park projects totaled \$12,356,515. According to WPA San Francisco Branch Manager William Mooser, Jr., the administration's work with the city "can be measure by more than mere improvements to the City's recreational facilities, W.P.A. contributions are evidenced in the increased number of cultural and educational activities in which many thousands more of San Francisco's citizenry are participating than previously." In this regard, the joint program accomplished more than the construction of new and improved playgrounds, clubhouses, and parks, but was also able to promote local community development, provide educational programs, and offer free entertainment that had a lasting influence on the community.

Lafayette Park

Samuel Holladay (1823-1915) challenged the city's claims to ownership of land that is now known as Lafayette Park and sued for title. Holladay had arrived in San Francisco from New York in 1849 and quickly established himself as an attorney and large landholder. After passage of the Van Ness Ordinance, he built a reputation for litigating title claims, and as attorney for the City and County of San Francisco from 1860-1863, Holladay successfully defended the city's claims to at least seven locations designated for schools, parks, and the county jail. In the mid-1860s Holladay found himself applying this experience and knowledge in defense of his own title claim to lands that encompassed the site of Lafayette Park. Holladay argued that the city did not have a right to the land under the Van Ness Ordinance and, moreover, the ordinance did not allow the city to dedicate four square blocks to public use. San Francisco, however, argued that Holladay's claims to the land were provisional in 1855, not settled, and therefore the city had a right to ownership under the Van Ness Ordinance. The city also defended its right to dedicate such a large expanse of land to a public park. This legal battle continued for seventy years, mostly in Holladay's favor.

In the meantime, a private estate and a public park grew up in tandem. Holladay fenced in six parcels between Gough and Octavia, including the peak of the Clay Street hill. He dug a well at the northeast corner of Clay and Octavia in 1869, then constructed a water tower, stable, gardens, and Italianate Victorian mansion, which he occupied from 1870 until the early 1900s. Holladay Heights, as the Holladay family referred to their estate, became a center for social, political, and literary gatherings, with such notable figures as Bret Harte, Mark Twain, Leland Stanford, and William Crocker frequenting the grounds. According to one journalist, the house "was a landmark that might be seen from any point within ten miles." By 1897, Holladay sold off a parcel of his land fronting Gough Street. Reverend Robert C. Foute, rector of Grace Church, constructed his residence at 1915 Gough Street; since 1914, the St. Regis Apartment Building, designed by master architect C. A. Muessdorffer, has occupied this site (now 1925

*Recorded by: Carey & Co., Inc.

*Date: October 29, 2010

Continuation Update

Continuation of B10. Significance:

Gough Street). A second house was constructed at the northwest corner of Gough and Clay (2001 Gough), where prominent San Francisco resident, and journalist and proprietor of the *San Francisco Bulletin*, Robert A. Crothers lived from 1918 until about 1930.

Progress on the development of Lafayette Square, later renamed Lafayette Park, occurred more slowly. The City had several other title claims besides Holladay's to fight before much work on developing the park land could begin. Most of these fights were settled in favor of the city by 1900, resulting in a park bounded by Octavia, Washington, Laguna, and Sacramento, as well as a patchwork of land to the east of Octavia, including the would-be continuation of Clay Street through the center of Holladay's claim and narrow strips of land to the north and south of Holladay's claims, comprised the new park. At this point, the city could move forward with development plans. Until 1900, however, the Department of Streets, Sewers, and Squares oversaw the city's small parks, but had little time or money to attend to them. Thus, Lafayette Square remained little more than an "unimproved sand hill" through the 1890s. With the creation of the Board of Park Commissioners in 1900, formal development of the small parks finally got underway.

Historic photographs and maps provide some idea of how many improvements at Lafayette Park had been made six years later, by the time the earthquake and fires of 1906 struck: Most of the retaining wall that frames the park had been constructed, though only a makeshift wood retaining wall supported the eastern end of the Washington Street side of the hill. Some pathways were laid out as well, including one from the southeast corner of Washington and Laguna, which forked to the east and south, and a pathway heading north from Sacramento Street with two forks lead to the west existed by 1906. Some plantings – trees, shrubs, grass – were in place too. Other photos, however, reveal a rugged site of little more dirt and weeds. Despite the slow progress of formal landscaping, the streets facing Lafayette Park attracted wealthy residents who constructed ornate mansions.

Lafayette Park became the site of class conflict following the earthquake and fires of April 1906. Like many other parks and public spaces in the city, Lafayette Park, served as an emergency refugee camp. Displaced residents quickly set up canvass tents and make-shift kitchens to accommodate basic domestic needs. Originally, the City told camp residents that they could remain in their temporary accommodations until August 1907. By the fall of 1906, however, the Parks Commission was building temporary wooden shelters and ordering refugees to vacate the tent camps. Refugees at all the camps invariably protested the government's change of heart, but at Lafayette Park the protests took on a particularly classist tone. Mrs. J. W. Scott led the refugee protest in Lafayette Park against removal. Dripping with diamonds and other jewels to emphasize her family's wealth and refinement, Scott chastised the local government's decision to refuse to build cottages or allow refugees to remain at Lafayette Park as a cowardly act that reflected the "whims of the rich" who lived in the surrounding neighborhood. Despite ongoing protests, only two tents remained in Lafayette Square by February 1907.

Little development of note occurred at Lafayette Park between the aftermath of the earthquake and fires and the onset of the Great Depression. A tourist map from 1911 illustrates the plan of Lafayette Park as a symmetrical grouping of paths leading to the center, also the apex, of the park where fountain stood. A colonnade of trees lined the western approach, while two buildings, less formally planted trees, and a water tower disrupted the symmetry of the eastern portion of the park. The map is not accurate from the center to the east, but the access points and pathways do appear to reflect reality on the western portion of the map. In 1912 the Park commission funded construction of a convenience station (or bathroom) at Lafayette Park, and stone sidewalks with granite curbing were constructed in 1913. The Holladay mansion and its gardens remained standing, but grew increasingly eerie as the vacated property deteriorated from neglect.

Developer Louis Lurie introduced one potentially substantial change to the park. He acquired the Holladay property in the 1920s and tried to compel the City to open Clay Street to Octavia Street. The road was intended to provide access to an apartment building Lurie planned to construct on the site of the former Holladay mansion. While Lurie had the Board of Supervisors on his side, neighborhood residents and the Park Commissioners, led by Herbert Fleishhacker, vehemently opposed Lurie's development schemes. He finally abandoned them and instead sold the Holladay property to the City and County of San Francisco in 1935.

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Continuation of B10. Significance:

Lafayette Park was one of the many San Francisco parks that the city target for improvements during the Great Depression. Drawings from 1934 show that the city at least wanted to created a dedicated path through the old Holladay property, which Louis Lurie still owned, from the apex of the hill to the south of Clay Street, them diagonally to Gough Street, at the northeast edge of Holladay's property. Two events occurred in 1935 that allowed the city to pursue more ambitious plans: President Franklin Roosevelt established the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and Louis Lurie sold the Holladay land to San Francisco.

With the entire four blocks of the park finally at the city's disposal, and with federal funds available to fund projects, Lafayette Park underwent over \$89,000 worth of improvements, representing over 100,000 hours of labor between 1936 and 1938. All of the existing paths on the west side of the park were resurfaced, as was the children's play area. New work in this section of the park consisted of converting the original convenience station into a utility shed, building a tennis court directly to the shed's east, and constructing a new, larger convenience station to the east of the tennis courts. On the eastern half of the park, the city merely maintained the areas it had owned since the nineteenth century, meaning it retained the lawn areas parallel to Washington and Sacramento Streets, which flanked the Holladay property, and resurfaced the paths that framed these areas. Several drinking fountains were installed throughout the park.

The former Holladay property underwent the most extensive changes during the WPA-improvement era. Holladay's mansion and water tower were demolished; however, the Department of Public Works retained and resurfaced all of the pathways and stairs associated with the old estate. The department also retained large pine, eucalyptus, and palm trees that framed the space where the house stood and an open lawn area immediately to its east. The city dedicated the open area where the mansion stood as a play area for mothers and young children. A second playground dedicated to teenagers was planned down the hill and to the east of the young children's playground. A card table area that stepped down to a viewing area (both pre-existing spaces with stairs already built) was planned for the space to the north of the circular drive that had fronted the west side of the house, and two tennis courts were constructed on the southern half of the former Holladay property. Trees and shrubs enclosed all of these dedicated areas, and one or two benches were installed in each area as well.

The Crothers residence on Gough Street, just north of Clay, was also demolished (though this may have occurred earlier), and the city finally addressed the extension of Clay Street. Rather than open the road, the Park Department built a steep stairway from the middle of the Gough Street edge to a pathway that continued west through the center of the park all the way to Laguna. It also forked to the northeast, where it connected with the pathway leading to the steps at the corner of Washington and Gough

WPA-funded work on Lafayette Park continued through 1942, with minor design changes occurring from the original 1938 drawings and the final 1942 drawings. Namely, the tennis court just to the north of the children's play area on the west side of the park was surfaced, but not striped. In addition, the original turn-of-the-century pathway running parallel to Sacramento Street from the second flight of stairs at the Sacramento/Gough Street entrance was not resurfaced. Otherwise, the only other notable difference between the original plans and executed projects is that the play areas for young children and teenagers on the east side of the park became general play areas or lawns.

Thaddeus M. Grabow, Assistant Superintendent of Parks, oversaw the work completed at Lafayette Park during the 1930s and 1940s. Born in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1888 to Polish immigrant parents, Grabow completed his undergraduate studies at the University of Illinois (campus unknown), where he was also a cadet in the University of Illinois regiment. Grabow was living in Oakland and working for the engineering firm C. W. Leavitt when he was drafted into the military and served as a lieutenant of engineers during World War I. After the war, Grabow studied landscape architecture at the University of California, Berkeley, and in 1924 he became the City of Berkeley's Superintendent of Parks. Two years later, frustrated by Berkeley's limited budget and lack of vision for a park system – for instance, Grabow wanted the city to purchase Wildcat Canyon, which has subsequently become the centerpiece for Tilden Regional Park – Grabow resigned. In 1928 Grabow found employment with San Francisco's Parks Department, where he remained for the next thirty years and served primarily as superintendent of engineering for Golden Gate Park. Grabow died in San Francisco in 1959.

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Continuation of B10. Significance:

Post-WPA Developments

Lafayette Park has undergone few significant changes since the WPA period. The pathways have never changed, though some have deteriorated. In 1960 the San Francisco Department of Public Works, Bureau of Engineering, undertook a topographical survey of the park, including the planting program, in preparation for the installation of a new irrigation system, which was installed in 1964. Plans for the new irrigation system did not include significant alterations to the flora at Lafayette Park, and an aerial photo from 1979 confirms that the trees, plants, and shrubs landscaping remained intact. More significant changes occurred in 1981, with major upgrades to the dedicated recreational areas. Tree roots compromised the tennis courts, so the roots were removed and the courts resurfaced and striped. The playground area underwent a complete renovation. Most of the asphalt area that had always hosted the playground equipment was dug up and replaced with a lawn area. New playground equipment was constructed on the asphalt area just to the north, which was originally dedicated to a third tennis court. Additional alterations to the park include new plant beds at all the entrances and some tree/shrub/plant removal, most noticeably two rows of shaped bushes that lined the perimeter of the park from 1925 Gough Street to Sacramento, and west along Sacramento to the Sacramento Street entrance. Trees have also been thinned out to the north of the playground, where a picnic area is now located.

EVALUATION

A/1 Association with events or broad trends in local, state, or national history

Lafayette Park appears to be eligible for the NRHP/CRHR under Criterion A/1 in association with multiple events in San Francisco history. It was designated a city park in 1867 in accordance with the Van Ness Ordinance of 1855. As noted in the context statement, the Van Ness Ordinance sparked numerous lawsuits. While it lies outside the scope of this report to identify all of the properties associated with the Van Ness Ordinance and which of those properties convey a significant link to it (most likely not all of them would), aspects of Lafayette Park's history and resulting landscape render it an exceptional example of this important moment in San Francisco's planning history. The city's designation of Lafayette Park sparked one of the most celebrated and longest-running land title disputes in the city's history, pitting attorney and socialite Samuel Holladay against the city for nearly seventy years; the legal battle even continued after Holladay's death. The land title disputes resulted in a park that divides distinctly into two parts: a nineteenth-century style landscape of formal paths, discrete concentrations of vegetation, and designated recreation areas on the western half, and a less formal, densely vegetated eastern half with significant improvements dating to the Great Depression. The privately owned apartment building and surrounding property disrupts the perfect rectangle of the square, lending the park a unique perimeter and again reflecting the land title dispute; Samuel Holladay sold the parcel while the courts still recognized his title. He wanted to ensure that some mark of the title dispute remained.

Lafayette Park more or less achieved its current design during the Great Depression, when the Recreation Department partnered with the federal Works Progress Administration to undertake significant public improvement projects throughout the city and fund jobs for tens of thousands of unemployed individuals. While Lafayette Park served as a refugee camp in the aftermath of the earthquake and fires of 1906, it was one of many parks in the city to fill this function. Similarly, the class conflict marked this period was not exclusive to Lafayette Park. For instance, the presence of Chinese at any refugee camp invariably created tension, if not outright ethnic conflict.¹ More research would have to be completed to understand how Lafayette Park's post-earthquake history stands out as particularly important for it to be considered significant in association with this local event.

B/2 Association with significant persons

The history of Lafayette Park is closely associated with Samuel Wirt Holladay, a prominent attorney, property owner, politician, and socialite in nineteenth-century San Francisco. He specialized in land title claims, and his own title claim case against the City of San Francisco for six parcels on the east side of Lafayette Park stands out as among the most notorious title disputes in the city's history, if not the most notorious. Although Holladay's mansion has been demolished, the very design of Lafayette Park, with its formal western half and heavily wooded eastern half, stems directly from this seven-decade dispute and illustrates an integral part of Samuel Holladay's biography and legacy in the history of San Francisco. Moreover, certain pathways appear to be linked to Holladay's estate. They include the Octavia Street approach to the Clay Street path, the circular pathway at the apex of the hill,

¹ Erica Y. Z. Pan, *The Impact of the 1906 Earthquake on San Francisco's Chinatown* (New York, 1995), 42-29.

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Continuation of B10. Significance:

where Holladay's mansion stood; the triangular pathway to the west of the circle, the three sets of stairs to the north and south of these pathways, and the narrow pathway from Washington Street to the top of the hill.

C/3 Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, represents the work of a master, or possess high artistic values

Lafayette Park embodies distinctive features of late nineteenth-century/early twentieth-century urban parks designed according to rational principles. The entrance steps and formal pathways – particularly along the western half – clearly directed park users where to promenade and where to picnic or play. Unlike romantic style parks, Lafayette Park also included a dedicated children's playground early on, giving urban kids an alternative play space to the city streets. These elements underscore the moral uplift and social control potential that park advocates sought during the turn of the century. Although the park retains these features, it does not stand out as a particularly significant example of nineteenth-century landscape design – either Romantic, pragmatic, or a mix of the two. Thaddeus Grabow is associated with the improvements completed between 1934 and 1942. While he appears to have achieved a certain level of local prominence and enjoyed a long career with the San Francisco Park and Recreation Department, he does not stand out as a master landscape architect. Moreover, his major accomplishments are more likely associated with Golden Gate Park. Therefore, Lafayette Park does not appear to be eligible for the NRHP/CRHR under Criterion C/3, as a good example of a particular type of park design, as the work of a master, or as a park of artistic distinction.

D/4 Potential to yield information significant to history or prehistory

Remnants of a building are located just to the southwest of the site where Holladay's mansion stood. They appear to be fluted concrete. Historic photos of the Holladay mansion reveal a wooden Italianate building. Thus, the remnants do not appear to be associated with the Holladay estate and the park does not appear to be eligible for the NRHP/CRHR under Criterion D/4.

Integrity

Lafayette Park retains good integrity. It has undergone some alterations during its 143-year existence. Most notably, Samuel Wirt Holladay's mansion and ancillary buildings at the top of the hill have been demolished. The Gough Street stairway and tennis courts have been constructed, and some of the vegetation has changed too. Also gone is the pathway that led from the top of the Gough and Sacramento Street entrance stairs west to Octavia Street. Other notable changes include the replacement of pruned and shaped shrubs running parallel to Sacramento and Gough Streets with deciduous trees, more sparsely planted. The beds flanking the entrance stairs are also not historic, and trees have been thinned out at various places, particularly by the picnic area, to the east of the Sacramento and Laguna Street entrance, and along the pathway from the Laguna Street entrance. The park underwent irrigation upgrades in the 1960s, and the children's playground area was upgraded in the early 1980s.

Despite these alterations, the park's landscape retains its overall integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Indeed, several of the changes mentioned above – the loss of the Holladay estate and introduction of the Gough Street Stairs and the tennis courts, for example – also mark the endpoint of the seventy-year battle of the city to gain full title over the park land and introduce another theme and period of significance, the WPA years. The irrigation program did not noticeably alter the park, and alterations to the children's playground area introduced minor changes to the landscape. For the most part, the park remains unchanged since the early 1940s and conveys the multiple themes of its historic significance. To be completed to determine definitively if Lafayette Park contains enough historic artifacts to be considered a site of importance, it does appear to hold that potential. Therefore, Lafayette Park may be eligible for the NRHP/CRHR under Criterion D/4.

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