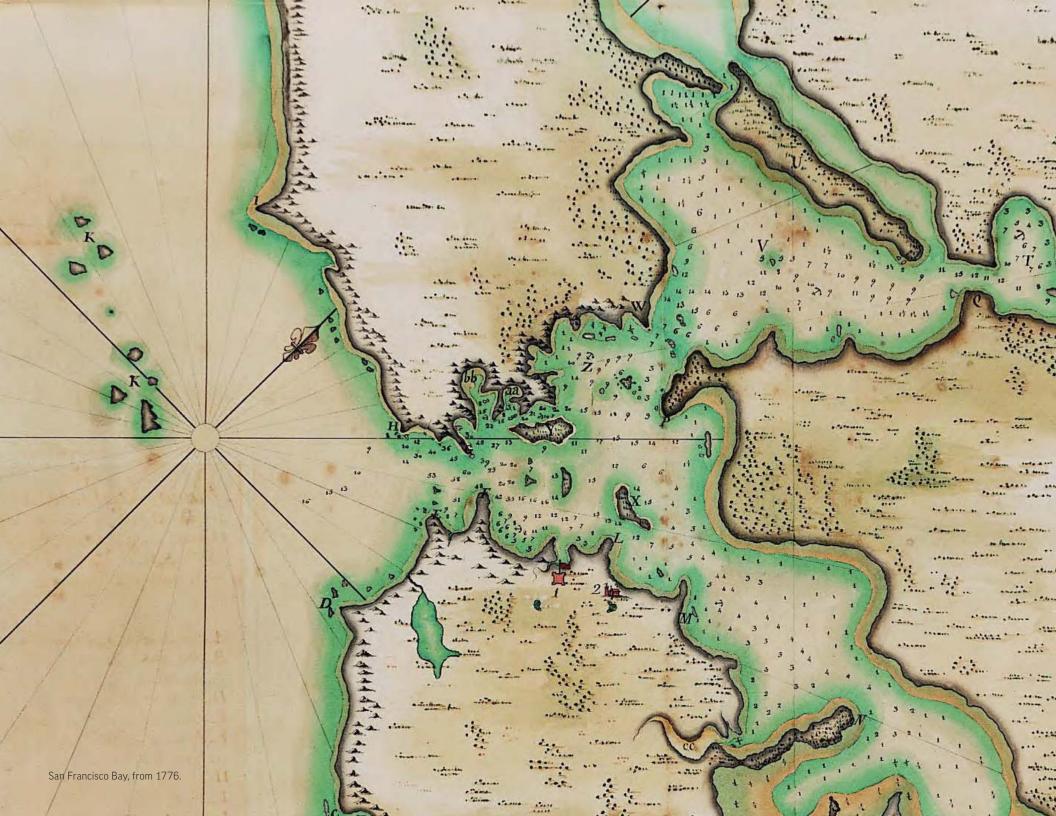
May 2013

Concept Study prepared for the Presidio of San Francisco by Ralph Appelbaum Associates



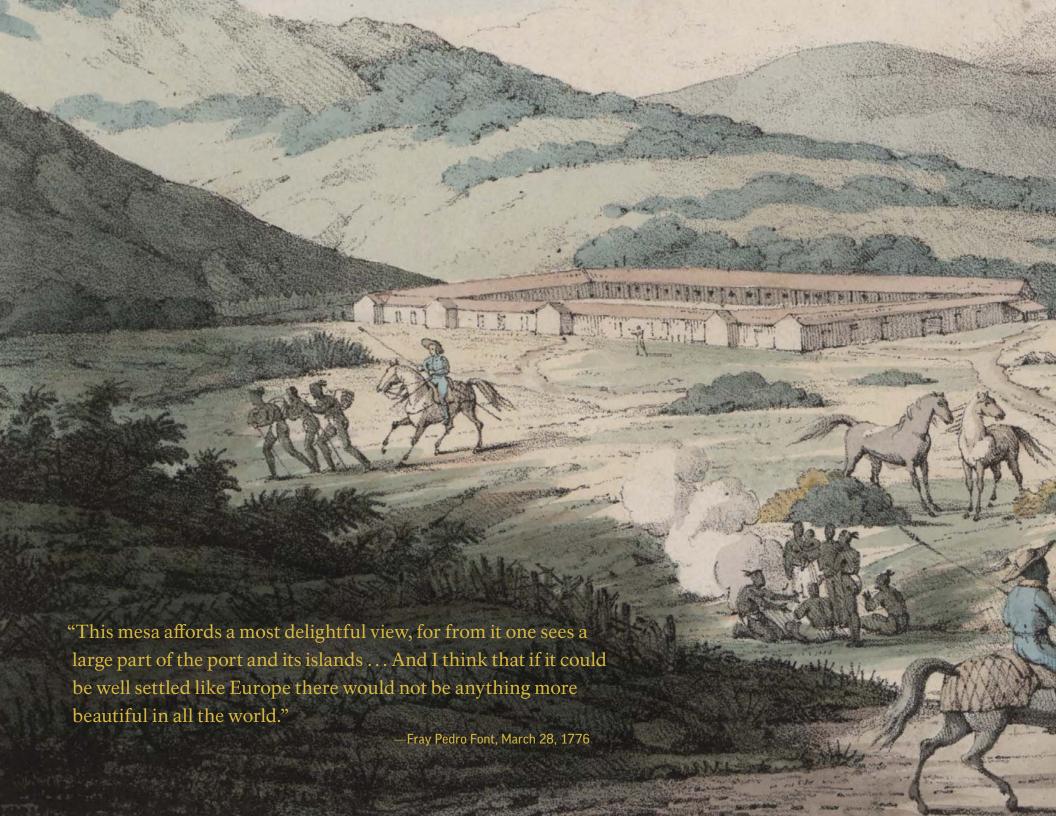
Concept Study prepared for the Presidio of San Francisco by Ralph Appelbaum Associates "My people were once around me like the sands of the shore ... many ... many ...

They have died like the grass. They have gone to the mountains."

- PEDRO ALCANTARA, OHLONE INDIAN (BORN 1786, INTERVIEWED 1850)

"I see my people, like the Phoenix, rising from the ashes—to take our rightful place in today's society—back from extinction."

— ALBERT GALVAN, OHLONE DESCENDANT (BORN 1960, INTERVIEWED 1995)







HERITAGE PROGRAM

The new Presidio Heritage Program is developing an array of sites and experiences that offer immersive, informative, and emotionally rich encounters that connect visitors to the park and invite them to become involved with its future. These sites and experiences are underpinned by research done in partnership with local universities and overlain with public programs developed in collaboration with community partners.



Mission

The Heritage Program reveals and elevates the Presidio, encouraging people to connect more deeply with our shared heritage.

Goals

- 1. To involve people in the unfolding story of the Presidio.
- 2. To connect the Presidio to the larger American experience.
- 3. To share knowledge about this national historic landmark.
- 4. To build relationships with new and diverse communities.

The new Heritage Program is reaching out to the community to offer educational opportunities for Bay Area youth, which support state school curricula and childhood development, and to the broader adult community to invite volunteers, docents, and community groups to partner in the work of our program producers, archaeologists, historians, and exhibit curators at the Presidio.

Elementary-school children, university undergraduates, and adult volunteers are already delving into the Presidio's history by participating in a suite of existing programs at the Archaeology Lab, others that coincide with annual events like *Pasados del Presidio*, and those that have accompanied temporary exhibits such as "War & Dissent." By expanding these programs and adding more interactive exhibits that are informed by ongoing research, the Presidio will become a dynamic destination, where the exhibit glass is removed and visitors are able to directly engage.

Rather than create a facsimile of the park inside the walls of a museum, the intent is to get people out into the park to experience the Presidio's stories in the places

they happened. The strategy relies first on selecting the appropriate site for conveying a particular facet of the Presidio's past, and second, on employing the authenticity of these buildings and landscapes to make that facet a living chronicle. Each site will embed new media and exhibitry into its architecture so that the semblance of the historic spaces is uninterrupted. The exhibits will employ a range of techniques, from handson activities to immersive media. Through the flexibility of digital technology, content will be updated with new information to reward repeat visitors and adapted to complement evolving programs and events.

At each site, the idea is not only to tell the Presidio's story but also to address broader issues—military and national service, the relationship between people and their environment, and the mix of cultures that makes the Bay Area unique. By telling universal American stories in authentic settings, the program brings our shared heritage to life so that future generations can discover and value the Presidio anew.



HERITAGE SITES

The Heritage Program animates key heritage sites throughout the Presidio. The Officers' Club and Archaeology Lab at *El Presidio* anchor the Heritage Program at the Main Post and connect to the Visitor Center, which orients people to the park and what is happening each day.

The **Officers' Club** was the social heart of the post throughout the twentieth century and is resuming that role by offering lectures, concerts, and performances. As the oldest building at the post, the Officers' Club is conceptually where the story begins and is best suited to hosting immersive exhibits depicting the broad sweep of Presidio history.

The **Archaeology Lab** is the information engine, where scientists actively uncover new knowledge about the Presidio's past. Here, visitors learn to see the relationships between physical remnants—buildings and artifacts—and the events and people that shaped them long ago.

The site of *El Presidio* showcases the archaeology that is gradually transforming our understanding of the colonial era and the imperial outpost that established this place. Over the years, visitors will witness the landscape itself change to reflect our growing understanding of the past.

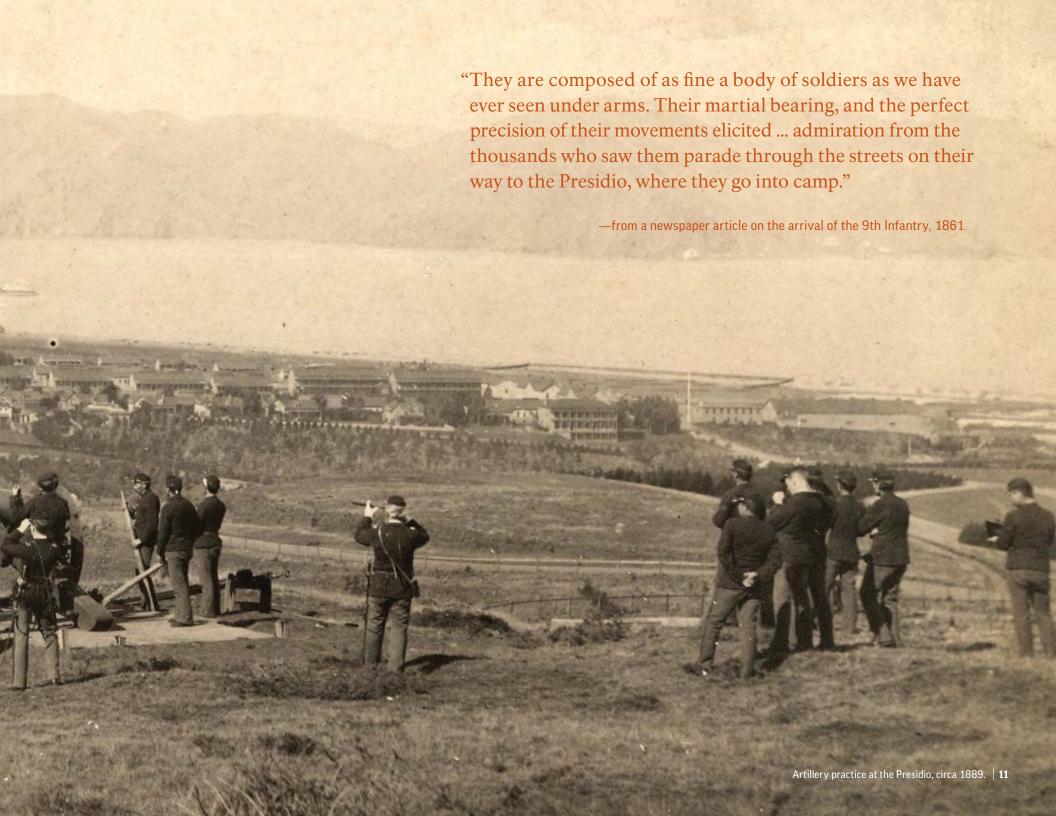
Nearby Heritage Sites

- In the Soldiers' Barracks, enlisted men with backgrounds nearly as diverse as America itself made the transition from civilian to soldier, experiencing the inherent tensions between individual liberty and national service.
- The parlor of an Officer's House, on Funston Avenue, offers a glimpse into the privileges accorded officers, the lives of women and children on post, and the officers' social connections in San Francisco.
- The Old Hospital and Surgery Ward presents the early years of medical practice in the West, showing the increasing brutality of weapons and medical advances that would save lives and combat disease.
- El Polín Spring uses water as the thread that weaves together stories about the abundance of wildlife around the springs with the Native Ohlone, colonial families, and frontier entrepreneurs who were drawn to it.
- The Ohlone Mound captures a span of human occupation since time immemorial, when sea levels were rising and the Native Ohlone established themselves along the shore, including a village they called "Petlenuc."

- The General's Office deals with painful decisions made by those in charge, one of them General DeWitt's implementation of President Roosevelt's order that led to the internment of Japanese Americans during WWII.
- The **Powder Magazine** dates to the earliest U.S. Army period and is key to understanding the progression of the Main Post's ceremonial spaces, beginning with the colonial *Plaza de Armas* and ending with the Main Parade Ground.
- The Bayside Batteries, on the bluffs overlooking the inner Golden Gate, provide a panoramic defense of the bay and an opportunity to reflect on the real and perceived enemies of the nation yesterday and today.
- The Last Commandant's Adobe, home to the last Mexican leader of the Presidio, Francisco Sanchez, depicts California's entanglement in the Mexican-American War and the Californios' tenuous loyalties to Mexico.







THE OFFICERS' CLUB

Strategies

- Create an emotional connection between visitors and the Presidio by telling stories of the people who transformed and were transformed by this singular place.
- Emphasize the Presidio's role as a crossroads of cultures, particularly the influence of Spain's former colonies in the fabric of America.
- Convey the Presidio's ongoing transformation while revealing its history, to inspire visitors to explore other destinations throughout the Presidio.
- Demonstrate how changes at the Presidio mirror the nation's history and its role as an instrument of power as the U.S. sphere of influence grew.
- Present multiple viewpoints, encouraging people to question what is and isn't included in the historical record and what perspective they could offer.
- Ensure that the Presidio serves the widest range of audiences by striving for universal access in the delivery of content.

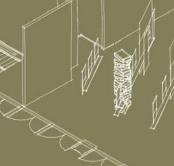
The Presidio has always been both a place of transformation and a cultural crossroads—from the day, in 1776, when the arrival of the Anza party altered the lives of the local Ohlone and Miwok tribe to the time when rival empires traded and defended their northern California territories, to the arrival of American troops during the war with Mexico, to thei departures into the Pacific, and finally to the post's transformation into a National Park site.

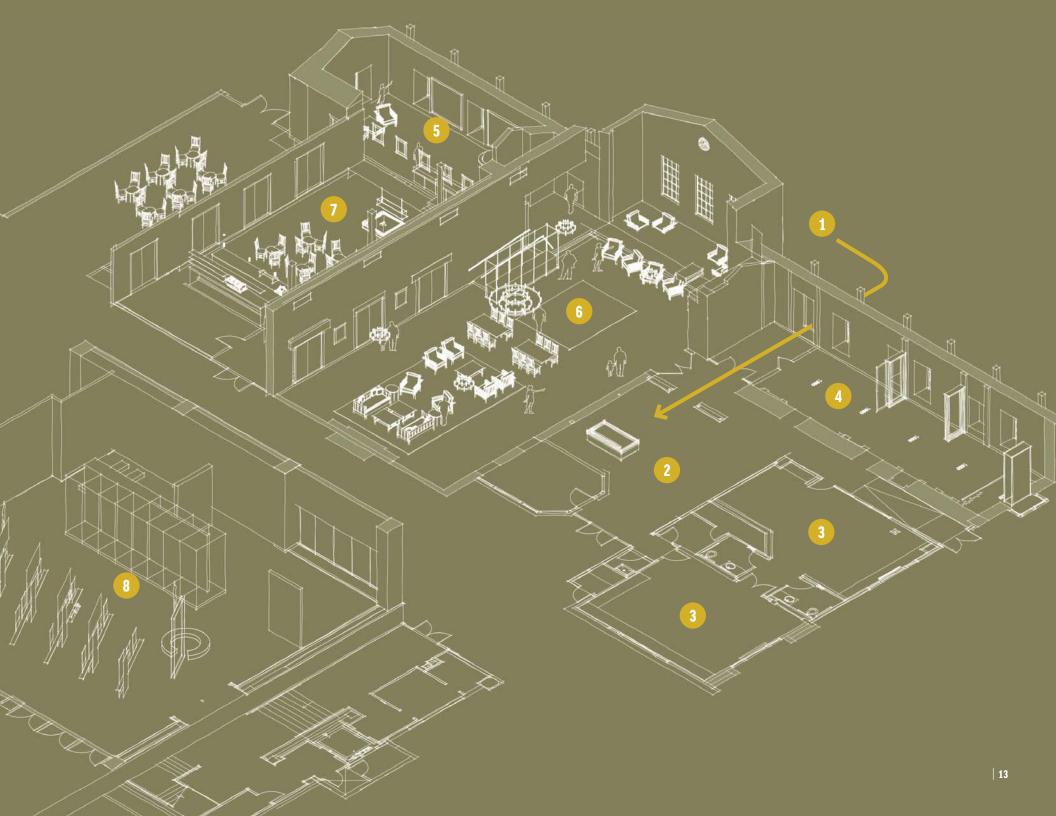
The Officers' Club, one of California's oldest buildings, has stood through all these changes. Now, the renovated Officers' Club will welcome new generations of visitors and locals by offering an arra of exhibits and by presenting concerts, films, and readings in its gracious period rooms.

The Heritage Program at the Officers' Club occupies adjoining venues: the historic core of the building, restored in large part to its 1930s glory, and the newer Heritage Gallery, in the large 1970s addition. The immediate impression of the Officers' Club evoke the experience of an officer stationed at the Presidio on the eve of World War II. The exhibits are adapted to these distinct spaces with a subtle overlay of

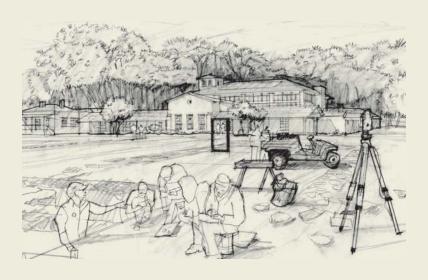
exhibitry in the historic core and a more pronounced media presence in the newer Heritage Gallery. Each space conveys a different approach to the Presidio's past. Some are local, some global, others are social or intimately personal. Together they tell the long arc of the Presidio's story, from time immemorial to our lives today.

- 1. Approach
- 2. Lobby/Orientation
- 3. Classrooms
- 4. Mesa Room
- 5. Anza Room
- 6. Moraga Hall
- 7. Arguello Room
- 8. Heritage Gallery





AT THE EDGE OF AN EMPIRE APPROACH

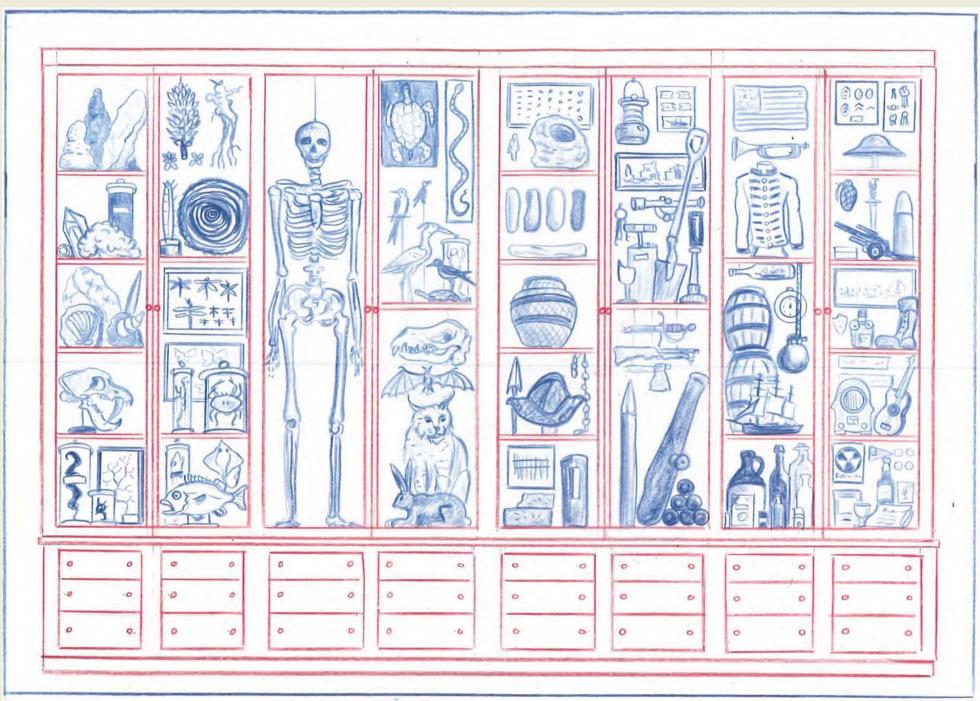


Extending out from the Officers' Club is the colonial site of *El Presidio*—an active archaeological site where hidden layers of history are being revealed. This approach signals to the visitor that there is more to be discovered and that the Presidio is worth exploring.

Concept

As they walk up Graham Street, visitors come across archaeologists conducting excavations, slowly transforming the landscape as they go. Simple surface features and rebuilt adobe walls mark the footprint of the original Spanish fortification and connect the landscape to the last standing colonial structure—the Officers' Club. Sturdy metal viewfinders point toward the Officers' Club. When visitors peer through, it's as if they had entered the past: they see images of the club as it looked when previous generations made this same approach.





WELCOME LOBBY



The Lobby provides a place for staff and docents to welcome and orient visitors to the Officers' Club. It also sets the tone for the visitor experience by introducing multiple perspectives on the Presidio's past.

Concept

In the center of the Lobby, visitors can gather around a graphic rendition of the Officers' Club illustrating the layers of history and providing an orientation to its spaces. Here, visitors are also informed of upcoming events and are encouraged to explore other heritage sites. A simple media program of changing images and words introduces themes that will recur throughout the Officers' Club experience. Visitors who need language support can check out a tablet device for use during their visit.

A highlight of the Lobby is an installation art piece proposed by Mark Dion, an artist known for using archaeological and scientific metaphors. This two-sided piece—a cabinet of curiosities whose objects represent the Presidio's natural and cultural heritage —can be viewed by visitors in the Lobby and students in the adjacent classroom. It invites everyone to question and contemplate the categories through which we probe the meanings of our heritage.



YOUTH EDUCATION CLASSROOMS

The Presidio belongs to all of us. The Heritage Program's education and outreach efforts seek to break the barriers between scholar and audience, between past and present, and between my heritage and your heritage.

The Heritage Program is committed to providing meaningful and memorable experiences to diverse audiences. Its education and outreach initiatives invite people to help uncover the cultural and natural history of the Presidio, and to formulate their own interpretations about its continued relevance. They also stimulate dialogue so that we can all offer insight into and gain meaning from our shared heritage.

The educational programs aspire to spark curiosity, broaden understanding about our heritage, and promote stewardship into the future by connecting community members to this place. Outreach initiatives expand our reach beyond site-based programs by forging partnerships with outside organizations and community groups. These two classrooms support field trips, summer camps, and after-school programs for school-age children; internships and professional training for undergraduate and graduate students; and volunteer programs, workshops, and docent training for adults.









WITHIN THE WALLS MESA ROOM



By peeling back the architectural layers of the colonial-era Mesa Room to reveal centuries of change marked in adobe, wood, plaster, and paint, the visitor is better able to visualize the transformation of the Presidio and how it developed from imperial outpost to army headquarters to national park. The Mesa Room articulates this layered transformation and highlights the Presidio as a uniquely American place.









Concept

In this historic room, visitors literally walk back in time. Starting in a section restored to its appearance in the second half of the 20th century, visitors follow dates projected on the floor to move through successively earlier eras. In each section, a deeper layer of the walls has been exposed, until finally the Presidio's earliest days are evidenced in the exposed adobe of the original Spanish fort. This end of the room also contains an homage to *El Presidio's* original Native builders—a display that includes an Ohlone basket made by a contemporary Native craftsperson, along with an evocatively changing image and quote related to the first inhabitants of the area.

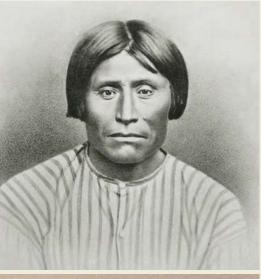
The Mesa Room introduces the Officers' Club experience. Within it, visitors find stories of representative Presidio people—an 18th-century Spanish colonist, a 19th-century army laundress, a commanding officer at the turn

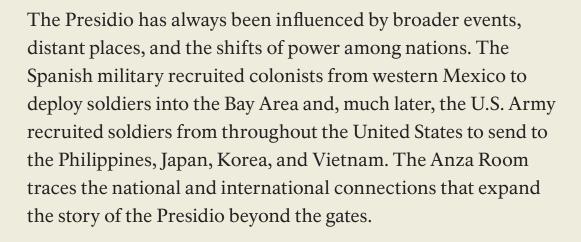
of the century, and a soldier in the late 20th century—who might have once been present in this room. Maps and scrapbooks round out the experience, offering a variety of views of the Officers' Club and Presidio during each period.

The walls speak with projected quotes, silhouettes, and ambient sounds that seemingly drift in through the windows from an era long past. One window in the room has been almost imperceptibly replaced by video monitors which present a view out that is not so much real as imagined. Artistic evocations of what the view might have been like in different eras slowly fade from one to the next. Subtle, animated details—such as clouds moving, or a figure on horseback cantering along the end of a parade ground—add an element of the unexpected to the view.



BEYOND THE GATES ANZA ROOM

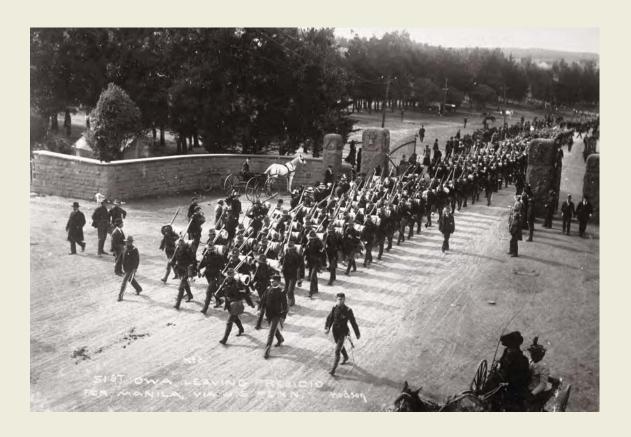












Concept

The Anza Room has the appearance of a map and reading room with period furnishings and a core collection of reference materials at one end. Like much of the rest of the historic building, this room has been brought back to its character in the 1930s. This room tells the story of the Presidio, but as a place of arrival and as a place of departure.

A large map illustrates how the Presidio's sphere of influence changed from that of a frontier post at the edge of the Spanish Empire to a gateway for intervention in the Pacific. It shows arrivals of key groups of colonists, soldiers, and their families from different parts of Spanish America and the U.S. over time. Each line traces the line of settlers arriving on horseback from Mexico, sailing around the cape from New York, or traveling overland by train from Tennessee. This map also depicts the departures from the Presidio-Spanish, Mexican, and U.S. troops sent to fight Indians over the course of a long century, Buffalo Soldiers performing park-service duties at Yosemite in the 1890s, troops sent to the Philippines during the Spanish-American war, and key deployments throughout the Pacific Rim in the 20th century. A large bound volume of recruitment posters shows the media used over the years to entice men and women to leave their civilian comforts to serve their country in these far-flung places.

This theme of arrivals and departures continues on the southern wall. Here, a changing display of objects and artifacts such as military orders, diaries, postcards home, and the souvenirs and mementos brought back from overseas illustrate several centuries of comings and goings to and from the Presidio.



PRESIDIO STORIES





An open-ended invitation is extended to the community to contribute to the Presidio's unfolding story by recording their own reminiscences and perspectives. These recordings are then made available to visitors so they can hear and appreciate the many viewpoints and memories the Presidio sparks in the community of people who have, or are building, a deep connection to this place.

Concept

The Heritage Program is partnering with StoryCorps to build this collection of audio recordings and submit them to both the Library of Congress and to our visitors via a handheld device. Several comfortable and quiet areas of the Officers' Club will be used to record and collect stories from Army veterans, colonial descendants, Native Ohlone peoples, and many others with a bond to the Presidio and a story to share. Visitors are encouraged to sit and relax, listening to this ever-growing collection of stories.







THE PRESIDIO'S LIVING ROOM MORAGA HALL



The social heart of the Officers' Club, Moraga Hall, plays a vital role at the Presidio. This spacious beamed room, which once hosted social events for officers and their families, provides a comfortable place for individuals and groups of visitors to linger, listen to a story, prepare for a hike, and generally soak in the ambiance. It is also where the Presidio hosts performances, lectures, dances, and community events throughout the year.









Concept

With its chandeliers, Mission-style furnishings, and fireplace, Moraga Hall re-creates the festive atmosphere of an era when officers looked forward to nightly socializing and a yearly calendar of dinners and dances. Today, it is an inviting setting for a busy calendar of events. Designed as a flexible space with period furnishings, the room can be configured for intimate fireside talks by local authors, opened up as a dance floor for big-band nights, or arranged with theater-style seating for large performances on the stage.

Along one wall is a display of selected portraits of Presidio commanders, accompanied by a list of all the commanding officers, from José Joaquín Moraga in 1776 to Gregory A. Renn in 1992. Visitors also find an array of insignias from many of the units posted at the Presidio

over time, and are invited to help fill in the blanks in the Presidio's collection. Flags flown over the Presidio, from the Spanish flag in 1776 to the Stars and Stripes, lowered for the last time by the Army in 1994, stand at the far end of the room. A large case presents changing displays similar to those that may have been in the room in its Army days—showing the Army as it presented itself to others.

As in the Mesa and Anza rooms, scrapbooks of images are available for visitors to browse. Here they contain images of Moraga Hall in use during its heyday. Period newspapers and magazines are also to be found throughout the room, giving visitors a chance to picture themselves here at another time in history.



OFFICERS' CANTEEN ARGUELLO ROOM



Continuing the period feel of Moraga Hall, the daylit Arguello Room offers visitors a space for rest and relaxation as it once did for officers. Throughout the year, it supports functions in Moraga Hall, next door, and provides visitors with food, drink, and a place to socialize.

Concept

Historically this room offered a bar and dining experience to military officers and families. This traditional use will be now be updated and expanded. The Arguello Room and the adjacent Portola Courtyard will offer lunch, dinner, snacks, and coffee seven days a week in an atmosphere reflective of the character and values of the Presidio.



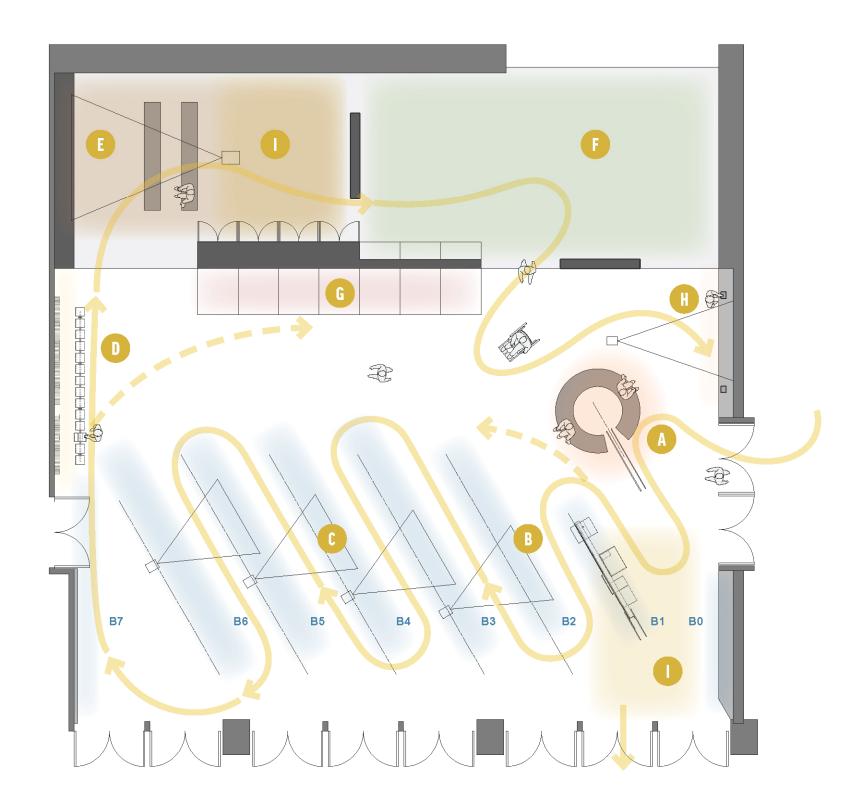


PEOPLE AND PLACE HERITAGE GALLERY



The Presidio story reflects the flow of human history in the New World, the West, and America. It contains and reveals a record of the many changes in people's attitudes and relationships to the land, with each other, and toward the idea of serving a cause greater than oneself. The Heritage Gallery is a place to forge emotional connections between visitors and the Presidio through vivid storytelling and theatrical immersion. Cumulatively, the exhibits strike a balance between more intimate stories that punctuate the Presidio's story with the sweeping narratives that permeate it.







- A. Gallery Introduction
- **B. Presidio Stories**
- C. Media Header
- D. West Wall Map
- E. Theater
- F. Temporary Exhibit Space
- G. Uncovering the Presidio
- H. Dialogue Wall
- I. Program Gathering Spaces

Concept

Drawn from a growing body of research, the gallery's stories speak to many meanings of "Presidio heritage." They include multiple first-hand perspectives on complex and controversial events of the times. Visitors appreciate the early encounters with the unknown, as fearful Spanish explorers and Native Ohlone people met aboard a ship in the middle of the bay for the very first time; they learn how Charles Young and his company of Buffalo Soldiers woke up in their barracks one morning to saddle their horses and do what no black soldiers had ever done, to ride alongside the President of the United States; they imagine what it must have been like to be a soldier drafted during Vietnam while peace protests drew large crowds in the city and dissent grew within the ranks and in the stockade of the Presidio; and they are brought into the discussion over the Presidio's future as a National Park site, a conversation begun in the 1970s.

The goal of the gallery is for all visitors to see beyond the Presidio's idyllic setting to an understanding of how this unique place embodies the dreams, struggles, passions, and humanity of countless people who have stood here before. Visitors entering the Heritage Gallery encounter a field of diverse and intriguing **Presidio Stories**. Objects, images, audio and film clips, poems, song lyrics, and engaging interactive exhibits are organized in seven eras that immerse visitors in the stories of people, places, and events. The design makes it possible for new stories to be added as they are uncovered or old ones revised in light of new information. Each section includes elements that encourage visitors to find ways to make connections between the Presidio's past and their lives today.

Suspended above the Presidio Stories, a **Media Header**, composed of four large projection screens, adds a dramatic, immersive element to the gallery. The Header program showcases an array of sweeping Presidio vistas that reinforce themes of changing attitudes toward the environment, community, and service as they are manifested at the Presidio. Some images move from one screen to another, evoking themes such as changing use of the land—from ranching to military to recreational. At other times, a single image fills all the screens—showing a progression of soldiers, a cloud of

Postcards from the Presidio Trust Collection.

migratory birds, or the swaying of Eucalyptus canopies. Accompanied by an evocative soundscape, the Media Header will be a memorable feature of the gallery that expresses emotionally and intuitively its major themes.

The **West Wall Map** illustrates the legacy of ongoing environmental restoration and historic rehabilitation work managed by the Presidio Trust. The central section of the wall features a large-scale outline of the Presidio site delineated with a matrix of holes. Streets and buildings are overlaid as cutout shapes on top of the matrix, and major street names are etched into the material. The color scheme is subtle so as to suggest the map emerges from the architecture. The east side of the map shows the City of San Francisco grid, visually anchoring the site. Five sets of data are represented with color pegs that can be freely inserted into the matrix. The peg system enables easy updates, suggesting the ongoing evolution of the site.

The Theater showcases an eight-to-ten-minute film featuring a wealth of newly shot on-camera interviews. The piece will explore the arc of Presidio history and the meaning of place, heritage, and community. Unlike a traditional film, however, which might rely on a single voice or narrator, this piece will be created entirely from the voices and words of the people interviewed. In a personally compelling way it demonstrates how people's different interests and passions are manifest at the Presidio.

The Theater is designed to open to the rest of the gallery and to the **Temporary Exhibit Space**. This space provides a prime setting for changing exhibits that are conceived of as conversation pieces that drive new programs and draw new audiences. These conversation pieces offer fresh perspectives on the content of the main exhibits and can draw repeat visitors back to the Heritage Gallery. A window on its north side provides natural light and also means the space will be visible as visitors approach the new Heritage Gallery from the historic building.

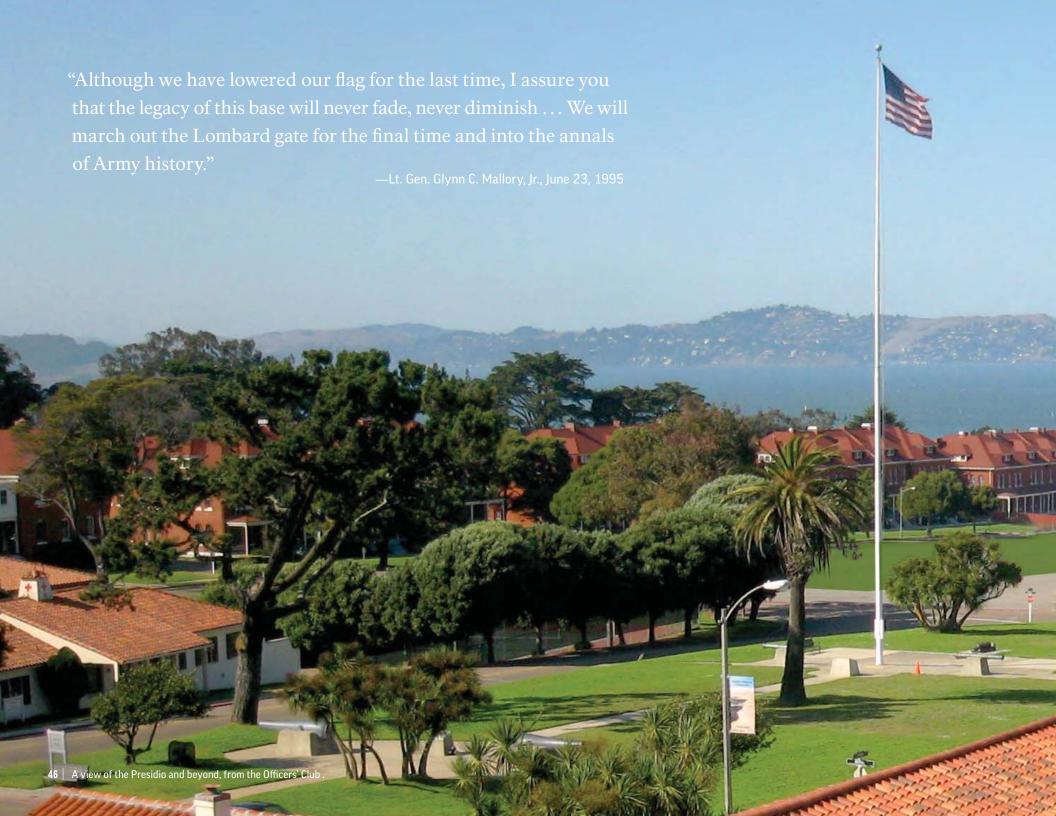
Uncovering the Presidio shares with the public a wide range of objects unearthed at the Presidio—found on or in the land, in its many buildings, stored in its archives, or gathered from the community. These artifacts are arranged in constellations that illustrate multiple ways of understanding the Presidio. The case also highlights the ongoing work of archaeologists, historians, and others to learn more from the things we find. Visitors are encouraged to explore the many places the Presidio has become over time—a place to call home, a place to grow, a place to defend, a place to pass through, a place to serve, a place to restore, among others. It also presents intriguing views of the unknown—objects that have not yet been identified—and invites visitors to contribute their thoughts about what they might be.

The culmination of the Heritage Gallery is an interactive experience that is at once personal and

communal. At two touch-screen-based kiosks, visitors select a custom digital postcard and pen their thoughts or sketch a drawing on the back in response to the prompt: "To me the Presidio is ..." Once complete, their submissions are added to the **Dialogue Wall**, which cycles through an ever-changing animation of visitor-contributed content. The postcards flip from front to back, and visitors watch as each card is brought to life with the handwritten message or sketch. The postcards will draw on the Presidio's historic collection as well as new and contemporary imagery. Visitor contributions will be stored in a Content Management System (CMS), providing a wonderful record and potential resource reflecting visitor engagement at the Heritage Center.

To accommodate school groups and others engaged in special programs, the gallery incorporates **two gathering spaces** for use by docents and teachers. The southeast corner provides space for a dozen visitors or schoolchildren with access to the outdoor terrace. Half of the theater can be also be used as a gathering space, in which loosely configured seating is provided along with storage for props and other teaching materials. The partition separating the Theater and Temporary Exhibit Space can be rotated 90 degrees for free flow through the entire north edge of the Gallery when desirable.







CONCLUSION

The Heritage Program at the Presidio Officers' Club takes advantage of its historic setting, in one of San Francisco's oldest buildings, to tell the story of the Presidio—its transformation from palisaded fort to Army post to park—as well as its position in the American West, the Pacific, and the world. The club will again become the Presidio's social heart; its distinctive architectural spaces will welcome visitors, encouraging them to enjoy its events, exhibits, and programs. The Heritage Gallery tells the stories of the people who shaped the Presidio and draws visitors into that history as they forge a connection to the park.

Ralph Appelbaum Associates Incorporated

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Credits

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Frederik "Rik" Penn, Presidio Archaeology Lab
Juana Briones, Point Reyes National Seashore Museum and
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Juan Bautista de Anza, Palace of the Governors, New Mexico History Museum

"Few opportunities exist to uncover a broad sweep of American history in one place. The Presidio of San Francisco presents such an opportunity." —PRESIDIO TRUST MANAGEMENT PLAN