

Lawrence Halprin

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June 16, 2008

Mr. David Grubb, Chairman, Presidio Trust Board
Mr. Craig Middleton, Executive Director
Presidio Trust
34 Graham St., P.O. Box 29052
San Francisco, California 94129-0052

Dear Craig:

In Friday's Chronicle I read John King's article and saw the sketches for Donald Fisher's museum for modern art in the Presidio. I want to renew my December 13, 2007 objections to both the proposed site and Richard Gluckman's architecture.

The museum as planned is located in the most desirable location in the heart of the Presidio and takes possession of the long views down the parade ground and out over the San Francisco Bay to Alcatraz Island and Marin County beyond. The huge modern urban building would overwhelm its neighbors and undermine the integrity of this National Historic Landmark. It would dominate the entire area particularly since the museum intends to include a series of outdoor terraces for exhibiting modern sculpture. Thus it appears that the museum would usurp the main post and overwhelm the character, feeling, and experience of the Presidio. The Presidio Trust should not allow the centerpiece of the Presidio to become a theme park of museums, unrelated to its history, context, and character.

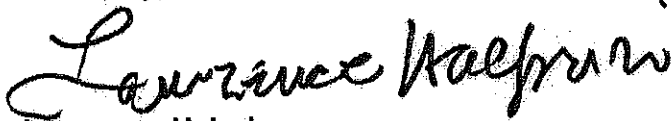
As I stated in my previous letter, the design for Fisher's museum building is completely out of character with the main post location. In both scale and design it is awkward and not at all compatible. What is more, the design sits poorly in the landscape. In fact, it seems to resist its site and appears to have been simply plunked down on the main parade ground without any sensitivity.

My own feeling is that the Presidio, the National Park, and the Fisher Museum could all benefit by moving it away from the main post to another location in the Presidio where it would not clash and could be designed for an environment

Mr. Craig Middleton
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more appropriately developed to receive it. John King's suggestion of moving it to an adjacent site just to the southwest, potentially elevates the museum to an even larger and more dominating spot in the composition of the main post where it would continue to threaten the integrity of a National Historic Landmark.

Sincerely,


Lawrence Halprin

Cc:

Letters to the Editor, S.F. Chronicle
John King, S.F. Chronicle
Superintendent Brian O'Neill, NPS
Jim Chappell, SPUR
Charles Birnbaum, Cultural Landscape Foundation

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10 December 2007

David Grubb, Chairman, Presidio Trust Board
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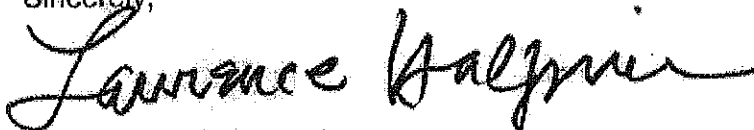
Re: A Modern Vision for the Presidio

Dear Dave & Craig:

In the December 4th San Francisco Chronicle I read about the glassy, modern building proposed for the Presidio. Such a conceptual design shift is wrong and dangerous to the ambience and atmosphere of this historic, urban national park set along San Francisco Bay. The proposed design that John King refers to as "a long stack of overlapping cubes with white masonry walls broken by stretches of clear glass" is absurdly inappropriate. It would ruin the unique architectural character of the Presidio by introducing a generic style that is used throughout much of the world today. In addition, the siting for this 100,000-sq.-ft. building, on the prominent crest of the Parade Ground, is particularly upsetting.

I am also concerned about the overall experience of the Main Post, which, it appears, will receive a new 120-room lodge and a Disneyland museum and library. Enough already! It is vital to maintain the national park character of the Presidio. When and where new buildings are proposed their design should be carefully articulated to fit within the Presidio's architectural history, and not within the stand-out, look-at-me replicas of buildings more suitable to today's downtown, urban centers.

Sincerely,



Lawrence Halprin, FASLA

Cc: Senator Nancy Pelosi
Senator Barbara Boxer
John King, S.F. Chronicle
Jim Chappell, SPUR
Charles Birnbaum, Cultural Landscape Foundation