

INSIDE

p.6

NextSpace  
p.10

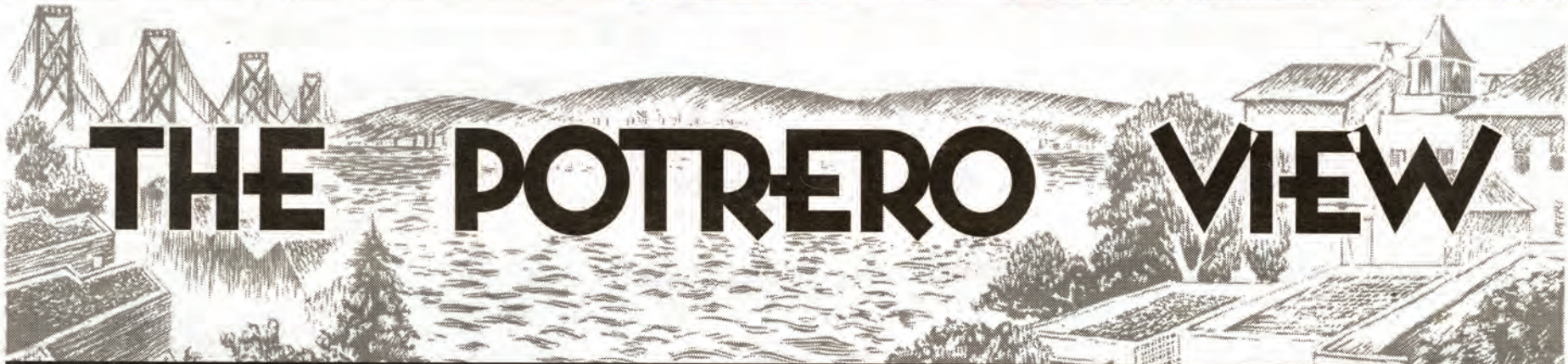
p.15

Dogpatch  
Wineworks  
p.17

p. 23

The  
Insufferables  
p.24

p.29



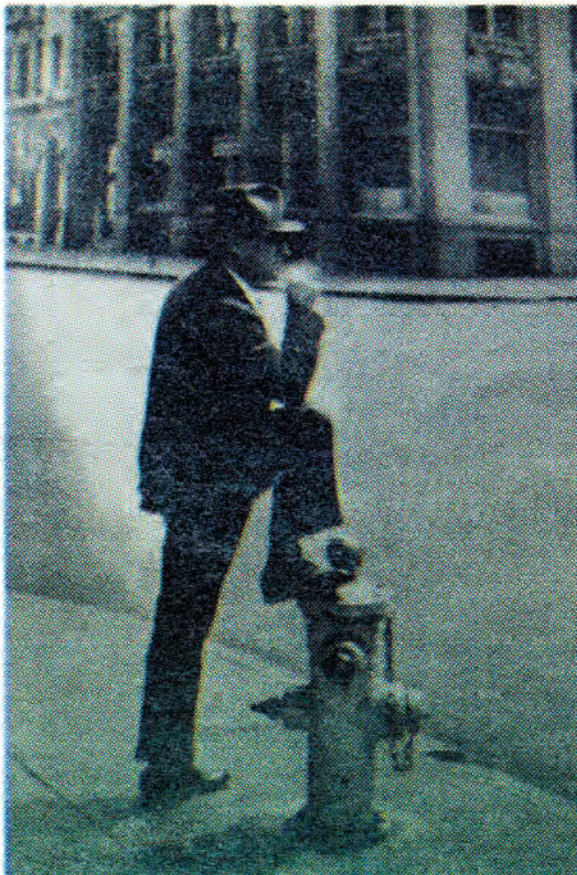
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# Community Collaboration Key to Good Architecture

BY CATHERINE HERRERA



Timothy Pflueger stands looking reflective in downtown San Francisco, circa 1930s. IMAGE COURTESY TOM PAIVA PHOTOGRAPHY © 2007

*“If the architect isn’t made aware of his role as a servant of humanity and of the broadening problems which this implies during his scholastic career, there is a very small chance that he will be inspired to the highest levels once he is engaged in practice.”*

— HARLAN MCCLURE, *Journal of Architectural Education*, 1955.

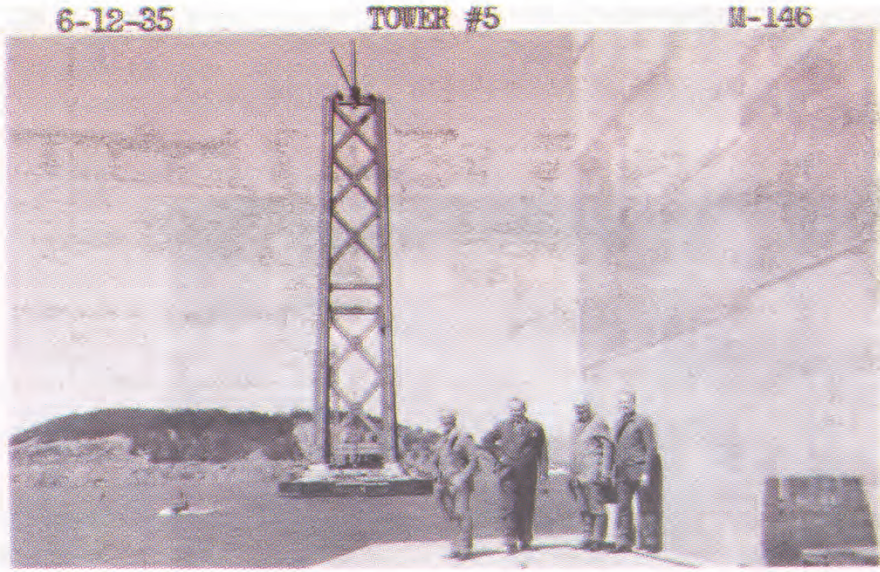
Architect Timothy Pflueger, born in Potrero Hill in 1892, left a lasting architectural imprint on the City from a career that spanned from the 1920s to 1940s. Pflueger designed the Castro and Alhambra theaters, the Transbay Terminal, the Golden Gate International Exposition, City College of San Francisco (CCSF), and such entertainment institutions as Top of the Mark, the Patent Leather Bar at the Saint Francis Hotel, the Fairmount’s Cirque Room, and the Olympic Club.

Pflueger had no formal training in

architecture. After years of working as a draftsman, in 1920 he passed the licensing examination to become a certified California architect. Pflueger mastered a range of design styles over his career, making him a versatile designer and architect.

Pflueger’s collaborations with the artists of his day anchored his designs. As a founder of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Pflueger commissioned Mexican muralist Diego Rivera for the San Francisco Stock Exchange. Rivera explored the role of art and technology in society at the Exchange, themes that re-emerged in his Pan-American Unity mural in the Diego Rivera Theater building at CCSF.

By 1929, Pflueger was an established leader in the development of California-style Art Deco architecture. His crown jewel was 450 Sutter Street, the



**ARCHITECTS from Front Page**

towering, triangular high rise which today operates as a medical building. 450 Sutter Street's exquisite marble lobby exhibits Pflueger's diverse range of design, with a Mayan-influenced motif, defined by an explosion of materials: terra cotta, metal, glass and marble. He also drafted a bird's eye plan for China Basin, imagining a transportation hub and airport for the flats.

As the Depression hit the Bay Area in the 1930s, Pflueger was contracted by the San Francisco Unified School District for commissions at Alamo Elementary, Roosevelt Middle School, and Washington and Lincoln high schools. In 2008, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to rename the street leading to the 450 Sutter Street building garage "Timothy Pflueger Place."

Potrero Hill continues to host influential architects. Like Pflueger, Steve Kolm, founding partner of K2A Architecture + Interiors, located at 555 De Haro Street, has extensive experience with California's Art Deco style. Recently, Kolm's firm designed the restoration and modernization of Downtown High School, at 693 Vermont Street.

"San Francisco has this incredible vein of beautiful Art Deco buildings, built decades ago, many back in the 1920s and 1930s. We feel very fortunate

Above, **THE BAY BRIDGE** Pflueger was one of a group of architects who helped design the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge. A 1935 construction photo of Tower 5 shows the architects' influence in using diagonal rather than horizontal bracing. Visiting the site are Tim Pflueger, second from the left, and to the right of him, Charles Purcell. IMAGE COURTESY OF RICH HIGGINS, CALTRANS

to be able to bring back to life these beautiful buildings, to modernize and make fully accessible, to adapt them to modern technology, so that they not only function for 21st Century learning, but that we bring back some of the incredible beauty and details that have been lost in these buildings," Kolm said.

As an architecture student, Kolm studied the Frieze technique in Italy, which he credits with heightening his appreciation for the Art Deco style. Twenty years later, Kolm knows "materials are always evolving, buildings adapt over time, to satisfy community needs."

K2A Architects is currently designing the new Willie Brown Middle School in Bayview. 'Classrooms of the 21st Century have to be able to open to the outdoors, to bring outdoor and indoor learning, to make that outdoor learning part of the indoor learning,' Kolm offered. "Sustainable practices are part of every design we do, it's not just energy efficiency, I prefer to call it 'high performance' sustainability."

According to Kolm, his firm asks one key question of all K2A's public

commissions: "have we really strengthened the urban fabric of the communities and neighborhoods where we do our projects? This type of thinking means that every project, on every site, has its own solution, there's no rubber stamp. Everything we do is a one-off, and every solution comes from working with the community, with the stakeholders, so that, at the end of the day, you've complimented the urban fabric, reinforcing the site as a community resource. The only way to do that is to really meet with community members. I think that's what, quite frankly, makes our projects so successful, is that the projects and the designs grow out of the process because we are very process driven."

Karin Payson was awarded the 2013 Kirby Ward Fitzpatrick Prize from the Architecture Foundation of San Francisco for her participation in the Bayview Library renovation, in partnership with lead architect Kacey Jurgens. After initial designs by Payson and Jurgens for the library demonstrated a need for a more responsive plan, the project changed from a renovation and expansion effort to the construction of a light-filled, versatile space.

"Collaborative thinking, at its best, results in better solutions, as a whole, strengthened by the sum of the parts," said Payson, who has been involved in three San Francisco public library

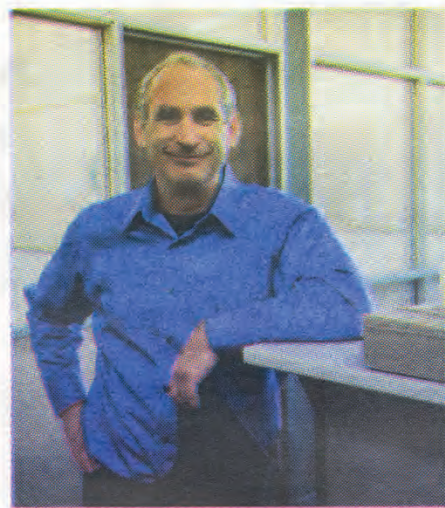
Above, **SAN FRANCISCO WHOLESALE PRODUCE MARKET** Jackson Liles Architecture has developed a vision for the future of the Market. The new Market—approximately 450,000 square feet located in five separate buildings—will provide a state of the art facility supporting San Francisco's fresh food-related economy. PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF JACKSON LILES ARCHITECTURE

modernization projects.

Despite new technologies, libraries continue to be important, and not just to adults. Earlier this year the Pew Research Center's Internet and American Life Project found that young people spend more time with, and read more books than adults.

"Architects are required to master many disciplines to navigate and successfully achieve the orchestration of so many elements into the final design of a building. Working on a public building is a form of engagement in the social contract, and has its own peculiar rewards," Payson shared. The Bayview Library "...was a unique success story in many ways. Based on the community input, we recommended that the City purchase the adjacent lot, and the project was re-envisioned and designed specifically keeping in mind the communities' expressed goals and desires."

"Architecture itself still both reflects on and partly shapes how communities are organized, how people interact with each other and how they use, or abuse, their environs," said Payson. "If one is lucky enough to obtain a commission designing a public building or other public space, there is an opportunity to effect change. First and

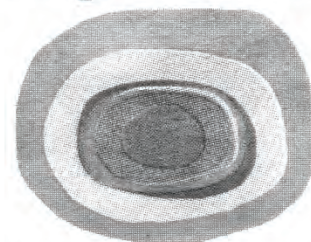


**Left and Below**, K2A is designing Willie Brown Middle School in Bayview PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF K2A.

**Right**, Steven Kolm, founding partner of K2A, has extensive experience in California's art deco style. PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF K2A



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**ARCHITECTS from page 8**

most important, you have to listen carefully to the constituents – the so-called ‘stakeholders’ – and commit to serving their aspirations as you integrate these into a design idea, and continue to be the advocate of the building until its completion. It’s important to me. I’m still an idealist at heart.”

Julie Jackson and Brian Liles, of Dogpatch-based Jackson Liles Architecture, are leading efforts to remodel the San Francisco Wholesale Produce Market in Bayview. The married pair previously designed the Chinatown YMCA’s interior as part of a remodel of that facility, the Sonoma County Food Bank expansion, and the Friends of Potrero Hill Nursery School, which involved extensive stakeholder dialogue with members of the school community, the school district and City Planning Department.

At the Wholesale Market, Jackson Liles will manage and design the first phase of the warehouse district’s expansion, from 300,000 to 500,000 square feet. The future occupants of the new spaces – which will meet Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design standards – will be involved in the remodel and upgrade design process, which is expected to be completed by the end of next year.

“Our considerations are mainly technical, functional, to ensure each space meets their functional requirements for selling their produce, to consider the dimensions of the loading dock to make sure trucks can deliver. It’s more straight forward in that sense, but we still engage the community so that the design ensures great visibility from the street, that it’s a building they will feel a pride working in every day,” said Jackson.

“I grew up in northern Ohio, Brian grew up in Virginia, we both ended up at the University of Cincinnati Architecture Program, an excellent school for architecture. The cooperative

educational component of the program was one of the best aspects. You work half the year in your field, and the other half of the year we went to school. So, we had a lot of opportunity to work for a lot of different kinds of architects and firms around the country. That was how we actually first came to San Francisco; we both did internships here. So, I think through that we got to see a lot of different types of firms, a lot of different values of firms, different ways that people work and we worked at different firms for a long time,” said Jackson, who shares a Hill home with her husband and two children.

The Architecture Foundation of San Francisco is the guiding force behind “Build San Francisco,” a mentorship program which places high school students with architecture firms so that they can learn real skills and obtain insights into the field, thereby supporting their development as 21st Century architects.

The massive development activity emerging in the Southside neighborhoods offers Build San Francisco students a chance to learn about local planning, and to become part of the design process for Pier 70 and the Hunters Point Shipyard. The program is intended to spur a local ecosystem of architecture and planning capacity, restoration specialties, and foster employment growth.

“I would counsel a young aspiring architect to learn to sketch,” said Payson. “Drawing by hand is an act of observation and interpretation. There is no substitute; it is a completely different activity than drawing on a computer, and probably uses a different part of the brain. It certainly uses the body differently. In essence I think with my right hand, and the pen and the quality of the paper are a part of the process, because that kind of thinking is sensory. It unlocks the ideas and even technical solutions, shows me the path, in the first few hours spent on every design project. Then the computer becomes a place to

test things out to a more rigorous scale. In the last couple of years I’ve noticed that clients are really responding with great interest to hand-drawn renderings and their atmospheric quality. It’s almost as if everyone has had 25 years of computer renderings and computer everything, and now the hand-made is a novelty again.”