

Historic Structures Report

Fort Point US Coast Guard Station
Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary

April 1, 2008



Prepared for
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary
Project Planning & Management Division - Western Region

Contract Number: 50-EANA-1-00031 TO0016



CAREY & CO. INC.
ARCHITECTURE

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INTRODUCTION

STUDY SUMMARY

In the following report, Carey & Co. evaluates six structures at Crissy Field that are associated with the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary at the Fort Point United States Coast Guard Station. The purpose of the report is to provide the site's management and staff with the architectural information it needs to implement a long-range program to restore, rehabilitate, and/or stabilize these increasingly significant historic structures in order to achieve the Parks' mission and long-term goals.

The structures examined are primarily of wood frame construction and date approximately to 1890, 1915, and 1938. These structures include a Officer in Charge Quarters (PE1901), 1890 Boathouse (PE1902), Main Boathouse/Life Saving Station (PE1903), Buoy Shack (PE1905), Tide Gauge House (PE1906), and Shop & Garage (PE1907). At the moment, only portions of the Main Boathouse are open to the public.

While most of the structures were found to be stable, the following deteriorated conditions were noted:

- Cracked and peeling paint.
- Deteriorating wooden elements.
- Corroding ferrous metal components.
- Biological growth.
- Differential soiling on the majority of all elevations.
- Painted, cracked, inappropriate, or missing window glazing.

The second half of the report presents our recommendations. General repairs are as follows:

- Painting of concrete and wooden elements that were originally painted.
- Cleaning, patching and painting of corroded ferrous metal elements.
- Consolidating, preservative-treating and painting of wooden elements.
- Recommendation for further testing, survey and study, including paint analysis, and original building configuration analysis.

PROJECT DATA

This Historic Structure Report is intended to provide the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) and the National Parks Service (NPS) with a guide for the future rehabilitation and maintenance of the Fort Point US Coast Guard Station at Crissy Field in San Francisco, California.

The following are included in this report:

- Historical Background and Context for the Fort Point US Coast Guard Station, including period of significance
- A Chronology of Development and Use
- A Physical Description
- An Evaluation of Significance
- An Assessment of Conditions
- A window survey

Since 1992 the six extant buildings of the former Fort Point United States Coast Guard Station have been designated contributing resources to the Presidio of San Francisco National Historic District. In addition, an extensive and meticulously researched Cultural Landscape Inventory of the Fort Point United State Coast Guard Station Historic District in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area established a period of significance as 1915-1964, from the year when the 1890 Boathouse and Officer in Charge's Quarters were moved to the current site until the year that the Main Boathouse ceased to function as a boathouse. Primary and secondary research conducted by Carey & Co. for this Historic Structures Report verified the research completed for these and other previously completed reports.

METHODOLOGY

Carey & Co. made several trips to the property between 2004 and 2007. During those visits, conservator, Laura Brown, and historian, Karen McNeill, Ph.D., conducted a floor-by-floor survey, recording all features on project-specific survey forms. The exterior was similarly surveyed, with features and conditions annotated and keyed with photographic documentation. Neither floor plans, except for the Main Boathouse/Life Saving Station (PE1903), Buoy House (PE1905), and Tide Gauge House (PE1906), nor elevations were available. Historical research supplemented field visits. In addition to reviewing information provided in several previous reports, including the 1993 update to the Presidio of San Francisco National Historic District records and the cultural resources inventory of the former Coast Guard Station from 2006, Carey & Co. conducted original research at repositories, including the archives of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. As per the guidelines of "Preservation Brief 43," Carey & Co. tried to avoid overlap with previously completed research, which was both extensive and thorough.

EVALUATION SYSTEM

In evaluating the Fort Point Coast Guard Station, Carey & Co. used a four-tiered historic value rating system. Historic value entails a professional judgment of the historic significance of each component based upon research of primary documents and on-site observation. The ratings are as follows:

Very Significant: The space or components are central to the building's architectural and historic character. In addition, the space or component displays a very high level of craftsmanship, or is constructed of an intrinsically valuable material. These spaces or components shall not be altered or removed under any condition.

Significant: The space or components are associated with the qualities that make the building historically significant. They make a major contribution to the structure's historic character. In addition, they display a high level of craftsmanship. These spaces or features shall not be altered or removed

Contributing: The space or components may not be extraordinarily significant as isolated elements but contain sufficient historic character to play a role in the overall significance of the structure.

Non-Contributing: The space or components fall outside of the building's period of significance, or are historic but have been substantially modified. Little or no historic character remains. Features that are not identified as *Very Significant*, *Significant*, or *Contributing* in the following *Evaluation of Significance* have been determined *Non-Contributing*. They will have little to no impact in regards to the final treatment of the historic property, and thus will not be discussed.

PART I: DEVELOPMENTAL HISTORY

The following section includes a concise account of research and investigation findings and recommendations for treatment and use, and a record of project administrative data.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

A Life-Saving/Coast Guard station has stood on the northeastern shores of the Presidio of San Francisco since 1890, when a small boathouse and keeper's residence were constructed on a spit of sand known as Strawberry Beach. As detailed in the "Cultural Landscape Inventory of the Fort Point United States Coast Guard Station Historic District in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area," prepared by the National Park Service, however, the period of significance of this site begins in 1915. That year, San Francisco hosted the Panama Pacific International Exposition, a fair showcasing art, architecture, technology, and world cultures. The boathouse and residence of the life saving station stood in the way of fairground plans, so they were moved 700 feet to the west to their present location. By this time the Life Saving station had also outgrown its quarters and plans had commenced to build a new boathouse. The newly formed United States Coast Guard thus constructed the three-story boathouse that now anchors the site in 1915. A two-story workshop and storage facility soon followed. Changes in technology and a growing staff resulted in several changes at the Fort Point US Coast Guard Station over the next twenty years, but the site reached its current configuration around 1942. High winds, strong tides, and fog always rendered Fort Point US Coast Guard Station a difficult site to maintain operations. With the introduction of 44-foot motor boats in 1964, boats had to be moored off the main pier. Although the site continued to serve as a Coast Guard Station until 1992, the period of significance closes in 1964, when the boathouse ceased to function according to its intended use.¹

Since 1992 the six extant buildings of the former Fort Point US Coast Guard Station have been designated contributing resources to the Presidio of San Francisco National Historic District. As summarized above, an extensive and meticulously researched Cultural Landscape Inventory of the Fort Point United State Coast Guard Station Historic District in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area established a period of significance as 1915-1964, from the year when the original boathouse and Officer in Charge's residence were moved to the current site until the year that the main boathouse ceased to function in that capacity. After conducting primary and secondary research for this Historic Structures Report, Caey & Co. has verified the research completed for these and other previously completed reports. Carey & Co. concurs with the period of significance defined in the Cultural Landscape Inventory.²

1 Timothy Babalis and Gretchen Stromberg, "Fort Point United States Coast Guard Station Historic District, Golden Gate National Recreation Area," *National Park Service Cultural Landscape Inventory* (2006) (hereafter, "Fort Point CLI").

2 National Register Programs, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, "Presidio of San Francisco National Historic Landmark District," updated National Historic Landmark documentation, October 16, 1992 (hereafter, Presidio NHL); Babalis and Stromberg, "Fort Point CLI".