

V O L U M E 2



# **SUTRO HISTORIC DISTRICT**

## **Cultural Landscape**

### **Report**

**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**  
**GOLDEN GATE NATIONAL RECREATION AREA**



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# SUTRO HISTORIC DISTRICT

## Cultural Landscape Report

September 1993

Prepared for  
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
Golden Gate National Recreation Area  
San Francisco, California

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**MANAGEMENT SUMMARY**

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## 1.1 INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT BACKGROUND

The preparation of the Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) for the Adolph Sutro Historic District in San Francisco is part of a growing body of work related to the documentation, evaluation, planning, and management of historic landscapes and ruins.

Both the National Park Service (NPS) and the local community have shared concerns for preserving the history of the Cliff House, Sutro Heights, and Sutro Baths. In 1979, NPS staff prepared a preliminary National Register nomination for this area. A lack of national and regional standards, however, resulted in a nomination that was not listed in to the National Register at that time. Throughout the 1980s, there was a concern for documenting and protecting the resources in this vicinity. Emphasis was directed toward surviving structures, especially the Cliff House, as well as the designed landscape of Sutro Heights. Throughout this time period, the bath ruins, the heights and even the remnant rail lines continued to attract considerable attention from local residents and visitors.

As recently as fifteen years ago, there were no NPS treatment standards affecting historic and cultural landscapes. Beginning in the early 1980s, NPS began a process of considering cultural landscapes as a distinct type of cultural resource requiring specific guidelines for documentation, evaluation, registration, and treatment. This attention has resulted in greater attention nationally to the resource protection and visitor access issues associated with cultural and historic landscapes.

Two documents have guided the development of this Cultural Landscape Report — *National Register Bulletin 18: How to Evaluate and Nominate Designed Historic Landscapes* and *National Register Bulletin 30: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Rural Historic Landscapes*. The methodologies discussed in the two bulletins have been modified for application to this specific site.

Additionally, recognition of the park's historic as well as natural resources in the establishing legislation for Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) has enabled the consultant team to consider the Adolph Sutro Historic District within a broader national context. GGNRA planning documents recognize that the Adolph Sutro Historic District contains significant historic resources that require attention.

In many ways, the combination of national standards with more localized recognition of historic landscape resources has resulted in an awareness that

landscapes are multi-faceted. Throughout the preparation of the CLR there has been a conscious effort to consider the interrelationship of natural and cultural features, and the ways in which they have, over time, produced this landscape. While the focus has been on cultural landscape features, considerable attention also has been directed to soils, vegetation, and climate. Finally, the results of the CLR have been used directly in the preparation of the comprehensive design plan for the district.

## 1.2 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

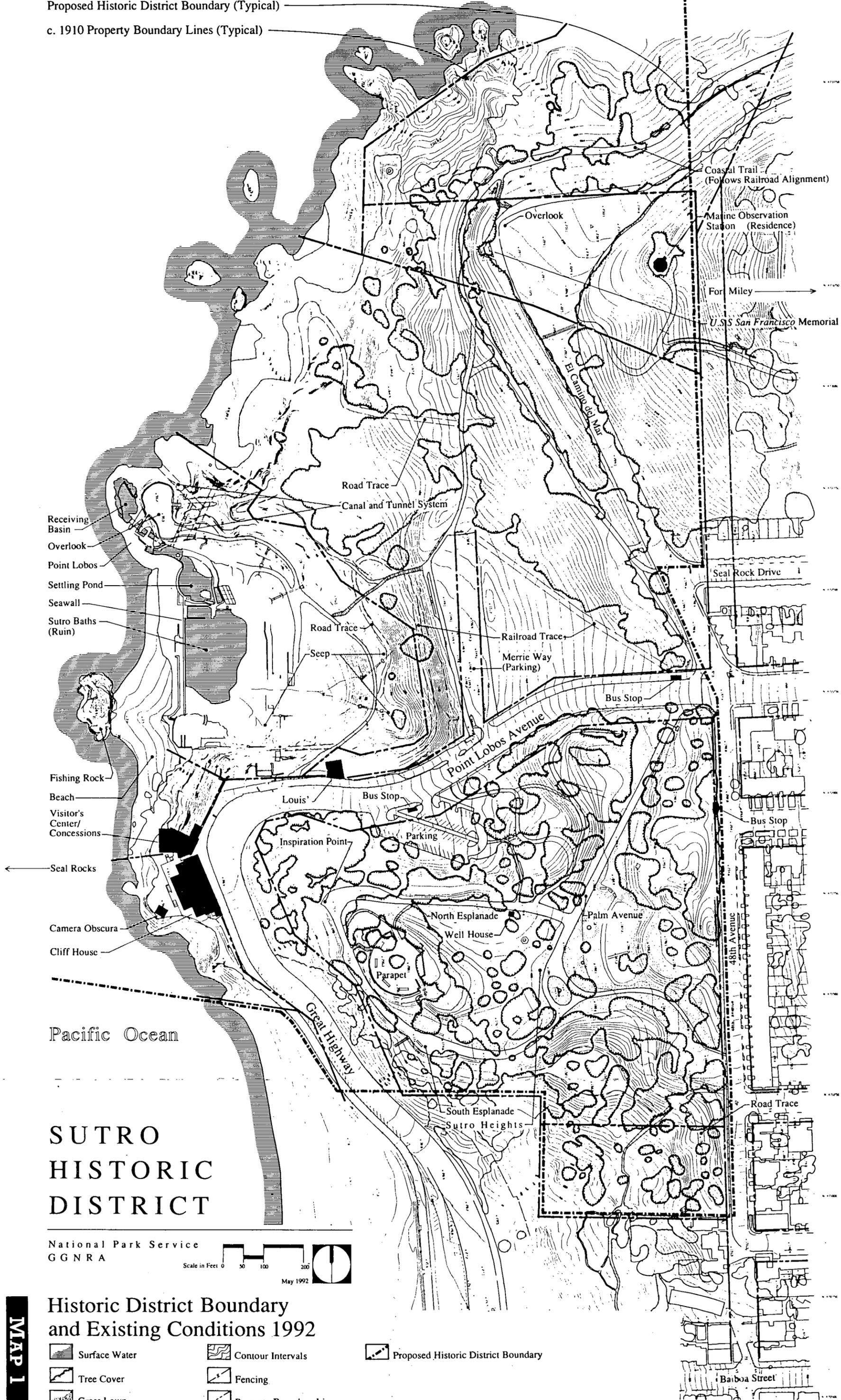
The first known recreational use of what is now the Sutro Historic District was associated with nineteenth-century naturalists who hiked or road horseback to this rugged section of coastline to observe marine mammals, pick wild strawberries, and enjoy scenery. Completion of Point Lobos Avenue, availability of a weekly Sunday stagecoach from Portsmouth Square, and the opening of the first Cliff House in 1863 opened the way for establishment of a recreational resort that was accessible to the less adventurous who wanted to view Seal Rocks without an arduous hike or horseback ride. Adolph Sutro's purchase of the area in 1881 heralded transformation of the area from a wild and remote place with a pleasant prospect into a popular San Francisco area seaside recreational complex. Sutro was responsible for development of Sutro Baths, and the public gardens at Sutro Heights as well as construction of a second and more ornate Cliff House. The provision of inexpensive rail service made Adolph Sutro's ambitious oceanside undertaking a popular and well-known destination that offered both San Franciscans and area visitors with leisure-time opportunities for recreation and sightseeing.

## 1.3 HISTORIC DISTRICT STUDY BOUNDARY

The proposed Sutro Historic District is located on the westernmost tip of the City of San Francisco, and includes oceanfront land stretching from just south of the Cliff House (approximately where Sutro Heights Avenue intersects with 48th Avenue) around Point Lobos, to the western edge of Fort Miley. The district includes Sutro Heights, the Cliff House site, the Sutro Baths site, portions of Point Lobos Avenue and Great Highway, Point Lobos, and portions of Lands End. The district is located within the Golden Gate National Recreation Area of the National Park Service. Some portions of public road right-of-ways fall within the district. Map 1, *Historic District Boundary and Existing Conditions 1992*, includes the location of the proposed historic district boundary. However, the map only delineates the proposed boundary on land. The district should include areas currently managed by the National Park Service along the Pacific Ocean edge extend-

Proposed Historic District Boundary (Typical)

c. 1910 Property Boundary Lines (Typical)



Pacific Ocean

# SUTRO HISTORIC DISTRICT

National Park Service  
G G N R A



May 1992

MAP 1

## Historic District Boundary and Existing Conditions 1992

- Surface Water
- Tree Cover
- Grass Lawn
- Contour Intervals
- Fencing
- Property Boundary Lines
- Proposed Historic District Boundary



ing into the ocean from where the southernmost proposed boundary intersects the ocean edge to where the easternmost proposed boundary intersects with the ocean edge. In addition, the district should include the Seal Rocks cluster of islands including areas extending into the ocean.

#### **1.4 PROJECT SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY**

The cultural landscape analysis and evaluation of the Adolph Sutro Historic District<sup>1</sup> was conducted in accordance with the guidelines and format specified in *National Register Bulletin 30: Guidelines for Documenting and Evaluating Rural Historic Landscapes*, as well as other National Register and National Park Service documents. All project methods and procedures complied with the guidance and direction offered in these documents.

##### ***Scope***

The scope of this analysis and evaluation included

- a history and preliminary determination of significance for the district based on archived documents and materials provided by the NPS and limited additional research and data collection
- limited archival research and data collection to supplement documents and materials provided by NPS
- final determination of the period of significance and preparation of historic base maps for three periods determined by an analysis of the archival materials and district context and history
- field work and mapping of 1992 cultural landscape components using a standard project base map provided by the landscape architects
- identification and mapping of surviving character-defining cultural landscape components
- assessment of historic significance, integrity, and condition
- preparation of a Cultural Landscape Report

***Project Methodology***

The project methodology included the following overlapping phases:

**A. Background Historic Research and Data Collection.** The consultant team consulted various archives and repositories<sup>2</sup> to identify and research primary written and visual materials, establish the historic context for the Sutro Historic District, and develop the district history. These materials form the basis for establishing the district's significance and integrity, as well as the landscape management recommendations.

Types of primary and secondary materials included historic ground level photographs; historic aerial photographs; historic oblique aerial photographs; historic maps and plans; historic posters, fliers, and handbills; historic records and accounts; and secondary histories.

Materials were collected and organized according to date, area location, type of information, level of detail, and degree of reliability. In some cases, historic maps were cross-checked with other materials to corroborate information, as well as periods and extent of development. For example, some maps indicating areas of development appear to be speculative plans rather than "as-built" maps that indicate existing conditions or what had actually been constructed.

Products of this project phase include

- project files,
- photocopies of various primary materials,
- a statement of historic context for the district, and
- a narrative physical history of the district.

**B. Historic Base Map Preparation.** Preparation of three historic base maps followed the collection of primary and secondary materials. The dates for these maps [c. 1867, c. 1888, c. 1910 (Maps 2 - 4)] were based upon an analysis of the periods of development and a determination of the period of significance. Decisions were made to represent early site development and early and late Sutro periods, allowing for a comparison of different types and extent of site development. Base maps include information about various cultural landscape components. These components include vegetation, circulation, small-scale elements and systems, buildings and structures, natural systems and features, topography, and boundary information.

**C. Field Data Collection.** Following the completion of the historic base maps, and the comparison of these maps with the preliminary 1992 base map, LCA completed field data collection. This task included the field

identification, field of all surviving historic landscape resources, general photographic documentation, identification of non-contributing features, and a preliminary condition assessment.

Using selections from all of the primary and secondary historic materials as indicators of potential historic characteristics, two staff persons surveyed the entire site on foot. Identified surviving historic components were indicated on the 1992 base map.

Field data collection also corroborated information obtained from historic materials. Mapped information, for example, was checked in the field to determine locations of contributing and non-contributing resources. This corroboration allowed for cross-checking of historic maps, as indicated above. When information on the map appeared to be incorrect based upon field reconnaissance, the entire historic map or plan was called into question. In some cases, it appears that historic maps may contain both verifiable and questionable information. Priority was given to using maps and plans that appeared to have the greatest degree of accuracy.

**D. Mapping of Surviving Character-Defining Cultural Landscape Components.** Following the completion of field work, existing conditions in the district were compared to the three historic base maps using a direct overlay system. This comparison allowed for the mapping of those character-defining features that survive from the different historic periods. The result of this phase was a series of inventory maps illustrating the cultural landscape analysis.

The maps produced during this phase include a comparison of historic and contemporary circumstances for the following landscape components: vegetation, circulation, small-scale elements and systems, buildings and structures, natural systems and features, topographic modifications, and view points (Maps 5 - 11).

**E. Assessment of Historic Significance, Integrity, and Condition.** Assessment of significance for the district was based upon the historic research conducted as part of the first phase of the cultural landscape analysis. A comparison of historic base maps with surviving character-defining cultural landscape components maps determined the qualitative degree to which cultural landscape components and the district as a whole retained historic integrity. The consultant team evaluated the Sutro district cultural landscape in terms of the seven aspects of integrity, as defined by the National Register of Historic Places — location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, association, and feeling. Finally, condition of surviving character-defining

landscape components was determined and assessed during field data collection.

Maps produced during this phase include proposed historic district boundaries,<sup>3</sup> synthesis of non-contributing elements and features, and synthesis of non-contributing elements and features excluding non-contributing vegetation. The last two maps (Maps 12, 13) were based upon a comparison of surviving cultural landscape components with the historic base maps and synthesized the previously prepared inventory maps. These two maps were used in evaluating the integrity of the district and in the planning and design process; they are not intended to replace the more detailed component inventory maps.

## 1.5 ADMINISTRATIVE CONTEXT

### *Applicable Legislation*

The Adolph Sutro Historic District is located in the Ocean Beach District of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA); National Park Service, California. GGNRA was established on October 27, 1972, with the passage and signing of Public Law 92-589. Gateway National Recreation Area in New York was established on the same day. The stated purpose of GGNRA is to “preserve for public use and enjoyment certain areas of Marin and San Francisco Counties, California, possessing outstanding natural, historic, scenic and recreational values, and to provide for the maintenance of needed recreational open space necessary to urban environment and planning.”<sup>4</sup>

In 1978, Public Law 92-589 was amended providing that “in the administration of those parcels known as...Cliff House Properties and Louis’ Restaurant, the Secretary shall credit any proceeds from the rental of space in the aforementioned properties to the appropriation...bearing the cost of their administration, maintenance, repair and related expenses...”<sup>5</sup>

These laws form the basis for the on-going administration, protection, maintenance, and public access of the properties within the Sutro Historic District.

Additionally, management and planning at GGNRA is subject to a number of federal laws and standards, including but not limited to the following:

- National Environmental Policy Act of 1969
- National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (with 1980 amendments)
- Public Law 95-341 - The American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1979
- Endangered Species Act of 1973

- Archeological Resource Protection Act of 1979
- Executive Order 11752 - Prevention, Control and Abatement of Environmental Pollution at Federal Facilities
- Concessions Policy Act of 1965
- Safe Drinking Water Act
- Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972
- Executive Order 11988 - Floodplain Management
- Executive Order 11990
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended in 1978
- Architectural Barriers Act (Public Law 90-480) of August 12, 1968, and amended through 1978
- Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS)
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990

#### **GGNRA DOCUMENTS, PLANS, AND REPORTS**

##### ***National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form: Point Lobos Archeological District, 1976***

Three archeological sites within the vicinity of Point Lobos were listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a district in 1976. The sites, CA-SFR-5, -21, and -24, most probably are Late Horizon, Ellis Landing Aspect in chronological placement (post 500 AD), or represent campsites of the historic Costanoans peoples of San Mateo, San Francisco, and other nearby counties.<sup>6</sup> It is also probable that some materials were removed from these sites or destroyed during the construction of the Sutro Baths. The earliest of the three sites was discovered as early as 1901, while the latest was not located and described until 1967.

The Point Lobos Archeological District, a National Register property, is located within the boundaries of the Sutro Historic District. The district is located on parcels 01-110 and 01-115 which are part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. The eastern boundary of the district follows the low tide level southerly to a point west of the Cliff House. The boundary continues in an easterly direction up the cliff to Point Lobos Avenue and follows Point Lobos Avenue to its intersection with Merrie Way. The boundary continues north along Merrie Way for approximately 1000 feet then turns northwest to a point 1600 feet southwest of Point Lobos Rock.

##### ***Archeological Resources Study, December 1976***

The 1976 study of archeological resources in Golden Gate National Recreation Area included an assessment of known cultural resources. Among the localities included was the area described as "Land's End" which included all of the property within the boundaries of the current project. Seven con-

centrations of cultural resources were known: Sutro Heights Park, Sutro Bath ruins, archeological sites CA-SFR-5, -21, and -24, Fort Miley's batteries, historic Ferries and Cliff House Railroad roadbed, military materials of World War II vintage, and deposits of what may be transported debris of 1906 earthquake spoil.

***Additional Archeological Resources Studies***

In 1992, a literature search and review of records concerning known cultural resources within the boundaries of the Sutro Historic District was conducted by BioSystems Analysis, Inc., archeological consultant to EDAW / San Francisco. The search and review was limited to records on file at the Northwest Information Center of the California Archeological Inventory at Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, and at the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Division of Management and Planning Offices at Fort Mason. A listing of the records identified by this search and review effort is included in the Bibliography.

***Adolph Sutro Historic District National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 1979***

In 1979, the area represented as the Adolph Sutro Historic District was nominated and rejected for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. The nomination included the Cliff House, Sutro Heights, Sutro Baths site, Lands End, Ocean Beach, and Point Lobos.

The district was determined ineligible for the National Register by the California State Historic Preservation Officer, for the following reasons:

- alterations
- loss of integrity in all elements, with exceptions:
  - a. Marine Exchange lookout
  - b. military installations covered in another application
  - c. Point Lobos archeological sites covered in another application
- district did not meet National Register criteria
- technical problems with photographs, sketch maps, acreage, etc.

To date, the nomination to the National Register has not been resubmitted. Since 1979, the National Register has developed more detailed guidance concerning the documentation, evaluation, and nomination of historic landscapes. A more technically correct nomination of the same district today may receive an affirmative evaluation of eligibility.

***General Management Plan, Environmental Analysis, September 1980***

The General Management Plan (GMP) for GGNRA established a system of land management zoning, directly associated with different management goals and objectives for the different land zones. The area now known as Sutro Historic District (Sutro Baths, Sutro Heights, and the Cliff House) was designated an “enhancement zone” within the general category of Historic Resources Zones. According to the GMP,

all of the areas within this subzone were developed originally as recreation spaces and still derive their primary value from recreation use. Management practices shall be directed at preserving the basic integrity of their settings and specific structures within them. Enhancement of the usability and attractiveness of these partially run-down and deteriorated areas will be accomplished through the addition of elements and the practice of maintenance...<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore, the stated purpose was to “rejuvenate the unsightly development and green up the landscape—and to recapture the spirit of another era when San Franciscans flocked here to frolic in the water, promenade along the beach, or enjoy elegant dining made special by the sights and sounds of the Pacific.”<sup>8</sup> More specifically, the GMP called for

- restoring the exterior facade of the Cliff House
- continued use of the Cliff House as a restaurant, lounge, and gift shop
- use of the Cliff House for exhibits relating to the historic role of the Cliff House, public restrooms, and a NPS visitor and information facility
- improvement of Sutro Baths as a setting for enjoying the seaside, including added safety features, stairs, walkways, ramps, and seating areas
- landscape improvements to increase the natural appearance of the site
- providing for visitor safety, burying undesirable components of the ruins, protecting prehistoric sites, and enhancing the natural character of the setting
- new plantings of Monterey pine and cypress and native shrubs, ground covers, and herbaceous plants to increase the natural appearance of the site
- consideration of restoring the small sandy beach that once fringed the cove

- retaining the quiet neighborhood orientation for Sutro Heights Park
- rectifying the unsafe, congested, and unsightly conditions created by existing parking and circulation arrangements

*Statement for Management, April 1992*

The Statement for Management (SFM) includes an updated legislative history and analysis, as well as administrative requirements specified in pertinent legislation. For example, Public Law 95-625, passed on November 19, 1978, expanded GGNRA's boundary by nearly 3,000 acres and reaffirmed that proceeds from Louis' Restaurant and the Cliff House could be retained.

The park now includes 73,000 acres, of which 28,413 have been acquired by the National Park Service, 41,332 acres remain under the ownership of other public agencies, and 3,337 acres remain in private ownership. Other than public road right-of-ways and areas within the Pacific Ocean, all of the areas within the proposed Adolph Sutro Historic District have been acquired by NPS.

As described within the SFM, within the Adolph Sutro Historic District, GGNRA has the following concession agreements:

- Peanut Wagon, Inc. - for food service and merchandise in the Cliff House
- Louis' Restaurant - for food service
- Alan Young Gift Shop - for merchandise
- Musee Mechanique - for amusements
- Giant Camera - for amusements

Most importantly, the Statement for Management recognized the importance of cultural landscapes within GGNRA, and need for the analysis, management, and interpretation. Specifically, this document states: "Inventory and evaluation of the park's landscapes as significant cultural resources should have high priority for funding. Cultural landscape reports will provide the necessary information to formulate recommendations for managing and preserving the park's landscapes." (p.68) The draft SFM identified landscape units within GGNRA, including Lands End and the Sutro properties.

As of November 1990, there were 285 acres of GGNRA, or 0.4% of the total land area, designated as a Historic Zone. Preservation, protection, and interpretation of cultural resources and their settings are the management objectives within this zone. Sutro Baths, Cliff House, and Sutro Heights are included in this management zone.

The Statement for Management established specific Management Objectives for GGNRA. These objectives were defined as “desired conditions that provide the framework for managers to fulfill the purpose of the park within the parameters of National Park Service Policies.” Many of the objectives — cultural resource management, natural resource management, interpretation, visitor activities, and development — have direct applicability to the Adolph Sutro Historic District.<sup>9</sup>

A discussion of these management objectives follows:

**Cultural Resource Management.** To identify and protect the significant historic and cultural resources of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area through proper planning, research, and preservation treatments.

To identify, research, and nominate all cultural resources that appear to have historical significance to the National Register of Historic Places.

To identify, preserve, and enhance cultural landscape values, considering the dynamics of natural systems and the need to maintain species diversity.

**Natural Resource Management.** To protect and enhance the natural processes and biological diversity found within the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, recognizing its unique position as part of a biosphere reserve in an urban setting.

To minimize human caused or accelerated impacts and processes including erosion, invasion by alien plants, degradation of air and water quality and disruption of the natural flow of water.

To locate development in areas previously disturbed by human activity whenever possible.

**Interpretation.** To offer interpretive programs and services that further an awareness and appreciation of the wide diversity of coastal ecosystems and cultural resources of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

To offer programs that explain the role of Golden Gate National Recreation Area in preserving our cultural and natural heritage and as a unit of the National Park System.

**Visitor Activities.** To provide for and permit only those cultural, educational, and recreational activities that are compatible with the preservation of park resources.

To offer facilities and services that promote a better understanding of the park's resources and their innate value for public recreation, benefit, and inspiration.

**Development.** To ensure that park development is the minimum necessary for efficient and essential management and that visitor services are consistent with the park's purposes and general management plan.

To assure that all facility and visitor service development, including trails and signs, harmonize with the cultural and natural environment and do not significantly impact park resources.

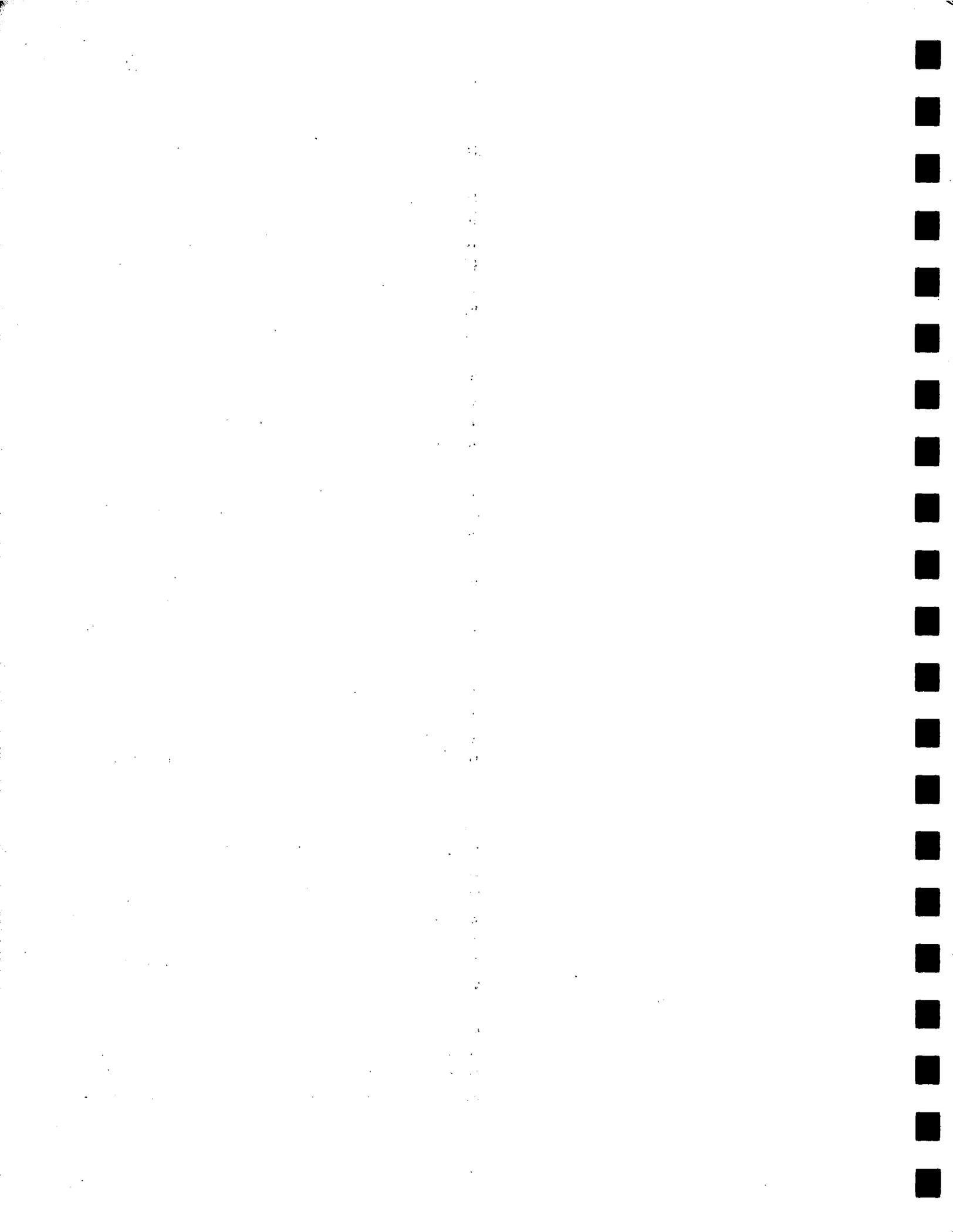
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## PHYSICAL HISTORY AND SITE ANALYSIS

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## 2.1 NARRATIVE HISTORY

(See Maps 2, 3, 4)

### *Prehistoric and Historic Background*

The earliest known evidence of human occupation in the Suto District are the remains of three Native American shell mounds located at the site of Suto Baths. The Point Lobos Archeological Sites were listed in the National Register in November, 1976. Dated to sometime after 500 A.D. but prior to 1769 A.D., these mounds are the cultural remains of the area's aboriginal inhabitants known as "Ohlone." Although generally residing inland, the Ohlone made periodic trips to the shore to fish and gather salt. Consequently, these shell piles contain only the remains of shells, bones, and seeds, and no artifacts or other cultural material. Spanish settlement in 1776 sharply curtailed Ohlone activity in this region; within a few decades the Ohlone had been moved inland to the Mission San Francisco de Asis de Dolores.

From the late eighteenth century until the middle of the nineteenth century the area now occupied by the Suto District was part of Rancho Punta de Lobos, a large Mexican land grant. Following the formal acquisition of California by the United States in 1848, these lands became part of the City and County of San Francisco. Although comprising the westernmost tip of San Francisco, the area around Point Lobos was considered remote and inaccessible for most of the nineteenth century and came to be known as the Outside Lands.

### *Early Settlement and Visitation at Point Lobos*

By 1854, Point Lobos bluffs had been homesteaded by a potato farmer named Chambers, but remained relatively undeveloped. Narrative descriptions dating from this period indicate that the adventuresome visited Point Lobos to pick the wild strawberries native to the area. Indeed, for a brief period of time the site was known as Strawberry Hill. Hikers and horseback riders reached this portion of the Pacific coast on one of several trails crossing the six miles of sand dunes that lay between downtown San Francisco and the sea. By the middle 1850s, travelers could rest and take refreshment at Seal Rock House located at the foot of the cliff near Seal Rock, or at Ocean House four miles to the south on the western end of the Mission Dolores trail to the beach. A popular day trip from San Francisco consisted of a coastal loop journey from Fort Point at the Golden Gate, to Seal Rocks, along the hard sandy beach to Ocean House, and back downtown.<sup>1</sup> (Fig. 1)

### *Initial Resort Development*

With the rapid influx of people and money associated with the California Gold Rush, San Francisco developed quickly during the 1850s. Between 1850 and 1860 the local population nearly doubled, growing from 35,000 to

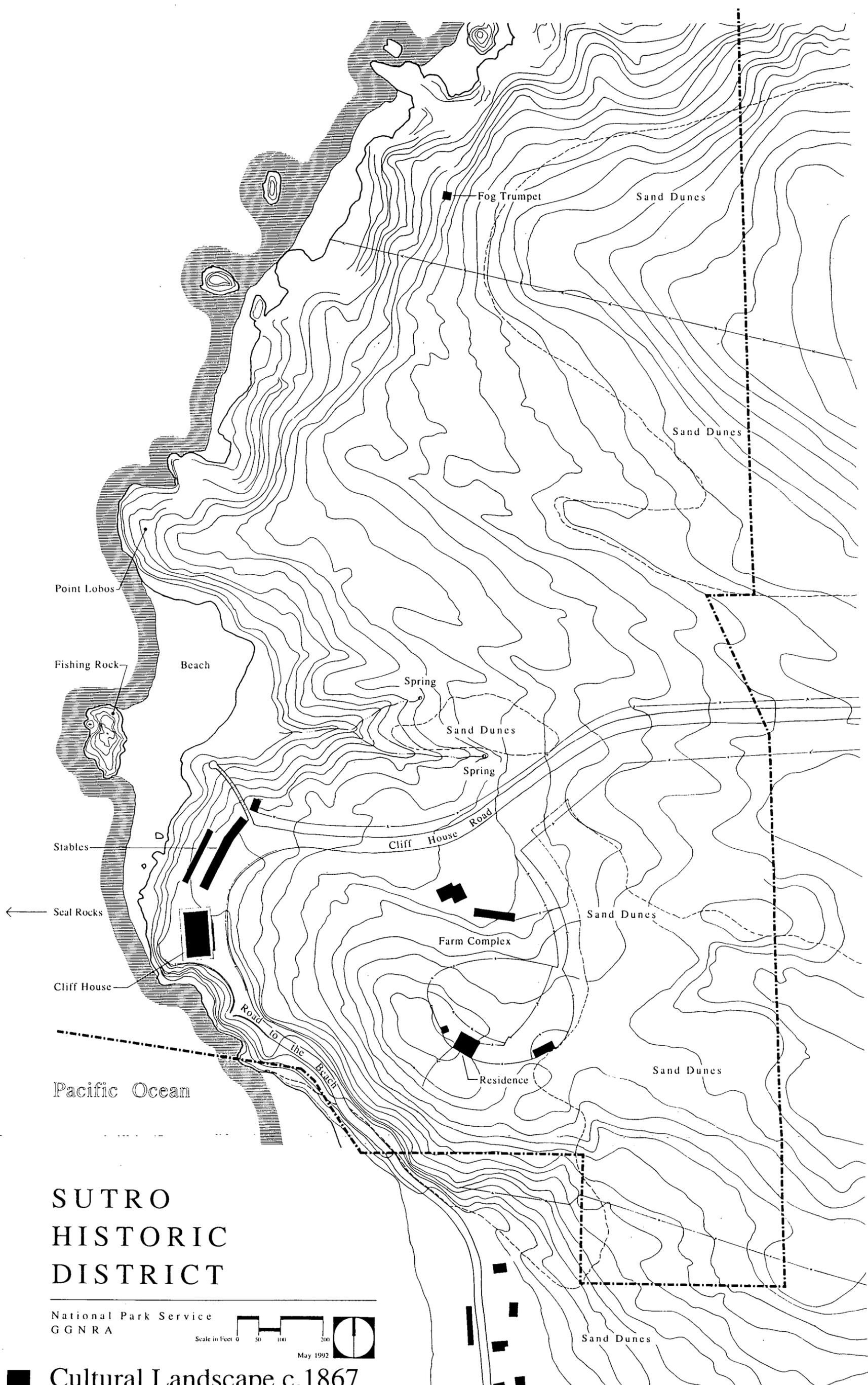
56,000. More significantly, the entire city changed abruptly from a ragged frontier town with unpaved streets and crudely constructed wooden buildings into a modern, well-organized, and almost elegant city.<sup>2</sup>



*Figure 1. Site of Sutro Baths Before Construction*

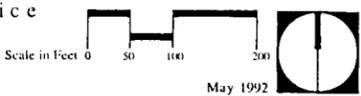
In the late 1850s, Charles C. Butler, a well-known San Francisco real estate magnate, purchased 160 acres of land around Point Lobos. Although Butler had planned originally to hold the land until profitable to sell, he soon decided to develop the site as a fashionable resort. In 1862, Butler joined forces with Senator James Buckley and James Phelan to form the Point Lobos Road Company. In February, 1863, work began on a road that would lead from Point Lobos cliff to the site of the proposed new resort, and then to the beach below. Point Lobos Avenue, completed in several months at a cost of \$175,000, provided a direct route from the end of Bush Street (at today's Presidio Avenue) past the site of the Cliff House to Ocean Beach.

When completed, the Point Lobos Road was 110 feet wide, paved part in macadam and part in rolled and watered clay. One side of the road was developed as a mile-and-a-half long clay speedway for fast-trotting horses. An 1871 account described the speedway as "the broadest, hardest, smoothest and longest track in the State."<sup>3</sup> Simultaneous to the development of the Point Lobos Road, another road was completed from downtown to the Ocean House, thus facilitating the popular coastal loop excursion. By 1863 a horse-drawn stagecoach made the trip from Portsmouth Square to the Point Lobos area each Sunday.<sup>4</sup>



# SUTRO HISTORIC DISTRICT

National Park Service  
GGNRA



## Cultural Landscape c.1867

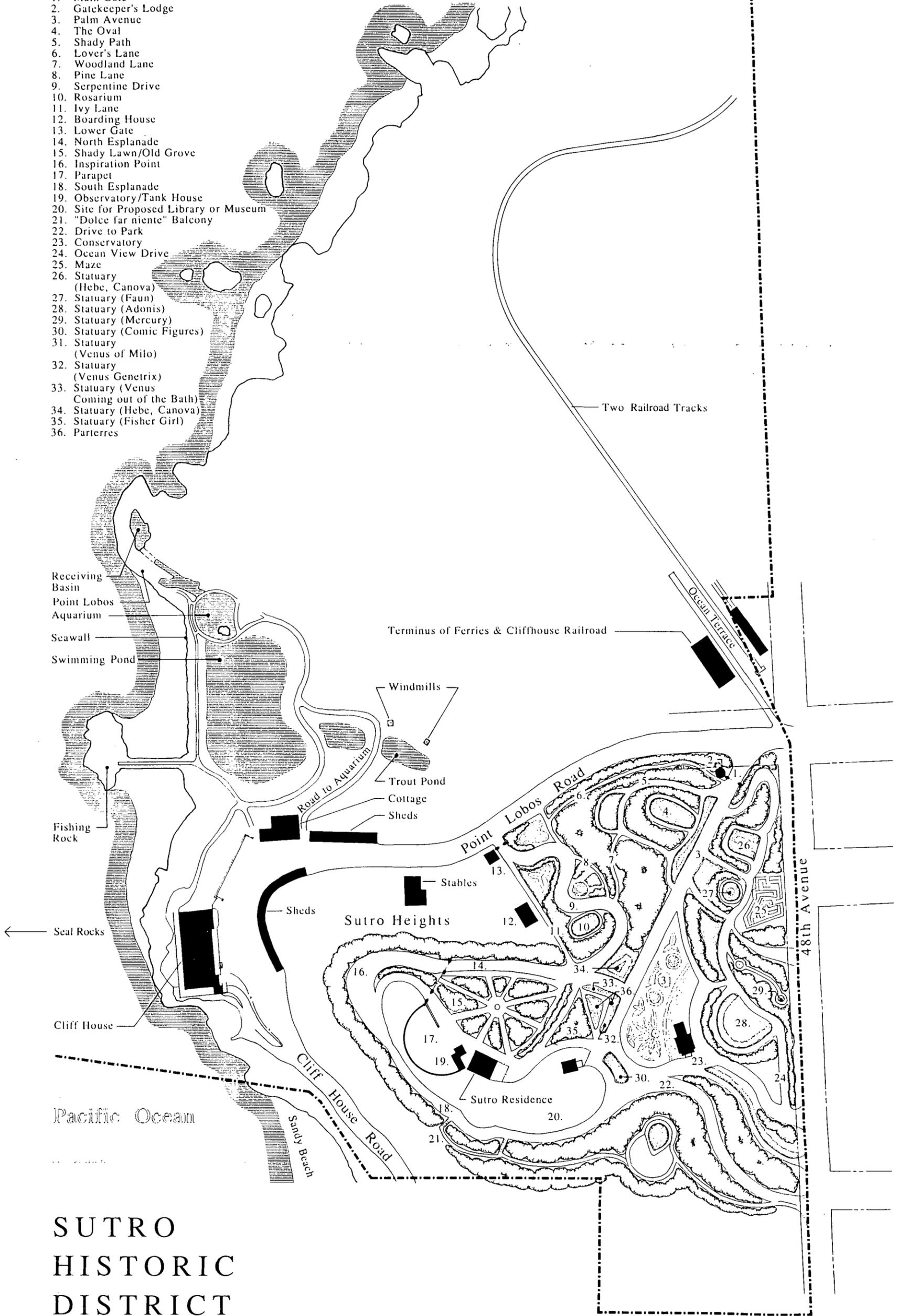
**MAP 2**

- Surface Water
- Tree Cover
- Grass Lawn
- Contour Intervals
- Fencing
- Property Boundary Lines
- Proposed Historic District Boundary



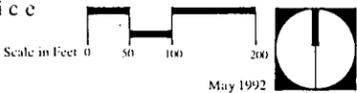
1888 Sutro Heights Legend

1. Main Gate
2. Gatekeeper's Lodge
3. Palm Avenue
4. The Oval
5. Shady Path
6. Lover's Lane
7. Woodland Lane
8. Pine Lane
9. Serpentine Drive
10. Rosarium
11. Ivy Lane
12. Boarding House
13. Lower Gate
14. North Esplanade
15. Shady Lawn/Old Grove
16. Inspiration Point
17. Parapet
18. South Esplanade
19. Observatory/Tank House
20. Site for Proposed Library or Museum
21. "Dolce far niente" Balcony
22. Drive to Park
23. Conservatory
24. Ocean View Drive
25. Maze
26. Statuary (Hebe, Canova)
27. Statuary (Faun)
28. Statuary (Adonis)
29. Statuary (Mercury)
30. Statuary (Comic Figures)
31. Statuary (Venus of Milo)
32. Statuary (Venus Genetrix)
33. Statuary (Venus Coming out of the Bath)
34. Statuary (Hebe, Canova)
35. Statuary (Fisher Girl)
36. Parterres



SUTRO HISTORIC DISTRICT

National Park Service  
G G N R A



May 1992

Cultural Landscape c.1888

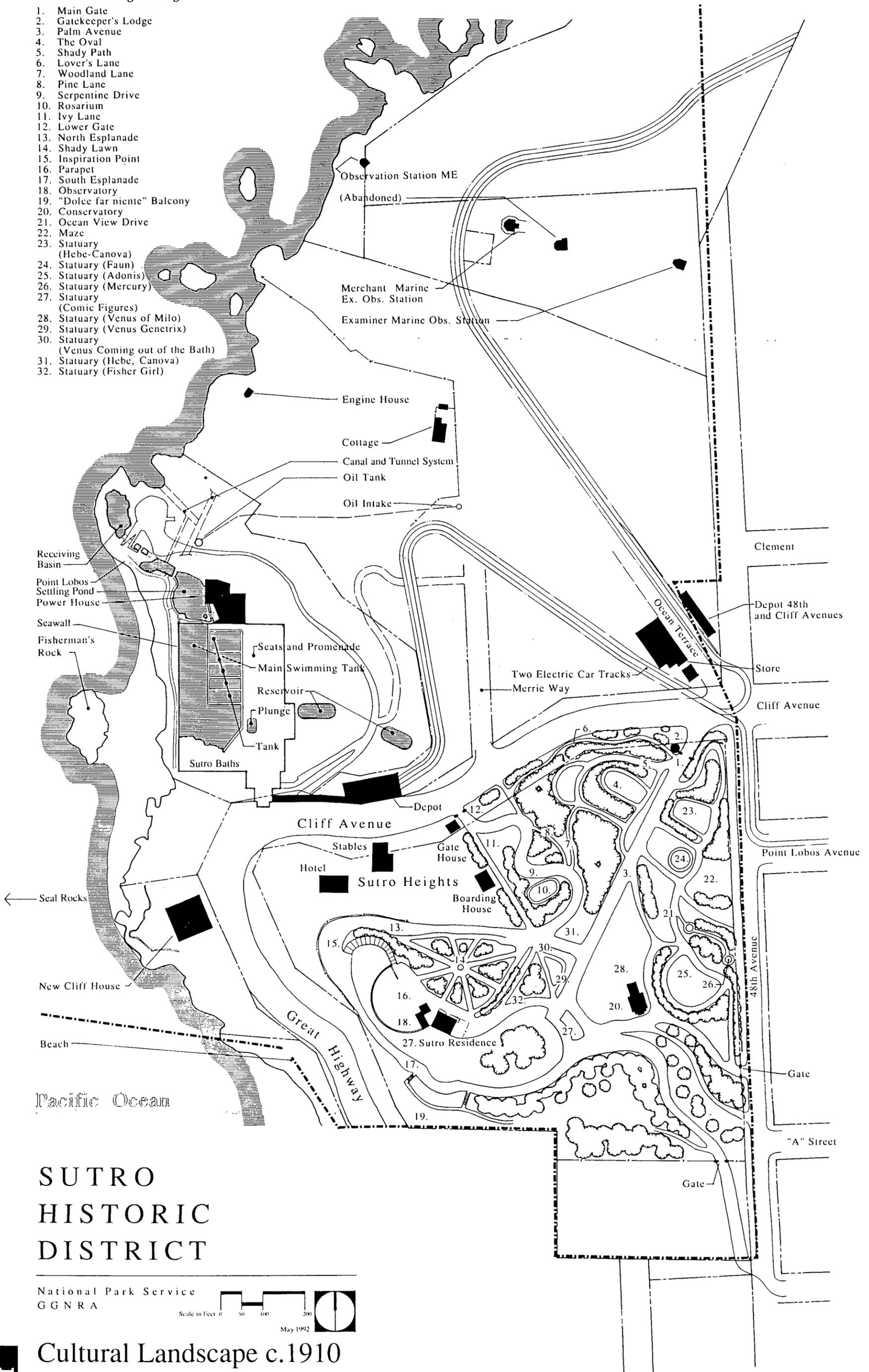
MAP 3

- |               |                         |                                     |
|---------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Surface Water | Contour Intervals       | Proposed Historic District Boundary |
| Tree Cover    | Fencing                 |                                     |
| Grass Lawn    | Property Boundary Lines |                                     |



**1910 Sutro Heights Legend**

1. Main Gate
2. Gatekeeper's Lodge
3. Palm Avenue
4. The Oval
5. Shady Path
6. Lover's Lane
7. Woodland Lane
8. Pine Lane
9. Serpentine Drive
10. Rosarium
11. Ivy Lane
12. Lower Gate
13. North Esplanade
14. Shady Lawn
15. Inspiration Point
16. Parapet
17. South Esplanade
18. Observatory
19. "Dolce far niente" Balcony
20. Conservatory
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22. Maze
23. Statuary (Hebe-Canova)
24. Statuary (Faun)
25. Statuary (Adonis)
26. Statuary (Mercury)
27. Statuary (Comic Figures)
28. Statuary (Venus of Milo)
29. Statuary (Venus Genetrix)
30. Statuary (Venus Coming out of the Bath)
31. Statuary (Hebe, Canova)
32. Statuary (Fisher Girl)



**SUTRO HISTORIC DISTRICT**

National Park Service  
G.N.R.A.



**Cultural Landscape c.1910**

**MAP 4**

- |               |                         |                                     |
|---------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Surface Water | Contour Intervals       | Proposed Historic District Boundary |
| Tree Cover    | Fencing                 |                                     |
| Grass Lawn    | Property Boundary Lines |                                     |



Simultaneous with the development of Point Lobos Road, Butler and Buckley oversaw the construction of the first Cliff House. (Fig. 2) Described as “a house of fair dimensions encircled by a balcony,” the first Cliff House was a relatively simple, one-story, frame and clapboard structure.<sup>5</sup> Early photographs of the first Cliff House show no landscape embellishments around the building other than a paved pull-in and sidewalk between the front facade of the building and Point Lobos Road. Indeed, the most noticeable feature of the Cliff House was its skillful siting on a cliff overlooking Seal Rocks, providing a breathtaking three-quarters panorama stretching from Ocean Beach to the south over to Marin County to the north.



*Figure 2. First Cliff House and Environs*

Butler placed Captain Junius Foster, later the manager of the International Hotel in San Francisco, in charge of the operation of the Cliff House. Butler’s plan for the Cliff House was to develop a fashionable resort for affluent San Franciscans. The prohibitively high cost of traveling to the site by carriage, and paying tolls and a night’s lodging at the elegant inn, contributed to the exclusivity of the enterprise for nearly two decades. (Fig. 3) Early Cliff House guests included members of prominent families of San Francisco, including the Crockers, Hearsts, Stanfords, Vandewaters, and Lathams. In 1868, owing to his success, Butler had Cliff House enlarged to three times its original size with additions to both the north and south ends. Other alterations included a platform added to the road side of the Cliff House to shelter visitors from the wind, and a broad, seaside verandah that could be used as an outdoor dance floor.<sup>6</sup>

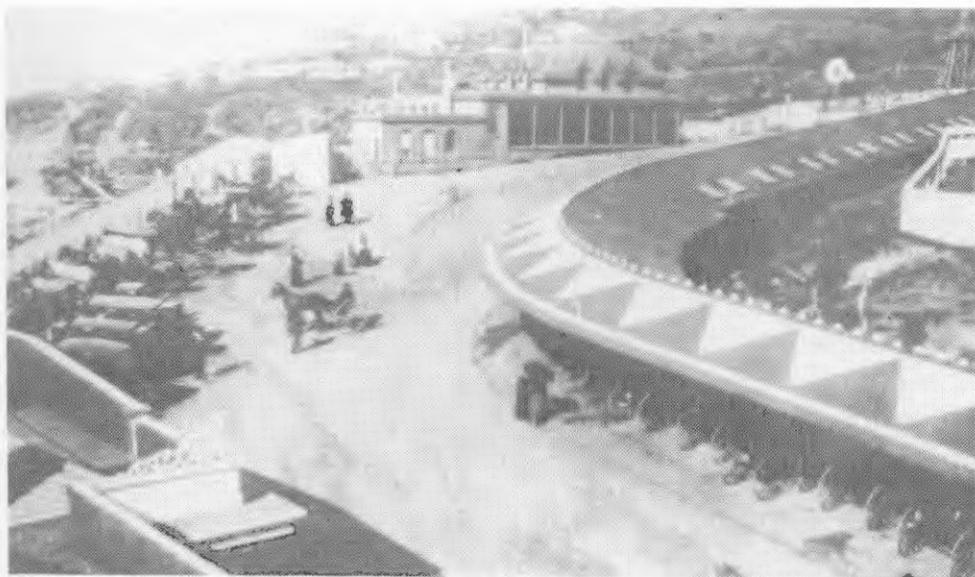


Figure 3. Carriage Sheds at Cliff House

During the 1870s, Cliff House began to decline in popularity as an exclusive resort. By 1877 the public road built by the City of San Francisco through Golden Gate Park to the beach was providing all classes of people access to the Cliff House vicinity. Increased competition from new establishments developing along the shore influenced Butler to attempt to lure new patrons by offering gambling, alcohol, and late hours. By the late 1870s the Cliff House was attracting a less fashionable clientele. Visitors described the resort as “down at the heels.”<sup>7</sup>

#### ***Change in Late-Nineteenth-Century San Francisco***

San Francisco’s tremendous growth as well as the changing social and economic conditions of the time influenced the development of Sutro’s recreational complex at Point Lobos during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. As described by one historian:

Few cities had witnessed so many dramatic events in so brief a period of time: its transfer to the sovereignty of the United States; the struggle for order that culminated in the Vigilance committees; the decline of the California placers and the rise of the Comstock’s silver mines; finally the changes brought about by the Civil War and the accelerated development of northern California’s natural resources.<sup>8</sup>

This prolonged state of upheaval continued in the 1870s and 1880s, an era marked by sharp economic swings, high levels of unemployment, and increasing racial tensions between whites and Chinese American immigrants. The last quarter of the nineteenth century also experienced rapid population

growth, with an increasingly narrowing gap between the numbers of men and women. An economic survey published in 1877 indicated that San Francisco had 27,000 buildings, and that more than 1,500 foreign and domestic ships arrived at San Francisco's ports in that year.<sup>9</sup>

Another unique feature of late-nineteenth-century life in San Francisco was the large numbers of people who lived in hotels or lodging houses rather than single family residences. A peculiar hold-over from the more transient Gold Rush period, the popularity of the hotel or rooming house as a permanent residence endured into the twentieth century, and long after the ratio of men to women had established an equilibrium.<sup>10</sup> Consequently, late-nineteenth-century San Francisco featured an usually large number of restaurants, and even those San Franciscans who lived in single family residences were more likely to eat in dining establishments than their contemporaries in other American cities. The variety and quality of food and lodging in late-nineteenth-century San Francisco contributed to its cosmopolitan flavor; visitors considered it an unusually urbane and sophisticated American city for its size.<sup>11</sup>

An additional significant characteristic of late-nineteenth-century San Francisco was the popularity of gambling or speculation. Starting with the gold rush, and continuing into the 1870s with the profits from the Nevada silver mines, the typical San Franciscan "preferred to risk his savings in highly speculative ventures that promised large and fast returns rather than in more conservative enterprises where the profits, though surer, were likely to be small."<sup>12</sup> As a result of the universal popularity of speculation, the local economy was characterized by rapid fluctuations from prosperity to collapse. Building programs in the city responded to swings in the local economy. In general, private construction would surge ahead during prosperous years, with public works picking up the slack during economic declines. With the decline of the silver boom in the late 1870s, for example, there was a significant public works program that included repaving streets, installing granite crosswalks, and the construction of schools, firehouses, and other facilities.

Despite the tremendous influx of money into the city during the late nineteenth century from gold and silver mining, little effort was put into the development of public parks or gardens. Instead, wealth was displayed in the construction of grand mansions, and luxurious hotels and restaurants. According to one historian, the city's growth during the gold rush days had been so rapid that development of recreational facilities, had received little attention.<sup>13</sup> As early as 1855 Frank Soule, one of the authors of *The Annals of San Francisco*, had noted that

Over all these square miles of contemplated thoroughfares there seems to be no provision made by the projectors for a public park — the true lungs of a large city. The existing plaza, or Portsmouth Square, and the other two or three diminutive squares, delineated in the plan, seem the only breathing holes intended for the future population of hundreds of thousands. This is a strange mistake, and can be only attributed to the jealous avarice of the city projects in turning every square vara of the site to an available building lot... Not only is there no public park or garden, but there is not even a circus, oval, open terrace, broad avenue, or any ornamental line of street or building or verdant space of any kind other than three or four small squares alluded to; and which every resident knows are by no means verdant, except in patches where stagnant water collects and ditch weeds grows. <sup>14</sup>

As late as 1866 Frederick Law Olmsted, after a visit to San Francisco, stated:

The most popular place of resort is a burial ground on a high elevation scourged by the wind with no trees or turf. I have more than once seen working men resort with their families to enjoy a picnic in the shelter of the tombstones. This state of things is positively wasteful and destructive of the sources of wealth and prosperity possessed by the city.<sup>15</sup>

In 1868, the City of San Francisco acquired the future site of Golden Gate Park, a one-half mile wide tract of land that fronted on the ocean and extended three miles inland, in response to this lack of public open space. The initial plan to develop the site as a park was ridiculed as “a dreary waste of shifting sand hills” that would never become an attractive park. Nevertheless, in 1871, under the auspices of William H. Hall, work began on the development of the 1,017-acre park. By the end of the decade so much had been accomplished that guidebooks described day trips to the new park, which by that time featured two miles of roads and paths, more than 135,000 trees and shrubs, and a greenhouse and nursery.<sup>16</sup>

#### **DEVELOPMENT OF ADOLPH SUTRO’S RECREATIONAL COMPLEX: 1881-1898**

During the last two decades of the nineteenth century, the Point Lobos area grew from a sparsely developed and exclusive scenic retreat into a day-use, recreational complex serving both local residents and tourists. Adolph Sutro, a German-born engineer who made his fortune in the late 1860s and 1870s through the design and construction of a massive tunnel that drained and ventilated the flooded shafts of the Comstock Lode silver mines in Nevada,

was the driving force behind this transformation. The construction of the Sutro Tunnel, which provided the basis for countless fortunes in silver, is recognized also as having improved significantly the working conditions of the miners themselves, and diminished risks to their health and safety. This combination of ingenuity and benevolence characterized Sutro's later work in San Francisco.

Between Sutro's 1881 purchase of the property and his death in 1898, he developed the gardens at Sutro Heights, oversaw the construction of the massive Sutro Baths, had the Cliff House rebuilt as a chateau-style palace, and instituted an inexpensive passenger railroad service linking downtown with the Point Lobos area. A 1928 aerial photograph showed the relationship between the three areas developed by Sutro: the heights, the baths, and the Cliff House. (Fig. 4) Initially Sutro also had planned to locate a library containing his extensive collection of books at Sutro Heights, reasoning that the beauty of the site would prove inspirational to scholars. However, Sutro abandoned this plan after several experts warned him that the Point Lobos salt air would damage his collection.



*Figure 4. Aerial View of Site, 1928*

When Sutro moved to San Francisco in the late 1870s, he initiated an aggressive campaign to purchase real estate in the city, much of which was still undeveloped. Indeed, it is said that at one point Sutro's holdings equaled one twelfth of San Francisco's area. Although Sutro purchased a significant amount of downtown property, his efforts were focused largely on acquiring the area known as the Outside Lands, located on the far western edge of the city.

### ***Sutro Heights***

Sutro first encountered the future site of his Sutro Heights home in March, 1881, while on a visit with his daughter Emma to the home of Samuel Tetlow. Tetlow's small frame cottage was located on a promontory overlooking the Cliff House and Seal Rocks and provided breathtaking views of the Pacific Ocean, Mount Tamalpais, and the Golden Gate. Tetlow, owner of the Bella Union Music Hall in San Francisco, had purchased the dwelling in November 1860 from James Butler, the first developer of the Cliff House. Legend has it that Sutro was so entranced with the site that he made a deposit of \$1,000 (on a total sale price of \$15,000) for the cottage and an adjoining 1.65 acres that very afternoon. Since the surrounding land was also for sale, Sutro was able to acquire the 21.21 acres adjacent to the cottage as well as 80 acres of shore lands bordering Fort Miley and part of the future Lincoln Park.<sup>17</sup> This land included the Cliff House.

At the time that Sutro first visited his new residence, Tetlow apparently had enlarged the cottage and started a small garden. Four tiers of picket fences, intended to prevent erosion, stood between the cottage and the steep hillside overlooking the Point Lobos Road. Sutro's renovation of the cottage retained its relatively modest appearance, belying its ownership by a man of Sutro's wealth and stature.<sup>18</sup>

In contrast to his restraint at renovation of the cottage, Sutro concentrated his efforts on the immediate development of elaborate gardens that eventually would cover the twenty-acre site. Sutro laid out the grounds to take advantage of vistas of the ocean and Seal Rocks. The design of the Sutro Heights gardens reflects, in part, a response to natural features and site conditions, including its topography, physical setting, hydrology, and climate.

**Early Site Work.** Much of the early site work consisted of creating an environment conducive to the growth of tender garden plants and included the construction of tall, wooden, slat fences on the north and west exposures and the planting of eucalyptus, cypress, and pine tree wind breaks.<sup>19</sup> Sutro's plans depended on extensive site grading to create the numerous terraces that later developed into individual garden rooms defined by paths, plantings, and gentle slopes. (Fig. 5) Another significant feature dating from the site's initial development was "The Old Grove," a grouping of cypress, pine, and eucalyptus trees planted approximately 10-15 feet on center and located in front of the Sutro residence. Once mature, the trees were pruned to provide an overhead canopy with shaded lawn below. Eight axial walkways radiated from a central point below, giving the grove a formal appearance, and establishing it as a central organizing element.

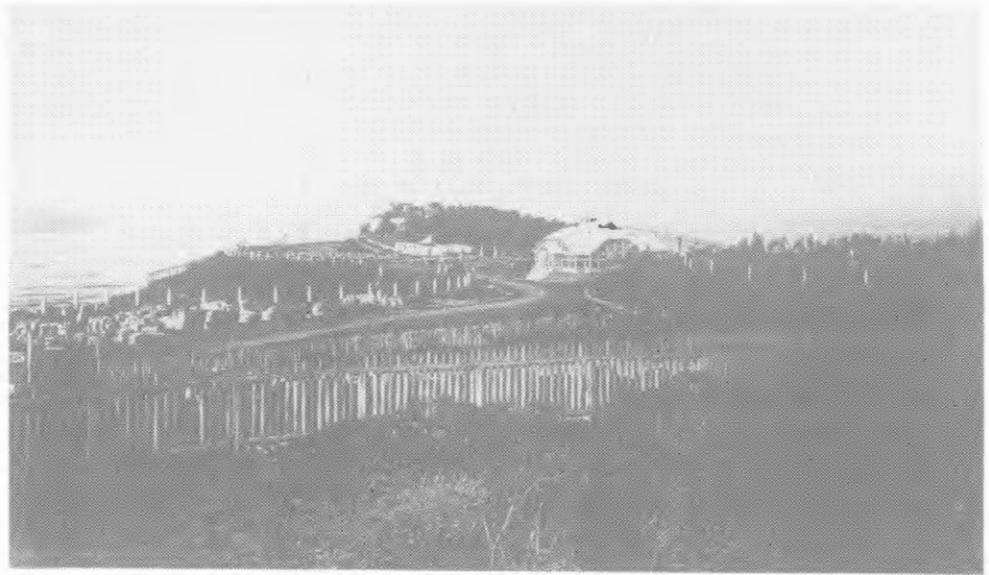


Figure 5. *Sutro Heights, View from Reservoir, 1886*

**Circulation.** Prior to Sutro's acquisition of the site, the main entrance to Sutro Heights was located on lower Point Lobos Avenue (currently at the junction of Serpentine Drive and Ivy Lane), from which point a road climbed up the site's steep north slope. Around 1883, a new main entrance to the site was developed at Palm Avenue on the corner of 48th Street and Point Lobos Avenue; the original entrance on lower Point Lobos Avenue came to be used as the service or private entrance. The development of the Palm Avenue entrance as the primary entrance to the site responded to the 1883 placement of a major depot (the Ocean Terrace stop) of the Park and Ocean Railroad directly across the street. The low fares offered by the railroad resulted in increased visitation by San Franciscans who frequently made Sutro Heights the first stop on their trips to the Point Lobos shore.

It appears that by around 1883 prominent gates marked both the main and private entrances. The main gate was a highly decorative wood structure more than 25 feet tall and flanked by two statues of reclining lions. This truss-like structure consisted of a central carriage entrance arch and half arches on each side for pedestrian passage, supported by decorative wood columns. The carriage entrance was secured by side-hinged double gates and the two pedestrian entrances had similar single gates. The gate at the private or service entrance on lower Point Lobos Avenue has been described as a smaller wooden structure flanked by statues of animals. In addition to the two Point Lobos Avenue entrances, secondary entrances were located along the east and southeast edges of the site, and each was marked by a minor gate.

Three main roadways were created at Sutro Heights as part of the initial development of the property: Palm Avenue, the Esplanade, and Serpentine Drive. Palm Avenue — lined with palm-like *Dracena draco* trees, edged with a carefully trimmed lawn and linear flower beds, and terminating with a carriage turnaround marked by planters, statues, and a fountain — was the most formal. Graded and graveled with crushed local sandstone, the main roads on the site were intended for pedestrians, and limited carriage and horseback use. Wherever necessary for proper drainage, roads on the site were lined with concrete swale gutters, approximately one foot wide. In 1891 a system of brick-lined catch-basins connected with terra-cotta drain pipes was installed on the Esplanade, to prevent the erosion of the cliff below. The entire length of the Esplanade was lined with an ornamental wooden post and chain fence to define the overlook, and keep visitors away from the cliffs below.<sup>20</sup>

Along with the main roads, narrower secondary paths, also paved with crushed stone, passed through the gardens and were limited to pedestrian use. These secondary paths led the visitor through the gardens in a meandering, leisurely style, and featured lookouts, seating areas, and garden structures.

**Planting Scheme/Vegetation.** Sutro created a thick forest of trees interspersed by small formal and semi-formal flower beds and planting displays. The outdoor rooms created within the forest, linked by a series of paths within the tree canopy, provided the light and shelter necessary for successful plant cultivation. The terraced garden rooms were designed to feature specific plants, a piece of sculpture, or a scenic view. All featured an open central lawn framed by decorative plantings and surrounded either by forest or open to the west with a view of the ocean. As shown on maps from 1882 and 1895, several of these areas had descriptive names such as the Rosarium, the Oval, and the Adonis.<sup>21</sup>

Along with the garden rooms, Sutro incorporated several other planting features. A map of the site dated 1885 shows a hedge maze, located in the northeast corner of the grounds; remnants still can be found on the site. Carpet beds or parterres were another prominent planting feature. The greatest concentration of planting displays was arranged along Palm Avenue in front of the carriage turnaround. Intricate parterres were located to the west of Palm Avenue opposite the conservatory. Popular in England and America during the Victorian era, these beds consisted of finely trimmed displays of annual or seasonal flowers arranged in various shapes and patterns. Historic photographs of Sutro Heights taken during this period show an American flag, with the date “1889,” and the another bearing the name “Sutro

Heights.” Known to have been in place by 1885, these flower beds required extensive maintenance by skilled gardeners and horticulturalists.<sup>22</sup>

The Gnomes Arbor Vitae, another striking garden feature at Sutro Heights, was a sculpted hedge of American Arborvitae [*Thuja occidentalis* o] in front of the conservatory. The hedge consisted of a straight segment approximately 130 feet long with two 60 foot lateral rows of Thuja radiating from its center at 60 degree angles and creating three wedge-shaped planting areas with a Norfolk Island Pine centered in each. At maturity, the hedge reached a height of twenty feet, and despite the extensive pruning it required, appears to have been well-maintained into the 1920s.

Sutro used largely drought-tolerant plant materials, many of which were native to similar climates in the Mediterranean, Australia, New Zealand, and South America. Species were selected for quick growth and tolerance to seaside conditions.<sup>23</sup> Constant changes of the plant materials used in the beds and annual borders as Sutro experimented with new species and patterns kept a large staff of gardeners employed.<sup>24</sup> The major forest trees planted on the site included Monterey cypress and pine, maritime pine, and eucalyptus. Dracena palms and Norfolk Island pines were used as specimens and accents. Shrubs included hydrangeas, roses, rhododendrons, Hebe, and Coprosma with Phormiums as accents. Hedges were of yew and arborvitae. Annuals and perennials used in beds and borders consisted of geraniums, salvias, chrysanthemums, and violas. Agaves grew in planters and beds. The formal carpet beds or parterres included a variety of succulents, trimmed herbs, boxwood, and miniatures.<sup>25</sup>

A spring located below on the future site of the Sutro Baths supplied water for the gardens. Windmills pumped the water to a 50,000 gallon storage tank located on 48th Avenue at A Street and to another 15,000 gallon tank located atop the parapet. The water was then gravity-fed from these two high points to the various portions of the site.<sup>26</sup> Portable sprinklers aided in garden irrigation.

**Statuary/Site Furniture.** Numerous statues, planters, and fountains were located on the grounds at Sutro Heights. During his 1883 tour of Europe, Sutro arranged for the casting of more than 200 pieces of sculpture in Belgium, which were shipped from Antwerp to San Francisco in 1884. The sculptures, along with rustic benches, chairs, and tables, were displayed on the grounds at Sutro Heights. Sutro’s intent was for the statuary to provide accessible examples of European culture to the visitors in the park.<sup>27</sup> In addition planting urns flanked sculptures, such as “Venus de Milo” and the fountain located in the center of the carriage turnaround, as well as providing

borders for the terraced lawn near the conservatory. (Fig. 6) Other planting urns served as carpet bed focal points.



Figure 6. *Garden with Statues*

**Buildings and Structures.** A variety of buildings and structures were associated with the development of the gardens at Sutro Heights. Buildings and structures ranged from utilitarian garden sheds to an elaborate glass-paneled conservatory. Built primarily between 1881 and Sutro's death in 1898, these structures served an integral role in the overall site design at Sutro Heights and served as organizing elements, focal points, and destinations.

One of the first major structures built following the remodeling of the residence was the rock and sandstone parapet located immediately west of the residence. (Fig. 7) Sited on the highest point of the estate, the parapet continues to provide breathtaking views of the surrounding coastal scenery. Since its completion in 1895 the parapet has been a major focal point, observation platform, and Sutro Heights visitor destination.

As built, the parapet was a curved sandstone wall that extended in a semi-circle for 280 feet. Two 100-foot walls projected from the north and south ends, creating a partial "D" shape. A small storage cellar with an arched doorway, possibly used as a wine cellar, was located on the north wall. Between the two rear walls a sloping ramp provided access to the top viewing platform. On the western side of the parapet there was a narrow stone staircase connected to the Esplanade. The parapet floor was covered with crushed native sandstone. Thirty stone crenellations, each topped with either

a concrete statue or planting urn and linked together with iron pipe railings, defined the top edge of the parapet. Initially, freestanding chairs, and two large, parrott model cannons pointing to the sea (each with a stack of cannon balls) were located on the parapet.<sup>28</sup>

Around 1890, the southwest exposure was terraced with several low rock retaining walls to reinforce the structure and prevent further soil erosion. The resulting exposed site was developed as a rock garden and planted with a variety of drought and stress tolerant plants including Agave, Aloe, iceplant, and other succulents.<sup>29</sup>

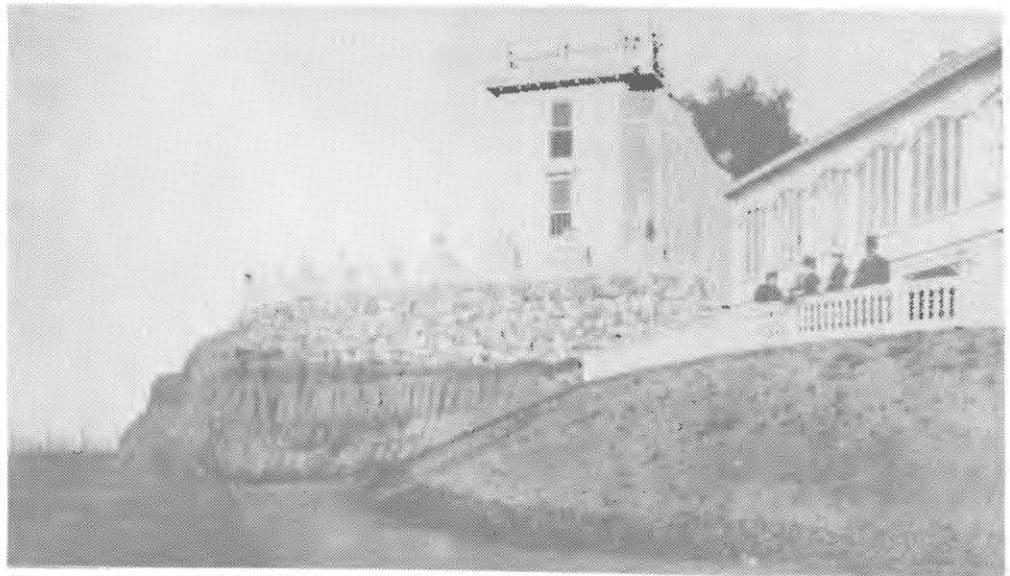


Figure 7. Parapet Wall and Statuary

Another significant landscape structure at Sutro Heights was the *Dolce far Niente* Balcony, a long terrace-like structure constructed in 1884-1885 on the cliff face below the South Esplanade and overlooking Ocean Beach. (Fig. 8) This elegant structure consisted of a cantilevered wood deck protruding from the cliff face and supported by wooden posts. The posts extended upward through the deck, terminating in a series of open wooden arches framing the ocean view to the west. A continuous decorative railing linked the posts at the deck level, and the open area below the deck was screened with lathes to give the structure a finished appearance from the beach below. Two stairways descending from the Esplanade provided access to the 250-foot-long balcony.

The gallery, built around 1884 and located at the northeast end of the parapet, was a one-story wood building featuring shingle siding and a sharply-

pitched shingled roof. A Queen Anne-style tower joined the gallery to the adjacent parapet; the tower actually resting atop one of the crenellations. Until well into the 1920s, the gallery operated as a photograph and souvenir concession; visitors could have their picture taken with the panoramic view of the parapet in the background, rent special glasses with which to view Seal Rock, and purchase postcards and other gifts.<sup>30</sup>

The well house, built around 1885, is the last surviving building from the Sutro era remaining at Sutro Heights. Built on an elevated foundation of cut and dressed sandstone, this small wood-frame structure originally featured carved wooden posts, iron grillwork doors on the north and south facades, decorative shingles, and finials capping each roof end. Sited at the top of Serpentine Drive, the well house marked the entrance from the lower gate to the central garden area. Although it is not clear whether the structure ever actually housed a well, it did contain the plumbing for the pair of drinking fountains mounted on opposite sides of the structure. The fountains featured scallop shell basins.

The tank house and observation tower located at the southeast corner of the parapet and adjacent to the residence was built around 1884. This two-story building with white clapboard siding was built by Sutro to house and screen the twin 15,000 gallon water tanks located on the rear of the parapet. However, an 1886 photograph showing the building labeled as “observatory” indicates the structure’s alternate use as a viewing station that provided visitors with an elevated view of the surrounding panorama. Subsequently a taller, three-story, wood observation tower of a similar design was constructed adjacent to the tank house to the north. This structure, which featured a cantilevered, glass-enclosed observatory on top, soon became a landmark recognizable from a great distance.

The conservatory was an elaborate greenhouse structure built to house Sutro’s collection of climate-sensitive tropical plants. Centrally located on an elevated mound east of the terminus of Palm Avenue, the structure was cruciform in plan, with a central ventilation tower. Built entirely of small glass panels mounted in wood frames, this ornate garden structure was supported by internal wood framing. The interior, which held a lush variety of palms, ferns, tropical flowers, and statuary, provided visitors with an impressive botanical display.<sup>31</sup>

Two gatekeeper’s houses were built around 1885-1886, one at the main gate and one at the lower gate. Once Sutro Heights was open to the public a guestbook was kept at the main gate house. Both buildings were octagonal, wood-frame structures clad in horizontal tongue in groove siding, with



Figure 8. *Dolce Far Niente*

pointed roofs and metal weathervanes in the shape of roosters. It appears that these were movable buildings with no foundations. In addition, several sheds located on the access road to the residence were used to store gardening tools and provide shelter for small animals.

**Public Response to Sutro Heights.** Sutro Heights opened to the public in 1885. By this time a trip from downtown San Francisco on the Park and Ocean Railroad cost 20 cents round trip, significantly less expensive than the sum to hire a private carriage. The enthusiastic descriptions of the gardens by visitors from this period indicate that a trip to Sutro Heights was well worth the cost. In November of 1885, a reporter from the Salt Lake City *Daily Tribune* provided the following sketch of Sutro Heights:

There are two very massive gateways with lodges, the first being guarded by two huge sphinxes, and through which is a narrow drive leading to the private gardens a quarter of a mile up the Cliff House Road, and nearer town in the main entrance, even larger than the lower or private one. This is guarded by two enormous lions couchant, copies of Sir Edwin Landseers lions at the base of the Nelson Column, Trafalgar Square, London. The main drive is very wide, perfectly level, and forms a junction with the lower drive in the center of the grounds, and extends round the bluff rock overhanging the sea, and from which you look down on the seals. Above you to the right, the bluff still rises about twenty feet, and on the extreme summit is built a massive stone wall, castellated in true Norman style, that resembles a piece of the terrace at Windsor Castle, or the battlements of Northallerton, and much admired, especially by those who have seen it from the ocean. The gardens are laid out beautifully, in the center of which is a very large conservatory, and to which, in addition is being made, and at every turn, or junction of roads, or foot paths, is placed some piece of statuary, rustic chairs, tables, and in fact everything that luxury or comfort can demand. There are several hundred chairs and not less than one hundred pieces of fine statuary.<sup>32</sup>

Records from 1889 indicate that trees and hedges had begun to mature; perennials were established; and irrigation systems were operating successfully. A full-time staff of seventeen — ten gardeners, a tree man, a coachman, driver, gate keeper, machinist and helper, and a road maker — maintained Sutro Heights. An 1890 description praised Sutro's design ability:

Possessed of a sound knowledge of perspective gardening, having an acquaintance with practical botany above the common, he [Sutro]

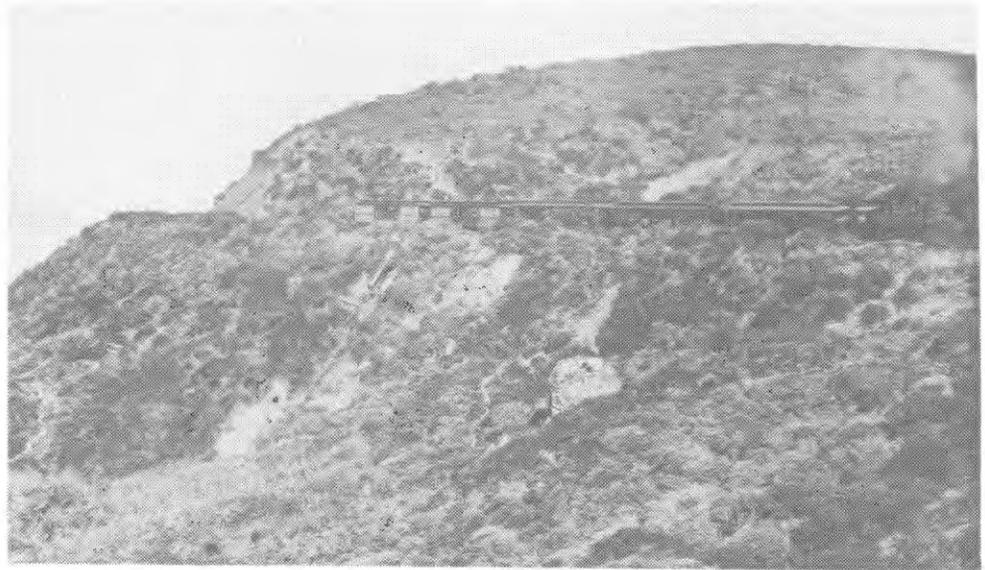
laid out the walks, superintended the making of the terraces and flower beds, chose the plants best suited to the soil and climate, directed the planting of the shrubs and trees and the result surpassed his expectations. The wilderness of sand has bloomed and blossomed into a scene of fairy-like beauty. The air is redolent with fragrant shrubs and flowers, peace and calm and sunshine seem to reign perennially and the dreams of the gallant knights of Queen Elizabeth's court seem here to have their fulfillment. Winding walks, fringed with beds of exquisite flowers, backed by flowering shrubs, show bright and sunny against the green of fair-shaped trees of every shade from the darkest to the lightest; open spaces where banks of flowers burn in vivid masses of color, quiet, retired, nooks from which glimpses and vistas of the blue waters of the Pacific in strong contrast with the white sails of passing boats can be seen. Lawns whose tender and delicate green can compare with that of England, broad carriage drives and esplanades from which the ever-changing face of the ocean, with its surrounding beauties of cliff and shore winding bay and spray-dashed rocks is visible all testify to the soundness of imagination that could devise and the practical skill that put into execution this work of beauty.<sup>33</sup>

Sutro used his seaside estate for entertaining a wide variety of visitors. In 1886 Sutro hosted the president of the University of California, and the following year he invited California's leading viticulturalists to a four hour breakfast at Sutro Heights. In 1887 he hosted a luncheon at Sutro Heights for sixty female teachers from the Pioneer Kindergarten Association. In 1891 President Benjamin Harrison dined at the heights after visiting the Cliff House. Other notable guests included William Jennings Bryan, Andrew Carnegie, Oscar Wilde, and Kate Douglas Wiggin. Despite the fact that the gardens at Sutro Heights were adjacent to his residence, Adolph Sutro encouraged their public use. In 1895 a production of *As You Like It* staged at Sutro Heights attracted an audience of 5,000. School children also visited Sutro Heights; in 1888 Sutro invited 220 six-year olds to a picnic on the grounds. The general public responded to such well-publicized accounts of Sutro's activities by visiting Sutro Heights in increasing numbers.

### ***The Cliff House and Ferries Railroad***

When Sutro Heights opened to the public in 1885, it could be reached only by private or hired carriage or via the Park and Ocean Railroad, which ran along the southern edge of Golden Gate Park and then to Sutro Heights and the Cliff House. At a time when a clerk earned about twelve dollars a week, Adolph Sutro felt that a twenty cent, round-trip, railroad fare was scandalously expensive.<sup>34</sup>

To make a visit to Sutro Heights more affordable, Sutro supported development of a new steam rail line designed to bring people from downtown to the Cliff House for half the cost of a fare on the competing line. The route linked downtown with Land's End along the present route of California Street, and around Point Lobos, terminating at Sutro Heights. (Fig. 9) Sutro also planned to include a branch line on Seventh Avenue to provide economical access to Golden Gate Park. Although the franchise for this new rail line was issued to Adolph Sutro's cousin Gustav Sutro, Adolph Sutro invested significantly in the project and paid for the grading and laying of track on the three-mile stretch where the line would pass through his own property between City Cemetery and the cliffs of Point Lobos. This new transportation alternative was not only less expensive for Point Lobos area visitors, it was also more scenic and provided the visitor with views of rugged shoreline, picturesque cemeteries, and "excellent views of the Golden Gate, Fort Point, the headlands of Marin County, and many other points of interest."<sup>35</sup>



*Figure 9. Land's End Railroad*

In 1887, the Sutros sold their franchise in the new rail line to the Powell Street Railroad Company. However, a stipulation in the deed of sale provided that the company must provide service from downtown to the Sutro Heights area for the five cent fare as originally intended. In 1888 the completed new rail line — the Cliff House and Ferries Railroad — provided widespread access to the area formerly known as "the Outside Lands."

The new rail line was immediately popular. Two special locomotives pulled the Sunday open air coaches which were filled to capacity, with some sixty persons in each car. Four lighter locomotives handled the daily traffic.<sup>36</sup>

The steep bluffs along the line plagued the early years of the railroad's operation. In March, 1889, Sutro received a letter from his son-in-law that the railroad had been closed because of a landslide.<sup>37</sup> Two months later Merritt reported that "this new R.R. [sic] has such a bad reputation at present that people are afraid to ride on it. The trains are irregular and the road looks so dangerous."<sup>38</sup> However, despite Merritt's warning's, the Cliff House and Ferries Railway improved, and continued, for the time being, to provide regular service to the Sutro Heights area.

### *Sutro's Aquarium*

Sutro's interest in natural history and marine studies led him to spend a significant amount of time watching the seals who played on the rocks near Point Lobos. Indeed, Sutro's efforts led to Congressional passage of an 1887 act granting the Seal Rocks to the City and County of San Francisco in trust for the people of the United States, thereby protecting the seals' home.<sup>39</sup> In addition Sutro developed the idea of creating an ocean pool, or aquarium, among the rocks north of Fisherman's Cove and the Cliff House. (Fig. 10)



*Figure 10. Aquarium, Swimming Pond and Sea Wall*

Sutro chose a site located in a cove just north of the Cliff House as the site for the aquarium. A semi-circular wall 15 feet thick and 14 feet wide was constructed adjacent to the ocean on the northwest corner of the cove to create a basin. Water was let into the basin by means of a tunnel 8 feet high and 153 feet long cut through an adjacent cliff, allowing ocean water to pour in during high tide. A small door in the tunnel controlled the amount of water delivered into the basin, and in one corner there was a subterranean outlet

which allowed water to recirculate back to the sea. As designed by Sutro, small marine animals would pour into the basin with the high tide and, as the tide receded, become visible with only four feet of water remaining at low tide. A network of rock paths crossing the basin provided bolder visitors with the opportunity for a closer look at the marine specimens uncovered during low tide. In addition a heated, glass-enclosed pool was sited on higher ground above the tidal basin and featured a stocked supply of more exotic sea creatures.

The basin and tunnel were completed on September 3, 1887. The project was acclaimed as an impressive engineering feat by the creator of the famous Comstock Tunnel. An article from the *San Francisco Chronicle* dated September, 1887, described the workings of Sutro's aquarium as follows:

The method by which the sea-water is conducted into the basin is exceedingly ingenious, and was devised by Mr. Sutro himself. On the other side of the point from where the aquarium lies is a natural shelf. Mr. Sutro observed how this caught the water from the combers at high tide and determined to make use of it. At great expense a tunnel was excavated eight feet high and 15 feet long, through the solid rock, its floor having a slight inclination from the before mentioned shelf down to the basin and it is through this tunnel that the water comes at extreme high tide, and for about two hours before and after.<sup>40</sup>

#### *The Development of Sutro Baths*

Sutro continued to expand his ocean front complex with the development of a massive public bath house, or swimming facility. It is not clear whether Sutro had conceived of the notion of the baths when he began work on the aquarium, or if the idea of a swimming complex was a later development. Sutro's motivation for developing a classical-style bath is not known.

Interest in recreational swimming increased in both England and North America during the nineteenth century.<sup>41</sup> The first modern English bath or pool opened in Liverpool in 1828. By the 1860s swimming clubs in British and American cities were holding inter-club competitions; competitive swimming was included in the first modern Olympic games in Athens in 1896. The design and layout of classical Roman bath or *thermae*, built around the first century, influenced the design of nineteenth-century baths in the United States. Three particularly influential models were the Roman *thermae* of Titus, Caracalla, and Diocletian, the ruins of which were accessible to nineteenth-century travellers.<sup>42</sup> Adolph Sutro, who had traveled extensively throughout Europe and the United States, may well have viewed both the ruins of the classical Roman baths as well as a variety of modern swimming facilities.

A number of freshwater swimming facilities existed in the San Francisco Bay area in the late nineteenth century. A large public bath house existed in Oakland from around 1880, and Lurline Baths at Bush and Larkin streets opened in 1894 and remained in operation until 1936.<sup>43</sup> In addition, it appears that other attempts were made, though unsuccessfully, to allow San Francisco bathers to enjoy the healthful but ice-cold waters of the Pacific. A prospectus of the Floating Sea-Bath Company of San Francisco, dated March, 1878, captured the popular enthusiasm for bathing at that time, while clearly defining the challenge presented to those interested in ocean bathing in the icy waters of the Pacific:

Bathing is an art in itself, like dining. It has been well said that for one man who dines there are ten who merely eat, and in like manner, those who perform ablutions only that they may clean do but wash, while the true bather enjoys every moment. Pleasure is an essential item of the real bath, and among the most active of its beneficial forces. There can be no doubt that a great number of our citizens would seek to enjoy the tonic effects of sea bathing, but for the low temperatures of the water.<sup>44</sup>

Sutro may have been aware of this proposal for temperate salt-water baths in San Francisco. Regardless of Sutro's knowledge of other bathing ventures, the Floating Sea-Bath Company's scheme of a massive floating bath house and heated pool complex—measuring 340 by 100 feet—makes Sutro's grand scheme for an ocean-side bath seem tame by comparison.

Whatever the precise model or rationale, the development of a public bath, providing wholesome entertainment for as many as ten thousand San Franciscans at once, was compatible with Adolph Sutro's populist tendencies and his dreams of providing inexpensive recreation for the general public. According to Sutro biographer Robert Stewart,

the Sutro Baths were Sutro's last great building project, his last effort to name something for his family and perpetuate the name Sutro. In many ways the baths were a summation of all of Sutro's objectives.<sup>45</sup>

The initial work on the ambitious baths project proceeded haltingly. Between 1887 and 1889 Sutro attempted three times to erect a bulkhead from the aquarium to the rock under the Cliff House to provide a foundation for the proposed baths. The first two times the seawall was constructed it sank into the sand, resulting in the loss of more than \$70,000 worth of concrete. However, by the fall of 1889 the third attempt at building a wall was successful. An 1896 advertising brochure for the baths described the fortifications in great detail:

All of the Bath buildings are protected on the west side by an enormous breakwater, 400 feet long, 20 feet deep, 25 feet wide at the top, and 75 feet wide at the base, that contains 450,000 cubic feet of rock. There is also another breakwater running east to west, 300 feet long, 25 feet wide at the top, 75 feet wide at the base, and 20 feet deep, that contains 300,000 cubic feet of rock. These two breakwaters furnish security against any possible contingency of a stormy sea. Indeed, there has been nothing omitted in the construction of the vast building or in its thousand details that could give security or add comfort to the visitor within the gate.<sup>46</sup> (Fig. 11)

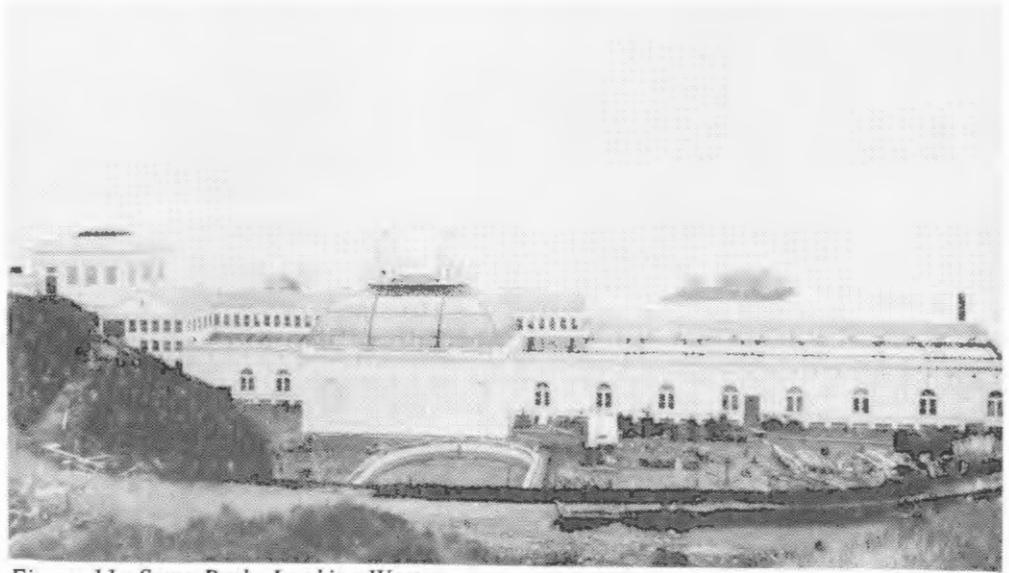


Figure 11. Sutro Baths Looking West

In 1890 Sutro offered a \$500 award for an architectural design for the baths building (the winner of which has been lost to the record), and work on the baths proceeded throughout the early 1890s. Sutro's records and correspondence during the early 1890s describe a flurry of activity relating to the baths project, including blasting for rock to line the fresh water pond, planting loam on the slopes, building a road from the cottage to the construction site, making gutterways and a cave, dumping clay over sandy slopes to check erosion, hauling sand from the cave and from Ocean Beach south of the Cliff House to make cement, and hauling lumber from the San Miguel property to the work site.<sup>47</sup>

The main entrance to the baths from Point Lobos Avenue was a small structure built in the form of a small classical temple. (Fig. 12) From this entry one descended a broad stairway, lined with potted palms, to the museum

gallery, which contained a series of glass exhibition cases filled with selections from Sutro's vast collection of artwork, archeological artifacts, and curios. From the gallery the visitor could proceed, either by elevator or down the grand staircase, to a massive enclosure containing the six saltwater swimming tanks of varying sizes, shapes, and water temperatures. The largest of the pools was L-shaped, with a length of 275 feet and a depth ranging from three and a half to nine feet. The other five saltwater pools all measured twenty-eight by seventy five feet, with pool depths ranging from two to six feet. All of the pools were heated to different temperatures by live steam. Holding a total of 1,685,000 gallons of sea water, the construction of the pools required more than ten thousand barrels of concrete. Adjacent to the bath area on three sides rose tier upon tier of bleacher-like seats, providing seating for thousands of spectators. Overhead, a massive arched glass roof made from 100,000 square feet of stained glass and supported by 600 tons of iron girders gave the baths a light and airy appearance, and provided breath-taking scenery. Above the baths were three levels of alcoves, balconies and balustrades, a restaurant on each of the three floors, galleries, an amphitheater, and a promenade.



*Figure 12. Sutro Baths Front Entry, 1896*

At its dedication in November, 1894, the Sutro Baths could be compared to only a few buildings in the United States in terms of scale and technical achievement. Spreading over three acres in size, the baths were compared by one contemporary writer to "the famous ablution resorts of Titus, Caracalla Nero or Diocletion."<sup>48</sup> Not only were the Baths magnificent to behold, they were lauded as breathtakingly modern and technologically sophisticated.

Promotional literature prepared for Sutro Baths in 1896 described the engineering required for the construction and daily maintenance of the baths:

Striking as is the first view, familiarity only makes it more striking. Its size impresses the visitors at once, yet it is not oppressive owing to the lightness and airiness of the structure. Tier upon tier of seats rise to the galleries, while at their base are the swimming tanks. The water for these is supplied by an ingenious use of ocean waves. A basin scooped out of solid rock receives the water that dashes over the top, thence it is conducted to a settling tank; by numerous small canals it makes its way into the various swimming tanks, of which there are six in all, the largest one containing the sea water in its natural state, the others being heated to different temperatures to suit the varying requirements of visitors. As stated, the baths are filled by the ocean itself. Should, however, the tides be so low as to necessitate pumping, preparations have been made for this, and water can be forced in at 6,000 [gallons] a minute by means of a large turbine pump placed at sea level in a cave-like excavation hollowed out by the solid cliff and heretofore driven by means of a steam engine... (Fig. 13)



*Figure 13. Holding Tank and Tunnel*

The mere emptying of the tanks entails a difficulty, but the emptying of them so as to prevent the once used water from again entering the tanks requires ingenuity. The refuse water is the main outlet into which all of the tanks ultimately empty, piped hundreds of feet to the side of the headlands, thence passed into the tidal currents away from the baths.<sup>49</sup>

This article ends with a short table summarizing pertinent facts and figures related to the baths:

Length of Baths, 499.5 feet  
Width of baths, 254.1 feet  
Amount of glass used, 100,000 superficial feet  
Iron in roof columns, 600 tons  
Lumber, 3,500,000 tons  
Concrete, 270,000 cubic feet  
Seating capacity amphitheater, 3,700  
Seating capacity promenade, 3,700  
Holding Capacity, 25,000  
Salt Water Tanks, 6  
Capacity of Tanks, 1,804,962 gallons  
Fresh water plunge tank, 1  
Toboggan slides in baths, 7  
Swinging rings, 30  
Spring boards, 1  
Private dressing rooms, 517  
Club room capacity, 1,110  
Time required to fill tank by waves, 1 hour  
Time required to fill tank by pump, 5 hours<sup>50</sup>

The daily maintenance and operation of Sutro Baths was a Herculean task. Each day the foreman in charge of ventilation and temperature completed a detailed record of existing conditions inside and outside the baths, including weather conditions, humidity and air temperature inside and outside of the baths, and water temperatures in all of the six tanks. In addition, the foreman recorded general remarks and observations regarding necessary repairs, attendance, and recommendations. During one week in October, 1896, the following notations were made by a foreman W. Brown:<sup>51</sup>

October 4: I would like to have the roof ventilators made light with strips similar to what is being done with the west wall windows. The stopping of all leakage should be now done as soon as possible!

October 5: I found central aisle north end roof ventilators both jammed wide open with rods bent. I have made a requisition for ten small padlocks so that I can lock them closed or open and so prevent further malicious tampering with them after I have set them for the night.

October 9: Tom resumed with the west wall this morning. It seems to me there are more of the upper classes of people, ladies and children coming more than I have noticed before.

October 10: I would advise the getting up and free distribution of a small pamphlet for general distribution. The Pamphlet to have [sic] a neat frontispiece of the interior of the baths or litho or therewith and the reading matter to consist of educational matter in the subject of the Baths. I will be glad to get one up for you.

With three railroads providing transportation to the area by the late 1890s, a visit to Sutro Baths crowned an all-day family excursion to the shore, including stops at Sutro Heights, the Cliff House, and Ocean Beach. Between seven in the morning and six in the evening, Sutro Baths were open to the public for a fee of ten cents for adults and five cents for children. A visit to the baths offered a wide variety of activities in addition to swimming, including band concerts, exhibitions of swimming and diving, talent shows, and other amusements. A flyer dated September 2, 1896, listed the following program at the Baths:

Grand Benefit to the California Swimming Club  
Tendered by the  
Sutro Baths  
Grand Illuminated Minuet  
Mat. Gay and his Trained Dog Jack  
The Highest Diver in the World  
Cornell and Empey: Burlesque Aerial Kings  
Boxing and Wrestling  
Races! Races! Races!  
Water Polo By Two Picked Swim Teams

Typical of the progressive spirit of Adolph Sutro, Sutro Baths was designed to provide its visitors with educational as well as recreational opportunities. The entrance to the baths was used as a kind of museum, featuring a multitude of glass cases filled with stuffed birds and animals, Egyptian mummies, and other edifying objects including paintings and statues. Sutro's biographer reflected that Sutro eventually managed to include examples of nearly all of his hobbies except book collecting.<sup>52</sup> In addition to the attractions offered inside the baths, outside visitors could enjoy the thrilling Firth Wheel, Mystic Maze, and Haunted Spring — all amusement features that Sutro purchased at the close of San Francisco's 1894 Midwinter Fair.<sup>53</sup>

### ***The War with Southern Pacific***

In the midst of the construction of Sutro Baths, Adolph Sutro again became embroiled in a dispute over rail service to the area. In 1893, the Cliff House and Ferries Railway experienced another change of hands when it was purchased by the Market Street Railway Company, a subsidiary of the massive Southern Pacific Railroad. At that time the fare was increased to ten cents once again, overriding Sutro's original stipulation that a five cent fare must be maintained. Adolph Sutro responded with outrage, stating

I had intended Sutro Heights as a breathing spot for the poor people as a benefit to the public. I felt grieved, and I chafed under the contemptible meanness of these people who, while I kept these places open here at a cost of \$20,000 a year at least, and in some cases a good deal more, that they should get every nickel out of the people who visited.<sup>54</sup>

Indeed, Sutro went as far as offering to donate Sutro Heights to the City of San Francisco and to charge a nominal fee at the Sutro Baths, then under construction, if the Market Street Railway would reinstate the five cent fare. When Southern Pacific refused to cooperate, Sutro took dramatic action, fencing his property and charging an entrance fee to anyone who had taken the railroad to the beach. Sutro's tactics were successful: railroad travel to the beach immediately dropped by 75 percent, significantly reducing profits to the Southern Pacific. In 1894 Sutro decided to build yet another railroad to the area, to ensure once and for all a reasonable fare to the beach. He obtained a franchise to build an electric rail line on Presidio Avenue running along Clement Street, one block south of the rival line on California Street. Sutro also began development of a branch on Eighth Street, serving Golden Gate Park, and arranged for free transfers at Presidio Avenue to the Sutter Street line, which was also independent from Southern Pacific's monopoly.

In July of that year, owing largely to his passionate battle against the Southern Pacific monopoly, Adolph Sutro was nominated as the Populist candidate for mayor of San Francisco. Although accepting the nomination with reluctance, Sutro carried on a vigorous campaign, focusing on an anti-railroad and pro-people platform.<sup>55</sup> Though one of three candidates, he received more than half of the votes, easily winning the election, which was actually a double victory, for just days prior to the election Southern Pacific had conceded to his demands to lower fares.

### ***Events at the Cliff House***

Along with his efforts spent developing new features at Point Lobos, such as Sutro Heights, the baths, and the railroad, Adolph Sutro spent a considerable

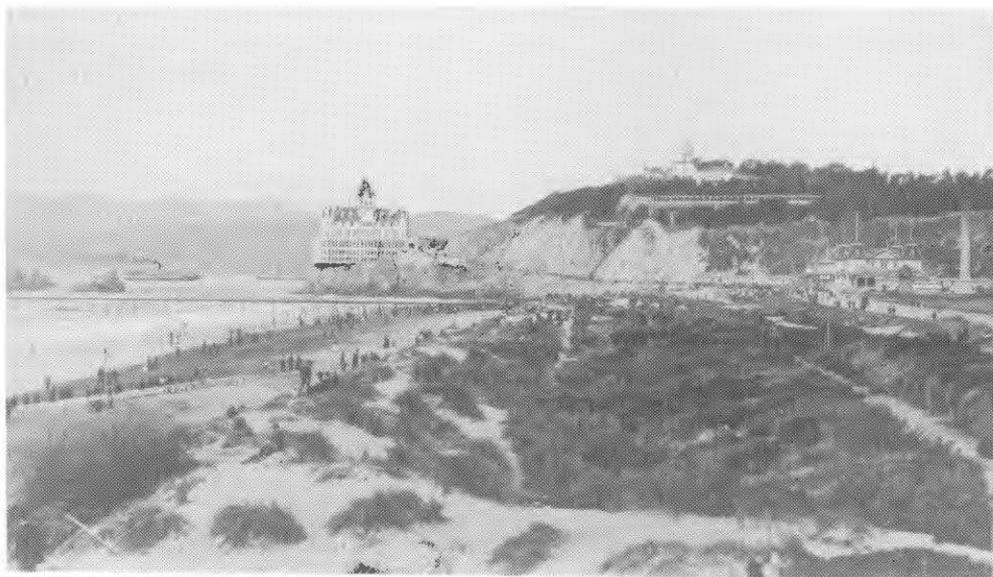
amount of time and money on maintaining the one pre-existing feature on the site, the Cliff House. When Sutro acquired the Cliff House in 1883 the well-known inn had lost its original illustrious reputation, and was suffering from poor management, neglect, and a less than desirable clientele. The first step that Sutro took to upgrade the establishment was to replace Junius Foster, who had managed the restaurant for more than twenty years, with James M. Wilkins. By 1887 the reputation of the Cliff House improved as a family establishment and meal prices were lowered.<sup>56</sup> Little evidence remains of any physical improvements that may have occurred during this period, however, owing to the heavy damage that the Cliff House received when the schooner *Parallel*, laden with a cargo of more than 1,500 cases of dynamite, exploded offshore in January, 1887. The blast seriously damaged the Cliff House, leaving windows shattered and doors hanging off their hinges. Despite extensive damage, there are no reports that the Cliff House ceased operations as a result. In 1889 the building was remodeled, including the relocation of the kitchen to a site adjacent to the dining room, the installation of water closets, and exterior repainting.

In 1894, less than five years after the completion of these renovations, the first Cliff House burned to the ground. Sutro, seemingly undaunted by this setback, immediately hired architects Emile S. Lemme and C.J. Colley to draw plans for a new, more elaborate Cliff House to replace the first. By July, 1895, grading and site-work had been completed and construction on the second Cliff House was progressing. On February 1, 1896, Mayor Sutro sponsored a formal opening for the second Cliff House and the new Sutro Railroad, including a band concert and banquet for the city of San Francisco's Board of Supervisors.

Referred to at the time as Sutro's gingerbread palace, the second Cliff House has been described as "a picturesque structure in the design of a chateau with spiralling towers."<sup>57</sup> (Fig. 14) Whereas the original Cliff House had been relatively simple in its design and construction, a contemporary description of the second Cliff House portrays a sprawling maze of dining rooms, curio shops, and parlors:

Looking from the ocean, the building consists of four stories and an attic, while from the Point Lobos Road, beside the attic, there are only two clear stories. The lowest one is devoted to the polishing of shells, manufacture of curios, and the electric plant for the lighting of the house and the running of the elevator, and contains sleeping rooms for the necessary attendants. On the second floor refreshments will be sold at the price of city restaurants. There are twenty dining rooms on this floor, also shell and curios rooms. The third floor doors

can be enlarged or diminished at pleasure. The attic is used chiefly as a means of approach to the rooms in the turrets, three of them fitted up a private dining rooms, and the fourth containing the largest camera obscura west of Chicago. Springing from the main roof, in its center, rises the handsome square tower, which, according to present plans, is to be used as an observatory room for from which coining of vantage, visitors may enjoy the magnificent and extensive view of the sea and shore, of plains and lofty mountain chains. A verandah, 16 feet wide, open at the fourth but enclosed by glass on the lower three floors, runs around the ocean side of the Cliff House. The inside fittings and furniture have been chosen by Wilkins and Pearson, and are in keeping with the style and beauty of the building.<sup>58</sup>



*Figure 14. Second Cliff House*

Among both its fans and its detractors, the second Cliff House achieved the status of a local cultural landmark:

The gingerbread palace that Sutro built was one of the most conspicuous and fanciful monuments in the west. Six stories high, surmounted by towers and turrets, this jig-saw masterpiece was the fitting termination of Victorian San Francisco.<sup>59</sup>

Completion of the second Cliff House marked the second wave of popularity for the resort. Along with continuing to serve countless families and lesser-known guests from all over the nation, the Cliff House in the 1890s hosted a variety of celebrities including James Flood, James Fair, John Mackay, and

Claus Spreckels; presidents Hayes, Grant, McKinley, Roosevelt, and Taft; and a variety of artistic personalities including Sarah Bernhardt, Adelini Patti, Mark Twain, and Bret Hart.<sup>60</sup> As Adolph Sutro's final contribution to the Point Lobos area, the construction of the second Cliff House marked the completion of his recreational complex by the sea.<sup>61</sup>

#### THE DEATH OF ADOLPH SUTRO

In 1897 Sutro ended his relatively unsuccessful term as Mayor of San Francisco with relief, stating honestly:

What have I accomplished as mayor? Very little. The Mayor is little more than a figurehead... I have always been master of a situation; I have always had a number of men under my employment, and they did as I told them. I could not manage with politicians.<sup>62</sup>

Merely one year after his return to private life it became obvious to his friends and family that Sutro's mental capacities were deteriorating, and the court soon appointed his oldest daughter, Dr. Emma Merritt, as his guardian. At the time of Sutro's death in August, 1898, at the age of sixty-eight, creditors and Sutro's other children challenged Emma Merritt's appointed role as guardian and executrix of the Sutro estate.

Following Sutro's death, Emma Merritt called for an inventory and appraisal of the property, and found the estate to be deeply in debt. In 1899 Merritt sold the Sutro railroad for the sum of \$215,000 to Robert F. Morrow who renamed it the Sutter Street Cable Car line. Although this sale helped to alleviate financial burdens, Emma Merritt struggled for twenty years to settle the estate. Consequently the condition of Sutro's Point Lobos properties deteriorated.

#### *Sutro Heights Following the Death of Sutro*

Despite financial difficulties, Emma Merritt attempted to maintain Sutro Heights for the enjoyment of the public. Reductions in the grounds staff from eleven to three resulted in decreased maintenance and supervision of the gardens. Plantings requiring intensive maintenance were replaced with those requiring less care, and the upkeep of paths, walks, and structures was neglected. By 1904, the Sutro residence, which had deteriorated significantly, was being used as a caretaker's residence. (Fig. 15)

In 1920, the ownership of Sutro Heights was transferred to the City of San Francisco under the condition that it be "forever held and maintained as a free public resort or park under the name of Sutro Heights."<sup>63</sup> The Merritts

retained a lifetime residence on the property. Between 1920 and 1933 the Merritts continued to allow visitors access to Sutro Heights, but provided for minimal maintenance of the site. Although not officially responsible for the maintenance of Sutro Heights during this period, the City of San Francisco conducted two emergency repairs on the Sutro property made necessary by the 1920 widening of Point Lobos Road, which had destabilized the western cliff face. These repairs included construction of a reinforced concrete road-bed on a section of the Esplanade in 1924 and erosion control measures on the adjacent cliff face to support the west flank of the heights promontory.



*Figure 15. Sutro Heights, Early 1900s*

In 1933, at the request of Emma Merritt, the City of San Francisco agreed to assume maintenance of Sutro Heights but there was no major improvement or rehabilitation of the grounds. A December, 1935, program of the San Francisco Garden Club presented a description of the garden at Sutro Heights as ghostly and neglected, though tempered by hope for the future:

There is a feeling of age about the cypresses at Sutro Heights; left largely to themselves they seem under the spell of some enchantment, and many of the statues are moss grown now. But men are at work here, a splendid rock garden is being planted on the escarpment facing the Cliff House and wood cutters are removing dead branches and making a clearing among the trees. The Shakespeare play given there in the open long, long, ago may be followed some day by an open air theater, who knows! And all the beauty of development on this wonderful place may be awakened as by the magic wand of some magician.<sup>64</sup>

In 1937, the city submitted a proposal to the Works Progress Administration (WPA) for the rehabilitation of the grounds at Sutro Heights. When Emma Sutro Merritt died in residence at Sutro Heights in 1938, the WPA was in the process of further stabilizing the western slopes at the heights through the construction of an elaborate series of artificial concrete cliffs. Following her death, the WPA proceeded to demolish the aging Sutro residence, then in a state of serious disrepair, the remains of the conservatory, entrance gates and fences, the Dolcefara Niente Balcony, and the structures on the parapet. At that time some new plant material was added, paths and road surfaces were upgraded, and the remaining statues were cleaned and repaired. The rear stone wall of the parapet was removed and replaced with a concrete retaining wall across the entire rear edge. Staircases were constructed at both ends of the wall to provide access to the parapet terrace.<sup>65</sup> In total, WPA improvements to Sutro Heights cost \$90,994.<sup>66</sup>

During World War II, Sutro Heights was closed for security reasons because of its proximity to Fort Miley. At this time a pair of concrete base end stations for range-finding were constructed adjacent to the Parapet as part of a sea coast fortification defense network. In 1949 the City of San Francisco commissioned a plan for the rehabilitation of the park. The only plan element implemented, however, was the installation of a partial irrigation system. Between the late 1940s and the 1970s there was considerable vandalism and neglect at Sutro Heights. In 1976, the City of San Francisco transferred ownership of Sutro Heights to the National Park Service, to be managed as part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. National Park Service management efforts since that time have attempted to identify and preserve the historic features remaining on the site. Concrete headers, planters, fountains, and statues were removed for storage and cataloging. Reproductions of the remaining statues, including the entrance gate lions, the Stag and Diana were cast and re-erected on the site. In the late 1970s selective archeological investigations were undertaken at the conservatory site, on the parapet, along the Esplanade, and the Dolcefara Niente Balcony. In 1986, the well house (the only remaining historic structure on the site other than the front parapet wall) was partially restored. Also at that time the parapet stonewall mortar was repointed and terrace planters below the wall restored.

Overgrown areas have been cleared of undergrowth; current maintenance includes pruning and trimming trees for both appearance and safety. Some trees have been removed. In addition, new landscape elements such as lawns and planting beds have been introduced.

Sutro Heights today continues to provide open space for strolling or other forms of passive recreation but presents a simpler appearance than in its

heyday. The main entrance to Sutro Heights Park, located in the northeastern corner of the site off Point Lobos Road, is marked by statuary lions on each side that are reproductions of the originals. Palm Avenue, the broad promenade is lined still, in part, by Palm trees. Intermittent groupings of trees and shrubs — scant reminders of Sutro's complex planting arrangements — still survive as does the well house. The grassy area surrounding the well house presents the remains of the area once known as "Shady Lawn." There are still views of the ocean and surrounding coast from the semi-circular parapet located at the western end of the site, and at intervals along the oceanfront side of the park.

### *Sutro Baths Following the Death of Sutro*

Sutro Baths continued to operate as a swimming center, first under the management of Emma Merritt, and then Adolph's grandson, Gustav Sutro, until 1937. At that time, a section of the baths, which had experienced diminished attendance and profits, were converted to an ice skating rink. Some drop in attendance at the baths during the 1920s and 1930s is attributable to the closing of the famous coastal route of the railroad in 1925, following a massive landslide. The closing of the coastal route (then owned by the United Railroads of San Francisco) made a day-long excursion to Point Lobos considerably less appealing as did deterioration of both Sutro Heights and the Cliff House.

Additionally, in the early 1930s, the California Board of Health issued a series of stringent regulations regarding the construction, operation, and maintenance of public swimming pools. Compliance with Board of Health requirements would have required costly renovations.<sup>67</sup> Finally, the persistence of the Great Depression throughout the 1930s significantly reduced the number of people who could afford a recreational excursion.

In 1951, battered still further by an even steeper drop in attendance at the baths during World War II, Gustav Sutro offered the property for sale, explaining to reporters that that despite his efforts to promote the baths, he had been unable to raise the \$25,000 to \$90,000 necessary for their proper restoration. Apparently Sutro had hoped that the City of San Francisco would purchase the baths; instead George K. Whitney, owner of the Cliff House and Playland-at-the-Beach (located at the foot of Point Lobos Avenue) was the purchaser. Whitney converted all of the swimming tanks to one large ice skating complex, and developed a small museum in the baths building. Despite Whitney's efforts to keep the complex open, he lost control of the baths in 1964 when his mother sold the controlling shares of the property to Robert D. Fraser, developer of two of San Francisco's apartment skyscrapers, the Fontana and the Comstock.

Fraser quickly developed plans to raze the massive structure and erect a 200-unit apartment complex and restaurant overlooking the ocean. However, in June, 1966, in the midst of negotiations regarding this development and with demolition already underway, a fire at Sutro Baths burned the once-splendid structure to its foundations.<sup>68</sup> As with the destruction of the Cliff House sixty years earlier, thousands of spectators came to watch the blaze. The public sentiment that arose following the fire may have impeded Fraser's development plan for the site which the National Park Service purchased in 1973 from Cliffside Properties and incorporated into the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Currently the Sutro Baths site is a ruin of Adolph Sutro's massive, late-nineteenth-century structure. (Fig. 16)



Figure 16. Bath Remains After Fire

#### *Cliff House Following the Death of Sutro*

At Sutro's death in 1898, his flamboyant, second Cliff House overlooking Seal Rocks was still a major attraction for visitors to the Point Lobos Area. In August, 1899, the Cliff House was the receiving station for the first wireless message sent on the Pacific Coast; the signal announced the approach of the U. S. Army transport Sherman, arriving home from Manila with California troops from the Spanish American War.<sup>69</sup>

In 1904 the Sutro Estate appraised Cliff House and its surrounding 7 acres at a value of \$125,000. Sutro properties lining the road to the north of the Cliff House, including a photography gallery, fruit stand, coffee kiosk, tourist information booth, and stables, were valued at \$32,150.

In 1906 James Wilkins, who had managed the Cliff House for twenty-one years, was replaced by local entrepreneur John Tait, who bought Wilkin's lease in June, 1907. Tait immediately began an ambitious renovation of the Cliff House, with plans to spend up to \$80,000 to rewire, install new plumbing, refurnish, and redecorate. The renovation was brought to an abrupt halt on September, 7, 1907, when the ornate, frame structure caught fire and burned to the ground. The fire represented a tragic loss to the floundering Sutro estate and to Tait, who had spent nearly \$55,000 on the renovation and had as many as 100 men working on the building during the three months prior to its destruction.

Not everyone viewed the destruction of the second Cliff House as a tragedy, however. In 1905 the renowned architect and urban planner Daniel Burnham (who had been hired by the Association for the Improvement and Adornment of San Francisco to design a master plan for San Francisco), recommended that the Cliff House and its adjacent structures be destroyed and replaced with a smaller, more simple structure that would not obstruct the sweeping views of the headlands to the north. Apparently, Burnham had the support of many San Franciscans who fondly remembered the first Cliff House and opposed the pretension of Sutro's palace.<sup>70</sup>

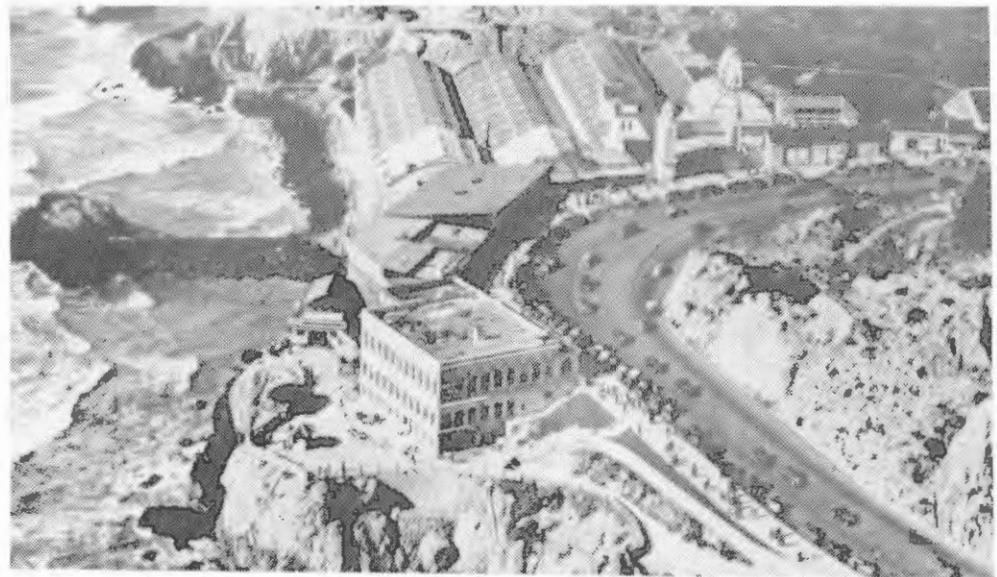
One year following the destruction of the second Cliff House, Emma Merritt applied for a permit to construct a third Cliff House on the site of the first two; work commenced in 1908 on a three-story, steel-reinforced concrete building. Designed by Reid Brothers, Architects, the rectangular, neo-Classical building cost approximately \$75,000 to construct. Although far simpler in appearance than the ornate second Cliff House, the third Cliff House continued to provide guests with a pleasant atmosphere and the same breathtaking views:

A commodious hall greeted visitors on the first level of the building which stood below the road and faced out onto the promenade where tourists could enjoy the view out to the ocean. On the road level were banquet rooms and space for dancing, while on the third floor patrons found the main dining room, a large lounge, and dressing rooms.<sup>71</sup>

On July 1, 1909, a gala celebration, to which its faithful patrons were invited, inaugurated the new Cliff House. The third Cliff House prospered for almost a decade, experiencing yet another resurgence of popularity reminiscent of the 1890s. However, in 1918, with the involvement of the United States in World War I, the U.S. Army ordered closure of all establishments within one half mile of military installations. Owing to its proximity to Fort Miley, the Cliff House stood closed for two years. In 1920 Cliff House re-opened under

the new management of Richard Roberts. Renovations at the same time included a three-story, reinforced concrete addition on the north side of the building and enclosure of the front entrance, on the east side of the building. At the same time Point Lobos Avenue outside of the Cliff House was widened from 20 feet to 60 feet, creating a four-lane asphalt road with an adjacent concrete sidewalk on the ocean side. Although a 1910 map does, in fact, show the road right of way passing very close to the front of the building, the actual widening of the paved surface undoubtedly altered the feeling and appearance of the area in front of Cliff House. The Cliff House, which again declined in popularity, closed once more in 1925.

The Cliff House did not reopen again until 1937 when two brothers, George K. and Leo C. Whitney, purchased the establishment from the Sutro Estate. In anticipation of the increased patronage associated with the World's Fair, to be held in San Francisco in 1939, the Whitney brothers renovated the electrical and plumbing systems at the Cliff House, and incorporated a curio shop and modern restaurant. About that time another small addition, built in the California Mission style of wood, adobe, and tile, was added to the north face of the building to provide an entrance to an exhibition (no longer present) of models of the twenty-one California missions. (Fig. 17)



*Figure 17. Aerial View of Cliff House and Baths, 1937*

The Whitney brothers remodeled and enlarged the Cliff House again in the 1950s, resulting in the expansion of the dining room, the construction of a special banquet room, an addition on the south face of the building, and a new top story. The exterior of the building also was modernized, resulting in

the alteration of the entire street front (east) facade. The Whitneys (who also purchased the Sutro Baths from Gustav Sutro in 1952) continued to operate the Cliff House, though somewhat unprofitably, until 1973. At that time an investment group called "We Four" leased the establishment with the goal of resurrecting the Cliff House as an elite eating establishment. The building has not been significantly altered aside from exterior painting since the 1950s. The National Park Service acquired the property in 1977.

## 2.2 INVENTORY AND DOCUMENTATION

(See Maps 5-13)

Character-defining features and elements, surviving character-defining features and elements, and non-contributing features and elements were inventoried for five major areas of the district. The areas are: Sutro Heights; the Cliff House site; the Point Lobos Avenue / Great Highway corridor; the Sutro Baths site; and Lands End — the northeast portion of the district. Character-defining features and elements were identified on the cultural landscape period maps. The surviving character-defining features and elements and the non-contributing features and elements were identified on-site and through the comparison of the existing conditions 1992 map with the cultural landscape period maps. This inventory and the inventory mapping should be used together to understand which systems and features are character-defining and to identify locations of sensitive cultural and natural resources.

Existing conditions were documented on a limited basis by Land and Community Associates during January 1992. These photographs are located in Section 4.

The maps listed below follow this page:

- Map 5. Buildings and Structures
- Map 6. Circulation
- Map 7. Topographic Modifications (non-contributing)
- Map 8. Vegetation (non-contributing)
- Map 9. Small-Scale Elements and Features
- Map 10. View Points
- Map 11. Natural Systems and Features
- Map 12. Synthesis of Non-Contributing Elements and Features
- Map 13. Synthesis of Non-Contributing Elements and Features  
(excluding non-contributing vegetation)

**SH Sutro Heights**

**Surviving Character-Defining Buildings and Structures:**

- SH-1 Parapet, terraced rock garden and stone walls
- SH-2 Well House
- SH-3 imitation rock structures
- Non-Contributing Buildings and Structures:**
- SH-A World War II Base End Station Bunker
- SH-B bus stop shelters
- SH-C WPA retaining wall/stairs (East end of Parapet)

**CH Cliff House Site**

**Surviving Character-Defining Buildings and Structures:**

- CH-1 Third Cliff House
- CH-2 lower terrace
- CH-3 gift shop
- Non-Contributing Buildings and Structures:**
- CH-A Sky Tram building (NPS Visitors Center)
- CH-B Giant Camera building
- CH-C upper terrace
- CH-D later additions to Third Cliff House
- CH-E rest rooms

**PLA Point Lobos Avenue/  
Great Highway Corridor**

**Surviving Character-Defining Buildings and Structures:**

- PLA-1 half bridge
- PLA-2 imitation rock structures
- PLA-3 masonry walls
- Non-Contributing Buildings and Structures:**
- PLA-A bus stops
- PLA-B Louie's restaurant

**SB Sutro Baths Site**

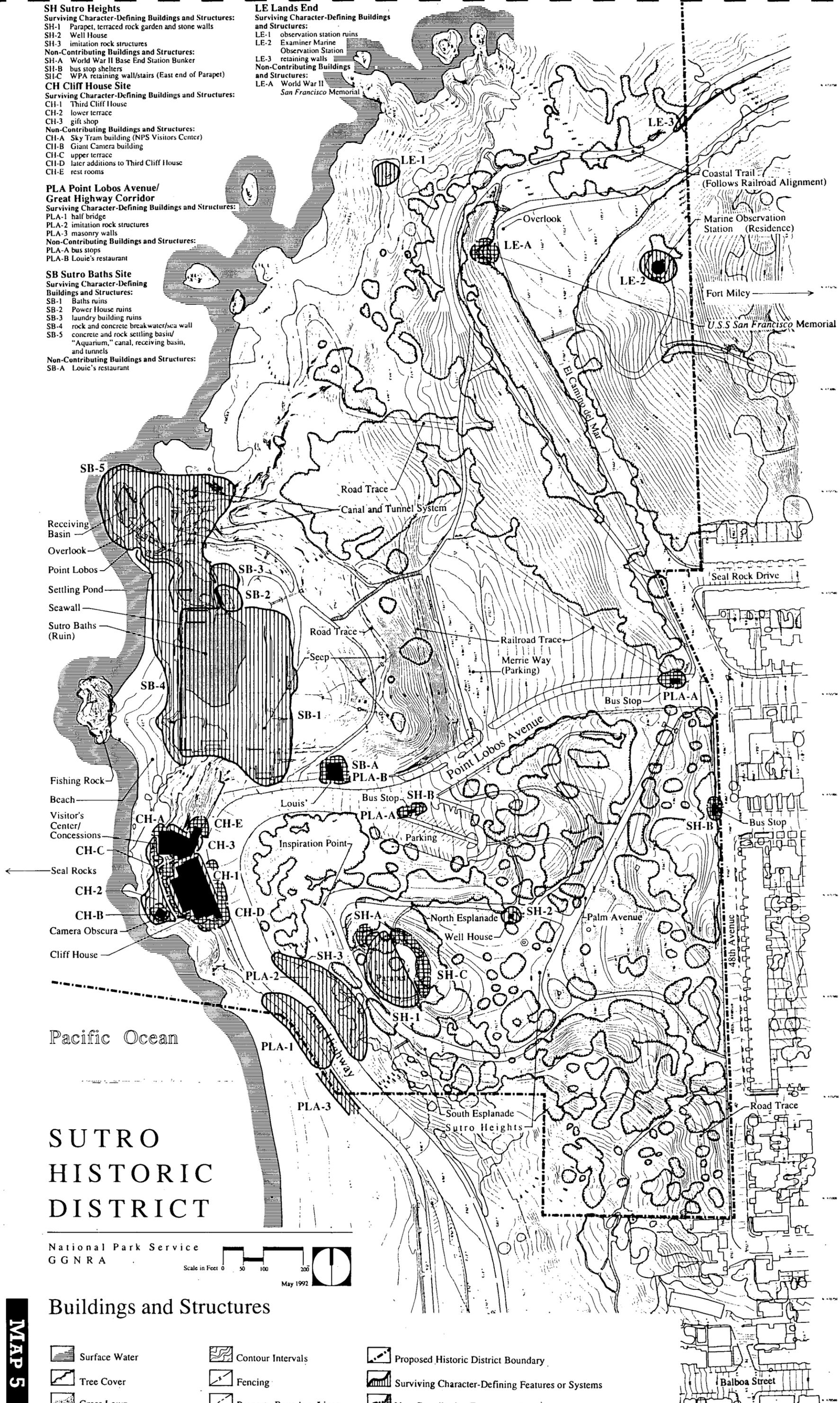
**Surviving Character-Defining Buildings and Structures:**

- SB-1 Baths ruins
- SB-2 Power House ruins
- SB-3 laundry building ruins
- SB-4 rock and concrete breakwater/sea wall
- SB-5 concrete and rock settling basin/ "Aquarium," canal, receiving basin, and tunnels
- Non-Contributing Buildings and Structures:**
- SB-A Louie's restaurant

**LE Lands End**

**Surviving Character-Defining Buildings and Structures:**

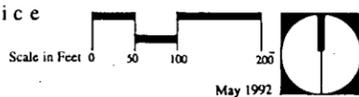
- LE-1 observation station ruins
- LE-2 Examiner Marine Observation Station
- LE-3 retaining walls
- Non-Contributing Buildings and Structures:**
- LE-A World War II San Francisco Memorial



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**Buildings and Structures**

- |               |                         |  |
|---------------|-------------------------|--|
| Surface Water | Contour Intervals       | Proposed Historic District Boundary              |
| Tree Cover    | Fencing                 | Surviving Character-Defining Features or Systems |
| Grass Lawn    | Property Boundary Lines | Non-Contributing Features or Systems             |

**SH Sutro Heights**

**Surviving Character-Defining Circulation:**

- SH-1 Point Lobos Avenue
- SH-2 Great Highway
- SH-3 48th Avenue
- SH-4 Palm Avenue
- SH-5 North and South Esplanades, Inspiration Point
- SH-6 Serpentine Drive
- SH-7 Ocean View Drive road trace
- SH-8 Drive to Park road trace
- SH-9 Ivy Lane
- SH-10 Dolce far niente Balcony site
- SH-11 paths at south garden/maze, traces of site and paths
- SH-12 48th Avenue entrance drive
- SH-13 Pine Lane, traces of path
- SH-14 Woodland Lane, path follows portions of historic alignments
- SH-15 Shady Path, path follows portions of historic alignments
- SH-16 Lovers' Lane, traces of grades remain
- SH-17 paths to the two mounts, traces of grades remain
- SH-18 path between the parapet and Inspiration Point

**Non-Contributing Circulation:**

- SH-A parking area located at the south of Point Lobos Avenue
- SH-B path from parking area at Point Lobos Avenue to Ivy Lane path
- SH-C informal paths and trails
- SH-D paths and sidewalks along Point Lobos Avenue and 48th Avenue

**CH Cliff House Site**

**Surviving Character-Defining Circulation:**

- CH-1 lower terrace
  - CH-2 walkway from lower terrace to Great Highway
  - CH-3 sidewalk along Point Lobos Avenue and Great Highway
- Non-Contributing Circulation:**
- CH-A upper terrace
  - CH-B steps at north side connecting the lower terrace to the upper terrace and the steps on the north side connecting the upper terrace to the front of the Cliff House
  - CH-C steps on south side of the Cliff House

**PLA Point Lobos Avenue/ Great Highway Corridor**

**Surviving Character-Defining Circulation:**

- PLA-1 roadway
  - PLA-2 sidewalk
- Non-Contributing Circulation:**  
none identified

**SB Sutro Baths Site**

**Surviving Character-Defining Circulation:**

- SB-1 street car lines, road trace
- SB-2 drive from Point Lobos Avenue past upper reservoir site to northeast corner of Baths road from spring heading northwest, road trace
- SB-3 areas on east side of Baths building and lower reservoir, road trace
- SB-4 drive from main drive to Baths building, road trace
- SB-5 area on east side of power house, road trace
- SB-6 path or road to lookout and lookout area
- SB-7 steps from lookout to lower lookout and to the canal tunnel
- SB-8 Merrie Way, historic corridor
- SB-9 path or road heading west from Merrie Way across the street car track historic corridor and then heading south to the main drive at the upper reservoir, road trace

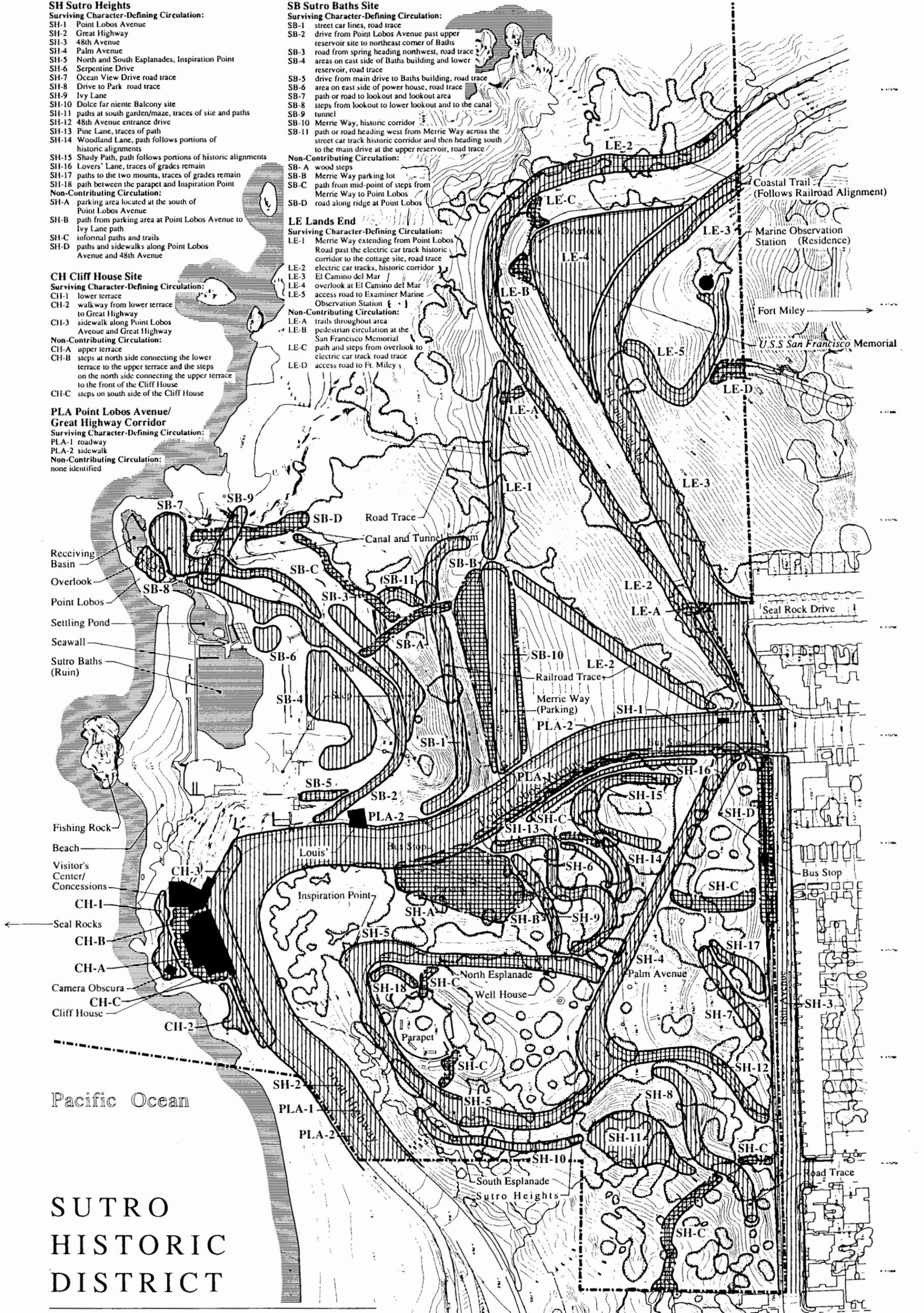
**Non-Contributing Circulation:**

- SB-A wood steps
- SB-B Merrie Way parking lot
- SB-C path from mid-point of steps from Merrie Way to Point Lobos
- SB-D road along ridge at Point Lobos

**LE Lands End**

**Surviving Character-Defining Circulation:**

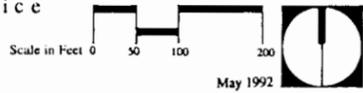
- LE-1 Merrie Way extending from Point Lobos Road past the electric car track historic corridor to the cottage site, road trace
  - LE-2 electric car tracks, historic corridor
  - LE-3 El Camino del Mar
  - LE-4 overlook at El Camino del Mar
  - LE-5 access road to Examiner Marine Observation Station
- Non-Contributing Circulation:**
- LE-A trails throughout area
  - LE-B pedestrian circulation at the San Francisco Memorial
  - LE-C path and steps from overlook to electric car track road trace
  - LE-D access road to Ft. Miley



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**Circulation**

- |               |                         |  |
|---------------|-------------------------|--|
| Surface Water | Contour Intervals       | Proposed Historic District Boundary              |
| Tree Cover    | Fencing                 | Surviving Character-Defining Features or Systems |
| Grass Lawn    | Property Boundary Lines | Non-Contributing Features or Systems             |

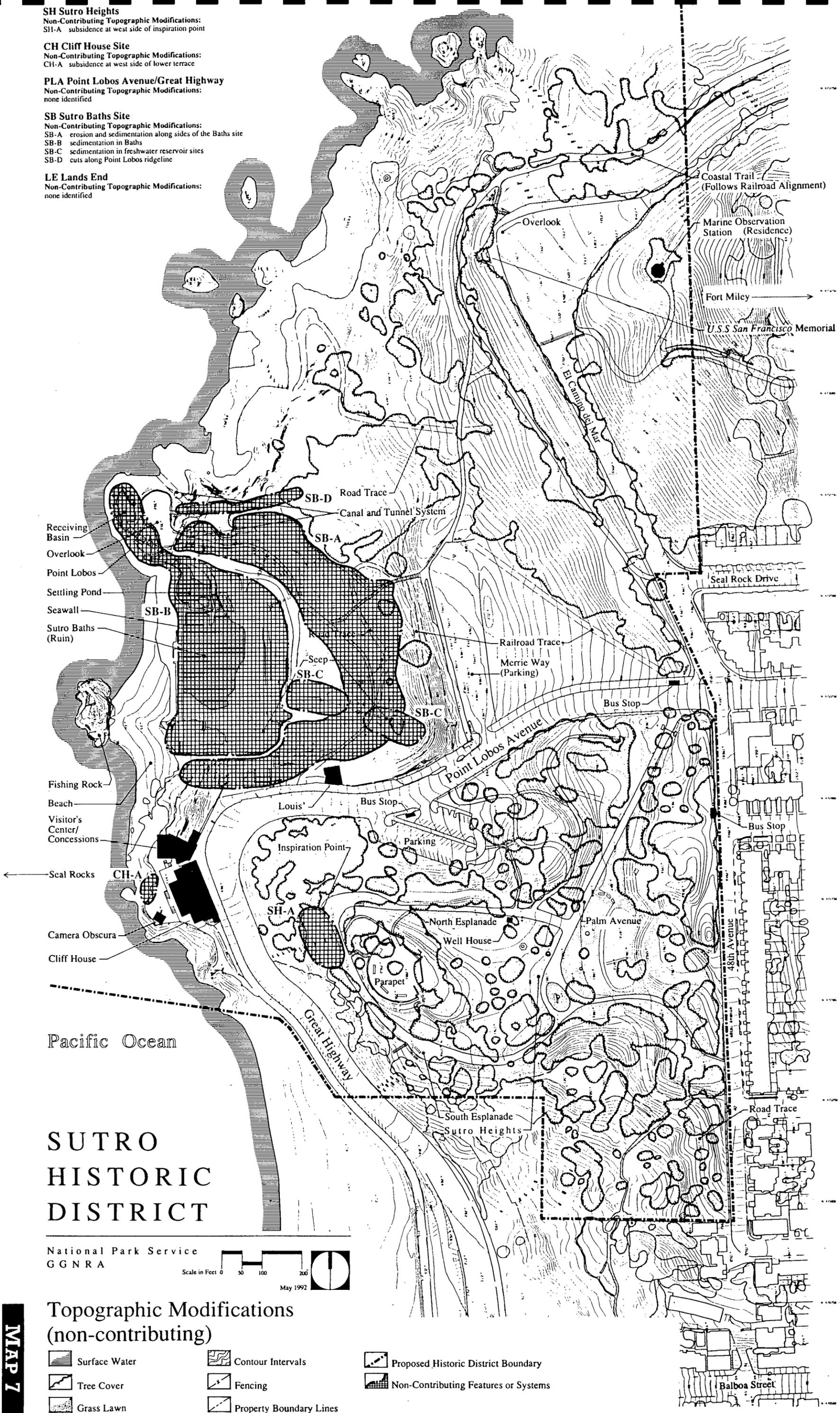
**SH Sutro Heights**  
 Non-Contributing Topographic Modifications:  
 SH-A subsidence at west side of inspiration point

**CH Cliff House Site**  
 Non-Contributing Topographic Modifications:  
 CH-A subsidence at west side of lower terrace

**PLA Point Lobos Avenue/Great Highway**  
 Non-Contributing Topographic Modifications:  
 none identified

**SB Sutro Baths Site**  
 Non-Contributing Topographic Modifications:  
 SB-A erosion and sedimentation along sides of the Baths site  
 SB-B sedimentation in Baths  
 SB-C sedimentation in freshwater reservoir sites  
 SB-D cuts along Point Lobos ridgeline

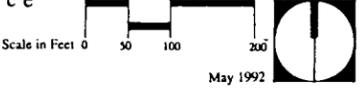
**LE Lands End**  
 Non-Contributing Topographic Modifications:  
 none identified



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## Topographic Modifications (non-contributing)

- |               |                         |                                      |
|---------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Surface Water | Contour Intervals       | Proposed Historic District Boundary  |
| Tree Cover    | Fencing                 | Non-Contributing Features or Systems |
| Grass Lawn    | Property Boundary Lines |                                      |

**MAP 7**

**SH Sutro Heights**

Non-Contributing Vegetation:

- SH-A tree cover
- SH-B tree cover and planting beds excluding the rock garden on the south side of the Parapet
- SH-C tree cover and non-native ruderal plants
- SH-D trees, shrubs, and groundcover
- SH-E trees, shrubs, groundcover and grass lawn areas, and planting bed locations

**CH Cliff House Site**

Non-Contributing Vegetation:

- CH-A plant materials in planters at front of Cliff House

**PLA Point Lobos Avenue/Great Highway**

Non-Contributing Vegetation:

- none identified

**SB Sutro Baths Site**

Non-Contributing Vegetation:

- SB-A native and non-native plants or plant communities in locations where character-defining buildings, circulation, or structures previously existed
- SB-B mixed non-native shrubs on the Point Lobos ridgeline

**LE Lands End**

Non-Contributing Vegetation:

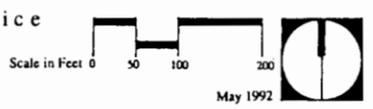
- LE-A non-native ruderal shrubs, succulents, herbaceous plants, and grasses



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**Vegetation (non-contributing)**

- |               |                         |                                      |
|---------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Surface Water | Contour Intervals       | Proposed Historic District Boundary  |
| Tree Cover    | Fencing                 | Non-Contributing Features or Systems |
| Grass Lawn    | Property Boundary Lines |                                      |

**SH Sutro Heights**

**Surviving Character-Defining Small-Scale Elements and Systems:**

- SH-1 sculptures and garden
- SH-2 masonry retaining wall

**Non-Contributing Small-Scale Elements and Systems:**

- SH-A wood bollards
- SH-B seating
- SH-C fencing
- SH-D wood retaining wall system along Point Lobos Avenue at Palm Avenue and along 48th Avenue connecting to the bus stop
- SH-E contemporary above-ground utility structures
- SH-F metal gate
- SH-G planting beds

**CH Cliff House**

**Surviving Character-Defining Small-Scale Elements and Systems:**

- CH-1 concrete freestanding wall along east and west sides of walkway connecting Great Highway to the lower terrace
- CH-2 stone wall along west and east sides of south end of walkway connecting the lower terrace to Great Highway
- CH-3 concrete retaining walls supporting lower terrace
- CH-4 stone retaining walls supporting the lower terrace
- CH-5 stone retaining walls along walkway connecting the lower terrace to Great Highway

**Non-Contributing Small-Scale Elements and Systems:**

- CH-A masonry wall along west side of lower terrace
- CH-B brick planters

**PLA Point Lobos Avenue/  
Great Highway**

**Surviving Character-Defining Small-Scale Elements and Systems:**

- none identified

**SB Sutro Baths Site**

**Surviving Character-Defining Small-Scale Elements and Systems:**

- none identified

**Non-Contributing Small-Scale Elements and Systems:**

- SB-A bituminous concrete curbing
- SB-B benches, timber curb stops, trash receptacles and signs at Merric Way
- SB-C stormwater drainage systems
- SB-D water fall structures at the Lookout
- SB-E concrete masonry unit or cinder block wall system
- SB-F metal pipe railing system at the Lookout and the canal
- SB-G fencing

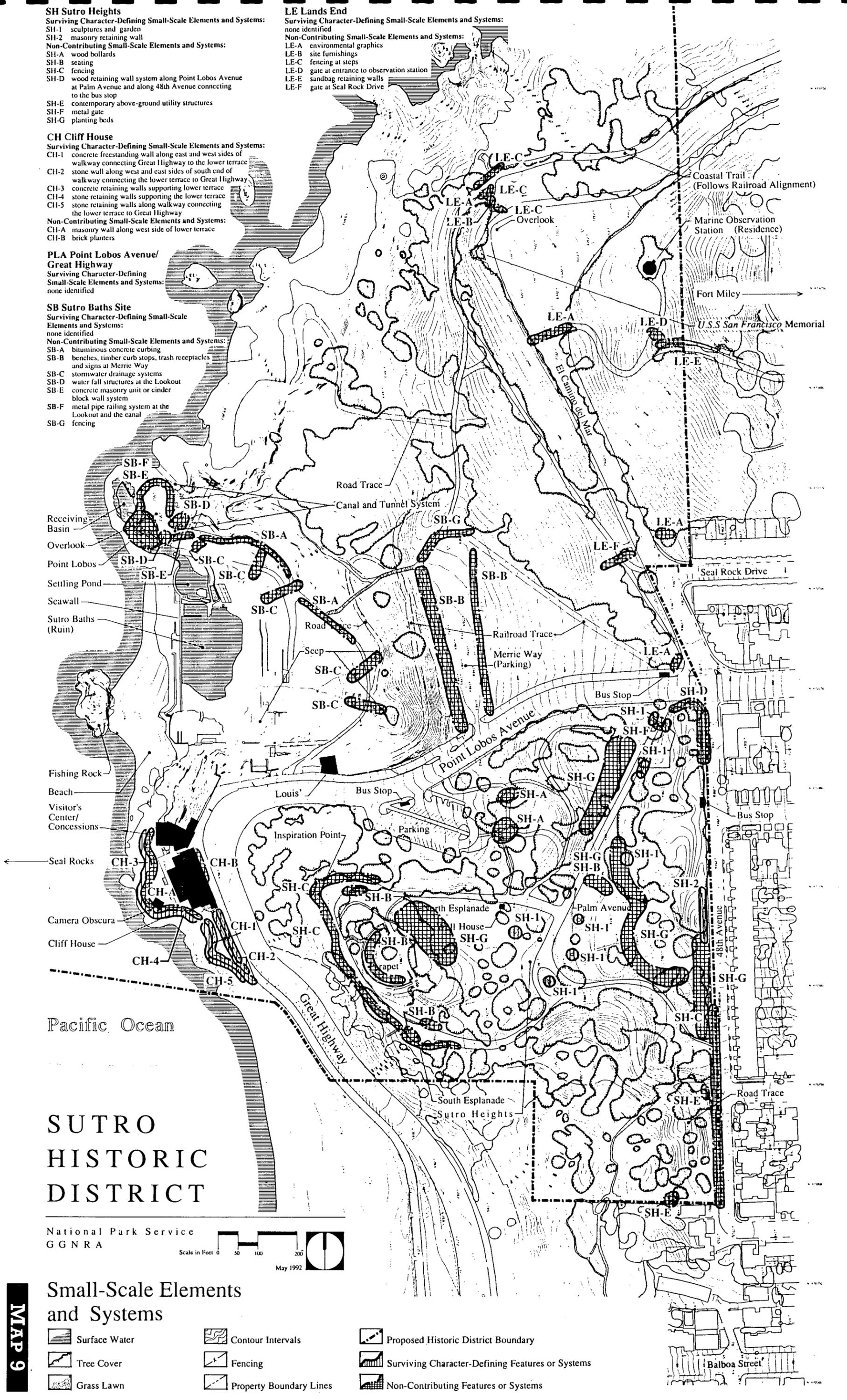
**LE Lands End**

**Surviving Character-Defining Small-Scale Elements and Systems:**

- none identified

**Non-Contributing Small-Scale Elements and Systems:**

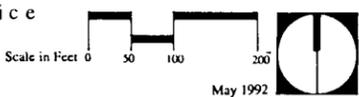
- LE-A environmental graphics
- LE-B site furnishings
- LE-C fencing at steps
- LE-D gate at entrance to observation station
- LE-E sandbag retaining walls
- LE-F gate at Seal Rock Drive



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**Small-Scale Elements  
and Systems**

- |               |                         |  |
|---------------|-------------------------|--|
| Surface Water | Contour Intervals       | Proposed Historic District Boundary              |
| Tree Cover    | Fencing                 | Surviving Character-Defining Features or Systems |
| Grass Lawn    | Property Boundary Lines | Non-Contributing Features or Systems             |

**SH Sutro Heights**

- Surviving Character-Defining View Points:**  
 SH-1 Parapet facing north, south, and west; views of the ocean, Cliff House site, Sutro Baths area, coastline  
 SH-2 Inspiration Point facing north, south, and west; views of the ocean, Cliff House site, Sutro Baths area, coastline  
 SH-3 South Esplanade facing south, views of ocean and Ocean Beach  
 SH-4 Shady Path and The Oval facing west, views of ocean and Sutro Baths  
 SH-5 Palm Avenue facing southwest, views down lane to the ocean  
 SH-6 Dolce far niente Balcony facing south; views of ocean and Ocean Beach  
 SH-7 Drive to the Park facing south and west; views of ocean and Ocean Beach  
 SH-8 Serpentine Drive facing west; views of the ocean, Cliff House site and coastline  
 SH-9 south Maze facing south and west; views of ocean and Ocean Beach

**Non-Contributing View Points:**  
 none identified

**CH Cliff House Site**

- Surviving Character-Defining View Points:**  
 CH-1 lower terrace facing west; views of ocean and coastline  
 CH-2 Cliff House facing west; views of ocean and coastline  
 CH-3 walks and paths facing west; views of ocean and coastline
- Non-Contributing View Points:**  
 CH-A views from Sky Tram building (NPS visitor center)

**PLA Point Lobos Avenue/  
 Great Highway**

- Surviving Character-Defining View Points:**  
 PLA-1 views facing west of the ocean, Cliff House site, Sutro Baths site, Point Lobos, Ocean Beach, Palm Avenue  
 PLA-2 views facing northeast of Lands End area, near views only due to wooded areas

**Non-Contributing View Points:**  
 none identified

**SB Sutro Baths Site**

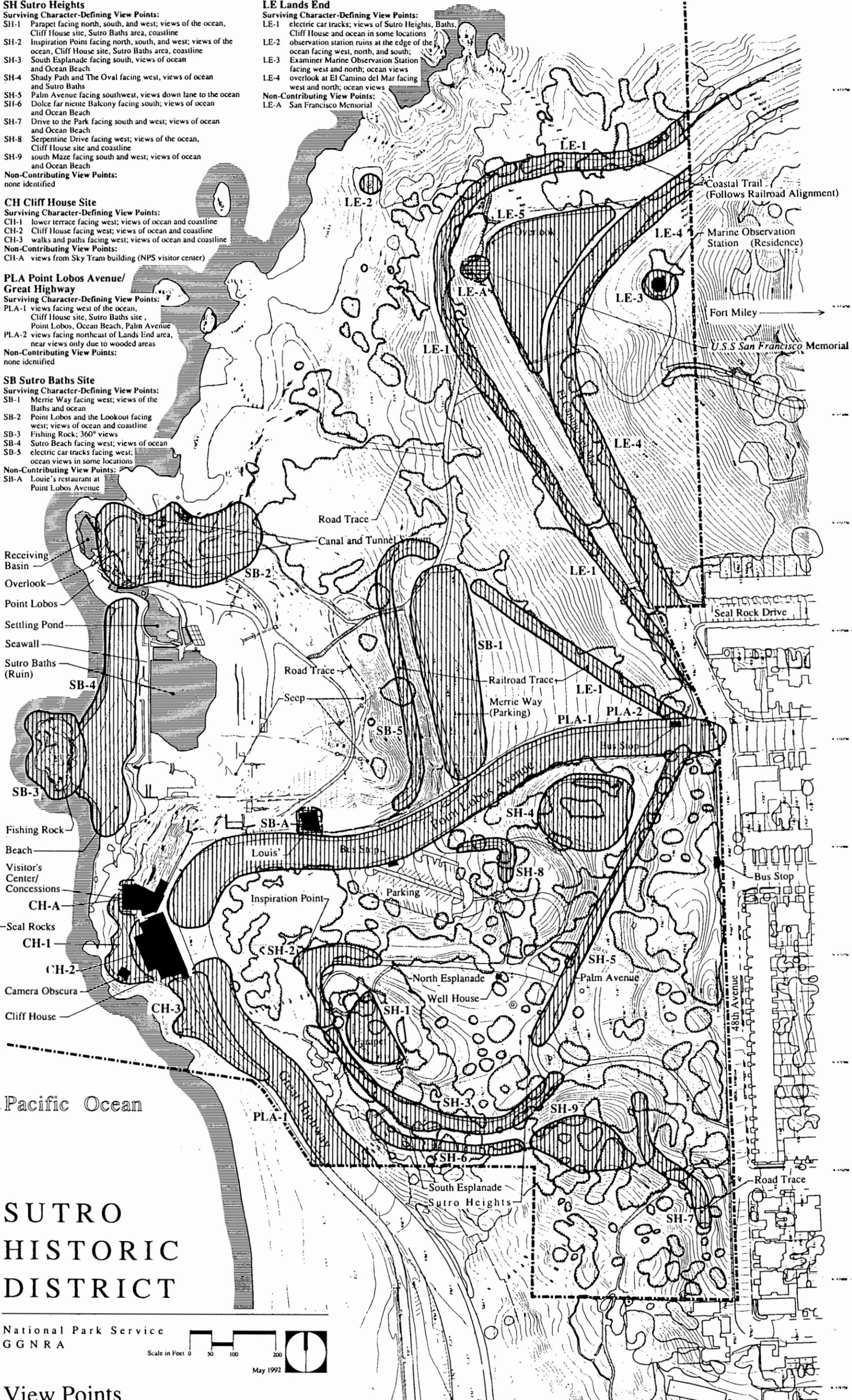
- Surviving Character-Defining View Points:**  
 SB-1 Merrie Way facing west; views of the Baths and ocean  
 SB-2 Point Lobos and the Lookout facing west; views of ocean and coastline  
 SB-3 Fishing Rock; 360° views  
 SB-4 Sutro Beach facing west; views of ocean  
 SB-5 electric car tracks facing west; ocean views in some locations

**Non-Contributing View Points:**  
 SB-A Louie's restaurant at Point Lobos Avenue

**LE Lands End**

- Surviving Character-Defining View Points:**  
 LE-1 electric car tracks; views of Sutro Heights, Baths, Cliff House and ocean in some locations  
 LE-2 observation station ruins at the edge of the ocean facing west, north, and south  
 LE-3 Examiner Marine Observation Station facing west and north; ocean views overlook at El Camino del Mar facing west and north; ocean views

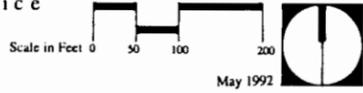
**Non-Contributing View Points:**  
 LE-A San Francisco Memorial



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May 1992

**View Points**

- |               |                         |  |
|---------------|-------------------------|--|
| Surface Water | Contour Intervals       | Proposed Historic District Boundary              |
| Tree Cover    | Fencing                 | Surviving Character-Defining Features or Systems |
| Grass Lawn    | Property Boundary Lines | Non-Contributing Features or Systems             |

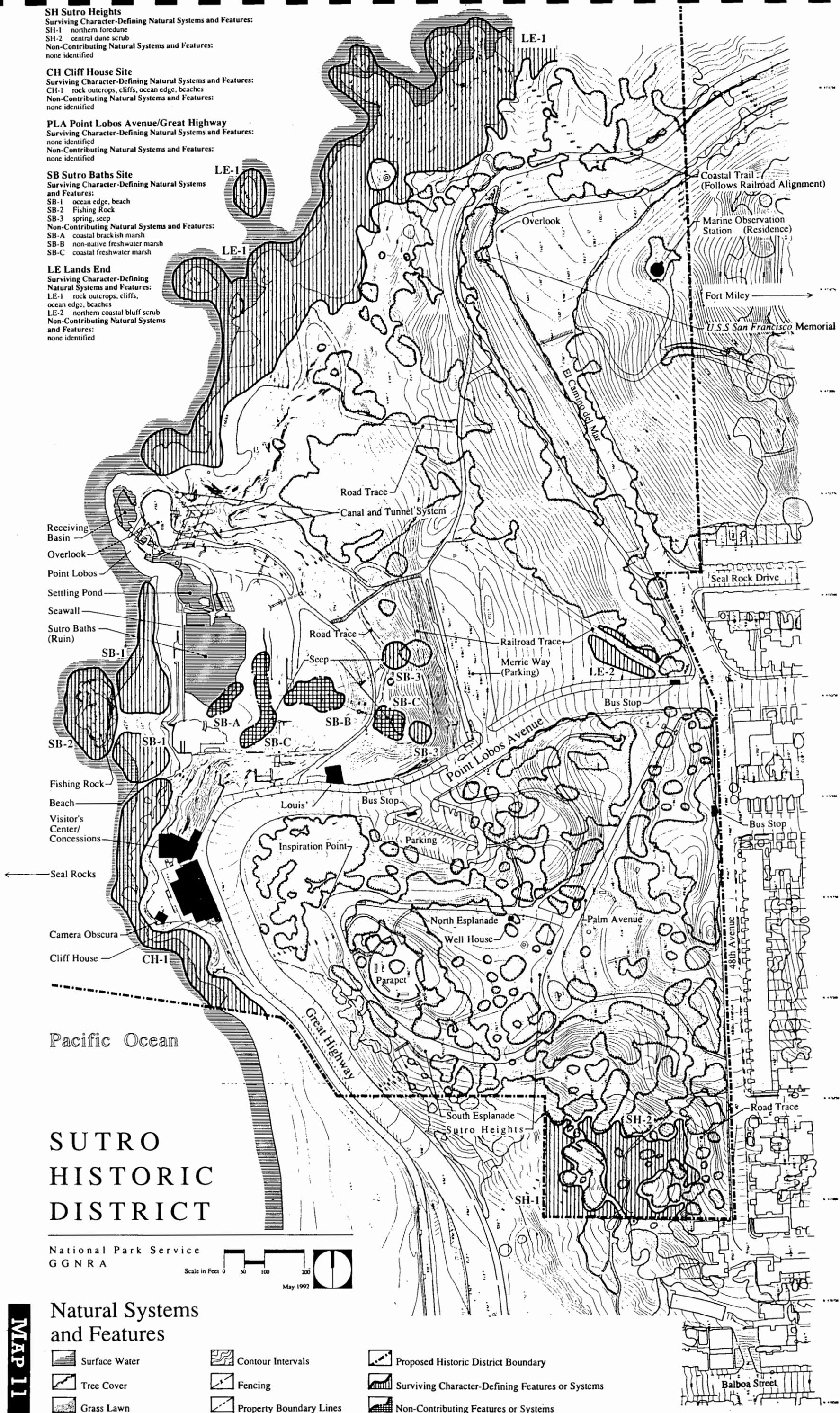
**SH Sutro Heights**  
 Surviving Character-Defining Natural Systems and Features:  
 SH-1 northern foredune  
 SH-2 central dune scrub  
 Non-Contributing Natural Systems and Features:  
 none identified

**CH Cliff House Site**  
 Surviving Character-Defining Natural Systems and Features:  
 CH-1 rock outcrops, cliffs, ocean edge, beaches  
 Non-Contributing Natural Systems and Features:  
 none identified

**PLA Point Lobos Avenue/Great Highway**  
 Surviving Character-Defining Natural Systems and Features:  
 none identified  
 Non-Contributing Natural Systems and Features:  
 none identified

**SB Sutro Baths Site**  
 Surviving Character-Defining Natural Systems and Features:  
 SB-1 ocean edge, beach  
 SB-2 Fishing Rock  
 SB-3 spring, seep  
 Non-Contributing Natural Systems and Features:  
 SB-A coastal brackish marsh  
 SB-B non-native freshwater marsh  
 SB-C coastal freshwater marsh

**LE Lands End**  
 Surviving Character-Defining Natural Systems and Features:  
 LE-1 rock outcrops, cliffs, ocean edge, beaches  
 LE-2 northern coastal bluff scrub  
 Non-Contributing Natural Systems and Features:  
 none identified



Receiving Basin  
 Overlook  
 Point Lobos  
 Settling Pond  
 Seawall  
 Sutro Baths (Ruin)  
 SB-1  
 SB-2  
 Fishing Rock  
 Beach  
 Visitor's Center/Concessions  
 Seal Rocks  
 Camera Obscura  
 Cliff House  
 CH-1

Road Trace  
 Canal and Tunnel System

Road Trace  
 Seep  
 SB-3  
 SB-C  
 SB-B  
 SB-3  
 SB-C

Louis'  
 Bus Stop  
 Inspiration Point  
 Parking  
 North Esplanade  
 Well House  
 Parapet  
 Great Highway

Overlook  
 El Camino del Mar  
 Coastal Trail (Follows Railroad Alignment)  
 Marine Observation Station (Residence)  
 Fort Miley  
 U.S.S. San Francisco Memorial

Railroad Trace  
 Merrie Way (Parking)  
 LE-2  
 Bus Stop

Palm Avenue  
 48th Avenue  
 Bus Stop  
 Bus Stop

South Esplanade  
 Sutro Heights  
 SH-2  
 SH-1  
 Road Trace  
 Balboa Street

Pacific Ocean

# SUTRO HISTORIC DISTRICT

National Park Service  
 GGNRA  
 Scale in Feet 0 50 100 200  
 May 1992

## Natural Systems and Features

- |               |                         |  |
|---------------|-------------------------|--|
| Surface Water | Contour Intervals       | Proposed Historic District Boundary              |
| Tree Cover    | Fencing                 | Surviving Character-Defining Features or Systems |
| Grass Lawn    | Property Boundary Lines | Non-Contributing Features or Systems             |





## SUTRO HEIGHTS

### *Character-Defining Buildings and Structures*

- stables located on the south side of Point Lobos Avenue
- gatehouse located on the south side of Point Lobos Avenue
- boarding house south of gatehouse south of Point Lobos Avenue
- gatehouse at main gate at the intersection of Palm Avenue and Point Lobos Avenue
- main gate at intersection of Palm Avenue and Point Lobos Avenue including gate structure and a pair of flanking lion sculptures on masonry bases
- conservatory located between Palm Avenue and Ocean View Drive
- Sutro residence
- observatory/tankhouse/Photo Concession building located on the east side of the parapet
- parapet including a cellar located on the north wall, stone steps connecting to the Esplanade, and terraced rock garden and associated stone steps and stone walls
- *Dolce far Niente* Balcony located south of the South Esplanade
- wellhouse located at the intersection of Ivy Lane and the North Esplanade
- gardners' sheds located on the access road to the residence
- Sutro Heights Gallery located at the northeast corner of the parapet
- lower gate at Serpentine Drive and Point Lobos Avenue
- imitation rock structures at road cuts on east side of Great Highway

### *Surviving Character-Defining Buildings and Structures*

- the Lion sculptures on masonry bases at intersection of Palm Avenue and Point Lobos Avenue are the only surviving elements of the main gate
- the western portion of the parapet survives with 1930s additions to the east side that are not character-defining, stone steps connecting to the Esplanade, and terraced rock garden and associated stone steps and stone walls are surviving
- the wellhouse located at the intersection of Ivy Lane and the North Esplanade is surviving and has been partially restored and has missing elements
- imitation rock structures at road cuts on east side of Great Highway

### *Non-Contributing Buildings and Structures*

- World War II Base End Station Bunker (Fire Control Station); not character-defining in this context although it may contribute to coastal defense historic context; until that significance can be determined, structure should be managed as a cultural resource
- bus stop shelters at 48th Avenue and Point Lobos Avenue
- portable toilets

***Character-Defining Circulation***

- Point Lobos Avenue
- Great Highway
- 48th Avenue
- Palm Avenue
- North and South Esplanades and Inspiration Point
- Serpentine Drive
- Ocean View Drive
- access drive to the residence
- drive to park (Golden Gate Park)
- Ivy Lane
- *Dolce far Niente* Balcony and connecting paths and two stairways from the South Esplanade
- paths at south garden/maze
- 48th Avenue entrance drive and parallel path on the south side of drive
- Shady Lawn radial path pattern
- Pine Lane
- Woodland Lane
- Shady Path
- Lovers' Lane
- paths to the two mounts
- north maze paths
- Rosarium paths
- paths at the Oval
- garden paths on the west side of the conservatory
- conservatory access drive
- Adonis Circle, half-circle path to east of the conservatory
- connecting paths and drives between Palm Avenue and Ocean View Drive
- connecting drive between Ocean View Drive and 48th Avenue
- various garden paths and paths associated with sculptures

***Surviving Character-Defining Circulation***

- Point Lobos Avenue follows historic corridor
- Great Highway follows historic corridor
- 48th Avenue follows historic corridor
- Palm Avenue, horizontal and vertical alignments survive
- North and South Esplanades, portions of Inspiration Point are missing due to landslide
- Serpentine Drive, path follows alignment of historic corridor
- Ocean View Drive, road trace in places, path follows alignment of historic corridor in places

- drive to park (Golden Gate Park), road traces in places, path follows historic corridor in places
- Ivy Lane, portions of vertical and horizontal alignment survive, path follows historic corridor in places
- *Dolce far Niente* Balcony and connecting paths and two stairways from the South Esplanade, extant connecting stairway is a restoration or reconstruction, terrace grades where balcony and path are located are evident
- paths at south garden, traces of site and paths remain
- 48th Avenue entrance drive and parallel path on the south side of drive, path follows historic alignment of connecting drive
- Pine Lane, traces of grades remain
- Woodland Lane, path follows portions of historic alignments
- Shady Path, path follows portions of historic alignments
- Lovers' Lane, traces of grades remain
- paths to the two mounts, traces of grades remain

#### ***Non-Contributing Circulation***

- parking area located at the south of Point Lobos Avenue
- path from parking area at Point Lobos Avenue to Ivy Lane path
- various informal paths and trails
- paths and sidewalks along Point Lobos Avenue and 48th Avenue

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#### ***Character-Defining Topographic Modification***

- widths and horizontal/vertical alignments of circulation
- building and structure site grading
- landscape feature and garden grading

#### ***Surviving Character-Defining Topographic Modification***

- widths and horizontal/vertical alignments of circulation; generally, much of the grading associated with character-defining circulation systems survives or portions of the grading of systems survive
- building and structure site grading; generally, the grading for building sites survive
- landscape features and garden grading; generally, the grading for landscape features and gardens survives

#### ***Non-Contributing Topographic Modification***

- extensive fill over planting bed locations west of Palm Avenue and between the North Esplanade and the carriage turn around
- subsidence at west side of inspiration point

***Character-Defining Vegetation***

- Shady Lawn, grove of trees
- Palm Avenue, street trees and planting beds flanking drive
- afforested areas along the North and South Esplanade, Dolce far Niente, Inspiration Point, and drive to park; afforested area bordered by Point Lobos Avenue, Ivy Lane, and Palm Avenue; afforested area bordered by Palm Avenue, drive to park, and 48th Avenue
- The Oval, planting bed
- Rosarium, planting bed
- planting bed at Shady Path
- planting bed at Serpentine Drive entrance at Point Lobos Avenue
- planting beds along Serpentine Drive
- planting beds along Ocean View Drive
- north maze
- south maze and planting bed
- planting bed and street trees along access drive to 48th Avenue
- Adonis Circle
- Rock Garden at parapet
- planting beds northwest of conservatory
- Gnomes Arbor Vitae hedge west side of conservatory
- native foredune and central dune scrub native plant communities at southern portion of site

***Surviving Character-Defining Vegetation***

- Shady Lawn, grove of trees; some trees remain
- Palm Avenue, street trees and planting beds flanking drive; some trees remain
- afforested areas along the North and South Esplanade, Dolce far Niente, Inspiration Point, and Drive to Park; afforested area bordered by Point Lobos Avenue, Ivy Lane, and Palm Avenue; afforested area bordered by Palm Avenue, drive to park, and 48th Avenue; some trees and shrub plantings remain

***Non-Contributing Vegetation***

- planting beds throughout site
- invasive non-native species throughout the site
- Rock Garden at parapet; recent plantings in garden are not character-defining
- tree cover at east end of parapet

***Character-Defining Small-Scale Elements and Systems***

- numerous garden ornaments and sculptures located throughout the site
- wood lath wind control, boundary, and area fencing
- ornamental wood post and metal chain fencing along North and South Esplanades
- cast iron “toadstool” seats
- wood and metal strap chairs
- masonry retaining wall on east side of the mount at 48th Avenue
- road and path edging including concrete gutters; “ball topped,” “rope coil,” and “arch topped” terra cotta edging
- turned, round, wood bollards with a ball top and round stone bumpers
- brick-lined “sewer boxes” or catch basins connected with terra cotta drain pipes installed along Esplanade
- water supply lines for potable water service and irrigation
- canon balls and canons
- overhead electric power and telephone poles and lines

***Surviving Character-Defining Small-Scale Elements and Systems***

- sculptures located throughout the site
- masonry retaining wall on east side of the mount at 48th Avenue
- road and path concrete gutters
- round stone bumpers
- brick-lined “sewer boxes” or catch basins connected with terra cotta drain pipes installed along Esplanade (portions of the system survive)

***Non-Contributing Small-Scale Elements and Systems***

- all trash receptacles
- all signage
- all wood bollards
- all seating
- all fencing
- all plastic fabric soil erosion control devices
- wood retaining wall system along Point Lobos Avenue at Palm Avenue and along 48th Avenue connecting to the bus stop
- all contemporary above-ground utility structures including piping and valves, concrete vaults

***Character-Defining View Points***

- parapet facing north, south, and west; views of the ocean, Cliff House site, Sutro Baths area, coastline
- Inspiration Point facing north, south, and west; views of the ocean, Cliff House site, Sutro Baths area, coastline

- North Esplanade facing north, views of Point Lobos
- South Esplanade facing south, views of ocean and Ocean Beach
- observatory, 360 degree views
- Sutro residence views facing west and south, views of ocean and Ocean Beach
- Shady Path and the Oval facing west, views of ocean and Sutro Baths
- Ocean View Drive and garden room along drive facing west, north and south, views of ocean, Sutro Heights, Sutro Baths
- Palm Avenue facing southwest, views down lane to ocean
- Ocean Beach view from *Dolce far Niente* Balcony
- Palm Avenue facing northwest to main gate

***Surviving Character-Defining View Points***

- parapet facing north, south, and west; views of the ocean, Cliff House site, Sutro Baths area, coastline
- Inspiration Point facing north, south, and west; views of the ocean, Cliff House site, Sutro Baths area, coastline
- South Esplanade facing south, views of ocean and Ocean Beach
- Shady Path and the Oval facing west, views of ocean and Sutro Baths
- Palm Avenue facing southwest, views down lane to ocean
- Palm Avenue facing northwest to main gate; main gate missing

***Non-Contributing View Points***

- none identified

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***Character-Defining Natural Systems and Features***

- northern foredune at south end of Sutro Heights
- central dune scrub at south end of Sutro Heights
- rock outcrops and cliffs along Point Lobos Avenue and Great Highway

***Surviving Character-Defining Natural Systems and Features***

- northern foredune at south end of Sutro Heights
- central dune scrub at south end of Sutro Heights
- rock outcrops and cliffs along Point Lobos Avenue and Great Highway

***Non-Contributing Natural Systems and Features***

- none identified

***Character-Defining Land Use***

- housing
- recreation
- education

***Continuity of Character-Defining Land Use***

- recreation
- education

***Non-Contributing Land Use***

- none identified

**CLIFF HOUSE SITE*****Character-Defining Buildings and Structures***

- third Cliff House, opened in 1909; frame addition on north side in 1912; new stairway on north side of 1912 addition
- lower terrace built in 1909
- shed built in 1909
- frame building, c. 1909
- gift shop (22 x 37 feet) located 100 feet to the north of the Cliff House
- candy stand on terrace, 1912
- two frame structures on terrace, 1914
- tea house added to the terrace, 1915
- gift shop built in two phases in 1913 and 1915

***Surviving Character-Defining Buildings and Structures***

- third Cliff House, opened in 1909; frame addition on north side in 1912; a new stairway built on the north side of 1912 addition; modified significantly beginning in 1937
- lower terrace built in 1909
- gift shop built in two phases in 1913 and 1915; portion of original building remains

***Non-Contributing Buildings and Structures***

- Sky Tram building (NPS Visitor Center)
- Giant Camera building
- upper terrace

***Character-Defining Circulation***

- concrete lower terrace
- concrete walkway from terrace to south connecting to walk on west side of Great Highway
- concrete sidewalk along Point Lobos Avenue and Great Highway

***Surviving Character-Defining Circulation***

- concrete lower terrace
- concrete walkway from terrace to south connecting to walk on west side of Great Highway
- concrete sidewalk along Point Lobos Avenue and Great Highway

***Non-Contributing Circulation***

- upper terrace
  - steps at north side connecting the lower terrace to the upper terrace and the steps on the north side connecting the upper terrace to the front of the Cliff House
  - steps on south side of the Cliff House
- 

***Character-Defining Topographic Modification***

- grading associated with the Cliff House and lower terrace
- grading associated with the complex of buildings on north side of Cliff House

***Surviving Character-Defining Topographic Modification***

- grading associated with the Cliff House and lower terrace
- grading associated with the complex of buildings on north side of Cliff House

***Non-Contributing Topographic Modification***

- none identified
- 

***Character-Defining Vegetation***

- vegetation on steep rock cliffs on west, north, and south portions of the site
- decorative plantings in containers

***Surviving Character-Defining Vegetation***

- vegetation on steep rock cliffs on west, north, and south portions of the site
- decorative plantings in containers

***Non-Contributing Vegetation***

- plant materials in planters at front of Cliff House

***Character-Defining Small-Scale Elements and Systems***

- concrete and metal picket fencing along west edge of lower terrace
- concrete freestanding wall along east and west sides of walkway connecting Great Highway to the lower terrace
- stone wall along west and east sides of south end of walkway connecting the lower terrace to Great Highway
- decorative metal handrails at steps
- flag pole and United States flag
- benches and seats
- fire hydrants
- decorative metal poles mounted on concrete bases with non-visible light source
- concrete retaining walls supporting lower terrace
- stone retaining walls supporting the lower terrace
- stone retaining walls along walkway connecting the lower terrace to Great Highway

***Surviving Character-Defining Small-Scale Elements and Systems***

- concrete freestanding wall along east and west sides of walkway connecting Great Highway to the lower terrace
- stone wall along west and east sides of south end of walkway connecting the lower terrace to Great Highway
- concrete retaining walls supporting lower terrace
- stone retaining walls supporting the lower terrace
- stone retaining walls along walkway connecting the lower terrace to Great Highway

***Non-Contributing Small-Scale Elements and Systems***

- masonry wall along west side of lower terrace
- trash receptacles
- signage
- seating
- brick planters
- “cobra head” lights and poles
- mounted telescopes
- stone aggregate planters
- totem poles

***Character-Defining View Points***

- lower terrace facing west, south, and north, views of ocean, rocks islands, coastline north and south
- Cliff House facing west, south, and north, views of ocean, rocks islands, coastline north and south
- tea house facing west, south, and north, views of ocean, rocks islands, coastline north and south
- walk along Great Highway facing south and west, views of Ocean Beach and ocean

***Surviving Character-Defining View Points***

- lower terrace facing west, south, and north, views of ocean, rocks islands, coastline north and south
- Cliff House facing west, south, and north, views of ocean, rocks islands, coastline north and south
- walk along Great Highway facing south and west, views of Ocean Beach and ocean

***Non-Contributing View Points***

- views from Sky Tram building (NPS Visitor Center)
- 

***Character-Defining Natural Systems and Features***

- rock outcrops, cliffs, ocean edge, beaches

***Surviving Character-Defining Natural Systems and Features***

- rock outcrops, cliffs, ocean edge, beaches

***Non-Contributing Natural Systems and Features***

- none identified
- 

***Character-Defining Land Use***

- commerce
- recreation
- education

***Continuity of Character-Defining Land Use***

- commerce
- recreation
- education

***Non-Contributing Land Use***

- none identified
-

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**POINT LOBOS AVENUE / GREAT HIGHWAY CORRIDOR*****Character-Defining Buildings and Structures***

- viaduct bridge south of the Cliff House
- imitation rock structures at cuts along east side of Great Highway and Sutro Heights
- temporary roadside vendor structures and buildings

***Surviving Character-Defining Buildings and Structures***

- viaduct bridge south of the Cliff House
- imitation rock structures at cuts along east side of Great Highway and Sutro Heights

***Non-Contributing Buildings and Structures***

- two bus stops
  - Louis' Restaurant
- 

***Character-Defining Circulation***

- roadway, paved with bituminous concrete and unit pavers in medians; concrete curb
- concrete sidewalk

***Surviving Character-Defining Circulation***

- roadway, paved, concrete curb; roadway widened, on-street parking
- concrete sidewalk

***Non-Contributing Circulation***

- none identified
- 

***Character-Defining Topographic Modification***

- cuts and fills, vertical and horizontal alignments associated with road, half bridge, and side walk

***Surviving Character-Defining Topographic Modification***

- cuts and fills, vertical and horizontal alignments associated with road, half bridge, and side walk

***Non-Contributing Topographic Modification***

- none identified

***Character-Defining Vegetation***

- groundcover planted on Sutro Heights side of road
- shrubs in basins on imitation rock structure

***Surviving Character-Defining Vegetation***

- none identified

***Non-Contributing Vegetation***

- none identified
- 

***Character-Defining Small-Scale Elements and Systems***

- fire hydrants
- utility poles
- decorative metal poles mounted on concrete bases with non-visible light source lights

***Surviving Character-Defining Small-Scale Elements and Systems***

- none identified

***Non-Contributing Small-Scale Elements and Systems***

- contemporary fire hydrants
  - signage, environmental graphics including painted stripping and markings on road surface
  - "cobra head" lights and poles
- 

***Character-Defining View Points***

- views facing west of ocean, Cliff House site, Sutro Baths site, Point Lobos, Ocean Beach, Palm Avenue
- views facing northeast of Lands End area

***Surviving Character-Defining View Points***

- views facing west of ocean, Cliff House site, Sutro Baths site, Point Lobos, Ocean Beach, Palm Avenue
- views facing northeast of Lands End area, near views only due to wooded areas

***Non-Contributing View Points***

- none identified

***Character-Defining Natural Systems and Features***

- none identified

***Surviving Character-Defining Natural Systems and Features***

- none identified

***Non-Contributing Natural Systems and Features***

- none identified

***Character-Defining Land Use***

- infrastructure

***Continuity of Character-Defining Land Use***

- infrastructure

***Non-Contributing Land Use***

- none identified

**SUTRO BATHS SITE*****Character-Defining Buildings and Structures***

- Baths including main swimming tank (1,310,000 gallons), swimming tank (115,000 gallons), four tanks (65,000 gallons each), plunge (25,000 gallons/freshwater), seating, promenade, amphitheater, club rooms, private dressing rooms, entrance building at Point Lobos Avenue
- Power house and smoke stack
- laundry building and smoke stack
- rock and concrete breakwater/sea wall
- concrete and rock settling basin (500,000 gallons), previously called "Aquarium," canal, receiving basin, tunnels
- street car depot
- lower fresh water reservoir (435,000 gallons)
- upper fresh water reservoir (155,000 gallons)
- oil tank
- buildings and structures connecting the street car depot to Sutro Baths entrance building
- Haunted Swing building
- Mirror Maze building
- Firth Wheel (ferris wheel)

- windmills (2)
- shed next to upper reservoir
- rock and concrete seawall connecting the seawall at the baths site to Fishing Rock

***Surviving Character-Defining Buildings and Structures***

- baths including main swimming tank (1,310,000 gallons), swimming tank (115,000 gallons), four tanks (65,000 gallons each), plunge (25,000 gallons/freshwater), foundation pool ruins
- power house, foundation ruins
- laundry building, foundation ruins
- rock and concrete breakwater/sea wall
- concrete and rock settling basin (500,000 gallons), previously called "Aquarium," canal, receiving basin, tunnels

***Non-Contributing Buildings and Structures***

- Louis' Restaurant on Point Lobos Avenue

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***Character-Defining Circulation***

- street car lines (two tracks)
- drive from Point Lobos Avenue past upper reservoir site to northeast corner of Baths
- areas around upper reservoir and spring
- road from spring heading northwest
- areas on east side of Baths building and lower reservoir, road trace
- drive from lower reservoir area to south end of Baths building
- path on east side of power house
- wood plank walkway with wood post and rail handrails along west side of Baths building on sea wall
- wood plank and earthen walkways with wood post and rail handrails on east and west side of settling basin
- footbridge across canal (two)
- path or road to lookout and lookout area
- masonry steps from lookout to canal
- path from lookout heading north along bluffs to north end of tunnel
- tunnel
- path with footbridges from area east of lookout heading north along bluffs
- Merrie Way
- path or road heading west from Merrie Way across the street car tracks and then heading south to the main drive at the upper reservoir
- walkway along seawall connecting the Baths site to Fishing Rock

***Surviving Character-Defining Circulation***

- street car lines (two tracks), road trace survives
- drive from Point Lobos Avenue past upper reservoir site to northeast corner of baths
- road from spring heading northwest, road trace survives
- areas on east side of baths building and lower reservoir, grades survive
- drive from lower reservoir area to south end of baths building, road trace survives
- path on east side of power house, grades survive
- path or road to lookout and lookout area
- masonry steps from lookout to lower lookout and to the canal
- tunnel
- Merrie Way, historic corridor survives
- path or road heading west from Merrie Way across the street car track historic corridor and then heading south to the main drive at the upper reservoir, portions of grading survives

***Non-Contributing Circulation***

- wood steps from Merrie Way parking lot to main drive into baths site
- Merrie Way parking lot
- path from mid-point of steps from Merrie Way to Point Lobos
- road along ridge at Point Lobos

***Character-Defining Topographic Modification***

- all grading associated with the siting and construction of the baths including the stepping and benching of north, south, and east sides of the site
- all grading associated with character-defining circulation

***Surviving Character-Defining Topographic Modification***

- all grading associated with the siting and construction of the baths including the stepping and benching of north, south, and east sides of the site
- all grading associated with character-defining circulation

***Non-Contributing Topographic Modifications***

- erosion and sedimentation along sides of the baths site
- sedimentation deposits in baths
- sedimentation deposits in freshwater reservoir sites

***Character-Defining Vegetation***

- mixed native and non-native shrubs on the eastern and northern areas of the baths site
- northern coastal bluff scrub on Point Lobos ridgeline on north side of baths site
- plantings inside baths

***Surviving Character-Defining Vegetation***

- mixed native and non-native shrubs on the eastern and northern areas of the Baths site

***Non-Contributing Vegetation***

- coastal freshwater marsh at the upper reservoir site
- Monterey Cypress trees and plantations along the northern and eastern slopes
- ruderal shrubs, herbaceous plants, and succulents throughout basin on eastern and western sides

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***Character-Defining Small-Scale Elements and Systems***

- overhead electric power and telephone systems including poles and wires
- concrete retaining walls along main drive from Point Lobos Avenue to the baths
- wood picket fencing along property line
- below-ground oil pipeline from Merrie Way to Point Lobos

***Surviving Character-Defining Small-Scale Elements and Systems***

- none identified

***Non-Contributing Small-Scale Elements and Systems***

- bituminous concrete curbing
- benches, timber curb stops, trash receptacles at Merrie Way
- all environmental graphics and signage
- various above and below-ground drainage structures and systems
- water fall structures at the lookout
- concrete masonry unit or cinder block wall system at the lookout
- metal pipe railing system at the lookout and the canal

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***Character-Defining View Points***

- Merrie Way facing west; views of baths and ocean
- Point Lobos and the lookout facing west; views of ocean and coastline
- Fishing Rock; 360° views
- Sutro Beach facing west; views of ocean

***Surviving Character-Defining View Points***

- Merrie Way facing west; views of baths and ocean
- Point Lobos and the lookout facing west; views of ocean and coastline
- Fishing Rock; 360° views
- Sutro Beach facing west; portions of the beach remain on the west side of the bath ruins during low tide; views of ocean

***Non-Contributing View Points***

- Louis' Restaurant at Point Lobos Avenue

***Character-Defining Natural Systems and Features***

- ocean edge, beach
- Fishing Rock
- springs, seeps, and central coast riparian scrub at the east end of the cove
- northern coastal bluff scrub at east end of cove along slopes

***Surviving Character-Defining Natural Systems and Features***

- ocean edge, beach
- Fishing Rock
- springs, seeps

***Non-Contributing Natural Systems and Features***

- coastal brackish marsh
- non-native freshwater marsh
- coastal freshwater marsh

***Character-Defining Land Use***

- recreation
- education
- infrastructure/utilities
- commerce
- infrastructure/transportation

***Continuity of Character-Defining Land Use***

- recreation
- education

***Non-Contributing Land Use***

- none identified

LANDS END

***Character-Defining Buildings and Structures***

- cottage and associated buildings north of Merrie Way
- engine house north of Point Lobos
- observation station at the edge of the ocean
- Examiner Marine Observation Station
- abandoned observation station
- Merchant Marine Observation Station on east side of electric car tracks
- electric car depot at Ocean Terrace
- store at Ocean Terrace
- fire engine house at Ocean Terrace
- retaining walls along railroad tracks

***Surviving Character-Defining Buildings and Structures***

- Examiner Marine Observation Station
- observation station at the edge of the ocean, ruin
- retaining walls along railroad tracks

***Non-Contributing Buildings and Structures***

- World War II *San Francisco* Memorial
- 

***Character-Defining Circulation***

- Merrie Way extending from Point Lobos Road past the electric car tracks to the cottage site
- steam and electric car tracks
- El Camino del Mar
- overlook at El Camino del Mar (pavement not character defining)
- access road to Examiner Marine Observation Station

***Surviving Character-Defining Circulation***

- Merrie Way extending from Point Lobos Road past the electric car tracks to the cottage site, road trace and parking area follow historic corridor
- electric car tracks, trail follows historic corridor
- El Camino del Mar
- overlook at El Camino del Mar; pavement is not character-defining
- access road to Examiner Marine Observation Station

***Non-Contributing Circulation***

- various trails throughout area and along bluffs
- pedestrian circulation associated with the *San Francisco* Memorial
- path and steps from overlook to electric car track road trace

***Character-Defining Topographic Modification***

- all grades associated with character-defining circulation
- all grades associated with character-defining buildings and structures

***Surviving Character-Defining Topographic Modification***

- all grades associated with character-defining circulation
- all grades associated with character-defining buildings and structures

***Non-Contributing Topographic Modifications***

- none identified

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***Character-Defining Vegetation***

- northern coastal bluff scrub and plantations of young Monterey Cypress located west of the electric car tracks and adjacent to both sides of the tracks
- non-native grasses and plantations of young Monterey Cypress east of the electric car tracks
- northern coastal bluff scrub and plantations of young Monterey Cypress east of Merrie Way

***Surviving Character-Defining Vegetation***

- plantations of Monterey Cypress located west of the electric car tracks and adjacent to both sides of the tracks
- non-native grasses and plantations of Monterey Cypress east of the electric car tracks
- northern coastal bluff scrub east of Merrie Way

***Non-Contributing Vegetation***

- non-native ruderal shrubs, succulents, and herbaceous plants

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***Character-Defining Small-Scale Elements and Systems***

- oil intake at Merrie Way
- fencing around cottage site
- underground oil pipeline

***Surviving Character-Defining Small-Scale Elements and Systems***

- none identified

***Non-Contributing Small-Scale Elements and Systems***

- all environmental graphics
- all site furnishings
- all fencing and gates

***Character-Defining View Points***

- views from electric car tracks
- cottage site facing west
- observation station at the edge of the ocean facing west, north, and south
- Examiner Marine Observation Station facing west, north, and south
- abandoned observation station facing west, north, and south
- Merchant Marine Observation Station on east side of electric car tracks facing west, north, and south
- electric car depot at Ocean Terrace facing west and north
- views from El Camino del Mar
- overlook at El Camino del Mar facing west, north, and south

***Surviving Character-Defining View Points***

- views from electric car tracks in some locations
- observation station at the edge of the ocean facing west, north, and south; station is not surviving, but views at the site are surviving
- Examiner Marine Observation Station facing west, north, and south
- overlook at El Camino del Mar facing west, north, and south

***Non-Contributing View Points***

- *San Francisco* Memorial
- 

***Character-Defining Natural Systems and Features***

- rock outcrops, cliffs, beaches
- northern coastal bluff scrub

***Surviving Character-Defining Natural Systems and Features***

- rock outcrops, cliffs, beaches
- northern coastal bluff scrub

***Non-Contributing Natural Systems and Features***

- none identified
- 

***Character-Defining Land Use***

- commerce/communications
- housing
- infrastructure/transportation
- recreation

***Continuity of Character-Defining Land Use***

- infrastructure/transportation
- recreation

***Non-Contributing Land Use***

- none identified

**2.3 ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION*****Statement of Significance***

Both fieldwork and research support a determination that the Sutro District has significance under National Register criteria A, B, C, and D.

The Sutro District has significance under National Register criterion A because of its association with the history of recreation in the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The development of Sutro's recreational complex represents a response to rapid urbanization and industrialization occurring in the United States during the late nineteenth century and the subsequent increase in the disposable income and amount of leisure time available to the average American worker. Desires for new forms of entertainment and recreation in American cities influenced the development of a wide variety of leisure time facilities including large urban parks, athletic clubs, public swimming pools, museums and exhibit halls, and amusement parks. The development of Sutro Baths, Cliff House, and the Sutro Heights gardens relate to this larger recreational context.

The newly created Golden Gate Park was the only public recreational facility of note in late-nineteenth-century San Francisco, where despite a burgeoning population, the need for accessible and inexpensive recreation and entertainment was particularly pressing. Adolph Sutro responded to this need with his development of Sutro Heights, Sutro Baths, and Cliff House, and the provision of inexpensive rail service to the area. In addition to swimming, Sutro Baths provided a variety of educational and recreational activities including exhibits, contests, band concerts, and athletic displays. Similarly Sutro Heights provided a pleasant garden setting for strolling and relaxing, and was the site of botanical displays, concerts, picnics, and charitable events.

The Sutro District has significance under National Register criterion B because of its close association with Adolph Sutro. Sutro, a German-born Jew who immigrated to the United States in his childhood, achieved national recognition for the design and construction of the Sutro Tunnel, which

drained and ventilated the deep silver mines of Nevada's Comstock Lode. Following the completion of the tunnel in 1879, Sutro moved to San Francisco, where he made his mark through a variety of notable civic works, including directing a city-wide tree planting campaign, serving a term as mayor, and developing the Sutro Library, which he left to the State of California at his death.

Most significant locally, however, was Sutro's role in the development of the Point Lobos area of San Francisco as a recreational facility for public enjoyment. During the last two decades of the nineteenth century, Sutro developed the gardens at Sutro Heights, oversaw the construction of the massive Sutro Baths, rebuilt the Cliff House as a chateau-style palace, and provided inexpensive passenger railroad service from downtown to Point Lobos. Sutro's oceanside complex was extremely popular in its heyday. Although currently offering a visitor considerably fewer attractions than in the past, the area continues to attract significant numbers of visitors. By the time of his death in 1898, Sutro had fulfilled his dream of providing accessible, inexpensive, and educational recreational facilities for the general public.

The Sutro District has significance under National Register criterion C both for skillful site engineering and for its design as a major West Coast oceanside recreational complex. The unique placement of buildings and structures, the skillful response to existing topography and landforms, and the accentuation of vistas contribute to its significance.

The district also represents the work of Adolph Sutro as both engineer and skilled amateur garden designer. The design and construction of the massive Sutro Baths represent a feat of engineering nearly unmatched in the late nineteenth century. Built on a sandy beach and into the surrounding cliffs, fortified with hundreds of thousands of cubic feet of rock, and fed by the tides through a tunnel blasted into an adjacent cliff wall, the construction of Sutro Baths taxed even engineer Adolph Sutro's ingenuity and expertise. When built, the massive structure, containing six large pools, dressing rooms for thousands, galleries, restaurants, auditoriums, and topped by a massive, arched glass roof, inspired the awe of visitors from all around the world. Although other bath houses were built in the United States during the nineteenth century, Sutro Baths was one of the most grand. Finally, although freshwater baths existed in many American cities, Sutro Baths was one of only a few saltwater bathing facilities in the United States, and the only one in the San Francisco area. By creating a temperate salt water bath, Sutro answered the wishes of many San Franciscans who wanted to bathe in the ocean, without suffering the frigid temperatures of the Pacific.

Sutro Heights Park possesses significance in the areas of site planning and garden design. Although not a landscape architect or designer by profession, his layout of the heights consciously used the site topography to its best advantage. Sutro's design emphasized the many vista opportunities and natural circulation routes inherent in the site, and resulted in a unique blend of formal and naturalistic garden styles. His experimentation with plant materials and their cultural requirements, as well as his mass plantings for site stabilization and climate control were pioneering efforts in their day.

Finally, the layout of the route of the Cliff House and Ferries Rail Line has significance for its unique and daring siting. Until completion of the Cliff House and Ferries Rail Line in 1888, passenger rail lines within the city of San Francisco ran along urban streets, conforming to the city's grid. Sited to hug the the coast closely as it passed Point Lobos, the rail line departed from the grid to provide its passengers with a unique and thrilling experience that enhanced their perception of the area's scenery. Passage on the Cliff House and Ferries Rail Line was not merely beach transportation, but an actual highlight of a visit to the Point Lobos area.

The Adolph Sutro Historic District has significance under National Register criterion D because it has yielded information important in prehistory and is believed likely to yield additional information concerning other archeological resources significant in either history or prehistory. The remains of three Native American shell mounds (middens), known as the Point Lobos Archeological Sites and located at the site of Sutro Baths were listed in the National Register in November, 1976. Dated to sometime after 500 A.D. but prior to 1769 A.D., these mounds are the cultural remains of the aboriginal inhabitants of the area, who are designated anthropologically as "Ohlone" Indians. Although generally residing inland, the Ohlone would make periodic trips to the shore to fish and gather salt. Consequently, these shell piles contain no artifacts or cultural material, but only the remains of shells, bones, and seeds. Although no additional mounds have been located, it is possible that similar resources could be identified in subsequent investigations in this area. Ohlone activity around Point Lobos was curtailed following the Spanish settlement of this region in 1776, and within a few decades the Ohlone had been moved inland to the Mission San Francisco de Asis de Dolores.

To date the Sutro Heights Historic District has not been investigated for significant nineteenth-century archeological resources. However, at Sutro Heights Park, remains of the original garden are thought to lie beneath fill material and vegetative debris that have accumulated on the site. The discovery and documentation of the unique road edging along the Esplanade and the observatory's tiled walkway buried beneath the lawn suggest consider-

able potential for significant additional archeological remains throughout the site. The visible topographic outlines of a number of the path alignments and “Garden Rooms” lend additional evidence of this potential.

***Period of Significance***

The period of significance spans seventy-five years beginning with the construction of both Point Lobos Road and the first Cliff House in 1863 and ending in 1938 at the death of Adolph Sutro’s daughter, Dr. Emma Merritt, who had continued to live in the family’s Sutro Heights residence.

***Condition Assessment***

The condition of the Sutro District was assessed during fieldwork. The overall condition of the Sutro District was assessed as either in good (functional and maintained), fair (functional and/or minimal maintenance), or poor (function is compromised and little or no maintenance) condition. The condition assessment was conducted concurrently, but as a separate evaluation from the integrity assessment. Condition was considered in the integrity assessment in terms of the condition of the historic fabric of the sub area. The condition assessment determined the existing level of maintenance and care of the 1992 cultural landscape.

The condition of the district is fair; it is functional with minimal maintenance. Many areas, features, and systems — whether contributing or non-contributing resources — are well maintained. The Cliff House area, the Point Lobos Avenue/Great Highway corridor, and portions of Sutro Heights and Lands End are functional and well maintained. The Sutro Baths site and the portions of Lands End near the ocean are in poor condition. Lack of appropriate management and maintenance, patterns and types of use, and the absence of visitor use facilities and/or development have contributed to this condition. Overall, the district, however, exhibits a level of management and maintenance that result in a condition of fair.

***Integrity Assessment***

The Sutro District continues to possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Its overall integrity has been evaluated by the degree to which character-defining features extant in the period of significance survive and retain integrity. In assessing landscape integrity the impact of changes since the period of significance have been evaluated in the context of the design of the district as a whole. Although some structures, vegetation, and land uses have changed since the period of significance, the Sutro District still retains essential characteristics that defined its general character during the period of significance.

**Location.** All of the major elements included in the proposed Adolph Sutro Historic District retain integrity of location.

**Design.** Although significant alteration and deterioration have occurred in all areas of the proposed district, integrity of design is still apparent in the siting and layout of buildings, structures, and other elements (including the remaining rail road grade); the retention of grading and landforms; the placement of circulation networks; and the accentuation of vistas throughout the site.

**Setting.** In general, the physical setting and scenic resources surrounding the proposed district are intact and retain their integrity. Despite the encroachment of residential development on the eastern and southern sides of the site, the overall views of the ocean, Seal Rocks, and surrounding coast remain relatively unchanged. The retention of Lincoln Park as open space appears to be critical to the integrity of setting in the district.

**Materials/Workmanship.** Integrity of materials and workmanship varies throughout the district. Both Sutro Heights and the current Cliff House retain a significant level of integrity of workmanship and materials. At Sutro Baths, which is largely a ruin, the major remaining material is the concrete used in the foundation, and the rocks used to create the seawall. Although the grading and excavation required to create the tunnel and build the baths remains clearly visible, little evidence of craft or workmanship remains.

**Feeling.** The remaining landscape elements at Sutro Heights, the sheer scale of the ruins at Sutro Baths, and the siting and preservation efforts at the Cliff House contribute to an overall integrity of feeling. The relatively scant amount of twentieth-century development in the area also enhances the integrity of feeling, as do the ocean sounds and smells apparent from almost all points within the district.

**Association.** The proposed Adolph Sutro Historic District retains its integrity of association through its continued use as a public recreational facility. Though many of the attractions historically offered in the area are no longer available, the district continues to provide a scenic open space within the larger urban context of the city of San Francisco.



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**3**

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**LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT  
RECOMMENDATIONS**

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### 3.1 LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

These landscape management recommendations are based on historical research; site analysis; and the proposed uses of the district as identified and discussed in the *Comprehensive Design Plan, Sutro Historic District RFP-8140-1-R-0014*, and the *General Management Plan Environmental Analysis Golden Gate Point Reyes*, September, 1980. Both historical research and existing site conditions support findings of significance and integrity for the Sutro Historic District according to the criteria of the National Register of Historic Places. Consequently, all landscape management recommendations should be in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation Projects*. In addition, all landscape management recommendations have been developed in accordance with the May, 1992, *Draft Guidelines for the Treatment of Historic Landscapes* prepared by the Technical Services Branch, Preservation Assistance Division, National Park Service and *Draft Management of Cultural Landscapes, Cultural Resource Management NPS-28*.<sup>1</sup>

#### ***National Register Status***

The Adolph Sutro Historic District is not listed currently in the National Register of Historic Places. Although continued research, site work, and archeological investigations may yield new information, the findings and statements regarding significance and integrity contained in this report are not expected to change.

#### ***Background***

The development concept for the Sutro District discussed in the 1980 *General Management Plan Environmental Analysis Golden Gate Point Reyes* calls for the development of outside seating and viewing at Cliff House; redesign of parking and circulation to include establishment of bus parking adjacent to Cliff House; refurbishing of the Esplanade with landscaping, seating areas, and restrooms; and development of the historic ruins at Sutro Baths with stairs, walkways, ramps, seating areas, lawn, trees, pools, cascades, and exhibits; and enhancement of the historic setting of Sutro Heights through landscape restoration, and installation of exhibits, restrooms, attractive exterior paving and seating areas for those who come to enjoy the view. In addition, proposals for the baths area include landscape improvements to increase the natural appearance of the site; some alteration of terrain to accommodate the development described above, provide for visitor safety, bury undesirable components of the ruins, protect prehistoric sites, and enhance the natural character of the setting; the addition of new plantings; and the possible restoration of the small sandy beach that once fringed the cove.<sup>2</sup>

The concept further calls for a substantial “facelift” of the seawall/Esplanade stretching from the Cliff House south to Golden Gate Park. An objective of such an action would be to revive its former dignity without disturbing present users. Physical work would include the addition of new plantings, seating areas, restrooms, and street furniture. Another proposal calls for the National Park Service to continue work with the City of San Francisco to improve pathways for pedestrians and cyclists and strengthen the visual connection between the beach and Golden Gate Park.

The concept of the 1980 management plan recognizes that future design efforts in the area would focus on rectifying the unsafe, congested, and unsightly conditions created by existing parking and circulation. Possible improvements could include establishment of remote bus parking with a drop-off area in front of the Cliff House, and a safe on-grade pedestrian crossing between the Cliff House and Sutro Heights Park.

In accordance with the 1980 general management plan, the *Comprehensive Design Plan, Sutro Historic District RFP-8140-1-R-0014* calls for a focus on redesigning pedestrian and vehicular circulation patterns; defining the scope and location of NPS/visitor contact, interpretive, and support facilities; analyzing viewsheds; and upgrading the quality of the visitor experience. The *RFP* recognizes as background issues the high rates of erosion, dangerous visitor conditions, accelerated maintenance costs, and congested tour bus parking conditions. The *RFP* calls for the preservation and enhancement of historic resources with the surrounding landscape managed for natural values; interpretation of Sutro Baths with safe visitor access; and partial restoration and interpretation of Sutro Heights gardens.

***Rehabilitation as a Landscape Management Approach***

Rehabilitation of the Sutro District’s historic landscape appears to be the treatment approach that best can meet the programmatic needs of the district as discussed in these two documents and that is appropriate to the types and conditions of historic resources extant in the district today. The process of rehabilitation implies elements of utility that the other treatments — protection and stabilization, preservation, restoration, and reconstruction — do not. Retention of existing historic fabric is inherent to the rehabilitation process yet rehabilitation allows for additions and alterations that are necessary for continued or adaptive uses. Through rehabilitation a variety of approaches to repair and replacement are possible.

Rehabilitation of a landscape is defined in the draft standards as a process that “retains the historic character of the landscape while making changes to the property for new uses and interpretation.”<sup>3</sup> Rehabilitation encourages

improvements that make efficient contemporary uses possible while preserving those portions or features that are significant. In rehabilitation, the entire history of the landscape is retained for interpretation.<sup>4</sup>

In a rehabilitation of a historic landscape, the physical work should focus on the maintenance and repair of existing features and materials.

In addition to maintenance and repair, the following work at a higher level of intervention may be appropriate. It should only be undertaken after the preservation concerns discussed above have been addressed:

- replacement of an entire feature that is too deteriorated to repair in kind
- replacement of an entire feature that is too deteriorated to repair with substitute material
- replacement of vanished features based on historic documentation
- replacement of vanished features with a new feature that is contemporary in design but compatible with the historic character of the landscape and/or
- make new additions and alterations for the new use.

In addition, *Draft NPS 28* has developed the following rehabilitation standards for historic landscapes:

- New additions or alterations do not destroy features, materials, or physical or visual relationships that characterize the cultural landscape. New work is differentiated from the old and is compatible with the massing, size, scale, compositions, and physical or visual relationships of the landscape's features to protect the integrity of the property.
- Additions and adjacent or related new construction are undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the cultural landscape would be unimpaired.<sup>5</sup>

#### ***Additional Investigations Necessary for Rehabilitation***

This cultural landscape report has initiated the preliminary actions necessary before actual design and physical work can begin; namely 1) historic research concerning the history of the landscape as a whole and 2) inventory and documentation of the existing conditions of features and their attributes. Despite those undertakings, more extensive research and archeological

investigations may be required prior to replacement of missing historic features or before undertaking projects involving new construction or land-disturbing activities. Any ground disturbance for archeological investigations should be reviewed in advance by a historical landscape architect qualified to evaluate the potential impact on significant landscape features. Sufficient study and documentation should be undertaken before any making decisions to modify and replace historic material. Documentation of all historic features before modification may aid in future research and interpretive efforts.

***Landscape Management Recommendations for the Sutro Historic District***

The significance of the Sutro Historic District is based primarily on its importance as a major recreational complex in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Consequently, its management as a historic landscape needs to be monitored carefully to ensure that its rehabilitation to meet current recreational needs does not diminish its integrity. Recreational use is a character-defining feature of the Sutro District; continued recreational use and interpretation of historic recreational uses can be accommodated provided such uses do not adversely affect significant landscape features or impede public understanding of the history of recreation in the Sutro Historic District.

Addition of contemporary facilities will not necessarily have an adverse impact on the integrity of the historic landscape. Programmatic needs, such as individual and group parking, visitor centers, restrooms, site furnishings, signs, universal accessibility, and other contemporary needs associated with continued recreational uses and with NPS interpretation must be designed to be compatible with the historic landscape values of the district. They must not create, however, through their design, placement, construction materials, or other attributes, a false historical impression that they existed in this manner during the period of significance. These new facilities should be sited to prevent adverse impacts on character-defining, historic landscape features.

Restricted access to some areas of the district may be desirable both to protect fragile cultural and natural resources and to provide for safe human use.

The Sutro Historic District's significance in the history of recreation in the United States also depends upon the protection of its splendid yet vulnerable natural resources. All decisions concerning use and treatment should consider the effects on both natural and built features and recognize the natural dynamics associated with this coastal site.

In accordance with the National Park Service standards for historic landscapes as presented in *NPS-28 Cultural Resource Management and Draft Guidelines for the Treatment of Historic Landscapes*, all rehabilitation work should be prepared and carried out by qualified professionals, including historical landscape architects, horticulturalists, and skilled artisans and craftspeople.

Required consultation and legal compliance must be established before any physical work affecting the Sutro Historic District is initiated.



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**4**

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**EXISTING CONDITIONS  
PHOTOGRAPHS**

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*Sutro Baths Ruins as Seen from Intersection of Great Highway and Point Lobos Avenue*



*Visitor Center, Northwest Portion of Cliff House, and Terrace*



*Looking South from Front of Cliff House*



*Artificial Rock Slope Along Eastern Side of Great Highway Below Sutro Heights*



*Looking East Along Point Lobos Avenue from Cliff House*



*Front of Cliff House*



*Cliff House as Seen from Inspiration Point, Sutro Heights*



*Camera Obscura at West Terrace of Cliff House*



*East Side of Parapet*



*Well House at the North Esplanade*



*Well House as Seen from Path Leading from Visitor Parking Lot at Point Lobos Avenue*



*Looking East to Lawn Area from East Side of Parapet*



*Looking Northeast from Lawn Area Down Palm Avenue*



*Looking Northwest to Lawn Area, Remnant Sculpture and Southwest Terminus of Palm Avenue*



*West Side of World War II Coastal Defense Structures at North Side of Parapet*



*Inspiration Point and Parapet as Seen from South Esplanade*



*South Esplanade as Seen from Parapet*



*Cliff House and Inspiration Point as Seen from Parapet*



*Looking North to Point Lobos and Sutro Baths Ruins from Cliff Below West Side of Cliff House*



*Looking Northeast to Terraced Bowl East of Sutro Baths Ruins from Louie's Restaurant*



*Looking South to Sutro Baths Ruins from Point Lobos*



*Looking North to Point Lobos and Sutro Baths Ruins from Point Lobos Avenue Between the Cliff House and Louie's Restaurant*



*Overlook and Stairs to Receiving Basin at Point Lobos*



*Settling Pond Ruins*



*Looking West from Railroad Trace at North Side of Parking Area at USS San Francisco Memorial*



*Monterey Cypress and Pine Plantations East of Point Lobos*



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# 5

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## NOTES, BIBLIOGRAPHY AND GRAPHIC SOURCES

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## NOTES

### 1 / MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

- <sup>1</sup> Although at the time of this study this area is not yet listed in the National Register of Historic Places, for the purposes of this report it is referred to as the Adolph Sutro Historic District.
- <sup>2</sup> See Section 4 for complete list of archives and collections.
- <sup>3</sup> See Section 2 for description and discussion of district boundary.
- <sup>4</sup> Public Law 92-589. October 27, 1972.
- <sup>5</sup> Public Law 95-625. November 10, 1978.
- <sup>6</sup> Point Lobos Archeological Sites. [1976] National Register of Historic Places Nomination. Prepared by Roger E. Kelly, Western Region Office, National Park Service.
- <sup>7</sup> GGNRA. GMP, 20.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.
- <sup>9</sup> GGNRA. 1992. Statement for Management.

### 2 / PHYSICAL HISTORY AND SITE ANALYSIS

- <sup>1</sup> Anna Coxe Toogood, *Historic Resource Study: A Civil History of Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Point Reyes National Seashore, California.*, volume 2. (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Denver Service Center, 1980).
- <sup>2</sup> Oscar Lewis, *San Francisco: Mission to Metropolis.* (Berkeley: Howell-North Books. 1966).
- <sup>3</sup> From Toogood, *Historic Resource Study*, 44.
- <sup>4</sup> Writers Program of the Works Progress Administration. American Guide Series. *San Francisco: The Bay and its Cities.*, (reprint) (San Francisco: Hastings House Publishers, Inc. 1973).
- <sup>5</sup> Toogood, *Historic Resource Study*, 42.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.
- <sup>7</sup> Irena Narrell, *Our City: The Jews of San Francisco.* (Berkeley: Howell-North Publishers, Inc. 1981), 255.
- <sup>8</sup> Lewis, *San Francisco*, 135.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 160.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 144.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.
- <sup>15</sup> United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Golden Gate National Recreation Area. *Draft Cultural Landscape Analysis and Management Recommendations Sutro Heights Park, Golden Gate National Recreation Area.* (November, 1991), 15.
- <sup>16</sup> Lewis, *San Francisco*, 164.
- <sup>17</sup> Robert E. Stewart and Mary Frances Stewart. *Adolph Sutro, A Biography.* (Berkeley: Howell-North Publishers, 1962), 171.
- <sup>18</sup> NPS, *Sutro Heights*, 28.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 42

- 21 Ibid., 20.
- 22 Ibid., 21.
- 23 Ibid., 14.
- 24 Ibid., 19.
- 25 Ibid.
- 26 Ibid., 14.
- 27 Toogood, *Historic Resource Study*, 53.
- 28 NPS, *Sutro Heights*, 29.
- 29 Ibid., 22.
- 30 Ibid., 31.
- 31 Ibid., 35.
- 32 From Toogood, *Historic Resource Study*, 54.
- 33 *Album of Sutro Heights*. San Francisco, Carl Garte Publisher, 1890. 2.
- 34 Stewart, *Adolph Sutro, A Biography*. 181.
- 35 Ibid., 182.
- 36 Toogood, *Historic Resource Study*, 62.
- 37 From Toogood, *Historic Resource Study*, 62.
- 38 Ibid., 63.
- 39 Stewart, *Adolph Sutro, A Biography*, 183.
- 40 From Toogood, *Historic Resource Study*, 73.
- 41 Pictures, bas-relief, and sculptures establish that humans have been swimming for more than 2,000 years. In classical Rome a variety of massive baths were developed for the exercise and enjoyment of the public. (Apparently swimming was one of the forms of conditioning used to train the Roman gladiators.) However, during the Middle Ages, swimming for recreational purposes was abandoned owing to the belief that it contributed to the spread of germs.
- 42 Alfred Cross, *Public Baths and Wash-Houses*. (London: B.T. Batsford, 1906), 2.
- 43 Jerry Flamm, "Swimming Anyone?" *Good Life in Hard Times*. 95. (n.d). The San Francisco Public Library, The San Francisco Room, San Francisco, CA.
- 44 Floating Sea-Bath Company, *Prospectus*, March 22, 1878 (California Room of the California State Library, Sacramento).
- 45 Stewart, *Adolph Sutro, A Biography*, 189.
- 46 *Sutro Baths, Cliff House, Sutro Heights*. (Advertising Brochure) San Francisco: Taber Photography, 1895.
- 47 From Toogood, *Historic Resource Study*, 75.
- 48 From Toogood, *Historic Resource Study*, 78.
- 49 Hoosier, J.E. Van "Pacific Service Supplies the World's Largest Baths." *Pacific Service Magazine*, September, 1912.
- 50 Ibid., 126.
- 51 Sutro Baths Weather Reports, GGNRA Historic Document Collection, San Francisco.
- 52 Stewart, *Adolph Sutro, A Biography*, 190.
- 53 Toogood, *Historic Resource Study*, 80.
- 54 From Toogood, *Historic Resource Study*, 64.
- 55 Narrell, *Our City*, 260.
- 56 Toogood, *Historic Resource Study*, 68.
- 57 American Guide Series: *San Francisco: The Bay and its Cities*, 298.
- 58 *Sutro Baths, Sutro Heights and the Cliff House*, 6.
- 59 Junior League of San Francisco. *Here Today: San Francisco's Architectural Heritage* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1968).
- 60 American Guide Series, 298.
- 61 Toogood, *Historic Resource Study*, 72.
- 62 Narrell, *Our City*, 260.

<sup>63</sup> From Toogood, *Historic Resource Study*, 84.

<sup>64</sup> San Francisco Garden Club. December, 1935 Program.

<sup>65</sup> NPS, *Sutro Heights*, 8.

<sup>66</sup> From Toogood, *Historic Resource Study*, 85.

<sup>67</sup> League of California Municipalities, County Supervisors Association of California. *Municipal Swimming Pools: Their Construction and Operation*. Report Number 1, April, 1937. 4.

<sup>68</sup> Toogood, *Historic Resource Study*, 88.

<sup>69</sup> From Toogood, *Historic Resource Study*, 90.

<sup>70</sup> Toogood, *Historic Resource Study*, 92.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

### 3 / LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

<sup>1</sup> These drafts provide the most comprehensive, existing references concerning treatment of historic landscapes. These recommendations were developed in accordance with both draft reports. Users of these recommendations should be aware that these guidelines, which have not been adopted by the Secretary of the Interior and the National Park Service, are subject to change. The most recent drafts or the adopted versions of these documents should be consulted when final decisions are made and actual physical work is undertaken.

<sup>2</sup> The *General Management Plan Environmental Analysis Golden Gate Point Reyes*, September, 1980, 46-47.

<sup>3</sup> Draft, Appendix B, 92.

<sup>4</sup> Draft, 44.

<sup>5</sup> *Management of Cultural Landscapes, Cultural Resource Management, NPS-28, Release No. 4 Draft*, 100.

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