

FREDERICK H. MEYER

Architect
(1876-1961)

Frederick Herman Meyer was born in San Francisco, the son of German immigrant parents who became naturalized citizens in 1877. His father John Nicolaus Meyer was a cabinetmaker. Meyer had no formal architectural training, but he started work in 1896 as a draftsman, first with builders Campbell and Pettus, and in 1898 joined Samuel Newsom, who quickly promoted him to partner.

Examples of two surviving grand houses that Meyer designed with Newsom are in:

- Pacific Heights - 1916 Octavia (1899) and 1901 Pacific (also 1899, now 8 apts.).

After separating from Newsom, and on his own briefly, Meyer designed in:

- Pacific Heights - 2474-78 Broadway (1901, a 3 flat building).

In January 1902, Meyer entered into a partnership with Smith O'Brien who was 8 years older and had been trained in architect Clinton Day's office. That productive partnership was to last for 6 years. Meyer and O'Brien visited Chicago to gain an appreciation of office building architecture and designed the Rialto Building (116 New Montgomery, 1902) in a U-shape with a central light court and a uniform window arrangement for flexibility in subdividing the floors. They designed several more office buildings, before and after 1906, and several residences including:

- Pacific Heights - 2480 Broadway (1902), 2032-34 Baker (1903, now 2 condos),
- 2021-23 Baker (1904, 2 flats);
- Presidio Heights - 3641 Clay (1902), 3740 & 3754-56 & 3758-60 Sacramento (1903),
- 3660 Clay, 3700 Sacramento, 3821 & 3829-31 Jackson (1904);
- Lake Street - 76 6th Avenue (1904);
- Downtown - 366-94 Eddy (1908, the Cadillac Hotel, S. F. Landmark #176).

Meyer opened his own office again in 1908 in the Humboldt Bank Building (783-85 Market, which he had designed with O'Brien in 1906). He was appointed, along with John Galen Howard and John Reid, Jr., to lay out the plan for rebuilding the Civic Center after the 1906 earthquake and fire had destroyed the old City buildings. After a bond issue was passed in 1912 to fund the work, the trio also conducted the competition to select the architects to design the new City Hall (won by Bakewell & Brown). Some of Meyer's residential work from that period includes:

- Russian Hill - 1111-39 Green (1909, 11 apts.), 1167-71 Green (1910, 4 apts.);
- Pacific Heights - 2756 Steiner (1910, his own home), 2195 Green (1914, 10 apts.),
- 2430 Pacific (1917), 2595 Washington (1918, 9 apts.);
- Downtown - 980 & 999 Bush (1910, 73 & 35 apts), 718 Pine (1913, a house),
- 795 Sutter (1913, 18 co-op apts.), 956 Post (1915, 32 apts.);
- Presidio Heights - 3435 Pacific (1912, a house & apt. opposite the Presidio);
- Nob Hill - 1200 Sacramento (1914, 22 apts), 1200 Washington (1915, 11 apts).

In his long and distinguished career, Meyer formed two more associations: with Albin R. Johnson (until 1926) designing the Elks Club and such houses as 2950 Broadway (1922); and with Albert J. Evers after World War II, designing schools and office buildings. He was a Regional Director of the AIA, and President of the State Board of Architecture 1928-30 and in 1936.