

The Cliff House *and Environs*

► DESIGN CRITERIA



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Introduction 1
 Project Background • Project Program • Purpose of Design Criteria • Organization of Design Criteria Document • Context Map

Design Criteria

Sense of Place 6
 Highlighting the Natural Environment • Drawing on the Past • Enhancing Sense of Renewal and Nostalgia • Making It Fun! • Accomodating All Ages and Abilities

Protection 11
 Providing Shelter/Protection

Views 12
 Maximizing Views from the Cliff House • Preserving View Corridors to the Cliff House

Uses/Activities 14
 Balancing Uses and Activities

Circulation 15
 Creating Pedestrian Connections • Calming Traffic

Landscape Elements 17
 Developing Landscape Counterpoint

Site Organization 18
 Emphasizing the Site • Strengthening Site-Building Relationships • Reflecting Site Geometry

Architectural Character 21
 Creating Contextual Fit with Mass and Scale • Acknowledging Existing Building Syle and Character • Creating an Indoor/Outdoor Experience • Strengthening the Entry Experience

Sustainability 25
 Incorporating Sustainability

Checklist

Design Criteria Checklist 26

Appendix

Chronological History of Cliff House/Sutro District Planning Documents

Preface

The National Park Service completed a Comprehensive Design Plan (CDP) and Environmental Assessment for the Sutro Historic District in 1993. The Comprehensive Design Plan is a conceptual document describing the management goals and overall development plans for the Sutro District. The Cliff House, as part of the District, is being redesigned as phase one of the implementation process. These Cliff House and Environs Design Criteria have been developed as part of the Cliff House redesign process.

Besides the Cliff House redesign, the district plan includes development of a new visitor center at the Merrie Way parking lot, adjacent parking for auto-

mobiles, buses and bicycles, a passenger loading area, ADA (Americans With Disabilities Act)-accessible paths, a stairway connecting the visitor center to existing pathways, and relocation of the Musee Mechanique to Merrie Way. This document provides a framework for building within the Cliff House area and should be integrated with future design documents for the District as a whole.

While these Design Criteria facilitate building design in broad terms, there are more stringent rules and regulations that must be adhered to for compliance with ADA, fire safety and building codes and standards. These are referenced in other NPS-GGNRA documents.

Introduction

Project Background

Charles Butler and James Buckley constructed the first “Cliff House” road house on the westernmost tip of San Francisco’s coastline in 1863. This first Cliff House initiated a long tradition of the site as a recreational public gathering place. After the first Cliff House was destroyed in a fire in the late 1800s, civic leader Alfred Sutro commissioned architects Emile S. Lemme and C.J. Colley to design a new Cliff House in the style of a French Chateau. This short-lived second Cliff House was destroyed by fire in 1907. In 1909 Sutro’s daughter Emma Merritt continued the Cliff House legacy, hiring the Reid Brothers architects to build the present Cliff House, this time in a neo-classical style made of non-flammable, reinforced concrete.

Each Cliff House structure has been intimately tied to its surrounding environment. The Cliff House is a unique place in that it strongly reflects both cultural and natural values. Generations of visitors have traveled here for recreation, entertainment, and to experience the magnificent natural setting.

Today, the Cliff House is part of San Francisco’s Sutro District within the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, one of the largest and most intensely visited urban national parks in the world. The Sutro District is one of the most popular sites in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, with over 1.4 million visitors annually—an average of 200 people every 15 minutes.

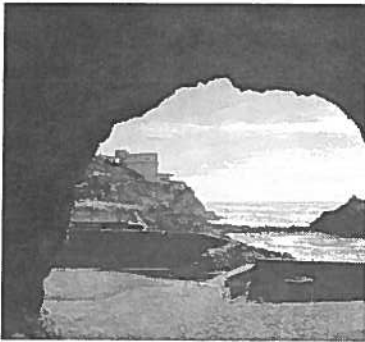
The National Park Service completed the Comprehensive Design Plan and Environmental Assessment for the Sutro District in 1993. Based on the recommendations from this Plan, the National Park Service is rejuvenating the Sutro Cultural Landscape, which includes Cliff House renovation and expansion.

Numerous opportunities for public participation have generated strong community interest in the future of the Cliff House and environs. The Cliff House and its associated spaces are extremely meaningful to the public, and the community is clearly committed to pursuing the best possible future for this special place.

In order to most effectively chart the future of the Cliff House, the National Park Service recognized a need to characterize the sense of place associated with this unique site. A public workshop was held on April 1, 2000 to solicit input with regard to the preferred image, uses and design characteristics for the Cliff House and its environs. Attendees included neighbors, design professionals, and business representatives. A broad range of comments were voiced during the workshop, including comments from some who prefer demolition of the existing Cliff House to allow construction of a new structure. While the National Park Service acknowledges these comments, they do not appear within the text of these Design Criteria. At the workshop, the community shared experiences and qualities that have helped define their sense of this place. Their participation provided the primary direction for the development of these Design Criteria.



INTRODUCTION



Project Program

The renovation and expansion project program includes the redesign of the existing 1909 Cliff House, demolition of existing Cliff House additions and adjoining buildings, construction of a new (approximately 8,850 square foot) addition to the Cliff House, and the stabilization of the lower level terrace. The Cliff House and greater Sutro area have been determined ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places, and therefore, the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation do not apply. However, the project program should be sensitive to the 150-year history of use of this area by San Franciscans.

Purpose of the Design Criteria

The Design Criteria are meant to be a flexible, yet effective means of protecting the unique character of the area, and creating compatibility in the environment through sensitive architectural treatment and site design. They are not intended to be unduly restrictive, or to stifle the creativity of architects and designers.

The purpose of developing Design Criteria is to ensure that the Cliff House renovation, expansion and associated site design, highlight important attributes of the site. Each criterion represents a common theme, or important concept that emerged during the participation process, or through past National Park Service planning.

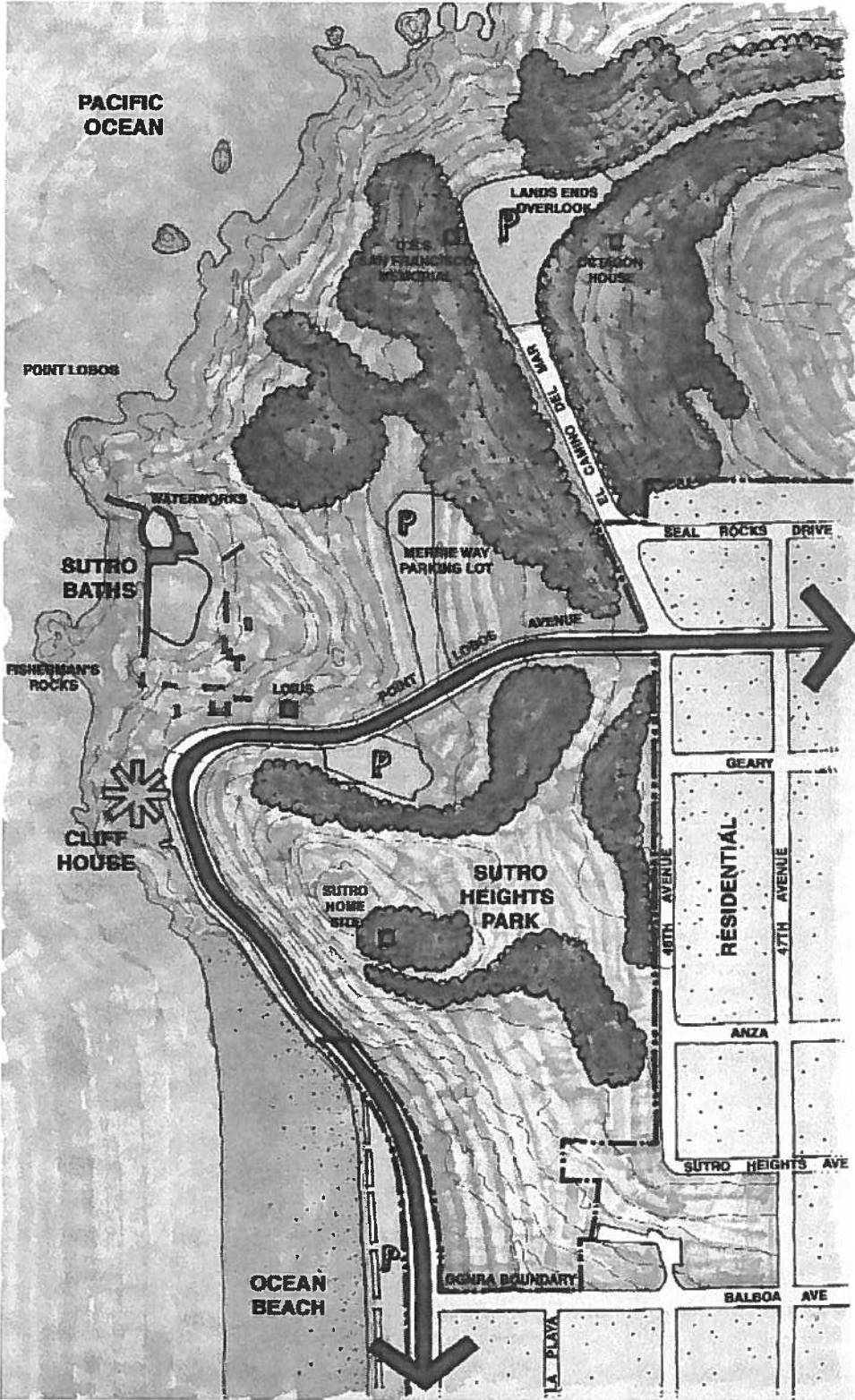
The Design Criteria are intended to inform the design process for Cliff

House development. They will be used by the National Park Service, subject to public consensus, as a vehicle for identifying issues and opportunities related to design proposals and as a tool for evaluating designs. Each criterion serves as a guiding principle to review designs, and determine how well a given design fulfills the objective. A design criteria checklist is included at the end of this document for design review purposes.

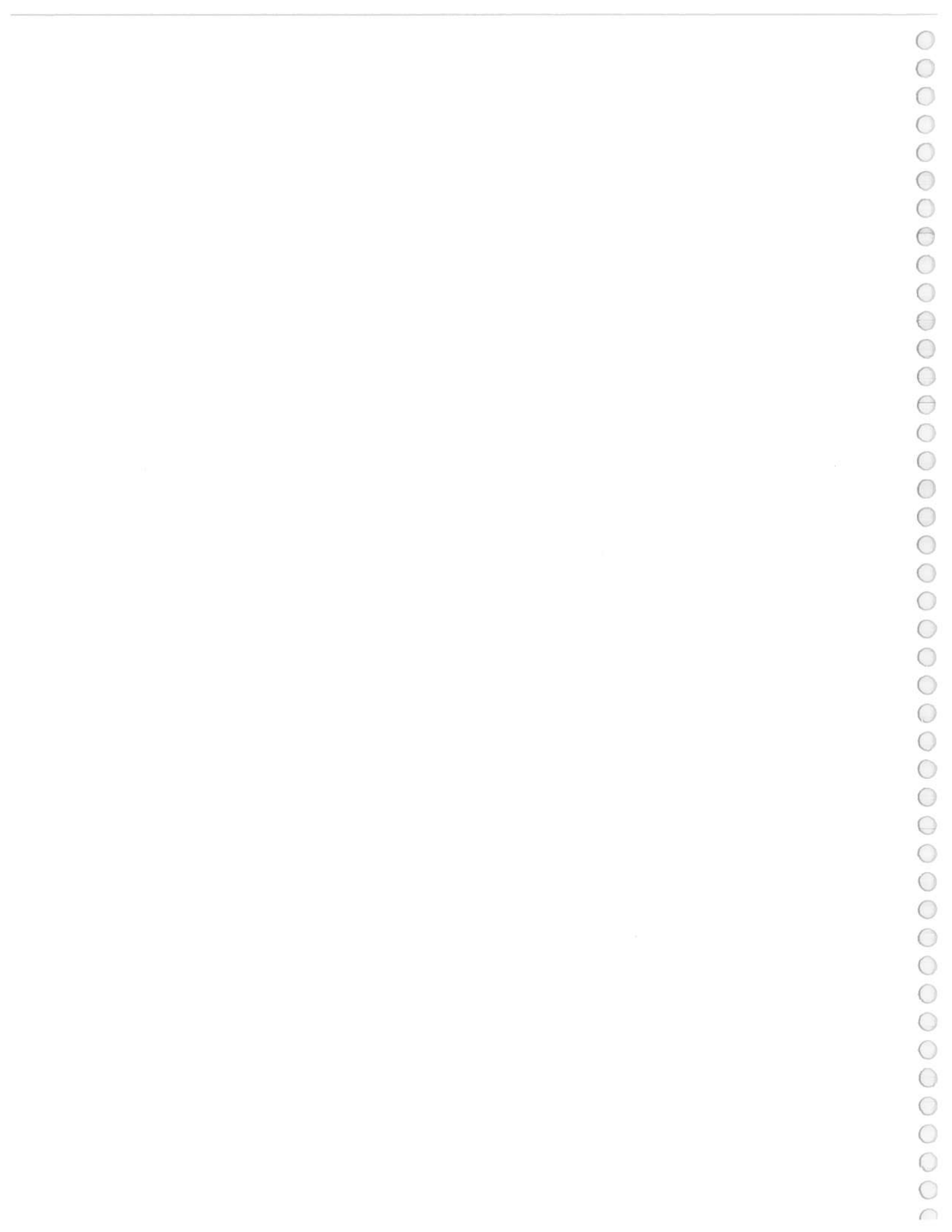
Although each criterion has not been assigned a hierarchical level of priority, the most prominent themes generated during the public participation process include: reinforcing the feelings that the site evokes; highlighting the natural environment; preserving views; and respecting existing architectural character.

Organization of Design Criteria Document

The criteria are organized from general to more specific concepts. Each criterion is presented as a guiding, directive statement. This statement is followed by a brief discussion of intent, describing the significance of the criterion and suggesting possible ways of supporting the criterion through design. Community member quotations related to criteria are included where appropriate (these statements were either submitted by the public on comment sheets or recorded during the April 1st public workshop).



Context map



Design Criteria



“Sense of place is in the edge of the community, strength of the ocean, and danger of the cliff...”

SENSE OF PLACE

► CRITERION #1: *HIGHLIGHTING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT*

Opportunities to experience the natural environment surrounding the Cliff House should be highlighted.

Intent

A primary experience of the Cliff House occurs outside of the Cliff House building, in the context of the natural environment. The Cliff House site has been appreciated by generations of visitors as a magnificent natural setting. Since the 1800s visitors have enjoyed relaxing on the beach and watching the ocean waves just as they do today. The place is characterized by the sea, sand, unique rock formations, sunsets, and diverse flora and fauna.

The natural, wildness of this outdoor setting is a critical defining element of the area. Some have associated a sense of danger with Land’s End, because of the powerful ocean and unrelenting waves, a sense of the uncontrollable forces of nature, strong, damp winds, fog, rocks, and steep cliffs. Biologists have estimated that as many as 140 species of birds, 41 mammals, and 14 amphibians and reptiles make their homes in the area.

Public outdoor spaces that invite an appreciation of natural site features should be incorporated to allow people to celebrate the awe-inspiring, wildness of the site. Strong indoor-outdoor connections in Cliff House architecture can serve to highlight natural features, framing views, and drawing visitors outdoors.



► **CRITERION #2:
DRAWING ON
THE PAST**

The character of the Cliff House as a road house, recreational public gathering place, and as a San Francisco icon should be maintained.

Intent

The remote and rugged beauty of this stretch of the coastline inspired the first roadhouse style development in the mid-1800s. Two saloons opened to the public when ocean view excursions along a scenic loop from Fort Point to the south end of Ocean Beach became a popular Sunday activity. Soon after, Charles Butler and Buckley constructed the first Cliff House, and initiated what would become a long tradition of this site as a showplace for architecture, and as a popular public gathering place for

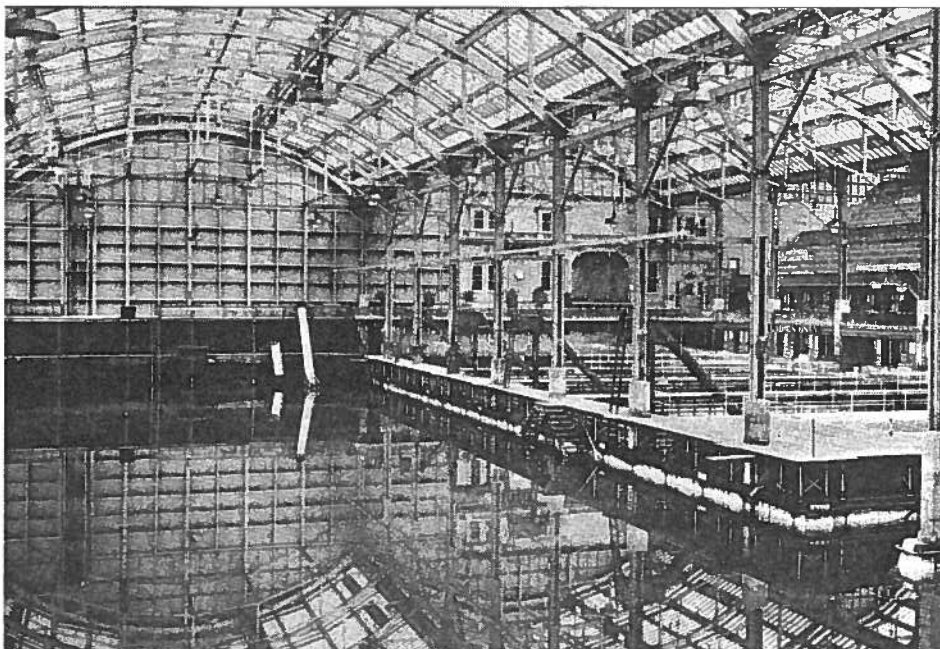
travelers. The culture of the Cliff House has revolved around fine dining, drinking, socializing, enjoying entertainment, recreating, and taking in the spectacular views and the wildness of the setting.

The Cliff House today should continue to carry on this tradition as a public gathering place that offers fine dining, entertainment, and phenomenal views in an indoor-outdoor setting.

The Cliff House site should also reflect its past as a place for prominent architecture. The dramatic relationship between built and natural form that is so prominent on this site should continue to serve as an inspiration for new development.



“Part of the identity of this place is in change, and remembrance of the past.”





“This is a meditative area where all stress and tension dissipates for me.”

► **CRITERION #3:
ENHANCING SENSE OF
RENEWAL AND NOSTALGIA**

The character and design of the Cliff House and environs should enhance people’s enjoyment of the site as a place of renewal and nostalgia.

Intent

Visitors have described the Cliff House setting as a spiritual place that nurtures a sense of renewal and healing. Many are drawn to this place for peace and solitude. Others have described the area as a place that serves to dissipate stress and tension. The rhythm of the waves against the shore, the salty wind, expansive ocean views, sunsets and distant horizon seem to nurture this sense of wonder, and serve as grounding elements. For some, it is this connection to the natural environment and the sea that marks the Cliff House site as an inspirational place. For others, it is the dramatic overlook that provides a sense of perspective. Still others experience

the emotional nature of the place in that it is a nostalgic setting for special occasions, celebrations and social gatherings--the site may recall memories of romance, weddings, birthdays or funerals. The Cliff House environment provides a place where, either alone, or in groups, people can mark special events in their lives.

These aspects that contribute to the sense of renewal and nostalgia associated with the site should be supported in the Cliff House rehabilitation and new design. Outdoor as well as indoor spaces that allow visitors to sit comfortably and enjoy views to the ocean, the beach and the Sutro Baths should be provided. Some of these spaces should offer protection from wind and rain, and others should remain open to the elements, inviting people to experience the wind and sun. Spaces for group celebrations, as well as spaces conducive to quiet reflection, should be incorporated into new development.

► **CRITERION #4:
MAKING IT FUN!**

The Cliff House should continue to provide activities and spaces that provide for fun, entertaining experiences.

Intent

The music and games of the Musée Mécanique, and the unending imagery projected from the Camera Obscura contribute to the sense of whimsy and fun associated with the Cliff House. The Cliff House site has served as a backdrop for entertainment and amusements since the mid-1800s when Charles Butler, son of Coney Island's founder, established a seaside resort at the Cliff House site. Crowds enjoyed watching such spectacles as parachuting and tightrope performances, and later danced to fiddlers on a beachfront dance floor. Between 1920 and

1960, visiting the Playland amusement park and the adjacent beach was one of the most popular San Francisco outings, with tens of thousands of visitors journeying here on weekends to ride the rollercoaster and the ferris wheel, explore the Maze of Mirrors, and play on the beach. Adolph Sutro's Oceanside Sutro Baths, was another major recreational success with up to 20,000 swimmers visiting per day to swim in one of the world's largest swimming pools.

Leisure is an important facet of the Cliff House experience that should continue to be supported. A sense of fun and delight can be enhanced by including entertaining activities, holding special events, and providing a range of spaces, in terms of size and character, to allow for outdoor events and gatherings of different kinds.



*“Don’t be afraid
to be funky.”*



“The Cliff House is a place for everyone—for children, the elderly, and for families...”

► **CRITERION #5:
ACCOMMODATING ALL
AGES AND ABILITIES**

The Cliff House site should support a range of ages and abilities.

Intent

There is a sense of family associated with the Cliff House, and a sense that it is a place for everyone.

The Cliff House has historically provided activities for all ages, for families, for the elderly, and for the very young. The dramatic views, fine dining, entertainment, and adjacent beach and ruins draw a diverse group of people. The Cliff House should continue to be a place where children, people with disabilities, seniors, families, San Francisco residents and tourists alike can come to enjoy the Cliff House experience.

The Cliff House should provide comfortable places to rest and should ensure safe access for all.

Site design should invite people of all abilities to experience the special attributes of the Cliff House, including its indoor-outdoor character, and its spectacular views. Plenty of seating opportunities should be incorporated to provide places to sit comfortably and enjoy the setting. Activities should continue to appeal to a broad spectrum of individuals.

PROTECTION

► CRITERION #6: PROVIDING SHELTER/ PROTECTION

The site should provide places for shelter and protection from wind and rain.

Intent

Because of its unique location on a promontory overlooking the Pacific Ocean, the Cliff House and its environs are especially susceptible to the cold wind, rain and fog that so often characterize the site throughout the year. The Cliff House has historically served as a place of shelter and refuge for San Francisco residents and visitors. The building's location, perched on this exposed site, emphasizes the value of the Cliff House as a refuge, where one can experience the excitement of the hum and chill of the wind and roar of the waves, and then retreat to a quiet, protected place. The restaurant provides a place to retreat for a meal, or simply a cup of coffee. Terraces and walls also offer a

sense of enclosure and some protection from the harsh climate.

The Cliff House should continue to serve as a place for shelter and protection from the elements. The indoor-outdoor aspect of the Cliff House should be maintained by providing comfortable, protected places to enjoy the outdoors, that offer convenient connections to indoor retreats. Protected spaces enhance the visitor experience and allow visitors to enjoy Cliff House views and ambiance even when the weather does not permit outdoor activities.

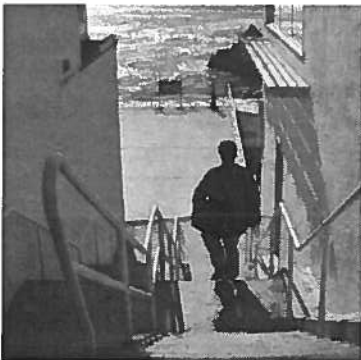
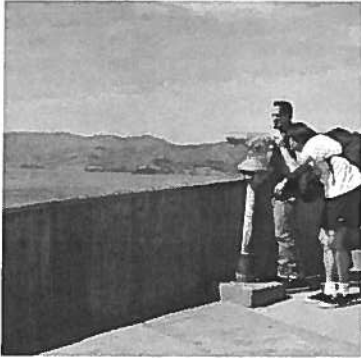
Opportunities for shelter might be provided in:

- Terracing,
- Walls/fences,
- Overhangs,
- Alcoves,
- Building form, and
- Landforms

These features can serve as windbreaks, and can offer protection from the elements and a sense of enclosure.

“This is a place of refuge, a place of shelter and protection from the elements.”





VIEWS

► CRITERION #7: MAXIMIZING VIEWS FROM THE CLIFF HOUSE

Site organization, renovation, and new development should maximize views from the Cliff House and provide opportunities to experience different types of views.

Intent

Opportunities for viewing, overlook, and perspective are integral to the Cliff House experience. The geography of this unique site affords expansive ocean views that have been enjoyed by San Franciscans and visitors for centuries. The cliff-top setting also offers spectacular overlooks to Ocean Beach and the Sutro Baths. Many have referred to the Cliff House as a “viewing platform” or as an “observation deck,” in reference to the variety and quality of views the site provides. Views of the ocean, waves, ships, rocks, beach, vegetation, Sutro Baths, cliffs, birds, seals, other wildlife, and the horizon, have captured the hearts of the community, and have attracted many visitors to this special place.

Different types of views that characterize the Cliff House and environs, include:

Expansive Views such as broad, sweeping views of the ocean and its confluence with the land up and down the

coast; vast, continuous views provided by the Camera Obscura.

Framed Views such as views framed by buildings, walls, and windows; views framed by viewing devices; snapshot views.

Multi-level Views such as views experienced from the street above the Cliff House, and from multi-level terraces.

Views from Sheltered Areas such as from inside the Cliff House and from protected areas outside.

New development should aim to maximize viewing opportunities, and provide a variety of viewing experiences from both indoor and outdoor locations. Primary views from the Cliff House site are to the south towards Ocean Beach, to the west towards the horizon, and to the north towards Sutro Baths and the Golden Gate entrance. Incorporating public spaces along the ocean side of Cliff House structures preserves uninterrupted views for all to enjoy. Providing terraces and viewing platforms at different levels contributes to the experience of viewing from multiple perspectives. Strategically locating Cliff House windows and indoor/outdoor access points can serve to draw people outside as well as inside to enjoy views.

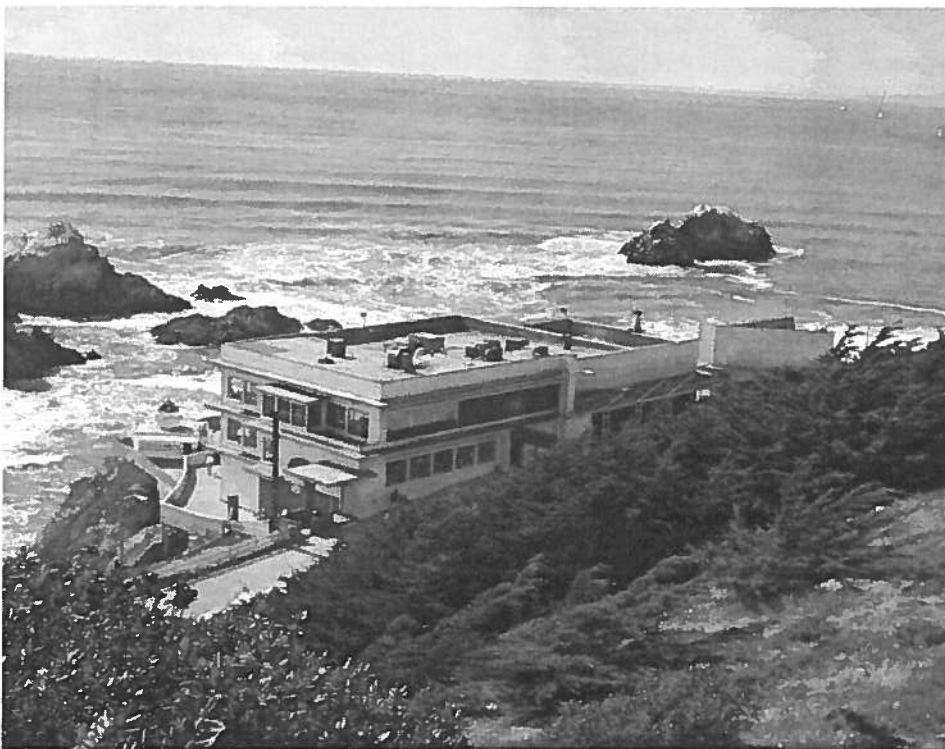
► **CRITERION #8:
PRESERVING VIEW
CORRIDORS TO
THE CLIFF HOUSE**

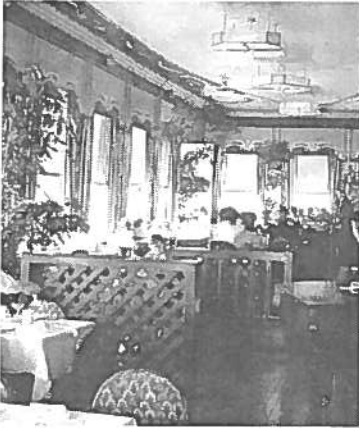
Important view corridors to the Cliff House should be respected and preserved.

Intent

Other important views associated with the area are views to the Cliff House

site from surrounding vantage points, such as from ocean-side terraces, from Point Lobos Avenue, from Sutro Heights Park, from the Sutro Baths, from boats and ships on the water, and from Ocean Beach. Cliff House renovation and site development should be sensitive to views experienced from these locations, protecting important view corridors, and improving views of the Cliff House structure.





“The Cliff House is a place to relax, have a cup of tea or a martini, and leave refreshed.”

USES/ACTIVITIES

► CRITERION #9: BALANCING USES AND ACTIVITIES

A balance of both active and passive uses and activities should be available on the site.

Intent

The Cliff House site is unique in that it supports passive activities, such as reflection, enjoying views, eating, and watching birds, as well as active uses, such as group gathering and socializing, visiting the Musée Mécanique, and the Camera Obscura, and playing on the beach. This diversity and balance between passive and active uses is an

important part of the Cliff House experience. Since the 1800s, visitors to the site have enjoyed not only the scenery, but also entertainment and social events.

The Cliff House should continue to be a place for fine dining, conversing, walking, viewing, socializing, playing and enjoying nature. Plenty of comfortable seating opportunities should be provided, and the design of the site should provide comfortable spaces for visitors to relax in solitude, or to gather and socialize with a group. To further support the balance of uses, the Cliff House site could serve as a place to hold small-scale conferences, concerts or special events. The site could also provide educational displays and areas for visitors to learn about the history of the site.



Public art on Ocean Beach

CIRCULATION

► CRITERION #10: CREATING PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS

Site circulation should support safe and efficient pedestrian access to important linkages.

Intent

Since a critical aspect of the Cliff House experience is derived from indoor-outdoor relationships and the adjacency of destination sites, circulation should be provided to support these connections.

Pedestrian linkages should be provided:

- Between the Cliff House and the Sutro Baths,
- Between the Cliff House and Ocean Beach,

- Between the Cliff House and terraces/outdoor public spaces on the west side of the structure,
- Between the upper west terrace and the public walkway along Point Lobos Avenue, and
- Around the perimeter of the Cliff House structures.

Pedestrian routes should be safe, efficient, and clearly marked. The design should be accessible (incorporating ADA and *Universal Design*) so that people of all abilities can share the Cliff House experience. The pathway between the Cliff House and the Sutro Baths should remain at a gradual grade transition for ease of access.

The pedestrian connection across Point Lobos Avenue to Sutro Heights Park and adjacent parking is a frequently used path that could benefit from safety improvements.





► CRITERION #11: CALMING TRAFFIC

Coordinate with the City to implement an attractive solution to calming traffic through street design and traffic management. The solution should aim to minimize congestion, slow the speed of traffic, and improve visitor safety.



Intent

The popularity of the Cliff House and environs as a tourist destination, and limited parking availability in front of the Cliff House, contribute to traffic congestion around the Cliff House. Point Lobos Avenue's narrow vehicular right-of-way, and sharp curve adjacent to a steep embankment, compounds the problem, limiting sight distance for drivers and pedestrians. Relocating and distributing tour bus and automobile parking away from the constricted area in front of the Cliff House could relieve



some of this congestion. Limiting parking in front of the Cliff House to delivery and disabled parking, and reconfiguring the Cliff House entrance to include a drop-off zone would help ameliorate traffic congestion as well.

Adding signage, and installing vehicular warning "buttons" and a pedestrian demand signal light are possible means of improving pedestrian visibility at the Point Lobos Avenue crosswalk. The location of the crosswalk could also be assessed to identify potential improvements. Rigorously enforcing the speed limit, installing attractive landscape medians, rumble strips, and raised crosswalks can all help to calm traffic and improve safety.

LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

► CRITERION #12: DEVELOPING LANDSCAPE COUNTERPOINT

Create a landscape character that provides a color and textural counterpoint to the structures, terraces, and the native landscapes of surrounding spaces.

Intent

The landscape character at the Cliff House is strongly shaped by the unique ecological environment of the ocean and cliff setting. New development should recognize this constraint if it is to be sustainable. The rocky site, coupled with intense use, has limited vegetation. At the same time, a little

protection from wind and salt spray can promote luxuriant plant growth.

The character of the built landscape immediately surrounding the structure itself could reflect a more formal, “urban” style, and then transition quickly to an informal, natural character, employing native plant materials. In all areas, the intent would be to use plant material strategically to provide an effective foliage and flower counterpoint to the build elements and rocky cliffs. Pockets of plantings at the entry and at the terraces will provide visual interest and enrich the experience of visitors around the building. Although the entry and east side of the structures could be richly planted with low-growing plant materials, street trees and tall shrubs that might block view corridors should be discouraged.



*“The site is it!
The primary
experience is
outside of the
Cliff House
structure.”*

SITE ORGANIZATION

► CRITERION #13: EMPHASIZING THE SITE

The Cliff House site itself, rather than Cliff House structures/built form, should be emphasized as the predominant site feature.

Intent

The Cliff House site is also referred to as “Land’s End,” the edge of the community, where the shoreline’s rocky cliffs meet the ocean. The sense of place associated with the Cliff House is strongly tied to the outdoor environment, and the site itself. The site context/environment is widely considered to be as important, if not more important than Cliff House architecture.

Site features that contribute to people’s appreciation of the Cliff House environment include:

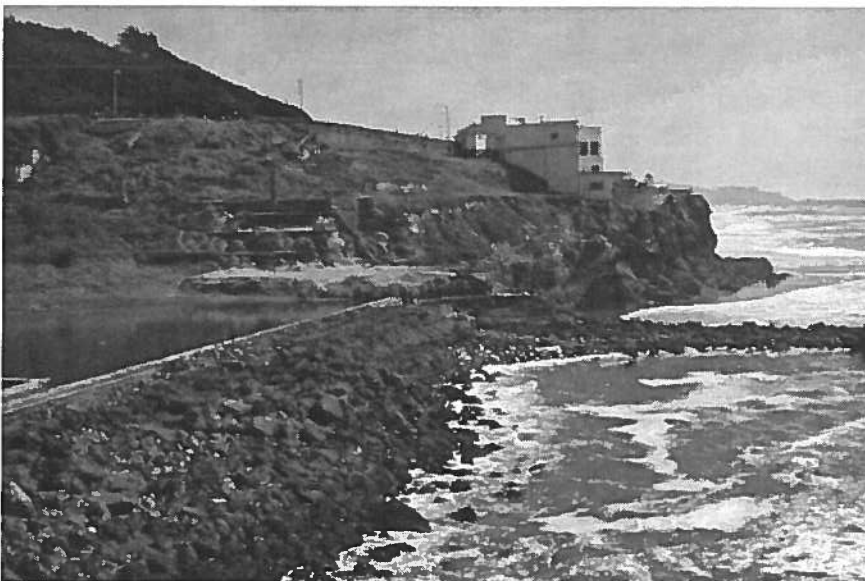
- The land—promontory, or high ridge of rock projecting into the sea—a cliff-top overlook,
- The surrounding hills,
- The adjacent Sutro Baths and Sutro Heights,
- The ocean setting,
- The horizon,
- “Seal” rocks and other rock formations,
- The presence of wildlife,
- The beach, the sandy shoreline, and
- The seaside vegetation.

The Cliff House site should remain strongly characterized by these site features, and new development should aim to highlight, rather than detract from, the site itself as the predominant feature.

New Cliff House development should integrate with the natural topography, following the rhythm of the shoreline and the hills to accentuate the site’s natural form.

A strong defining feature of the site is its cliff-top location, and the dramatic sense of perspective experienced from this promontory. Building mass and scale should respect the scale of the cliff and the surrounding hills, so that the structure does not feel obtrusive and dominating in relationship to site context.

Offering plenty of opportunities for overlook, and places to enjoy views of the magnificent Cliff House environment will strengthen the community’s special connection with the Cliff House site. Providing access from the Cliff House to adjacent sites, such as Ocean Beach and the Sutro Baths, will invite people to experience the unique qualities of the site.



► **CRITERION #14:**
**STRENGTHENING SITE-
BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS**

Cliff House site organization and building orientation should highlight relationships to the ocean, the beach, the Sutro Baths, and Point Lobos Avenue.

Intent

The Cliff House site is a narrow, ribbon-like shelf of land, lying between steep rocky embankments. The lower embankment to the west, tumbles into the ocean, and the upper embankment to the east, hugs the edge of Point Lobos Avenue, and terminates at the edge of Sutro Heights Park.

Surrounded by attractive features, with the Sutro Baths to the north, beautiful Ocean Beach to the south, and the Pacific Ocean to the west, the site affords spectacular views and important connections. The relationship of the Cliff House structure to the adjacent Great Highway is also significant in that it is from the highway that visitors first approach the Cliff House site. The architectural challenge involves orienting and designing a structure on a narrow strip of land that relates to these surrounding places and multi-directional views.

To the extent possible, site organization, renovation and new development should strengthen relationships to these important adjacent sites.

The relationship to Point Lobos Avenue as the approach to the Cliff

House could be strengthened by creating an attractive, entry area with architectural features that would serve to welcome visitors and provide space for waiting and gathering outside.

Relationships to the site can be reinforced by framing views and by providing spaces to experience dramatic surroundings.

The Cliff House structure's relationship to adjacent sites may also be accentuated, not only through visual connections, but also by reflecting significant features or materials inherent to those sites. For instance, incorporating materials, such as the glass and steel that were so prominent in the design of the Sutro Baths, would be one way of recalling and acknowledging a connection with that site.

Architectural character and design elements can reflect the unique rocky promontory on which the Cliff House is situated. Use of stone or rock outcroppings in the site design reflect the nature of the sea cliffs and provide additional connections to the place. Natural rocks and outcroppings can also be integrated into public art, fountains and retaining walls, as well as reflected in the building materials, color schemes and site details. Use of rock and stone materials calls attention to the distinctive cliff location and provides visual and tactile connections to the environment.



► **CRITERION #15:**
REFLECTING SITE GEOMETRY

New development should accentuate the natural and previously developed geometry of the site.

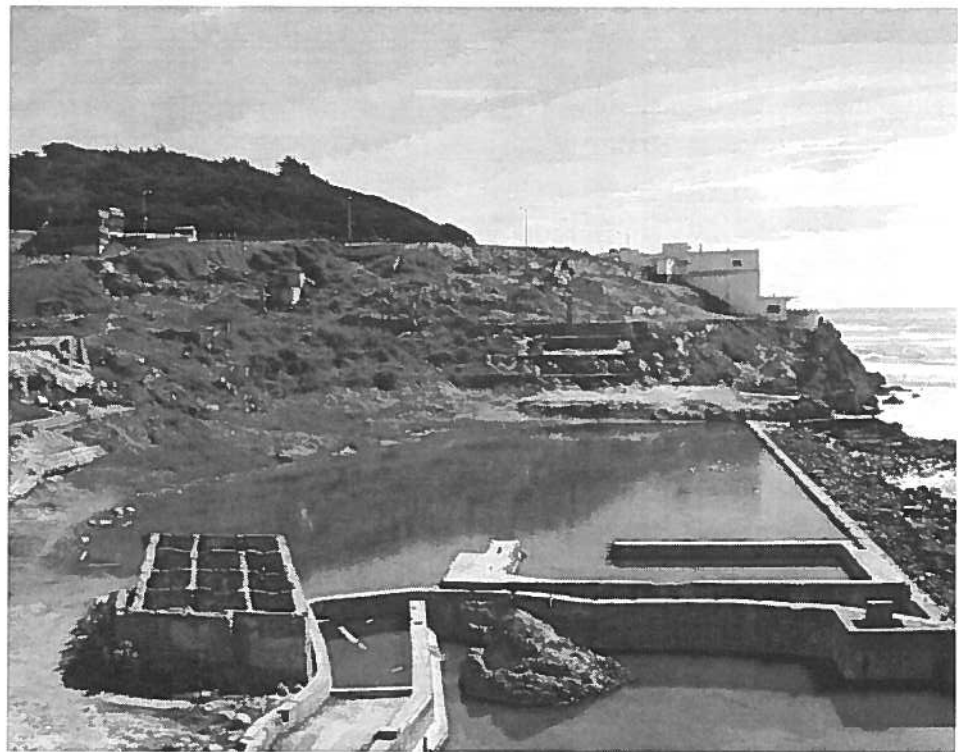
Intent

Natural and built axes can serve as strong orienting patterns for site development. Primary site axes include:

- The shoreline,
- The lines of the existing Cliff House building,
- The foundation lines of the Sutro Baths, and

- Point Lobos Avenue.

Corresponding with these major site axes creates a structural rhythm and synthesis between the architecture and the site. This allows the built form to integrate with existing site features and reinforces the site as the driving component.



ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

► CRITERION #16: *CREATING CONTEXTUAL FIT WITH MASS AND SCALE*

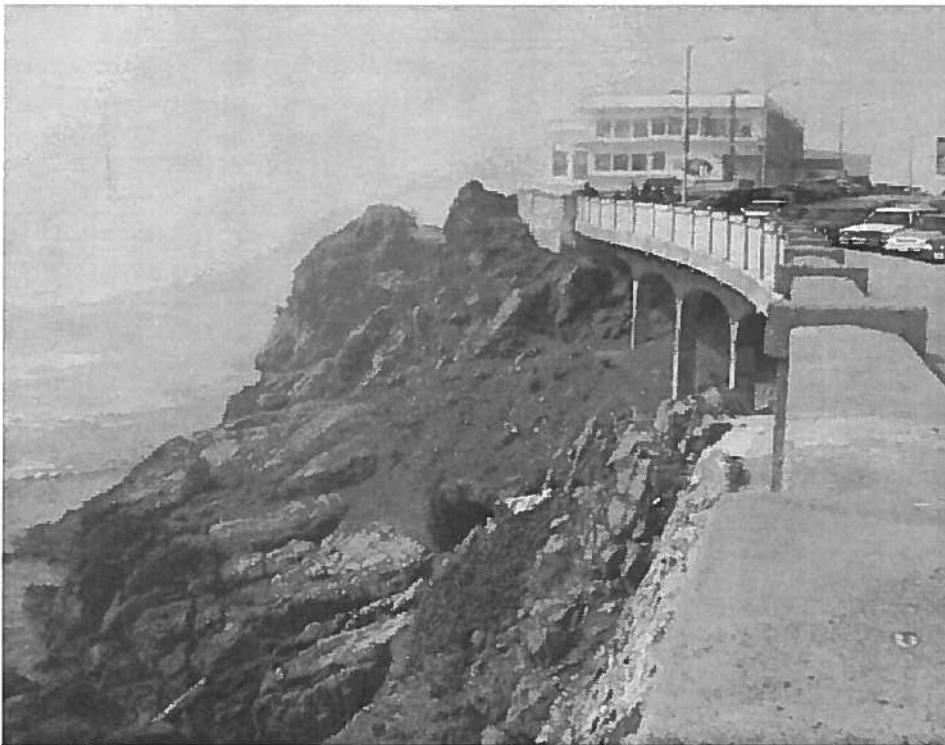
The mass and scale of the new addition should fit within the context of the site and the existing Cliff House building.

Intent

Additions and new site structures should not dominate or overshadow the existing Cliff House structure or the site itself. The building height, form and

massing should be scaled to the existing Cliff House structure. The height, size and shape of the new addition can conform to the site by stepping the building down the hillside, following the natural site topography. A moderate scale building addition may also provide views over the site to the ocean when approaching the Cliff House southbound from Point Lobos Avenue. The scale and massing of a new addition can help accentuate the character and prominence of the existing Cliff House structure by offsetting the new addition from the old structure.

“Create a design in a language that is without precedent... satisfying and beautiful.”



► **CRITERION #17:
ACKNOWLEDGING EXISTING
BUILDING STYLE
AND CHARACTER**

The character of the existing Cliff House might be celebrated.

Intent

This seaside site has served as the showplace for three recreational complexes since the mid-1800s. Each of the past Cliff House structures embodied a very different architectural style, specific to a particular era. All the buildings however, have shared prestige as destination places where the urban fabric and built form meets the wild, untamed coast. Although the first two Cliff House structures were destroyed in fires, much of the third Cliff House still exists today. New design might respect and celebrate the character and history of this existing building.

Unique interior features and materials, such as the pressed tin ceilings and marble, could be retained, and interior improvements should accentuate the original interior design character.

The existing architecture could be enhanced by preserving alignment, scale and rhythm of window and door openings in the building façade, and by maintaining height and position of original eaves, cornice lines and window sill lines. Carrying over building lines and

respecting alignment and scale of features in the existing building will help provide continuity between new and old buildings on the site. New architectural features could help to celebrate the old, by drawing on original characteristics and abstracting them, or using them in new ways. The adjacency of new and old architectural elements presents an opportunity to accentuate this contrast between the existing structure and twenty-first century architecture.

Architecture can also recall the history of the site by incorporating materials or references to architectural elements found on the site, or in the vicinity of the site. For example, the use of glass, steel, concrete and bowstring arches could serve to reflect past architectural elements and remnants found in the adjacent Sutro Baths.

Cliff House architecture should respect and celebrate the history of the building and the site, while still allowing for safe and efficient modern uses. The cultural value of this popular destination has largely been in providing San Franciscans and visitors a vital place for socializing, public gathering, and spending leisure time. The building should continue to support this vitality for the enjoyment of future generations.

► **CRITERION #18:**
CREATING AN INDOOR-OUTDOOR EXPERIENCE

Remodeling of the Cliff House and new additions should retain and enhance the strong indoor-outdoor relationships of the building and surrounding spaces.

Intent

The Cliff House and its immediate surroundings are characterized by strong indoor-outdoor connections that contribute to its sense of place and provide a dramatic experience for visitors. Views framed from indoor areas, terraces, and balconies all provide direct connections from indoor spaces to the out of doors. The indoor-outdoor relationship heightens the visitor's experi-

ence of the Cliff House as a dramatic overlook of the ocean to the west, and the windswept cliffs below. Visitors can linger on terraces outdoors, or in spectacular dining rooms to experience the changing climate, ocean conditions, sunsets, and the ever-present sea life of Seal Rock.

These overlooks and terraces provide direct experience with the dramatic views of sunsets, oncoming storms from the northwest, and a daily experience of the changing ocean environment. At the same time, the proximity of the Cliff House building provides immediate protection from the strong weather conditions, while maintaining dramatic view connections and overlooks to the ocean below.



“What’s your pleasure? If it’s foggy, enjoy the indoors and celebrate with a cocktail—if it’s sunny go for a hike.”

► **CRITERION #19:
*STRENGTHENING THE
ENTRY EXPERIENCE***

Create building entries that provide shelter and create a welcoming experience.

Intent

Building entries can help articulate a sense of portal by enhancing the ordinary activity of ingress & egress, and by providing orientation to doorways. An effective entry provides a smooth, gracious transition between outside and inside, tempering the effects of wind, rain, light and temperature on the senses. It provides shelter and comfortably accommodates large groups as well as individuals. It satisfies the needs of people as they wait to enter, or wait for

transportation as they leave, by providing places to sit, rest, and set packages. Entries may include canopies that provides shelter from rain and sun, or enclosing wings that provide shelter from wind. A strong entry can also serve as a wayfinding element, drawing visitors by orienting them to primary entrances. As the entry sequence transitions to the street, site elements such as bollards, textured paving materials, or planters with colorful flowers may be used to help define the entry zone, and draw attention to the portal.

► **CRITERION #20:
INCORPORATING
SUSTAINABILITY**

Design, construction and operation of the Cliff House should rely on sustainable practices.

Intent

As a place that is intrinsically linked with elements of the natural environment, it seems especially apropos that the Cliff House promotes sustainable practices.

Promoting sustainability means incorporating design, construction and daily operation measures that require the least amount of energy, water, and other valuable resources, and that replenish these resources when possible.

Adhering to such standards will not only ensure that the Cliff House continues to operate in harmony with the environment, but will also contribute to overall cultural, economic, and community sustainability.

Since much of the Cliff House facilities and supporting infrastructure systems must be repaired, there are many opportunities to incorporate sustainable performance standards and technologies in the design and build process. Addition-

ally when the Cliff House renovation is complete, environmental sustainability could serve as the basis for an important educational and interpretive program.

Following are broad actions for incorporating sustainability into Cliff House design, construction and operating practices.

- Utilize water-efficient landscaping,
- Incorporate efficient building envelope and daylighting practices,
- Meet or exceed Whole Building Energy Performance,
- Employ efficient electric lighting and controls practices,
- Reduce CFC in HVAC and refrigeration equipment,
- Recycle construction waste,
- Reuse resources,
- Use recycled content,
- Use local and regional materials and resources,
- Adhere to indoor environmental quality guidelines,
- Meet or exceed the minimum requirements of Guideline for Occupied Buildings under Construction,
- Select low-emitting materials, and
- Control indoor chemical pollutants.



Design Criteria Checklist

Sense of Place

- 1. Highlighting the Natural Environment**
Opportunities to experience the natural environment surrounding the Cliff House should be highlighted.
- 2. Drawing on the Past**
The character of the Cliff House as a road house, recreational public gathering place, and as a San Francisco icon should be maintained.
- 3. Enhancing Sense of Renewal and Nostalgia**
The character and design of the Cliff House and environs should enhance people's enjoyment of the site as a place of renewal and nostalgia.
- 4. Making It Fun!**
The Cliff House should continue to provide activities and spaces that provide for fun, entertaining experiences.
- 5. Accomodating All Ages and Abilities**
The Cliff House site should support a range of ages and abilities.

Protection

- 6. Providing Shelter/Protection**
The site should provide places for shelter and protection from wind and rain.

Views

- 7. Maximizing Views from the Cliff House**
Site organization, renovation, and new development should maximize views from the Cliff House and provide opportunities to experience different types of views.
- 8. Preserving View Corridors to the Cliff House**
Important view corridors to the Cliff House should be respected and preserved.

Uses/Activities

- 9. Balancing Uses and Activities**
A balance of both active and passive uses and activities should be available on the site.

Circulation

- 10. Creating Pedestrian Connections**
Site circulation should support safe and efficient pedestrian access to important linkages.
- 11. Calming Traffic**
Coordinate with the City to implement an attractive solution to calming traffic through street design and traffic management. The solution should aim to minimize congestion, slow the speed of traffic, and improve visitor safety.

Landscape Elements

12. **Developing Landscape Counterpoint**
Create a landscape character that provides a color and textural counterpoint to the structures, terraces, and the native landscapes of surrounding spaces.

Site Organization

13. **Emphasizing the Site**
The Cliff House site itself, rather than Cliff House structures/built form, should be emphasized as the predominant site feature.
14. **Strengthening Site-Building Relationships**
Cliff House site organization and building orientation should highlight relationships to the ocean, the beach, the Sutro Baths, and Point Lobos Avenue.
15. **Reflecting Site Geometry**
New development should accentuate the natural and previously developed geometry of the site.

Architectural Character

16. **Creating Contextual Fit with Mass and Scale**
The mass and scale of the new addition should fit within the context of the site and the existing Cliff House building.

17. **Acknowledging Existing Building Style and Character**
The character of the existing Cliff House might be celebrated.
18. **Creating an Indoor/Outdoor Experience**
Remodeling of the Cliff House and new additions should retain and enhance the strong indoor-outdoor relationships of the building and surrounding spaces.
19. **Strengthening the Entry Experience**
Create building entries that provide shelter and create a welcoming experience.

Sustainability

20. **Incorporating Sustainability**
Design, construction and operation of the Cliff House should rely on sustainable practices.



Appendix



**Chronological History of
Cliff House/Sutro Historic District Planning Documents**

- 1980 Golden Gate Point Reyes *General Management Plan* Environmental Analysis
- 1987 *Historic Structure Report* of Cliff House & North Annex
- 1992 Newspaper articles on Sutro/Cliff House rehabilitation proposal
- 1993 ***Staff Report – Sutro Historic District Comprehensive Design And Environmental Assessment GGNRA, Summary of Public Comment on the Draft Plan and Recommendations of the Final Plan***
- 1993 ***Sutro Historic District Comprehensive Design and Environmental Assessment Plan***, prepared by EDAW
- *Volume I: Comprehensive Design and Environmental Assessment*
 - *Volume II: Cultural Landscape Report*
 - *Volume III: Resource Analysis Studies*
- 1993 *Guiding Principles of Sustainable Design*. National Park Service
- 1994 *Cultural Resource Management Guidelines*. US Department of the Interior NPS-28
- 1995 *Cliff House Site Visit Report*, prepared by Architectural Resources Group
- 1995 *Value Analysis Study for Rehabilitation and Improvements Cliff House*. prepared by Denver Service Center. National Park Service
- April 1996 *Cliff House Evaluations*. prepared by Architectural Resources Group
- *Volume I: Structural Evaluation. Life-Safety, HVAC, Geotechnical, Construction Cost Estimates*
 - *Volume II: Environmental Condition Assessment*
 - *Volume III: Economic Feasibility Analysis*
- August 27, 1997 *Prospectus* issued for the Open Competition of the Cliff House Concession Contract
- January 14, 1998 Prospectus Proposals Due
- January 14, 1998 Peanut Wagon, Inc. submits proposal for Concession Contract
- July 1998 *Concession Contract* between NPS and Peanut Wagon, Inc. activated
- November 1999 *NPS Briefing Statement and Q's and A's* on the National Register Nomination vs. Cliff House Planning Process

