

# the VIEW

4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2015

**CREW**<sub>SF</sub>

PAST, *Present*, *Future*  
**ADAPTIVE Reuse**

**inside**

STRAND THEATER • HAKKASAN • PIANOFIGHT



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Cover: New Montgomery Exterior, Photo by Rien Van Rijthoven

## CREW SF COMMUNICATIONS TEAM CALL FOR ARTICLES FOR *the VIEW*

### UPCOMING ISSUES

#### **2016 Quarter 1: 30 Years of CREW SF!:**

##### **Then to Now—and Beyond**

Deadline for articles: *January 15*; Angel: *Valerie Concello*

#### **2016 Quarter 2: Bridging the Bay: Oakland**

Deadline for articles: *April 15*; Angel: *Inga Miller*

#### **2016 Quarter 3: Rising Rents: Keeping Culture**

Deadline for articles: *June 15*; Angel: *Laurie Gustafson*

#### **2016 Quarter 4: Living Small in the Big City**

Deadline for articles: *September 15*; Angel: *TBD*

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Cities change. It's what they do. Adaptive reuse is so essential a concept to the growth of a city such as San Francisco that it often goes without saying, but that is exactly why we wanted to say it! In this city both boasting a history richly deserving of protection and propelling itself ever forward toward the future, CREW SF and the real estate community have many stories to share regarding the extensive adaptive reuse project which is known as "the City."

When I first moved into Hayes Valley, I was attracted by the Victorians in the neighborhood, which reminded me of flats where I lived in Boston. I immediately felt at home. Across the street was the service entrance to a rather large brick building by architect Julia Morgan, decorated with railings with Jewish stars at their center that made me curious. While originally the structure was built to house "single Jewish women who had come to San Francisco for a better life," it was now the home to the San Francisco Zen Center, which I took as a good sign as I settled into my new neighborhood.

The Zen Center, my flat, Hayes Valley, and San Francisco itself are all adaptive reuse projects of varying scales. This issue of *the VIEW* explores many new projects in the city that take historic buildings as their ground zero, incorporating new life, new technologies, and new uses into these venerable bones. Once a coal bin, movie theater, monument, army barrack, factory, restaurant, and newspaper office, now these projects have transformed their outdated occupancies into vital new spaces for retail, offices, and 21st century communities.

Our next issue, "30 Years of CREW SF! Then to Now—And Beyond," will mark our anniversary with an issue full of articles exploring the changes over the past 30 years and their consequences: for the city, the industry, and our professional lives as women. Gathering the voices of distinguished leaders in our community as well as younger voices just entering the field, we will look back at our accomplishments to see the opportunities ahead.

If you are inspired by this or any future topics of *the VIEW*, or if you have an idea—even a tiny germ of one—please contact us at *the VIEW* to get the dialogue started on how you can contribute to the publication as well. We at *the VIEW* are here to help you project your voice into the San Francisco real estate community.

Thank you, as always, for taking the time to read *the VIEW* and letting other members of the real estate community know about us. It is exciting to see what our members have accomplished and how we can best showcase those accomplishments. And last but not least, let me extend a heartfelt thank-you to



our guiding angel, Debbie Leifer, who gave her time and connections to make this issue possible.

Best,

**Donna Schumacher**  
Managing Editor, *the VIEW*

# THE COMEBACK OF MID-MARKET: The Revitalization of A.C.T.'s The Strand Theater

© 2015 Debbie Leifer, Page & Turnbull, and Gayle Tsern Strang, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP

San Francisco's famed American Conservatory Theater (A.C.T.) has recently unveiled its newest theater, The Strand. Located in the Mid-Market neighborhood, the renovated 98-year-old cinema now serves A.C.T. as a dynamic, state-of-the-art performance complex and educational center. Originally built in 1917 as a silent movie house called The Jewel, the once regal but later neglected theater became part of the mayor's Central Market Economic Strategy to expand and relocate notable art organizations into the city's Central Market district.

In 2011, a 10-month community input process was launched to revitalize Central Market. City agencies provided grant funding and technical assistance for real-estate development by arts organizations wishing to relocate to the area. Given its commitment to Mid-Market, and since community engagement is vital to its mission, A.C.T. envisioned The Strand as the perfect site where it could engage the neighborhood by uniting architecture with community. "It was our goal from the beginning to create a thrilling public space that would not only invite theatergoers inside but truly transform a neighborhood," said Carey Perloff, artistic director of A.C.T.



Photo by Bruce Damonte

For its newest theater, A.C.T. brought on several talented firms to complete the renovation. The project team—led by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP (SOM) with Page & Turnbull as preservation architect—included Equity Community Builders, Plant Construction Company, The Shalleck Collaborative, Charles M. Salter Associates, WSP Parsons Brinckerhoff, BKF, Rick Unvarsky Consult-

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## ANGEL PROFILE



### DEBBIE LEIFER, LEED® AP

Director of Marketing & Business Development | Page & Turnbull

**Company:** Page & Turnbull (founded in 1973) is a full-service architecture and planning firm specializing in historic preservation with offices in Los Angeles, Sacramento, and San Francisco.

**Background:** Born in New York, NY. I was a fine arts major at UC–Santa Barbara and I received a BA in environmental design from UCLA and an AAS degree in interior design from Parsons School of Design.

**CREW history:** Joined in 2008. Membership Committee, liaison to the Communications Committee; Programs Committee, Networking Program Manager & Program Director, Leadership Workshops Program Director. Nominated to be on the Board of Directors, 2016–2018.

**Charities:** SF-Marin Food Bank, Southern Poverty Law Center, American Heart Association, KQED and KCSM

**First job:** My first real job was at Russell Stover Candies in the Time-Life Building across the street from Radio City Music Hall, but my first job in the industry was as a junior interior designer on a project for Oppenheimer Holdings, whose headquarters was on the 34th floor of World Trade Center 2.

**Extracurricular passions:** Spending time with my family and friends; volunteering for Moms Demand Action for Common Gun Sense in America; listening to jazz; walking along the beach; and driving my silver Porsche Boxster with the top down—anywhere!

**Travel tip:** Never go in the direction my husband thinks is correct—it's always the other way!

**Recent travel highlight:** A reunion on each of four days this past May in NYC: with a close friend from elementary school whom I hadn't seen in 10 years; with my first boyfriend from junior high school; with a high school buddy and my science teacher that I hadn't seen in 43 years; and dinner out with five friends I worked with at Earth Angel Café while attending Parsons School of Design whom I hadn't seen in 30 years.

**Top Bay Area restaurant picks:** Aslam Rasso (Indian/Pakistani) in the Mission, and Ton Kiang on Geary for dim sum

**15 minutes of fame:** I had always joked that when I arrived in my dream city of San Francisco that it would be announced, and that came true in an interview for what used to be the *Chronicle's* Question Man column in 1988.



Photos by Bruce Damonte

ing Services for LEED, and PrichardPeck Lighting. The result of the team's work is a theater that maintains its venerable character, while incorporating contemporary design and technology.

Together, A.C.T., SOM, and Page & Turnbull revived the Strand from an abandoned shell into an energetic structure that enhances the neighborhood both aesthetically and culturally, while also preserving its rich architecture and reducing its carbon footprint. The goal of the project was to merge the old with the new by creatively infusing the 19th century building with modern design, contemporary technology, and flexible spaces that are capable of serving multiple functions.

"The inspiration was to insert A.C.T.'s new theaters into the shell of the derelict former cinema—overlaying essential modern theater elements onto the raw backdrop of the original building," said Michael Duncan, design director at SOM. "The result has been an absolute transformation, providing intimate creative spaces for artistic invention, as well as an innovative and exciting theater experience."

One excellent example of this is The Rueff, a 140-seat event and performance space above the front lobby, which specifically represents the fusion of historic and modern architecture. The theater's box is framed by robust historic wood windows restored and retrofitted with insulated glass, yet it is also designed in a modern fashion, with breathtaking views of the Civic Center and San Francisco City Hall. The Rueff is now flexible enough to be used for multiple functions: classes, rehearsals, workshops, performances, new play readings, and other events.

The 283-seat Toni Rembe Theater, which serves as The Strand's main stage, combines a shell of historic ornamental plasterwork with state-of-the-art live performance technologies. Additional changes to the former cinema include the conversion of seating sight lines, as well as the capacity of the stage.

"The rehabilitation of The Strand didn't quietly breathe new life; it revived the building with an amplified gust of creative energy, an

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Photo by Bruce Damonte

intensity conveyed by the electric red hue of the building's exterior," said Erin Ouborg, a project manager and conservator at Page & Turnbull. "The result is a building that can never again be ignored."

The interior underwent numerous other changes, including the rehabilitation of the ornamental wood surrounds of the original exit doors, which were customized and relocated to the lower level to frame the entrances to the public restrooms and backstage green room for pre- and post-performance gatherings. These old doors are a wonderful contrast to the modern interior spaces.

The metal-framed, pink neon letters displayed in the lobby were salvaged from the cinema marquee at the start of construction and restored to working condition. Relocated, the original lettering lights up the lobby above the café, providing a splash of color to the bright, white modern interior.

The Strand also has become a community gathering space. It provides classroom and workshop space for A.C.T.'s longstanding Master of Fine Arts, Young Conservatory, and Education & Community programs. The nonprofit theater company also offers free access to The Strand to its partner organizations as part of its Community Space-Sharing Initiative, which is funded by grants from the San Francisco Neighborhood Art Collaborative and the Kenneth Rainin Foundation. Through the Strand, A.C.T. is uniting architecture and community to create a stronger Mid-Market neighborhood.

"Preservation is exciting when it brings an old, storied building like this back into use," says Carolyn Kiernat, a principal at Page & Turnbull. "The old Strand Theater has many more stories yet to tell."

Thanks to the transparency of its façade, which allows The Strand to be a stage that engages with the community and draws it inside, the theater truly embodies the "heart" of Market Street. A milestone of economic regeneration for the area, it connects a changing neighborhood with a cultural and educational destination, calling on its place in history to shape the city's future. ●

#### About the Authors



*Debbie Leifer, LEED® AP, Director of Marketing & Business Development at Page & Turnbull, has been an active member of CREW SF since 2008 and has been the program director for the Program Committee's Leadership Workshops for the past two years. Next year she will leave that role to serve on the Board of Directors. She also works closely with the principals and all three offices, helping to establish the strategic direction of the firm.*



*Gayle Tsern Strang, AIA, associate and project manager at Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP (SOM), is an architect with over 15 years of experience and a portfolio that includes civic, cultural, residential, and education projects. At SOM, her projects include A.C.T.'s recently completed and award-winning Strand Theatre, and residential and commercial developments in San Francisco's Transbay and Central SOMA districts.*

# A STORY OF TWO IDENTITIES: Hakkasan Restaurant at One Kearny

© 2015 Christiana Kyrillou, Woods Bagot



Photos by Hakkasan

Three styles of architecture converge at the iconic One Kearny building, which anchors the significant intersection of Market, Kearny, and Geary Streets, once the location of the major newspaper companies' headquarters in the 19th century. Strikingly visible from Third Street as one approaches the city's downtown, this historic landmark was built in three phases: the original 1902 French Renaissance Revival, 12-story Mutual Savings Bank designed by William Curlett, which survived the 1906 earthquake; the 1964 postmodern Charles W. Moore Annex fronting Kearny Street; and a newly constructed addition, to which the first two were joined in 2009 after being renovated and revitalized.

Upon completion of the addition, the owners of the building, One Kearny LLC, had a vision to bring a five-star Chinese restaurant to the second floor. In 2011, Hakkasan agreed to the partnership, expanding into the San Francisco market.

Since its inception, Hakkasan has become one of the world's most notable global restaurants, and it presents a unique identity representative of contemporary Cantonese cuisine. The restaurant's interiors are famously opulent and vibrant, reflecting a sense of luxury through the use of Chinese screens and rich materials and textures, which create an inviting atmosphere full of energy and intrigue.

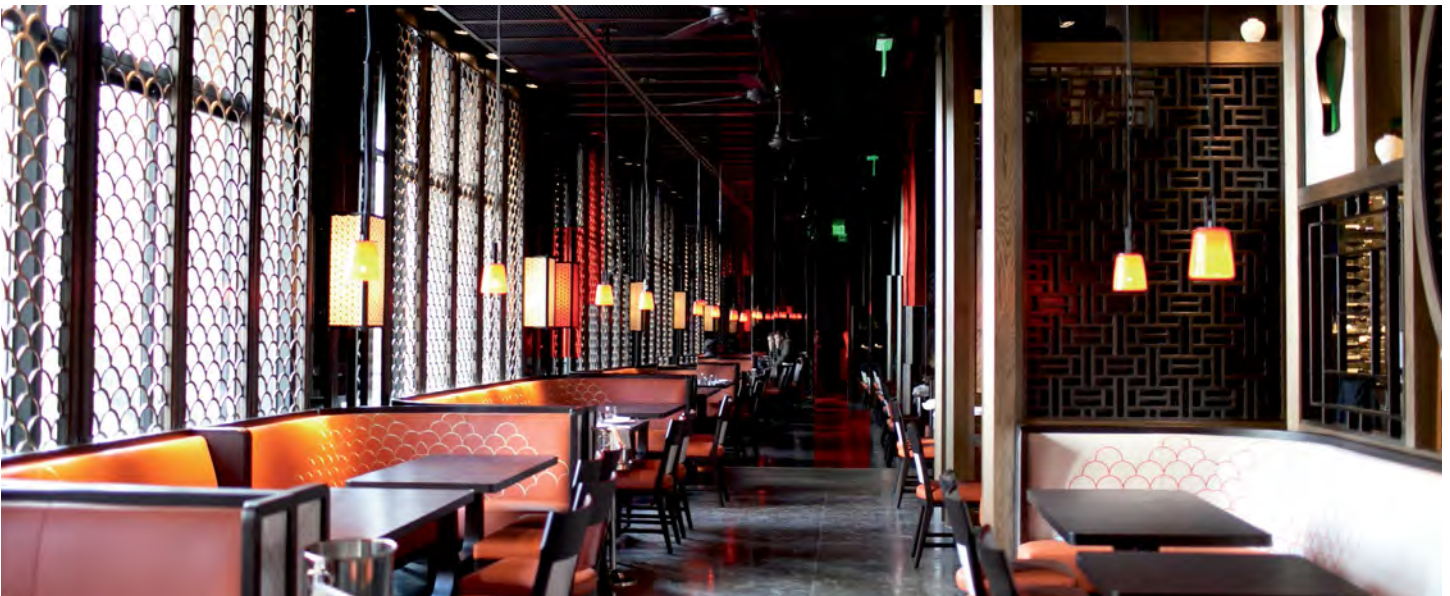
Hakkasan's San Francisco location—designed in a collaboration between Hakkasan, Paris design firm Gilles & Bossier, and Woods Bagot—opened its doors in 2012 in a 10,000-square-foot space, boasting 170 seats. The main dining room and the lounge optimize views along Market and Geary Streets through large windows. Wood-carved screens divide the dining and bar areas, creating intimacy and privacy while also defining the spaces. The bar, which adopts the wedge-shaped form of the original building and lot, is adorned with bronze and the signature Hakkasan blue light. Two private dining rooms and the kitchen are located in the new addition of the building.

The highly detailed wood screens are critical to the brand language, the quality of the space, and the customer experience, particularly in the transition after stepping off the private elevator and into the second-floor restaurant. This was envisioned to carry the customer through a wood-carved screen-lined, tunnel-like hallway before entering into the main space, though this was only partially realized as some screens were eliminated during design.

Given the historic status of the building, the design team worked together with Page & Turnbull to ensure that the state and federal historic preservation boards approved the design. The

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challenge was to maintain the historic integrity of the Charles Moore Annex, in particular the brick walls, while allowing for a continuous reading of the ceiling visible from the Market Street exterior. The mandate set forth was for all proposed treatments to be completely reversible in order to avoid any significant impacts to these features of the building.

The approval process by the historic preservation boards required several iterations of the design supported by illustrative renderings. After months of negotiations, a balance was struck between the historic defining features of the building and the brand-defining elements of the new Hakkasan. The final outcome was a respectful compromise that offers a unique

experience. Since its completion, the restaurant has been very successful and a major corner activator. ●

#### About the Author



*Christiana Kyrillou, AIA, LEED, a senior associate at Woods Bagot, has vast experience in architectural design and leading complex mixed-use projects from initial conception to final tenant occupation. Comfortable in a wide range of scales from master planning and architecture to detail-oriented interiors, she has found success both locally and internationally. Rather than applying a singular approach, she believes that design is best driven by developing unique solutions to client challenges, allowing her work to embody a level of authenticity that is tailored to the needs of future users.*

## TENANT TALES: *PianoFight Moves North to the TL*



Photo by Andrew Hansen Strong

© 2015 Dan Williams, PianoFight

When my business partners and I first considered moving PianoFight to the Tenderloin in 2010, our lawyers, advisors, investors, friends, mothers, and girlfriends pretty much universally questioned our sanity.

Never mind our gritty, humble beginnings in a small theater complex with a 55-seat theater, a 65-seat theater, and a funky rehearsal room (Off-Market Theaters) on the second floor of a lonely office building just blocks away at 6th and Mission. Considering a permanent move to the Tenderloin was proof that we had really gone off the deep end. It seemed that for most people the Tenderloin held a special place on their no-go list as somewhere they actually, literally did. not. go. The only people that didn't question our sanity (at least publicly) were city officials, who were delighted that we were young and crazy enough to take on the challenge.

Our landlords were also delighted, of course. Hard to believe in this current real estate climate, but just five years ago there weren't many callers for 5,000 square feet of restaurant/retail space at Taylor and Eddy. When we first toured the space, it still had quite a bit of character from its 73 years of hosting Original Joe's, the iconic Italian restaurant and San Francisco institution. The day we walked in, the tables were still set, menus were ready to go, and that beautiful bar with a sweeping Chicago rail stood ready for customers. The only oddities were the scars from the kitchen fire that shuttered the place—and about three years' worth of dust everywhere.

We loved the place immediately. We didn't see the dust and the bones of an old restaurant; we saw 19-foot ceilings perfect for overhead lighting grids and a column structure at the back of the space that was ideal for black box theaters. And that bar. We definitely saw that bar. A few hours later, we had at least seven or eight drunken napkin sketches of future floor plans that would eventually comprise a 92-seat theater, a 42-seat theater, and a full-service restaurant and bar with a cabaret stage.

So we set about convincing our lawyers, recruiting investors, signing leases, negotiating loans, and firing up the now 40-strong creative



Photo by Mark Semegen

company of theater-makers and artists in anticipation of PianoFight's new home. That took a while of course, but we put together a deal that I'm very proud of. Our plan was comprehensive and interesting and with it, we convinced a broad team of stakeholders that three young guys with a dream and relatively little experience were capable of turning a sacred but shuttered Italian restaurant into a thriving theater arts venue dedicated to new and local work.

Most of the old restaurant was demoed to make room for new walls, doors, and ceilings, but our 42-seat theater sits in roughly the same footprint as the large banquet room, and the 92-seat theater is where the old dishwashing and kitchen prep room used to be. We swung the bar around opposite the entrance and the slotted front windows, and we commissioned a friend and local artist to build a mosaic of our "Californicorn" to put up over the bar. We retrofitted and refurbished a few banquettes and a booth saved from demolition, which really tied the room together. And then we opened the doors.

Except that it was outrageously more difficult than that. It felt like every conceivable roadblock reached out to smack us around roughly and teach us a lesson. Construction dragged, permitting was an elusive bear, and funds were constantly strained—which I've since learned is typical of construction projects, but this being our first, it stung particularly hard. But through the delays, the plan and our contingencies held up. And we had fantastic support from our investors and so many stakeholders who helped to push those doors open with us.

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# ADAPTIVE REUSE IN ACTION AT MARE ISLAND: The Coal Sheds Redefined

© 2015 Michelle Jones, RIM Architects

Adaptive reuse: the process of reusing an old site or building for a purpose other than that for which it was built or designed.

Mare Island in Vallejo is just that. Already, more than 70 historic buildings, with over 1.5 million square feet, have been put back into reuse, representing a strong preservation effort at the first naval facility established on the West Coast.

Mare Island commenced operations in 1851. Since its closure in 1996, the local community has rallied around the island's conversion into a thriving residential and business community, with an overall master plan guiding redevelopment. Every day, the main developer, Lennar Mare Island, makes progress cleaning up Mare Island, improving infrastructure, and preparing new areas of the island for reuse.

Currently, Mare Island is home to more than 100 businesses that occupy more than 3.5 million square feet of commercial space, including Touro University and Blu Homes, an active residential neighborhood with an 18-hole golf course, as well as vast stretches of open space. The island is divided among several mixed-use neighborhoods, the historic Ferry Landing area and the North Island area both being the main commercial neighborhoods skirting the waterfront.

The Ferry Landing area is culturally rich with naval history and has many beautiful structures of historical significance. Working with Lennar Mare Island, RIM Architects developed a reuse design of Building 45, a historic gem at the south end of Ferry Landing, originally a seam shop for sails for the Navy. It was designated for reuse as office or light manufacturing space, with an annex perfectly situated for a café. The interior environment of exposed timber, brick, and raw concrete floors is highly desirable for tech, wine, and other entrepreneurial businesses.

At the bridge between Ferry Landing and the Northern Waterfront sit the Coal Sheds, a series of nine buildings with a prime waterfront location, initially constructed between 1901 and 1903 as temporary coal storage for naval ships, and thus they consisted solely of the structural roof trusses, roof, and concrete bin walls at the west end. Over subsequent years, the Navy enclosed the sheds, and most recently they have become studios for artists and small businesses.

The vision, originally established by the Vallejo community and being implemented by Lennar Mare Island, is to develop these structures as a commercial mixed-use complex, with the Mare Island Brewing Co. being its first retail user to drive further interest in the buildings. The anticipated tenant mix for this development—local manufacturers, product creators, food and beverage purveyors, and other retailers—will create a destination for those seeking an experience off the beaten



Rendering of Building 45 by RIM Architects



Rendering of Coal Sheds west façades by RIM Architects

path. This requires the original structures be rebranded and renovated to honor and respect their architecture and history as well as appeal to the customer as a cohesive destination.

The proposed design is expected to retain the original roof forms, emphasize and highlight the original truss structure, and accent the thick concrete bin walls at the main entry to the complex. Retaining the existing structure couples perfectly with the requirements for historic preservation. The exterior walls would be re-clad with metal and wood siding, respecting the character of the board and batten siding of the original exterior.

RIM Architects, working with local stakeholders and the preservation community, will propose strong arrival features at the west-to-east connection points by peeling off the cladding, glazing a portion of the façade, and expressing the internal truss structures. This will provide a clear view through the buildings to the waterfront, demarking the point of arrival and circulation to access the waterfront.

By ferry, by bus, and by auto—hopefully in carpools—this vision should bring the community to experience this new waterfront location with a rich history, one dormant for many years but come to life again. If so, this will be a successful adaptive reuse that will have sparked the resurgence of a once-vacant neighborhood. ●

## About the Author



Michelle Jones, AIA, NCIDQ, LEED AP BD&C, is the managing principal at RIM Architects' San Francisco office. She is active in the design-build community and in CREW SF.

# THE BATTERY: Rebirth of a San Francisco Treasure

© 2015 Morgan Ward, RETS Associates



Photos by Eszter + David

At 717 Battery Street sits a building on a site rich with history. Named The Battery, it is now home to a members-only club that boasts a spa, a fitness center, 15 guest suites, an upscale restaurant, and a 6,000-square-foot rooftop penthouse.

But the building was not always a lavish club. Formerly on San Francisco's shoreline, the first building on the site was a factory built in the 1830s by Alpheus Basil Thompson. During the 1906 earthquake, this original building (then the Musto Factory) caught fire and burned down, after which it was completely rebuilt. The new building hosted a number of businesses over the next five decades, including a candy manufacturer, a crafting business, and eventually office space in the 1960s.

Michael and Xochi Birch purchased 717 Battery after selling their social networking site (Bebo) to AOL in 2008. They approached FME Architecture + Design, a local architecture firm, with their vision of turning the building into a tech incubator space. But early in the process, the couple had a change of heart and presented FME with a different idea. Shortly after, "The Battery" was born.

The Birches' new dream was to bring a London-style private club to beautiful San Francisco, a club that could cater to a diverse array of people. Along with the team at FME and Ken Fulk's interior design, they set a goal of respecting the history of the building by maintaining its timelessness and but also marrying it with the contemporary San Francisco lifestyle. The team at FME, led by senior project architect Greg Sheppard, set out to keep as much of the brick-and-timber building as possible intact while making it structurally sound.

With the help of the Holmes Culley structural engineering team, an approach called "performance-based building design" was used to model the building to see how it performed during seismic activity. The team wanted to maintain as much of the beautiful, authentic exposed brick as possible while making sure that the building was up to code. Fortunately, the team did not have to cover up the brick. Instead, moment-resisting frames that fit in aesthetically with the building but still highlighted the brickwork were added around the majority of the structure.

**The Battery's respect for the past and intentions for the future make it a noteworthy establishment that will combine history, community, and San Francisco life for many years to come.**

FME also determined that the owners' ultimate vision of the club wouldn't fit into the space of the building. So they added a fourth-floor penthouse with incredible views of the San Francisco skyline. The penthouse is enclosed with a custom glass curtain wall system and features a walk-in closet, fireplace, outdoor patio, fire pit, and infinity hot tub. Even though additional stories would have fit within allowable height limits, the team decided to forgo adding an additional floor in order to keep peace with the surrounding community.

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Sheppard and the FME team realized they had to invent and create more space in other ways, so with the help of BCCI Construction they lowered the floor in the basement several feet. They added new foundations under each original column and extended the exterior walls a few feet. The columns were lengthened and the basement was waterproofed. This created more usable space for the spa and fitness facilities.

During this process, crews found an original light well that had been covered up in the 1960s when the building was converted to office space. Wanting to incorporate this historic piece into the building, the owners looked for unique solutions. It was decided that the light well would be kept and revamped to bring natural light into the basement.

Once the building was stabilized, the team was able to add in fun touches, such as a suspended, glass-enclosed steel staircase reminiscent of M.C. Escher and a Willy Wonka-style elevator surrounded by glass (both LCD and regular) and with a privacy glass floor. The elevator was custom built by KONE Elevators and Escalators and features one of the only glass counterweights made for an elevator. Both the staircase and the elevator shy away from bulky and distracting beams in order to keep movement in the building fluid. A glass bridge from the main space to the courtyard was then also introduced. Next, interior designer Ken



Fulk added both timeless and modern décor, which echoed the original intentions to marry the old with the new.

Since opening two years ago, The Battery has attracted an eclectic membership that value the club as a place that creates community. For example, there are no cell phones or photos allowed in The Battery, and everyone adheres to the rule that computers must be off and put away in the evening. This brings a community together free from the ties of technology. While the structure of the building and its design balance history with the modern world, the atmosphere of the club balances work with life.

717 Battery, reinvented over the decades, has stood the test of time. The Battery's respect for the past and intentions for the future make it a noteworthy establishment that will combine history, community, and San Francisco life for many years to come. ●

#### About the Author



*Morgan Ward is a director at RETS Associates (Real Estate Talent Solutions), an executive search firm specializing in the recruiting and placement of interim, permanent, and executive candidates in the commercial real estate industry. She concentrates on recruitment for accounting, finance, property management, and construction roles. She focuses on the full scope of the process and interacts with both clients and candidates.*

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One of the most important stakeholders was the neighborhood itself. "The TL" is a vibrant and social urban place, with all walks of life moving in and around and through it. It is constantly churning and writhing and rolling around in front of our doors, and we quickly realized that we would need to embrace the neighborhood or it would roll right over us. With help and inspiration from several neighborhood leaders who warmly met our embrace, and through our commitment to providing a space where local artists can thrive and local audiences can discover, we've earned respect and a place in our new and beloved neighborhood.

The work is surely not over, and in fact there's a long way to go. We've made promises to people that will take years to deliver on. At least now, with a thriving new business carved out of a vacant block in the TL, they've stopped questioning our sanity. ●

#### About the Author



*Dan Williams is the cofounder and executive director of PianoFight, established in 2007. He also co-owns and operates the physical operations at 144 Taylor Street in the Tenderloin, San Francisco. PianoFight is most efficiently described as a theater company committed to producing new work by new artists, though that's hardly all it does.*

# REBIRTH OF SF'S FIRST SKYSCRAPER: 140 New Montgomery

© 2015 Nina Mahjoub, Holmes Culley; and Katy Hearey, Holmes Culley



Photos by Tim Griffith

**“The best building type for modern office buildings is the reappropriation of 1920s Art Deco buildings.”**

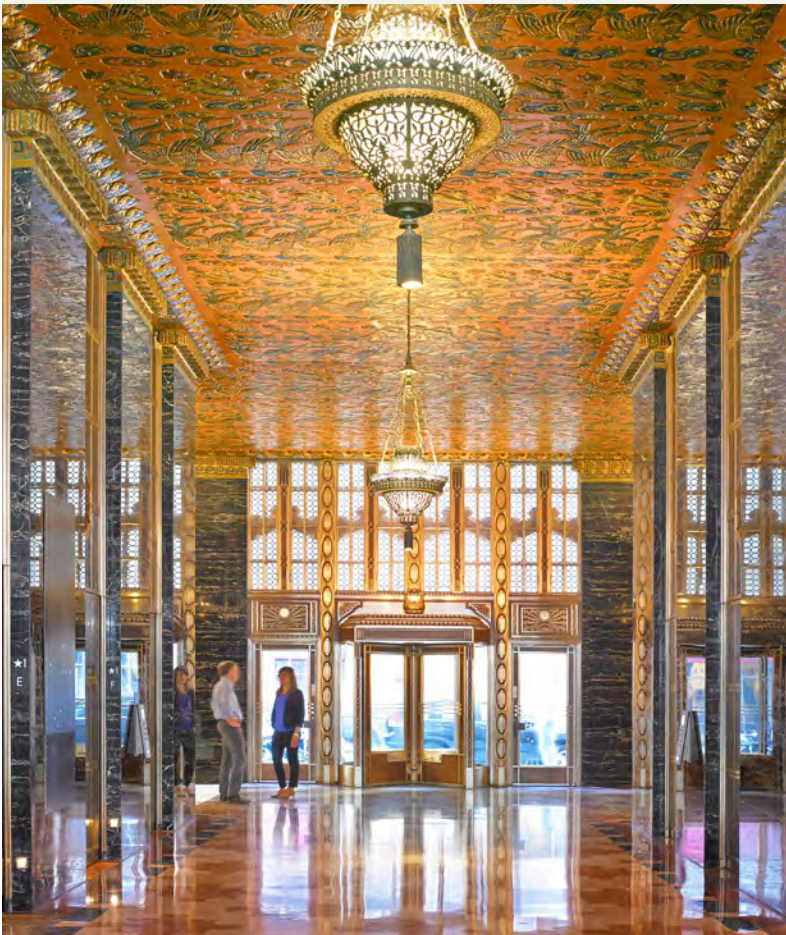
So stated a panelist at this year’s Urban Land Institute (ULI) Fall Meeting. Given their large floor plates, wonderful detailing, and historic attributes, these buildings have the bones and character that modern buildings do not. Most importantly, even with a sizable capital investment for improvements, the Class A rental income covers and makes possible this type of reinvestment.

In 1927, the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Building in San Francisco was heralded by the media and the owner as the “Monument of Talk.” At the time, it was the tallest building in the city, with the most technologically advanced infrastructure that allowed new forms of communication. The importance of the building was highlighted by a 1929 visit from Winston Churchill, who made one of the first transatlantic calls. The 26-story historic layout included double-loaded corridors for offices and switch rooms with ornately decorated spaces.

Despite its early glory, this building sat empty and unused for nearly a decade before Pacific Bell sold it in 2007 to developer Wilson Meany. The vision for the restored building was to honor its original inception as a modern communication hub and a center of innovation by providing state-of-the-art technology infrastructure and flexible workspaces, all within a historic high-rise.

The building, designed by Timothy Pflueger, was originally built with a concrete-encased riveted steel structure with masonry infill and terra-cotta façades. Holmes Culley designed the full seismic upgrade to strengthen this existing structure. A nonlinear, performance-based engineering model was digitally built to look beyond conservative building codes and better understand the areas with the most vulnerability. Calculating precise, limited locations in need of additional strengthening allowed the new open floor plates to be laid out efficiently while also exposing the masonry exterior walls. New shear walls were limited to the new core and expanded egress. Buckling-restrained braces and outrigger trusses allow the building to be stabilized with minimal impact on the rentable floor area.

[\(continues on page 13\)](#)



Page and Turnbull and Perkins + Will worked together to preserve both the building's façade and its existing polychrome lobby. No elements of the new structural system were introduced into the historic marble-and-bronze Art Deco lobby, leaving it as a charming entrée to the past splendor of the era. (The lobby is flanked by two impressive gourmet restaurants, Trou Normand and Mourad, each with unique and memorable designs.) The exterior façade was preserved, though new operable windows replaced existing ones with higher performance but similar dimensions.

The developer knew that in order to attract the most promising tenants, the building's historic features would need to be useful as well as celebrated. So 140NM, as it was marketed, has become a modern, efficient, LEED Gold building with a desirable urban location. Perkins + Will also worked with Wilson Meany to create open, expansive floor plates with efficient cores in order to be appealing to a wide range of tenants. Companies such as Yelp, Bloomberg, G2 Insurance, Luminosity, and Knoll quickly picked up the leasable space. Each of the tenant improvements left areas of the exposed historic structure to contrast with and enhance the new buildouts.

The care in which the building has been adapted and repositioned extends the building and its use through the coming decades. It has returned to its origin as a vibrant bustling office tower, nurturing new technologies while celebrating its impressive history.

#### **Base Building Project Team:**

**Owner:** Stockbridge Capital Group; **Developer & Property Manager:** Wilson Meany; **Contractor:** Plant Construction Company; **Architect:** Perkins + Will; **Structural Engineer:** Holmes Culley; **Historic Preservation:** Page & Turnbull; **Landscape Design:** GLS Landscape; **Lighting Design:** Horton Lees Brogden. ●

#### **About the Authors**



*Nina Mahjoub, PE, senior engineer at Holmes Culley, leads the new office in Los Angeles, where she has recently joined CREW. She utilized her expertise in the retrofit of historic structures as the project manager of the structural engineering for 140 New Montgomery. Her passion for historic structures and travel have resulted in her pursuit of a Master's of Historic Sites through UNESCO. She returned from her studies in Italy with a stronger passion for the care, preservation, and reuse of buildings and historic places.*



*Katy Hearey, AIA, associate principal at Holmes Culley, oversees the business development and marketing of the San Francisco and Los Angeles offices. She is involved in the pursuit of new projects and connections, as well as the celebration of completed projects. She has been part of CREW SF since 2013. With offices in California, New Zealand, and Australia, Holmes Culley and Holmes Fire provide structural engineering and fire engineering throughout the western United States.*

# THE PRESIDIO OFFICERS' CLUB Reimagined

© 2015 James Mallery, Perkins + Will



The recent transformation of San Francisco's Presidio Officers' Club preserves our heritage by peeling back the layers of history, while at the same time repurposing obsolete spaces and infusing them with new life.

Although it is a California Historical Landmark, part of the Presidio's National Historic Landmark District, piecemeal additions to it over the years led to an unintelligible array of underutilized, deficient spaces that obscured its historic character. In 2008, the Presidio Trust hired SMWM/Perkins + Will to renovate the building. We were charged with sensitively integrating accessibility and seismic upgrades into the existing structure, coupled with the larger goal of converting the complex into an invigorated, historically respectful, multifunctional popular cultural destination. Taken as a whole, our ultimate design is nearly as multifaceted as was the building itself.

Our greatest challenge stemmed from the complex and layered history of the building. The oldest pieces of the Officers' Club—today known as the Mesa and Anza Rooms—were built in 1776 as part of the original Spanish garrison. In fact, along with Mission Dolores, the Presidio Officers' Club is one of just two extant Spanish-era structures in San Francisco. During the Spanish, Mexican, and American military periods, the Presidio Officers' Club served as an officers' social center and underwent frequent ad hoc incremental growth.

In the mid-1880s the Moraga Room, a large Victorian pavilion, was added in the middle of the older adobe structure. A half-century later, in the 1930s, the Moraga Room was "updated" to reflect the then-popular Mission Revival style, giving it the look that we recognize today. Many small additions followed, and by the 1970s, it stood as an incoherent mélange of layered adobe, concrete, and steel- and wood-frame structures. In 1972 architect Robert Wong added a massive two-story Mission Revival style structure south of the Moraga Room.

At the time that SMWM/Perkins + Will took on the project, the Presidio Officers' Club was underutilized and housed a series of obsolete spaces. Our design sought to add logic and clarity to the plan, incorporating iconic spaces in a flexible and logical



Photos by Tim Griffith

sequence. All this was to be achieved while accentuating the narrative of the historic structure.

Following a programming and historical inquiry phase completed in collaboration with the Presidio Trust, it was decided that the project would include a visitor center, an archeology center, new and refurbished classrooms, meeting spaces, interpretive exhibits, and a restaurant. The ultimate design drew on several distinct approaches: preservation of the historic core, exposure and interpretation of the physical layers of history, reuse and reinvention of less historic areas, and construction of new circulation paths and exterior courtyards.

Where adobe remained, the Presidio Trust utilized innovative technologies in combination with traditional building practices to retrofit and restore the historic core. With the aid of thermal imaging, the Presidio Trust was able to chart moisture levels inside wall cavities without damaging them. Such nondestructive testing saved most of the original adobe and plaster walls, and repairs were needed only in select locations. In a few instances, builders exposed adobe walls and infilled gaps with the identical "formula" first used by Spanish settlers.

The more recent, incrementally added portion, which occupied most of the area between the historic core to the north and [\(continues on page 15\)](#)



the 1972 addition to the south, required focused, case-specific interventions. We ultimately drew on nearly all available options: rebuilding, restoring, repurposing, relocating, and where necessary, selective demolition. For example, existing classrooms were upgraded and reconfigured with new operable glass walls opening onto a long-hidden wall.

In another example, next to the historic Arguello Room, a formerly interior room, was “liberated” and once again made exterior; today the Arguello Restaurant opens onto that restored courtyard. And in the case of the Garden Room, we reconstructed a portion of the venerable structure. The Garden Room juts out of the Moraga Room and originally had windows looking onto an exterior garden. Over time, however, incremental additions relegated the once-charming Garden Room to a largely forgotten position. Working with the Presidio Trust, we designed a restored Garden Room that now serves as the backdrop to the new, rationalized entrance lobby sequence.

The two-story 1972 southern addition posed unique challenges. Its concrete structure was sound and provided two large assembly spaces crucial for the building’s new program. However, it needed a major renovation and new elements such as service areas, restrooms, warming kitchens, and elevators. (The original design did not provide elevators because, as the story goes, the second floor was for young, able-bodied officers who could walk up stairs!) The renovated and adapted rooms now house a permanent exhibit of Presidio history on the first floor and an updated, airy assembly hall on the second floor with stunning Bay and Golden Gate Bridge views.

Moreover, when compared to the adobe-and-wood structure, the scale of the 1972 concrete addition seemed jarringly massive, so we

developed a “street scheme,” which drew inspiration from an actual road that once bisected the site. In essence, we separated the area between the original historic core and the 1972 structure with a caringly planted and sunny courtyard and transparent glass passages. This move hugely simplified the plan and, in the process, exposed the exterior Moraga Room wall and fireplace that had been hidden for decades. Notably, the “street scheme” courtyard is home to one of Andy Goldsworthy’s signature works of art at the Presidio, “Earth Wall.” The new courtyard, along with the enlarged lobby, today acts as a vibrant and bustling hub of activity that links the historic core, classrooms, and several large assembly halls.

Perhaps the best compliment one can give the new Presidio Officers’ Club is that the extent of the recent intervention is not readily apparent. Design principal Cathy Simon explained, “Our goal was to seamlessly bring this marvelous place to a new and vibrant lifestyle at the heart of the Presidio, while both clarifying and honoring its fascinating and layered history.” The recent announcement that the Presidio Officers’ Club won a 2015 Governor’s Historic Preservation Award, which recognizes projects that “demonstrate significant achievements in preserving the heritage of California,” is a testament to its successful transformation. ●

#### About the Author



*James Mallery, AIA, is a senior associate at the San Francisco office of Perkins + Will, and over the past 10 years there has specialized on adaptive reuse and preservation projects. In addition to the Presidio Officers’ Club, he also worked on the rehabilitation of Timothy Pflueger’s Art Deco masterpiece 140 New Montgomery, the adaptive reuse of 375 Beale Street, and the recently opened Tenderloin Museum. James is a licensed architect and also holds a PhD in San Francisco history. In his “free time,” he teaches architectural history at the Academy of Art.*

# RESTAURANT REPORT

## Comstock Saloon

© 2015 Angie Sommer, ZFA Structural Engineers

If you're looking for a fresh cocktail in a very, very old building, North Beach's Comstock Saloon is about the best you'll find 'round these here parts. Opened in May of 2010 by bartenders Jeff Hollinger and Jonny Raglin plus San Francisco restaurateur Bill Russell-Shapiro, all of Absinthe Brasserie & Bar, Comstock wasn't just bestowed a pre-Prohibition theme; the building and several notable features actually are from that era.

The history of the property extends back to 1853, says co-owner Jonny Raglin, who knows more than a bit of history about the surrounding area (and, indeed, the whole city). Originally housing the Billy Goat Saloon with its frontage around the corner on Kearny Street, the building was rebuilt in 1907 after it was lost in the fire the previous year. With its storefront facing northeast on Columbus Avenue as it does today, the bar space reopened as the Andromeda Saloon, then became the Andromeda Café during Prohibition. The most recent occupant was the SF Brewing Company, whose proprietor moved into the spot sometime in the 1980s and sold the place to the Comstock crew in 2009.

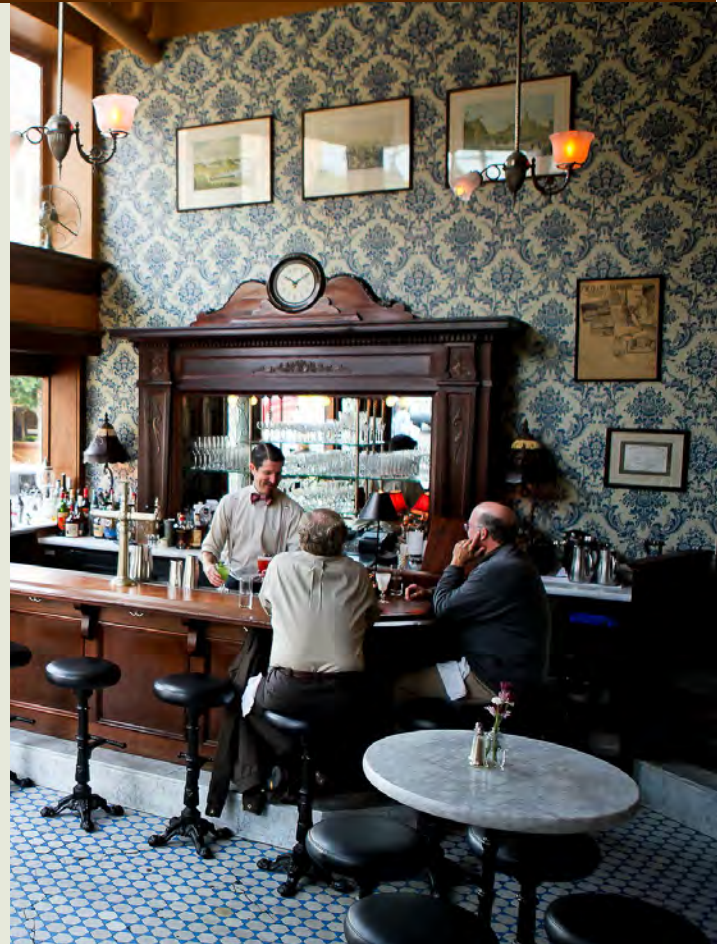
The building was in shambles when they took the project on, Raglin reports. His and Hollinger's approach wasn't a gut-and-remodel, however, as is so common with old buildings in our city. Instead they painstakingly restored the historical aspects of the interior.

"It wasn't the easy way to do it, but [our work] shows," notes Raglin, and he's right. Walking into the space, customers are transported back to the turn of the last century via the period décor, as well as the food and drinks that hark back to their century-old roots.

Raglin is proud to have restored some very special architectural features of the 1907 structure, including the original tile floor and tin ceilings in the upper bar; the main bar's tile troughs (whose historical purpose is notably debated); the gorgeous back bar that Raglin guesses was saved from the 1906 fire from a nearby tavern; and—perhaps his proudest achievement—the oldest bar top in the city, made of Cuban mahogany that Raglin himself painstakingly restored over a six-week period.

After their six-month restoration project, Raglin noted with both awe and reverence that, indeed, "they don't build things like they used to."

Other décor echoes the bar's ties to the sport of boxing: original newspaper pressings, posters for hundred-year-old boxing matches, and old photos. It turns out that the owner of the Andromeda Saloon in the early part of the 20th century was also the owner of the nearby Broadway Athletic Club, a premier boxing



Photos courtesy of Comstock Saloon

arena in the Old West. So it came to be that characters like Jack Johnson—who would later become the first African-American heavyweight champion—would drink there, and Jack Dempsey, a boxer turned cultural icon, worked there as a doorman.

Even the food and drink are thoughtfully themed for the era. Raglin recalls diligently scouring antique bookstores for old recipe books containing the secrets to pre-Prohibition cocktails, which, though not terribly complicated, weren't as easily found on the Internet as they are today. All the cocktails on the menu are old classics, and even Anthony Bourdain enjoyed a libation or two at the antique bar top on a 2012 episode of his show *The Layover*.

But let's be sure to remember the food, since "saloon" makes some forget that the selective menu is worth booking for a birthday dinner. Not your standard 2015 pub fare, it pays homage to the days before the mighty refrigerator by relying on embellishments derived from age-old techniques, like pickling, salting, and curing. Raglin is quick to remind us that many of these techniques gave birth to "food items we know and love," even in the 21st century. The menu changes periodically, but sample dishes include appetizers such as the pickled egg, Cabot

[\(continues on page 17\)](#)



(continued from page 16)



cheddar and pimento cheese with housemade saltines, and lamb meatballs, while the short but sweet list of mains might offer items like a roasted half-chicken, a burger with pickles and fries, and one item that's always on the menu, housemade pot pie.

Of course, not everything inside Comstock is the way it would have been a hundred years ago. For example, they kindly allow women to patronize the establishment as customers, not just work as staff. They've also made additions to the space—a wing wall here, a secondary bar there—but always with careful consideration of how the new and the old meet and mingle. In an age where we're so often looking toward the future, it's nice to see (and taste) a true relic from the past. ●

Comstock can be found on the old dusty trail at the corner of Columbus and Kearny, or online at [www.comstocksaloon.com](http://www.comstocksaloon.com).

#### About the Author



Angie Sommer is a senior engineer at ZFA Structural Engineers, a medium-sized engineering firm with five Bay Area offices and a broad range of experience in the commercial, residential, educational, retrofit, and correctional sectors. In her spare time, she writes restaurant reviews for her blog, Broccoli and Chocolate ([broccoliandchocolate.com](http://broccoliandchocolate.com)); helps people write wedding vows and construct ceremonies via her business, Vow Muse ([vowmuse.com](http://vowmuse.com)); and is a cofounder of a small collective of copywriters, Copy Muse ([copymuse.com](http://copymuse.com)).

## From School to Scholarship to Career in 3 Steps: A CREW SF Rising Leader's Story

### Step 1: Focus

When Erica Chan was in the Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan, her classmates were planning careers in investment banking or consulting. But she knew all along that commercial real estate beckoned.

"I was born in Hong Kong, and real estate is really big there. It's something very tangible. Even when I was little, I always wanted to build my own building," she says.

While researching education support, Erica found out about the CREW Network Foundation and applied for a scholarship. She was awarded \$5,000 in tuition assistance, along with complimentary admission to the Annual Convention and Marketplace. Hungry to meet other real estate professionals, Erica found herself at the Miami convention in 2014.

### Step 2: Seize the Opportunity

With her laser-like focus on what she wants, Erica attended the CREW Convention seeking a job. While networking in Miami, Erica met HR staff and analysts from the Bay Area Prudential Real Estate Investors, which was seeking talent at the convention. Soon enough, Erica landed an offer to move to San Francisco for her new career in real estate finance.

While she'd never lived in the Bay Area before, Erica is sold on San Francisco. "I've been here for only three months and I love it!"

### Step 3: Stay Connected

Sure, Erica could have just gotten her job and ended her affiliation with CREW. However she not only recognizes the value of the Network but also wants to give back.

Erica joined CREW SF's Rising Leaders Committee, for those new to the industry. While she loves her job in finance, she's interested in exploring all facets of real estate and says that CREW offers a window on all aspects.

"Real estate is a big industry, from commercial real estate developers to real estate investment trusts (REITs), involving a broad understanding of debt, equity, contracts, laws, and tax regulations. I just want to learn everything, from



A to Z," says Erica. Involvement in CREW allows her to glean something from all those disciplines, Erica notes.

Erica attended the recent Network convention in Seattle. Among the many aspects of the convention she enjoyed, Erica noted a few top take-aways:

1. Learning from all the sessions and other people's experiences: "You can never have too much knowledge. I will never stop learning."
2. Meeting lots of great people: "In Seattle, there were over a thousand people attending and everyone was so kind and genuine...they're very willing to talk to you and share their experiences."
3. Giving back: "I loved meeting young students who are like how I was at last year's Miami convention: exploring different areas of real estate with a keen interest in learning, meeting new people, and starting a career." ●

A promotional poster for the 'Elevate' event. The background is a vibrant, multi-colored geometric pattern of triangles in shades of purple, pink, and orange. The word 'ELEVATE' is written in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters at the top. Below it, the text 'An Event Honoring Diversity &amp; Women's Leadership in Commercial Real Estate' is centered in a smaller white font. A horizontal white line separates this from the event details: 'SAVE THE DATE: FEBRUARY 25, 2016' in large white letters, followed by 'Julia Morgan Ballroom, San Francisco' in a smaller white font. Below that is the website 'www.ElevateBayArea.com' in white. Another horizontal white line is below the website. At the bottom, the text 'Brought to you by:' is centered in white. Below this are three logos: 'CREW SF' in white, 'CREWSV' in white, and 'EAST BAY CREW Commercial Real Estate Women' which includes a stylized building icon. To the right of these is the logo for 'THE REGISTRY BAY AREA REAL ESTATE' in white.

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BCCI is pleased to sponsor CREW SF and support its mission of elevating women in every sector of the commercial real estate industry.

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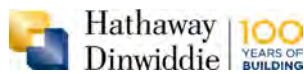
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# CREW<sup>SF</sup>

Commercial Real Estate Women San Francisco

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- » The VIEW Editor & Writer
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## CREW<sup>SF</sup> Communications Committee

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The communications committee is a great group of people whose contributions are essential to successful CREW SF activities, providing information to our members and the public, and promoting CREW SF in our community.

Communication Committee

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- Blog
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- Graphic Design

For more information, please contact Angie Sommer at [angies@zfa.com](mailto:angies@zfa.com). **We look forward to meeting you!**