

# 2014 GOVERNOR'S HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARDS

## Hallidie Building Restoration



*The façade of the restored Hallidie Building in San Francisco*

Designed by Willis Polk and commissioned by the University of California Berkeley, the Hallidie Building is extraordinary for its unique front: its glass façade is generally recognized as a forerunner of contemporary and ubiquitous curtain wall systems. The building is named after Andrew Hallidie, one of the university regents and inventor of the San Francisco cable car. The building was completed in 1918 and is Polk's last major work before his death. The Hallidie Building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and was designated a San Francisco City Landmark in 1971. Though the ground floor storefronts have been altered, the building's façade remains largely unchanged. With its glass façade and decorative blue and gold metalwork, the Hallidie building stands out among a streetscape lined with the more traditional masonry-clad buildings. The restoration project returns the integrity of the iconic façade through repair of the curtain wall and the façade's decorative features.

The initial project scope was to replace the structural steel supports of the balconies and fire escapes, which had become unsafe due to severe corrosion. Investigation of the curtain wall began in 2010 at these locations, where the supports penetrate the façade, and expanded to include all of the window units and the structural T-mullions to which they connect. The final scope of the project included a full

restoration of the curtain wall, balconies and fire escapes, and the highly ornamental sheet metal. As a San Francisco Landmark, the repair work was required to comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings. The design team included a preservation architect, Page & Turnbull, for consultation on repair approaches and to ensure best preservation practices were followed. The team also included a materials scientist who reviewed repairs for proper material compatibility. Project efforts included, among others: proper documentation and cataloging of all elements removed from the building; removal of historic materials in a way that would minimize damage; identification of compatible replacement materials in order to retain the building's historic integrity; extensive color analysis to determine the original blue and gold colors of the façade; and cataloging of all features repaired or replaced and of all treatment procedures.

The project went through intensive review by both the San Francisco Planning Department and the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). Planning staff and Historic Preservation Commissioners conducted several site visits throughout the duration of construction, resulting in a collaborative repair process that included the preservation community.

The restoration project has extended the life of this architectural landmark by executing necessary repairs, compatible replacement of historic features in limited circumstances, and improvements that respect the original and innovative design. The Hallidie Building is an excellent example and embodiment of fundamental architectural elements that make the modern city livable in design and form.

Learn more about the Hallidie Building and the restoration project:

<https://www.bdcnetwork.com/nations-first-glass-curtain-wall-exterior-restored-san-francisco>