

2015 GOVERNOR'S HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARDS

The Presidio Officers' Club



Original adobe walls visible in the background with information panels in the foreground

California Historical Landmark No. 79, the Presidio Officers' Club, is one of San Francisco's most historic buildings and a contributing resource to the Presidio of San Francisco National Historic Landmark District. Some of the building's original adobe walls date from the Spanish colonization of California, but the building is largely an amalgam of adobe, wood-frame concrete and steel structures built over the course of approximately two-hundred years. The significance of the building stems from the role it played on the Presidio grounds as the headquarters and social center for Spanish, Mexican, and American officers; its mission revival architecture; and its potential to yield archaeological information about the Spanish and Mexican periods. The front portion of the building that would later serve as the Presidio Officers' Club was constructed by Spanish colonists in 1776. It suffered damage in 1779 and again in 1808 and 1812. By the 1880s, with the Presidio under the control of the U.S. Army, the adobe walls of the building had mostly crumbled away, but General Irvin McDowell restored the building and converted it into headquarters for the post. A 1934 remodel gave the building the Mission Revival character it retains today. In 1972 a two story steel and concrete structure was added to the rear of the Officers' Club. After the Army departed in 1994, the Presidio became part of the National Park Service, and by the early 2000s, the Officers' Club was operated by the Presidio Trust as a space for public exhibits and special events.

From 2011 to 2014, the Presidio Trust conducted a comprehensive rehabilitation of the 36, 895 square foot Presidio Officers' Club. The goal was to transform the building into a multifaceted, fully public cultural destination. The Officers' Club rehabilitation fully repaired the historic front portion of the building, as well as the large rear addition added by the U.S. Army in 1972. A new structure

connects the two, enabling the building to function as one seamless space. A new basement was also added for mechanical and electrical systems, and storage space. Seismic stabilization and repairs were made to the Club's original adobe. Portions of the adobe wall were exposed for the first time since they were covered over in the 1880s. Using thermal-imaging technology, the Trust was able to map moisture levels and cavities inside the adobe walls without having to drill into them. Repairs were made with new adobe bricks manufactured with the same formula used in the building's original construction.

The Presidio Officers' Club rehabilitation project has protected and revealed the building's defining characteristics and enabled access by the public to spaces that previously had been closed off. The Club hosts topical discussions, live music and dance, education workshops and after-school programs, tours, and interactive family activities that are all free to the public through the sponsorship of the Presidio Trust. These events invite debate, stimulate participation, and help visitors to understand the world they are living in today by exploring the Presidio's history and culture.

Visit the Presidio Trust website to learn more about the Presidio Officers' Club:
<http://www.presidio.gov/officers-club-internal/>