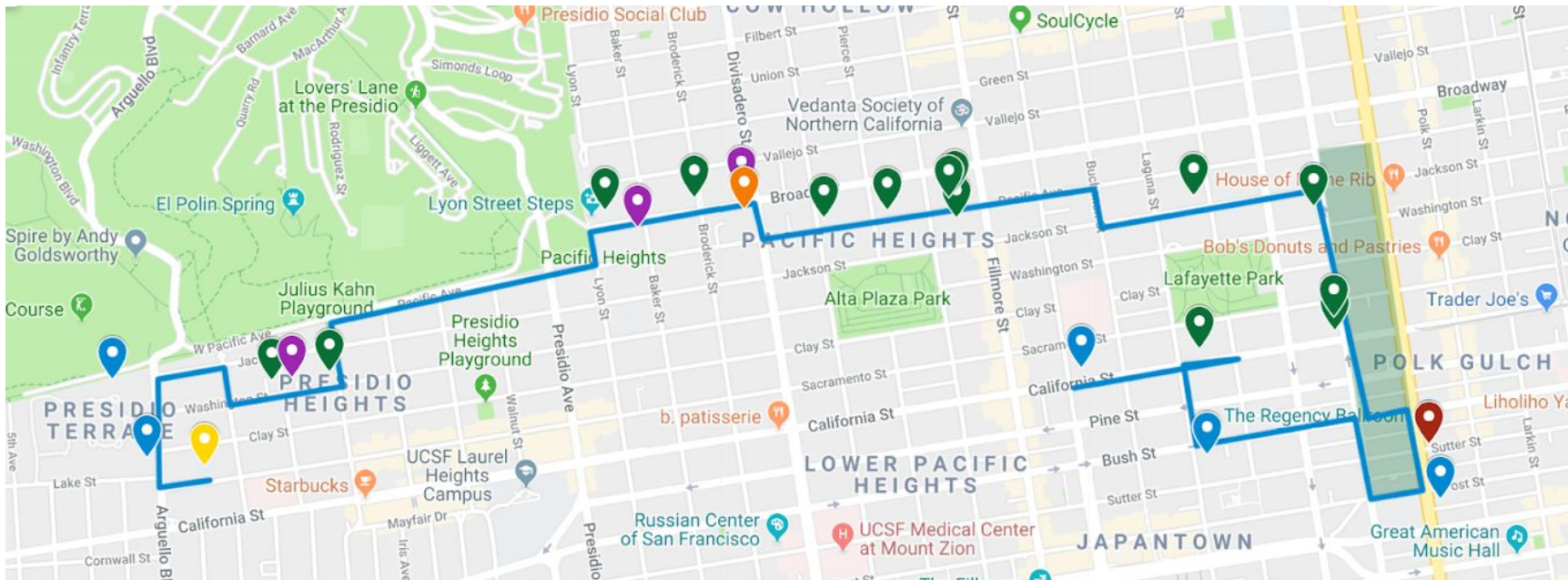


Jewish Sights from Presidio Terrace to Polk Gulch: A Walking Tour



Start at 3950 Sacramento St. You will see the **Madison Campus of Claire Lilienthal Elementary School**. This site is one of two alternative public schools in San Francisco named after philanthropist Claire Lilienthal, here serving grades K-2.

Turn **right** onto **Arguello Blvd**
1000 ft

On your immediate left after passing Lake St is **Congregation Emanu-El**. One of San Francisco's two oldest synagogues, Emanu-El was founded in 1851 alongside Sherith Israel, primarily

by Bavarian Jews but also several Sephardim. Despite moving locations, Emanu-El has occupied this site on Lake Street since 1926, in a building designed by the gentele Arthur Brown, Jr., who also designed many other San Francisco landmarks: City Hall, the War Memorial Opera House, and the previous Transbay Terminal, among others. Emanu-El has, historically, served many of San Francisco's Jewish elite, including the Haas family, the Goldman family, Senator Dianne Feinstein, Levi Strauss, Warren Hellman (of Hardly Strictly Bluegrass fame), and Florence and Julius Kahn (two prominent Jewish congresspeople). The stained

glass windows, designed by Mark Adams, are an architectural highlight, especially at sunset.

Farther up the hill on the left, Pacific Ave leads along the edge of the Presidio to the **Presidio Golf and Concordia Club**. For many years, beginning in 1864, the Concordia Club was the exclusive social club of San Francisco's Jewish elite. Denied access to the country clubs of the area's gentiles, these figures gathered at the Concordia to socialize, entertain themselves, and, scandalously for Jews from other regions, consume traif seafood. The Concordia merged in 1939 with another Jewish society, the Argonaut Club. In 2015, the club merged again, with the Presidio Golf Club, an unaffiliated organization.

Turn **right** onto **Jackson St**
600 ft

Turn **right** onto **Cherry St**
300 ft

Turn **left** onto **Washington St**
1000 ft

At 3800 Washington St, intersecting with Maple, stands **Le Petit Trianon**. This striking home, based on the Versailles palace of the same name, is also known as the Koshland House. Cora Koshland and Marcus Koshland, the CEO of Levi Strauss Co., lived here. The house was host to many of Cora's famous parties, including Hanukkah parties, beginning in 1928.

Across Maple St from the Koshland House is another famous address, 3778 Washington. This iconic house belonged to **Madeleine Haas Russell**, an heir to the Haas and Strauss family fortunes. German architect Erich Mendelsohn designed it in 1951,

his only residential project in the entire United States. Mendelsohn did, however, design other San Francisco buildings—the Maimonides Hospital at Mount Zion seen earlier on the tour bears his imprint as well.

On the same block, look at 3700 Washington. The **Goldmans**, San Francisco philanthropists, founded the Goldman Fund, Goldman Environmental Prize, and the assisted living facility Rhoda Goldman Plaza. They lived at this address.

Turn **left** onto **Spruce St**
500 ft

Turn **right** onto **Pacific Ave**
½ mi

Turn **left** onto **Lyon St**
300 ft

Turn **right** onto **Broadway**
¼ mi

At 2970 Broadway lived **Florence Hellman** and **Sidney Ehrman**. Florence Hellman received this house as a gift from her father, San Francisco and Los Angeles financier Isaias Hellman. She lived here with her husband, Sidney Ehrman, a well-known lawyer. The two did not have surviving children, but they did have a surrogate son of sorts: world-renowned violinist Yehudi Menuhin, whose artistic career they patronized for much of their lives.

2901 Broadway, the enormous house at the end of the block on the right, was designed by Joseph Strauss. Strauss was an architectural engineer best known for his work on the Golden Gate

Bridge. The house was, incidentally, later bought and almost immediately sold by Herbert Hoover.

Soon after come 2800 and 2808 Broadway, the homes of Hellman children. Banker Isaias W. Hellman financed their construction for his son, **Isaias W. Hellman, Jr**, and his daughter, **Florence Hellman Dinkelspiel** respectively. Miriam and Peter Haas, the heirs to Levi Strauss Co., later bought 2800 Broadway, giving the building several generations of elite Jewish history.

After Broderick St, note 2710 Broadway. This 1998 house was the creation of **Robert A.M. Stern**, dean of the Yale School of Architecture. Built with exposed wood, the home reflects the Arts and Crafts style of a century prior.

Immediately across Broadway, at 2701, stands the **former headquarters of the Delancey Street Foundation**, a nonprofit focused on restorative justice through the rehabilitation of incarcerated people. The foundation's founder, Mimi Silbert, is an active member of the Bay Area Jewish community. With help from Dianne Feinstein, the organization moved to the Embarcadero in 1991.

Turn **right** onto **Divisadero St**
300 ft

Turn **left** onto **Pacific Ave**
½ mi

At 2698 Pacific is the home of **Clara Gerstle** and **Adolph "Dick" Mack**. Mack was an active leader in San Francisco's drug, banking, and oil industries around the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. His wife, Clara Gerstle, was an heir to the Alaska Commercial

Company, which facilitated early United States resource extraction in the territory.

Cross Pierce St and note 2520 Pacific. The **Schwabachers**, best known for their investment banks across the West Coast, moved to San Francisco in 1858. Schwabacher Brothers, founded by siblings Abraham, Sigmund, and Louis, later expanded across the Pacific Northwest; Abe stayed behind in California, living in this house.

On the block after Steiner stands 2459 Pacific, the home of **Herb Caen**. Caen, a journalist for the Chronicle for almost six decades, was beloved by many locals for his daily column, where he addressed the foibles and goings-on of the city. Caen lived at this address toward the end of his life; he was born and raised in Sacramento, but spent most of his life in San Francisco. When Caen died in 1997, thousands attended his packed funeral in Grace Cathedral.

Immediately across from Caen's house lived **Alice Gerstle** and **J.B. Levison**, at 2420 Pacific. Gerstle was an heir to the Gerstles and the Alaska Commercial Company, and J.B. Levison, a Prussian Jew of Sephardic descent, worked in the insurance business. The Fireman's Fund, under Levison, pioneered automotive insurance across the country. For many years, Levison served as the chairman of the board of Mt. Zion Hospital.

Bella Gerstle, Alice's sister, and **Mortimer Fleishhacker** lived next door, at 2418 Pacific. Hannah Gerstle, the wife of Lewis Gerstle, built this house after her husband died for her and their daughter, Bella. During its construction, Bella married Mortimer Fleishhacker; the two of them moved in once it was completed. Hannah lived with them as well as her other daughters for the rest of her life.

Turn **right** onto **Buchanan St**
300 ft

Turn **left** onto **Jackson St**
½ mi

2020 Jackson St, on the block after Laguna, was the home of **Clara Hellman** and **Emanuel Heller**, Wells Fargo owner I.W. Hellman's daughter and son-in-law. After the 1906 earthquake, this address became the temporary headquarters of Wells Fargo Nevada while the building was repaired.

Turn **right** onto **Franklin St**
½ mi

The first home to your right on Franklin is the famous **Haas-Lilienthal House**. Now a museum, this building was once home to two of the most illustrious names among San Francisco Jewry. The Haases were the heirs to the Levi Strauss fortune, and the Lilienthals controlled Crown Distilleries, a liquor manufacturing company. William Haas and Bertha Greenbaum, both from wealthy German Jewish families, lived in the house at its inception; their daughter, Alice, married Samuel Lilienthal and brought the Lilienthals into the house's name. The building is the only preserved Victorian home in San Francisco open to the public as a museum. Most other Jewish San Francisco landmarks from before 1906, including most east of Van Ness, were destroyed in the 1906 earthquake and fire—Van Ness acted as a firebreak.

Three blocks later, after Sacramento St, is 1735 Franklin, the home of **Edward Bransten** and **Florine Haas**. The couple lived here in the early twentieth century. Bransten was a descendant of Max Brandenstein, the founder of coffee company MJB, and Florine Haas was a descendant of Levi Strauss and, more immediately, the

Haas and Lilienthal families. Their marriage, like many among the San Franciscan elite, brought together the fortunes of several prominent families.

Wells Fargo titans **Isaias** and **Esther Hellman** lived next door, at 1701 Franklin, beginning in 1892. The Hellmans would become one of San Francisco's most visible Jewish families, through their associations with Wells Fargo, the California Wine Association, the development of the University of California, and numerous other high-profile projects.

Turn **left** onto **Bush St**
400 ft

Turn **right** onto **Van Ness Ave**
1000 ft

In 1910, facing a dearth of religious education for the city's expanding Jewish community, **Congregation Emanu-El** established a **religious school** for Jewish children at this site, Sutter and Van Ness. The school was a rousing success—in 1921, after only a decade, it enrolled over 500 children. For much of the next century, the school occupied this site, weathering many tumultuous fluctuations in attendance.

Before turning onto Post, look to the southeast corner of Post and Van Ness to see the **Concordia-Argonaut Club**. The Concordia Club formed in the late 19th century to provide a social gathering space for the Jewish elite of San Francisco. Its original campus stood at this intersection until 2014, when the club sold the location. A year later, the Concordia merged with the Presidio Club, ending its history as a Jewish organization. Now, Academy of Art University owns the building.

Turn **right** onto **Post St**
500 ft

Turn **right** onto **Franklin St**
700 ft

Turn **left** onto **Bush St**
¼ mi

1881 Bush now bears the name Kokoro Assisted Living, but before it was residential it was known as the **Bush Street Synagogue**. Designed in 1895 by Moses J. Lyon, this synagogue was founded by Orthodox defectors from the Reform Congregation Emanu-El, who founded **Congregation Ohabai Shalome** here. In 1934 the synagogue sold the building, and it became a Buddhist temple. In 2003, the building, having fallen into disrepair and changed hands, was renovated and became a home for senior citizens, primarily serving Japanese Americans.

Turn **right** onto **Laguna St**
700 ft

Turn **right** onto **California St**
500 ft

Simon Foorman lived at 2022 California, on the left of this block. Foorman came from Hesse to the United States in 1847 and moved to the California gold country in 1850. He designed the water supply of Calaveras County and was one of the founders of the Eureka Benevolent Society (one of the West Coast's first charities). When he had children, he moved to San Francisco so they could have access to its schools. He lived at this address after its construction in 1890 until his death in 1900.

Cross the road and turn around
¼ mi

On the right, as you approach Webster, pay attention to the prominent dome of **Congregation Sherith Israel**. One of the first two synagogues founded in San Francisco, Sherith Israel dates to 1851, like its sister congregation, Emanu-El. Unlike the predominantly Bavarian composition of Emanu-El, Sherith Israel has historically served Poseners—Jews from Posen, in present-day Poland and eastern Germany, who were more numerous and generally less well off than the often assimilated Bavarian Jews of the city. This particular building became the home of the congregation in 1905; the building survived the 1906 earthquake and, in fact, served as an impromptu courthouse for San Francisco, whose unfinished city hall had been damaged beyond use. Noted Jewish machine boss Abe Ruef's trial occurred in Sherith Israel during this time period, with Ruef's testimony occurring on the bima. If given the chance to enter the synagogue, look at the stained glass in the main sanctuary. One prominent design depicts Moses receiving the Ten Commandments in front of Yosemite Valley, reflecting the sentiments of some Californian Jews that San Francisco, not Palestine, was in fact the Promised Land.