

Records of San Francisco Botanical Garden



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Descriptive Summary

Date (inclusive): 1935-2016

Date (bulk): 1959-2005

Extent/ Physical Description: 49 Linear feet: 7 document boxes, 2 cartons, 71 Oversize folders, 27 tubes

Language of Material: English

Date Completed: August 2019

Acquisition Information

Title: Records of San Francisco Botanical Garden

Creators:

Appleton & Wolfard	Gerson Overstreet
Arbegast, Mai Kitagawa	Goodpasture, Thomas
Architects Collaborative	Grabow, T. M.
Arelt, Valerie	Greenworks Landscape Design
Baker, Richard E.	Guthrie, Walter V.
Baylis, Douglas	Halprin Lawrence
Trainor [Bernard] Design Associates	Hammon, Jensen, & Wallen
Breyfogle, Jon	Hobart, Lewis
Brown, Emily	Roberts [John Northmore] & Associates
Bryan, John E.	Johnson Guthrie Associates
Brydon, Percy Hadden (Jock)	Laflin, J. L.
Cagwin & Dorward	Leife, J. M.
Carlson, Don	Lerner and Nathan
Claassen, John R.	Lutsko [Ron] & Associates
Cole, Todd	Matsutani, Henry
Corbin, Mike	McCrory, David
Dixon, J.	Morgenstein, Richard
Downey, Timothy	Nelson, Douglas
Eckbo, Dean & Williams	Patri, Patri, Patri
Eckbo, Dean, Austin & Williams	Patri, Tito
Elliot, Roger	Pedersen, Jay
Fernau [Richard] & Hartman [Laura]	Plant, Jonathan
Feyerabend & Madden	Portico Group, The
Fong, Jung, Nakaba Associates	Quan, Daniel
Freeman & Jewell	Radd, George K.
French, Prentis	Raiche, Roger
Gayman, Bernard	Reid & Tarics

Riddell, J. A.
Riedy, George
Royston, Hanamoto & Mayes
Russell D. Mitchell Associates
Schall, Herb
Schmidt, Hubert C.
Schuster, Edward L.
Shannon, Kathleen
Shinoda, Frank
Splenda & Yamamoto

Tetlow, Robert
Turner, R. G. Jr.
Tusabamoto, Rinji
Valen, W.
von Birgelen, A.
Walther, Edward E.
Wigglestem Gardens,
Yuill-Thorton, Warner & Levikow
Zolly, Robert J.

Administrative Information

Access Statement

Collection is open for research. Advance notice is required for use.

Publication Rights

All requests for permission to publish, reproduce, or quote from materials in the collection should be discussed with the Library Director.

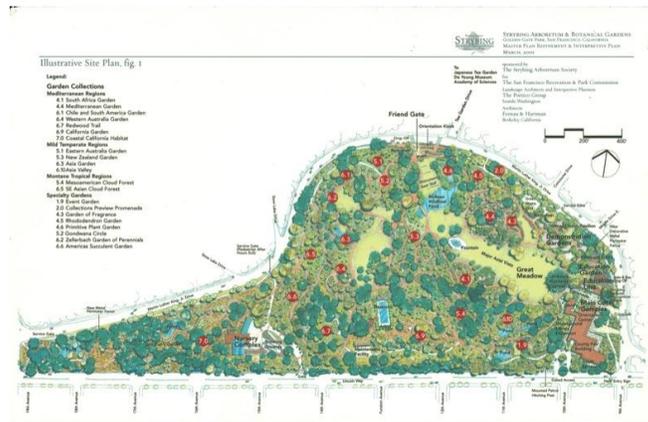
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Arrangement and description of this collection was funded by San Francisco Botanical Garden

Contributing Institution: San Francisco Botanical Garden



History

Golden Gate Park (GGP) was created in 1870 when Army-trained engineer William Hammond Hall was appointed Park Engineer and created a detailed site survey and preliminary design. During the first five years he leveled and stabilized the sand dunes and established a nursery to supply the first 60,000 trees for the Park. John McLaren, who served as the park's superintendent from 1887 to 1943 is credited with the vision and skill that developed GGP into one of the world's great parks.

San Francisco Botanical Garden (SFBG) became a reality in 1926 when Helene Strybing, the prosperous widow of a San Francisco merchant, provided the funds in her bequest to establish an arboretum and botanical garden in Golden Gate Park. McLaren and Eric Walther, the Garden's first director (1937-1957) drew up a master plan. Construction and planting began in 1937 supervised by Walther with assistance from the Works Progress Administration (WPA) as the San Francisco Parks and Recreation Department lost public funding during the Great Depression.

The Botanical Garden opened officially in 1940, designed around a central axis that still exists between the central fountain and the Zellerbach Garden. Walther was followed by consultant Richard E. Baker (1958-1960) who prepared a report entitled *Summary of Deficiencies and Principal Features*.

Beginning in 1953 the City and County of San Francisco decided to construct the Hall of Flowers adjacent to the Arboretum, which was completed in 1960. It was during this time that friends and associates of Eric Walther helped establish the Strybing Arboretum Society (SAS) to support the development of the Botanical Garden and to provide educational programs. In 1959, Landscape Architect Robert Tetlow, a professor at UC Berkeley's College of Environmental Design was commissioned to develop a master plan for Strybing Arboretum, now known as San Francisco Botanical Garden. His plan implemented a few years later, included defining features of the Garden including the Great Meadow, the fountain, the Friend Gate, and the basic layout of the existing gardens.

In 1960 publisher Bill Lane of Sunset Magazine contacted Percy Hadden (Jock) Brydon, the newly hired Director, to propose a public-private development of the Sunset Home Demonstration Gardens which were intended to assist Bay Area home gardeners with ideas about and models of planting, paving, fencing, and seating; patio, terrace, and deck construction; and design and display of plant containers. The Demonstration Garden opened in 1965 with gardens designed by famous Bay Area landscape architects: Thomas D. Church, Lawrence Halprin, Edward Williams, Douglas Baylis, and Robert Royston.

Over more than fifty years a variety of landscape architects contributed designs and ideas to the Demonstration Garden including Tito Patri, H.C. Schmidt, and Edward Williams of Eckbo, Dean Austin and Williams. Other contributors included the firms Splenda & Yamamoto, The Portico Group (TPG), and Patri, Patri, & Patri. Landscape architect Valerie Arelt contributed an All White Garden, and Frank Shinoda designed a garden for the International Ikebana Society.

The Demonstration Garden was redesigned by Ron Lutsko in 2019 and renamed the Celebration Garden retaining the original Thomas Church Pavilion.

The Helen Crocker Russell Library of Horticulture opened in 1972, becoming Northern California's most comprehensive horticultural library. The Library building design was begun by architect Gardner Dailey. Following his death, his successor firm Yuill-Thornton, Warner & Levikow, completed the Library. Landscape Architect Thomas D. Church, designed the courtyard in honor of Gardner A. Dailey.

Brydon was followed by Directors by Roy L. Hudson (1969-1971) who retired after nearly 40 years with the Park Department and John E. Bryan (1971-1979). During this time the Garden worked with local communities to develop and financially support gardens of interest. For example, in 1977 future development plans included a Malaysian Gardens with plants to be donated by the Malaysian society, a Philippine Garden with plants to be donated by the Philippine Society, and a Palm Garden with plants to be donated by the Palm Society. None of these came to fruition.

Director Walden Valen (1979-1999) revised the plant collections plan to leverage San Francisco's mild coastal climate, expanding the collections to include Mediterranean and other temperate climate regions among the garden areas. In a 1983 statement of goals, Valen determined that labels and records would be both horticultural and botanical (scientific) and the masterplan for the Plant Collection would be divided into four types of groupings: geographic collections, taxonomic collections, horticultural collections, and gardens.

The next Director Scott Medbury (1999-2005) led the renovation of seven gardens, including the Southeast Asian Cloud Forest, the first of its kind anywhere. In 2004, Strybing Arboretum changed its name to San Francisco Botanical Garden at Strybing Arboretum, and the Arboretum Society followed suit, becoming San Francisco Botanical Garden Society. The current Garden Director is Matthew Stephens.

Sources: <https://www.sfbg.org/> accessed May 2, 2019

Plant Collections Committee Statement of Goals, 1983. Helen Crocker Russell Library vertical files.

System of Arrangement

These records are organized into four series: 1) Planting Areas/Gardens, 2) San Francisco Botanical Garden, 3) Buildings, and 4) Golden Gate Park.

Scope and Contents

The Records of San Francisco Botanical Garden (SFBG) span the years 1936-2016 (bulk 1959-2008), and includes drawings, photographs and manuscript materials related to San Francisco Botanical Garden and Golden Gate Park. The records are organized into four series: 1) Planting Areas/Gardens, 2) San Francisco Botanical Garden, 3) Buildings, and 4) Golden Gate Park.

The *Planting Area/Gardens* series is the largest series and encompasses all the distinct areas of SFBG. For a complete list of these areas see the project index. The records document the ways in which these areas have evolved over time and the multiple landscape architects who have worked on them. They range alphabetically from the Ancient Plant Garden to the Zellerbach Garden and geographically they include Australia, New Zealand, China, Japan, Mesoamerica,

Chile, and the Mediterranean Basin. There are also planting Areas/Gardens by type of plant such as the Bamboo Pond, Rhododendron and Camellia Gardens, and a California Native plant garden; and by special topic including the John Muir Nature Trail, Moon-Viewing Garden, Entry Garden, Friend (North) Gate, and the Garden of Fragrance. This series includes a subseries for the Sunset Magazine Home Demonstration Gardens (1965-2018).

The records for the *San Francisco Botanical Garden (SFBG)* series is comprised into a number of subseries: SFBG: General, SFBG: Director's Office; SFBG: Infrastructure; SFBG: Planning, and Plant Collections. The records of the Director's Office contain correspondence primarily created under the directorship of Jock Brydon and reference files related to other arboretums. The Planning subseries begins with a plan by landscape architect Prentiss French in 1949 followed by a master plan by UCB professor and landscape architect Robert Tetlow (1959-1965) that created many elements of the arboretum still extant; a 1982 plan by Jonathan Plant, and master plans by landscape architect Tito Patri with the architecture firm Fernau & Hartman (1994 and 2000-2001). SFBG: Plant Collections includes Garden "bed" division maps, various tree studies, and plant acquisitions. The Infrastructure sub-series contains plans for irrigation, fencing, signage, topography and ADA compliance modifications.

The *Buildings* series contains records for a variety of structures integral to SFBG including the San Francisco County Fair Building, the Helen Crocker Russell Library, the Nursery Complex, and the Bookstore. There are unbuilt designs among the specific building files because they were related to existing buildings and therefore filed with building records rather than as an unbuilt project. The small group of unbuilt projects is comprised of architect Lewis Hobart's 1936 design for a neo-classical arboretum building, a project by the WPA (1939-1940), and a Garden Center (1949).

The *Golden Gate Park* series includes maps for the park and drawings for the Conservatory of Flowers.

Custodial History

These records were created for San Francisco Botanical Garden by a variety of designers and firms, many under the auspices of the City and County of San Francisco (SFCC) Department of Parks and Recreation or the Department of Public Works and/or the Department of Engineering as well as the San Francisco Botanical Garden Society. All of them were in the custody of the SFBG when processed.

Series Description

I. PLANTING AREA/GARDENS, 1952-2008

4 Boxes/.5 Cartons / 46 OVS folder / 1 tube

Arranged alphabetically

This series is the largest series and encompasses all the distinct areas of SFBG. The records document the ways in which the designs and planting of these areas have changed over time and the different landscape architects who have worked on them. In some cases specific garden areas have been renamed, were never constructed, or no longer exist. [For a complete list of these areas see the project index]

Subseries: Demonstrations Gardens, 1952, 1960-2003

Arranged chronologically

These records are comprised of plans, drawings, manuscript material, and photographs that document the development of the Demonstration Gardens as well as specific gardens within the enclosed area. Architects who worked on these gardens include Thomas Church, Lawrence Halprin, Garrett Eckbo, Edward Williams, Douglas Baylis, and Tito Patri.

II. S.F. BOTANICAL GARDEN, 1935-2008

2 Boxes/ 1 1/3 Cartons / 14 OVS folder/ 24 tubes

This series contains the five subseries listed below and contains correspondence, reference files, drawings, planning proposals, Garden “bed” division maps and various tree studies.

- A. General
- B. Director’s Office
- C. Infrastructure
- D. Planning
- E. Plant Collections

III. BUILDINGS, 1939-2009

.5 Box/.25 Carton/ 9 OVS folder/ 3 tubes

Arranged alphabetically

This series contains records for a variety of structures integral to SFBG including the San Francisco County Fair Building, the Helen Crocker Russell Library, the Nursery Complex, and the Bookstore. This small series contain documents related to a number of buildings, structures and gardens that were never built or implemented. There are also unbuilt projects within the specific building folders.

IV. GOLDEN GATE PARK, 1948-2005

3 OVS folder/ 3 tubes

This series includes maps for Golden Gate Park and drawings for the Conservatory of Flowers.

Related Collections

Thomas D. Church Collection, Environmental Design Archives, U.C. Berkeley
Robert Royston/RHAA Collection, Environmental Design Archives, U.C. Berkeley
Robert Tetlow Collection, Environmental Design Archives, U.C. Berkeley

Related Names [Last name, First name, (dates), function]

Brydon, Percy Hadden (Jock) (1906-1990), Director
Bryan, John E., Director
Tetlow, Robert, (1922-1988), Landscape Planner

Subjects

Arboreta—United States
Botanical Gardens –United States
Gardens – California –San Francisco Bay Region
Landscape architects--California.
Landscape architecture--California.
Landuse -- Planning
San Francisco Botanical Garden at Strybing Arboretum

Genres and Forms of Material

Landscape architecture records.
Landscape architecture drawings.
Landscape architecture photographs.