

7. DESCRIPTION

A. Resource Type and Use: Present (P) and Historic (H)

Building(s) ___ District ___ Structure ___ Site ___ Object
 Residential ___ Commercial ___ Industrial ___ Institutional
 ___ Other (specify): _____

B. Condition:

___ Excellent ___ Fair
 Good ___ Poor

C. Alterations:

Unaltered
 ___ Altered

D. Site

Original Site
 ___ Moved (Date _____)

E. Style/Type: Craftsman // Arts & Crafts // First Bay Tradition

F. Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance:

384 Bellevue Avenue is a multi-gabled, complex “T” plan 1-1/2 and 2-story home, painted reddish-brown. A large deodar cedar with twin trunks grows from the front lawn and is a focal point of the residence. The house faces West and from the street, one can see two steep offset gables, the shorter sits forward of the taller and is offset to the right (South). The façade below the front-most short gable is clad in beveled, rough-sawn wood siding. A small double casement “attic” window is centered at the upper story, while below is a 5-sided shallow bay with a metal rooflet above. Each of the bay’s 5 wood casement windows has a smaller rectangular upper transom with a square leaded cross-hatch pattern. To the right of this gable, there is a covered porch or enclosed sunroom with a flat roof and large windows. It is clad in the same siding. On the left (North) wall of the front gable, there are two wood casement windows that match the bay windows and transoms.

The taller of the street-facing gables to the North is set back roughly 18’ from the lower gable. Wide 12” wood siding with a significant 1” bevel clads the lower half, while shingles in a distinctive “ribbon coursing” pattern, with a row of wide shingles lapped over a narrow row of shingles, clad the upper portion of the 2nd taller gable along with “half timber” detail that breaks up the shingles in a geometric pattern that outlines two pairs of double casement windows. The front door sits set back beneath the taller gable with a trellis above it. The second story of that gable’s footprint is larger than the first story, so there is a 14” overhang over the porch.

The roof has extended eaves that descend well below the roof line. They also extend forwards (West), towards the street, well past the façade of the house. Rafters are visible below the roof decking and no soffits are present. At each window, the eave is broken and kicked up to provide more light inside the home. Along the gables, there are notched beam ends. That same notched pattern is mimicked in the facade’s corbels, sunporch rafter tails and front door trellis. Some say they look like a whale, others a mouth or dragon. Large bargeboards follow the pitch of each gable and are “boxed” in on four sides.



Concrete steps lead to the front door. I imagine that the concrete steps were likely originally brick. Some grading has been modified to make a widened concrete driveway that leads to the rear garage and front door.

Not as apparent from the street is the complex roof plan with cross gables that run side to side (North/South). They are off-set from one another and not identical in size. Around the left (North) side of the house, a cross gable is somewhat visible from the street. A series of wood casement windows, singles and pairs of doubles line



Landmark, S-7, S-20, or Heritage Property Application p.3
 upper and lower stories. To the East (rear), the house seems to have had more significant alterations with two upper level sun porches enclosed, 1 covered by a flat roof, the other covered by what may have been a flat roof but from aerial shots looks to be “California framed” or a pitched frame built over the existing flat roof to tie into the South facing gable.

In 1943, a rear (East) 10x16’ addition was constructed. It is single story and has a slightly pitched shed roof that extends off the upstairs enclosed porch. For the addition, they installed wooden double hung windows while all other windows are casement. In the process of building this, I suspect they didn’t match original details as the shingle pattern on this area is standard and does not mimic the original.



Wrapping around back to the West (street

facing), one can barely see the South gable behind the deodar cedar but if one looks through the branches and above the enclosed sun porch, the gable has a dormer with 3 pairs of tiny casement windows. From the flat roof of the lower sunporch, the clinker brick chimney runs between the former exterior wall and the sun porch interior wall. It once stood tall above the uppermost roof line with metal braces for support. It has been lowered and capped, the fireplace replaced with a gas insert and the remains of the metal braces stick out from the roof but serve no purpose.

1943 permit application for rear addition, Oakland Microfiche



The current condition shows signs of significant wear from years of deferred maintenance (both exterior and holistic maintenance) including noticeable paint peeling and fading, dry rot on notched beams, warped shingles, splitting siding, visible fibers from roof shingles, and more.

The 1985-86 heritage survey is included for additional description of the property.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

A. Construction date(s): 1908-1909

B. Architect/Builder/Designer: Charles McCall & Willson Wythe (architect/engineer), Bolin, Peterson & Anderson (builder)

C. Statement of Significance (include summary statement of significance as first paragraph):

384 Bellevue is an architecturally distinct home in the Adams Point neighborhood and stands as an important reminder of what was once an affluent, architecturally rich neighborhood in Oakland. Built for businessman and local politician Eugene A. Young and family in 1908, the home was designed by notable local architect Charles McCall & Willson Wythe and represents a significant example of McCall’s, in particular, developing style. It is a primary resource for the Bellevue-Euclid Residential District which was established in 1986 and considered an Area of Primary Importance or National Register-eligible district.



Map of district from 1986 survey

TIME & PLACE

In 1905, after the death of Oakland “co-founder” Edson Adams, his three children agreed to subdivide their father’s acreage known as Adams’ Point. Each sold their respective inheritances off, thus dividing Adams’ Point into smaller subdivisions.

384 Bellevue Ave is within the boundaries of the “Highland Subdivision”. Soon after inheriting the subdivision, it was quickly developed and the sale of lots began. By 1905-1906, newspaper advertisements are published boasting the amenities and conveniences of the Highland Subdivision.

As the neighborhood developed and Oakland’s population grew after the 1906 earthquake displaced San Franciscans, upper-middle class, businessmen and politicians began moving into Adams’ Point. Many homes were commissioned by local architects which is evident from the remaining homes’ variety of styles.

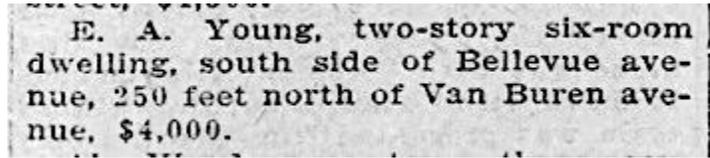
With a permit issued in 1908 for a value of \$4000, 384 Bellevue was one of the early homes constructed in the subdivision, and, according to the 1986 Bellevue-Euclid Residential District report, one of few of its “development generation” remaining today. Report attached for additional details of the history of the Highland Subdivision, the Bellevue-Euclid Historic District and the homes in the vicinity.



[Oakland Tribune, July 29, 1905]

PEOPLE

The then “two-story, six-room dwelling” at 384 Bellevue Avenue was commissioned by Eugene A. Young for his family.



[Oakland Enquirer, October 10, 1908]

Young was a businessman, owning Young’s Meat Market with his brother on 7th Street at Magnolia in West Oakland. In 1902, Young had commissioned architect Charles McCall to build two-story flats on Poplar Street in West Oakland. Similar to many successful business owners at the time, Young’s move from the old to newer neighborhoods was a common pattern.

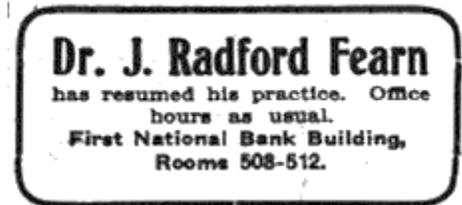
As his career evolved, he served as the president of the Merchant’s Exchange, Chamber of Commerce and was the elected “Member No. 5” of the Oakland School Board.



[Oakland Enquirer, May 7, 1921]

Around 1920, Young moved from Bellevue Ave. to 1112 Clarendon Crescent, following the pattern of many well-to-do families moving from Adams’ Point to Piedmont or Piedmont bordering neighborhoods. Young died in 1924.

John Radford Fearn purchased Bellevue in 1920. He was a physician whose practice was located at the First National Bank Building at 1401 Broadway. He later moved his practice to 230 Grand Ave, presumably to be closer to home.



[Oakland Enquirer, October 5, 1909]

Fearn was a society man and made headlines twice with marriages ending in divorce. Fearn, third wife Ada, Fearn’s parents John and Manuelita English, son Robert and “servant” resided at 384 Bellevue until 1938 when they moved to unincorporated Contra Costa County.

Sold in 1938 to Richard A. Bohn, Sr., a chemist, who previously rented an apartment around the corner at 351 Palm Ave. The Bohns lived at Bellevue for about 28 years. Over the following 30 years, the residence was inhabited by four other owners including Robin Jahnke, member of Oakland’s Historic Preservation Task Force and Adams’ Point preservation activist as well as Fairyland Executive Director, CJ Hirschfield.

ARCHITECTS

While 384 Bellevue Avenue was designed by the offices of Charles McCall and Willson Wythe, their partnership was short-lived and many characteristics of the residence share similarities with other McCall homes. For this reason, I have chosen to focus my research on the significance of Charles McCall as a Bay Area architect.



[The Architect and Engineer, April 1910]

Charles McCall was a “prominent” Bay Area architect whose body of work was quite prolific. While the name is lesser known, McCall was a contemporary of widely recognized architects including Willis Polk, Julia Morgan, John Hudson Thomas, Bernard Maybeck, among other local architects who contributed to early Adams’ Point, including A.W. Smith, C.W. Dickey, Milwain Bros., Chapin & Morris, and more.

McCall practiced in multiple styles of architecture, able to design in the style of the time and trend. He designed many significant historic buildings in the Bay Area, both residential and commercial and across the greater area including San Francisco, Alameda, Piedmont, Berkeley and Marin. At the time of his death, his portfolio included over 225 known buildings—though some records show numbers as high as 600.

McCall was born in Oakland in 1878. As a young boy, his family moved to his mother, nee Rachel Cluett’s ancestral home in the Channel Islands, and later to the southern coast of England where he studied design and architecture at the Perkins Academy and the Bournemouth Institute of Science and Art. In 1897, his family moved back to Oakland where he worked in the offices of architects D. F. Oliver, F. D. Voorhees and N. Barker.

While records indicate that McCall was building as early as 1897 through the offices in which he worked, he became a licensed architect in 1901 and opened his own office that year. Many of his early buildings were in West Oakland and the Telegraph corridor, but by 1902, he had designed at least 2 homes in the Adams Tract. Even at the start of his career, his “style” varied, including flats and apartment buildings in the Colonial Revival and Mission Revival styles.

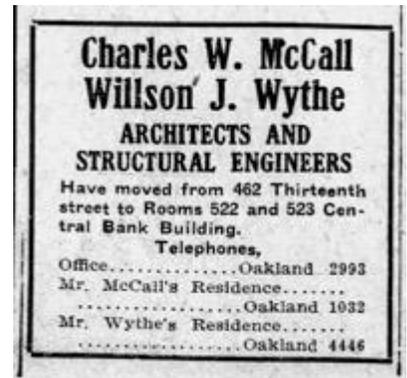
McCall’s first undertaking as a young architect was designing a home for his family at 3215 Telegraph Ave. Many of what would become signature elements of his body of work are seen in this home, including the notched beams, intersecting gables, bargeboards—many of which are notable characteristics of 384 Bellevue. 3215 Telegraph Avenue was re-developed in 2017. The original structure has been incorporated into the renovation and remains somewhat visible despite a street level enlargement around the perimeter.



[3215 Telegraph Avenue, Residence of Charles (Sr.) & Rachel McCall, c. 1897-8 Google Maps 2016]

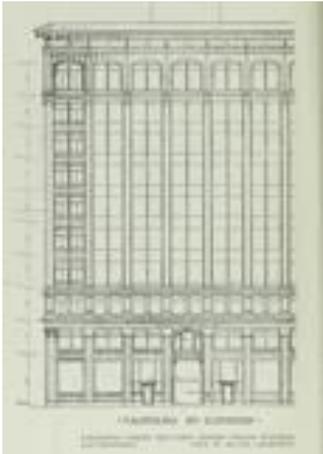
In 1906 McCall partnered with Willson Wythe and together they opened their own practice. As the East Bay population expanded quickly during that time, McCall and Wythe's practice boomed. They began designing large residences for successful families in Oakland and Piedmont in styles described as "Swiss" and "English."

When McCall and Wythe's partnership formally ended in 1910, McCall went on to design countless other residential and commercial buildings of a wide variety of style. The two may have continued to collaborate after the dissolution of their joint office, as permit records indicate an application in 1920 under the applicant name of McCall and Wythe. Despite the partnership, McCall is individually applauded in a 1910 *Architect and Engineer* article for his "original and artistic" designs.



[Oakland Enquirer, August 1, 1906]

Perhaps most well-known for his 1919 design of the Robert Dollar Building in San Francisco's now Financial District, McCall was commissioned by shipping magnate Robert Dollar to renovate an existing five-story building. Reworked to become the eleven-story building that still stands, the project marked a significant post WWI building boom and downtown San Francisco revitalization. Of the building, Irving Morrow, designer of the Golden Gate Bridge, wrote "There have since been erected or started in the city's financial district structures of greater height and mass, but it is doubtful if any to date can claim a superior interest and beauty."



Throughout the course of McCall's approximately half-century long career, he went on to design countless homes, apartments, commercial, religious and government buildings, the total number not fully quantified, though Will King and Gail Lombardi's research for the Piedmont Historical Society credited McCall with "...over six hundred residences and commercial buildings which are scattered from the City of Mexico to the State of Washington." *East Bay Builder*, March 15, 1927.

[The Architect and Engineer, 1921, San Francisco Public Library Archives]

While McCall's body of work was expansive, and perhaps not yet properly quantified, his residential and commercial work remain an integral part of Oakland's history. And for the buildings still standing today, they each tell a unique tale of Oakland's many evolutions, including expansion from old neighborhoods eastwards; stylistic trends from Colonial and Mission Revival to Craftsman to Spanish Colonial to Tudor Revival; commercial development for Oakland's growing commerce; development of City community and recreation; . "All told, Mr. McCall's work is dignified, varied, unprejudiced, unquestionably an asset to the community." *Architect & Engineer*, Irving Morrow, 1921

Throughout his career, McCall was named in notable publications, *The Architect & Engineer*, *Pacific Coast Architects*, *East Bay Builder* and *The Oakland Tribune*. The *East Bay Builder* wrote of McCall, "Charles W. McCall has been conceded by the building industry to have done much toward making our East Bay cities more attractive and beautiful." Upon his death in 1948, McCall had built a legacy of timeless, unique homes and buildings that tell the story of Oakland's early decades by their design, structural integrity, use of materials and craftsmanship.



Clockwise from top left:

- 382 Euclid Ave, 1909, Bellevue-Euclid Residential District; Glasscock Residence, *Architect and Engineer*, Vol. 20, No. 3, 1910;
- Three Flats for Mrs. R. Wyatt, Oakland, *Architect and Engineer*, Vol. 20, No. 3, 1910;
- Wholesale Produce Market, 145 - 327 Franklin Street - 370 - 423 Second Street, *Oakland Heritage Alliance Newsletter*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 1987;
- 733 Longridge Rd, Oakland, 1918;
- Four Six-Room Flats for Mrs. R. McCall (Mother), *Architect and Engineer*, Vol. 20, No. 3, 1910



Clockwise from top left:

- YWCA Boarding Home, aka Lake Merritt Lodge, 2332 Harrison St., Oakland Tribune, March, 28, 1926;
- Hill Court Apartments, 465 Bellevue Ave, Oakland, 1920 (McCall & Wythe);
- Oakland Lawn Bowling Club, Lakeside Park, Oakland Tribune, August 15, 1926;
- 1099 Ardmore, Oakland, 1918 (former home of Robert Dollar's son);
- Holland Building, 1400-1404 Franklin St, Oakland, 1923-24;
- Garage, *Architect and Engineer*, 1921

And of McCall's work no longer remaining, these too tell stories of Oakland. Of battles to preserve versus develop, of freeways separating and segregating neighborhoods and communities, of the flight of the prosperous eastwards towards Piedmont and other suburbs. For all these stories, preservation of remaining structures, including preservation of 384 Bellevue Avenue is all the more critical.

RESIDENCE RECENTLY COMPLETED FOR PHYSICIAN ON VAN BUREN AVENUE



NUMEROUS attractive residences have been constructed of late in the Adams Point district, among them being a beautiful and comfortable home for Dr. H. S. Kergan on Van Buren avenue, the plans having been drawn by Chas. W. McCall. This residence, which is of cement exterior, is arranged interiorly both for comfort and attractiveness. The interior woodwork is of the latest pattern and the plans of the rooms permit of furnishing arrangements which are both pleasing to the eye and modern in colorings and design.

[469 Van Buren Ave, c. 1911, demolished. Oakland Tribune, July 1, 1911]



[469 Van Buren Ave, 2018]

PERSONAL

When my husband and I visited 384 Bellevue during an open house, a Craftsman-style home was not on my wish list. But something about this house was different. It had the steep gables of the San Francisco “Queen Anne” I grew up in, it was multi-storied with bedrooms upstairs, it had unique decorative elements that showcased craftsmanship and design, it was different from the single-story craftsman bungalows I was more familiar with. It was unusual, asymmetrical, unpredictable and I couldn’t pinpoint the precise style. It felt interesting and it felt...one of a kind.

As I spent more time in the house, I became increasingly puzzled by it. Was it in fact a craftsman? What was its history? Where did it fit the story of Adams Point and the greater Oakland at large? I found myself perusing the historical binder left behind from a previous owner with the 1985 survey in it and Googling various addresses of McCall’s buildings. On walks and drives around Oakland and Piedmont, I wondered about that notched beam end and whether that was synonymous with McCall or used by many architects and builders.



[childhood home on 29th St, SF, c. 1907]

Struggling to find a suitable architectural-style for the home, the First Bay Tradition vernacular spoke to me. *“First Bay Tradition (1880-1920): Eschewing the highly ornamented Victorian styles also popular at this time, First Bay Tradition architects developed a building vernacular linked to nature, site, and locally sourced materials. The style emphasized volume, form, and asymmetry. Characteristics of the First Bay Tradition include the use of local materials, particularly redwood; an emphasis on craftsmanship and the Arts and Crafts movement; the use of unpainted wood shingle cladding; and a sensitivity to site and climate. Along with natural wood, shingle, and clinker brick, materials such as field stone and river stone were popular for cladding the wood frame structural systems.”* – San Francisco Planning, Preservation Bulletin, Architectural Periods and Styles in San Francisco

I’ve spent countless hours poking holes in walls to uncover the home’s origins, from digging out remaining pieces of siding in the basement to find the dark brown, almost black stain on the old growth redwood, to ripping out the kitchen flooring to reveal original hardwood, to discovering the original wooden roof shingles that still sit on the skip sheathing. I’ve obsessed over the gutters, their deliberate extension past the eaves and square profile notched into the rafter tails (despite the original wood ones being removed), pondered the notched joists of the covered porch and wondered of the original intent—a trellis, perhaps? This house tells as many stories about the families who lived before and made their respective marks on the home and community.

When I first inquired about the Mills Act, Betty Marvin directed me to a 2010 publication by the Piedmont Historical Society on the life and works of McCall. I reached out to Society Director, Gail Lombardi, for a copy. She graciously welcomed me into her home and told me of a gentleman who had lived at 210 Hillside Ave., Piedmont, who had become obsessed with McCall and inspired the research for the publication. In the introduction, author Will King shares an anecdote that sparked his curiosity about McCall. He tells a story of a day when he was gardening outside his home when a jogger ran by and yelled, “It’s a McCall!” and proceeded to describe his home with its nested gables, bargeboards and notched beams. The jogger was none other than previous 384 owner and Adams Point preservationist Robin Jahnke.

Coincidentally, or fatefully, perhaps, the co-author of the publication, researcher and former resident of 210 Hillside Ave, Will King, is someone I know. I work for an Oakland-based general contractor and custom millwork shop. I develop pricing for and manage a number of renovations and restorations of historical homes each year. Last year, I had helped to develop a project with Will at his new Orinda home. Will, thrilled to learn that I am now the owner of 384 Bellevue Ave. has graciously shared his knowledge, stories, sources and files with me,

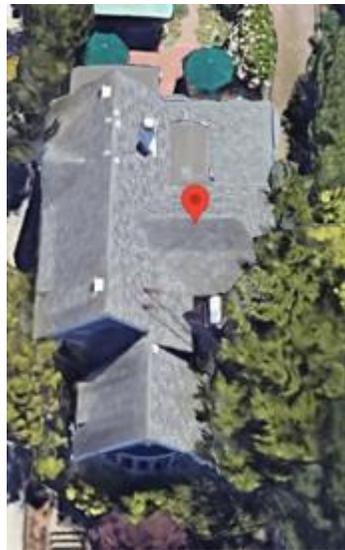
leaving me feeling committed to preservation and stewardship of 384 Bellevue Ave.

Following the excitement of making the personal connection, I performed a quick search on the MLS listing history of 210 Hillside Ave. and was floored by what I saw. A multi-gabled home with notched beam ends, large bargeboards, 5 bay windows, overhanging eaves, while stucco, was so similar to 384 Bellevue. But the interior was nearly identical. From built-ins to wainscoting, coffered ceilings, fireplace mantel details, clearly McCall (or McCall and Wythe) had signature details that he replicated throughout his work.

This realization that the house that to me appears so unique, stuck in time between Victorian-Queen Anne, Tudor Revival and Craftsman, was replicated, refined, adjusted to accommodate the wealth and family sizes of its occupants, the site, has sent me on my own journey of discovery. Are there more out there?



1625 San Antonio Ave,
Alameda c. 1908



130 Monticello Ave, Piedmont
c. 1908



210 Hillside Ave, Piedmont c.



384 Bellevue Ave, Oakland
c. 1908-9



18 Mesa Ave, Piedmont c.
1909



130 Monticello Ave,
Piedmont c. 1908



1625 San Antonio Ave,
Alameda c. 1908



384 Bellevue Ave, Oakland
c. 1908-9

384 Bellevue, Oakland



1625 San Antonio, Alameda



18 Mesa, Piedmont



210 Hillside, Piedmont



9. SOURCES / BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- 1) Historic Resources Inventory – Bellevue-Euclid Residential District, 1986
 - 2) Historic Resources Inventory—384 Bellevue Avenue, 1986
 - 3) Designing for a Purpose: The Life and Works of Charles W. McCall, Will King and Gail Lombardi, A Publication of the Piedmont Historical Society, Vol. 11 – Summer/Fall 2010
 - 4) East Bay Builder, Louis Webb, March 1927
- *Additional sources and references cited within

10. FORM PREPARED BY

Name: Eliza Strauss
 Organization/Title (if any): Owner Date: 4/27/2024
 Address: 384 Bellevue Ave Telephone: 415-310-1948
 City/Town: Oakland State: CA Zip: 94610 Email eliza.strauss@gmail.com

DEPARTMENTAL USE ONLY

rev.

1/10/2020

A. Accepted by: _____ Date: _____

B. Action by Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board

(1) ___Recommended ___Not recommended for Landmark/ S-7/S-20 designation

Date: _____ Resolution number: _____

(2) ___Designated as Heritage Property Date: _____

C. Action by City Planning Commission Date: _____

___Recommended ___Not recommended for Landmark/ S-7/S-20 designation

D. Action by City Council Date: _____

___Designated: Ordinance No: _____ ___Not Designated