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Two Historic Buildings Set the
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* TREND ALERT:
safety on
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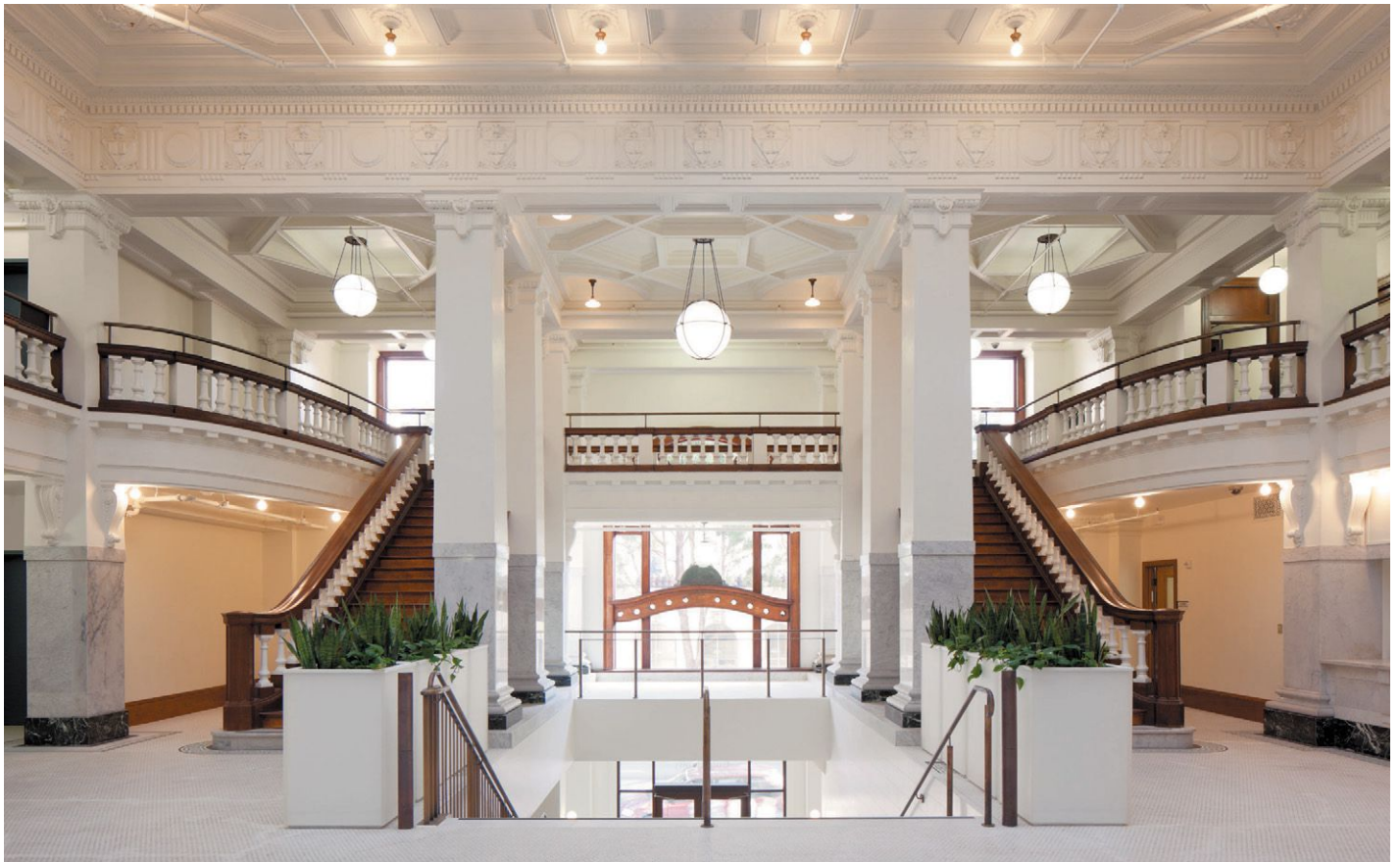
THIS
ISSUE IS
INTERACTIVE!
See Page 10

IMPROVING YESTERDAY FOR TODAY

[MULTIFAMILY]

A SOCIAL PURPOSE

PHOTOS: MARK LUTHRINGER



Sometimes the challenge in adaptive reuse is to transform not only the function or systems of an existing building but also its meaning. In contrast, for Kelly Cullen Community, an adaptive reuse of the historic Central YMCA in San Francisco, the challenge was to preserve the Y's holistic dedication to body, mind and spirit in the context of a truly innovative integration of new homes for homeless people, supportive services for residents and supportive services for the whole Tenderloin neighborhood.

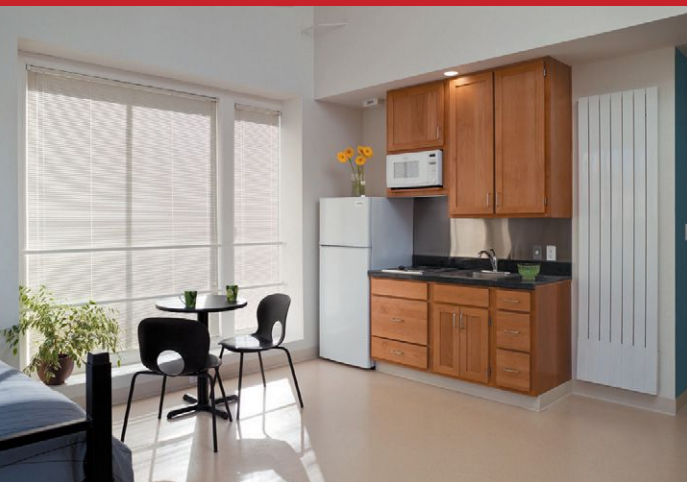
The building, a National Register Criterion C, also embodies meaning in its preservation of an exceptional historic resource. The majestic 9-story classical building was designed by the prominent McDougall Brothers Architects. Their busy practice extended across California and included churches, three Carnegie libraries and other significant civic buildings.

The Y design and construction was completed in 1908 immediately following the 1906 earthquake and fire. The size and varied program of the central branch building reflected the Young Mens' Christian Association's ambitions. Despite the challenges of the period following the disaster and World War I, the San Francisco YMCA—as the association reported in the Y.M.C.A. Year Book (April 30, 1925)—was No. 1 among the 15 largest associations in North America in order of its achievements.

The building occupies a key corner in the Uptown Tenderloin National Register District. The Y faced a time limit to execute more than \$15 million of seismic improvements for the building's assembly spaces and historic standards of design and construction. Their decision to move the Y programs to a new location after 98 years of operation put the building at risk. In 2007, the

A Historic San Francisco YMCA Building Maintains Its Historic Architecture and Role in the Community

WRITTEN BY | LISA GELFAND, FAIA, LEED AP



Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corp. (TNDC) acquired the building (now known as Kelly Cullen Community). Through a truly complex five-year long process, TNDC managed a \$95 million rehabilitation process that depended on major funding from a variety of public and private sources, each with their own criteria.

Foothold into the Future

Kelly Cullen Community is named in honor of TNDC's former Executive Director Brother Kelly Cullen, who passed away in November 2010. A dynamic force, Brother Kelly was a Franciscan friar; early resident of TNDC's Aarti Hotel, a single room occupancy residential hotel; and a tireless advocate for the Tenderloin neighborhood and its lowest-income residents. Kelly Cullen Community exemplifies his spirit, by bringing beauty and showing respect for San Francisco's poorest residents. In Brother Kelly's words, "With safe, affordable housing and the power of community, TNDC offers a foothold into the future."

Brother Kelly believed in serving the poorest of the poor. But, in its mission to house the homeless, TNDC faced real challenges in meeting the needs of people who might have lived on the streets for many years. From the beginning, the Y project was meant to locate housing and services together. This was a goal shared by the San Francisco Department of Public Health (DPH). DPH recognizes homelessness as more of a health risk factor than HIV, yet the complexity of the health problems suffered by homeless people makes it even more challenging to house them. For Kelly Cullen Community, DPH funded TNDC to house people with chronic health issues and also stepped in with a clinic to be located on the ground floor of the building. The clinic welcomes residents, as well as patients from the neighborhood and community at large.

In a new building it might have been difficult to justify including a gym, auditorium and skylit atrium lobby. Indeed, as part of the Kelly Cullen Community renovation, a small gym,

Materials

EXTERIOR

ALUMINUM STOREFRONTS // Arcadia Inc., www.arcadiainc.com
TPO ROOF SYSTEM // FiberTite, www.fibertite.com

STUDIO APARTMENTS

FLOORS // Nora Plan Classic from Nora, www.nora.com
CEILINGS, DOORS, TRIM AT DOORS AND WINDOWS // Dunn Edwards, www.dunnedwards.com
CABINETS // Lanz Cabinet, lanzcabinets.com
BLINDS // Faber from Hunter Douglas, www.hunterdouglas.com
FURNISHINGS // Multiplicity Design, multiplicitydesign.com

CLINIC

FURNISHINGS // Dina C. Design Studio, cheyettedesign.com

RESIDENTIAL CORRIDORS

FLOORS // Marmoleum from Forbo, www.forbo.com
BASE // TS Series from Burke, burkeindustries.com
WALLS, CEILINGS AND TRIM AT DOORS // Dunn Edwards

PUBLIC RESTROOMS

FLOOR, BASE AND WALLS // Daltile, www.daltile.com
BLINDS // Faber from Hunter Douglas
PARTITIONS // Bobrick, www.bobrick.com

Left: A clinic is located on the ground floor of the building. It welcomes residents, as well as patients from the neighborhood and community at large. Right: The former YMCA's assembly facilities provide residents and the Tenderloin neighborhood with a diverse variety of organizational, wellness and social activities.

handball courts, offices and the swimming pool were converted or replaced by housing. But for TNDC and DPH, the remaining assembly facilities offered a great opportunity to reach out to residents and the Tenderloin neighborhood with a diverse variety of organizational, wellness and social activities.

The project received Historic Preservation Tax Credit funding, requiring updates to comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. A series of alterations over the decades had impaired the integrity of a significant portion of the interior, most notably removal of the original grand stair from the main entry to the main lobby on the second floor. This move allowed the Y to control a single point of entry on the ground floor but created a maze of unintended circulation difficulties. Ironically, the need to create private and safe housing and public circulation for the new uses helped support the replacement of this key element.

For Executive Architect Gelfand Partners Architects and Historic Architect Frederic Knapp Architect, both of San Francisco, the construction of a new grand stair in the area of an original grand stair addressed three needs:

- It restored public access to the glorious sky-lit atrium and still intact historic interior spaces of gym, auditorium and president's office.
- It separated circulation to the private apartment realm.
- It re-established an understanding of the building that was lost for almost half its life span.

The scope of the rehabilitation included extensive exterior work,

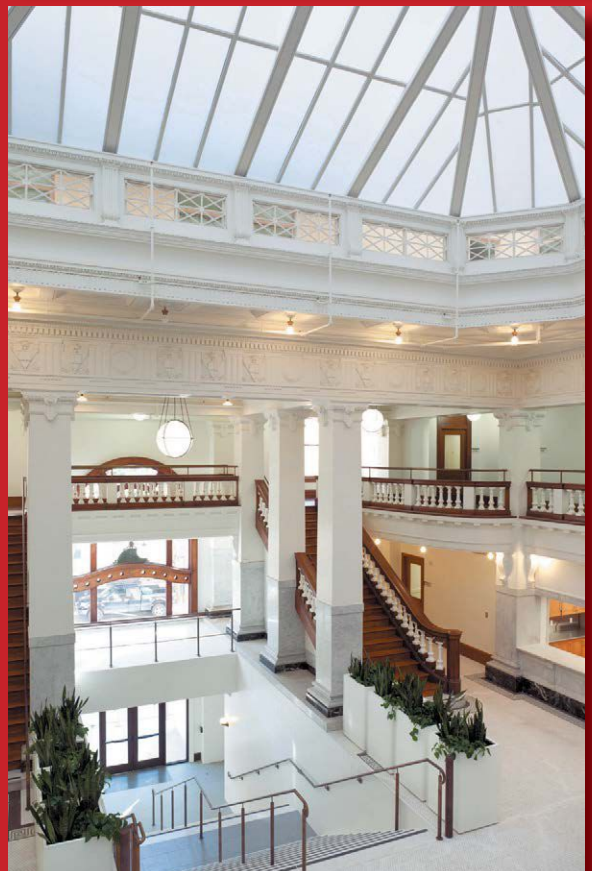
such as repairs to the original windows and reconstruction of the main entry and ground-floor storefronts that had been modified. On the interior, the grand second floor lobby was reconnected with the main entry and the missing balustrade of the twin lobby stairs from the second to third floor also was reconstructed. The auditorium was rehabilitated with only minor changes.

In addition to exterior repairs, the rehabilitation project included a full seismic upgrade and complete reroofing. The mechanical, electrical, plumbing, fire alarm, telephone and data infrastructure also were replaced. The clinic earned LEED Gold for Commercial Interiors, and the entire project, which uses solar-thermal domestic hot water, beats California's stringent energy code by 11 percent.

Significant Spaces

The project retained all the highly significant historic spaces, including the 3-story Men's Gym. Most of the first floor, heavily altered in the 1950s and later, has been converted into the DPH clinic. Although DPH would have loved to keep the pool for its potential therapeutic value, the funding was simply not available. The basement space, which housed the pool, has been converted to a resident meeting room. The pool excavation is preserved under a removable infill floor plate and the character-defining wall tile with a Vitruvian scroll pattern was retained and replicated at the deck level where the original had to be removed for structural work.

The 2-story, skylit lobby, 2-story auditorium and the Men's Gym





Funders of Kelly Cullen Community include:

- City and county of San Francisco, Mayor's Office of Housing, acquisition / construction / permanent loans with funding from HOME, CDBG and Hotel Tax Fund
- City and county of San Francisco, Department of Public Health, construction and services grants with funding from the California Mental Health Services Act of 2004 and General Fund
- California Tax Credit Allocation Committee, construction / permanent loan with funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009
- California Housing Finance Agency, construction / permanent loan with funding from the California Mental Health Services Act of 2004
- PNC Bank, historic tax credit equity investor
- Citi Community Capital, construction loan
- Silicon Valley Bank, construction / permanent loan with funding from the Federal Home Loan Bank of San Francisco Affordable Housing Program
- Corporation for Supportive Housing, services grant with funding from the Corporation for National Service
- U.S. Bank, acquisition loan


occupy at least 30 percent of the floor area of the building—a large amount given the project's mission of providing affordable housing to people who have had none. But maintaining these and other rehabilitated historic spaces convey to residents the social purpose the building has always had. These spaces also are used and valued by residents and give them a sense that their home is a place enjoyed and appreciated by generations of San Franciscans. Both programmatically and physically, the project has retained the most important aspects of the building's fabric, program and community role, ensuring that this historical resource will continue to convey the associations that tie it to San Francisco's past.

Project Financing

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 made the project possible, providing more than \$50 million in tax-credit financing in the face of the investor community's unwillingness to finance the project. However, this financing was intended for affordable housing units. Given the commitment to historic preservation, maximizing housing units also required imagination. The majority of the spaces on the second through eighth floors, including the original hotel rooms, which were only 7-feet wide

and lacked private bathrooms, were reconfigured into studio apartments. The basic circulation scheme was retained, including a portion of the original corridor with its finishes and doors. When the handball courts on the rear of the eighth floor and the Boys' Gym on the fifth floor were demolished, 18 units of new housing were built. One hundred twelve tiny rooms have been replaced by 172 livable studios.

Kelly Cullen Community is not only beautiful, it also provides vital services. The new housing provides homes for chronically homeless people coming from the streets of San Francisco. Among them are 50 tenants who come from DPH's list of high users of emergency room services. City and DPH referrals keep the building entirely full. The ground-floor clinic is the Tenderloin's largest DPH clinic, serving 25,000 visitors annually.

The dedicated TNDC staff works tirelessly to support community, from movie nights in the auditorium to coffee and donuts in the atrium. Kelly Cullen Community's name underscores the desire to create a community not an institution. As Don Falk, executive director of TNDC, reports, "You walk in and it's just a nice place". Ultimately, Kelly Cullen Community promotes holistic wellbeing for San Francisco's most vulnerable while reducing public spending on hospitalizations. 

Retrofit Team

At the grand opening of the project, the Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corp. presented more than 180 thank-you certificates to individuals who were instrumental in developing, designing and building this project. Following is an abbreviated list:

EXECUTIVE ARCHITECT // Gelfand Partners Architects, San Francisco, www.gelfand-partners.com

■ Lisa Gelfand, FAIA, LEED AP, principal in charge

■ Chris Duncan, project manager

■ Ariane Fehrenkamp, job captain

HISTORIC ARCHITECT //

Frederic Knapp Architect, San Francisco, www.knapp-architect.com

■ Frederic Knapp

■ Ruchira Nageswaran

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER // Tennebaum-Manheim Engineers, San Francisco, tmesf.com

■ Daniel Manheim

■ Nancy Tennebaum

MEP ENGINEER // Salas O'Brien Engineers Inc., Oakland, Calif., salasobrien.com

■ Joshua Heth, mechanical engineer

■ John Chinn, mechanical engineer

■ Jeffery Gosal, electrical engineer

ENERGY DESIGN // Bright Green Strategies, Berkeley, Calif., brightgreenstrategies.com

■ Sharon Block

GENERAL CONTRACTOR // Cahill

Contractors Inc., San Francisco, cahill-sf.com

■ Chuck Palley, principal

■ Blair Allison, project manager

■ Guy Estes, estimator

■ Matt Dennig, project engineer

■ Mark Graeven, project superintendent

WOOD-REPLICA MILLWORK //

Balliet Brothers Inc., South San Francisco, www.ballietbros.com

STOREFRONT INSTALLER // Valiant Glass, San Francisco, www.valiantglass.com

ROOFING CONTRACTOR // Alcal Roofing, Sacramento, Calif., www.alcal.com