San Francisco City Hall Tour
Welcome to San Francisco City Hall.

This building has served the people of San Francisco for more than 80 years, and I am proud that it will be here for generations to come.
City Hall Docent Program

- The City Hall Docent Tour Program will guide you through this historic landmark.

- In 1999 Mayor Brown created the Docent Program to guide members of the public throughout the magnificently restored City Hall.
San Francisco City Hall

Restored and renovated after the 1989 earthquake, City Hall re-opened for business and to the public on January 5, 1999.

San Francisco City Hall was originally built in 1915.
City Hall

- San Francisco City Hall is a huge structure occupying two city blocks.
- It contains over 550,000 square feet of space.
City Hall Dome

- The San Francisco City Hall dome is the tallest in the United States.
- At 307 feet 6 inches, it is 42 feet higher than the dome in the Nation’s capital in Washington D.C.
City Hall Dome

The intricate 23.5 karat gold leaf finish was restored on the exterior surface of the City Hall Dome.
City Hall Architects

- Architects Arthur Brown and John Bakewell were trained in Paris at the Ecole de Beaux Arts.

- City Hall is the finest example of the Beaux Arts style which merges elements of French, Roman and Greek design.
The floor of the Rotunda features an intricate design and is made out of Tennessee pink marble.
The walls that surround the Rotunda are made of limestone blocks from the state of Colorado.
The interior design of the Rotunda features four Medallions created by the famous sculptor Henri Crenier.
The Medallion of Equality has the equilateral triangle in her hand and the mythological father of mathematics in the background.
Medallion of Liberty

The Medallion of Liberty is extending an olive branch in a gesture of peace and liberty to all people of the world.
Medallion of Strength

The Medallion of Strength faces the legislative chambers and represents the strength of the legislative system of the City and County of San Francisco.
Medallion of Learning

The Medallion of Learning depicts a man reading to a group of children. The children represent the future.
Rotunda Embellishments

- There are many special embellishments throughout the Rotunda.
- Greek Mythological faces surround the first level of the Rotunda.
Rotunda – Father Time

- A depiction of Father Time is seen on the East wall of the Rotunda.
- An hour glass is in his hand. History is seen on his left and future on his right.
The inscription under Father Time reads: “San Francisco, oh glorious City of our hearts that has been tried and found not wanting. Go thou with like spirit to make the future thine.”
James Rolph Inscription

Mayor Jim Rolph was the visionary who insisted that the City of San Francisco build this magnificent structure.

Underneath Father Time, Mayor James Rolph had his name inscribed in the limestone.
Grand Staircase

- The Grand staircase leads to the Ceremonial Rotunda and the Board of Supervisor’s Chamber on the second floor.
- The stairs have been renamed the Charlotte Maillard Shultz stairs in honor of San Francisco’s former Chief of Protocol.
Ceremonial Rotunda

- The Ceremonial Rotunda is where many weddings or commitments of domestic partnership are performed.

- One of the most famous City Hall weddings was that of Joe DiMaggio and Marilyn Monroe.
Board of Supervisor’s Chamber

- Mayor Rolph is seated in the center.
- The opening session of the Board of Supervisors in 1915.
Board of Supervisor’s Chamber
Board of Supervisors

- The Board meets every Tuesday at 2:00 pm.

- The public is welcome and is encouraged to attend.

The Board of Supervisors consists of eleven representatives elected from districts in the City.
The President of the Board of Supervisors sits at the top of the dais and presides over the meetings.

The Clerk of the Board sits in the chair below.
Ornate Wood Paneling

- The wood paneling in the Board Chamber is Manchurian Oak.
- Manchurian Oak is softer and easier to carve than California Oak.
- There are no more forests of Manchurian Oak left in the world.
- These carvings cannot be recreated.
The benches, railings and desks in the Chamber are made of a harder California Oak.
Ceiling Designs

The ceiling in the Board Chamber looks like wood but is actually a cast plaster enhanced to show off the magnificent detail.
In the center of the ceiling a ship is visible.

The ship is the San Carlos which belonged to the explorer Ayalah who was the first to chart San Francisco Bay.
The plaster work above the public speaking area has four demon heads.

Rumor has it that this was done because the public always made trouble for the elected officials.
Floor Covering

- The original floor covering in the Board Chamber was Portuguese cork.

- Present carpeting shows off the Dahlia, the official flower of San Francisco.
Window Coverings

- The window coverings in the Board Chamber incorporate unique decorative gold features known as soutache.
Modern Technology

- State of the Art technology was utilized and installed during the restoration of City Hall.

- Fiber-optic technology allowed existing conduits to be used instead of changing the historic building.
The Board of Supervisor’s Committee Room was re-named after John Taylor to honor his 16 years as Clerk of the Board of Supervisors.
Window Design

An image of the ship the San Carlos is incorporated into the design of the leaded glass windows on the fourth floor gallery area.
The Mayor’s Office

- The Mayor’s Office is located in Room 200.
- The country and city flags are on either side of the entrance doors.
Mayor’s Reception

Members of the public and official visitors are welcomed in the Mayor’s Reception.
International Room

The International room is the site of many high level meetings and receptions.
Hallway of Alcaldes

- Leading to the Mayor’s Office is a gallery with pictures of former Alcaldes (Mayors) of San Francisco.

- The last Alcalde and first Mayor was John W. Geary.
Mayor Newsom’s Mementos

On his desk Mayor Newsom has .....
The Protocol Office recognizes Herb Caen as someone who epitomized the spirit of San Francisco. He is honored with a display in their office.
Mayor’s Rotunda Balcony

“Oro en Paz Fierro en Guerra” is inscribed in the limestone.

It means “Gold in Peace, Iron in War.”
George Moscone

- A statue of Mayor George Moscone is located in the Mayor’s ceremonial rotunda.
- Mayor Moscone served from 1972-1978.
Dianne Feinstein

- A statue of Mayor Dianne Feinstein is located in the Mayor’s ceremonial rotunda.

Willie L. Brown Jr.

❖ In recognition of the restoration of San Francisco City Hall, a bust of Mayor Willie L. Brown Jr. has been placed in the ceremonial rotunda outside the Mayor’s Office.

❖ Mayor Brown served from 1996-2004
Historic Elevators

- White gloved attendants originally operated the City Hall elevators.

- Known as the City Hall “Birdcages,” a person could look over and see the passenger in the adjacent elevator.
Elevator Designs

- The floor of the elevators is wood, inlaid with brass.
- The floor features the official monogram of San Francisco.
- The letters S and F are surrounded by Laurel leaves.
Accessibility

- City Hall is completely ADA accessible.

- A ramp was built to make access across the Rotunda possible.

- The railing replicates the same designs surrounding the Rotunda.
South Light Court

The South Light Court houses exhibits which chronicle significant events in San Francisco history.
The Ceremonial Shovel used by Mayor Jim Rolph to begin construction on the “New City Hall” is featured in one of the exhibits in the South Light Court.
South Light Court Vault

- An original vault used for the Treasury of the City and County of San Francisco.
South Light Court Statue

The head from a statue of the Goddess of Liberty was rescued from the original City Hall.
South Light Court Clock

- The clocks in the public areas of City Hall were designed by Albert Samuels Jr.

- The Roman numeral for 4 is spelled IIII. Samuels wanted to create a unique design specifically for City Hall.
South Light Court Flags

An exhibit honoring those who served in San Francisco’s 363rd infantry, 91st division is located in the South Light Court.
Light Court Skylights

- During the renovation, the covering placed on the skylights during the cold war was removed.

- This allowed natural light to once again properly illuminate the main floor of City Hall.
North Light Court

The North Light Court hosts a variety of Civic and private functions.
George Christopher

- A statue of Mayor George Christopher is located in the Goodlett Lobby on the first floor.

- Mayor Christopher served from 1956-1964.
John Shelley

- A statue of Mayor John Shelley is located in the Goodlett lobby on the first floor.

- Mayor Shelley served from 1954-1958.
Edward Robeson Taylor

- A statue of Mayor Robeson Taylor is located in the Van Ness lobby on the first floor.
- Mayor Robeson Taylor served from 1907-1910.
Angelo Rossi

- A statue of Mayor Angelo Rossi is located in the Van Ness lobby on the first floor.

- Mayor Rossi served from 1931-1943.
Frederick Funston

- A statue of Frederick Funston is located in the Van Ness lobby on the first floor.
- Funston was a distinguished Major General from San Francisco.
Michael O’Shaughnessy

- A statue of Engineer Michael O’Shaughnessy is located in the Van Ness lobby on the first floor.

- O’Shaughnessy oversaw the completion of the Dam at Hetch Hetchy.
City Hall Art

City Hall displays artworks in the South Light Court and in a public gallery on the ground floor level.
City Hall Events

City Hall hosts many civic and private events which often support services and functions for the people and City of San Francisco.
City Hall Renovation
To protect against earthquake damage, a system utilizing base isolators was installed under City Hall.

Building Response prior to restoration.
(Please click on image)

Building Response after restoration.
(Please click on image)

Simulation Courtesy of Forell/Elsesser Engineers Inc. Copyrighted.
San Francisco City Hall

- San Francisco City Hall has been restored to its former glory and at the same time updated in order to meet the needs of San Francisco for years to come.

- San Francisco City Hall: truly the people’s palace and crown jewel of San Francisco.