

CHARLES I. HAVENS

Architect
(1849-1916)

Charles Issacs Havens was born in Long Island, New York in June 1849 and was brought out to San Francisco by his parents Henry and Catharine Havens in 1856. His father Henry T. Havens was a lumber dealer. Havens had no formal architectural training, but he started work in 1864 as a draftsman in the office of architects S. C. Bugbee & Son, staying with them for five years learning the trade. He then worked for two years for society architect John P. Gaynor, whose clients included Charles Crocker, James G. Fair, William Sharon and Levi Strauss, before beginning a long association with architect Peter R. Schmidt. In 1881 Schmidt promoted Havens to partner and they continued to work together through the end of 1885. Schmidt is best known for the 1886 Haas-Lilienthal House at 2007 Franklin, the home today of San Francisco Architectural Heritage and S. F. Landmark #69.

Examples of grand houses that Havens designed with Schmidt, many now subdivided, are:

- Pacific Heights - 1976 California (1883, 6 apts.), 2525 Fillmore (1883, 6 apts.),
- 2619 Octavia (1885), 1809 Gough (also 1885, now 3 condos);
- Lower Pac. Hts. - 2583-97 Pine (1883, 16 apts.), 2722-24 & 2726-28 Pine (1884).

After parting from Schmidt, Havens opened his own practice and designed a magnificent home and carriage house for himself at 1381 South Van Ness, which is now S. F. Landmark #125, and these additional residences, in:

- Pacific Heights - 2965 Washington (1887), 2497 Pacific (1889), 2561 Washington (1890);
- Presidio Heights - 3343 Washington (1893).

Havens served as City Architect for 12 years from 1891. In 1895, he took on a partner, William Henry Toepke (1870-1949), who had trained as a draftsman in his office and had also worked for architects William Mooser and Emil Depierre. The Havens & Toepke partnership was to last for 20 years, until Havens retired in 1915. They gained an appreciation for office building architecture and designed several downtown buildings, at least two of which survive - the L-shaped building with matching façades at 153 Kearny/217 Sutter (1908), which wraps around the corner Argonaut Building, and the Flatiron Building, 1 Sutter at Market (1913, now S. F. Landmark #155). They also designed many residences, including the second home to be built in Presidio Terrace:



2636 Union

- Presidio Heights - 3232 Jackson (1897), 15 Presidio Ter. (1905), 135 Presidio Av. (1914);
- Pacific Heights - 2340 Vallejo (1902), 1958-60 Sacramento (1903, 2 apts.),
- 2120 Washington (1908), 2957-61 Washington (1908, 6 apts.);
- Cow Hollow - 2636 Union (1902), 2540 Filbert (1914);
- Nob Hill - 1315-25 Sacramento (1907, 6 apts.), 1073 Bush (1911, 11 apts.);
- Lake Street - 95 West Clay Park (1913).

Havens died at his ranch in Kenwood, Sonoma County, on April 28, 1916, at the age of 66.