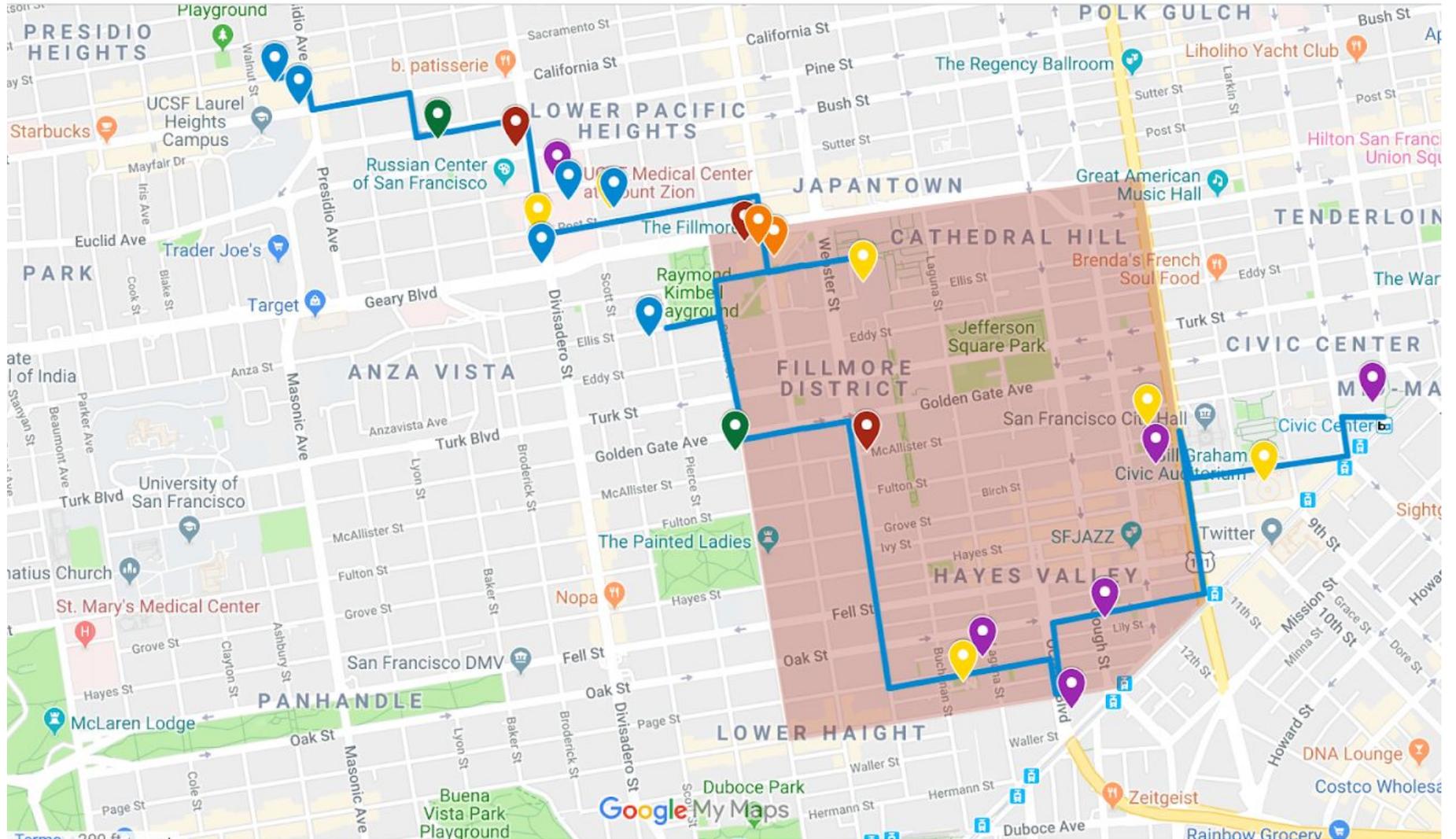


# Jewish Sights from the Civic Center to Presidio Heights: A Walking Tour



Begin at the **United Nations Plaza** at Civic Center BART station.

UN Plaza is one of the city's most notable public spaces. Jewish architect Lawrence Halprin designed the plaza in conjunction with John Carl Warnecke and Mario Ciampi under the Civic Center Station project.

Head **west** toward **Hyde St**  
300 ft

Turn **left** onto **Hyde St**  
300 ft

Turn **right** onto **Grove St**  
¼ mi

On your left, you will pass the **Bill Graham Civic Auditorium**. This 8,500-seat, multipurpose arena, at the heart of San Francisco's Civic Center, honors music promoter Bill Graham, who helped launch the careers of many prominent musicians in the mid-1960s. Graham was at one point the proprietor of The Fillmore auditorium, a venue in the Western Addition. He had a long association with San Francisco, but the psychedelic music he expounded has had global reach.

Turn **right** onto **Van Ness Ave**  
700 ft

Across the street, opposite City Hall, stands the **Herbst Theatre**. This Civic Center theater is named after philanthropists Herman and Maurice Herbst, significant patrons of the San Francisco arts scene.

To the immediate south of the Herbst is the **War Memorial Opera House**. This iconic landmark was designed by two prominent San Francisco architects: Arthur Brown, Jr., a Gentile, and Albert Lansburgh, a Jew. The San Francisco Opera has performed here since the building's construction in 1932.

Cross Van Ness and turn around, to the south.  
⅓ mi

This area, and much of the tour, lies within the boundaries of the **Fillmore District**, loosely defined. The Fillmore, a neighborhood of the Western Addition approximately bounded by Geary, Van Ness, Haight, and Steiner, has long been one of San Francisco's most ethnically diverse neighborhoods. It was, at one point in history, also one of its most Jewish, the closest the city has ever come to having a definitively Jewish neighborhood. Many of San Francisco's Jewish families and businesses could be found here from the late nineteenth into the mid-twentieth century. For much of this time, the Fillmore was seen as "trendy," a bourgeois area for affluent Jews who were not rich or high-status enough for wealthy areas like Pacific Heights.

Turn **right** onto **Oak St**  
¼ mi

At the intersection of Gough and Oak, look to your left. This building, 182-198 Gough Street, was designed by the cartoonist **Rube Goldberg**, best known for the intricate, absurd inventions he illustrated. Goldberg, a San Francisco native, lived here for much of his life after constructing the property in 1911. He retained the site for the rest of his life—until 1972.

Turn **left** onto **Octavia St**  
700 ft

Along Octavia at the corner with Market, look to your left to see the housing complex **8 Octavia St**. Constructed by architect Stanley Saitowitz in 2014, these luxury condominiums overlook the Central Freeway. Saitowitz has proved a controversial figure in the world of Bay Area architecture, drawing both praise and criticism for the mechanistic nature of his work.

Cross the road and turn around, facing north.  
300 ft

Look at the houses across the street from 8 Octavia. This site has a long and complicated history. Over the years, 121 Haight has served as a site of worship for Christians, as a Japanese American community center, and a communist meeting house. From 1917, it was also the site of the **Young Men's and Young Women's Hebrew Association of San Francisco**, a role it served until the construction of the JCCSF in 1933.

Turn **left** onto **Page St**  
¼ mi

Pay attention to 300 Page St, on your right after crossing Laguna. Now the San Francisco Zen Center, this building was once the home of the **Emanu-El Sisterhood**, Congregation Emanu-El's women's organization. The building itself was designed by Dorothy Worsmer Coblentz, the first Jewish woman architect in the American West, in an industry still dominated by men.

Across the street on the same block is the **Koshland Community Park and Learning Garden**. Named after the Koshland family, whose patriarch, Daniel Koshland, Sr., was the CEO of Levi Strauss Co., this community garden focuses especially on

providing gardening and educational programming to underserved youth.

Turn **right** onto **Webster St**  
½ mi

Along Webster Street once stood many Jewish businesses. At the intersection of Webster and Golden Gate was **White's Kosher Restaurant**. White's was, as its name suggests, an all-kosher restaurant at this site in the Fillmore of the early 20th century. The establishment served no dairy.

Turn **left** onto **Golden Gate Ave**  
1000 ft

Across the street on this block stood **Diller's Strictly Kosher Restaurant**. In the 1920s, Diller's was considered the biggest, best, and most popular Jewish restaurant in San Francisco. Later, it changed ownership and became Kretsch's Kosher Restaurant, before going out of business entirely.

On the corner of Fillmore was once **Waxman's Bakery**. Now marked by a sidewalk plaque on the east side of Fillmore Street, the Jewish bakery Waxman's once stood at this site. Waxman's was one of many Jewish stores in the Fillmore in the 1920s, at a time when the neighborhood was the closest in the city to a definitively Jewish area.

Turn **left** on **Steiner St**  
200 ft

Next to what is now a bed and breakfast on the west side of Steiner is 1043 Steiner St. Famed violinist **Yehudi Menuhin**, often considered one of the greatest ever, grew up at this address in the

1910s. Menuhin's father was a Hebrew school principal who homeschooled Yehudi and his siblings here. Later in life, Menuhin gained the patronage of Sidney Ehrman, an established lawyer who lived in Pacific Heights. Ehrman and his wife Florence, a daughter of Isaias Hellman, treated the young Menuhin like an extended family member, and eventually funded his travels to England, where he remained for much of his life.

Turn around and walk north  
1,000 ft

Turn **left** onto **Ellis St**  
600 ft

At the corner of Ellis and Farren is the **Jewish Community High School of the Bay**. This school is a coeducational, pluralistic Jewish high school, one of two in the Greater Bay Area. Its location borders a historically Jewish neighborhood, the Fillmore. Of special note is the **Jewish Community Library**, located on the second floor of the building. The library boasts a wide collection of books, many of them Jewish, for use by the public.

Cross the road and turn around  
600 ft

Turn **left** onto **Steiner St**  
300 ft

Turn **right** onto **O'Farrell St**  
¼ mi

What is now Rosa Parks Elementary contains the **Raphael Weill Child Development Center**. Raphael Weill owned one of San Francisco's most famous shops: the White House, a department

store in the Financial District named for its striking white facade. The city named this elementary school after him, although in 1995 the name changed to honor Rosa Parks. The school's center for early childhood learning still bears Weill's name—in addition to his business, Weill was a prominent philanthropist and public servant. He served on the San Francisco Board of Education, financially supported the growth of the French Hospital, helped fund relief efforts after the 1906 earthquake, and was a founder of the notorious Bohemian Club, an ultrawealthy gentlemen's club ironically also known for serving conservative WASP elites.

Turn around  
1000 ft

Turn **left** on **Fillmore St**  
700 ft

Wise Sons, a Jewish deli that opened in 2010, expanded with this branch in the Fillmore in 2016. An echo of past decades' Jewish restaurants in the neighborhood, **Wise Sons Bagel & Bakery** sells bagels, other baked goods, and deli sandwiches here.

**The Fillmore**, one of San Francisco's best-known music venues, has changed hands and locations several times over the years, but its traditional location is here, at the intersection of Geary and Fillmore. It is perhaps most famous for its associations with promoter Bill Graham, who ran the site between 1965 and 1968. Graham, a Holocaust survivor, was responsible for promoting many of the psychedelic era's biggest names, including the Grateful Dead, Janis Joplin, and Jefferson Airplane.

Originally the site of **Congregation Beth Israel**, the site next door to the Fillmore changed hands when that synagogue merged with a Daly City congregation, and became a private museum of sorts for

designer Tony Duquette. In 1973, this site also became home to the Peoples Temple of Jim Jones, of Jonestown infamy. The building was at that point the center of Jones' cult within the Bay Area. After the Jonestown tragedy, the building was destroyed, the current post office built in its place.

Turn **left** onto **Post St**  
 ½ mi

Before crossing Scott, on the right at 2150 Post, stands **Jewish Family and Children's Services**. JFCS is the oldest Jewish charity in the Bay Area. Even more, it is the oldest United States charity west of the Mississippi River. Founded in 1850 as the Eureka Benevolent Society, the organization has gone through waves of reinvention, absorbing and combining with other Jewish nonprofits, always in service of supporting people experiencing homelessness, illness, poverty, and other forms of distress.

The next address, 2180 Post St, is **Rhoda Goldman Plaza**. Rhoda Haas Goldman, a Haas by birth, married into the similarly illustrious Goldman family. As daughter of Walter Haas and Elise Stern, she was also an heir to the Levi Strauss estate. Goldman was an active leader in the San Francisco Jewish and secular communities throughout her life. At various points, she was president of the San Francisco Symphony, Congregation Emanu-El, and Mount Zion Hospital, as well as founder of the Goldman Environmental Prize alongside her husband. This assisted living facility, established by Jewish Family and Children's Services in 2000, bears the name of Goldman, who died in 1996.

Turn **left** onto **Divisadero St**  
 200 ft

At this intersection, on the left, is the **Osher Center for Integrative Medicine**. Bernard Osher, a businessman and philanthropist, granted funds to this integrative medicine complex in 1998. The Osher Center, an arm of UCSF, combines conventional Western medicine with alternative approaches.

On the next block is **Sinai Memorial Chapel**. Founded in 1901 at 1117 Buchanan St, Sinai provides Jewish funerals, burials, and mourner care to the entire spectrum of the Bay Area Jewish community, regardless of financial means or affiliation. Sinai is, unusually, a nonprofit, as well as the only Jewish funeral home between Los Angeles and Seattle. Although an 1888 law relocated San Francisco's cemeteries to Colma to allow the expansion of the Mission District, Sinai operates several cemeteries around the Bay Area: in Oakland, Colma, and Lafayette. This current building, designed by Polish American Jew Abraham Appleton, dates to 1938.

Turn around  
 1000 ft

On your right is UCF **Mount Zion Hospital**. Mount Zion was dedicated in 1897 and expanded in 1899, intended to serve the Jewish community of San Francisco as well as all who needed its services. In 1990, UC San Francisco acquired Mount Zion Hospital, long a site of medical research. Now, it is one of several UCSF campuses around the city, several of which bear Jewish names.

Behind what is now the entrance to the UCSF Women's Health Center, is **Maimonides Hospital**. Designed by Prussian-born, German Jewish architect Erich Mendelsohn, the hospital now belongs to UCSF and serves the attached clinic.

Turn **left** onto **Pine St**  
1000 ft

On the left after crossing Broderick is 2821 Pine St. **David D'Ancona**, a Sephardi Jew from Britain, made his living in the furrier business. From 1876, he served as the president of Western States District Grand Lodge of B'nai Brith, one of the most prominent public positions in the American Jewish community. He lived in this house.

Turn **right** onto **Baker St**  
300 ft

Turn **left** onto **California St**  
¼ mi

Turn **right** onto **Presidio Ave**  
300 ft

The **Jewish Community Center of San Francisco** lies at the corners of Presidio and California. The JCCSF is the oldest JCC on the West Coast, having served the city since its inception in 1933. The facility is open to all, Jewish and otherwise. Upon its founding, the JCC filled a gap in the city's Jewish community, which lacked the vibrant array of gathering spaces, social events, and programs that characterized it in previous years. In another form, the JCC existed at different sites since 1877, as the Young Men's Hebrew Association and other groups. Since 1933, the JCC has occupied this site on California Street. In 2004, the aging original building was torn down and replaced.

Turn **left** onto **Sacramento St**  
200 ft

On the same block as JCCSF, look to your left to see **Menorah Park Housing**. Menorah Park is an affordable assisted living facility for seniors, funded by the Jewish Community Federation. The complex offers a wide array of services to its residents, including translation, health education and monitoring, food programs, and accessibility services.

Located next to Menorah Park Housing and on the same block as the JCCSF is San Francisco's **Mikveh Society**. Many Jews come here for ritual purification, conversion ceremonies, and other life events.