

## **PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE HOSPITAL DISTRICT: RESIDENTIAL AND EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY**

### **PLANNING CONCEPT**

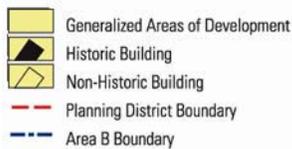
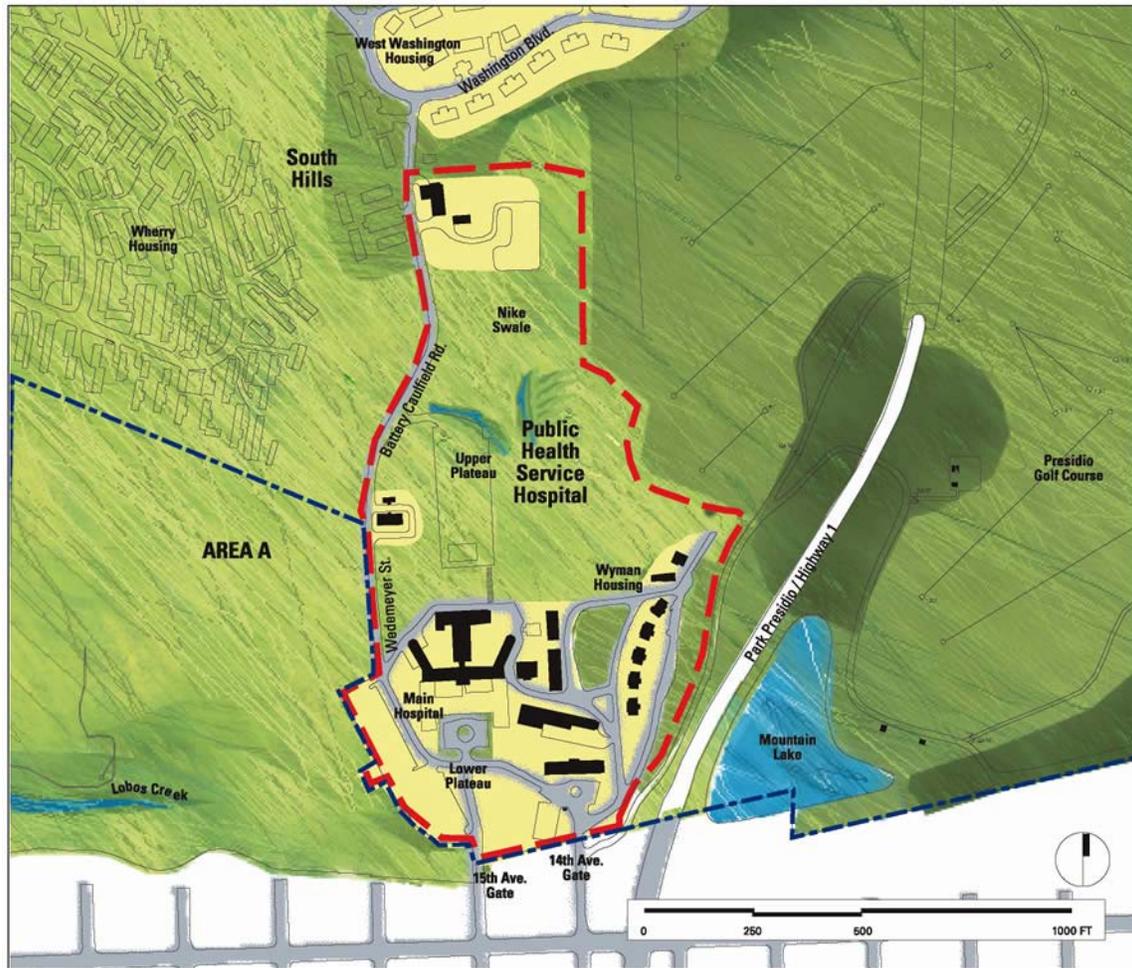
The historic complex of buildings at the former Public Health Service Hospital will be rehabilitated to accommodate new uses, with a preference for residential and educational uses. Important natural resources, including habitat for rare and unique plant and wildlife species, will be protected and enhanced. Non-historic structures may be removed, and replacement construction could be considered in the future. New construction would be carefully sited and designed to enhance the serene, campus-like historic setting.



**RESIDENTIAL AND EDUCATIONAL USES ARE PREFERRED FOR THE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE HOSPITAL DISTRICT**

### **Character, Land Use, and Open Space**

The Public Health Service Hospital (PHSH) district is situated on a gentle north-south ridge at the Presidio's southern boundary, overlooking the city and remote from other developed areas of the Presidio. The PHSH evolved as a separate entity, first under the administration of the U.S. Marine Hospital Service and then under the U.S. Public Health Service. The site, originally selected for development in the 1870s because of its proximity to Lobos Creek and Mountain Lake, has been developed into two plateaus, with most of the existing development located on the lower plateau. (See Figure 3.6.) The district contains 19 buildings, including the former U.S. Marine Hospital and its support buildings. The historic 170,000-square-foot main hospital building, built in 1932, was expanded in 1952 with a seven-story, 128,000-square-foot addition on the south side of the original building. The hospital closed in 1980.



Planning District Area	42 acres
Existing Total Building Area	400,000 square feet
Maximum Permitted Building Area	up to 400,000 square feet
Maximum Demolition	130,000 square feet
Maximum New Construction	130,000 square feet
Land Use Preferences	educational and residential

FIGURE 3.6  
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE HOSPITAL - RESIDENTIAL AND EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY

- Maintain the historic concentration of development on the lower plateau, and enhance open space on the upper plateau.
- Rehabilitate the former hospital for residential use; consider demolition of the non-historic hospital wings, replacing them with more compatible structures.
- Rehabilitate historic housing and accessory structures for a variety of complementary uses.
- Protect and enhance important natural resources, including habitat for rare plant and wildlife species.
- Protect and enhance existing wetland features on the upper plateau.
- Preserve and enhance views to and from the site. Continue and enhance recreational uses.
- Ensure that any new construction is sited and configured to be compatible with the historic district.

The upper plateau behind the hospital supports unique and ecologically significant native plant communities that include coast live oak woodland, central dune scrub, and riparian and dune slack wetland vegetation, as well as the San Francisco lessingia (*Lessingia germanorum*), a federally-listed endangered plant. The complex array of vegetation also provides valuable habitat for the largest known quail population in San Francisco, as well as other bird species. The potential for historic archeological resources is high in this area. The old Marine Cemetery, a significant archeological resource, dates back to the 1880s.

The PHSH district, historically separate and distinct from the rest of the Presidio's developed areas, will be a setting suitable to residential and educational uses. These building uses may be complemented by compatible outdoor recreational uses. Future planning may consider removal of non-historic structures, including the modern wings of the main hospital building. If a suitable tenant cannot be found to rehabilitate the historic hospital, the entire building may be considered for removal. Removal of the historic hospital and replacement construction would be considered as part of a separate undertaking. The Planning Guidelines (see below) would help ensure that any new construction would be sensitive to the prevailing architectural treatment, scale, and orientation of existing structures, and would be designed to reinforce the historic setting.

Remnant natural systems in this area will be preserved and revitalized. Ongoing activities in this district include restoration of native plant communities and wildlife corridors, as well as enhancement of the dune slack wetland east of the parking lot below the Nike Missile site. Future projects that might affect the conservation and recovery of the San Francisco lessingia will be carried out in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.



AN HISTORIC COLONIAL REVIVAL STRUCTURE LENDS CHARM TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE HOSPITAL COMPLEX

### **Access and Circulation**

The PHSH building complex has historically been an enclave separate from the rest of the Presidio. Two city streets, 14th and 15th Avenues, provide the main vehicular access. Alternatives for primary access, including reopening the 14th Avenue gate to vehicular access and operating 14th and 15th Avenues as a one-way couplet, will be studied. Access to the PHSH district from other parts of the Presidio will continue along Battery Caulfield Road; through-traffic will be discouraged. Connections to the surrounding network of trails and pathways will provide a scenic pedestrian gateway to other parts of the Presidio. Convenient access will be provided to nearby outdoor recreational amenities such as the Presidio Golf Course, Mountain Lake, and trails.

## PLANNING GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE HOSPITAL DISTRICT

### 1. Spatial Organization and Land Patterns

*Upper and Lower Plateaus.* Topography has influenced the development of the PHSH site throughout its 125-year history. The building core was sited on a relatively level natural bench in the south-facing slope west of Mountain Lake. An upper plateau above the building core was left more open. This distinction between upper and lower plateaus remains today.

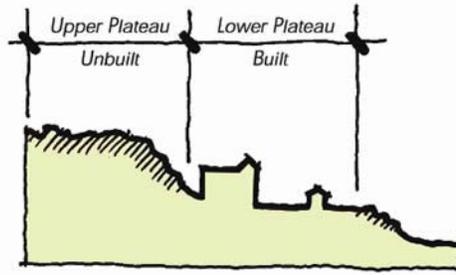


THE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE HOSPITAL DISTRICT AS SEEN FROM NEARBY MOUNTAIN LAKE

*Hierarchy of Building Sites.* The building complex retains much of the original design of the 1932 plan. Buildings were sited according to function and hierarchy in a campus-like setting. The hospital building retains the most prominent position facing out over the city. Associated buildings are located nearby to the east. Open lawns typically serve as formal foregrounds (front yards) for major buildings or building groups.

### SPATIAL ORGANIZATION AND LAND PATTERNS GUIDELINES

- Maintain the historic patterns of development, primarily on the lower plateau. The formal placement of buildings around open spaces and the definition of open space and streets through plantings should be retained. Infill construction should respect historic spatial relationships, scale, and orientation of buildings.
- Enhance open space and preserve natural processes for a functioning ecological system on the upper plateau below the Nike Missile site.



UPPER AND LOWER PLATEAUS

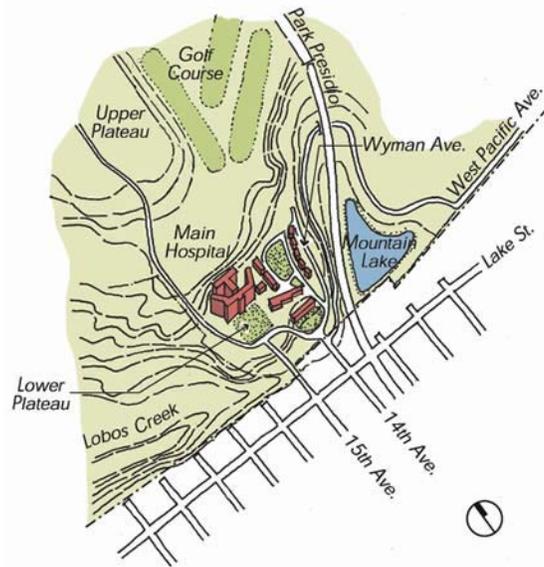
## 2. Buildings and Structures

*Formal vs. Informal Buildings.* The PSHH complex is comprised of the dominant hospital building and a number of smaller buildings. The main institutional structures face the city and present a strong image, with prominent massing and classical detailing. In contrast, the Wyman Avenue houses face east and are arranged in an arc on a knoll, overlooking Mountain Lake and its surroundings.

*Contrasting Architectural Character.* The architectural character of the PSHH complex is different from the rest of the Presidio, reflecting its historically separate governmental jurisdiction. The buildings adjoining the hospital structure are organized by function; the use of buff brick and flat red clay tile roofs helps to unify these buildings. Colonial Revival style architecture is used throughout the complex in both institutional and residential structures.

### GUIDELINES FOR BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

- Maintain the historic character of the site. In concert with historic building rehabilitation, cluster additions and/or replacement construction onto compact sites, close to existing buildings, to reinforce the campus-like setting.
- Ensure that any replacement construction is secondary to the former hospital as the predominant building in the complex.
- Ensure that new construction is compatible in scale, massing, height, color, and materials with the historic buildings in the area. Maximum heights should be between 30 feet to 45 feet for outbuildings and 70 feet for buildings adjacent to the main hospital.

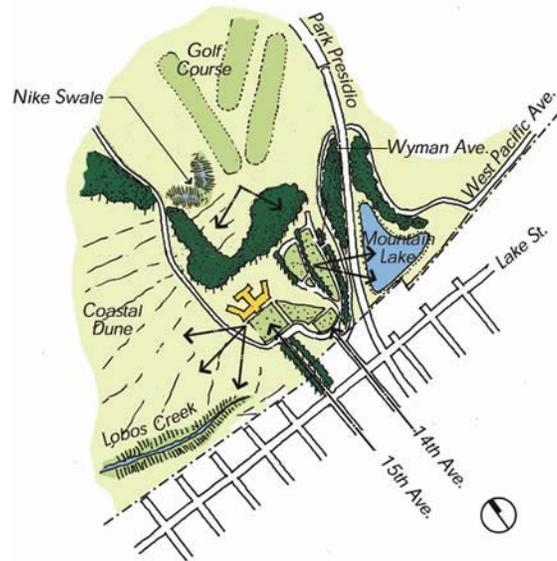


PRIMARY BUILDINGS CLUSTERED ON SMALL PLATEAU OVERLOOKING CITY

### 3. Open Space/Vegetation/Views

*A Rich Mix of Natural Features.* The PHSH district is sited on a ridge that drains west to Lobos Creek (the Presidio's source of drinking water) and east to Mountain Lake. Natural areas surrounding the hospital support a variety of native plant habitat, including rare and endangered species. A federally-listed endangered plant species, the San Francisco lessingia, is found on the upper plateau of the site.

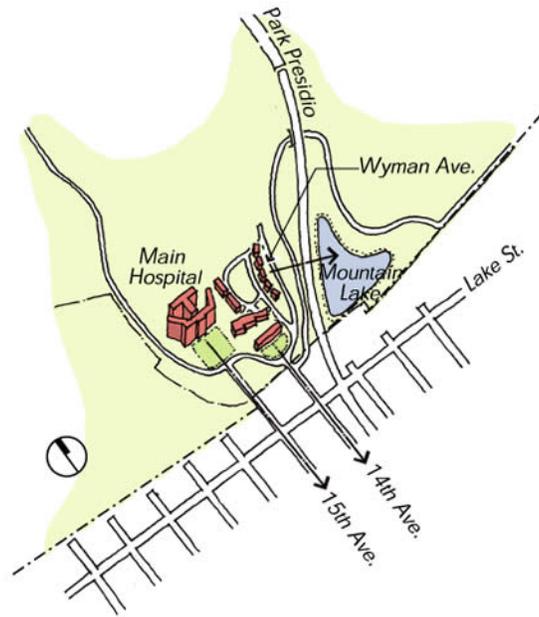
*Formal Landscaping.* Designed landscape features that characterize the PHSH complex include the hospital's front lawn and tree-lined entry roads, the Wyman Street houses' landscapes and tree plantings, the remnant cypress windrow on the north and west sides of the former cemetery, and a large stand of Monterey pine trees north of the hospital.



## SITE SURROUNDED BY A DIVERSE MIX OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

### GUIDELINES FOR OPEN SPACE/VEGETATION/VIEWS

- Rehabilitate and restore the upper plateau, below the Nike Missile site, as native plant habitat. Accommodate compatible recreational uses elsewhere consistent with protection of the natural resources.
- Respect the natural and historic terrace landform of the district. Major regrading and construction on slopes should be avoided.
- Protect Lobos Creek, the Presidio's drinking water source, and direct stormwater runoff away from the adjacent watersheds of Lobos Creek and Mountain Lake.
- Consider planting as part of the overall design of the site to articulate and better define historic open spaces and entry sequences.
- Preserve and enhance view corridors and panoramic viewsheds both from and to the site. Significant views include Mountain Lake from Wyman Terrace and Lobos Creek Valley from the western edge of the site, as well as sweeping views of the city and ocean from the upper plateau.
- Restore natural resources, and protect and enhance wetland and endangered species habitat.
- Locate new replacement construction to protect and preserve views and vistas.
- Protect and commemorate the former Marine Cemetery.



CONTRAST BETWEEN FORMAL ORIENTATION OF MAIN HOSPITAL AND  
INFORMALLY SITED ADJACENT BUILDINGS

**4. Circulation and Access**

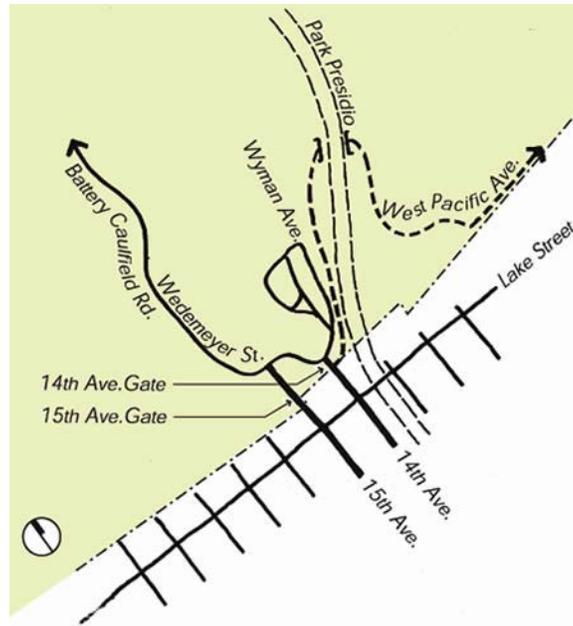
*Access Via 14th and 15th Avenues.* Historically, a curving, tree-lined drive entered the Presidio at 14th Avenue and ended at the hospital. This access is now gated and provides pedestrian access only. The 15th Avenue gate is the main vehicular entrance to the PHSH district.

*Internal Circulation Routes.* In the late 1980s, Wedemeyer Street and Battery Caulfield Road were connected to provide access from the PHSH complex to the rest of the Presidio. Circulation within the district is characterized by informal, curving roads that reinforce the site's campus-like character.

*Key Trails.* Several important trails intersect in the PHSH district. A key section of the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail runs through the site. The West Pacific Avenue trail extends to Mountain Lake, the Park Boulevard trail connects through the golf course to Washington Boulevard, and the Lobos Creek trail extends through the site to Baker Beach.

**GUIDELINES FOR CIRCULATION AND ACCESS**

- Maintain 14th and 15th Avenues as the main access; consider a one-way couplet for vehicles using these streets. A secondary entry should be promoted along Battery Caulfield Road to accommodate traffic coming from within the Presidio.
- Ensure that bike and pedestrian trails connect to the network of nearby local and regional trails.
- Minimize traffic impacts from new uses at the site.
- Enhance public access through improved mass transit options, both within the Presidio and via links to city transit.



PRIMARY SITE ACCESS FROM 14TH AND 15<sup>TH</sup> AVENUES