



PROWLER, Inc.

ISSUE #11 - Fall 2009

It's been ten years since David Prowler left City Hall to launch Prowler, Inc. It's a great excuse to thank all the friends and clients who have made this decade so successful. The breadth of these relationships has been the basis for this success. The range of clients includes City agencies, non-profits and institutions, and developers and landowners (you could click here to see a partial list). So to friends and colleagues: sincere gratitude.

PROWLER INC. PITCHING IN ON NEW SFMOMA



The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art has hired Prowler, Inc. to lead the government and community relations efforts furthering its expansion project.

David Prowler is working with the Museum's staff and trustees, City Hall, neighbors, and an all-star team to

bring San Francisco one of the best modern art museums in the world. The expansion will triple the Museum's gallery space (an additional 100,000 square feet), consolidate support and conservation uses, and house the spectacular Fisher Collection. That collection, formerly proposed for the Presidio, has well over 1000 works by the masters of modern art.

It is a terrific and challenging project – and it's also a great honor to be on the team. Thank you to the Fisher family for their enormous generosity.

To learn more about the project, look here to read recent coverage (<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2009/09/25/MNVC19S49B.DTL>).

LOST!

AIA Architecture in the City Festival.

You win some. And, unfortunately, you lose some too. That's inevitable when you take risks.

As part of the AIA's Architecture in the City festival, David Prowler served on a jury to pick winning losers:



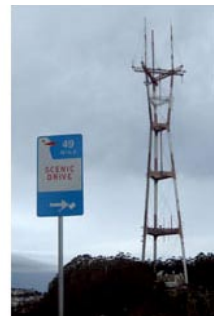
the design submittals for proposals or competitions that didn't get chosen. Architects put a lot of work into these entries and then they never get shown (much less built). Entries included a stadium, hospital, bus shelter, memorial, master plans, housing, and public art. The only common element: they lost.

The architecture firm of Van Meter Williams Pollack, LLP (VMWP) organized the contest and the jurors included John King (San Francisco Chronicle critic), Margie O'Driscoll (Director of the SF AIA), Tim Culvahouse (Editor of ArCA magazine), John Kriken (Consulting Partner, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, LLP), Tim Van Meter, of VMWP.

ICONOCLASTS: ARCHITECTURAL HAIKUS IN SPUR'S URBANIST

Six Haikus About SF's Renegade Buildings.

It's a photo essay by David Prowler (<http://www.prowler.org/pdfs/spur-haiku.pdf>) highlighting some buildings which for one reason or another probably wouldn't get approved today. They break the rules; but somehow they're loveable.



The buildings range from a Bauhaus senior housing project to that swanky residential tower at Jackson and Steiner. Here's another one that came up after the Urbanist went to press – a symbol of the City which would probably not be approved today:

Submit a haiku to the Sutro Tower Haiku Contest at info@prowler.org.

Winner will be in the next Prowler News and will receive a copy of *Life and Death of Great American Cities* by Jane Jacobs.



1: On a recent visit to a site in San Francisco, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi said: “There is no work more important than what is being done here. What I saw today is a national model, of national significance, about how we can better invest our resources.”

—What was she talking about?

- A. The Bay Bridge replacement project
- B. HPP: the Homeless Prenatal Project
- C. The little plaza at 17th and Castro Streets
- D. Chez Panisse

Answer on the next page.

2. When was San Francisco’s first mass bicycle ride and protest?

- A. 1969
- B. 1996
- C. 1895
- D. 2004

Answer on the next page.

3: A matter of size:

Which of the following statements are true?

- A. San Francisco is about the same size as Disney World.
- B. Manhattan is about half the size of San Francisco.
- C. Cape Kennedy is over 4 times the size of San Francisco.
- D. Paris is about the same size as San Francisco, but it’s 2.5 times denser than New York City.
- E. Oakland is about the same size as San Francisco but it has less than half the population.

Answer on the next page.

4: Question: Who was Yick Wo?

- A. A Planning hero, he stood up for the rights of Chinese San Franciscans in the 19th Century
- B. The founder of Chinatown’s Cameron House
- C. Star of Asia/SF’s drag revue
- D. First head monk at the SF Zen Center

Answer on the next page.

SUGGESTED READING

Where is the “Perfect City”?



Of course, it’s imaginary, an amalgam of familiar cities, combining their best features. David Byrne, founder of the Talking Heads has some thoughts on this. He writes in a recent article that a perfect city needs such ingredients as human scale, density, a mix of uses, and even “chaos and danger”.

He continues:

“The perfect city isn’t static. It’s evolving and ever changing, and its laws and structure allow that to happen. Neighborhoods change, clubs close and others open, yuppies move in and move out-as long as there is a mix of some sort, then business districts and neighborhoods stay healthy even if they’re not what they once were. My perfect city isn’t fixed, it doesn’t actually exist, and I like it that way.”

Here is his article:

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203440104574403293064136098.html>

ANSWERS TO THE QUIZ

1. Answer: **B. – Speaker Pelosi was visiting HPP, the Homeless Prenatal Program, for the announcement of a new program to link families with the aid for which they are eligible. (An astonishing \$60 billion in aid doesn't reach eligible Americans each year.)**

David Prowler is President of the Board of HPP, where poor families help each other out of poverty. To support this great group, please donate at www.homelessprenatal.org?



2. Answer: **C. – 1895.**

From the book, *The Public City: The Political Construction of Urban Life in San Francisco 1850-1900*:

"In May, 1895, the South Side Improvement Club joined with a host of bicycle clubs to stage a massive, lantern-lit procession of ten thousand pedestrians and two thousand cyclists – "a wilderness of wheels" – to demand better roads. 'Wheelmen', as they were called (although there were many women on wheels reported) wanted smooth surfaced roads and wanted to use the roads far beyond their own neighborhoods. Organizations from the Richmond District, the Western Addition, the Mission District, and the South Side created a citywide Federation of Improvement Clubs in 1893, and by 1895 these federated groups had organized demonstration projects of street cleaning, paving, and other services in what can be seen as a remarkable example of grassroots participatory government."

3. Answer: **All are True.**

4. Answer: **A. – A hero of urban planning.**

San Francisco's Board of Supervisors passed the nation's first zoning ordinance in 1873, a racist law pretending to regulate laundries. Except it was only applied to Chinese laundries. Although most of the city's laundry owners applied for a permit, none were granted to any Chinese owner, while only one out of approximately eighty non-Chinese applicants was denied a permit.

Rather than submit, laundry owner Yick Wo went to jail. He sued and his challenge went all the way to the US Supreme Court, where he won in 1886.

By the 1950s, the Warren Court used the principle established in *Yick Wo vs. Hopkins* to strike down several attempts by states and municipalities in the deep south to limit the political rights of blacks. *Yick Wo* has been cited in well over 150 Supreme Court cases since it was decided.

You can salute this little-known hero as you pass the Yick Wo Elementary School on Jones Street.

A century later, residents of Chinatown embraced the power of zoning in crafting the Chinatown Community Plan. David Prowler headed up the project on behalf of the Chinatown Neighborhood Improvement Resource Center, Asian Neighborhood Design, and the Chinese Chamber of Commerce. Our plan is now the law.