

The Route for the San Francisco Popos hike

(Privately Owned Public Open Spaces)

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Intro: Mandated by 1985 the city's downtown plan for new office developments in downtown, these private spaces are required to be open to the public. Many are open only during business hours but others are public plazas open all the time.

Some were created earlier, by developers seeking density bonuses in exchange, or the like. Problem is, people don't know about many of these open spaces. (Sort of like the trails in El Cerrito.)

In 2013 Chronicle urban writer John King wrote a series critiquing the way some owners made their spaces known, and how poorly the city enforced the rules. Since then thanks to John and increased public interest, things have improved.

This tour is an update of a tour Trekkers gave in 2013.

We will tour not just POPOS spaces but some other plazas and lobbies that are also open to the public, but without the POPOS mandate. We will note how many of these spaces contain excellent art, making downtown very much an open air and lobby museum that itself is too little known.

Note: As performed on February 15, we did not get to all of these sites due to time constraints. We got to most, though!



Crown Zellerbach

One. Meet at 1 Bush Street, Crown-Zellerbach Building. 1959, Hertzka and Knowles, SOM. (Hertzka, Wayne, Knowles, William Howard. 16 and 24th street BART stations, 100 Pine St., at least portions of Lawrence Berkeley Lab) First glass walled tower in city. Notice beautiful multi- and subtly-colored tile work. Explore the stony sunken courtyard, not really meant to be walked on. Spur has suggested seating would be good here but would it? Wouldn't it go against the architect's goal? This is open space for visual appreciation primarily.

Compare to the 1910s, 1920s skyscrapers nearby, their ornate detail; 130 Bush, the **Heineman Building**, oddly narrow, 1910, **MacDonald and Applegarth**. **Shell Building**, one of the great Deco towers, 1930, **Kelham** (who also designed Main SF Library (today Asian Museum), Valley Life Sciences at Cal, International House at Cal, the Gothic skyscraper on Montgomery Street -- the Russ Building)..

How C-Z breaks the grid, a bit of suburban office park in the city.

Notice the odd statue of a woman.

Turn left on Sansome to :

Two. Citicorp Center, former **London Paris National Bank**, One Sansome. 1910, **Albert Pissis**, 1921 addition, **Kelham**. Tower, deconstruction of bank, 1984, **Pereira and Associates** (best known in town for Transamerica Pyramid, major designers of corporate modern; LA firm.)

Open space was carved into the former bank, which retains much elegance.

See “**Star Maiden**” by **Alexander Stirling Calder**, the second in a trio of grandfather-father-son sculptors, known for Washington on the Washington Square Arch in New York and Swan Fountain in Philadelphia. This was done for 1915 Panama-Pacific Expo here in San Francisco



Star Maiden, Citicorp Center

Head west on Sansome to:

343 Sansome. But first look at: **First Standard Oil Building, 225 Bush**, a Renaissance palazzo, Kelham, 1922, enlarged 1948. As you stroll by **155 Sansome** poke into the lobby to see the great Art Deco interior of Tim Pflueger's **Stock Exchange Tower**, now City Club. Much great art inside including mural by Diego Rivera.



Sun Terrace, 343 Sansome

Three. 343 Sansome, the older Crown-Zellerbach Building. 1930, Hyman and Appleton, 1990 tower addition, Johnson and Burgee. Note lovely Deco glazed terra cotta façade. Say howdy to person behind desk (there is a **David Ligare** painting over the lobby desk) and take elevator to **15th floor** “Sun Terrace.”

Charming terrace, benches and plants, mosaic and other artworks (notice how many Popos’s are filled with art; corporate lobbies too; you could spend a few days seeing art in such places.

“The best rooftop for access and comfort,” John King says of this spot.

Views of Transamerica Tower, what appears to be a privately owned private terrace across the street, and the three ghostly figures apparently of death on another Johnson and Burgee building at 580 California. **Philip Johnson**, once one of America’s leading International Style modernists (he invented the term, designed the famous Glass House and the Seagram Building of 1956) later became a Post Modernist designing buildings that are like jokes but not always funny.

Speaking of open space, looking down we can see a privately owned private open space that is part of the **Bank of California, 400 California Street**, the 1967 addition by Anshen and Allen, the original architects for mid-century modern tract builder Joe Eichler)..



Union Bank lobby and exterior preserve walrus granite busts from a former building on this site. Too bad they tore it down.

Head east on Sansome one block and turn left onto California Street:

Four. The **Union Bank modern building at 350 California Street** is not a POPOS but it has a great lobby with walrus heads in granite removed from the old **Alaska Commercial Building** that stood on this site. (You can also see a row of these head installed on the exterior).

In center of the lobby is a wild stainless steel circular fountain. Also displays on Inuit ceramics and a wood sculpture by **James Blunk** from 1984.

Head to two open spaces, **200 and 150 California** for two very different experiences!

Continue north on California Street:

Five. **200 California**, one of the more ridiculous looking buildings in town, shows what happens when “public space” is so loosely defined it looks like “sidewalk.” The “open space” consists of a concrete planter and a statue of a mother and child by **Gwynn Merrill**.



Garden Terrace, 150 California

Six. 150 California, an imposing tower designed by HOK in 1990 has a “Garden Terrace” on the sixth floor. Pleasant little courtyard; building provides large overhang so you can enjoy the outside even when it rains. Nice view of the garden and courtyard at 101 California across the street. Also, lobby has good glass art, including a monolith by Howard Ben Tré.

Cross the street to:

Seven. 101 California, 1982, Johnson and Burgee, a lively take on International Style. Outdoor courtyard, sloping-glass walled indoor tropical garden with pleasant seating; on other side of elevators is another indoor space filled with good art.

Before our next stop, look towards Market Street to see one of the most imposing edifices in town, the **PG&E Building**, 245 Market, 1925, **Bakewell and Brown** (designers of SF City hall). Next to it are two similarly proportioned classics, the **Matson Building**, also 245 Market (they were conjoined to become one building), 1921, **Bliss and Faville**, and One Market, **Southern Pacific Building**, 1916, Bliss and Faville.



100 Pine, a hidden oasis

Exit 101 California onto Pine Street and turn right to:

Eight. 100 Pine. Among the ground level open spaces in San Francisco, King calls this one “the most hidden,” and indeed you’d never know it was there walking by on Pine or on Front Street. Behind the building (Hertzka and Knowles, 1972 – an old-timer among modernist skyscrapers downtown) is a courtyard with plants and a small fountain, a convenient and restful spot to grab a sandwich at an adjoining deli.

Nine. Hang a right onto Front Street to Market. Take a quick look at the plazas and lobbies at **425 Market**. There are changing displays of art in the adjacent lobby, **455 Market**.

Ten. Take First Street east to Mission, take a quick gander at the brand new Salesforce Tower, the tallest building in town. Where is the POPOS here? Hang a right onto Mission and clamber up the stairs to a nice second-floor “sun terrace” at **100 Second Street (note the address is on Second Street but the entrance is an exterior stairway on Mission)**. 1988. Strange, undulating glass fountain.



The view from 543 Howard

Eleven. Continue on First to Howard, where we notice the cluster of buildings surrounding the intersection, called **Foundry Square**. There are outdoor plazas with art and indoor lobbies too in all these buildings, which were completed just a few years ago. We check out the building at the southeast corner, **505 Howard**, aka **Foundry Square III**, with a living green wall and some strange figurative sculptures by **Thomas Houseago**.



Sculpture by Thomas Houseago and a living wall at Foundry Square III

Turn right to 543 Howard:

Twelve. 543 Howard. We come an older two-story commercial-industrial building with a more recent two story addition sensitively done. Great views from the roof terrace; notice Tim Pflueger's magnificent Art Deco Pacific Telephone Building. Also views to next door where the POPOS park atop the Transbay Center will soon be open to the public.

Continue down Howard to Second, where at the corner visit:

Thirteen. 222 Second Street, at Howard, the LinkedIn Building. Large interior with much seating, also popular Equator café. Large paintings and some form of digital art by **Frank Stella**. John King called this building, “an overbearing 26-story glass box on one prominent corner that has all the charm of a well-tailored packing crate.”

From King’s article: “ ‘What I’m most pleased about is how the ground floor opens to the city,’ said Thomas Phifer, the tower’s design architect. ‘We wanted it to be a warm welcome, not just a welcome.’ ”



Art by Frank Stella provides entertainment in the POPOS at 222 Second Street at Howard.

Turn onto second heading towards Market to:

Fourteen: 101 Second Street (2000, SOM) has a much-used lobby where people lunch. It has a mezzanine level too! Sculpture (**Larry Bell**) and art (**Charles Arnoldi**).



Sculpted heads by Ugo Rondinone serve as vents at 555 Mission Street

Turn right, north, on Mission to:

Fifteen. 555 Mission Street (2008, Kohn Pedersen Fox, and Heller Manus) is one of the more entertaining urban open spaces thanks to amusing art. The tall piece of colorful man-like figures is by **Jonathan Borofsky**. Also heads by **Ugo Rondinone**. Also here we have a nice view of the soon-to-open Transbay Terminal roof garden and the serpentine wall that sheaths this new structure..

Sixteen. The JP Morgan Chase Building at 560 Mission has an open space and mini-park that winds its way trail like through the area. The building by Pelli Clarke Pelli, with its glass curtain wall that appears to step away from the building, deliberately harks back to a Willis Polk building we won't see today, said to be the world's first glass curtain wall tower, the **Hallidie Building** from 1917, 130 Sutter St.



Relaxing interior attached to 55 second Street

Seventeen. Speaking of Willis Polk, **55 Second Street**, a 2002 tower by Heller Manus, provides its public open space in an attached building on Stevenson Street. (Notice the eagle atop its attractive façade. Designed by Polk as a post office, if I'm not mistaken, with nicely arrayed arched windows. A popular spot for brown bag lunches today, plus you can rent it for events. It is filled with good art by disabled and formerly homeless artists.

Exit through the Second Street lobby to be thunderstruck by two large, colorful wall paintings by **Sol LeWitt**

Eichteen. The roof gardens atop the **Crocker Galleria** (one is atop a Willis Polk bank) are among the best known in the city but by this time it's late so we have to skip them. But we can't skip the rooftop gem at **1 Kearney Street, at Market**. This is three buildings in one. It was built as 704 Market in 1902 (and '06, after the quake) to a French renaissance design by William Curlett. In 1964 Charles Moore (Sea Ranch) provided an oddball addition. It was recently expanded again – when it got its rooftop garden.

To visit, you are asked to sign in – and provide photo ID! Both of these requirements go against the rules of Popos – and John King is after them about it. Plus – the plaque announcing the site's existence is – in the elevator! Enjoy the view!