

Why is Market Street set at an angle?

By the time people tried to set out a sensible grid for the growing town, the landowners had other ideas...

"In 1839, when San Francisco was Yerba Buena, a Mexican outpost of cabins and tents huddled between a bayside cove and some chaparral-covered hills, the authorities asked...Jean-Jacques Vioget, to lay out a rudimentary grid of north-south and east-west streets around a plaza (now Portsmouth Square)...

Eight years later...Jasper O'Farrell codified and extended Vioget's grid plan...To negotiate the steep hills, O'Farrell wanted to terrace some roadways into gently sloping curves, but property owners insisted that the existing alignments remain.

South of Yerba Buena Cove, landowners forced O'Farrell to offset Vioget's grid at a problematic 45-degree angle...over Rincon Hill to Mission Bay.

To unite the two competing grids, O'Farrell devised a 120-foot-wide, diagonal boulevard, Market Street, which he aimed southwest at...Twin Peaks. A century later, columnist Herb Caen characterized O'Farrell's great boulevard as 'the obtuse angle that no traffic plan can ever solve.'" [From "The Streets of San Francisco" by Curt Sanburn (2005)]



Landowners didn't like the new Market Street

(at least according to quotes of *Forgotten Pioneers*, by T.F. Pendergast)

"When the engineer had completed his map of Market Street and the southern part of the city, what was regarded as the abnormal width of the proposed street excited part of the populace, and an indignation meeting was held to protest against the plan as wanton disregard for rights of landowners; and the mob, for such it was, decided for lynch law.

A friend warned O'Farrell, before the crowd had dispersed. He rode with all haste to North Beach, took a boat for Sausalito, and thence put distance behind him on fast horses in relay until he reached his retreat in Sonoma.

He found it discreet to remain some time in the country before venturing to return to the city."



<http://www.spur.org/blog/2011-08-04/walk-down-market-street>

<http://www.sfweekly.com/2005-06-29/news/the-streets-of-san-francisco/>

<http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=5195639>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jasper_O'Farrell