NPS Form 10-900
(3-82)

OMB No. 1024-0018
Exp. 10-31-84

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic San Francisco Civic Center

and or common

2. Location

street & number vicinity of Van Ness Avenue & Market Street ___ not for publication

city, town San Francisco ___ vicinity of

state California code county San Francisco code

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
_X_ district	_X_ public	_X_ occupied	___ agriculture	_X_ museum
___ building(s)	___ private	___ unoccupied	___ commercial	_X_ park
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational	___ private residence
___ site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	_X_ entertainment	___ religious
___ object	___ in process	_X_ yes: restricted	_X_ government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
		___ no	___ military	___ other:

4. Owner of Property

name SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

street & number

city, town ___ vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Recorder's Office

street & number Room 167, City Hall

city, town San Francisco state California

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title SEE CONTINUATION SHEET has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes ___ no

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
X excellent	___ deteriorated	___ unaltered	X original site
___ good	___ ruins	X altered	___ moved date
___ fair	___ unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Summary[1]

The San Francisco Civic Center is a group of monumental buildings around a central open space (Civic Center Plaza), and additional buildings that extend the principal axis to the east and west. It includes all or part of 12 city blocks, six of which are combined into three double blocks that accommodate larger features. There are eight major and three secondary aboveground structures, two notable landscape features, and one major unbuilt site. Some street rights-of-way have been turned into pedestrian areas.

Of the buildings in the Civic Center, nine (City Hall, Civic [or Exposition] Auditorium, the Public Library, the State Building, the Federal Building, the War Memorial Opera House, the Veterans Building, the Department of Public Health Building, and the Civic Center Powerhouse) contribute to the national importance of the district. Two temporary buildings (the Department of City Planning and the Library Annex) are non-conforming intrusions of limited significance.

City Hall (1913-16)

City Hall occupies the double block bounded by Polk, McAllister, Van Ness, and Grove Streets. Rectangular in its ground plan, it consists of two rectangular office wings linked by a high central dome. The building is in late French Renaissance, or Baroque, style with its principal design feature, the dome, derived from several great domes in Europe. The dome rests on a rectangular base, stressed on the east and west facades by large pedimented porticoes. The office wings feature long Doric colonnades over a rusticated base, and slight projecting pavilions at the corners.

The City Hall is erected on a steel frame clad in gray granite. Its dome rises more than 300' above the street, higher than the U.S. Capitol. The office wings contain 4 stories above ground and a partially exposed basement. The base consists of the first floor and exposed basement, the columned superstructure fronts on the second and third floors, and the fourth-story attic is slightly recessed behind a balustrade.

On the Polk Street, or eastern, facade, three arched entrances in the base are reached by a steep flight of steps. Intricate door frames and sconces, and a balustrade between the columns on the next level, are all burnished iron, painted brilliant blue and gold. These colors are carried over in the decorations of the balustrades and windows of the entire facade and the interior. Six Corinthian columns in the superstructure carry a Doric entablature. There are paired columns at the ends of the portico and two single columns more widely spaced between. Behind and between the columns three French windows open onto a balcony. There are large windows overhead on the third floor, and large flat cartouches over them at the top of the wall. The pediment encloses a sculpture group by Henri Crenier, with a female "San Francisco" beckoning commerce and navigation.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
prehistoric	archeology-prehistoric	X community planning	landscape architecture	religion
1400–1499	archeology-historic	conservation	law	science
1500–1599	agriculture	economics	literature	sculpture
1600–1699	X architecture	education	military	social
1700–1799	art	engineering	music	humanitarian
1800–1899	commerce	exploration settlement	philosophy	theater
X 1900–	communications	industry	X politics government	transportation
		invention		X other (specify) Recreation (world's fair)

Specific dates 1913-51 **Builder Architect** Multiple (see below)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Summary

> ... when the shores of the Pacific are occupied as the shores of the Atlantic now are, when all around the vast arena formed by America, Asia, and Australia are great nations of wealth and culture, with hundreds of Bostons and Baltimores, of Londons and Liverpools, the great American republic would scarcely be satisfied with only a porter's lodge at her western gateway.
>
> --Hubert Howe Bancroft (1907)[1]

The San Francisco Civic Center, the scene of events of national and international importance, including the founding of the United Nations and the drafting and signing of the post-World War II peace treaties with Japan, outstandingly illustrates the era of turn-of-the-century municipal reform movements in the United States and early public and city planning. By general consensus, its architecture and plan are regarded as one of the finest and most complete manifestations of the "City Beautiful" movement in the United States. Henry Hope Reed, a well-known scholar of Classical architecture, has called it "the greatest architectural ensemble in America."[2]

The Civic Center also embodies the city's phoenix-like resurgence after the disastrous 1906 earthquake and fires. The Civic Center remains the permanent manifestation of this phenomenon; it shared its origins, however, with its Siamese twin, the Panama-Pacific International Exposition of 1915. Exposition Auditorium, in the Civic Center, remains as the only link between these two great projects and the only intact survivor of the Exposition, one of the most notable of America's World's Fairs.[3]

The "City Beautiful" Movement

The "City Beautiful" movement, an aspect of the general drive for municipal reform that sprang up in the 1890s and continued after the turn of the century, intended to bring order and beauty to American cities. The national impetus to the movement was the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, called the "White City" by its admirers for its large white Classical buildings that were arranged in an orderly manner around a lagoon in a "Court of Honor." The apparent harmony, cleanliness, and grandeur of the White City captivated the American public and directly influenced urban planners and architects for almost 40 years. A western echo of this idealistic spirit was expressed in Joaquin Miller's novel, The Building of the City Beautiful, published the same year as the Chicago fair, in which the hero pursues a visionary scheme to erect an ideal city athwart the Golden Gate.[4]

9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property about 39

Quadrangle name San Francisco North **Quadrangle scale** 1:24,000

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	10	551850	4181490
B	10	551850	4181080
C	10	551010	4181080
D	10	551020	4181480
E			
F			
G			
H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title James H. Charleton, Historian

organization History Division, National Park Service **date** November 9, 1984

street & number 1100 L Street, NW **telephone** (202) 343-8165

city or town Washington **state** DC 20013-7127

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state ___ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

GPO 894-788

Property Owners

City and County of San Francisco
Real Estate Department
450 McAllister Street
San Francisco, California 94102

Chairman, Board of Supervisors
County of San Francisco
City Hall
San Francisco, California 94102

Bay Area Rapid Transit District
800 Madison Street
Oakland, California 94612

U.S. General Services Administration
Regional Historic Preservation Liaison
Public Buildings Service
525 Market Street
San Francisco, California 94103

Representation in Existing Surveys (#6 Continued)

California History Plan: Inventory of Historical Features
1967 State
Department of Parks and Recreation, Historic Preservation Section
Sacramento, California

Junior League of San Francisco, Inc.
1968 Local
San Francisco, California

1975-1976 Architectural Inventory
1976 Local
San Francisco Department of City Planning
San Francisco, California

San Francisco City Landmarks
on-going Local
San Francisco Department of City Planning
San Francisco, California

National Register of Historic Places
1976 State
National Register of Historic Places
Washington, DC

Historic American Buildings Survey
1973 Federal
California Historical Society, San Francisco, California
also Library of Congress, Washington, DC

The Van Ness (western) facade is identical to Polk Street except for details in the central portico, base, and superstructure.

The Grove Street and McAllister Street facades, virtually identical, are simplified versions of the principal facades. Slightly protruding pavilions at the angles are linked by simply fenestrated walls, with pilasters in the superstructure.

The dome is constructed on a steel frame, sheeted with copper and coated with lead. It was originally highlighted with gold. The vertical lines of the columns around the drum rise to an encircling skullcap of surface decoration. A circling iron balustrade at the top encloses a tall spired lantern on a base of four low arches looking to the cardinal directions. Four taller arches rise over the base with pairs of free-standing fluted Doric columns flanking the arches and carrying a broken cornice. An urn carries through the cornice over each column. A tall slender tapering steeple with a crowning torch rises from the center.

The interior of City Hall is arranged with a central ceremonial hall or rotunda tying the office wings together. In the rotunda, a monumental staircase leads directly to the board of supervisors chamber in the Van Ness portico. Opposite this across the domed space is the mayor's office.

The entire basement and ground floor are utilized, but the higher floors are grouped around central light courts. Continuous hallways that encircle the light courts open into offices and other chambers.

A wealth of sculpture and decorative and highly symbolic detail, too extensive to catalog here, graces City Hall's interiors. Apart from the domed space, the ornamental treatments in the board of supervisors chamber and the mayor's office are especially elaborate.

The War Memorial Complex (1932)

The San Francisco War Memorial consists of a pair of very similar monumental Classical structures, the Opera House (309 Van Ness Avenue) and the Veterans Building (459 Van Ness Avenue), to either side of the formal Memorial Court. The complex is set in a double block bounded by Van Ness, McAllister, Franklin, and Grove Streets, and faces City Hall across Van Ness Avenue.

The Opera House is erected on a steel frame with reinforced concrete floors and walls. It is clad in terra cotta that simulates the granite used in its base, steps, and columns. The building is generally rectangular in shape, except for a high scenery loft at the rear and two staircase wings that project from the sides so near the front that they appear to be part of the main facade. There are four principal stories above ground and a leaded copper mansard roof.

The building is a rather severe example of the Beaux Arts style with decoration encircling the building at all levels. The ground-floor base is deeply rusticated and cut with ranges of arches. The 2-story superstructure has a rusticated wall of lower definition and the same ranges of arches everywhere except the front facade, which is more elaborate. The attic is set back behind a balustrade.

The principal forward facade on Van Ness is reached by a series of long granite steps. It contains seven arches in the base, glazed and fitted with handsome bronze and iron frames. In the superstructure, eight pairs of large free-standing fluted Doric columns rise above the piers between the arches below and flank seven arches recessed just behind them.

The Court and Grove Street sides of the Opera House consist of rusticated walls with ten arches ranged across each tier from the staircase wings to the rear of the building. The Grove Street side has a marquee that runs the length of the building.

The rear of the Opera House is dominated by a large arch that cuts through the base and superstructure and two smaller arches on both sides in each tier.

The main Van Ness Avenue entrances open into a simple vaulted vestibule which leads into a grand foyer across the front of the building. Corridors run off along the sides of the building. This plan is roughly repeated on the higher levels.

Other than the concert hall, the ground-level foyer is the most highly decorated room. The blue and gold bronzed-iron light fixtures resemble those in City Hall.

The main hall is given a sense of splendor by its Classical detailing. The side walls reflect the exterior, with a rusticated base carrying a superstructure of high arches. The arches are latticed and hung with drapes, which originally camouflaged organ pipes but now house stage lights. A magnificent aluminum sunburst chandelier hangs from the center of the large smooth oval surface of the ceiling. A massive proscenium arch at the stage features statuary groups by Edgar Walter in the spandrels.

The seats (3302 with 300 standing) are arranged more like a movie theater than a traditional opera house, with two large balconies suspended directly from wall to wall. There is only one horseshoe section of box seating.

The west end of the Opera House contains dressing rooms and offices on all levels.

The exterior of the Veterans Building is virtually identical to the Opera House. The building sits on higher ground, however, and, in order to be at the same level as the Opera, is approached by a shorter flight of steps. The superstructure recedes to a longer open vestibule than in the Opera House. Instead of a scenery loft and high central arch on the rear, there are seven arches across both the base and superstructure.

The interior of the Veterans Building is like a small opera house with a museum (the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art) atop it. The Herbst (formerly Veterans) Auditorium occupies the center of the building on the lower three stories. A corridor encircles the auditorium on each floor and opens into offices and meeting rooms on its outer sides. The museum is organized in the same way, around a central 2-story skylit sculpture court (now closed off and used as a movie theater), likewise surrounded by a corridor, which opens into exhibit rooms on the outside.

The principal entrance opens onto Van Ness Avenue. Behind the end arches in the base of the facade are veterans' groups offices to the south and the museum bookstore to the north. In the projecting southern wing, a Trophy Gallery leads to a Souvenirs Gallery; and in the similar northern wing are elevators to the museum.

The Herbst Auditorium is similar to the main hall of the Opera House, but is smaller and has more subdued detailing. It holds 1,100 people and had only one balcony until box seats were added in 1978. The arches of its side walls contain eight giant murals by British artist Frank Brangwyn depicting earth, air, fire, and water and their benefits to humanity. The murals originally hung in one of the demolished Panama-Pacific International Exposition structures. They were installed in the Herbst at the time of the building's construction. The ceiling of the Herbst is irregularly coffered; a traditional bronze chandelier hangs from its center. The chamber retains its essential appearance as of the time the United Nations Charter was signed in it.

In 1971, the third-floor offices were turned over to the museum by the veterans for use as offices and classrooms. Minor renovations were then carried out in various parts of the building.

Today, both the Veterans Building and the Opera House continue to serve the functions for which they were built. The Opera House is the permanent residence of the San Francisco Opera, Ballet, and Symphony and hosts other cultural events. The Veterans Building houses both veterans groups and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. A recent proposal by the museum to expand by removing the Herbst Auditorium has sparked discussion. The resolution of this issue is uncertain.

Memorial Court (1936)

The War Memorial Court occupies the area between the Opera House and the Veterans Building. It is enclosed on its open sides by blue and gold ornamental iron fencing that runs between the two buildings. The court is a central lawn encircled by a sidewalk lined with box hedges and sycamore trees and lighted by ornamental iron lamps.

Exposition (Civic) Auditorium (1915)

Exposition Auditorium (99 Grove Street) fills the block bounded by Grove, Larkin, Hayes, and Polk Streets and faces the Civic Center Plaza from the south across Grove. Its four stories are erected on a steel frame clad in gray granite on the main facade and brick on the sides and rear. The Auditorium is designed in the Beaux Arts style with elements of both the French and Italian Renaissance.

The main facade is symmetrically arranged with a dominant central feature flanked by advancing pavilions and receding wings. The 2-story base is rusticated. The superstructure above contains pedimented windows, except in the central feature where three large arches reach through both tiers. A cornice caps the superstructure and a false attic rises above it over the three central planes.

The three high arches in the central feature rise between four piers in the base level, and four pairs of engaged Doric columns which stand on the piers in the superstructure. The rusticated base is divided by a long wooden marquee covered with copper sheeting.

The rusticated bases of the projecting pavilions on either side of the central feature contain large showcase windows in the ground floor with pairs of small windows above them. The cornice of the base sits on two pairs of brackets which frame the windows of the second floor beneath it, and, at the same time, serves as a base for two pairs of free-standing Doric columns in the superstructure. Each pair of columns extends through the heavy cornice of the fourth floor with festooned urns on granite bases.

The receding wings on the ground level contain plainly framed doors that match the showcase windows in the adjacent piers. Windows in the third floor have rounded pediments and balustraded balconies on brackets.

The sides and rear of the Auditorium are brick except for granite angle features on Polk and Larkin, around the corner from the main facade. The rear facade contains five planes reflecting those of the front. The central feature contains two high service doors.

A remodeling of the building in 1964 resulted in minor exterior alterations, including a slight extension of the westernmost pier in the central feature of the main facade to accommodate the principal escalator to Brooks Hall, the underground exhibition hall under the Civic Center Plaza; and extension of the projecting pavilions on the rear toward the sides.

The principal auditorium is reached through entrances at the base of the high arches, and two secondary halls through doorways in the receding wings. Seating capacity is 7,800 in the large auditorium and 900 in the side halls. Nineteen smaller conference rooms each hold 30 to 125 people.

There have been several interior renovations. In 1921, G. Albert Lansburgh altered the main hall for use by the San Francisco Opera, adding a canopy which lowered the ceiling. After the Opera House was completed in 1932, the Auditorium was again remodeled, obscuring the open metal trusswork of the main hall with huge canvas murals and a forest of chandeliers. A further renovation by Wurster, Bernardi, and Emmons, and Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill modernized the interior in 1961-64.

The principal use of the Auditorium is for conventions. Until the 1960s renovation, however, departments of the city government used the upper floors.

Public Library (1916)

The San Francisco Public Library (200 Larkin Street) occupies all but the northeast corner of the block bounded by Larkin, Hyde, Fulton, and McAllister Streets. The library is erected on a steel frame clad in gray granite; it is shaped somewhat like a giant "P" with a square main building and an ell continuing the south facade the full length of the Fulton Street frontage. The Larkin and Fulton Street sides are the principal facades, and together with the end of the ell on Hyde and a flat pavilion around the corner from Larkin on McAllister Street, are treated in Italian Renaissance style. The remainder of the McAllister Street facade is more simply expressed. The other exterior walls, on the north and east, largely behind the annex (a temporary building that occupies the northeast corner of the library block), and the two interior light courts, are ordinary brick.

The ornamental facades consist of a rusticated basement crowned by a belt course and surmounted by a high story consisting of projecting corner pavilions joined by ranges of graceful arches. Over all is a high entablature which forms the well of the top story.

The main facade faces the City Hall over the Plaza across Larkin Street. Three large central doorways on the ground floor are flanked by two large rectangular windows cut into the rusticated wall on either side. There are seven plainly molded arches in the superstructure, those at either end belonging to flat pavilions framed by pairs of Doric pilasters. Under the end sills are pairs of tablets on which are inscribed the names of famous authors. Between the pavilions are five more arches, recessed together behind a row of free-standing Ionic columns, the bases of which are linked by a low balustrade. Each arch features a a giant cement figure on a pedestal. On the third floor, cut in a great panel, is a legend identifying and dedicating the library.

The side facade on Fulton Street is a simplified variation of the Larkin facade. The ground floor has a single central ornamental doorway flanked by six windows on each side.

The end of the ell on Hyde Street and the west end of the McAllister Street facade are exact restatements of the pavilion ends of the main facade. The remainder of the McAllister Street (north) facade consists of seventeen high narrow rectangular bays separated by simple piers and reflects the library stacks on the interior.

The principal ornamental public spaces are those which constitute a ceremonial progression and the two main reading rooms. The public spaces are grouped along the Larkin and Fulton Street sides and in the center of the building. The ceremonial spaces are especially noteworthy and form the distinctive architectural feature of the library. From an elaborately ornamented entrance vestibule, the view is clear through a succession of magnificent ceremonial spaces up a formal staircase to an enclosed landing, skylighted dramatically from the sides, and to the main room on the second floor. From the staircase area and from the main room there is ready access to two other principal reading rooms of the library, which connect to smaller and less imposing public rooms on the first and third floors. The stacks are on the McAllister Street side. Large interior courts for light and air are to either side of the central main room.

The main reading room is monumental. It is 65 feet square and 42 feet high and contains large scaled features similar to those on the building's exterior. The entrance and three other huge arches, one on each wall, are framed in a plain molding carried on giant free-standing Ionic columns. The room was originally called the "delivery room," but now houses card catalogs and information services.

The two other large reading rooms also have special decorative treatment. The Literature and Philosophy reading room, originally a general reading room, off the main room, runs almost the entire length of the Fulton Street facade. The History and Social Science reading room, off the staircase area opposite the main room, was originally the Reference Room; it runs the length of the Larkin Street side. Both rooms are modeled after early Renaissance halls. Two giant murals, one in each reading room, depict American migration from New England to California. They were painted by Frank V. DuMond for the Panama-Pacific Exposition.

The rest of the library is relatively plain. Most of the original functions of the rooms are at least generally the same as originally intended. Only two rooms, of lesser importance, have been thoroughly remodeled. The Fulton Street entrance has also been closed off and is used as an office area. The original "old Italian" accessories, which still predominate, have a high degree of unity.

Although the Library is in excellent condition, in recent years it has suffered from overcrowding.

Library Annex (1945)

The Library Annex (45 Hyde Street), a "temporary" structure, occupies the northeast corner of the Library block. It is a 3-story rectangular wood building. Its flat white walls are completely plain except for rows of rectangular windows on each floor. Built for the U.S. Navy, it has served the library and city departments since 1948.

California State Building (1926)

The State Office Building (350 McAllister Street) is basically rectangular, occupying the south half of the block bounded by McAllister, Larkin, Golden Gate, and Polk Streets. The north half of the block contains the State Building Annex (1957), which is about the same size. The latter structure is attached to the State Building in the center of the block allowing the buildings to function as one. Visually, however, they appear separate. (The Annex is not included in this nomination.)

The State Building is 6 stories high, constructed on a skeleton of steel and sheathed in gray granite and terra cotta simulating granite. The Italian Renaissance style of the building is fully realized on the long main facade, which faces across McAllister Street to the Civic Center Plaza, and on the ends of the main forward section of the building. A rear section, set back from Polk and Larkin Streets, is treated more simply.

The entire main facade is lightly rusticated. It is broken up into a high 3-story base surmounted by a 2-story superstructure of glazed arches and pedimented windows with a simple top-floor entablature. The most interesting feature of the facade is the entrance motif with three high arches, in the center of the base, which open onto an air-vaulted vestibule. To either side of the arches are nine simple rectangular windows evenly spaced across the facade on each floor. Three elaborate framed doorways enter the building from the vestibule.

The second level is dominated by thirteen glazed arches marked with voussoirs. Between the arches are twelve vertical pairs of rectangular windows with simple pediments over larger lower windows and vertical panels over the upper ones. Above each arch and pair of windows, in the entablature, is a small rectangular window.

The sides are treated like the main facade with three windows on each floor in the base; a central glazed arch and two flanking vertical pairs of windows with adjacent pilasters in the second level; and three plain windows with panels in the entablature.

The other public wall surfaces are simplified versions of the main facade. There are three rectangular windows in each floor of the rear sections which face on Larkin and Polk Streets. The treatment of the base is identical to other base areas, but the superstructure is only ornamented with pediments over the two outside windows on the third floor.

The back of the building was originally adorned like the rear sides with four windows across from either end and brick in between. Now only two windows at each level are exposed; everything else between has been cut out for the connnection between the old building and the Annex.

The interior of the State Building contains a functional organization of offices, which are not elaborately decorated. The only exception is the 2-story Supreme Court room, which was extensively remodeled in 1956.

Federal Building (1936)

The Federal Office Building (50 U.N. Plaza) occupies the entire block bounded by U.N. Plaza, Leavenworth, McAllister, and Hyde Streets. It is a generally rectangular building with a large central court. There are 5 principal stories and a mansard roof above. The building is erected on a steel frame clad in gray granite.

Its Classical styling, in a generally French Renaissance manner, is fully realized on the U.N. Plaza, Hyde, and Leavenworth Street sides. The McAllister side is treated more simply but still has a Classical quality. The U.N. Plaza side, with a long colonnade, is the principal facade and contains the main entrance. Reentrant corners, at U.N. Plaza and Hyde, and at U.N. Plaza and Leavenworth, contain secondary entrances.

On all sides there is a 2-story base of rusticated blocks surmounted by a higher 2-story tier, with an essentially smooth background wall surface. The second tier is surmounted by a simple cornice, above which is an interrupted balustrade. On all but the central section of the McAllister facade there is another story set back behind the balustrade and capped by a mansard roof.

The U.N. Plaza facade contains three high arched entrances in the center of the rusticated base. Each arch is glazed and set in an iron frame painted silver and gold. To either side of the arches there are eight windows on each of two floors. Alternate windows on the ground floor bear massive masks of Classical faces on their keystones. The windows are paired vertically, with the second-story windows being smaller. The vertical pair of windows at either end of the facade is set back in a slightly receding plane which carries to the roof.

The Hyde and Leavenworth Street facades are identical simplified variations of the U.N. Plaza facade. There are fourteen windows in each floor of the base with the last vertical pair at both ends set in receding planes which carry to the roof. Giant keystone masks are set over every third ground-floor window. The second tier contains a single vertical pair of windows flanked by free-standing fluted Doric columns with Doric pilasters behind.

Flanking pavilions on the McAllister Street facade are identical to the Hyde and Leavenworth facades with three windows at each level. The receding central section of this wall contains a rusticated base with a single glazed arch in the center. There are eight windows on either side in the ground floor and nine windows on the second floor. The second tier simply contains 19 vertical pairs of windows with horizontal panels between them. There is the same regular entablature and balustrade found elsewhere at the top of this section of the wall, but there is no fifth floor or mansard roof. The shape of the central court reflects that of the exterior of the building, but it is faced with gray industrial brick.

The interior contains identical hallways that encircle the building on all four principal floors. These halls open to offices on both sides. The only alterations in the building have been behind office doors. It has been well maintained and is in excellent condition.

Department of Public Health Building (1932)

This building (101 Grove Street) sits on a rectangular lot at the northeast corner of the block bounded by Polk, Grove, Van Ness, and Ivy Streets. It covers the full rectangular lot at ground level, but has a light court above the ground level at the rear of the building, and is thus a "U" shape above the first floor. The structure is of reinforced concrete clad in gray granite, executed in the Italian Renaissance style on its public faces. The facade on Ivy Street and the west wall are gray industrial brick. The principal entrance is in the reentrant corner at Grove and Polk Streets, angled to face the Civic Center Plaza.

The ornamental facades are decorated in two principal horizontal bands above a smooth granite base. A 2-story lower level consists of a rusticated wall cut by plain rectangular windows. This is capped by a plain flat belt course, above which is another 2-story section with a smooth wall cut by a similar configuration of windows. Alternate windows on the third floor are framed by simple pediments of voluted brackets and slightly projecting balconies.

The Polk Street facade contains seven windows evenly spaced across the wall at each level; there is a door in the third window space from the Ivy Street corner on the ground floor. The Grove Street facade contains fifteen windows at each level with a door in the fourteenth window space on the ground floor and alternate pedimented and balconied windows on the third floor. The reentrant corner at Polk and Grove consists of a high arched doorway in the first two floors and one window in each of the third and fourth floors. The third-floor window is framed just like those on the other facades but with a longer balcony.

The main entrance opens into a small lobby with gray marble walls and floors. The Grove Street entrance is a smaller version of the main entrance. The parts of the building reached by these two entrances serve the Department of Public Health as offices, laboratories, and clinics. The Polk Street entrance opens on a small plain lobby from which a stairway rises, leading to a rear section of the building not connected to the main office areas in front. This smaller rear area was originally a women's prison, and is still marked by barred windows at the rear; it now is a clinic. The rear entrances are to a section of the building used as the Central Emergency Hospital. Interior renovations occurred during the late 1930s and in 1966.

Civic Center Plaza (1915)

The Plaza is bounded by Polk, McAllister, Larkin, and Grove Streets. A paved pedestrian area lined with flagpoles runs where Fulton Street once cut through the block from east to west. A long rectangular pool sits in the center of the paved area with rows of sycamore trees at its sides. Park areas to either side are circumscribed by concrete walks; a central square lawn is flanked to the east and west by rows of olive trees. The present landscaping scheme dates from the early 1960s; it was put in place after Brooks Hall and a parking garage were constructed under the Plaza. The Plaza formerly was similar in design. During World War II, prefabricated barracks were erected in the Plaza for military men on leave.

Brooks Hall (99 Grove Street), a 90,000-square-foot exhibition area, is under the south half of Civic Center Plaza. The hall was planned by Wurster, Bernardi, and Emmons; and Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill and constructed in 1956-58. It is connected to the Civic Auditorium by ramps. A parking garage (355 McAllister Street), completed in 1960, is under the north half of the Plaza.

Civic Center Powerhouse (1915)

The powerhouse, built about 1915, is a small squarish building in the northeast corner of the small lot at the northeast corner of Larkin and McAllister Streets. It is constructed of reinforced concrete and has exterior walls decorated with a few simple Classical details. A high steel stack, supported by two prominent girders, rises from its back corner. The Powerhouse still supplies steam heat to the entire Civic Center.

Marshall Square (1870)

Marshall Square, named after James Marshall, whose discovery led to the California gold rush, is the block bounded by Larkin, Fulton, Hyde, and Grove Streets. It is the only major site in the Civic Center plan never to have acquired a sizable structure. At present, the Department of City Planning (100 Larkin Street), on the west side of the block, faces the Civic Center Plaza. A long sloping driveway to

Brooks Hall (under the Plaza) runs the length of the Fulton Street side of the block. The Pioneer Memorial is at the corner of Hyde and Grove Streets. The remainder of the block is used for parking. A variety of suggestions have been made for the future use of the square.

Department of City Planning Building (USO Hospitality House) (1941)

This structure was built as a "Hospitality House" for the United Service Organization (USO) in 1941. It served to entertain military personnel quartered in temporary barracks in the Civic Center Plaza. An irregularly shaped, flat-roofed, 1-story building constructed on a wood frame, it is an example of late Moderne architecture, with strips of white walls, blue windows, and rounded corners. Although it was only intended to be a temporary structure, it remains in good condition. After World War II, ownership was transferred to the city, which has used it for offices.

The Pioneer Memorial (James Lick Memorial) (1894)

Lick left the largest part of his fortune to erect public statuary in San Francisco. This sprawling work was sculpted by Frank Happersberger to honor the miners, traders, cowboys, sailors, and other pioneers who came to California seeking their fortunes and remained to settle. It consists of groupings of bronze statuary on a central stone base and four projecting piers. A female "California" with a bear at her feet and a shield and a spear in her arms occupies the central pedestal. Two allegories and two tableaux on the piers are entitled "Early Days," "Plenty," "In '49," and "Commerce." In addition there are four bronze relief scenes, five relief portraits, and numerous medallions, plaques, and inscriptions. The most notable aspect of this work is the modeling of the large figures, ordinary people depicted in heroic groupings.

United Nations Plaza (1975)

The 1-acre United Nations Plaza commemorates the founding of the United Nations in the Civic Center in 1945. It consists of former Fulton Street, between Market and Hyde, and Leavenworth, between Market and McAllister, which have been converted into a pedestrian plaza. The entire area is paved in brick, with granite borders that echo the principal materials of the Civic Center buildings. The architects were Mario Ciampi and Associates, John Carl Warnecke and Associates, and Lawrence Halprin and Associates. U.N. Plaza provides a pedestrian approach to the Civic Center and a clear view from Market Street to City Hall.

Footnotes

[1]This description condenses Michael Corbett's description of the Civic Center that appears in the National Register of Historic Places nomination form (1976). He drew extensively on municipal sources cited in his bibliography.

[2]A portfolio of newspaper items on this question is available for review and will be permanently filed with this nomination.

The most immediate effect of the City Beautiful movement was the imitation of the White City in world's fairs that were held around the country in the next two decades. The fairs spread the ideals of Classical architecture, Beaux Arts planning, and the example of cooperation among architects for greater effect in an ensemble. But, like the White City, these expositions, which involved multiple structures and elaborate landscape plans, lasted for a season or two and were then largely demolished.

A spectacular and well-known longer-term application of City Beautiful principles was in the revival of L'Enfant's plan for Washington, D.C. More characteristic and widespread results of the movement were city, park, and civic center plans. Many cities, large and small, commissioned such plans. Of the number prepared for major cities, however, only San Francisco's civic center came near to completion. It originated in tandem with a great exposition to be held in the city. Both were intended to fulfill the visions of San Francisco's elite, who saw their city as a modern-day Florence.

History

San Francisco's Old City Hall crumbled in the first 60 seconds of the 1906 earthquake, and its replacement became a lively public and political issue. That structure, on the site now occupied by Exposition Auditorium, had been begun in 1872, but, principally because of corruption in city government, was not completed until 1897, at the then-phenomenal cost of $5.75 million.

There were suggestions that the superstructure or foundation of the old building be reused, but, by the end of 1908, demolition was under way. Those who supported a new City Hall would eventually join with other efforts to promote San Francisco, including a drive to erect a new public auditorium to attract conventions.

Already, in 1899, Bernard J.S. Cahill, with the encouragement of reform-minded Mayor James D. Phelan, had put forth a Civic Center plan that came to naught. Out of office, in 1904, Phelan had also been instrumental in the establishment of the Society for the Improvement and Adornment of San Francisco. The Society invited Daniel Burnham to provide the city with a grand plan and also suggested to Cahill that he revise his 1899 plan. (The latter plan was similar to the tightly grouped one later adopted.) Burnham's grandiose master plan for the city, including a Civic Center, was ready in 1905 and was delivered from the printer the day before the earthquake on April 18, 1906; it, like Cahill's plan, languished.

In 1909, although San Francisco had been reconstructed essentially on pre-earthquake lines, Burnham was asked to revive and revise his Civic Center plan. Willis Polk, his deputy, handled the design, placing a semicircular group at the corner of Van Ness and Market. Stirred by what he conceived to be the impracticality of the

plan, Cahill revised his 1904 scheme slightly and argued that the Burnham/Polk proposal was too expensive, disruptive, and likely to be delayed by litigation. The Burnham/Polk plan was put before the public and easily defeated.

These conflicting views of the form the Civic Center should take became linked to plans for a major international exposition to be held in San Francisco. In 1910, the Panama-Pacific International Exposition Company was formed to hold a fair in 1915. By the mid-summer of 1911, the directors of the company had decided to build an Exposition Auditorium as a lasting reminder of the grandeur of the Exposition and as a permanent contribution to the city. To justify the Auditorium as an Exposition expense, its conferences would meet there without paying rent.

A vice-president of the Exposition Company, James ("Sunny Jim") Rolph, ran for mayor in September 1911. A municipal street railway, the Hetch-Hetchy water project, and other civic improvements were parts of his program, but the Exposition and the Civic Center ideas were its cornerstones. The Civic Center would permanently exhibit the grandeur which the Exposition would only briefly evoke. They would together demonstrate convincingly to the world that San Francisco had not simply recovered from the earthquake but had become a thriving and civilized metropolis of international importance. Rolph won a landslide victory, and the city moved forward on both projects.

The Final Civic Center Plan

After Rolph's election, steps toward planning of the Civic Center and the construction of the Exposition moved quickly, in hopes of completing at least the City Hall and Auditorium in time for the Exposition. In January 1912, the board of supervisors endorsed a revival of Cahill's Civic Center plan of 1909. The issue of its location was turned over to an architectural commission under the auspices of the Exposition, including Willis Polk, William B. Faville, and John Galen Howard, among others; a clear majority chose the present site.

The mayor appointed another commission (John Galen Howard, Frederick W. Meyer, and John Reid, Jr.) to select a final plan, oversee a City Hall design competition, and implement the plan. Howard, the chairman, guided the initial stages and campaigned for a March 1912 bond issue to finance the Civic Center and City Hall. Spurring public approval was the announcement by the State, just before the election, of its intention to erect a State building in the Civic Center. The bond issue passed overwhelmingly and the City Hall competition began quickly.

The approved Civic Center plan, then, consisted of a central plaza with the City Hall to the west, a State Building to the north, the Public Library and an Opera House to the east, and Exposition Auditorium to the south. Four corner lots between the main buildings were reserved for a Health Building, a Fire and Police Building, a Powerhouse, and an undetermined public building. The use of the site of the

present Federal Building was also unspecified. Narrow strips, to be lined with arcades and peristyles, were also to be acquired on all properties fronting the Civic Center.

The Panama-Pacific International Exposition

The Panama-Pacific International Exposition of 1915, held in a 635-acre site in the Marina area of San Francisco, was, from the viewpoint of scholars who have studied the history of world's fairs, a notable event.[5] As a recreational spectacle, it presented the same variety of amusements, exhibits, technological innovations, and spectacular architecture as others in the tradition. The "car trains" used in zoos, for example, originated there,[6] and the world's first indoor airplane flight took place in the giant Palace of Machinery.[7]

World's fairs, though they have their lighter side, which tends to capture popular fancy, can also be appreciated from serious perspectives. Architectural historians, for example, have stressed the attention to the color schemes of the buildings and plantings and the use of soft indirect light as notable innovations at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition. They have also noted the Exposition's emphasis on the arts, rather than technical sciences, that would have been expected in light of the primary event the Exposition was celebrating, the opening of the Panama Canal.[8]

While it would be possible to elaborate on the legacy of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in terms of both its architecture and recreational aspects, which are both highly significant, such a discussion would conclude with regrets that, aside from Exposition Auditorium, no structures from it have survived intact.

The Palace of Fine Arts, by Bernard Maybeck, a structure of great architectural interest, survived until the 1960s. Then, however, it fell prone to the temporary character of the materials of which it and most other Exposition structures had been built, and had to be demolished. It had won such a place in the hearts of San Franciscans, however, that it was shortly thereafter reconstructed.[9] (It is not recommended for National Historic Landmark designation because, while important, it does not meet the extraordinary tests required for the National Historic Landmark designation of reconstructions.)

Certain tangential legacies of the Exposition have also survived, including much of the artwork in the early Civic Center structures and the great municipal pipe organ, from the Exposition's Festival Hall, which was installed in Exposition Auditorium in 1917.

Exposition Auditorium, however, intended as a permanent contribution to the city by the Exposition, does remain, though it is in a detached location from the Exposition's main site. Exposition Auditorium is the link between the two great events of 1915 in San Francisco, the Exposition and the Civic Center. The Civic Center would grow and endure and transcend even the significance its planners had envisioned.

Implementation of the Civic Center Plan

John Bakewell, Jr., and Arthur Brown, Jr., designed the City Hall, while Howard, Meyer, and Reid received the Exposition Auditorium commission. Construction of City Hall began quickly, in April 1913, and of Exposition Auditorium in July of the same year. The Auditorium was dedicated on January 5, 1915, in time for the Exposition. The Powerhouse and Plaza were also finished when the Exposition opened. The new City Hall, on the other hand, was not ready until early 1916, after the Exposition had closed.

With the City Hall and Exposition Auditorium as anchors and the approved Civic Center plan as a guide, other buildings were added. A home for the San Francisco Public Library, which had been moving around in various temporary quarters since its establishment in 1878, was constructed in 1915-17, by George Kelham. World War I and the subsequent depression delayed further progress into the 1920s. The State Building, begun in 1920, was thus not completed until 1926.

On the other hand, the proposed arcades and peristyles were never built. And, although the builders of the Orpheum (then Pantages) Theater planned to face the theater's blank rear walls to match the Civic Center's buildings, a never-resolved dispute arose over who would pay for the facing. The walls have never been faced.

Construction of the War Memorial Complex

The Civic Center, then, as it was originally approved, gradually reached virtual completion. A new development west of the City Hall, the War Memorial Complex, expanded the Center. Completed in 1932, these buildings thoroughly harmonize with the original plan.

Even before the end of World War I, a memorial to honor those who had died in the struggle was proposed in San Francisco. There was great public debate over the nature of the project, and whether it should take the form of a monument; a "living memorial," such as an opera house; or some other character.

San Francisco had been an enthusiastic opera town almost since the "Gold Rush," but it had had little luck with opera houses, with several burning down. The last of these, the Tivoli, perished in 1906. Every version of the Civic Center plan had called for an opera house.

In 1918, a citizens' group revived the idea and invited the American Legion to join in support of a War Memorial Opera House. Together the two groups raised substantial funds and gained public support. A prestigious architectural advisory commission (Bernard Maybeck, John Galen Howard, Willis Polk, Ernest Coxhead, G. Albert Lansburgh, John Reid, Jr., Frederick Meyer, and Arthur Brown, Jr.) drew up the site plan. By 1925, it had been decided that Brown would design the buildings with Lansburgh collaborating on the Opera House.

The scope of the project required far more money than had been raised privately and, with the help of the local newspapers, a bond election was approved in 1927. It was 4 more years before construction began, because of disagreements between the veterans, opera supporters, the mayor, and the board of supervisors over allocations of funds and space. Construction finally began in the summer of 1931 and was complete in the fall of 1932.

Although there were sound aesthetic reasons for designing the two buildings of the War Memorial as a matched pair, in the end they were made identical because neither the opera supporters nor the veterans would consent to the other having a more complete, costly, or magnificent home. As the Opera House was the more complicated structure, it was designed first and the Veterans Building derived its shape and design from it.

Other and Later Features

Contemporary with the War Memorial Complex, the Department of Public Health Building was constructed in 1931-32, under the direction of Samuel Heiman of the City Architect's Office. A landscaped Memorial Court, between the Opera House and the Veterans Building, was planned by Arthur Brown along with the two structures, but was not built until 1936, from designs by Thomas Church.

Construction of the long-promised Federal Building, also designed by Brown (in his capacity as an architect for the Treasury Department), was begun in late 1933 and completed in 1936. Its addition essentially brought the Civic Center to completion.

Events in the Civic Center

The beauty, monumental character, and excellent and varied facilities of the San Francisco Civic Center have drawn important people, meetings, and events to it. Two of these events are of international importance: the organization of the United Nations (1945) and the Peace Treaties with Japan (1951).

The United Nations Conference on International Organization met in the Civic Center between April 25 and June 26, 1945. Heads of state and delegates from 50 countries attended the conference. Organizational details and the drafting of the United Nations Charter occurred in the Veterans Building; the Charter was signed in an 8-hour ceremony in the Veterans Auditorium (now the Herbst Theater) on June 26.

Ceremonial events and speeches took place in the Opera House. Concerts and public gatherings for the delegates, including the welcoming ceremony, were in the Exposition Auditorium. The Public Library provided its facilities and services. The United Nations Conference demonstrated how successfully the buildings in the complex support one another in function as well as design.[10]

A little more than 6 years later, on September 8, 1951, representatives of 49 nations signed a general peace treaty with Japan, returning full sovereignty to her after World War II. Japan, in the treaty, relinquished her claims to territories outside the home islands. In a separate treaty between the United States and Japan, concluded the same day, Japan granted the United States permission to continue stationing armed forces there. Both treaties, drawn in the Veterans Building, were signed in the Opera House.

Nationally important events associated with the Civic Center have been varied in character. The Democratic National Convention of 1920, in Exposition Auditorium, at which James M. Cox and Franklin D. Roosevelt were nominated for President and Vice-President, respectively, helped to fulfill a key role foreseen for that structure. City Hall's magnificent domed space has been utilized on state occasions, including the reception of distinguished visitors, such as the Presidents of the United States and French President Charles de Gaulle. President Warren G. Harding lay in state there in August 1923, after his sudden death in San Francisco, as did former Mayor James Rolph, the leading political figure behind the success of the Civic Center, in 1934. He died while Governor of California. That same year, events associated with the violent San Francisco general strike swirled around the Civic Center. Later events have included House Un-American Activities Committee hearings in the 1950s, in City Hall, and anti-Viet Nam War demonstrations in the 1960s.

Architectural and Aesthetic Evaluation of the Civic Center Plan and Buildings

Within the scope of turn-of-the-century Classical architecture in the United States, the San Francisco Civic Center contains a superlative example, in the City Hall, and several fine examples of the mode. They cannot, however, properly be evaluated solely in isolation. Seen in the context of the Civic Center as a whole, and in relation to City Hall, they together achieve distinction, if they are judged on the degree to which each enhances the group without distracting from the City Hall. These qualities are achieved through a harmony of color, materials, scale, size, texture, rhythm, and style. The ensemble is a monument of architecture and a triumph of early 20th-century American city planning.

The Civic Center carries out City Beautiful planning concepts in its Classical style of architecture, in its association with municipal reform, in the restraint shown by the individual architects in the integration of their structures into the Civic Center plan, and in the manner in which the Civic Center defined its importance in architectural terms. In San Francisco, moreover, the Civic Center represented the city's emergence as a regional center of national importance.

The San Francisco City Hall is widely regarded as one of the finest examples of Beaux Arts Classical architecture in the United States. A very conservative building for its day, it is within the tradition of American capitol buildings such as the U.S. Capitol. Yet the influence of the Beaux Arts revival of the Baroque ideal and Arthur Brown's masterful and scholarly hand set it apart.

City Hall also serves as a powerful centerpiece and focal point for the civic complex, with the dome serving as the end point of major vistas from the east and west and as a dominant point of reference. Although not the first building constructed in the complex, the City Hall was the first to be designed and all subsequent buildings have deferred to its grandeur. Every other major Civic Center building echoes the spirit and details of the City Hall, in such general matters as the character of the office wings and in such details as the rusticated bases.

The finest feature of the City Hall is its dome, whose exterior has been described as an effective and coherent synthesis of the European dome from the 16th to the 18th centuries. The interior domed area, with its elaborate detail, its imaginative but correct use of Classical elements, its grand staircase, handsome blue and gold metalwork, and dramatic lighting, is a magnificent Baroque space, comparable to the finest in the United States.

The siting and design of the War Memorial Complex extended the Civic Center to an area not included in the original plan. And, although designed 15 years later than the City Hall, the War Memorial is, nevertheless, aesthetically inseparable from it. The success of the complex is due principally to the designer of its buildings -- also Arthur Brown.

The planning of the War Memorial was masterful in terms of its relationship to the City Hall, which had been criticized as being too short for its block and in need of two or three more bays at each end. By lengthening the front facades of the War Memorial buildings, they protrude beyond the wings of the City Hall and permit an imposing view of the War Memorial from the Plaza. The lower scale of the two War Memorial buildings and the court between them are also effective in highlighting the City Hall. Viewed from the west end of the complex, the War Memorial buildings focus the view on the dome of City Hall.

The Public Library is an excellent example of American Beaux Arts architecture in the tradition of Classical Revival European and American libraries, such as Cass Gilbert's Detroit Public Library, on which it is closely modeled. The long arcade of the Fulton Street facade, with the colonnade of the Federal Building, defines the principal planning axis of the Civic Center and directs the eye from Market Street to the City Hall dome. The Larkin Street facade, across the Plaza from City Hall, reflects the design of the City Hall in its main features.

The principal issue in the Library's design competition, the shape of the building and its relation to the others in the Center, clearly illustrates the impact of the City Beautiful movement on an individual building. The winning architect conformed his building in shape and exterior decoration to integrate his structure with the plan of the Civic Center.

The Exposition Auditorium is designed in a very traditional Beaux Arts manner with a multi-faceted facade, huge bays, and paired columns. As an aesthetic element of the Civic Center, it plays a unique role. The other buildings defer to the City Hall and reflect its rhythmic and Classical qualities. They might almost serve as the base for the dome themselves in their style, but the form of the Auditorium facade echoes the features of the dome itself. The small scale of the Auditorium's details, on the other hand, serves to harmonize it with the City Hall and other buildings.

The Federal Building links Market Street and the Civic Center visually. The uninterrupted rhythmic colonnade leads the eye up U.N. Plaza and Fulton Street to the City Hall dome. The reentrant corners and the frontage on U.N. Plaza (relative to the setback Public Library) make the building more visible from the Civic Center Plaza and thus appear to be more a part of the group.

The State Building, occupying the full-block street frontage, balances Exposition Auditorium across the Plaza. The masterful handling of the War Memorial complex brings the State Building into relationship with the other Civic Center buildings.

The Civic Center Plaza, as the central feature of the principal grouping of Civic Center buildings, provides views that emphasize the unity of all the monumental buildings.

In the 1912 plans for the Civic Center, in addition to the major buildings on blocks facing the Plaza, four sites, opposite the corners of the square that would complete the Classical wall all the way around the Plaza, were reserved. On the four sites, only two structures, the Powerhouse and the Public Health Building, have been constructed. The failure to build on all four corners is due to their inclusion in the plan for aesthetic rather than practical considerations.

Of itself, the Department of Public Health Building is a simple but pleasing exercise in the Italian Renaissance style. In its shape and orientation, however, it helps to fill the gap between the Exposition Auditorium and City Hall; it is the same height as those two buildings and mixes their decorative features.

The Architects and Advocates of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition and the Civic Center

Just as the beauty and importance of the Civic Center is diffused among many elements, so no one person can be singled out as having presided over its development and that of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition. The same individuals were, with a few exceptions, involved in both projects. Mayor Phelan, Bernard J.S. Cahill, the Society for the Improvement and Adornment of San Francisco, Daniel Burnham, and the supporters of the Exposition all helped mold the Civic Center idea. Mayor Rolph and architect John Galen Howard were probably most responsible for winning its acceptance. Arthur Brown, Jr., designed most of the buildings. Many of the men and groups were involved at more than one stage, and some, like Willis Polk, never left any tangible marks of their influence, yet were significantly involved through their support and service on the various commissions and design review boards that participated in the Center's growth and the building of the Exposition. A number of other individuals deserve credit, because the architects involved in the conception and execution of the Civic Center were an exceptional group, and some discussion of their background and accomplishments will make clearer the character of the individuals involved in these achievements.

The architects of the Civic Center were well grounded in the formal training required for their tasks. Six (John Galen Howard, John Reid, Jr., George Kelham, Arthur Brown, Jr., John Bakewell, Jr., and G. Albert Lansburgh) had attended the École de Beaux Arts, and three (Howard, Walter D. Bliss, and William B. Faville) had apprenticed under McKim, Mead, and White.

The École de Beaux Arts in Paris, the most important school of architecture late in the 19th century, purveyed the ideas, which, in the United States, became incarnated as the City Beautiful movement. Certain American schools and East Coast architectural firms provided similar training and promoted many of the same ideas. The New York City firm of McKim, Mead, and White was one of the most influential.

Arthur Brown, Jr., was the architect of more buildings in the Civic Center than any other individual, and they stand out as the finest. With John Bakewell, Jr., his partner (1906-28), he planned the San Francisco, Berkeley, and Pasadena City Halls; the Horticulture Building at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition, which was a domed structure larger than the Pantheon; the Santa Fe Depot in San Diego; and many buildings at Stanford University. Later, he designed the War Memorial Complex, Federal Building, and Coit Tower in San Francisco, and the Department of Labor and Interstate Commerce Commission Buildings in Washington, D.C.'s Federal Triangle. He served on the architectural boards of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition and the 1933 Chicago World's Fair, and chaired the Golden Gate Exposition held on Treasure Island in San Francisco in 1939-40.

G. Albert Lansburgh, who assisted Arthur Brown with the Opera House, also served on the Panama-Pacific International Exposition board. He was principally known as a theater designer for the Orpheum chain, and built vaudeville and movie house for the company throughout the United States.

George Kelham, the architect of the Public Library, chaired the architecture committee of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition and designed its Court of Flowers and Court of Palms. He had arrived in San Francisco in 1909 to supervise construction of the Palace Hotel, for the firm of Trowbridge and Livingston. Kelham's greatest impact on the city was as a skyscraper designer in the late 1920s and early 1930s. As much as any person, he gave definition to the famous skyline that lasted into the 1960s. His most prominent buildings are the Standard Oil Building, the Russ Building (the city's tallest from 1927 to 1964), and the Shell Building. As supervising architect for the University of California, he also did the plan and four buildings at UCLA.

John Galen Howard chaired the advisory board that selected the plan for the Civic Center (1912) and oversaw the early stages of its implementation. Although Howard collaborated with Frederick H. Meyer and John Reid, Jr., on the Exposition Auditorium, his major role in the Civic Center was that of advisor and persuasive advocate. Howard had served on the board of the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo (1901), where he designed the prize-winning Electric Tower, and chaired the board of the Alaska-Yukon Exposition in Seattle (1909). He was also the architect of the Hearst Memorial Mining Building at the University of California in Berkeley (1900), remained to plan the university campus, and founded its department of architecture, over which he presided for 25 years. During his tenure, he designed most of the university's new buildings. Later in his career, he sat on the committee that advised the city on the War Memorial Complex.

Frederick H. Meyer, the German-born architect who shared in the design of the Exposition Auditorium, was influential in art education in the Bay Area. He was most closely associated (1907-61) with the California School of Arts and Crafts in Berkeley, which he founded. He served on the original advisory board of architects for the Civic Center and on the later War Memorial board. His most notable architectural achievements, both in San Francisco, are the Humboldt Bank Building and the Monadnock Building.

John Reid, Jr., was the San Francisco City Architect (1912-28). In that capacity, he played a long-term role in executing the Civic Center plan. Aside from his part in the Exposition Auditorium, he laid out the original Civic Center Plaza, made interior alterations to the Health Building, and designed a large number of the city's public schools.

Walter D. Bliss and William B. Faville had one of the most prominent and well-respected firms in San Francisco when they won the State Building competition in 1915. They had just designed the key buildings at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition. Their other San Francisco commissions included the St. Francis Hotel, the Bank of California, and the Geary Theater. Virtually all of their commissions are extant, except the Exposition structures.

Bernard J.S. Cahill, an Englishman who came to San Francisco in 1891 to practice architecture, prepared the first Civic Center plan in 1899. His 1904 plan, as revised, served as basis for the final design of the Civic Center. He specialized in mausoleums but was most influential as an early advocate of city planning. He also invented the "butterfly," or octahedral, map projection.

Several contributors to the Civic Center's "decorations" also deserve mention. Jean-Louis Bourgeois assisted with the interiors of City Hall. Paul Deniville, who executed the decorative plaster and artificial stone of City Hall's interior, also did the travertine interiors of the San Francisco Public Library and the huge Palace of Machinery at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition, as well as the Pennsylvania Station in New York City. (Both of the latter are demolished.) Thomas D. Church, a nationally prominent landscape architect associated with the "Bay Region Style," planned the Memorial Court.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Cited in Kevin Starr, Americans and the California Dream, 1850-1915 (Santa Barbara, Calif.: Peregrine Smith, 1981), p. 294.

[2]Henry Hope Reed, Jr., The Golden City (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1959), p. .

[3]The bulk of the text of this significance statement has been edited and condensed from the exhaustive presentation of the Civic Center's significance in Michael Corbett's National Register of Historic Places nomination form, which will not be cited further.

[4]Starr, op. cit., pp. 288-293.

[5]John Allwood, The Great Exhibitions (London: Studio Vista, 1977), pp. 119-120.

[6]Folke T. Kihlstedt, "Formal and Structural Innovations in American Exposition Architecture" (Ph. D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1973), p. 1, 148.

[7]Frank Morton Todd, The Story of the Exposition (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1921), II, 19.

[8]For example, Kihlstedt, op. cit., pp. 117 et seq.

[9]See William H. Jordy, American Buildings and Their Architects, vol. 3 (Progressive and Academic Ideals at the Turn of the Century) (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1972), pp. 275-291.

[10]"Truman Talk Finale to Charter Adoption," San Francisco Call, June 26, 1945, p. 1; "Truman in S.F. Today for Conference Close," San Francisco Chronicle, June 27, 1945, pp. 1 and 4; and "Program in Honor of the Delegates to the Conference of the United Nations" (San Francisco: Pisani Printing Company, 1945).

Bibliography

Allwood, John. The Great Exhibitions. London: Studio Vista, 1977.

Barry, John D. The City of Domes. San Francisco: John J. Newbegin, 1915.

The Blue Book: A Comprehensive Official Souvenir View Book of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition of San Francisco, 1915. San Francisco: Robert A. Reid, Official Publisher of View Books, 1915.

Burnham, Daniel H., and Edward H. Bennett. Report on a Plan for San Francisco. (ed., Edward F. O'Day). Published by the City of San Francisco, September 1915.

Draper, Joan. "San Francisco Civic Center: Symbol of Unity," unpublished manuscript, University of California at Berkeley. June 11, 1973.

Hailey, Gene, ed. California Art Research. San Francisco: Works Progress Administration Project, 1937, 2874 O.P. 65-3-3632. Vol. 17. First Series.

Jordy, William H. American Buildings and Their Architects, vol. 3 (Progressive and Academic Ideals at the Turn of the Century). Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1972.

Kihlstedt, Folke T. "Formal and Structural Innovations in American Exposition Architecture, 1901-1939," Ph.D. Dissertation. Northwestern University, 1973.

Mullgardt, Louis C. et al. The Architecture and Landscape Gardening of the Exposition. San Francisco: Paul Elder and Co., 1915.

Neuhaus, Eugene. The Art of the Exposition. San Francisco: Paul Elder and Co., 1915.

"Program in Honor of the Delegates to the Conference of the United Nations." San Francisco: Pisani Printing Company, 1945.

Reed, Henry Hope, Jr. The Golden City. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1959.

Reps, John W. The Making of Urban America. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1956.

Rolph, James, Jr. History of the San Francisco War Memorial. San Francisco: The Recorder Printing and Publishing Company, n.d.

_____. Supplemental History of the San Francisco War Memorial. San Francisco: The Recorder Printing and Publishing Company, n.d.

"The San Francisco City Hall," tour leaflet printed by the City of San Francisco.

Schuyler, Montgomery. American Architecture and Other Writings. William H. Jordy and Ralph Coe, ed. Abridged by William H. Jordy. New York: Atheneum, 1964.

Scott, Mel. American City Planning Since 1890. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969.

Starr, Kevin. Americans and the California Dream, 1850-1915. Santa Barbara, California: Peregrine Smith, 1981.

_____. The San Francisco Bay Area: A Metropolis in Perspective. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959.

Todd, Frank Morton. The Story of the Exposition. New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1921. 2 vols.

"Truman in S.F. Today for Conference Close," San Francisco Chronicle, June 27, 1945, pp. 1 and 4.

"Truman Talk Finale to Charter Adoption," San Francisco Call, June 26, 1945, p. 1.

Tunnard, Christopher. The City of Man. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953.

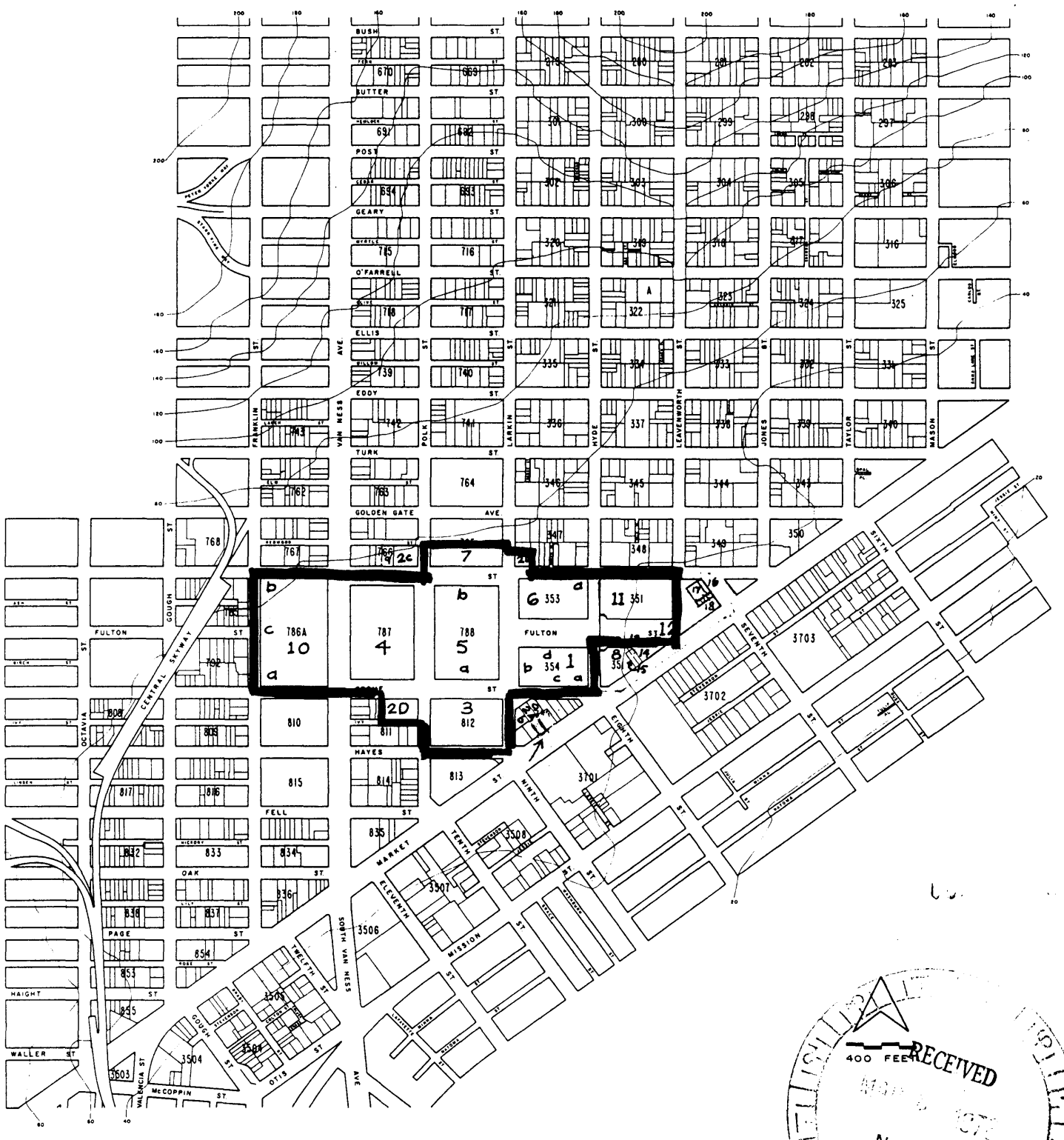
Wilson, Richard Guy. "California Classicist," Progressive Architecture (December 1983), pp. 64-71.

Michael Corbett's National Register of Historic Places nomination contains additional bibliography that will be useful to any student of the Civic Center, the Panama-Pacific International Exposition, and their architects.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The area generally encompasses the portions of the Civic Center plan of 1912 that have been built up with structures in the Classical mode substantially as envisioned in the plan; together with Marshall Square, which antedates the plan; and the War Memorial Complex just west of City Hall, built in 1931-32 as an extension of the Civic Center. A precise boundary follows:

Beginning at the south edge of the intersection of former Fulton and Leavenworth Streets, the boundary proceeds west to the center of the intersection of Fulton and Hyde, then south on Hyde to Grove, west on Grove to Larkin, south on Larkin to Hayes, and west on Hayes to Polk Street. It proceeds north on Polk to Ivy Street and then west on Ivy to the western lot line of Block 811, Lot 1. Then north on the western line of the lot to Grove Street, and west on Grove Street to Franklin Street. On Franklin Street, the boundary proceeds north to McAllister Street, east on McAllister to Polk Street, then north on Polk Street to the northern boundary of Block 765, Lot 2, to Larkin Street, south on Larkin to the northern line of Block 347, Lot 8, and east on the northern boundary of Lot 8. It then proceeds south on the eastern boundary of Block 347, Lot 8, to McAllister Street, then east on McAllister to Leavenworth, and south on Leavenworth extended to the beginning point.



WORKING AREA LAND USE STUDY

CIVIC CENTER

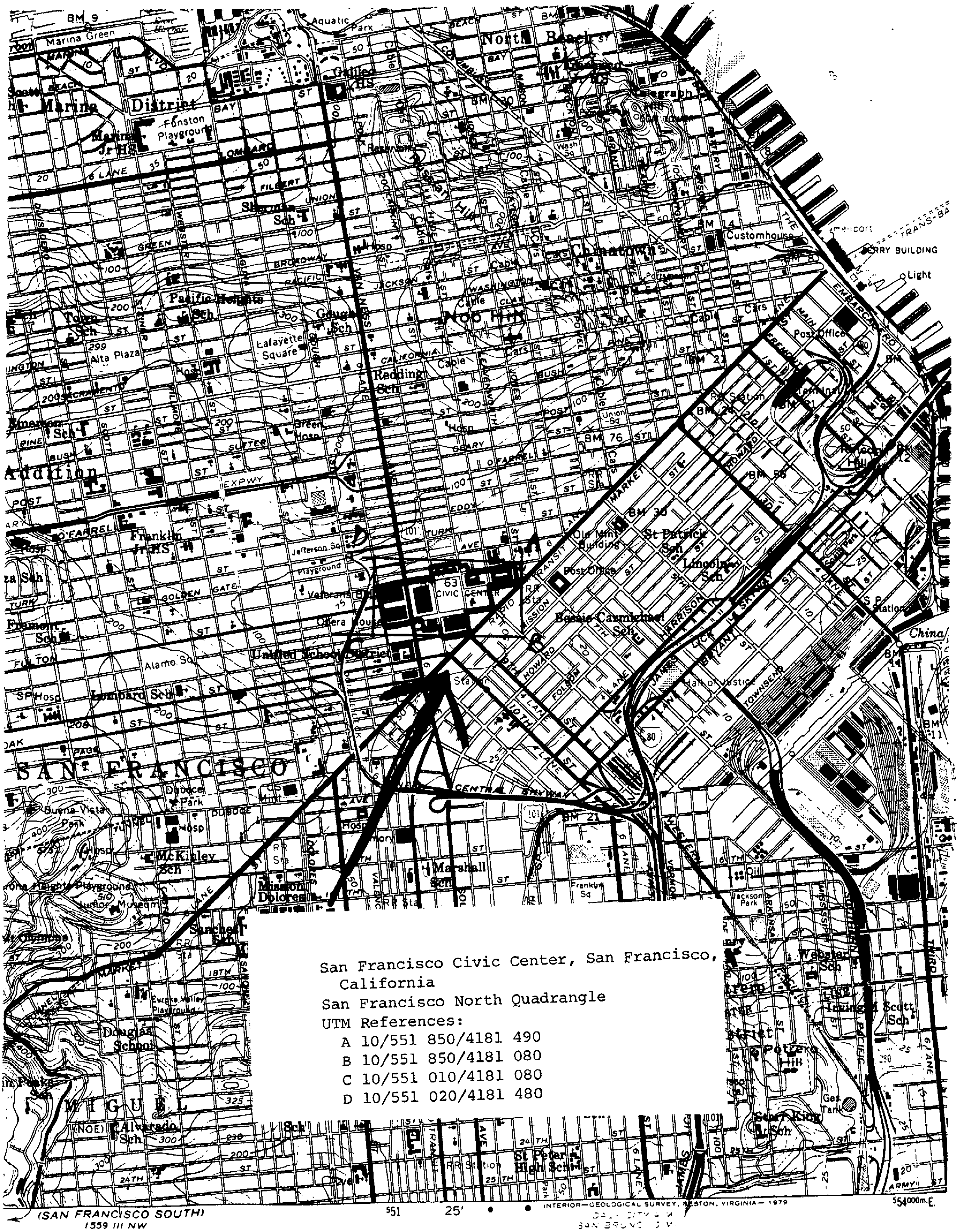
WORKING AREA W · PLANNING AREA 3

San Francisco Civic Center (Map I)

Numbers and letters are keyed to the specific buildings and sites of the San Francisco Civic Center. The above numbers relate to the order in which buildings and sites are presented under item 7 (description) and item 8 (statement of significance) in the text. For example, 10 is the War Memorial Complex, "a" represents the Opera House, "b" the Veterans Building and "c" the Memorial Court.

San Francisco Civic Center

Property	Map Reference
Marshall Square	1
Pioneer Memorial	1a
Department of City Planning Building	1b
Parking	1c
Brooks Hall Ramp	1d
Civic Center Powerhouse	2B
Department of Public Health Building	2D
Exposition Auditorium	3
City Hall	4
Civic Center Plaza	5
Brooks Hall	5a
Civic Center Garage	5b
Public Library	6
Library Annex	6a
California State Building	7
War Memorial	10
Opera House	10a
Veterans Building	10b
Memorial Court	10c
Federal Building	11
United Nations Plaza	12


San Francisco Civic Center, San Francisco,
California
San Francisco North Quadrangle
UTM References:
A 10/551 850/4181 490
B 10/551 850/4181 080
C 10/551 010/4181 080
D 10/551 020/4181 480
Marina Green
Aquatic Park
North Beach
Marina District
Funston Playground
Galileo HS
Telegraph Hill
Wash Sq
Chinatown
Customhouse
FERRY BUILDING
Light
Pacific Heights Sch
Lafayette Square
Alta Plaza
Nob Hill
Post Office
Union Sq
Franklin Jr HS
Jefferson Sq
CIVIC CENTER
Opera House
Veterans Bldg
Old Mint Building
St Patrick Sch
Lincoln Sch
Bessie Carmichael Sch
Hall of Justice
Alamo Sq
Lombard Sch
SAN FRANCISCO
Duboce Park
Buena Vista Park
McKinley Sch
Mission Dolores
Marshall Sch
Franklin Sq
Jackson Park
Webster Sch
Irving M Scott Sch
Potrero Hill
Douglas School
Alvarado Sch
St Peter High Sch
Gas Tank
MARKET
CENTRAL SKYWAY
EMBARCADERO
INTERIOR—GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA—1979
(SAN FRANCISCO SOUTH)
1559 III NW
551
25′
554000m.E.