

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name **Bank of Italy, Merced**

other names/site number **Mondo Building**

2. Location

street & number **501 West Main Street** NA not for publication

city or town **Merced** NA vicinity

state **California** code **CA** county **Merced** code **047** zip code **95340**

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

William Wayne Donahoe 24 AUG 2004
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

California Office of Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
 - See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 - See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain): _____

Edson H. Beall Signature of the Keeper Date of Action
10/12/04

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce: financial institution, business

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Work in progress

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete
roof clay tile
walls cast stone, stucco

other granite

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- X Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Merced County Historical Society

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1928

Significant Dates

1928

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

NA

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/Builder

Minton, Henry Anthony, architect

Parker, Kingsbury E., builder

Bank of Italy, Merced
Name of Property

Merced County, CA
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approximately .17 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	10	723120	4131120	3		
2				4		

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title **Jonathan Tolkin, Manager**

organization **Mondo Building, LLC** date **4-21-03**

street & number **51 West Dayton Street, Suite 100** telephone **626-535-0317**

city or town **Pasadena** state **CA** zip code **91105**

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name **same as above**

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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(8-86)
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National Park Service

OMB No. 1024-0018

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

Bank of Italy, Merced

Merced, California

Section 7 - Narrative Description

Summary: The Bank of Italy Building (a.k.a Mondo Building) is a three story commercial building with basement, located at the central intersection of Downtown Merced (the City's historic commercial district), on the northwest corner of Canal Street and West Main Street. The Building's approximately 26,771 square feet of gross building area is allocated as follows: Ground Floor area of 7,172 square feet; Mezzanine area of 1,250 square feet; Second Floor area of 5,690 square feet; Third Floor area of 5,690 square feet, and Basement area of 6,969 square feet. Its historic name is the "Bank of Italy Building", and the factual construction date was in 1928. The Bank of Italy Building was designed by the notable architect, H.A. Minton and built by K.E. Parker Co. The building is rectangular in shape and set on the site with storefronts and window fenestration along Canal and Main Streets. The building is 65 feet tall at the facades, however the rooftop mechanical room extends to 71 feet. The method of construction for the building structure is primarily poured-in-place reinforced concrete with cast stone cladding. The building boasts distinctive Classical Revival architectural styles and features. The building exhibits excellent craftsmanship, and artistic elements with its decorated cast stone columns, cornice and Corinthian capitals and decorative cast stone band. With the exception of a portion of the ground floor, which was modified the 1950s, the building looks substantially similar to the way it looked historically, with most of the building's historic elements in good condition.

Historic Appearance: When the Bank of Italy Building opened its doors on April 20, 1928, it was considered one of the most beautiful buildings in the City. It incorporated the operations of many of Merced's pioneer financial institutions: the First National Bank of Merced, the Merced Security Savings Bank, and the Commercial Savings Bank. The building itself was itself a major contributor to the economic growth of the City. The offices in the upper floors, occupied by physicians, dentists and lawyers, provided the City with essential professional services.

The three-story rectangular plan building has a flat roof with terra cotta tiled mansards and a decorated cornice and frieze facing the streets. The primary exterior building material is cast stone (crushed marble recast with cement). A strip of salt and pepper granite ran along the base of the building. The first floor fenestration was framed by five stone engaged columns with Corinthian capitals facing Main

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Section 7 Page 2

Bank of Italy, Merced

Merced, California

Section 7 - Narrative Description continued

Street and seven similar pilasters on Canal Street. The decorated band between the first and second floors is embellished with alternating square panels featuring the head of an Indian wearing a headdress or an eagle, separated by rectangular panels with diamonds. The fenestration of the upper floors consists of pairs of windows (five facing Main, and eight facing Canal) separated by recessed rectangular panels between pairs, and square panels between floors.

Original Materials: The clay tile roof is comprised of clay tiles manufactured by California Pottery Company. The exterior finishing stone is a reconstructed marble made from the original crushed material, re-cast with cement to act as a binding agent. Its trade name is Travertite; and the original marble crushed for the finished product is Travertine marble. It was manufactured by P. Grassi & Co. of San Francisco. The salt and pepper granite is from California Cut Stone. The steel and wood window frames, clear plate glass, cast iron, and pressed decorative zinc metal were fabricated by Federal Ornamental Bronze out of San Francisco.

In the 1950s, to accommodate the then desires of first floor retail store occupant, portions of the first floor fenestration were covered by stucco.

Current Appearance: The building retains its original character, and most of the building's historic elements are in good condition. The building is being completely rehabilitated as a tax credit project. The rehabilitation work commenced in fall 2003 and is scheduled for completion Summer 2004. The rehabilitation will restore and preserve the historic architectural features and upgrade building systems to accommodate the building's new occupants, which include the University of California at Merced and County Bank.

The stucco, which was placed on the building during its 1950s modification and covered portions of the first floor fenestration, has been removed as part of the rehabilitation to reveal the wonderfully well-preserved architectural features.

The original cast stone cladding remains in very good condition on the entire Canal Street elevation, and on the second and third floors of the Main Street elevation.

Columns and Pilasters: The original cast stone fluted engaged columns and pilasters are well preserved along the Canal Street (longer) frontage; however

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Bank of Italy, Merced

Merced, California

Section 7 - Narrative Description continued

they were damaged along the Main Street (shorter) frontage as part of the building modifications which took place in the 1950s. Each pilaster along Canal Street includes an original salt and pepper granite base from California Cut Stone. Original salt and pepper granite clad bulkheads exist under each window bay along Canal Street. The $\frac{3}{4}$ round fluted engaged columns along the Main Street frontage were damaged during the 1950s building modifications. The damaged columns and pilasters are being restored as part of the current building rehabilitation. All of the damaged cast stone architectural features are being restored during the current building rehabilitation using a process which includes the making of molds and the casting of the features with a custom cement mix. Most of the salt and pepper granite on the Main Street elevation was removed during the 1950s building modifications. This granite is being restored as part of the current building rehabilitation. The cast stone decorative band is well preserved in its historic condition along both the Canal Street frontage and Main Street frontage.

Corinthian Capitals: Most of the Corinthian Capitals are in good condition along the Canal Street (longer) frontage. During the 1950s building modifications a few of the Canal Street and most of the Main Street (shorter frontage) Corinthian capitals were damaged. Additionally, some of the cast stone medallions decorating the exterior above the capitals were removed. The damaged capitals and medallions are being restored as part of the current building rehabilitation.

Decorative Band: The Decorative Band is well preserved in its historic condition along both the Canal Street (longer) frontage and Main Street (shorter) frontage.

Windows: All original wood windows remain in good condition on the second and third floors throughout the building. They are being refinished as part of the current building rehabilitation. The original steel windows on the ground floor are in excellent condition along the Canal Street (longer) frontage, and have been removed along the Main Street (shorter) frontage. These steel window frames include a decorative metal relief at $\frac{1}{3}$ the height of the bay. Some original clear plate glass remains. New steel windows are being fabricated for the Main Street frontage to match the original window sections as part of the current building rehabilitation.

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Merced, California

Section 7 - Narrative Description continued

Doors: Original decorative cast iron entrance and bronze doors exists at the building's lobby entrance on Canal Street. The original cast iron entrances and doors were removed from the Main Street frontage during the 1950s modification.

The original red clay tile roof exists in good condition.

The "blind" north elevation is at the property line; the rear elevation faces an alley. Both are in original condition.

Section 8 - Narrative Statement of Significance

Summary: Designed by the notable architect, H.A. Minton, the Bank of Italy Building is a significant architectural achievement, eligible for placement on the National Register because of its distinctive Classical Revival architectural characteristics which display exceptional artistic value. The Bank of Italy's character defining Classical architectural features include a cast stone fluted engaged columns and pilasters, cast stone decorated cornice and Corinthian capitals, decorative medallions and a decorative cast stone band. The building's artistic value is also displayed in the steel window frames, which include a decorative metal panel. The Bank of Italy building is a good example of commercial and banking architecture during in the 1920s in which buildings draw on Classical architectural features as a representation of the prosperity, growth, pioneering spirit and progress of the people. This theme is particularly well expressed by the Bank of Italy's opening announcement placed in the April 19, 1928 edition of the Merced Sun Star Newspaper, "This new building of the Bank of Italy in Merced, together with its-all inclusive banking-service, is substantial and abiding proof that this great bank is living up to its pledge to work at all times for the greater prosperity of Merced and surrounding community. This living monument marks the shoulder-to-shoulder progress of both the Merced district and the Bank of Italy." The Yosemite Portland Cement Co. congratulatory advertisement in the same April 19, 1928 edition of the Merced Sun Star Newspaper, similarly illustrates this theme, "A Monument to the great progress and strides that Merced is now making - the new Bank of Italy building will stand as a cornerstone of the new era of business advancement and business progress. Constructed of the finest materials obtainable, its establishes a new standard in the business life of Merced and the Bank of Italy is to be congratulated upon its vision of the future

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Section 8 Page 5 Bank of Italy, Merced
 Merced, California

Section 8 - Narrative Statement of Significance continued

of Merced, and Merced is to be congratulated that it is worthy of this confidence in its future. It is with no little sense of pride - honest pride in a product that is brought from the hills of Merced County by home folks - handled and manufactured at home by these same home folks . . ."

When the Bank of Italy Building opened its doors on April 20, 1928, it was considered one of the most beautiful buildings in the City, boasting distinctive Classical Revival design. The Bank of Italy Building was designed by the notable architect, H.A. Minton and built by K.E. Parker Co. The Bank of Italy Building was originally constructed for a cost of \$250,000, and it took an average workforce of fifty people, earning \$5-\$12 per day, approximately 210 working days to complete.

The Bank of Italy Building housed the operations of many of Merced's pioneer financial institutions: the First National Bank of Merced(No. 9437), the Merced Security Savings Bank, and the Commercial Savings Bank. The Bank of Italy Building was itself a major contributor to the economic growth of the City. The offices in the upper floors, occupied by physicians, dentists and lawyers, provided the City with essential professional services. There is evidence that 40 offices were contained in this building. There is evidence that one of the first directors of the Security Bank was C.H. Huffman, father of J. Walton Huffman, who with Charles Crocker established the Crocker-Huffman land and water system. According to the Merced Sun Star article dated 4/19/28, Mr. Huffman established the First National Bank of Merced and became the President of the Bank.

The Bank of Italy Building was the one of the first substantial commercial/financial building in the City of Merced. It is also one of the relatively small numbers of commercial buildings surviving from this early period of Merced's history and is a very good example of the town's business architecture in the 1920's. Lastly, as a result of its stature, age, and prominent location in the City, The Bank of Italy Building has become a familiar visual landmark of the downtown Merced for many residents and visitors. In 2002, the City of Merced designated The Bank of Italy Building as a local historic resource and landmark.

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 Bank of Italy, Merced

 Merced, California

Section 8 - Narrative Statement of Significance continued

Boasting distinctive Classical Revival features and representing the early heritage of Merced, the Bank of Italy building is a significant architectural achievement with distinctive architectural characteristics and artistic values and building craftsmanship. The building's architectural accomplishment is best embodied in the distinctive building elements including the decorated cast stone cornice, cast stone Corinthian columns, pilasters and capitals, and cast stone decorative medallions and decorative band.

The following are a few of the Bank of Italy's significant building features: The building has terra cotta tiled roof mansards and a decorated cornice and frieze facing the streets. The primary exterior building material is cast stone (crushed marble recast with cement). A strip of salt and pepper granite adorned the base of the building. The first floor fenestration is framed by five stone engaged columns with Corinthian capitals facing Main Street and seven similar pilasters on Canal Street. The decorated band between the first and second floors is embellished with alternating square panels featuring the head of an Indian wearing a headdress or an eagle, separated by rectangular panels with diamonds. The fenestration of the upper floors consists of pairs of windows (five facing Main, and eight facing Canal) separated by recessed rectangular panels between pairs, and square panels between floors. All original wood windows remain in good condition on the second and third floors throughout the building. The original steel windows on the ground floor are in excellent condition along the Canal Street frontage. These steel window frames include a decorative metal relief at 1/3 the height of the bay. The original cast iron doors and entrance exists at the building's lobby entrance on Canal Street. The building's interior lobby and ground floor bank space both possess elaborate plaster detailing. Original Materials: Clay tile roof from California Pottery Co., the exterior finishing stone is a reconstructed marble made from the original crushed material re-cast with cement to act as a binding agent. Its trade name is Travertite and the original marble crushed for the finished product is Travertine marble. It was manufactured by P. Grassi & Co. of San Francisco, black granite from California Cut Stone, steel and wood window frames, clear plate glass, cast iron by Federal Ornamental Bronze out of San Francisco, and pressed decorative zinc metal.

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 Bank of Italy, Merced

 Merced, California

Section 8 - Narrative Statement of Significance continued

A discussion of the architectural significance of The Bank of Italy Building would not be complete without mentioning the contribution of The Bank of Italy Building's architect, H.A. Minton (Henry Anthony Minton). Henry Anthony Minton, 1883-1948, was a major contributor to California's architectural landscape. As the Bank of Italy, founded in San Francisco in 1904, rose rapidly to become a major statewide banking institution, the Bank's founder, A.P. Giannini, commissioned H.A. Minton's San Francisco architectural firm to design many of its buildings. Minton, born in Boston and educated at Harvard University, had come to San Francisco in the aftermath of the 1906 earthquake and fire, and quickly established himself as practitioner in San Francisco and the surrounding area. In addition to his work for The Bank of Italy, including the impressive thirteen-story Bank of Italy skyscraper in San Jose, Minton became the architect for numerous Catholic schools and churches, including St. Brigid's, St. Francis Xavier Mission for Japanese and the Mission Dolores Church in the Bay area. Minton also did the plans for the Alameda County Courthouse and, in cooperation with noted theater specialist Thomas W. Lamb, designed the lavish Fox Theater in San Francisco.

Section 9 - Bibliography

Merced Sun-Star (4/19/28) By C.R.
Architectural Evaluation for the City of Merced Economic Development Department
(December 15, 1999), La Salle Associates

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Section 10 Page 8

 Bank of Italy, Merced

 Merced, California

Section 10 - Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description: A portion of Lots 15 and 16 of Block 163, as shown on the map entitled "Supplemental Map to Town of Merced", filed March 4, 1889 in the Office of the County Recorder of Merced County, in Volume 2 of Official Plats, at Page 12. 501 W. Main Street, Merced, California. Northwest corner of Canal & Main Streets. Assessors Parcel #:031-141-006.

Boundary Justification: The boundaries were selected because they describe the original city lots and legal description, assessor's parcel number, and street address.

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Section Additional Documentation Page 9

Bank of Italy, Merced

Merced, California

Photographs

Photograph #1

Name of Photographer: Unknown
Date of Photograph: September 2003
Location of Negative: Unknown
Description of View: Historic View from Corner of Main & Canal Streets

Photograph #2

Name of Photographer: Jonathan Tolkin
Date of Photograph: September 2003
Location of Negative: Pasadena Office of Tolkin Group (Digital)
Description of View: Building View from Corner of Main & Canal Streets

Photograph #3

Name of Photographer: Herb Cooper
Date of Photograph: March 2004
Location of Negative: Pasadena Office of Tolkin Group (Digital)
Description of View: View of Ground Floor Storefront from Canal Street

Photograph #4

Name of Photographer: Herb Cooper
Date of Photograph: March 2004
Location of Negative: Pasadena Office of Tolkin Group (Digital)
Description of View: View from Lobby outward toward Canal Street

Photograph #5

Name of Photographer: Herb Cooper
Date of Photograph: March 2004
Location of Negative: Pasadena Office of Tolkin Group (Digital)
Description of View: View of Lobby looking toward Stairway - lower

Photograph #6

Name of Photographer: Herb Cooper
Date of Photograph: March 2004
Location of Negative: Pasadena Office of Tolkin Group (Digital)
Description of View: View of Lobby looking toward Stairway - higher