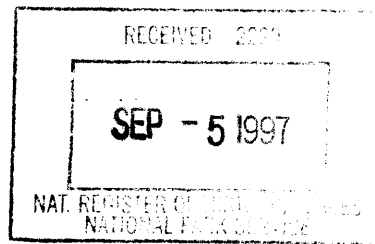


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



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OHP

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 an 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 Gibb, Daniel, & Co. Warehouse
Gibbs' U.S. Bonded Warehouse; Vallejo Street Warehouse;
other names/site number Trinidad Bean and Elevator Co.; Gibb-Sanborn Warehouse

2. Location

street & number 855 Front Street / 101 Vallejo Street not for publication
city or town San Francisco vicinity
state California code CA county San Francisco code 075 zip code 94111

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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.)
[Signature] August 26, 1997
Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____
California Office of Historic Preservation
State of 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 official/Title _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Ralph H. Ferguson Date of Action 10/10/97

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	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	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/TRADE: Warehouse

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: Professional

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Mid 19th century

OTHER: Brick Warehouse

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Sandstone; Brick

walls Brick

roof See Continuation Page 1

other See Continuation Page 1

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.
- C 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 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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Commerce
- Community Planning & Development
- Architecture

Period of Significance

- 1855
- 1906

Significant Dates

- 1855; 1906

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

- N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(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:

City Planning Department

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	110	552900	41835710
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
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 Anne Bloomfield

organization Anne Bloomfield Architectural History date 6 May 1997

street & number 2229 Webster Street telephone 415-922-1063

city or town San Francisco state CA zip code 94115

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 SHPO or FPO.)

name 101 Vallejo Associates, c/o Ron Kaufman

street & number 55 Francisco Street telephone 415-982-5702

city or town San Francisco state CA zip code 94133

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 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 Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 7 Page 1

Gibb, Daniel, & Co. Warehouse
San Francisco, CA

7. DESCRIPTION:

Materials:	Roof:	N/A (not visible) Metal
	Other:	Granite Marble Iron Stucco

Narrative description:

The Daniel Gibb & Co. Warehouse is a two-story and basement brick structure 28 ft. high, covering its entire 40 x 110-ft. lot and located at the southwest corner of Vallejo and Front Streets in San Francisco, California (Photo 1). It is one of a matching pair (the other is at the northwest corner) constructed together in 1855 (Photos 2,3,4). It is on flat landfill about one block west of the present seawall, and at the time of construction it was on the edge of the water. It has three bays on Front Street and nine on Vallejo. Openings are tall and narrow, with filled-in relieving arches on all but the main entrance and two upper floor windows on Front Street. First story windows on Front and the two original doorways on Vallejo are taller and wider than the other first floor windows. The main entrance is sandstone, trabeated with a Gibbs surround (alternating large and smaller blocks) (Photo 5). The other openings have slightly projecting, arched surrounds with granite sills. The two original door surrounds on the Vallejo Street side are plastered; the third door, converted from a window, is in the next-to-westmost bay and in a brick surround. The visible foundation is sandstone on Front Street and brick on Vallejo (Photo 6). The interior basement walls are granite. The Front and mid-Vallejo entrances retain early iron doors (Photos 5, 6). Windows are two-part, on side pivots, six-over-six upstairs and six-over multi-pane downstairs. The

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 7 Page 2

Gibb, Daniel, & Co. Warehouse
San Francisco, CA

Narrative description (cont.):

cornice is simple corbelling. Marble street signs are incorporated in the brickwork between floors at the corner (Photo 7). On the Front Street elevation a granite water table projects slightly, with a course of quarter-round brick above it (Photo 6). The Vallejo elevation is divided into three sets of three bays by stretcher-wide indentations for drainpipes. The roof is concealed behind a parapet, but part of its western half has been popped up for a gabled and skylit mezzanine with standing seam metal roofing (Photo 1). The building is intact to its 1906 restoration as to location, design, setting, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Immediately after being gutted and partly destroyed in the 1906 earthquake fire, the building was restored to its original configuration and uses. The seam between pre- and post-fire brickwork is clearly visible: along Front Street it runs below the tops of the second floor windows, at the corner it dips down almost to the street signs, then rises again in the first Vallejo Street bay to just under the cornice for about three bays, and finally it runs between floors for the remainder (the seams on the south and west elevations are not visible because of adjoining buildings) (Photos 1, 7, 8). Thus brickwork dating to the 1855 construction exists for the whole first floor, nearly half of the second floor, and none of the cornice or parapet. The 1855 brickwork is stretchers only, with smooth pointing. The 1906 brickwork is American bond, with rough pointing. Pictures of the pre-fire buildings show a cornice with modillion blocks or dentils and all windows with relieving arches (Photos 3, 9); the 1906 cornice is simpler corbelling, and two upper windows on Front were eliminated (Photo 10). Otherwise the 1906 reconstruction appears exact, including the interior structure of two rows of brick piers under wooden posts supporting wooden beams and floors (Photo 11).

The non-matching 1906 brickwork suggests that the exterior was painted soon after reconstruction. Certainly a 1961 photo shows painted brick (Photo 10). Some time during the 20th century, perhaps in the 1930s, the roof pop-out for a mezzanine was constructed. It appears on the 1961 photo.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 7 Page 3

Gibb, Daniel, & Co. Warehouse
San Francisco, CA

Narrative description (cont.):

In 1972 the building was converted from warehouse to professional office uses. Everything was cleaned and shined. The brick was sandblasted to remove the paint. A loading dock along Front Street was removed. A pair of windows was cut in the second floor on Front Street where they had existed before 1906, but these have neither relieving arches nor raised surrounds (Photos 1, 3, 10). One bricked-up window on the Vallejo elevation was re-opened. Another window toward the west end of the same side was turned into a door. The other windows were repaired. Full seismic strengthening (a ductile bridge system) was constructed on the interior without removing 1855 or 1906 fabric (Photos 11-13). A new stairway and other safety provisions were constructed inside, the mezzanine was removed, leaving its roof for a two-story space (Photo 14). Partitions were added, sympathetically to the two rows of 1906 posts (Photo 13). Some interior hinges for iron shutters remain in place. Some beams in the basement retain their stenciled labels for the types of beans stored there when the building was the Trinidad Bean warehouse c.1940-1972 (Photo 11).

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 8 Page 4

Gibb, Daniel, & Co. Warehouse
San Francisco, CA

Statement of Significance:

The Daniel Gibb & Co. Warehouse appears eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance, under Criteria A-patterns of events and C-architecture in the contexts of San Francisco's mercantile development spurred by the gold rush, her infrastructure of seawalls and landfill, her early warehouse architecture, and the rebuilding after the 1906 earthquake fire. This building and its twin across Vallejo Street appear to be the oldest surviving warehouses in San Francisco, the only ones dating back to the gold rush era. The building's integrity is very good to its extensive repairs after the 1906 fire, and fairly good to its original construction.

BUILDING HISTORY

Daniel Gibb, commission merchant from Scotland, appears to have bought the land in 1852. The building and its twin were constructed in 1855; the designer and the builder are unknown. The firm Daniel Gibb & Co. moved in during the first week of September 1855 and used this building for their sales office as well as for storage.¹

In 1861 surveyor George Cofran reported that this Class 1 brick building was owned and occupied by Daniel Gibb & Company, that it measured 45' 10" by 110' by 2 stories and basement with walls 20-16 inches thick, that it had a tin roof and iron covering for front and rear openings.² The company continued at this address as long as it existed, that is until some time in 1864, after the deaths of both Daniel Gibb and his brother William. About that time the two buildings were bought by John Sanborn, warehouseman, whose family continued to own the subject building until 1969 and to this day owns the twin at the northwest corner of Front and Vallejo.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 8 Page 5

Gibb, Daniel, & Co. Warehouse
San Francisco, CA

Statement of Significance (cont.):

The subject building, at the southwest corner, is identified in city directories at least 1879-1886 as "Gibbs' U.S. Bonded Warehouse." By 1894 the tenant had changed the name to "Vallejo Street Free Warehouse," as it was identified on the 1899 Sanborn map. In 1901 it was the "Vallejo Street Bonded Tea Warehouse."

The earthquake of 18 April 1906 caused a three-day fire which destroyed San Francisco's northeast (downtown and waterfront) section. The Gibb-Sanborn Warehouses did not escape; the fire gutted them and took down parts of the walls. The subject building retained more of its 1855 walls than its twin. Sanborn's widow Elizabeth had both warehouses reconstructed to very nearly their original appearance, using what remained of the original brick walls.

After the reconstruction, the building's uses are less clear. A Sanborn family member has identified it as a "public" warehouse.³ The city directory of 1908 names it as one of the "Vallejo Street Bonded and Free Warehouses," but by 1914 the address of that group had changed to Battery and Broadway, under the management of William B. Sanborn, John's son. Similarly the 1923 directory names only the "Vallejo Free Warehouse No. 4" at 622 Battery, leading to the supposition that the twin warehouses at Front and Vallejo were Numbers 1 and 2. The 1913 Sanborn map shows its use as "wine storage." Reverse directories in 1933 and 1940 identify it as the "Savin-Vincent Seed Co."

About that time the tenant became the "Trinidad Bean and Elevator Co.," which continued to use it until about 1972. Begun in Colorado where the crops were raised, Trinidad Bean used the building for sorting and cleaning its merchandise as well as storing it. They had--and possibly built--a skylit mezzanine at the west end of the second floor for the better hand sorting of the beans. In the basement at least one wooden beam is still stencilled "Lentils" and "Garbanzos" (see Photo 11).

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 8 Page 6

Gibb, Daniel, & Co. Warehouse
San Francisco, CA

Statement of Significance (cont.):

In 1969 the Sanborn family sold the building, and in 1972 The Ron Kaufman Companies obtained a master lease with option to buy, which they did in 1979 under the name "101 Vallejo Associates." In 1972 they converted the building to office use, adding seismic strengthening and other safety measures inside but changing the outside very little except for sandblasting off the exterior paint. In 1976 the building was designated San Francisco Landmark No. 91. It is now rented to three professional tenants, one per floor.

CONTEXT: SAN FRANCISCO'S EARLY MERCANTILE DEVELOPMENT

The Gibb Warehouse represents the way trade was conducted in San Francisco during the gold rush and the 1850s. It is the only warehouse in the city which has survived reasonably intact from that time. Although the chaotic gold rush conditions had somewhat settled by the time the building was constructed in 1855, it was still the era when storage and sales were conducted in the same building.

The gold rush of 1848-1849 instantly created the city of San Francisco, where before there had been only the sleepy, 400-person town of Yerba Buena. The 1852 census registered almost 35,000 inhabitants, and by 1860 that figure rose almost to 57,000. The city was the major port for the entire state, the transshipment point for all supplies en route to the gold mining areas. There was no railroad, no way across the continent for freight, nothing like enough supplies within California. Everything had to come by water, usually around the southern tip of South America, and that voyage took about six months.

Many among the gold seekers realized that money was to be made supplying miners rather than competing against them. So they became merchants of one kind or another, from running a little general store at the latest digs to brokering fleetsful of supplies, and all the middlemen in between. The route was to load a

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 8 Page 7

Gibb, Daniel, & Co. Warehouse
San Francisco, CA

Statement of Significance (cont.):

mixture of supplies onto a vessel on the east coast--or in South America or Europe or Hawaii or China--and send it out to San Francisco. There the cargo might go directly to the merchant who had commissioned it, or the captain might sell it whole or in parts, or it might be auctioned off. The buyer then would pass it on, at a profit, to the next middleman, and somewhere in the chain the supplies would be shipped to the hinterland via steamer, and thence on wagons and/or mules to the actual mining areas, where the eventual users would buy.

In this system prices fluctuated wildly, depending on when the previous shipment of similar merchandise had arrived. It took a very knowing operator consistently to buy goods at a price from which the resale could make a profit, and when to store or sell them. Other elements of success or failure were financial connections at the point of origin, and the ability to predict what goods to order considering the time lag of shipment.

The famous clipper ships were created to reduce this time lag, so troublesome to the merchants. These ships' large size, narrow hulls, and enormous sail spread enabled them to cut two months or more off the passage from the east coast to San Francisco.

Profits here could be high, and risks were great. Many men tried their fortunes as commission merchants. Some succeeded spectacularly, for instance William T. Coleman and Levi Strauss. Others failed, the most notorious case being Joshua Norton, who became the town's pet "Emperor Norton." Most of the successful merchants located their stores close to the waterfront, where they could always have the latest information, and the quickest access to incoming vessels to compete for the cargo most valuable at that moment.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 8 Page 8

Gibb, Daniel, & Co. Warehouse
San Francisco, CA

Statement of Significance (cont.):

Storage capability also had an effect on profits. A successful merchant would pick the most favorable time to release his goods, and until then would store them. Thus the need for warehouses, near the water to minimize drayage costs. These conditions endured for most of the 1850s.

It is to be noted that these commission merchants did not specialize in any particular type of goods. Their advertisements in the local newspapers show an amazing variety of specific items. For instance, Daniel Gibb and Company's first ad from the new buildings at Front and Vallejo offered the entire cargo of the *Windsor Forest* out of Glasgow:

- 180 hogsheads, Tennent's Double Strong Ale
- 91 barrels, [same]
- 840 hogsheads, Stroug Ale
- 123 barrels [same]
- 80 hogsheads Double Brown Stout
- 650 casks bottled E.I. Ale and D.B.Stout, in pts & qts
- 450 cases E.I. Ale in quarts
- 400 quarter barrels Kames Co's blasting gunpowder
- 251 tons Cowdenhill gas coal
- 550 tons Eastfield splint coal
- 50 tons No. 1 Gartsberrie pig iron
- 84 tons bar and sheet iron, well assorted
- 10 tons galvanized and corrugated sheet iron pipes, rivets, etc.
- 40 boxes IX Charcoal Tin Plates
- 60 boxes IC Charcoal Tin Plates
- 250 qr. crates Scotch white granite earthenware
- 160 barrels Bi-carbonate soda
- 50 barrels 100 lbs. each, Scotch oatmeal
- 60 bundles oakum
- 4 bales tapestry carpeting⁴

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 8 Page 9

Gibb, Daniel, & Co. Warehouse
San Francisco, CA

Statement of Significance (cont.):

CONTEXT: SAN FRANCISCO WATERFRONT INFRASTRUCTURE

The Gibb Warehouse's location was originally part of Yerba Buena Cove, and the original shoreline at Vallejo Street was a block to the west, at the east edge of Battery Street.⁵ The cove was too shallow for ocean-going vessels to enter, even the small ones of the 1840s and 1850s. They had to anchor farther out and send passengers and goods ashore on lighters (a type of small, shallow-draft rowboats). Inevitably, with the crowd of ships and commerce serving the gold rush excitement, wharves were pushed out from the original shoreline, and the shallows were filled in to accommodate mercantile needs. The fill might consist of rock quarried from nearby Telegraph Hill, sand from leveled sand hill, debris, and/or beached vessels.

By 1852, when the U.S. Coast Survey researched their San Francisco map printed in 1853, the area around Vallejo Street had acquired the Broadway Wharf (constructed 1851-1853), one block to the south, extending east 1 ½ blocks beyond the Front Street right-of-way. Half a block north of Vallejo there was Cunningham's Wharf (constructed 1850), which ended with a T cross-bar half a block east of Front. A plank walkway extended along Front past Vallejo to Broadway. North of Vallejo there was open water between the walkway and Battery Street, but the square block southwest of Vallejo and Front was nearly filled in, and several buildings lined its Front Street side, up to the site of the subject building, which still showed partly as open water. (Usually fill was allowed to settle a while before substantial buildings were constructed on it.)

Vallejo Street acquired its own 930-ft. wharf in 1853, built by a wharf company led by M. O'Brien, E.P. Flint, Charles Minturn, and Charles B. Macy.⁶ Daniel Gibb, who the year before had bought the land for the twin warehouses, may well have been associated with this company. He probably envisioned capturing the favorable position at the head (landward side) of the new wharf, a position he'd

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 8 Page 10

Gibb, Daniel, & Co. Warehouse
San Francisco, CA

Statement of Significance (cont.):

occupied in 1850 at the then-new Central Wharf.⁷ A business slump in 1854 and/or the need for fill to settle caused him to delay construction of the warehouses until 1855. The Vallejo Street Wharf consistently produced more revenue than any other city wharf and was still a prestigious location in 1868, when a photo shows hotel omnibuses lined up on it awaiting steamer passengers.⁸

It was recognized as early as 1854 that a permanent bulkhead or seawall was needed to stabilize the shoreline and the buildings on fill. However nothing was done about the matter until the late 1860s because of a political battle. The wharf owners proposed to build a bulkhead in exchange for control of the waterfront for 50 years. Opposition arose. After a lengthy political struggle, the State Legislature assumed control of the San Francisco waterfront and entrusted its management to a State Board of Harbor Commissioners, which met first in late 1863. In their first year they had the dilapidated Vallejo Street Wharf entirely rebuilt.

Another early item of business was a seawall. The first one was constructed 1867-1869 along the lines of the streets. It was/is a strong rock structure tapering from 60 feet wide 20 feet down, to 13 feet wide at the level of mean low tide, and topped by 2 feet of concrete and then a masonry wall. It ran south along Front from Union to Vallejo, then east along Vallejo, south again along Davis, and east on Pacific. Gibb's twin warehouses thus were exactly at the angle of this seawall, as shown in the 1868 photo.⁹

Unfortunately the zigzag seawall soon silted up. The Harbor Commissioners realized that the only practical solution was a new curved seawall that allowed the natural tidal currents of the bay to sweep it clean. Leaving the "Old Seawall" in place, this "New Seawall" was constructed, in sections, between 1878 and 1924. It sustains the San Francisco waterfront to this day. The thousand-foot section that establishes the modern east end of Vallejo Street was constructed 1880-1881.¹⁰ But the twin warehouses Daniel Gibb had constructed in 1855 still reign over the nearby intersection of Front and Vallejo Streets.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 8 Page 11

Gibb, Daniel, & Co. Warehouse
San Francisco, CA

Statement of Significance (cont.):

CONTEXT: SAN FRANCISCO'S EARLY WAREHOUSE ARCHITECTURE

"Warehouses are storage buildings which accommodate irregularities of seasonal and traffic fluctuations in commerce. Merchants were forced to anticipate market demands many months in advance; food stuffs and other goods needed storage for varying amounts of time. Buildings were also needed for temporary cargo storage before a second transport.

"Warehouses date back to the time in pre-history when people were able to grow enough grain during the summer months to feed the community during winter. The great expansion of the building type occurred in the 19th century as a result of growth of trade during the industrial revolution.

"Expansion of San Francisco in the 1850s and 1860s permitted segregation of storage and trading activities, the former [eventually] concentrating along docks and the latter in the mercantile heart of the city. Aside from considerations of storage, warehouses were designed to expedite the movement of goods from transportation carriers to the warehouse. . . . Transshipment from warehouse to ship and the reverse was accomplished via drays and carts. . . .

"Many decisions regarding the construction and structure for warehouses have revolved around questions of fire-proofing and safety. Safe storage of goods has always been a primary concern of warehouse owners and transportation companies. For instance, safety from burglars demanded round the clock security. . . Security from other elements which could damage goods such as rain and rodents was also important. . . .

"Throughout the United States, incentive for efficient fire-proofing was provided by the rate structure set by insurance companies. Since the function of warehouses was to provide prolonged storage for expensive items, owners found it necessary

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 8 Page 12

Gibb, Daniel, & Co. Warehouse
San Francisco, CA

Statement of Significance (cont.):

to purchase fire insurance. Generally, the more secure a warehouse, the lower the insurance rates. Ironically, the insurance rates which determined the structural features of warehouse design were themselves created through knowledge of, and reference to, state of the art technology in warehouse design. . . .

"Susceptibility of wood to fires led to the use of masonry walls with timber-framed interiors. Although iron--and later steel--posts and beams were used in construction after the 1880s, the economic nature of warehouse construction precluded their adoption on a large scale.

"The most widespread structural material has been masonry, especially bricks. Given their widespread use between the 1850s and 1920s, bricks were the building material commonly associated with warehouses. . . . The use of iron doors and shutters also accompanied the use of masonry wall materials.

"Standard common bricks at this time usually measured 8 in. by 4 in. by 2½ in. The most common color for bricks has been red. . . . Walls often rested upon stone foundations and timber piles. Brick bearing walls typically ranged from 12 to 20 inches in thickness, depending upon height."¹¹

In the 1850s warehouses in San Francisco were at most two stories high, and many were one story only. They were brick, with iron doors and shutters. The interior structure was heavy timber. They had tall doors, and some windows for interior lighting. Roofs were generally flat, but some had a series of low gables. Ornamentation was limited to the parapet and entry areas, and even there was rather sparse. Most were located near the northeast waterfront and were small in area compared to the massive warehouses required in the following decades.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 8 Page 13

Gibb, Daniel, & Co. Warehouse
San Francisco, CA

Statement of Significance (cont.):

San Francisco's oldest surviving warehouses are the two Gibb & Company ones of 1855, Hathaway's of 1856 rebuilt 1875 with later additions, Howe's of 1860 rebuilt 1911, the Oriental of 1867 being rebuilt now, and Hooper's of 1874. Only the Gibb Warehouses, altered as they are, really remain from the 1850s.

CONTEXT: REBUILDING AFTER THE 1906 EARTHQUAKE AND FIRE

The great San Francisco Earthquake, measuring 7.9 on the new Richter scale, struck at 5:12 a.m. on the 18th of April 1906. Fires broke out immediately and could not be stopped because water mains had succumbed to the quake. The fires joined into one great blaze that burned for three days over 4.11 square miles of the city. It claimed 28,000 buildings and caused temperatures above 2000°F in some places, especially in "mercantile" buildings. At Vallejo Street and one block to the north and two to the south, the fire claimed everything up to the eastern edge of the street (Embarcadero) along the seawall.¹²

Abundant post-fire photos show great areas of devastation, with partial walls standing here and there, sometimes nearly whole buildings with burned-out interiors. The fate of these shells rested with the individual owners. Some chose to demolish everything and start anew, some opted for reusing old foundations, some repaired and restored what remained. Not many buildings that burned in 1906 were restored and still exist today.

Reconstruction after the fire was swift. By 1909 the city was essentially rebuilt, although some vacant spaces remained. The waterfront had been key to the new construction, as the area for unloading cargos of building materials and generally a transportation center. Old warehouses had survived in waterfront areas untouched by the fire: a 10-11-block area north of Green and east of Kearny, and a 2-3-block depth south of Howard Street. The U.S.G.S. Report's "Map Showing Burned District" indicates railroad tracks along the Embarcadero (the seawall street) from

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 8 Page 14

Gibb, Daniel, & Co. Warehouse
San Francisco, CA

Statement of Significance (cont.):

Powell and Jefferson to Broadway and Drumm, an incentive to waterfront reconstruction. Other warehouses, like the two Gibb-Sanborn ones, were quickly rebuilt. Perhaps such buildings near the edges of the fire had suffered less damage. Perhaps the owners felt that rebuilding would put them back in business sooner than new construction.

The Scotsman Daniel Gibb (1826-1861) arrived in San Francisco in mid-1849 and almost immediately established himself as a merchant. His first known business address was aboard the beached ship *Niantic*, and his second "at the head of the [Central or Long] wharf in a brick building bearing the conspicuous sign of Dan. Gibb, com. mer." In 1852 his brother William joined him, and the firm became Daniel Gibb & Co. Later partners included William West Watson, Thomas Thomson, and Alexander Forbes, who carried on the firm after the deaths of the Gibb brothers and lived in fashionable South Park 1860-1874.¹³

Gibb's connection with the Glasgow, Scotland, firm of Forbes, Gibb and Company provided him with consignments of goods.¹⁴ It also gave him a strong financial base for the intercontinental transfer of funds by letter rather than actual coin. Such a connection was typical of gold rush merchants.

A client wrote of him that: "Daniel Gibb was early established as a commission merchant. He seemed to be energetic and capable. Goods were sent to him from all quarters of the world on consignment alone, trusting to his honesty and integrity to dispose of them to the best advantage in the wildly fluctuating market at San Francisco. . . Sound merchants, such as the Scotch clients of Daniel Gibb and Company, felt their market carefully and endeavored to be guided absolutely by its consumption."¹⁵

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Gibb, Daniel, & Co. Warehouse
San Francisco, CA

Statement of Significance (cont.):

His obituary proclaimed that: "No merchant in the State has been more widely or more favorably known than the deceased. None of more tried mercantile faith and integrity. None that has done more by judicious enterprise in building up and developing our material prosperity, or whose loss will be more generally felt. . . . He was eminently known for being intense in purpose and strong in action; and as a merchant he not only had acquired the knowledge of his business by education and practice, but practiced it as an art. He will long be remembered for his enterprise, judgment and commanding ability."¹⁶

He had prospered mightily. The 1860 census taker recorded his real estate holdings as worth \$150,000 and his personal estate as \$250,000, huge amounts for that era. His residence at the then-country corner of Chestnut and Kearny contained a parlor, dining room, five bedrooms and a kitchen; its furniture included a piano, a gilded clock, large rosewood and mahogany sideboards, and two large mahogany dining tables.¹⁷

Gibb was also active as a citizen. For several years he chaired the local Chamber of Commerce. He subscribed to the construction of the first public school. In January 1860 Governor Latham appointed him one of four "Pilot Commissioners for the Port of San Francisco." Had he not died at the early age of 35, leaving behind a Scottish wife Ellen and a four-year-old son born in California, he probably would have established one of the families that remain today the backbone of San Francisco's cultural life.¹⁸

His business headquarters at the southwest corner of Front and Vallejo, the subject building was his headquarters from its construction until his death. It memorializes him and other merchants of the gold rush as hardly any other resources in San Francisco are able to do. Only a handful of buildings dating to the 1850s have survived in San Francisco, because the 1906 earthquake fire destroyed

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Gibb, Daniel, & Co. Warehouse
San Francisco, CA

Statement of Significance (cont.):

the part of the city that was developed earliest. The only business buildings left are the two Gibb warehouses of 1855, the 1856 part of Hathaway's Warehouse, and nine in the Jackson Square National Register District (400, 431, 458, 470, and 472 Jackson; and 722, 728, 732, and 804 Montgomery).

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1. Daniel Gibb & Co. advertised merchandise daily in the *Alta California*. From late February 1853 through 1 September 1855 their address was listed elsewhere. From 4 through 7 September 1855 no address was listed, and beginning on 8 September 1855 the address in the Daniel Gibb & Co. ads was "Corner of Front and Vallejo streets."
 2. George Cofran, *Classification of Buildings*, San Francisco Lambert & Flint, March 1 1861 (bound manuscript at California Historical Society, San Francisco).
 3. Robert Sanborn, interviewed in mid-1960s in the research for *Here Today*, and repeated in the Landmarks Case Report of 1976.
 4. *Alta California*, 6 October 1855, 3/3.
 5. Olmsted, Roger and Nancy, and Allen Pastron, *San Francisco Waterfront*, San Francisco, San Francisco Wastewater Management Program, 1977, 441.
 6. *Ibid.*, 468. *San Francisco Municipal Reports, 1862-1863*, 204, 273.

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Gibb, Daniel, & Co. Warehouse San Francisco, CA

Statement of Significance (concl.):

7. Bancroft, H.H., *History of California*, San Francisco, The History Company, 1888, vol. 6, 178.
8. *San Francisco Municipal Reports*, 1861-1862, 259-260. See Photo 4.
9. Olmsted, op. cit., 483, 485-491. See Photo 4.
10. Ibid., 424, copied from Dow, Gerald Robert, "Bay Fill in San Francisco: A History of Change," M.A. thesis, San Francisco State University, 1973, appendix 3.
11. Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board, "Introduction: History," *A Context Statement and Architectural/Historical Survey of Unreinforced Masonry Building (UMB) Construction in San Francisco from 1850 to 1940*, San Francisco, Department of City Planning, 1990, 7-9.
12. Hansen, Gladys, *San Francisco Almanac*, San Rafael, CA, Presidio Press, 1980, 195. U.S. Geological Survey, *Bulletin No. 324: The San Francisco Earthquake and Fire of April 18, 1906 and their effects on structures and structural materials*, 1907, reprint San Francisco, San Francisco Historical Publishing Co., n.d., 68-69 and plate 56.
13. Neville Scrapbook No. 4, (California Historical Society, San Francisco), 34. Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board, Case Report for Gibb-Sanborn Warehouses, 1976, 2. Bancroft, H.H., vol. 6, 178. San Francisco city directories, 1861, 1862. Shumate, Albert, *Rincon Hill and South Park*, Sausalito, CA, Windgate Press, 1988, 112.
14. "Death of Daniel Gibb," *Alta California*, 5 January 1862, 2/2.
15. Quoted in Landmarks Board Case Report, Gibb-Sanborn Warehouses, 2.
16. "Death . . ." *Alta*, 5 Jan. 1862, 2/2.
17. National Archives and Record Service, Sixth Census, 1860, California, San Francisco Ward No. 2, p. 743. "John Middleton & Son, Sale of Furniture at Auction," Neville Scrapbook No. 4, 85.
18. Case Report. Obituary. Census. Latham, "Day Journal," *California Historical Quarterly*, 11 (1933), 10.

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Gibb, Daniel, & Co. Warehouse
San Francisco, CA

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Bancroft, Herbert H. *History of California.* San Francisco, The History Company, 1888, vol 6.

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---. Case Report, Landmarks 91-92, Gibb-Sanborn Warehouses, 1976.

---. Case Report, Northeast Waterfront Historic District, 1982.

---. Case Report, South End Historic District, 1990.

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Section Number 9 Page 19

Gibb, Daniel, & Co. Warehouse
San Francisco, CA

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McEnerney Clear Title Case No. 17394. Elizabeth B. Sanborn, plaintiff. 1909, on file with San Francisco County Clerk.

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Olmsted, Roger and Nancy, and Allen Pastron. *San Francisco Waterfront, Report on Historical Cultural Resources*. San Francisco, San Francisco Wastewater Management Program, 1977.

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Gibb, Daniel, & Co. Warehouse
San Francisco, CA

Major Bibliographical References (cont.):

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA:

Verbal Boundary Description:

The nominated property is Lot 13 in Block 141, a rectangular parcel measuring 45'10" x 110'6".

Boundary Justification:

The boundary includes the entire Assessor's parcel, which is fully covered by the building and is historically associated with the building.

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Section Photographs Page 21

Gibb, Daniel, & Co. Warehouse San Francisco, CA

Photograph Labels:

Photo 1.

Daniel Gibb & Co. Warehouse, San Francisco County, California

Photo Anne Bloomfield, 11 April 1997, negative 314/2 with photographer

View: Front Street (east) and Vallejo Street (north) elevations, looking west
southwest

Photo 2.

Daniel Gibb & Co. Warehouse, San Francisco County, California

Photo Anne Bloomfield, 11 April 1997, negative 314/3 with photographer

View: Intersection of Front and Vallejo Streets, looking westward along Vallejo

Photo 3.

Daniel Gibb & Co. Warehouse, San Francisco County, California

Reproduction of historic lithograph, by Kuchel and Dressel, c.1858

Courtesy California Historical Society, San Francisco (this credit line must be used)

Negative with California Historical Society, San Francisco

View: The two Daniel Gibb & Co. Warehouses, looking northwest from across
Front Street

Photo 4.

Daniel Gibb & Co. Warehouse, San Francisco County, California

Reproduction of historic photograph, by unknown photographer, c.1868

Courtesy San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park

Negative P84-138.12 (m) with Photograph Collection of S.F. Maritime NHP

View: Gibb Warehouses and 1868 seawall, looking northwest from the Vallejo
Street Wharf

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Section Photographs Page 22

Gibb, Daniel, & Co. Warehouse
San Francisco, CA

Photograph Labels (cont.):

Photo 5.

Daniel Gibb & Co. Warehouse, San Francisco County, California
Photo Anne Bloomfield, 11 April 1997, negative 314/1 with photographer
View: Main (Front Street) entrance, looking northwest

Photo 6.

Daniel Gibb & Co. Warehouse, San Francisco County, California
Photo Anne Bloomfield, 26 January 1997, negative 307/15 with photographer
View: Detail of Front Street first floor, south portion, showing sandstone
foundation, granite water table, two courses of quarter-round bricks,
1906 sill infill, and iron fire door; looking southwest

Photo 7.

Daniel Gibb & Co. Warehouse, San Francisco County, California
Photo Anne Bloomfield, 11 April 1997, negative 314/4 with photographer
View: Detail of corner, showing street signs and seam between 1855 and 1906
brickwork, looking southwest

Photo 8.

Daniel Gibb & Co. Warehouse, San Francisco County, California
Photo Anne Bloomfield, 26 January 1997, negative 307/16 with photographer
View: North (Vallejo Street) and west (rear) elevations, looking southeast

Photo 9.

Daniel Gibb & Co. Warehouse, San Francisco County, California
Reproduction of historic photograph, by unknown photographer, c.1867
Courtesy San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park
Negative A12.28 504 (n) with Photograph Collection, S.F. Maritime NHP
View: Panorama of waterfront with rear of Gibb Warehouse at far left, looking
southwest from Battery and Vallejo Streets

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Section Photographs Page 23

Gibb, Daniel, & Co. Warehouse
San Francisco, CA

Photograph Labels (cont.):

Photo 10.

Daniel Gibb & Co. Warehouse, San Francisco County, California
Reproduction of historic photograph by Karl Kortum, 1961

© Karl Kortum, courtesy Jean Kortum

Negative A12 14,488 with Photograph Collection, San Francisco Maritime NHP
View: Gibb Warehouse as Trinidad Bean and Elevator Company, looking southwest

Photo 11.

Daniel Gibb & Co. Warehouse, San Francisco County, California

Photo Anne Bloomfield, 11 April 1997, negative 314/24 with photographer

View: Portion of basement interior, showing brick pier supporting 1906 wood post,
wood beam with stencilled bean names, and 1906 wood joists;
looking southwest

Photo 12.

Daniel Gibb & Co. Warehouse, San Francisco County, California

Photo Anne Bloomfield, 11 April 1997, negative 314/20 with photographer

View: Portion of first floor interior, showing window, sill, and wall surfaces; looking
north toward Vallejo Street

Photo 13.

Daniel Gibb & Co. Warehouse, San Francisco County, California

Photo Anne Bloomfield, 11 April 1997, negative 314/19 with photographer

View: Portion of first floor interior looking northeast at two rows of posts

Photo 14.

Daniel Gibb & Co. Warehouse, San Francisco County, California

Photo Anne Bloomfield, 11 April 1997, negative 314/12 with photographer

View: Portion of second floor interior, looking west and up into pop-up roof