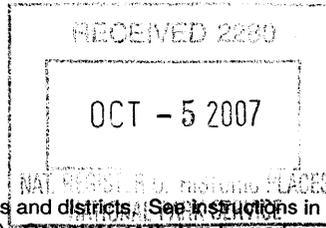


**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**



1176

**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 South Berkeley Community Church

other names/site number Park Congregational Church

**2. Location**

street & number 1802 Fairview Street N/A  not for publication

city or town Berkeley N/A  vicinity

state California code CA county Alameda code 001 zip code 94703

**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.)

Steph D. Winkler  
Signature of certifying official/Title

10/4/07  
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

11-15-07  
Date of Action

**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**

\_\_\_\_\_

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion: Religious Facility  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion: Religious Facility  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revivals - Mission  
Revival  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete  
roof asphalt shingles  
walls stucco  
\_\_\_\_\_  
other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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



**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** Less than 1 acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	10	564100	4189280	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 Leona Martin

organization Friends for the Restoration of South Berkeley Community church date April 28, 2007

street & number 901 Sea View Drive telephone 510-526-2958

city or town el Cerrito state CA zip code 94530-0310

**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 South Berkeley Community Church

street & number 1802 Fairview Street telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Berkeley state CA zip code 94703

**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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Narrative Description

South Berkeley Community Church (originally Park Congregational Church) is located on a corner parcel at Fairview and Ellis Streets in Berkeley, California. This Mission Revival Church building was designed in 1912 by Hugo Storch (1873-1919). The contractor was William Livingston. It is built of wood construction with stucco surfaces and stucco form decoration. The building was erected on a vacant lot chosen by the Park Congregational Church, first established in a church building only a block away. The exterior Mission Revival characteristics and features of the Church have remained essentially the same since 1912. The building, almost square-shaped and relatively small, is innovative because of its design and because of its use of space.

South Berkeley Community Church is one block west of Adeline Street, a roadway laid out in 1876 as a major transportation corridor for the Southern Pacific steam train spur line connecting Oakland to Berkeley. The Church is oriented on its corner site so as to face toward the residential streets of the historic South Berkeley Lorin District. Its distinct Mission Revival features, designed to be in scale with the Victorian and Colonial Revival houses typical of an East Bay turn-of-the-century streetcar suburb, blend into the surrounding neighborhood. The massively proportioned bell tower corner entrance is actually shorter than many of the nearby residential structures. In total, the building measures approximately 90 feet along Fairview and 115 feet along Ellis, sitting close to the lot lines.

Architect Hugo W. Storch modeled the Church after his large Mission Revival church designed in 1910 for the First Congregational Church in the Oakland Fruitvale District (demolished, 1973). It is an assembled series of components which transitions through a range of variation, both on the exterior as well as the interior, crafted into a domestic scale.

The complexity of the Fairview façade reflects the ingenious relationship of the spaces within. Perhaps the most traditional display of Mission Revival detail is found on the single story elevated roof line above the recessed Fairview entrance between a corner office and a second office space. Slanted roofs with rafter tails are above each office, which in turn are unified across by a classic curving parapet and a "mission bell" opening. Two thick stucco covered chimneys, one fake and one real, for the clinker brick fireplace, emphasize this delightful Mission Revival embellishment. Both offices project out approximately ten feet from the body of the building and are defined by vertical pairs of double casement windows on three sides, with a cross pattern of four

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divided lights. The entrance archway (compromised by ramps added for handicap accessibility) leads under the parapet to two wood frame glass doors that lead into a reception room connected to the offices, the east side "aisle" or meeting room, and the sanctuary.

The Fairview façade is divided in the middle by a rising wall on the other side of the second office, measuring approximately 25 feet across. This wall has a large stained glass window under a gabled roof, capped by a triangular arch. (See photo #3) Some ten feet behind the gabled roof, which covers the choir section of the nave, a second gabled roof rises to a new height of two stories to cover the pulpit and sanctuary. Originally, two Gothic windows graced the exterior of the nave wall. These windows were removed in 1960 to be replaced with the large stained-glass window. Continuing on the other side of the nave wall, the Fairview façade returns to a single story elevation behind which a third office space is located, again, defined by vertical double casement windows, with four divided lights in a cross pattern. Adjacent to the third office and interrupting its single story elevated roof line is the structural mass of the bell tower rising up two stories.

The Mission Revival bell tower establishes the church on the corner site. While it appears to project from the body of the building because of its thickly proportioned and weighty walls, it is flush with the building. The two entrance archways, one from Fairview and one from Ellis, add to the heavy "feel" by being almost horizontal and low rather than vertical. The archways lead into a deep-set, low ceiling portico where two double wood framed glass doors, on a diagonal, open into the vestibule. Battered walls, or diagonal bracing walls typical of early church architecture, are suggested in the high exaggerated squat corner finials and in the four low, squat buttresses on each side of the entry stairs. The buttresses are almost like stair rails. At the top of the thick tower walls two slanted roofs with rafter tails project over a set of double casement windows, with four divided lights, that together almost form a square with an indented rectangle. Rafter tails are repeated on the roof of the open belfry supported by four exposed wood beams. Within the belfry there is a bell that is still rung every Sunday morning at 11:00 a.m. prior to Church service.

As the building continues along Ellis, after the corner bell tower, three sets of vertical casement windows, with a cross pattern of four divided lights, are set in the façade under a single story roof line. Two squat buttresses repeating the buttresses at the corner entrance are set in between the windows. These buttresses are accented by small roof caps and two rafter tails. The interior space behind the single story façade

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serves as a side aisle (west) or additional meeting room. It has its own fireplace (now blocked) with a tall stucco chimney rising above the roof line, almost as high as the second-story gable roof over the nave. The gable roof of the nave, set back, runs lengthwise along Ellis. Three sets of two windows with six divided lights each can be seen up under the roof line. The gable roof meets the flat second story of the social hall and Sunday school rooms at mid-point of the building.

The social hall area, the second use of the Church and the second half of the building, introduces a new architectural component, yet part of the original structure, where "mission" is inferred mainly from the context of the other parts of the structure. Nevertheless, this half of the building is completely novel, crafted on the exterior for an exciting social and teaching space in the interior. This is part of Hugo Storch's original design. All together, it is two stories with a flat roof. It may be entered by a simple, but thematic entrance on Ellis. The entrance has a straightforward stairway set between two buttresses, again, repeating the buttresses of the bell tower. On the landing an archway leads to two wood framed glass doors. The entrance is enhanced by rectangular windows on each side and a pair of windows above on the second floor. (The original windows were replaced approximately forty years ago.) Two exaggerated squat corner finials frame the entrance at the second story roof line, repeating the shape of the four finials that define the top of the bell tower. The entrance leads into a low ceiling reception room that, in turn, leads on the left, into the sanctuary, streaming with light, or, on the right, into the dramatic open space of the social hall area.

The exterior wall that encloses the social hall area is indented some five feet back from the Ellis façade and, then, begins to form a semi-circle of nine sections that continue around the back of the building. The sections on the second floor rest on projecting partition piers on the first floor and each has a large window with four divided lights. The first floor is set back considerably from the projection above with each of its nine sections containing a large square window with sixteen divided lights. Except for the pattern of square windows on the two floors, this semi-circular exterior is unadorned. However, two unseen window features exist, hidden back from the semi-circular exterior. One is a row of nine horizontal windows, matched with the nine sections of the façade, raised to a higher level. The other is a lovely antique stained glass window (as seen in photo #4) set between the two roofs where the height of the nave gable roof meets the lower horizontal flat roof of the social hall area.

The fourth side of the Church completes the social hall area with a sizable kitchen on its first floor. Then, again, a single story façade begins where the two-story portion ends,

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behind which is the side aisle (east). It is hidden from street view, being adjacent to a residential property. An alleyway from Fairview leads down its side for utilitarian purposes and to reach the kitchen space.

The Church interior is small and intimate, still with a hierarchy of space and light recalling the inspiration of great church tradition, including a sanctuary, aisles or side chapels, pulpit and choir. Its unpainted stained interior is extraordinary when the daylight streams through its three ranges of windows, its light structural trusses, and its widely spaced purloins. The light trusses of the sanctuary have diagonal braces, knitting the structure downward through the spreading spaces. The uncovered vertical wall studs, which project to braces across open space, suggest an abstract perpendicular tracery. All the joining metal bolts and braces are exposed. The original open single wall construction of the choir was remodeled and closed off in the 1960s when the large stained glass replaced the two gothic windows. The sanctuary extends out horizontally from the pulpit with semi-circular wooded pews, all original, designed to bring the congregation together around the pulpit. Two handsome floor-to-ceiling wooden roll-down doors on each side extend the sanctuary beyond to the side aisles that, in turn, have a circular connection to each adjoining room and, also, flow directly into the social hall and Sunday school area.

The semi-circular social hall space is directly linked to the sanctuary through three handsome floor-to-ceiling wooden roll-down doors extending the entire length of the back side of the sanctuary. Again, the unpainted stained wood interior is extraordinary. It recalls a chapter house of the Gothic Age where activities, away from the nave can take place, but are still joined together. At each side of the social hall, open stairs lead up to two small rooms; one room is above the Ellis entrance and the other, above the kitchen. Between the stairs on the first floor in the back of the semi-circular social hall a series of doors lead to nine little Sunday school rooms. On the second level the rooms are repeated behind a delightful open balcony with all the charm of an Arts and Crafts interior.

At first glance, the South Berkeley Community Church appears in good condition. At a second glance, it is obvious that its stucco surfaces cover up a structure that is in extreme need of repair. Dry rot is most evident where there are drainage problems, which is almost everywhere. There is evidence of termites too. Many of the original windows have been replaced (1960-1970) because of deterioration. Currently there are plans to repair the antique stained glass window which threatens to break out of its

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casement. While the building continues to have heavy use, a plan for restoration is in order.

Although over time, the South Berkeley Community Church has suffered from hard use and a lack of much needed structural restoration, it retains a high degree of integrity. Its location in South Berkeley is a vital part of the community and a bridge between Oakland and San Francisco communities. It is near the University of California Campus and the Pacific School of Religion, one of Graduate Theological Students nine schools. Each of these institutes provides a rich cultural mixture of both students and faculty. Even though the neighborhood has been in many transitions, the integrity and significance has remained strong.

South Berkeley Community Church is still a visible Mission Revival church building in the historically diverse residential neighborhood of Lorin that became home for many African American families in the East Bay during Ward War II.

On the exterior and in the interior only the alteration of the choir section of the church, to accommodate a contemporary stained glass window, has intruded upon the original innovative design of Hugo Storch. This is not irreversible. The overall feel of time and place that is striking about South Berkeley Community Church's unique Mission Revival exterior and its beautiful Arts and Crafts natural wood interior remains intact today.

The most significant aspects of integrity can be found in its location, its workmanship, its design as well as its association with the events of integration during the 1950 and 1960s. Even the setting of the church lends itself to the physical integration within the neighborhood as the character of the church blends with the local residents and businesses.

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## Statement of Significance

South Berkeley Community Church is historically significant at the local level because it is associated with the historical theme of integration in Berkeley during the World War II period, 1941-1943. Integration is still an important aspect of South Berkeley Community Church's role in the Berkeley community. It is also architecturally significant as a good example of the Mission Revival style in Berkeley. It therefore satisfies National Register Criteria A and C. Criteria considerations are met by deriving primary significance historically and architecturally, not for religious doctrine.

South Berkeley Community Church is located in an area historically known as the Lorin District in South Berkeley. Lorin was first established in the early 1870s when it was considered a suburb of Oakland, being the "Lorin Station" stop on the Southern Pacific spur line that ran from Oakland to Berkeley. By 1889 the area had "150 houses, post office, church and school house,"<sup>1</sup> including the small steeple Park Congregational Church on Fairview, built in 1883. In 1892 Lorin was formally annexed to the City of Berkeley. The neighborhood, populated by residents known to be associated with fishing, the building trades, and small businesses in the Lorin shopping district, and long known to be a "heterogeneous community of Italians, Irish, Poles, Estonians, Scandinavians, and one black family."<sup>2</sup>

In 1912 Park Congregational Church (to become South Berkeley Community Church) asked the innovative and "sophisticated" architect Hugo W. Storch to design a new church at the corner of Fairview and Ellis Streets. The area reflected the prosperity of a neighborhood that had changed from a little pioneer village to a prominent section of Berkeley. Already, only a block away, along the Adeline Street commercial corridor, architects of note, such as John Galen Howard, C.M. MacGregor, A.W. Smith, Williams Knowles, and James Plachek, had designed a collection of distinctive buildings. Storch's remarkable Mission Revival Style building was, thus, understood "to keep the needs of the whole community in mind in planning the new church, and has provided accommodations for the new church, as well as activities of a thoroughly modern religious organization."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Simon, Joshua, *Lorin Station; A Brief History of South Berkeley*, March, 1983, 7.

<sup>2</sup>Dean, Merle, "Swedish Life in Lorin, 1905-1925," *Part I. The Berkeley Historical Society Newsletter*, BHS, Berkeley, Summer, 2005, 6

<sup>3</sup>Unknown, "Begin Work on New Church Building," *The Berkeley Independent*, Saturday, July 6, 1912, Vol.6, #162, 2.

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Berkeley's pre-war African American population was confined primarily to a small geographic area in West and South Berkeley.<sup>4</sup> World War II brought an influx of migrants to California, primarily to the East Bay. "Of the 8,000,000 people who moved west of the Mississippi in the 1940s, nearly on-half came to the Pacific Coast. California received 3,500,000 new residents. From 1942 to 1945, after the passage of Executive Order 8802 and the creation of the President's Committee on Fair Employment Practice...nearly 500,000 African Americans poured into the state. They represented the largest voluntary black westward migration in the nation's history."<sup>5</sup> It was this atmosphere that a prejudice against the newly arrived "Negroes" prevailed, often with the claim that the "colored people do not know their place." So, in the West, as in the South, African American families were once again segregated:

Although there had been an African American presence going back to at least the Gold Rush, the region's black population had remained small through the 1930s. All that changed in the forties. Between 1940 and 1944, Berkeley's African American population almost doubled, Oakland's grew by over two and a half times and Richmond's increased an astounding twenty fold... Housing discrimination was chronic in the Bay Area, and blacks who were unable to find room in one of the hastily-built wartime public projects were forced to compete for housing in the few neighborhoods where minorities had traditionally been welcome.<sup>6</sup>

By 1942 the minister of Park Congregational Church, Rev. Tom Watt, reported to his membership that over the last ten years the average attendance on Sundays has decreased from 40 to 25. He also reports:

"I am appalled and tremendously disturbed when I discover the change in the population in this two years that materially effects our work. Only two colored families were in the same block with the church, the block directly across the street on Ellis is predominately colored, the house diagonally across the corner has sold to negros [sic] and one house in the block below on Fairview has sold to negros [sic] and one house in the block on our side of the street is negro. The same and greater changes have come in other streets immediately surrounding us. If we are to maintain ourselves as an

<sup>4</sup> Gretchen Lemke-Santangelo, *Abiding Courage: African American Migrant Women and the East Bay Community* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 80-81.

<sup>5</sup> Shirley Ann Wilson Moore, *To Place Our Deeds: The African American Community in Richmond, California, 1910-1963* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 40-41.

<sup>6</sup> Wollenberg, Charles, *Photographing the Second Gold Rust; Dorothea Lang and the Bay Area at War, 1941-1945*, Heyday Books, Berkeley, 1995, 17.

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organization it seems to be quite evident that we shall be compelled to depend on growth from outside this area.”<sup>7</sup>

After 31 years, in the face of change and racial fears, or the “American Dilemma,” the Park Congregational Church discontinued services. It was deeded over to the Northern California Conference of Congregational Churches and soon became “a weather-beaten, deserted old church building.”

South Berkeley Community Church became one of the first organized interracial church congregations in the Bay Area. The church joined a rich history that demonstrated intentional determination and direction for integrating the congregation and its leadership. Prior to World War II African American community organizers were actively lodging “Don’t Buy Where You Can’t Work” campaigns, struggling to get African American school teachers hired by the Berkeley public school system, and fighting for fair housing for African American students attending the University of California.<sup>8</sup> The influx of newcomers from the South in the 1940s rejuvenated these processes.<sup>9</sup>

A committee was formed by the Northern California Conference of Congregational Churches to discuss the “dilemma” of reopening their church for African Americans. The ministers and leaders on this committee had a tradition of social responsibility and were linked to the Pacific School of Religion (PSR), the first seminary in California, now long established in Berkeley. They knew of a young African American student, Roy C. Nichols, who was selected to attend Seminary for the precise purpose of ministering in Berkeley. Nichols was the first black student to graduate from PSR. Sending Nichols to PSR was an intentional move. It was Dr. Howard Thurman (1900-1981), Dean of the Chapel of Howard University, who had noticed Nichols on the Lincoln University’s all black debate team and suggested that he study in the West at PSR in Berkeley.

In the late summer of 1943, the committee made a new and bold recommendation to re-establish the Park Congregational Church as an interracial church and that it be renamed South Berkeley Community Church. To create an interracial balance they further recommended two leaders, Roy Nichols (black), still a senior at PSR, and Robert K. Winters (white), a junior at the Starr King School for the Ministry to take the leadership. Establishing an interracial congregation was a radical experiment both for

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<sup>7</sup>Reverend Tom Watt, “Pastor’s Report for Year, December 1, 1942 to November 30, 1943,” Pacific School of Religion Archives.

<sup>8</sup>Lawrence P. Crouchett, *Visions Toward Tomorrow: The History of the East Bay Afro-American Community, 1852-1977* (Oakland: Northern California Center for Afro-American History and Life, 1989), 46.

<sup>9</sup>Moore, *To Place Our Deeds*, 1.

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the membership and the surrounding community. South Berkeley Community Church provided an opportunity for church ministry to a group that could govern themselves in a socially responsible manner with ethical as well as social responsibilities, and was the right timing for Nichols, a young African American man, who was already chosen to help facilitate an interracial body of believers.

On Sunday, October 23, 1943, the Mission Revival corner church was reopened to become the historic South Berkeley Community Church, or as some said "The Church Without Walls." Dr. Charles S. Johnson, later to become the first African American President of Fisk University, Dr. Buell G. Gallagher, President of Talladega College, and Dr. Will Alexander from the U.S. Department of Education shared the honors of the occasion and the Camp Ashby Military Singers, African American Battalion stationed in Berkeley, furnished the music.

The next Sunday in October, Roy Nichols, later to become Bishop Roy Nichols, preached his first sermon:

"Some weeks ago, when I made my first excursion through this quiet structure, before you crowded through these doors, or your faces brightened these empty pews, or your voices filled this room with singing, I was deeply moved by a feeling that I was about to share in a great tradition.

Scribbled inside some of the hymn books, I saw names I did not know. On the walls of the Sunday school rooms, I noticed pictures of folk, strange to my eyes. On the beautiful stained glass windows, I perceived inscriptions, foreign to my memory...

Then, we cleared away the excess debris, washed the ugly dirt from the windows, brushed the gloomy cobwebs from the rafters, and opened the old Bible on this pulpit. A new work had begun.

What they thought was theirs, and what we think is ours, belongs to the generations to come, and was given by the generations which have gone before..."<sup>10</sup>

Across the Bay, similar efforts were happening simultaneously. Dr. Alfred Fisk, a professor of Philosophy at San Francisco State College (now San Francisco University), and a Presbyterian clergyman, who was "deeply concerned with the absence of bridges of understanding among the varied races, cultures, and faiths presented in American

<sup>10</sup> Reverend Roy C. Nichols, Sermon, October 30, 1943, South Berkeley Community Church Archives.

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society.”<sup>11</sup> He brought together people of similar concerns and established a “neighborhood church” who first met in the Fillmore District in private homes. Later the Presbyterian Board of National Missions provided the congregation the use of a former Japanese Presbyterian Church at 1500 Post.<sup>12</sup> In the fall of 1943 Thurman came to San Francisco to help lead the Church for the Fellowship of All Peoples. Howard had been interested in the possibility of creating a church that crossed race lines since 1935 when he was invited to meet with Gandhi. Shortly after arriving in San Francisco Howard urged the small congregation to move the church from the Fillmore Post area to prevent it from becoming “segregated in spite of ourselves.” The congregation moved into the former Filipino Methodist Church on Pine Street. It then moved a second time to the Theatre Arts Colony. Its formal inaugural service occurred on October 8, 1944.<sup>13</sup>

In its early years as an integrated church South Berkeley Community Church boasted 300 members, seventy-five percent were white and twenty-five percent were African American.<sup>14</sup> Well those generations have come, and many of the grandchildren of those present in 1940 have a legacy to leave for their children and grandchildren. Nearly all of the original members from the War years have passed away and most of their children have migrated elsewhere. Today, as in the early 1940s, it is the practice within the wider community of Berkeley and Oakland that the “whites” go to their own churches and the “blacks” go to their own. The South Berkeley Community Church, however, has remained an interracial church since observing its Covenant adopted in June, 1944.

Hugo Storch's (1873-1917) design for South Berkeley Community Church is representative of the era and reflects the amazing structural variety, play of scale, and beauty of natural materials used by other notable architects of the time. Storch was like many architects implementing the Mission Revival style. According to noted architectural historian David Gebhard most Mission Revival style buildings were not constructed by master architects. Rather, they “...were designed by locally important

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<sup>11</sup> “The Church for the Fellowship of All Peoples History” available online at <http://www.fellowshipsf.org/history.html>, accessed June 8, 2007.

<sup>12</sup> Jack Casford, “Fellowship Church History” available online at [www.rhn.org](http://www.rhn.org), accessed June 8, 2007. Originally printed in the Russian Hill Neighbors Newsletter, Fall, 1997.

<sup>13</sup> The Church of the Fellowship of All Peoples; Jean Burden, “Howard Thurman” avail online at [www.nathanielturner.com/howardthurman.htm](http://www.nathanielturner.com/howardthurman.htm), accessed June 7, 2007. Originally printed in *The Atlantic Monthly*, 1953.

<sup>14</sup> U. Sharon Broussard, “Two Churches – One Black and Successful, One Integrated and Failing – Grapple with the Future” available online at [www.sbcccucc.org](http://www.sbcccucc.org), originally printed in *The Daily California Midweek Magazine*, February 4, 1981.

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but nationally little-known architects and architectural firms..."<sup>15</sup> Storch was born in the Mexican Sierra Madre Mountains, where his father was a silver mining engineer, Storch apprenticed in architecture at the age of 17 in the San Francisco architectural office of John Gash. He opened his own office three years later. Then in 1899 he took on work as an electrical engineer and moved to the East Bay in 1903. After the 1906 Earthquake and Fire he resumed practicing architecture, accepting many commissions in the Fruitvale District in Oakland. Unfortunately, soon after finishing the South Berkeley Community Church building, ill health led the Storch family to move to the Santa Rosa area where he died soon after. It is unfortunate that Storch practiced architecture for only a relatively brief period of time. What he did design showed a creative mastery of materials, space and architectural traditions.

Storch's innovative Mission Revival design for the South Berkeley Community Church is representative of a dynamic and creative period for architects in San Francisco Bay Area at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. "Mission Revival, which saw its inception in the 1880s and reached its fullest development during the first decade of the twentieth century."<sup>16</sup> When Storch traveled from Mexico as a young man to become an architectural apprentice it was a time of great romance and interest about developing a style that represented the California spirit. When discussing the development of the Mission Revival style, Gebhard states: "...California became entranced with the image of the Mission. The interest in them was as romantic and exotic ruins of a culture whose roots, in part, lay outside of the Northern European experience...If California was to seize upon the image of the Mission, the new buildings must not only be romantic and regional, but they must also be something which was practical, and they should function as a commodity which would openly 'sell' California to tourists and potential immigrants. It was therefore quite natural that the most impressive of the early Mission Style buildings were railroad passenger stations and exposition buildings."<sup>17</sup>

By the 1890s the style was gaining in popularity. "The enthusiasm for the Mission style was reflected in literally all modes of buildings from complete towns to cemetery gateways, schools, libraries, and mile upon mile of tract houses..."<sup>18</sup> Architects also

<sup>15</sup> David Gebhard, "Architectural Imagery, the Mission and California," *Harvard Architectural Review* (Spring 1980): 140-141.

<sup>16</sup> David Gebhard, "The Spanish Colonial Revival in Southern California (1895-1930)," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* XXVI, no. 2 (May 1967): 131.

<sup>17</sup> Gebhard, "Architectural Imagery," 137-139.

<sup>18</sup> Gebhard, "The Spanish Colonial Revival," 134.

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often "...designed churches in the Mission Revival...By 1925 a Mission Revival church could be found in nearly every community, large or small, in California."<sup>19</sup>

The style emphasized the external and "...allowed the Mission Revival building to do what it wished with internal space...Therefore, the plan of the Mission Revival architect...could, with ease, reflect both the stylistic fashion of the moment and whatever utilitarian considerations were felt to be essential...As long as the key symbols of the image were present, the non-Mission elements could be as numerous as desired. A classic case in point was the single square tower, generally topped by a low-pitched, hipped roof, which became a hallmark of so many Mission Revival buildings...Another great advantage of the Mission image was that it could be easily (and cheaply) realized by any one of the current techniques of construction."<sup>20</sup>

Concurrent with the development of the Mission Revival style, the California Arts and Crafts movement also took shape. According to Gebhard this was an important reason why the style lasted longer than one would expect.<sup>21</sup> Storch's ability to craft the dramatic Mission Revival forms on the exterior of the South Berkeley Community Church exuded with warmth and natural beauty of its Arts and Crafts Mission as a true reflection of the highest architectural ambitions of the times.

South Berkeley Community Church was designated a City of Berkeley Landmark in 1975 and was surveyed in 1979 and recorded in the Statewide inventory. The architectural historian John Beach who wrote the Landmark Application stated "...it seems likely that Storch's church will be considered one of the major examples of the mode (Mission Revival); not merely in a local context, but a national one. The Mission Revival exterior cloaks a craftsman, proto-constructionist interior of amazing variety and daring."<sup>22</sup> Gray Brechin, architectural critic, wrote for the Inventory Form "The church is coarse, rude, and extremely original, a sort of Expressionist Mission Revival. The interior is skeletal without any concession to elegance – everything is exposed and the spaces unfold, one beyond the other."<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Karen J. Weitze, *California's Mission Revival* (Los Angeles: Hennessy & Ingalls, Inc., 1984), 103.

<sup>20</sup> Gebhard, "Architectural Imagery," 141-142.

<sup>21</sup> Gebhard, "The Spanish Colonial Revival," 136.

<sup>22</sup> Beach, John, *Park Congregational Church*, City of Berkeley, Landmark Application, July 15, 1975, p.2.

<sup>23</sup> Brechin, Gray, *South Berkeley Community Church*, State of California, Historic Resources Inventory, July 14, 1978.

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South Berkeley Community Church maintains several aspects of integrity. Its workmanship and design are truly one of the great architectural expressions of the Mission Revival Style building, with the freedom and beauty of the Arts and Crafts, and the San Francisco Bay Tradition styles. It is both simple and sumptuous, being both modest in size, fitting neighborly into its residential setting and dramatic in proportions and features. Its sequence of interior space is unique, with an unforgettable rich quality of natural wood and light. Consequently, based on the evidence presented above South Berkeley Community Church meets both historical significance as well as architectural significance.

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Geographical Data  
Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at the intersection of the Eastern line of Ellis Street with the Southern line of Fairview Street, Formerly Fairview Avenue, as said street and avenue are shown on the map hereinafter referred to; running thence Southerly along said line of Ellis Street, 115 feet, 6 inches; thence Easterly parallel with said line of Fairview Street, 90 feet; thence Northerly parallel with said line of Ellis Street, 115 feet, 6 inches to said line of Fairview street; thence Westerly along said line of Fairview Street, 90 feet to the point of beginning.

Begin a portion of Lots 121 and 122, in Block 1, as said lots and block are delineated and so designated upon that certain map entitled "Map of the Lands of the Regent St. Homestead Association, Oakland," filed April 5, 1871, in Book 1 of Maps, at page 36, in the office of the County Recorder of Alameda County.

Boundary Justification

These are the lots historically associated with the building.

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Additional names for assistance in preparation of Form

Name/Title: Leona Martin, President of Friends for the Restoration for South Berkeley Community Church; Main contact person. Reverend Gwendolyn M. Elliott, Treasurer of friends for the Restoration of South Berkeley Community Church; Lesley Emmington Jones, Preservation Specialist.

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Photograph Log

The following information is true for all 10 photographs.

1. South Berkeley Community Church
2. Alameda County, California
3. Gerald Martin, photographer
4. April 2007
5. Digital photographs are retained by photographer

Below is the name of the digital file, photo number, and photo description:

CA\_AlamedaCounty\_SBCC\_01.tif – East Fairview entrance with slanted roofs and rafter tails above offices. Wood frame glass doors in view.

CA\_AlamedaCounty\_SBCC\_02.tif – The Fairview façade and large stained glass window under a gabled roof capped by a triangular arch. The East view displays the two stories.

CA\_AlamedaCounty\_SBCC\_03.tif – Handicap accessibility under a parapet leading into a reception room and offices.

CA\_AlamedaCounty\_SBCC\_04.tif – East side entrance and Bell Tower from Fairview Street.

CA\_AlamedaCounty\_SBCC\_05.tif – Southwest view of entrance archway and two buttresses.

CA\_AlamedaCounty\_SBCC\_06.tif – Further South on Ellis Street, viewing three sets of casement windows under a single story roof line.

CA\_AlamedaCounty\_SBCC\_07.tif – Still further South on Ellis Street, two glass wood framed doors lead to an entrance merged between two buttresses. Here the second story and flat roof is visible.

CA\_AlamedaCounty\_SBCC\_08.tif – South West view of classrooms and meeting rooms.

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CA\_AlamedaCounty\_SBCC\_09.tif – South East view on Fairview of neighboring home

CA\_AlamedaCounty\_SBCC\_10.tif – South West interior view of lower level meeting rooms and upper level rooms.

CA\_AlamedaCounty\_SBCC\_HistoricPhoto.tif – South-Eastern corner of Mission Revival Style church building facing Ellis Street. Photo from Church Archives.

Central Park (Amended Map & Re-Sub) (Bk. 12 Pg. 17)  
Map of the Land of the Regent Street  
Homestead Association.  
(Bk. 1 Pg. 26)

1530

ASSESSOR'S MAP 52

Scale: 1" = 40' ft.

1529

B-26-76.EM  
4-21-03 EG

1874  
1872  
1868  
1866  
1864  
1862

1551

1826

1820

1816

1812

1810  
1808

1548

1802

Fairview St.

Fairview St.

CITY

CENTRAL HOMESTEAD

CENTRAL HOMESTEAD

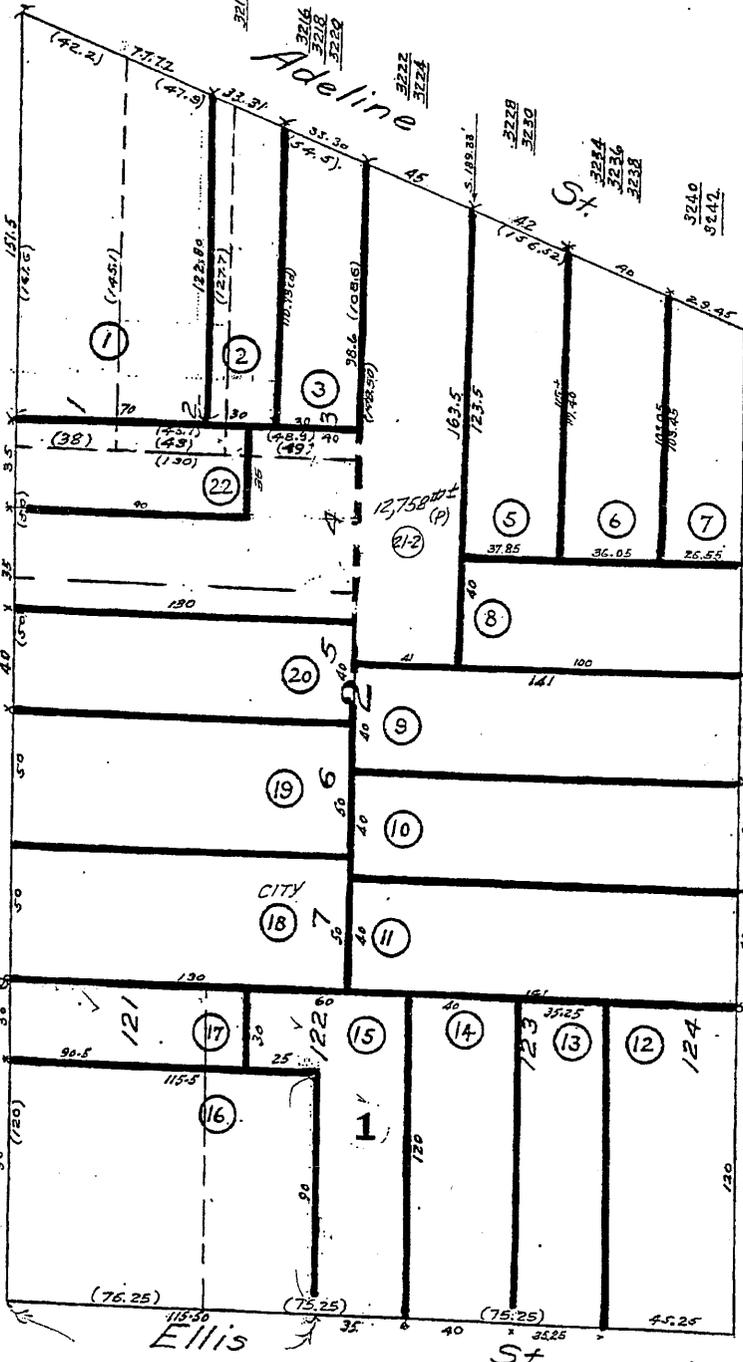
Ellis St.

Adeline St.

St.

St.

Harmon St.



1534

3207  
3209  
3211  
3213

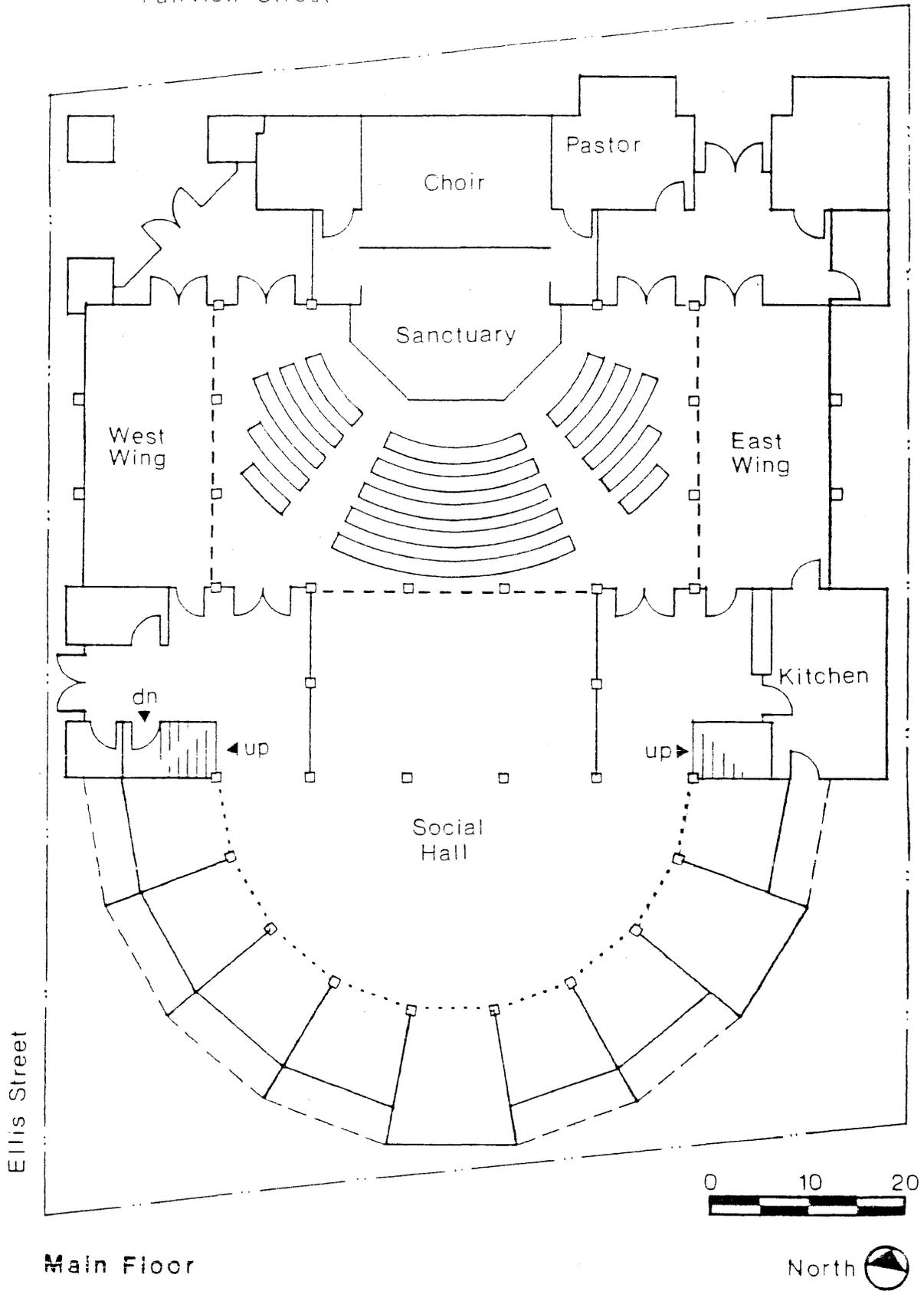
3219

3221

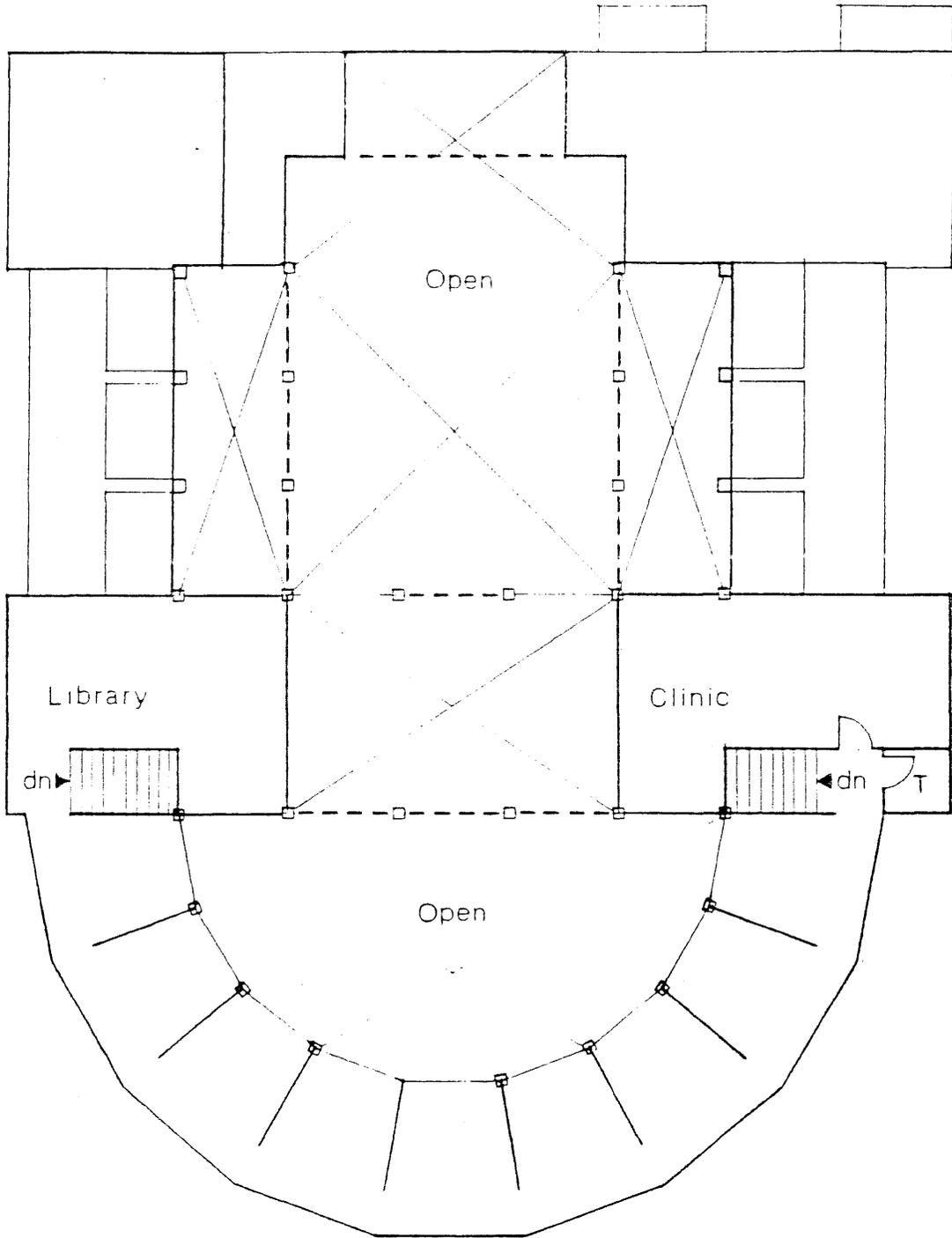
3223

HPN 22

Fairview Street



Main Floor



Second Floor

