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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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AUG 14 2007

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 Alameda Veterans' Memorial Building

other names/site number n/a

2. Location

street & number 2203 Central Avenue N/A not for publication

city or town Alameda N/A vicinity

state California code CA county Alameda code 001 zip code 94501

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.)
Stephen D. Niska ASHP 8/13/07
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
California Office of Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper
Edson H. Beall Date of Action
9-27-07

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

N/A _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Social: Meeting Hall _____

Recreation and Culture: Theatre and auditorium _____

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Government: Municipal Building _____

Social: Meeting Hall _____

Recreation and Culture: Theatre and auditorium _____

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals – _____

Spanish Colonial Revival with Art Deco details _____

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete/steel frame _____

roof Mission Clay tiled pavilion, flat portion is asphalt _____

walls concrete and stucco _____

other _____

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 a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1929

1949

Significant Dates

1929 (date of construction)

1949 (addition)

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Meyers, Henry H.

Primary Location of Additional Data

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

Name of repository:

City of Alameda _____

Alameda Veterans' Memorial Building
Name of Property

Alameda County, CA
County and State

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	566460	4180940	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 Jean S. Sweeney, Secretary

organization Alameda Veterans' Building Restorations Fund Committee date 5/17/07

street & number 212 Santa Clara Avenue telephone 510-522-1579

city or town Alameda state CA zip code 94501

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 Dale Lillard, Director Recreation and Parks, City of Alameda

street & number 2263 Santa Clara Avenue telephone 510-747-4700

city or town Alameda state CA zip code 94501

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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Alameda Veterans' Memorial Building
Alameda County, CA

Completed in 1929, the Alameda Veterans' Memorial Building is a large two-story building located in Alameda's civic area on the northeast corner of Central Avenue and Walnut Street. The south-facing entrance is on Central Avenue across from the historic Neoclassical style Alameda High School and across Walnut Street to the west is the former Adelpian Club, a Mission Revival style structure. On the southwest corner of Central and Walnut is the Neoclassical First Church of Christ Scientist. The Veterans' Memorial provides a cohesive look with all the other civic buildings nearby that are also built with the same stately presentation.

Exterior

The Alameda Veterans' Memorial Building is a Spanish Colonial Revival style structure enlivened with Art Deco details, constructed of reinforced concrete treated with a cement stucco finish. The footprint is roughly rectangular. The entry pavilion projects forward from the primary elevation at its western end and rests on a 40-foot wide red brick staircase. In form the entry pavilion is a classically inspired arcade of three tall arches, perhaps suggestive of a triumphal arch. Pilasters surmounted by Art Deco foliate capitals support the arches. Below the cornice are the words "Veterans Memorial" in Art Deco style relief lettering. A tympanum in each round arch has a faceted Art Deco surface treatment above paired double hung windows. Below each pair of windows is a relief medallion with the dates: 1898-1902; 1861-1865; 1917-1918. The projecting entry bay is topped by a hip roof of red clay Mission style tiles. Flanking the projecting entry pavilion are slightly projecting bays below a zig-zag frieze. Slightly recessed further is the primary elevation of the mass of the structure, extending only one bay to the west (left), and four bays to the east (right), topped by a stylized oak leaf frieze. To the east, the elevation is organized by four regularly-spaced blind arches above paired double-hung windows that suggest an arcade on the ground floor, while on the second floor are simple paired double-hung windows with identical spacing; to the west there is only one bay with identical treatment. Beneath the frieze are bas-relief medallions depicting World War I soldiers, sailors, airmen, and nurses.

Through the entry pavilion arches are three double entry doors, each surmounted by a rectangular bas-relief plaque with a stylized eagle with outstretched wings.

The nearly square lot measures a little over .6 of an acre.¹ The interior is 29,000 square feet with a full basement. It has a footprint of about 150 feet square and has 29' setbacks on Central Street and Walnut Street. The basement and first floor are the size of the footprint and the second floor is about a quarter-size smaller. The 1949 addition

¹ Assessor's parcel No. : 071 0218 018 Alameda, CA

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is built to the property line on the east with a 35" foot set back on the southeast elevation on Central Street. There is a narrow road leading from Walnut Street to a small parking lot at the rear of the building.

Interior: First Floor

Foyer

Through the three entrance doors is the foyer which leads through three recessed paired door entrances into the auditorium. The foyer is richly adorned with stylized plaster ornament and Moderne/Art Deco fixtures. Multicolored glazed tiles at the baseboard and frieze levels in an Art Deco chevron pattern ornament the foyer. According to Mildred Meyers, the tiles were designed in the architect's office with colors to harmonize with the room. East and west ends of the foyer have molded arches suggestive of Spanish Colonial Revival. The floor consists of random red clay floor tiles. The light fixtures in the foyer are of geometric amber leaded glass, each a pendant globe with an Art Deco zigzag edge at the top and bottom. According to the architect, the inspiration for the lights came from Old Spanish designs on fixtures in early California-Spanish buildings². Above the right and left doors are stylized floral medallions with a center flower and outstretched leaves right and left, while above the center door is an oval medallion of George Washington in profile.

Auditorium Room 250

The Auditorium lobby is lit by pendant amber leaded glass fixtures with an Art Deco zig zag edge. The main auditorium, about 65' square, soars to the height of 36 feet below a deeply coffered ceiling, which is lavishly ornamented with bas-relief floral patterns in shades of ochre, teal, red and gold. There are 4 clerestory paired windows on the west wall, and two clerestory windows on the east wall. The room is lit by eight large light fixtures of amber glass, in form a cascade of larger and smaller cylinders with Art Deco zig zag edges. The stage's proscenium is framed in light colored squared Art Deco pilasters with large bas-relief geometric shapes outlined from top to bottom. The stage has a 15 foot fly space and was substantially built to hold very heavy scenery. There are footlights and stage lights. The dressing room has a sink, dressing table and toilet. The auditorium holds no more than 400 assembled people at a time.

Veterans' Fireside Lounge Room 260

The Veterans' Fireside Lounge is accessed through double doors at the east end of the foyer. On the east wall is a substantial mahogany fireplace with a hearth of sandstone colored terrazzo, flanked by bookcases glazed in leaded amber glass. Above the

² Meyers, Mildred. "Memorials." The Architect & Engineer. Aug. 1935 p. 10-22

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Alameda Veterans' Memorial Building
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fireplace is a round bas-relief plaque of an American eagle with outstretched wings and tail feathers. Above the book cases is an elaborate grill for air circulation. Around the lounge room is mahogany painted pine wainscoting four feet in height. The original green glass light fixtures were removed when the room was used by the city and are in storage waiting to be restored and rehung. The three original south facing windows are paired casement windows with a fixed window above. The formerly matching paired windows on the north are now two lighted trophy cases and a doorway. They all have fixed mirrors in place of clerestory windows above.

Billiards Room 270

To the north of the Fireside Lounge is a billiards room. The billiard and assembly rooms were added in 1949. The Billiards room has unadorned, lighter-oak colored four foot tall wainscoting around the room. The dominant feature of this room is a billiard table and a pool table that has 3 polished brass shades over each table. The lights are on a rod over each table and hung from the ceiling. A line with counters runs east to west. On the west wall are the cue sticks. On the east side are 5 small offices for each of the units that meet in the building and a storage room. Also in the billiard room are office chairs that were built according to plans in the original architectural drawings for the building. Among the chairs that that were built according to specifications on the original drawings of the architect are the tall oak armchairs with 4 ½ ' tall backs.

Assembly Room 280

This room was also added in 1949 and is in keeping with the other assembly rooms, with four foot high unadorned oak colored wainscoting all around the room. The room measures 40 x 50 and is used primarily for Veterans' meetings and ceremonies. There is a broad elevated platform on the north wall for the officers with original tall oak chairs and high oak desks with narrower platforms on the other walls with fixed theatre seats for the general membership. The plans for the chairs, desks, and podiums are drawn on the original building plans.

The Basement Level

The Lobby

From the east end of the foyer is a wide staircase with wrought iron balustrade, in Spanish Colonial Revival style, providing access to the second floor and to the basement. Bathrooms are located on the landing between the first floor and the basement level. At the bottom of the landing is a lobby that leads to the dining room and a large storage room, a bar, a smaller dining room with a kitchenette, a gymnasium and lockers that were excavated in 1949 along with smaller closets, the elevator, and outside door.

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Dining Room 120

The dining room measures 64.5' north and south and 61' east and west. There is natural light from 8 windows that are mostly above ground level. The capacity of the room is 187 diners and 285 if assembled. The dining room is situated under the auditorium and supported by 9 piers. The floor covering is vinyl asbestos tile on a concrete slab. There is an east door well near the north corner of the room which leads to the parking lot in the back of the building.

Main Kitchen 132

The kitchen is entered from a north door of the dining room which goes through a pantry and into the kitchen. There are original painted wooden cupboards with clear glass windows on the east wall of the pantry and the south wall of the kitchen. The kitchen is 16.5' north and south and 22.5' east and west. There are two clerestory windows in the north wall. Through the west door is a hall that leads to a store room, bathroom and an outside stairwell. The kitchen has an original stove hood.

The Bar 160

The bar is a big room with a red mahogany bar all along the north wall. This room was excavated in 1949.

The Second Floor

Room 350 and 390 are lodge rooms. They have light oak colored wainscoting around the room as well as raised seating similar to the assembly room on the first floor. There is a projection room completely steel clad to prevent fires which serves the auditorium.

Alterations

An east wing and elevator were added in 1949 and a handicapped ramp in 1977.

In 2001 the fire escape was built and a unisex, handicapped accessible bathroom was modified from an existing first level bathroom.

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The Alameda Veterans' Memorial Building is significant under Criterion C at the local level of significance as a good example of the Moderne/Art Deco style popular during the late 1920s to the advent of World War II, designed by a noted local architect, Henry H. Meyers.

Historical Context

Following the end of World War I in 1918, some 300,000 veterans carried grim reminders of war: disabling injuries, battle scars, gas-seared lungs, and prolonged illnesses. Following a tumultuous hero's welcome, America wiped the horror of war from its mind almost as quickly as the ticker tape was swept from the streets of New York City. There was no medical care or pension for veterans. Angered by the negligence and incompetence of the Federal government to deal with their problems, some of these veterans banded together and began forming organizations starting in 1920. There was much to be done to assure that the veterans had proper medical care and affordable home loans. The veterans also needed to establish someone in Washington who could make sure that the veterans who fought to guarantee our freedoms would not be forgotten. To do this it meant the combined support from veterans groups around the United States to make it possible.¹

Veterans' groups represented at the Alameda Veterans' Memorial Building include the Veterans of Foreign Wars #9919, Corporal Leonard B. Hollywood Post #939, the American Legion Post #9, the Leland J. Thompson Post #647, the Disabled American Veterans Chapter 8, the Fleet Reserve and Branch Unit #87, and the Forty et Eight. Nationally, these groups have been instrumental in the establishment of the Veterans' Administration, a national cemetery system, in getting benefits such as home and farm loans for veterans at low interest rates, employment assistance for disabled vets, health care and retiree benefits, and scholarships. The activities of local veterans' organizations noted in Frank C. Merritt's 1928 History of Alameda County² paralleled those elsewhere: medical service, tax exemptions, pension programs, Americanization, youth activities, and "opportunity to meet former comrades."³ In Alameda by 1926 various veterans groups were organized and meeting regularly. The veterans met at first in members' homes. The American Legion Post 9 met weekly in a hall at 1334 Park Street⁴. At times this space was used by groups like the Pine Tree Club and the Housewives Club that often raised money for the American Legion. The VFW #939

¹ <http://www.dav.org> about DAV/history

² Merritt, Frank Clinton, History of Alameda County. Chicago. S.J. Clarke. Vol. 1 p. 439-40, 585

³ Gail G. Lombardi, CA Dept of Parks and Recreation, Historic Resource Survey, Oakland Veterans' Building, 1985 p.6.

⁴ "Veteran Luncheon Club to hear E. R. Taylor." Alameda Times Star 1 Jan 1926 p. 3

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Auxiliary Whist Club met in the Eagle's hall and in the Knights of Pythias.⁵ On January 19, 1926 the VFW Auxiliary had their installation of 15 officers in the Oakland Auditorium and had a good turnout.⁶ The Veterans' Luncheon Club (Veterans of Foreign Wars #939) met for lunch each Wednesday at Mead's restaurant, 1427 Park Street. The Barrett Camp 29 of the United Spanish War Veterans had their installation meeting in the Eagle's Hall and 350 people attended the ceremony.⁷ The Barrett Camp Auxiliary also met at the Eagle's Hall. All the groups joined together occasionally to entertain the veterans at the State Hospital in Livermore.⁸

Beginning about 1924, a number of memorial buildings were built, originally as memorials to those servicemen killed in action during the Civil War, the Spanish-American War and the Great War. These buildings were built with County, State and Federal funds. In an effort to promote patriotism, legislators in California in 1925 permitted the counties to include a certain portion of their tax rate for the construction and maintenance of memorial buildings to be dedicated to the memory of their veterans⁹. As a result of the 1925 California legislation, the City of Alameda in 1926 purchased a six-acre parcel of land at the corner of Walnut Street and Central Avenue for \$12,969.69.¹⁰ The plans for the new building, drawn by Henry H. Meyer, County Architect, were accepted by the City Council members on May 3, 1927. On December 5, 1927 Alameda County leased the two parcels on Walnut and Central from the City of Alameda to build a Memorial Building.¹¹ The Alameda Veterans' Memorial Building was built for \$91,198.00 including the furnishings¹², and was intended to house the various ex-servicemens' organizations."¹³ The building represents the social-political movement of the 1920s to recognize and memorialize the sacrifices of those who went to war.

On November 9, 1929, the day before the Veterans' Building was dedicated, the *Alameda Times Star* reported, "Dedicated to the perpetuation of unstinting loyalty and unswerving bravery exemplified best by hundreds of Alamedans who answered their country's call in the World War and other conflicts, the new Veteran's Memorial building on the northeast corner of Central Street and Walnut Street, will be opened officially tomorrow afternoon. Scores of dignitaries headed by Governor C. C. Young, will participate in the program, along with various ex-service men's units. The building

⁵ "VFW 939 Auxiliary Whist Club" *Alameda Times Star* 2 Jan 1926 p. 3

⁶ "VFW 939 Auxiliary holds Installation." *Alameda Times Star*. 19 Jan 1926 p. 2

⁷ "Barrett Camp holds Installation." *Alameda Times Star* 12 Jan 1927 p. 10

⁸ "VFW Entertains Veterans in Livermore" *Alameda Times Star* March 24, 1926 p. 4

⁹ Cal. Code Mil. & Vet. Code section 1260-1262

¹⁰ Deed Nov 19, 1926 in liber 1462 page 157; Deed Dec 11, 1926 in liber 1505 page 1

¹¹ City of Alameda Staff Report, re: Resolution 12737 Feb. 7, 1996 p. 1

¹² "Veterans' Memorial in the City of Alameda." *Civic Affairs of the City of Alameda 16th Annual Report 1932-1933* p. 50

¹³ "Plans for New War Memorial Win Approval" *Alameda Times Star* May 4 1927 p.10

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rounds out a veritable civic center with the Adelphian Club, First Church of Christ Scientist and the high school, all imposing, on other corners of the intersection.

The reward of years of planning and the perpetual shrine of a grateful city, whose gratitude will grow as its perspective upon the heroic deeds and sacrifice of its men and women lengthens. The new Alameda Veterans' Memorial building will be dedicated tomorrow. Only now is the nation awakening to a true appraisal of the everlasting obligation it owes to its World War heroes, both living and dead. Alameda will complete its debt from a standpoint of perpetual recognition of the Memorial building. Headed by Governor C. C. Young, state, county and city dignitaries as well as high-ranking navy and army officers and representative units from each of the various veteran's organizations in Alameda, and from throughout the East Bay, will assemble in front of the building for the outdoor literary and musical program, which is to begin at 2:30.

Parade

Military units and other participants in the program will assemble in front of the Alameda Elk's clubhouse on Santa Clara Avenue for the parade that is to be conducted by Alameda Lodge No. 1015 B.P.O.E. Officers and the dedication exercises.

With the Alameda High School R.O.T.C. band at the head, parade units will be composed of drum corps of American Legion posts in Oakland, Richmond and Hayward and Co. Astor Post of Berkeley. Corporal Leonard B. Hollywood Post No. 919, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Alameda Post No. 9 American Legion Spanish War Veterans, Alameda Chapter No 8. Disabled War Veterans, a unit of ex-service men from the Alameda Elks Lodge, and distinguished guests.

Program

The Program will open with invocation by the Rev. Gail Cleland, pastor of the First Congregational Church. The speech of Welcome will be delivered by Mayor Victor L. Schaefer, followed by Al Mathebat, chairman of the Memorial Commission who will speak briefly upon the building's history and purpose. The cornerstone ritual will be delivered by Superior Judge Homer R. Spence. The dedicatory address will be given by William J. Hamilton, Chairman of the County board of supervisors. Officers of the Elks, headed by James C. Fogarty, exalted ruler will perform the cornerstone ritual. This is part of a two-day celebration to include Armistice Day. On the morning of the 11th, at 10 O'clock in the Neptune Beach stadium, football's elevens from Alameda and Richmond posts will play in inter-county game. The closing event of the celebration will be an Armistice Day dance in the new Memorial."

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One of the chief features in the building will be the roll of honor prepared after much tedious and involved work by Charles R. Smith.¹⁴

On November 11, the Alameda Times Star reports:

Legion Will Hold Armistice Ball

New Veterans' Memorial to Be Scene of Gala Affair Tonight

Alameda's observance of Armistice Day, which began yesterday with the cornerstone ritual and dedication of its new Veterans' Memorial Building will be concluded fittingly tonight when the first Armistice ball in the memorial is to be held from 8 to 12 o'clock.

The ball will be given by Alameda Post No. 9, American Legion.

Music for the evening will be furnished by the Fleur de Lis Orchestra. Many tickets have been sold for the affair and it is expected that the memorial auditorium, which has a capacity of 700, will be filled with Alamedans and representatives of not only the American Legion but United Spanish War Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars and Disabled Veterans of the World War.

Alameda units of these four veterans' organizations will use the memorial as the gathering place for their various meeting from now on as the building is a memorial to all veterans.

Henry H. Meyers, Architect

Born and raised in rural Alameda County, and a longtime resident of the city of Alameda, Henry H. Meyers (1867–1943) was one of the best-known architects of his generation in the San Francisco Bay Area. A carpenter's son, he moved to San Francisco following high school to pursue a career in architecture, attending night classes and apprenticing in the firm of Percy & Hamilton, where he eventually became the head draftsman. This firm was one of California's most respected architectural offices in the late 19th century. The senior partner, George W. Percy, is remembered today as an exponent of Richardsonian Romanesque and a pioneer in the use of reinforced concrete. Following the deaths of Hamilton, in 1899, and Percy, in 1900, Meyers took over the firm.

By 1903, Meyers had taken on Clarence R. Ward as his partner. Meyers & Ward played an important role in the reconstruction of San Francisco after the 1906

¹⁴ "Legion Will Hold Armistice Ball." *Alameda Times Star* 11Nov 1929 p. 4

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earthquake, designing skyscrapers, office buildings, retail stores, factories, and warehouses for the devastated districts of the city. The firm disbanded in 1910. For the remainder of his career Meyers would work under his own name, without partners, though he did take on associates, including George R. Klinkhardt and his oldest daughter, Mildred S. Meyers, a 1921 graduate of the School of Architecture, University of California at Berkeley.

Henry H. Meyers began his association with the Alameda County Board of Supervisors in 1912, initially as a consulting architect for the Alameda County Infirmity competition and later as the officially appointed county architect—a position he held (alongside his private practice) until shortly before his retirement in 1936, at age 69. Between 1917 and 1935, Meyers produced dozens of designs for county facilities, including ten veterans' memorial buildings in the county's principal municipalities, opened between 1927 and 1934. The preponderance of his work for the county involved hospitals, including all new and remodeled facilities built at the Alameda County Infirmity (Fairmont Hospital) between 1917 and 1931; the Arroyo Sanitarium (1918) and Del Valle Farm (1924); and Highland Hospital (1926). Highland remains the single most monumental work Meyers executed for Alameda County.¹⁵ The portals of the Caldecott Tunnel (1936) in the Oakland hills and the Posey Tube (1927) from Oakland to Alameda are two engineering structures designed by Meyers. Other buildings by Meyers in Alameda include his residence of 1897 at 2021 Alameda Avenue, the First Presbyterian Church (1904) (listed on the National Register of Historic Places), the United Methodist Twin Towers Church (1909).

Architectural Context

The design sensibilities embodied in the veterans' memorial buildings Meyers designed for Alameda County characterize popular architecture of the period, known generally as academic eclecticism or historicism. The design modalities at play in these buildings are Beaux-Arts classicism (often with an overlay of Moderne detailing) and Spanish Colonial Revival, the pre-eminent revivalist style in California between the two world wars.

Architects working in the Beaux-Arts tradition, as promulgated by the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, looked to the past for inspiration. Classical ideals of balance, symmetry, proportion, and axiality were determinants of the design process, from the planning of entire complexes to the layout of individual buildings, the composition of elevations, and the details of applied ornament. Meyers apprenticed in the office of Percy & Hamilton, a

¹⁵ Henry H. Meyers Civic Architect." Alameda Times Star. 19 Mar. 1979, p. 4

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firm that was strongly influenced by the work of the Boston architect H. H. Richardson, a graduate of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. The work of Percy & Hamilton displayed an adherence to Beaux-Arts classicism in its persistent use of symmetry, balance, and axiality, and Meyers would exhibit a similar allegiance throughout his career, as seen in the plans, elevations, and detailing in many of his veterans' memorial buildings.

Meyers in turn was also influenced by the work of Bertram Goodhue, a masterful eclectic architect who launched the Spanish Colonial Revival at the 1915 Panama-California Exposition in San Diego. Drawing from Spanish Baroque and Spanish Colonial (Mexican) sources, Goodhue's exposition buildings combined ornate appliques of carved stone and terra cotta around doorways and windows, in striking contrast with broad expanses of wall surface plainly finished in cement plaster. Roofs were clad or trimmed with terra cotta tile. Goodhue's Los Angeles Public Library of 1922 also attracted much attention from the architectural profession for its Beaux-Arts composition with Art Deco design details.

Spanish Colonial Revival enjoyed great popularity in California between the two world wars, and Meyers's Highland Hospital, in Oakland, remains one of the most monumental and intact examples of the style in the San Francisco Bay Area. His forays into Spanish Colonial Revivalism in the veterans' memorial buildings are far less monumental and ornate, yet also representative of the style.

Meyers also belonged to that generation of American architects whose careers spanned the shift from historicism to the onset of modernism—that is, who entered the profession around the turn of the 20th century and whose practices ended by World War II. Prior to World War I, progressive architects in America and Europe began to turn from historical precedent to more elemental issues of space, form, and structure. This new, "modern" architecture sought more rational and functional solutions to design problems, resulting in buildings that often seemed designed from the inside out, as envelopes for human activity—letting form follow function to arrive at the finished design. Modernism began to supplant academic eclecticism in American architecture schools in the 1930s, becoming the dominant paradigm after World War II.

Though rooted in academic eclecticism, like many of his peers Meyers also experimented with the stylized abstractions of the Moderne—a sort of eclectic, transitional modernism in the mainstream of American architecture of the 1920s and 1930s. Disparate Moderne styles are characterized both by stylized ornament and stripped-down and streamlined forms. The earlier, ornamental phase is commonly known as Art Deco; the later, more austere phase is often called Streamline Moderne.

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Moderne/Art Deco Architecture in the San Francisco Bay Area

Within the Bay Area, architect Timothy Pflueger is credited with the earliest major buildings in the Moderne/ Art Deco style with his designs for San Francisco buildings such as the Pacific Telephone Company Building (1926), 450 Sutter Building, and the Pacific Stock Exchange Building, both of 1929. In the East Bay, Pflueger is known for his design of the Paramount Theater in Oakland(1931). While Meyers's body of work is not quite the level of architecture produced by Timothy Pflueger, Meyers is comparable to James W. Plachek, architect of the Berkeley Public Library (1930) and Berkeley City Hall (1938), George Kelham, architect of the the Shell Building in San Francisco(1928) and the University of California- Berkeley Life Sciences Building, or Weeks and Day.¹⁶ Meyers's work represents the work of a competent mainstream architect in the San Francisco Bay Area, conservative, yet open to new design concepts such as the Moderne/Art Deco. It was not until the 1930s that the Moderne/Art Deco style became very popular and was used extensively for commercial buildings, apartment buildings, and retail stores, so Meyers's Alameda Veterans' Memorial Building can be seen as a relatively early use of the style in the Bay Area. Within the context of Alameda, the Veterans' Memorial is one of the earliest uses of the Art Deco style, predating Pflueger's Alameda Theater from 1931-32.

Meyers's Veterans' Memorial Buildings

The ten veterans' memorial buildings designed by Henry H. Meyers (in association with George R. Klinkhardt and Mildred S. Meyers), display the varied approach to historicist design employed by mainstream, eclectic American architects of the early 20th century. Built between 1927 and 1934, the buildings fall primarily into two stylistic groups. One group, exemplified by the buildings at Oakland, Berkeley, Emeryville, and Hayward, is rooted in Beaux-Arts classicism, with strictly symmetrical massing and varying degrees of classical detailing. The other group, embodied by the buildings at Niles (in present-day Fremont), Pleasanton, Livermore, and Albany, is Spanish Colonial Revival in feeling, characterized by white-painted plaster, terra-cotta tile roofs, and a tendency toward picturesque massing. The last two buildings, in Alameda and San Leandro, mix elements from both of these groups and, together with the buildings in Emeryville and Hayward, incorporate the stylized applied ornament and fixtures of the Moderne.

"In all cases, the Memorials have been designed in styles to suit the surroundings," Mildred Meyers wrote in the August 1935 issue of *The Architect & Engineer*. "Where they are located in residence sections, a less formal style was selected. For those in

¹⁶ Crowe, Michale F.. *Deco By the Bay: Art Deco Architecture in the San Francisco Bay Area*. New York: Penguin Books, 1995, pp. 11-33.

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business districts, the monumental was considered more appropriate.”¹⁷ Accordingly, the buildings in Oakland, Berkeley, Emeryville, and Hayward are formal in design, with a strict use of symmetry, a liberal quoting of classical precedent, and (except for Emeryville) a more monumental, urban scale. The other buildings, notably the group of four in the Spanish Colonial Revival style, are smaller in scale and more relaxed in composition, in response to their residential settings.

“A modernized Classic was chosen for the buildings at Emeryville, San Leandro and Hayward,” Mildred Meyers stated. “Because of the character of the surrounding and the history of the district, the building at Niles was designed and planned in the California Spanish style. As a result, when the building was completed, three other communities [Pleasanton, Livermore, and Albany] requested that their buildings be of similar architecture Regardless of style, military details have been introduced into the design of all Memorials to emphasize the purpose of the buildings.”¹⁸

Alameda Veterans' Memorial Building

Opened in 1929, the Alameda facility mixed elements of monumental Beaux-Arts composition and massing of the sort that prevailed in the Oakland and Berkeley buildings (which preceded it), with a looser compositional approach akin to the Spanish Colonial Revival buildings (which came after it). Alameda was also the first of the ten buildings to exhibit the influence of the Moderne in its stylized Art Deco ornament and fixtures.

The site of the Alameda building, at the edge of the city's civic center, facing a neoclassical high school (1926) and catty-corner from a neoclassical church (1921), contributes to the formalism of the design. This is most evident in the entrance block, which has a symmetrical front. The tall, attenuated arches of the entrance are dominated by pilasters, recalling the façade of the earlier Oakland building. Yet the site also adjoins a picturesque, Mission Revival club building (1908), and it borders an extended residential neighborhood. This other dimension of the setting may have influenced the relaxed symmetry of the building's façade, with the entrance block placed off-center and a long wing extending to the east.

Compared with Meyers's other Veterans' buildings, this building was the first to incorporate Art Deco stylistic elements in an eclectic design with the Spanish Colonial Revival style, similar to his treatment of the Posey Tube portals. The Veterans'

¹⁷ Meyers, Mildred S. “Memorials.” *The Architect & Engineer*, August 1935, pp. 11–22.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

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Memorial Building is also one of the earliest monumental buildings in Alameda incorporating Moderne/Art Deco elements. Meyer's last work as county architect, the Caldecott Tunnel (1936), shows a purer rendition of the Moderne/Art Deco style. The Alameda Veterans' Memorial therefore exhibits a transition in Meyers's work from the eclecticism of adding Art Deco stylistic elements onto a classically-inspired or Spanish Colonial Revival base to the unadulterated Art Deco style.

The eclectic Alameda Veterans' Memorial Building exhibits the distinctive characteristics of the Spanish Colonial Revival style with its arched entry pavilion and in the use of materials such as stucco cladding, and a Mission clay tile roof, while the stylized foliate capitals, zig-zag cornice and stylized oak leaf frieze and many interior details are representative of the Moderne/Art Deco style.

The 1949 addition was accomplished in a seamless manner, so that it is hard to tell which part is the addition and which is part is the original building; the addition contributes to the significance of the historic property. The architect for the addition was Andrew T. Hass who was well known in the Bay Area and designed several buildings and schools in Alameda. Andrew Hass graduated from the School of Architecture at the University of California-Berkeley around 1920. He moved to Alameda with his architect wife, Myrtle, in the 1920s. He established an office in San Francisco, where he carried on an active practice. In Alameda, Hass produced a number of residential commissions in the 1920s and 1930s, including several on Palmeta Court and the Tudor Period Revival Barry House at 1600 Dayton Street. Hass's firm (Kent & Hass) produced a number of important buildings in Alameda beginning in the 1930s, including the W.P.A.-funded Electric Substation of 1936 at Grand Street and Eagle Avenue and the Fire Alarm Building in 1939. Kent & Hass designed a series of schools, beginning with the streamlined Mastic (1930), as well as Edison (1942). Longfellow (1942), Franklin (1951) and Otis (1951)¹⁹.

Uses of the Veterans' Building

Because of the large auditorium, and a main kitchen downstairs with a large dining room, the building was in constant demand for parties, dinners, stage entertainment and other events. The Veterans lounge and adjoining billiards room was and is a popular place to meet and enjoy the camaraderie of fellow veterans. Upstairs is a small preparation kitchen and small dining room on the second floor which was popular with ladies for afternoon activities and in demand for small evening dinner parties. After

¹⁹ Historic Preservation Element, Alameda Planning Department. 1980 p. 14

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1949 there was another kitchenette and dining room, it was then possible to have many parties and lots of entertainment at all times of the day and evening.

The Veterans' building since 1998 has been managed by the City of Alameda Recreation and Parks Department. They have sponsored activities throughout the year such as day care, church groups, dance classes, piano lessons. Downstairs in the former small kitchen/dining room and gymnasium, the Junior High students have a place to go after school to do homework and socialize with their friends. The Alameda Free Library Adult Literacy program currently occupies one of the assembly rooms on the third floor.

There are several Veterans' groups that still meet regularly in the Veterans' Memorial Building. Among them are the American Legion Post #9 and #647, the Veterans of Foreign Wars #9919, the Filipino American League and the Disabled American Veterans #8. They sponsor public ceremonies on Armed Forces Day and Veterans' Day. In addition they host district meetings and social gatherings such as parties and card playing. The Veterans also sponsor the Veterans' Building Restoration Committee which meets in the building.

Integrity of the Veterans' Memorial Building

Of the seven aspects of integrity, the Veterans' building has high integrity of location, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, with only design slightly compromised by the 1949 addition to the east, the wheelchair ramp, and the fire escape on the west side elevation. The 1949 addition to the Central Avenue primary elevation is recessed from the primary elevation, is small, and complements the stylistic elements of the original elevation. The interior alterations and additional rooms of 1949 were added in a compatible way and do not detract from any of the original stylistic elements. The wheelchair ramp, although it is on the primary elevation, was handled in a sensitive way and does not detract from the overall design. The fire escape was added on a secondary elevation and not visible from the primary Central Avenue elevation. The Veterans' Building possesses sufficient integrity to convey its significance.

Period of Significance and Historic Property Boundary

The period of significance for this historic property is 1929-1949, based on the original construction date and the date of the addition, which is a contributor to the historic property. The boundary of the property is the assessor's parcel, 071-0218-018, containing the building and its 1949 addition.

Criteria Consideration F

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Criteria Consideration F applies to properties whose sole or primary function is commemorative, or in which the commemorative function is of primary significance. Although the Alameda Veterans' Memorial Building was designed as a memorial to veterans, its primary function is to house veterans' groups and community activities. Therefore this criteria consideration does not apply.

Other Designations

The Alameda Veterans' Memorial Building was designated a City of Alameda landmark in 1982 and was also declared an Alameda Historical Monument.

Conclusion

The Alameda Veterans' Memorial Building appears eligible for National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C as a good example of the Moderne/Art Deco style popular during the late 1920s to the advent of World War II, designed by a noted local architect, Henry H. Meyers. It also exhibits a transition within the work of Meyers, moving from an academically eclectic design background based on Beaux-Arts classicism to a more fully realized Art Deco style exhibited in his design for the Caldecott Tunnel.

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Boundary Description

Assessor Parcel Number 071-0218-18

Boundary Justification

This is the parcel historically associated with the Alameda Veterans' Memorial Building

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Continuation Sheet

Photo Log Page 1

Alameda Veterans' Memorial Building
Alameda County, CA

PHOTOGRAPH RECORD

Photographer: Bill Hodges

Date/Time: April 20, 2006 p.m.

Photos printed on HP Premium Plus Photo glossy paper. Ink is HP # 95 Black Ink.

CA_Alameda County_Alameda Veterans' Memorial Bldg_01

South elevation Looking North. Asymmetrical façade.

CA_Alameda County_Alameda Veterans' Memorial Bldg_02

SE elevation looking North West. Ramp, East Property line, 1949 addition.

CA_Alameda County_Alameda Veterans' Memorial Bldg_03

Central Avenue looking East. Veterans' Building north, Historic HS south.

CA_Alameda County_Alameda Veterans' Memorial Bldg_04

Walnut Street looking north. Adelphian Club west Veterans' Building east.

CA_Alameda County_Alameda Veterans' Memorial Bldg_05

SE elevation looking north West. 1977 Handicapped Ramp.

CA_Alameda County_Alameda Veterans' Memorial Bldg_06

West elevation looking East. 2002 Fire escape.

CA_Alameda County_Alameda Veterans' Memorial Bldg_07

West elevation looking south east. Auditorium exit door and fire escape.

CA_Alameda County_Alameda Veterans' Memorial Bldg_08

South Elevation looking north. Nurse medallion and foliated zig zag frieze.

CA_Alameda County_Alameda Veterans' Memorial Bldg_09

West elevation looking east. Army medallion and foliated zig zag frieze.

CA_Alameda County_Alameda Veterans' Memorial Bldg_10

South elevation looking north. Flyer medallion.

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Alameda Veterans' Memorial Building
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CA_Alameda County_Alameda Veterans' Memorial Bldg_11

South elevation looking north. Entry façade.

CA_Alameda County_Alameda Veterans' Memorial Bldg_12

West alcove looking east. Tiled vestibule with wave patterned archways.

CA_Alameda County_Alameda Veterans' Memorial Bldg_13

Looking north from lobby. Auditorium stage and ornate ceiling.

CA_Alameda County_Alameda Veterans' Memorial Bldg_14

Looking north from front door. Recessed double doors into auditorium.

CA_Alameda County_Alameda Veterans' Memorial Bldg_15

Looking North East from hallway. Billiards Room and offices added in 1949.

CA_Alameda County_Alameda Veterans' Memorial Bldg_16

Looking North east from hallway. Assembly room & platform seating added 1949.

CA_Alameda County_Alameda Veterans' Memorial Bldg_17

Looking South East from hallway. Veterans' Lounge fireplace and bookcases.

Photographer: Unknown Date/Time: November 10 1929

Subject: Dedication of the Veterans' Memorial Building

Scanned photo

Copy of photo in possession of the Veterans' Memorial collection

Photographer: Unknown Date/Time: Before 1949

Subject: View of 1929 facade

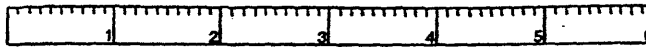
Scanned photo from Alamedans at Play by Woody Minor

Copy of Photo in possession of Woody Minor of Alameda

Photographer: Unknown Date/Time: Before 1943

Subject: Henry H. Meyers

Scanned photo from Paul Vigness' Alameda Community Book published 1952



ASSESSOR'S MAP 71

Code Area No. 21-000 21-004

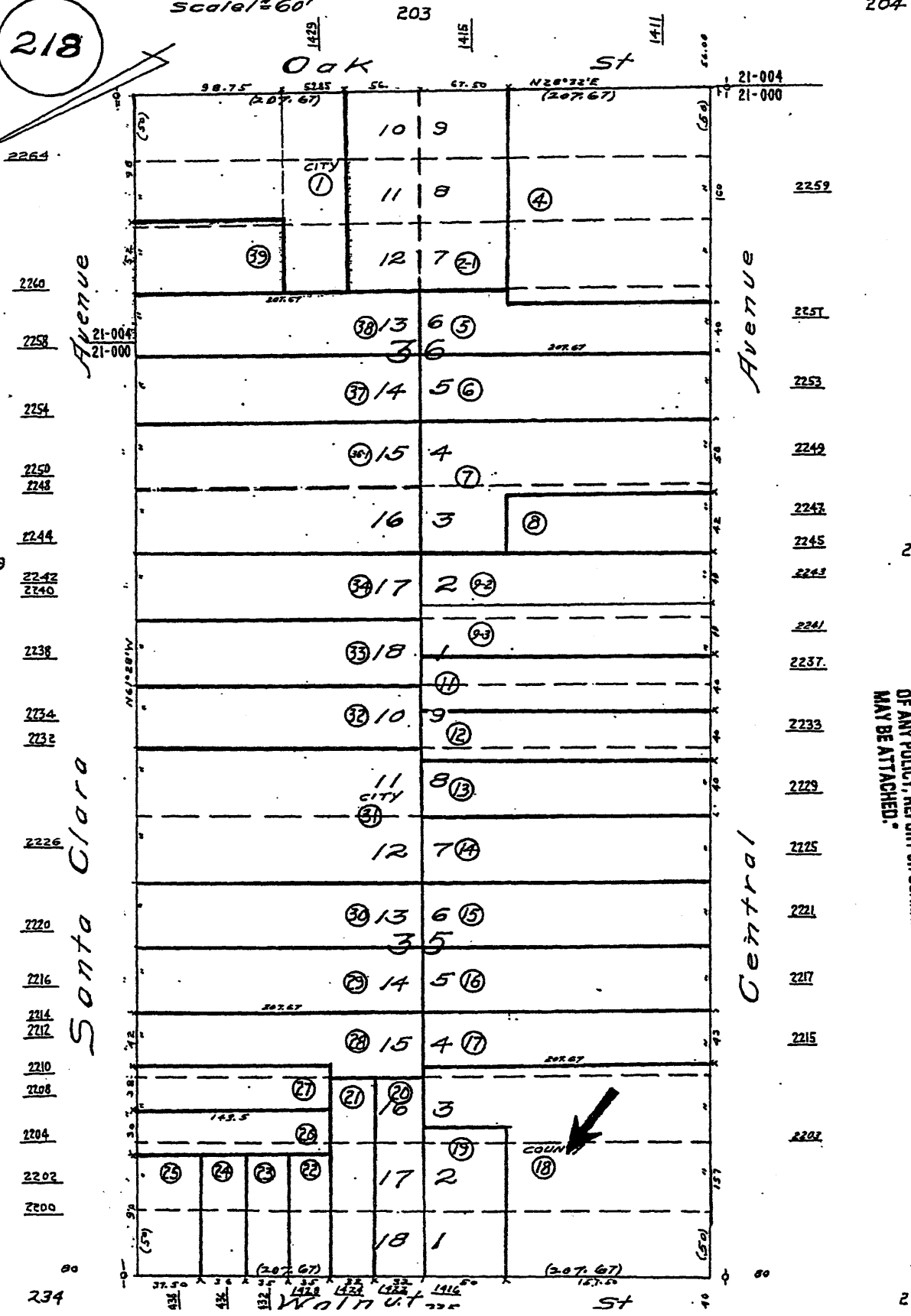
21/3

Map of
Lands Adjacent to the

Alameda Veterans' Memorial Building
Alameda County, CA

202 Town of Encinal (Surveyed by Jas T. Stratton) (Bk 19 Pg 53)
Scale 1/2" = 60'

218



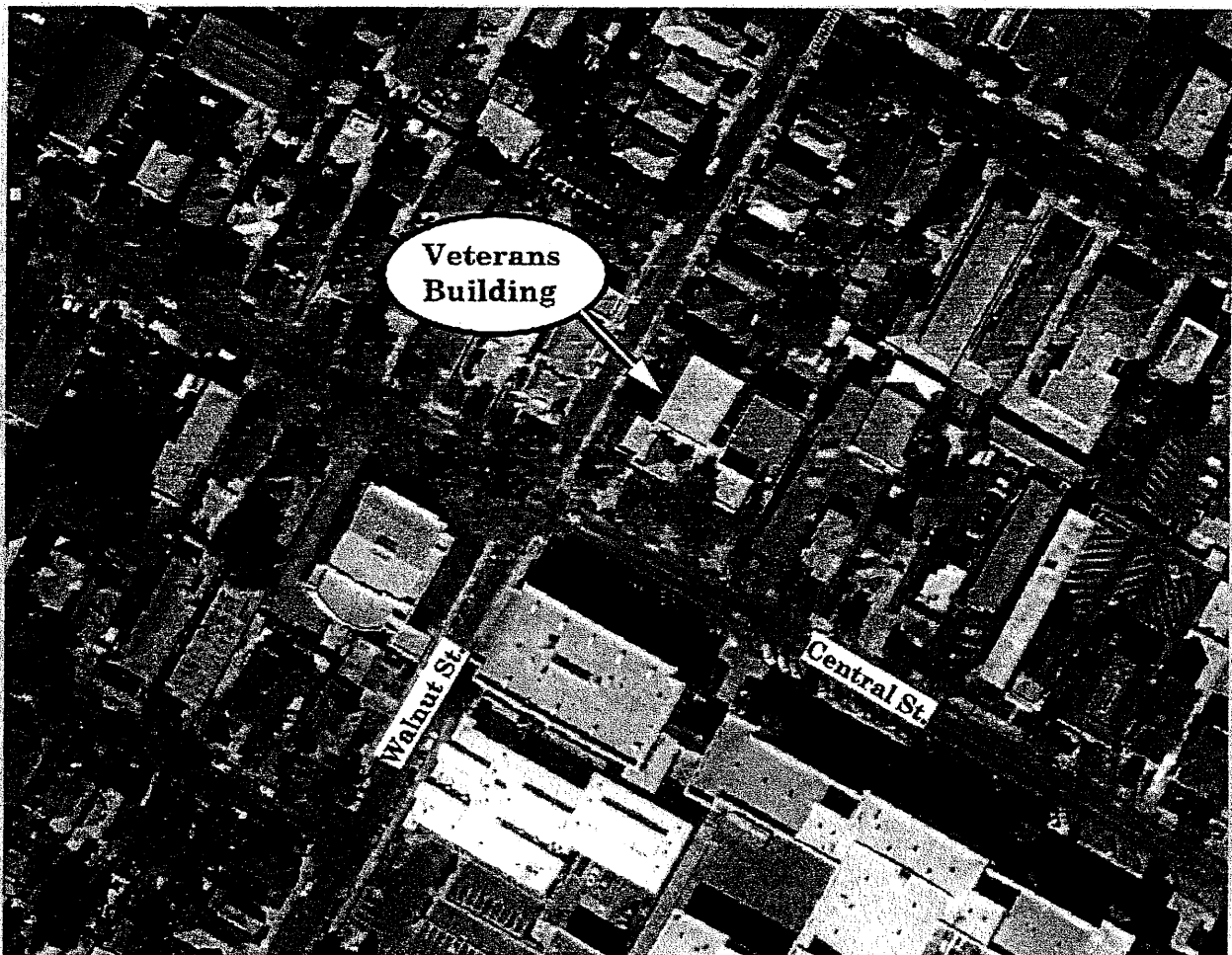
THE INFORMATION ON THIS PLAT IS PROVIDED FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE AS A GUIDE TO THE GENERAL LOCATION OF THE SUBJECT PROPERTY. THE ACCURACY OF THIS PLAT IS NOT GUARANTEED, NOR IS IT A PART OF ANY POLICY, REPORT OR GUARANTEE TO WHICH IT MAY BE ATTACHED.

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Veterans' Memorial Building, Alameda
Sunday, November 10, 1929
James C. Fogarty
Exalted Ruler, Alameda Lodge no. 1015 B.P.O Elks
Mayor Victor L. Shaefer Governor C.C. Young
Judge Homer R. Spence Supervisor William J. Hamilton

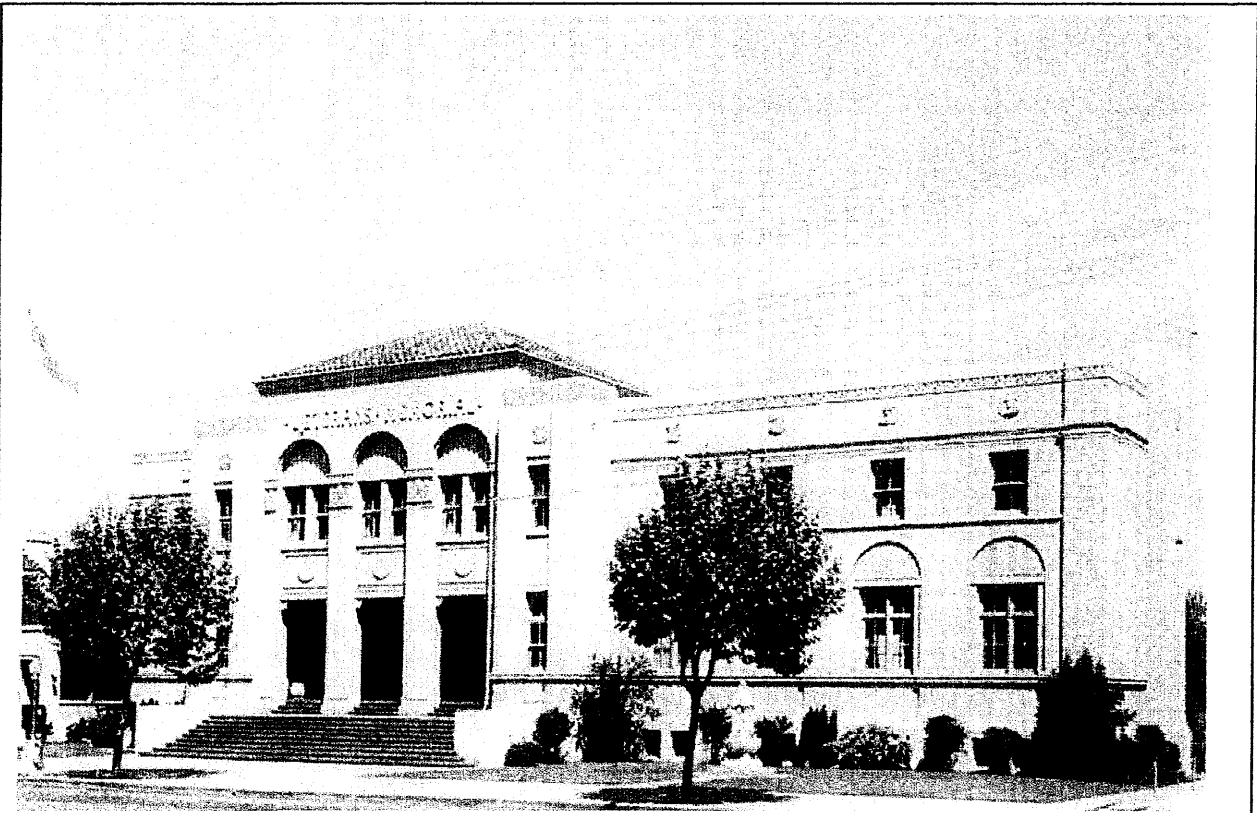
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**Alameda Veterans' Memorial Building
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Alameda Veterans' Memorial Building circa 1929

We know that this is an early view of the Veterans' Building because we can see to the rear of the building beyond the east wing where the 1949 addition was built. Also, we get a glimpse of the fountain donated by the Bay Street Merchants. It is about the center of the photo against the building just to the right of the street tree. Also, there are early automobiles to the west on Walnut Street.

Date and Photographer unknown

Photo scanned from Alamedans at Play by Woody Minor page 123

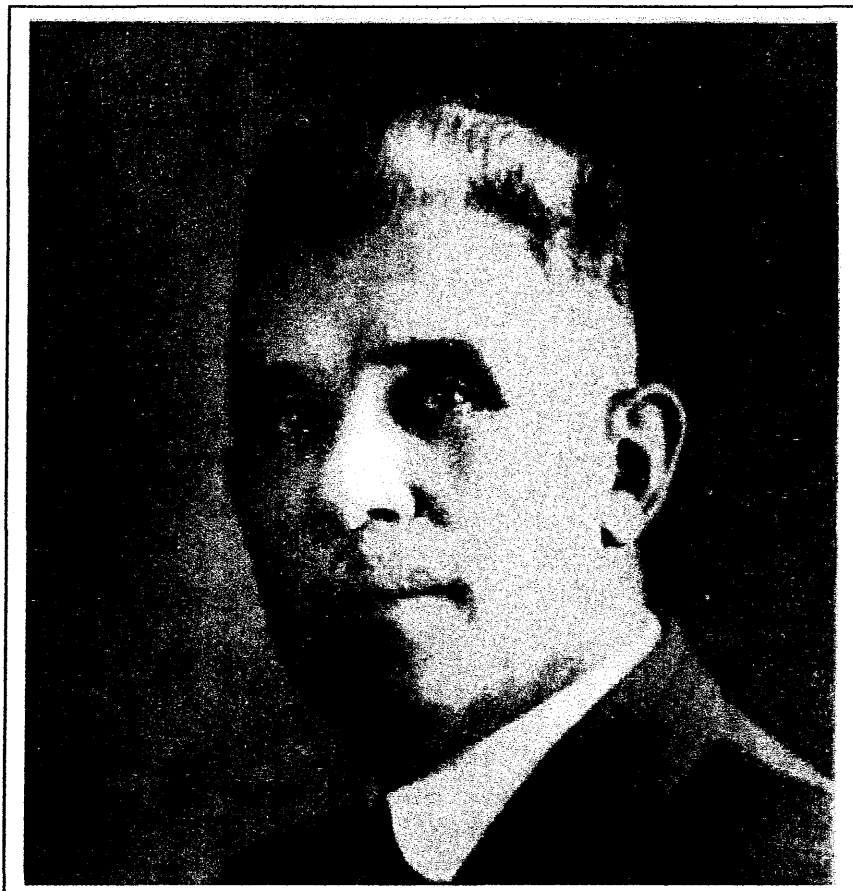
**United States Department of the Interior
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Section number Additional Documentation

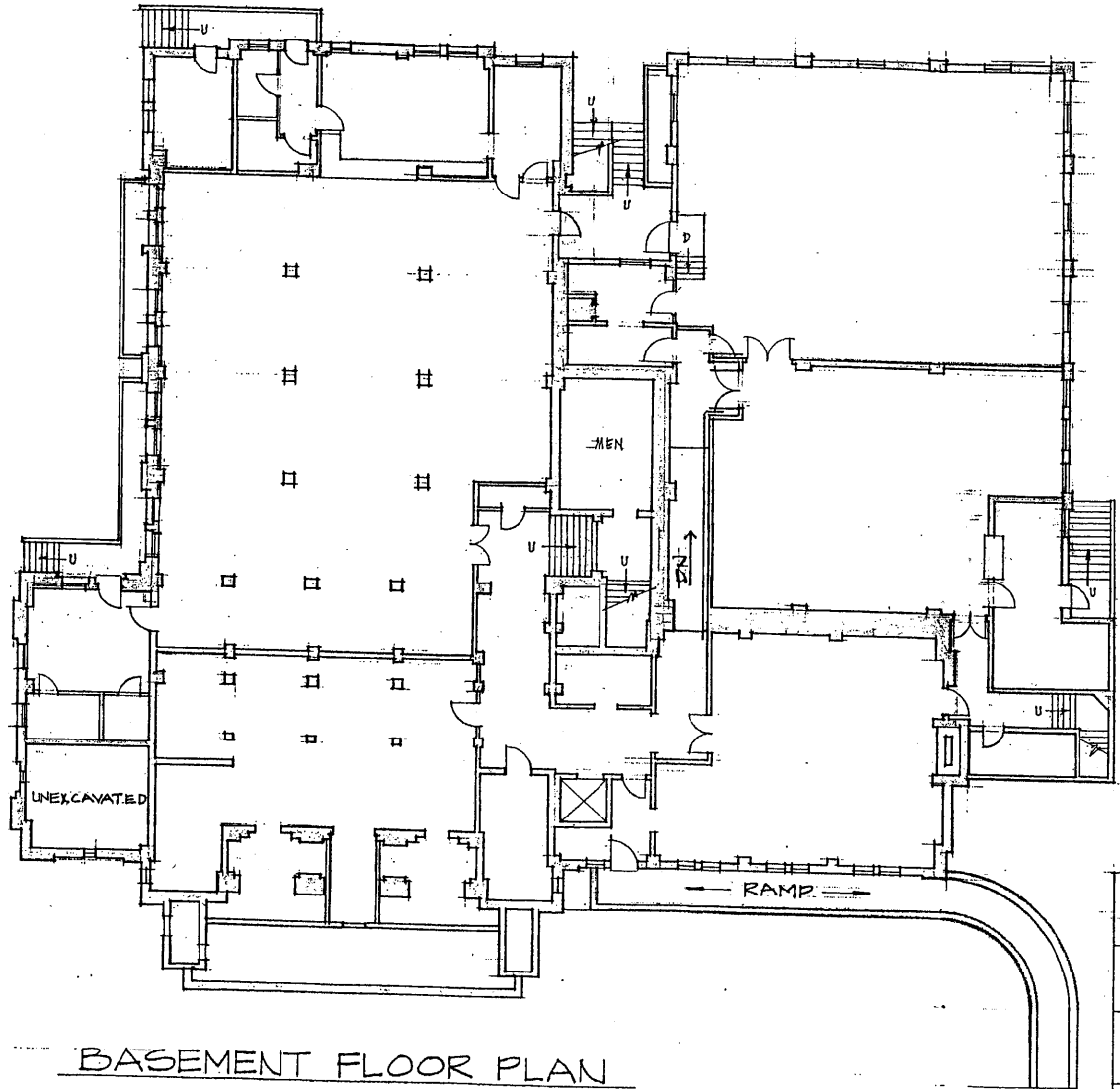
Page 4

**Alameda Veterans' Memorial Building
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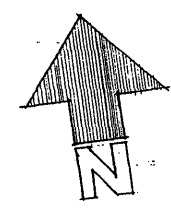
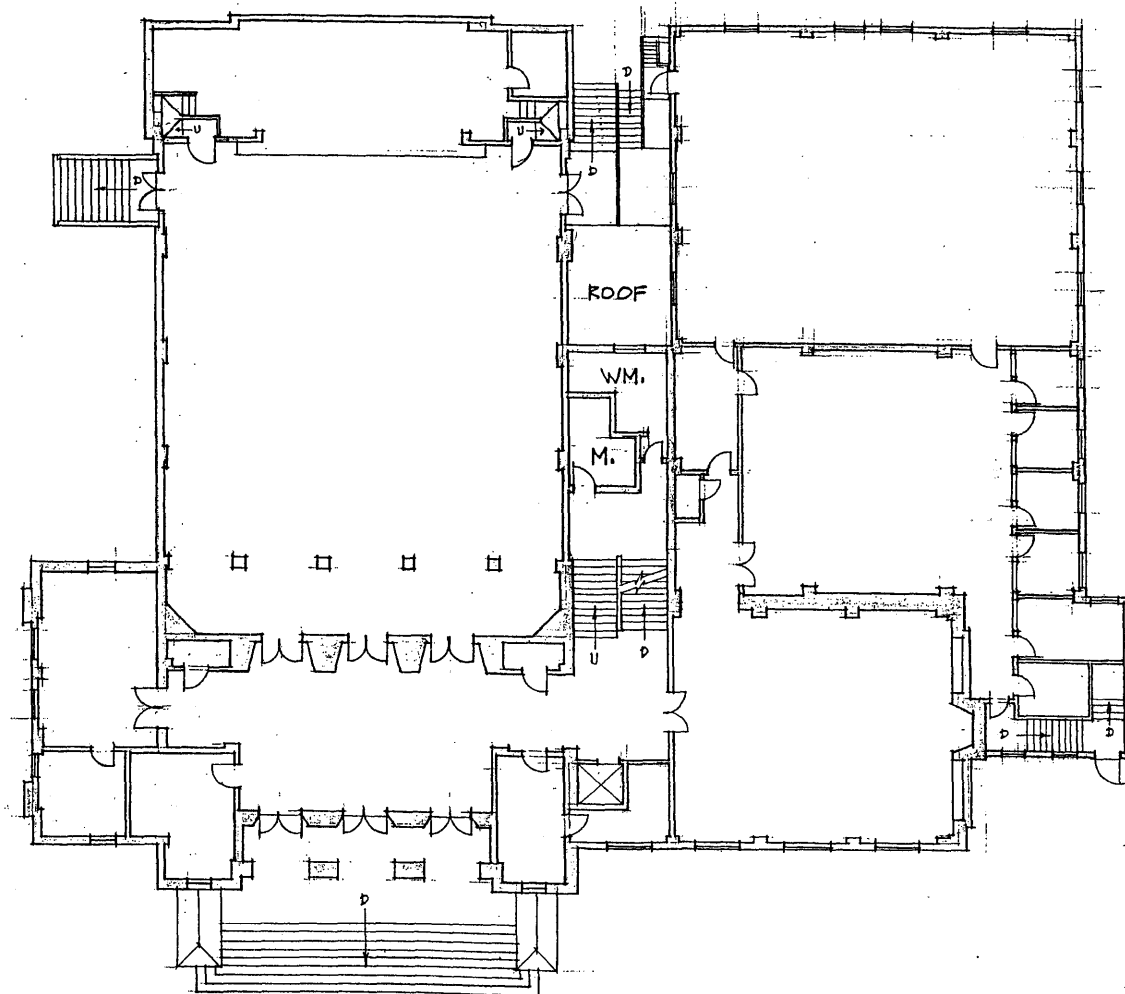
Henry Height Meyers 1867-1943

Architect of the Alameda Veterans' Memorial Building



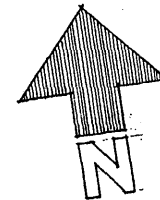
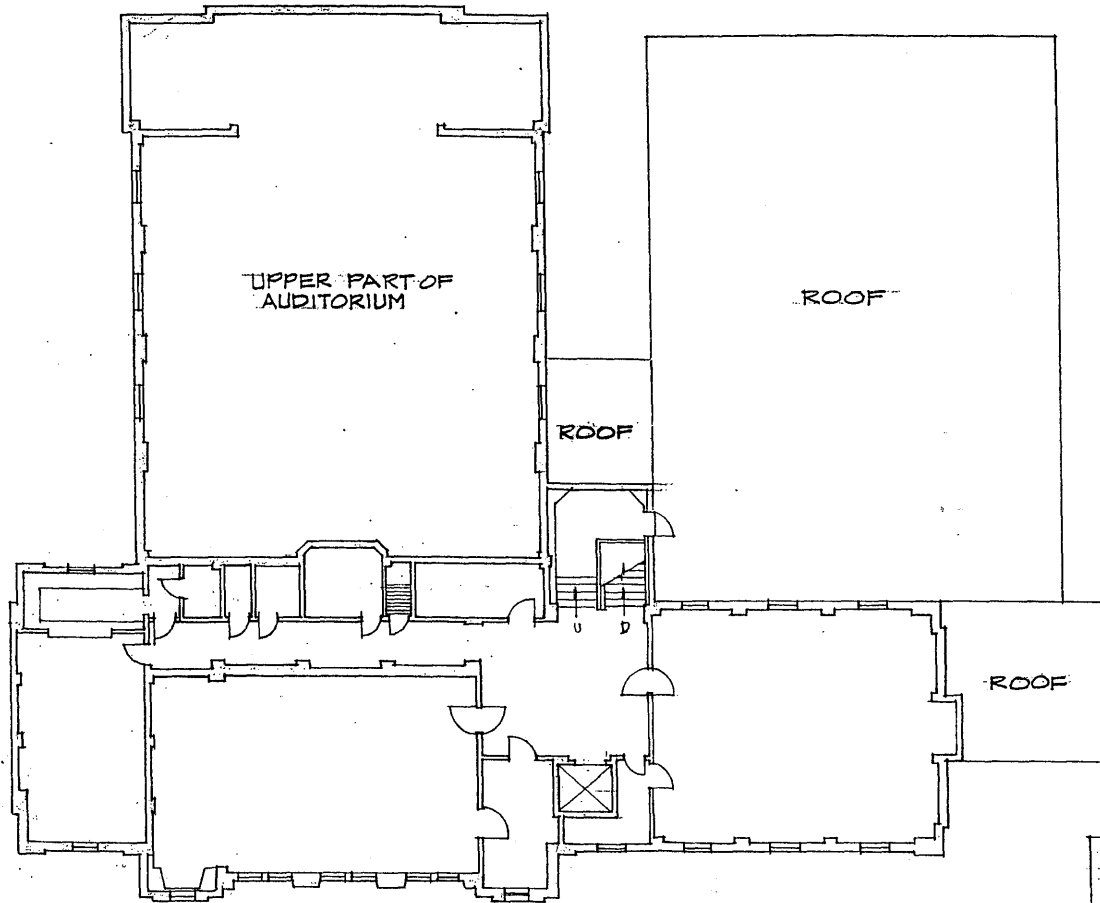
BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN

DATE	COUNTY OF ALAMEDA		
11-1-76	GENERAL SERVICES AGENCY		
REV.	BUILDING MAINTENANCE DEPT.		
11-30-78	ALAMEDA VETERANS MEMO.		
SCALE	2203 CENTRAL AVE., ALAMEDA		
1/16"=1'-0"	BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN		
DR. BY:	H.R. SAVAGE	SHT. / OF	DWG. NO.
W. L.	BLDG'S. SUPT.	1 / 4	6111-76-3



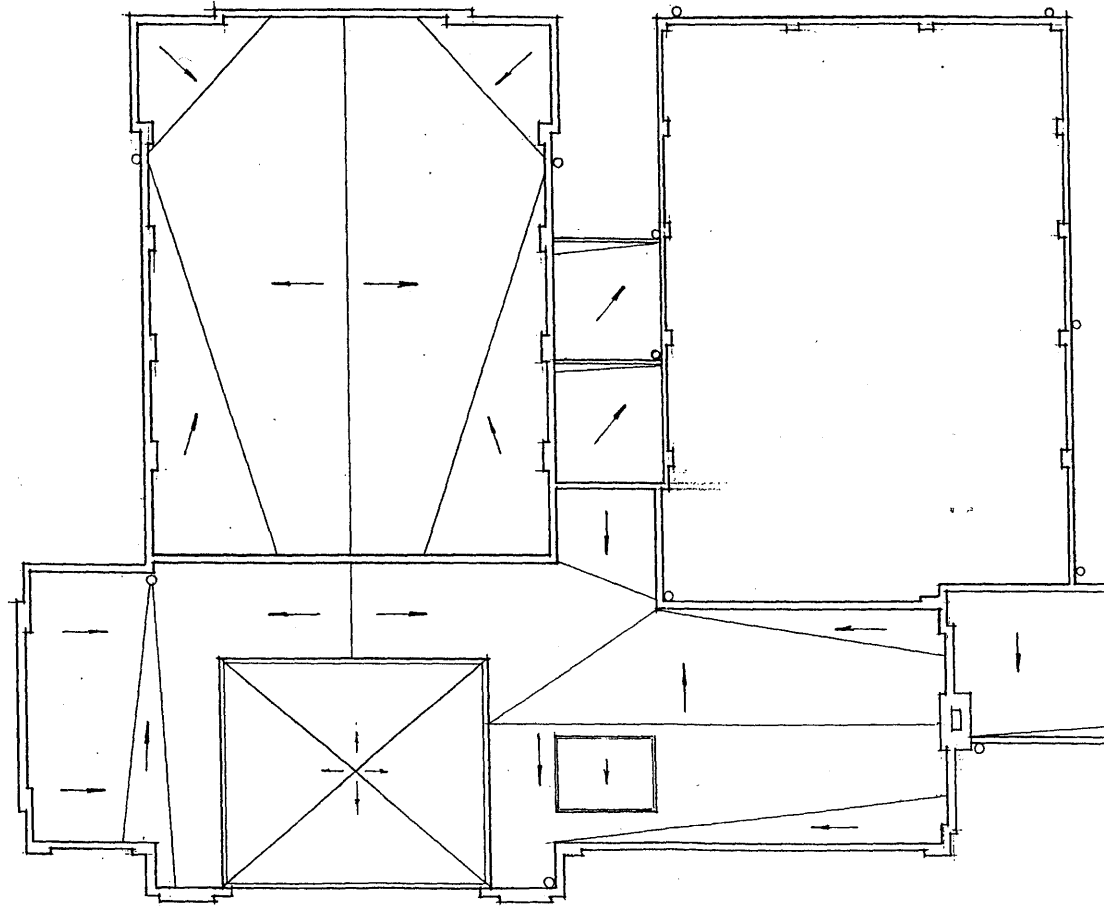
FIRST FLOOR PLAN

DATE	COUNTY OF ALAMEDA		
11-1-76	GENERAL SERVICES AGENCY		
REV.	BUILDING MAINTENANCE DEPT.		
	ALAMEDA VETERANS MEMO.		
	2203 CENTRAL AVE., ALAMEDA		
SCALE	FIRST FLOOR PLAN		
1/16"=1'-0"			
DR. BY	F.R. SAVAGE	SHT. / OF	DWG. NO.
W.L.	BLDG'S. SUPT.	2 / 4	6111-76-3

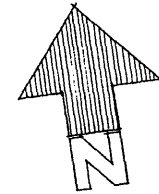


SECOND FLOOR PLAN

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SCALE 1/16"=1'-0"	SECOND FLOOR PLAN		
DR. BY W. L.	H. R. SAVAGE BLDG'S. SUPT.	SHT./OF. 3 / 4	DWG. NO. 6111-76-3



ROOF PLAN



DATE	COUNTY OF ALAMEDA		
11-1-76	GENERAL SERVICES AGENCY		
REV.	BUILDING MAINTENANCE DEPT.		
	ALAMEDA VETERANS MEMO.		
	2203 CENTRAL AVE., ALAMEDA		
SCALE	ROOF PLAN		
1/16"=1'-0"			
DR. BY	SHT / OF	DWG. NO.	
	4 / 4	6111-76-3	