

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 91000308 Date Listed: 3/26/91

Twining Laboratories                      Fresno                      CA  
Property Name                                      County                                      State

N/A  
Multiple Name

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

*for* Antoinette J. Bee  
Signature of the Keeper

3/26/91  
Date of Action

=====  
Amended Items in Nomination:

Statement of Significance: On Continuation Sheet, Section 8, page 6, the last sentence should read, "Twining Laboratories qualifies for listing on the National Register of Historic Places with State Significance."

This information was confirmed with Cynthia Howse of the California State Historic Preservation Office.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

FEB 14 1991

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name The Twining Laboratories  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number 2527 Fresno Street  not for publication  
city, town Fresno  vicinity  
state California code CA county Fresno code CA 019 zip code 93721

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.  See continuation sheet.  
Kathryn Austin 2-5-91  
Signature of certifying official Date  
California State Historic Preservation Officer  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:  
 entered in the National Register. Quinnotti Bee 2/26/91  
 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:)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
for Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE  
professional engineering office  
and chemistry labs

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE  
professional engineering office  
and chemistry labs

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS  
Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete  
walls Brick  
Stucco  
roof Synthetics/Asphalt  
other Roof/Mission Clay Tile

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

**SUMMARY PARAGRAPH**

The **TWINING LABORATORIES BUILDING** is located on the northwest corner of Fresno and "P" Streets in downtown Fresno, California, a short three and a half blocks northeast of the Fresno County Courthouse. Constructed in 1930, the building was designed to function as a chemical testing lab, a function it continues to serve today in addition to providing state-of-the-art biochemical, soils, materials and environmental quality testing. The original two-story brick structure was rectangular in plan with a small basement mechanical room. Masonry walls and a system of steel columns support floors and a trussed roof. The latter is faced above the formal front facade by a mission tile parapet, flanked by missionesque end gables. The first of four later additions thoughtfully extended the "palazzo" forms and detailing of the Mediterranean Revival front elevation in 1935, the latter a remarkable investment in aesthetics made during the depths of the Depression. An utilitarian two-story expansion to the rear of the original building, added in 1940, provided extra laboratory space. A single-story garage and storage wing was added in two phases, the first in 1942, and the second in 1943, creating the "L" shaped footprint of the building complex today. These additions are also built of brick. Roof decks are flat, surfaced with composition roof sheeting. The building is structurally sound, has been maintained in good repair, and has sustained limited alterations. A cosmetic rehabilitation is in progress, addressing the restoration of historic paint colors, replication of missing wood frame window screens, and the reconstruction of the front entry door. Because stylistic modifications to the principal architectural facade have been minor, loss of original building fabric has been limited, and the primary function of the building has not changed appreciably for six decades, the property exhibits a substantial degree of historical and architectural integrity.

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### EXPANDED DESCRIPTION

The Twining Laboratories Building (1930) is located three and a half city blocks northeast of the Fresno County Courthouse. It is prominently sited on the northwest corner of the Civic Center intersection of Fresno and "P" Streets in downtown Fresno, California. With the proposed construction of the new \$30 million Fresno City Hall designed by internationally acclaimed architect Arthur Erickson FAIA, and planned for a site catty-corner from the Twining property, this intersection will become one of the most heavily traveled in the community. [See accompanying BEE article: "Grand plans for City Hall"] Indeed, Twining enjoys a prime location on Fresno Street, which is already a major surface arterial between Freeways 99 and 41.

Twining Laboratories, a charming commercial structure whose main facade is modeled along the lines of a small, urban Mediterranean Palazzo [Photos 2 & 3], anchors one side of one-way "P" Street directly across from the Physicians Building (1926). The Physicians Building has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1978.<sup>1</sup> Viewed as a pair of revival era buildings designed by the same architect, Charles E. Butner AIA, Twining Laboratories and the Physicians Building are substantial symbols of an era of modestly-scaled and simply-embellished office buildings designed during the late teens, 1920s and early 1930s in the community. Much of this generation of downtown Fresno commercial stock has fallen during twenty-nine years of downtown urban redevelopment since 1960. In 1930, Twining Laboratories Building, with its curvilinear gables, mission tile roof, soft red-ochre stucco walls, glazed arabesque ceramic tile grillwork, and celedon green window casements was a colorful sibling to the crisp white Spanish Revival Physicians Building across the street. The Physicians Building was published as a U.S. Department of the Interior Preservation Case Study in 1979 and 1982.<sup>2 3</sup>

Immediately opposite Twining Laboratories' Fresno Street entrance is the 5-story U.S. Courts and Federal Building. A regional branch of Bank of America stands on the alley-side of the Lab facility, and a twelve-unit Spanish Revival courtyard apartment complex abuts the rear of the Lab's corner site. [Photos 1, 8, & 9] The two-story Lab building contains over 20,325 square feet of administrative, laboratory and storage space covering 66.4% of the site in an "L" shaped footprint. Built of masonry with a formally articulated, stuccoed front elevation, the 40-room rectangular, two-story building connects to a single-story storage and garage wing. The latter opens onto a vehicle storage and service yard. The building's interiors are clinically spartan [Photos 11, 12 & 13], with the exception of a mahogany paneled front reception area. [Photo 10] A small reinforced concrete basement houses mechanical services. A major addition to the building sensitively extended the Beaux-Arts detailing of the building's front facade in 1935.<sup>4</sup> [Photo 4] The original symmetrical

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fenestration, matched quoined pilasters and central entryway shifted off-center with that building expansion. The centered design of latter-day signage, somewhat "moderne" in flavor, counteracts the asymmetrical elevation today. [Photo 6] A subsequent series of utilitarian additions were built to the rear and side of the building from 1940 to 1943, resulting in the "L" shaped configuration. The single-story storage and garage wing defines the vehicle storage yard located at the intersection corner of the site. [Photo 7]

The Twining Laboratories Building is in very good repair and has been in continual use for almost 60 years by the same business, serving the biochemical, agricultural and construction industries of the central San Joaquin Valley from this convenient downtown location. The property's future, however, is potentially threatened by the projected demand for additional parking to accommodate the new 200,000 square foot City Hall, even though the Twining facility has been listed in the Local Official Register of Historic Resources since 1979.<sup>5</sup>

Architect William E. Patnaude FAIA, in the State of California Historic Resources Inventory form he completed in 1978, described the Twining Laboratories as a "good example of a depression [sic] era building," the main wall of which being "very well studied."<sup>6</sup> That description and the observation that the building's "simplicity and severeness [were] responsive to the needs of the time," place the building within the context of the uneasy economics of 1929, the year the building was designed.<sup>7 8</sup> By the time the \$200,000 facility had been completed in August of 1930, the economic outlook of the country was bleak, making such a major investment even more impressive.<sup>9 10</sup>

The building's masonry construction was quite utilitarian, being laid up in common-bond red brick with struck mortar joints, except for the front facade which was finished in stucco. Beaux-Arts formalism characterized that elevation, including a 24" pronounced plinth, quoined pilasters, and a frieze band embellished with heraldic shields, a trademark of the architect. The main entrance consisted of a single-light mahogany french door, flanked by sidelights, and topped by transom lights. A pair of rectangular backlighted niches to each side of the recessed entrance illuminated the entry through perforated arabesque ceramic tile grills glazed in a jade green. The recessed entry was tiled in sanguine colored mosaic tiles set in a herringbone pattern. Vertically proportioned utilitarian one-over-one wood double-hung windows, with hopper windows below, were employed on the ground floor. Two-over-five wood-sash screens simulated more intricate window patterns associated with the formal style of the building. Smaller two-over-four screens on the second floor windows completed the front fenestration.

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The roof over the Mediterranean Style facade of the building was faced with mission tile, that visually served as a parapet behind which the roof was decked in composition sheeting. A trussed roof system was engineered for the bulk of the building. The mission tiles are laid in a regular pattern, and complement the missionsque shaped gables at each end of the building. The gables are coped in stucco.

Aside from the simple mahogany wainscot paneling and casework that trim the front reception office, the building's interiors are uniformly spartan. Typical of this no-nonsense simplicity is the main staircase to the second floor labs, which is a study in utilitarian design with painted pipe rails. [Photo 11] The building plan was laid out on an informal grid of interconnecting rooms. Finishes are clinically white, and none of the rooms has changed markedly over the years. Minor additions of suspended ceilings accommodated the installation of standard florescent fixtures to increase light levels at lab counters and work stations [Photo 12 & 13]

Since the building was built on zero lot lines on three sides, there is no landscaping. A chain-link fence presently encloses the asphalt covered vehicle storage and service area. The alley and rear elevations are variously painted and unpainted brick, with a combination of steel casement windows and openings infilled with glass block. The latter allow natural light into the garage and storage wing.

## SUMMARY OF BASIC ALTERATIONS

As previously described, the first major addition to the building took place in 1935, a 25' x 75'-2" extension of the front elevation [See Sketch Map, Area "B" for side office addition footprint], designed and constructed by Fisher & McNulty, General Contractors, the builders of the original 1930 structure. [See Sketch Map, Area "A" for original building footprint] In 1940, this same firm added a 40' x 75' two-story expansion to the rear of the building.<sup>11</sup> [See Sketch Map, Area "C" for rear lab expansion footprint] The garage and storage wing was added in two phases, the first in 1942, and the second in 1943, again by Fisher & McNulty.<sup>12</sup> [See Sketch Map, Area "D" for side storage expansion] Minor repairs and modifications, such as a corrugated metal storage shed along the rear of the building, have been completed over the ensuing years. Twining Laboratories has evolved into a building 118' deep, with a 75' long formal front elevation, and a 75' x 50' garage wing that includes 7 storage rooms.

The original polychrome coloration of the building has been repainted several times, and is presently in shades of tan and brown. Aluminum screens have replaced the lively green

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muntin-type wood screens that were designed for the building. Two glass commercial storefront doors now replace the 1930 mahogany entrance. A condition of this application for listing on the National Register is that the owners are committed to restoring these major features of the building, and have already begun that process, having recently uncovered the arabesque grills which had been hidden for years behind illuminated plexiglas signs. Weins-Carlstrom Architects of Fresno have been retained to coordinate this work.

### PERCEIVED THREATS TO THE BUILDING

Various urban pressures, not least of which is the advent of a new City Hall on the same intersection where Twining Laboratories has resided for over half a century, pose potential threats to the survival of this important building. At a formal public hearing held on February 2, 1988 before the Redevelopment Agency of the City of Fresno and the Council of the City of Fresno, a proposal for modifications to the designated land use in the Mariposa Project Urban Renewal Plan was presented. Speaking for the Development Department, Dr. Stan Rys, Deputy Director, said, when asked specifically about the impact of this plan on Twining Laboratories, that it was his "understanding that ... no properties are being proposed along Fresno Street for acquisition. There is no... impact upon your property at all. The plan simply supports what you are doing," he assured the owner of Twining Labs, in reference to the pending nomination of the building to the National Register.<sup>13</sup> The revised map for this plan, however, clearly identifies the Twining property for "Civic Center Expansion or Associated Commercial Development." Unofficially, members of the city staff have suggested that the Twining site has been seriously studied for parking use and possible Federal office expansion. [See attached copies of Notice of Public Hearing]

Demolition of revival era buildings continues to be a policy supported by the City, most recently evidenced in the loss of the Iverson Building (1926), also designed by Charles E. Butner.<sup>14</sup> Formerly located at 2422 Tulare Street within the Civic Center Square Project, the Iverson Building was cleared to make way for the future expansion of a redevelopment site that has received ongoing government (UDAG) funding for public improvements.

Since the hearing on February 2, 1988, the FRESNO BEE has reviewed the new City Hall proposal, specifically noting that parking is a major problem, and "that the City may have to consider a parking structure in the area to meet parking needs."<sup>15</sup> On May 5, 1988, the City Attorney's Office released an even more ominous proposal for an "Exterior Building Maintenance Ordinance."<sup>16</sup> The demolition provisions in this proposed ordinance provide sweeping powers to the City, with the City Manager identified as the sole judge, jury and "executioner." Reaction by local preservationists was swift. Although proponents of the ordinance spoke for its immediate approval, a vote was deferred for 30 days so community

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groups would have time to comment.<sup>17</sup> The ordinance, as amended into law, provides an efficient method to clear land for a variety of purposes, not least of which may be the goals of continued urban renewal. This addition of Article 14 to Chapter 13 of the Fresno Municipal Code included NO exclusionary language to protect buildings listed on the Local Official Register of Historic Resources or National Register of Historic Places until political pressure exerted by preservationists forced the addition of such language.

The City of Fresno has also released a Draft E.I.R. dated January 15, 1988, for the proposed Fulton Area Redevelopment Plan, further demonstrating the City's commitment to urban renewal.<sup>18</sup> That draft plan's proposed boundaries and cavalier appraisal of historic buildings within the area prompted a formal critical response from the Preservation Committee of the Fresno City & County Historical Society. The City has yet to implement action relative to the Fulton Plan, although it recently appointed a new Redevelopment Department "Czar" who has broad independent powers to reactivate backlogged plans and new projects.

**CONCLUDING STATEMENTS**

It should also be noted that the Twining Laboratories Building was presented as a project-in-progress at the state rural preservation conference held in Hanford, California in October of 1987. The focus of this particular case study was preserving historic fabric.<sup>19</sup>

Because of the perceived threats to the Twining Laboratories Building, a swift review of this nomination is requested for potential listing on the National Register of Historic Places.



**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

Architecture  
Science  
   
   
   
 

1930-1940

1930

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

Twining, Frederick E.

Architect/Builder

Butner, Charles E.

Fisher and McNulty General Contractors

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Twining Laboratories is significant in the scientific history of the state under Criterion B for the association with Frederick E. Twining. Dr. Twining, a prominent pioneer chemist in the San Joaquin Valley, made significant contributions in the area of vaccine preparation and food and drug testing. The building is also significant in the architectural history of the community under Criterion C as a good example of a small commercial Mediterranean Revival building, and as an example of the work of Charles E. Butner, a regional architect who practiced in the central San Joaquin Valley.

Twining Laboratories, built in 1930, is significant to the architectural history of downtown Fresno, California. It is a distinguished work by architect Charles E. Butner, a "regional master" whose major contributions to the community's built environment date from 1914-1931. His thoughtfully studied design for this chemistry lab, adapting the Mediterranean Revival idiom to the "palazzo" model, is a superior example of a modestly scaled private sector commercial project constructed within the context of the early Depression years, 1929-1930. No other buildings built in downtown Fresno during this two-year period -- comparable buildings understood to have had high design value at the time of their construction -- are known to have survived the mass civic center demolition stemming from the much-published Gruen Urban Renewal and Fulton Mall Plans of the 1960s. Twining Laboratories, however, survives as a highly refined example of Fresno revival era period style architecture. The building's principal features (massing, materials, fenestration, decorative details) are intact or restorable. Little historic fabric has been lost over the lifetime of the structure. A privately financed rehabilitation of altered original exterior paint colors is in progress. Replication of easily deteriorated features such as missing wood-framed window screens is also scheduled. Certified tax credit formulas are not presently applicable to the minimal scope of work required to return the building to near-original visual appearance. The Lab's sympathetically executed additions, constructed between 1930-1945, have long since achieved acceptance as natural evolutions of the Laboratory's growth as a scientifically based business keeping pace with technological change.

See continuation sheet

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At the time of the construction of Twining Laboratories in 1930, Fresno's third generation of architectural firms approached maturity. Including Charles Butner's office, nine firms served the community and surrounding Central Valley area: W. D. Coates, Jr.; Felchlin, Shaw, and Franklin; Robert Hotchkin; Ernest J. Kump, Sr.; Eugene Mathewson; Edward Peterson; Shields, Fisher, and Lake; and Swartz and Ryland. Each of these firms displayed considerable talent, but no one firm may be said to have been "better" than the others. Each of these men was highly trained, and produced numerous works of local and regional architectural significance during his career. However, within the context of the early Depression years of 1929-30 -- 1930 being the first year of significance for Twining Laboratories -- the local economy was unhealthy and building activity correspondingly sluggish. Butner's lab building was a high-profile project with considerable architectural merit for that time.

A survey of 24 newspaper articles published by the local press during 1929-30, and a review of related Valley building news published in the journal ARCHITECT AND ENGINEER OF CALIFORNIA for the same period, reveals a severe reduction in the number of local architectural commissions, along with a distinct change in the calibre of projects in general. Public sector remodelings were common, in particular hospital and school jobs. Private sector work was scant. For example, E. J. Kump, Sr., the only Fresno architect from this period whose papers have survived nearly intact (THE ERNEST J. KUMP PAPERS AND ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS: A PRELIMINARY INDEX, 1986, Hoover Institution, Stanford University, prepared by John Edward Powell), had approximately a dozen projects between 1929-30, only two of which were located in Fresno: a body and fender shop, and an I.O.O.F. remodel. According to published accounts surveyed for the two-year period, a similar pattern of work was experienced by the other firms. H. Rafael Lake, head designer for Shields, Fisher and Lake, had a remodel for a film theater. W. D. Coates designed a fraternal lodge building and a courthouse annex during this period. Swartz and Ryland opened an office in Monterey to secure residential and school work in the Carmel area. Mathewson, the elder statesman of the group, retired to Arcata. Felchlin, Shaw and Franklin dissolved their partnership, which had been a full-service A&E operation responsible for virtually all of Fresno's highrise projects during the late teens and early '20s. Charles Franklin, who achieved national stature during the 1940s with his young partner Ernest Kump, Jr., struggled working alone until 1935. His partner Shaw moved to Los Angeles, and Felchlin went into the gravel business. Hotchkin and Peterson ran small one-man shops and suffered serious setbacks in their careers. Neither fully recovered his previous status in the profession after the Depression. Butner struggled as well. After opening an office in Salinas, he spent much of his time on the road between there and Fresno serving his clients. His other published projects during this period included

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the Corcoran Firehouse, an unadorned suburban duplex in Fresno, a country schoolhouse in rural Fresno County, a shop building for Kamikawa Brothers in Fresno's Chinatown, and the Collegiate Gothic style Emmanuel Lutheran Church located east of the Civic Center in Fresno's Cathedral District. Twining's Lab building stands out as Butner's most significant commercial project during the period.

Although the years 1929-30 witnessed a sharp decline in construction activity in Fresno's Civic Center, Twining Labs became, nonetheless, the most publicized project within that area. Architect Butner adapted to the times and produced a well-designed but modestly scaled building for a client taking a major financial risk. Investing in a new plant during a time of tremendous economic uncertainty was indeed big news. Stylistically, the little lab building mixed formal Beaux-Arts ornamental detailing with more informal Mediterranean Revival style characteristics. The building thus adapted the axial formalities of the Classical Revival imagery that was predominant among large downtown commercial buildings, yet yielded to its Spanish Revival style neighbor the Physicians Building (1926) by reflecting aspects of the latter's bright coloration, similar red clay roofing tile, and modest building scale. Small office buildings of this general type, particularly those few that were designed in the Spanish/Mediterranean Revival idiom during the 1920s, the peak years for the style's popularity throughout the state, were rare properties in the downtown Fresno area. Most were targeted early-on by urban renewal during the 1960s. The only other building located in downtown Fresno drawn from the "Palazzo" model is the six-floor Fresno Bee Building (1922), designed by Sacramento architect Leonard Starks. Listed on the National Register, its detailing, however, is Renaissance in character rather than Mediterranean, and its scale substantially greater than Twining's humble two-story profile.

In context, the Twining Laboratories building is significant as a Depression era work of regionally important architect Charles E. Butner. It is also significant as a solid example of a small commercial office designed using a variation of the Mediterranean Revival style not otherwise in evidence in the downtown Fresno Civic Center area.

Charles E. Butner, a significant third-generation regional architect who practiced in California's central San Joaquin Valley, was born in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, on July 31, 1888. As did many aspiring American architectural students of his generation, Butner enrolled in the architecture program at the University of Pennsylvania. There he studied under the legendary Beaux-Arts architect and educator Paul Philippe Cret. While at Penn, Butner met fellow architecture student Edward Glass (1886-1954), the son of the influential California publishing family that owned the politically

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powerful FRESNO MORNING REPUBLICAN newspaper. This college friendship developed several years later into an architectural partnership that lasted from 1914 to 1921, with Glass serving as the partner in charge of engineering and Butner the partner in charge of design. Over 75 projects, including over 30 homes, numerous schools, agricultural packing plants, hospital buildings, and a small collection of commercial structures, bearing Butner's stamp have been documented from oral interviews, building records, over 200 newspaper and architectural journal articles, and a small cache of surviving tracings and blueprints. It should be noted that Butner's pre-Salinas office records, linens, and renderings, including most of the documents from the early Glass and Butner partnership, were destroyed in the 1938 Fresno floods.

Butner completed his formal studies at the University of Pennsylvania in 1911, receiving his Certificate of Proficiency in Architecture, a professional degree at that time. Remaining on the East Coast to complete his apprenticeship, Butner ventured to New York to work in association with the influential designer Grosvenor Atterbury, FAIA, and the renowned landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., who were then designing Forest Hills Gardens, a socially progressive suburban community developed by the Russell Sage Foundation, Butner's employer. According to an oral history provided by John Waterman, an early employee and later a partner of Butner's in Salinas, California, Butner also served part of his apprenticeship in the offices of McKim, Mead, and White, America's foremost classicists at the turn of the century.

In 1914, Charles Butner traveled west to join his former college classmate in Fresno to establish the partnership of Glass and Butner, Architects. Glass' social and political prominence in Fresno allowed the young firm to secure many of the most substantial residential and commercial commissions, as well as large school contracts, that were let prior to World War I. The advent of the war brought building construction virtually to a halt nationwide, and Butner joined the U.S. Army Aero Squadron, serving in France as a pilot. The boom period that followed the war's end propelled Glass and Butner to a solid position in the state's architectural community. In 1919, the firm opened an office in San Francisco. The two Fresno-based architects were subsequently honored in competition for their design proposal for a War Memorial Veterans Building that was to have been constructed in San Francisco at a cost of \$2,500,000. Clouded in an apparent controversy arising from regional architectural politics, the proposed structure was never built. Before closing their fledgling office in San Francisco, Glass and Butner did, however, complete an important delineation commission to produce comprehensive documentary drawings of historic California structures for the firm's one major Bay Area client, Mrs. William Randolph Hearst. The whereabouts of this

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suite of drawings is not known today. Edward Glass and Charles Butner were forced to dissolve their partnership when Glass' wife became ill in the early 1920s. Glass and his wife consequently moved to San Francisco. The two architects remained close friends, and again formed a partnership in 1935 for a short period during the depths of the Depression.<sup>20</sup>

During the early Depression years, Butner attempted to maintain both his original office in Fresno and a branch office in Salinas with his new partner William Stranahan. Stranahan's sudden death in 1931 prompted Butner to move permanently to the Central Coast where building activity was considerably greater. Always the dapper southern gentleman, Charles Butner quickly became a prominent civic leader in Salinas and built a thriving architectural practice in that city, Monterey, and the South Bay region. Unlike many Beaux-Arts trained architects, Butner adapted to the Modern Movement as it took hold after World War II, producing distinctive work, including his Mel's Drive-In Restaurant, a classic period piece published in ARCHITECT AND ENGINEER in 1952. Butner managed the firm until his death on June 10, 1957.

Throughout his career, Charles Butner enjoyed drawing and painting as a companion to his architecture. Red-tile roofs, white-washed adobe walls, towers, and Spanish village scenes were the images Charles Butner most often captured in his art, and were the themes that inspired the designs of many of his built works interpreted in the Spanish Colonial and Mediterranean Revival styles, among them Twining Laboratories.<sup>21</sup>

The Twining Laboratories, located at 2527 Fresno Street, is also associated with the scientific contributions of Frederick E. Twining (1874-1945), a prominent pioneer chemist in Fresno, California and the greater San Joaquin Valley.<sup>22,23</sup> Twining was born in Croton, Ohio and studied chemistry at Denison University. He attended medical school in Columbus, Ohio, after which he engaged in the pharmaceutical business before migrating to California in 1897.<sup>24</sup> Before opening his own laboratory, he worked for E. A. Cutter in Fresno along with his brother Charles Twining. Charles eventually moved to Berkeley in 1903 to help establish Cutter Laboratories there.<sup>25</sup> In 1898, F. E. Twining opened his practice as a bacteriologist, in what the FRESNO MORNING REPUBLICAN called a "secluded room on the second floor of a commercial block" on Mariposa Street.<sup>26</sup> Early in his career, Dr. Twining focused his attention on the preparation of vaccines against diseases in cattle, earning him a national reputation.<sup>27</sup> He served as a State Sanitary Inspector for five valley counties and was appointed City Bacteriologist. By 1930, the firm bearing his name had made four major moves to accommodate the growth of the enterprise, resulting in the construction that year of the Mediterranean Revival style plant it still occupies. By 1946, the Fresno Street facility

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had gone through four major building expansions and could boast of having the technical resources to conduct testing in "chemistry, physics, biology, and engineering" for its industrial clients.<sup>28</sup> The firm's slogan was "We Test Anything," and Dr. Twining was widely consulted on such diverse subjects as food and drug testing, sobriety testing, and the analysis of California brandy quality compared to imported products.<sup>29,30,31</sup> In the mid-1940s, the firm's technical library held in excess of 10,000 books and over 60,000 scientific journals, bulletins, and reports, and was said to be "probably the largest private technical (library) on the Pacific Coast."<sup>32</sup> Frederick E. Twining died on October 18, 1945, almost a year and a half after his 50th wedding anniversary, leaving his sizable estate to his wife Maude, who died in 1948.<sup>33,34,35,36</sup>

At the time of Dr. Twining's death, the lab he founded was described as "the most diversified laboratory for scientific research and testing in the United States."<sup>37</sup> Twining's son, Frederick W. Twining (1895-1976), also a chemist with vast experience in the petroleum industry, managed the business after his father's death.<sup>38,39</sup> He expanded the operation into Bakersfield, Visalia, Modesto, Stockton, and Long Beach.<sup>40</sup> Twining Laboratories continues today to be a major source for the testing of soils and materials in the central San Joaquin Valley.

As designed by architect Charles E. Butner (1888-1957), the Twining Laboratories (1930) represents a fine "example of Depression era building," in a modestly scaled and detailed Mediterranean idiom.<sup>41</sup> Although this genre was quite popular in the design of schools and residences in the Fresno area during the teens and '20s, it was not widely adopted for commercial buildings. Much of that original but small resource has been lost to urban renewal, making the Twining Laboratories a rare example of a stylistic type commonly seen in other California communities. Two buildings designed by Butner are listed on the National Register: the Fresno Republican Printery (1919) and the Physicians Building (1926).<sup>42,43,44</sup>

Subsequent additions to Twining Laboratories were designed and constructed by Fisher and McNulty General Contractors, who also built the original 1930 plant.<sup>45</sup> Revere Paul Fisher (1895-1973) and Hugh McNulty (1893-1974), both of whom were educated at Stanford University, were influential in the valley's construction industry as designers, engineers, and builders, constructing homes and commercial buildings throughout the area.<sup>46,47,48</sup>

Twining continued his association with the building until his death in 1945. Nothing of exceptional significance occurred in Twining's career between 1940 and 1945. The arbitrary date of 1940 is therefore chosen for the terminating date of significance.

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CONCLUSION

The Twining Laboratories (1930) was featured in the Valley Public Television production of VALLEY BY DESIGN, filmed as a regional follow-up to the nationally aired PBS production of AMERICA BY DESIGN in 1987. VALLEY BY DESIGN was funded with major grants from the American Institute of Architects, the San Joaquin Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, and KMTF-TV Channel 18, Fresno. In a segment of that program devoted to early 20th century architects who built in the valley -- and who had been trained under architect-educator Paul Cret or had studied in the Beaux-Arts tradition -- Twining Laboratories was included in a montage of buildings designed by such architects as Charles E. Butner, William C. Hays and Toyokichi Kurahashi, George Kelham, R. F. Felchlin Company, Charles Franklin, Raymond Shaw, H. Rafael Lake, and B. Marcus Priteca. VALLEY BY DESIGN is being used throughout the public schools and colleges in the central San Joaquin Valley for the instruction of regional and California history.<sup>49</sup>

Twining Laboratories qualifies for listing on the National Register of Historic Places with Local Significance.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

See Continuation Sheets 9-1 through 9-5.

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

**Specify repository:**

Twining Laboratories

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property .43

**UTM References**

A 

1	1
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2	5	1	2	4	0
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4	0	7	1	4	6	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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B 

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Zone Easting Northing

D 

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See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

See Continuation Sheet 10-1.

See continuation sheet

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary includes the entire city lot that has historically been associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title John Edward Powell, Architectural Historian  
organization \_\_\_\_\_ date November 28, 1989  
street & number 224 East Cambridge Avenue telephone (209) 225-6339  
city or town Fresno state CA zip code 93704



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Twining Laboratory, plant and real property situate [sic] in the City of Fresno, County of Fresno, State of California, described as follows, to-wit:

Lots 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 in Block "C" of the Town (now City) of Fresno, according to the map of the Town of Fresno, Recorded June 8, 1876, in Plat Book No. 1 at page 2, in the office of the County Recorder of the County of Fresno, State of California.

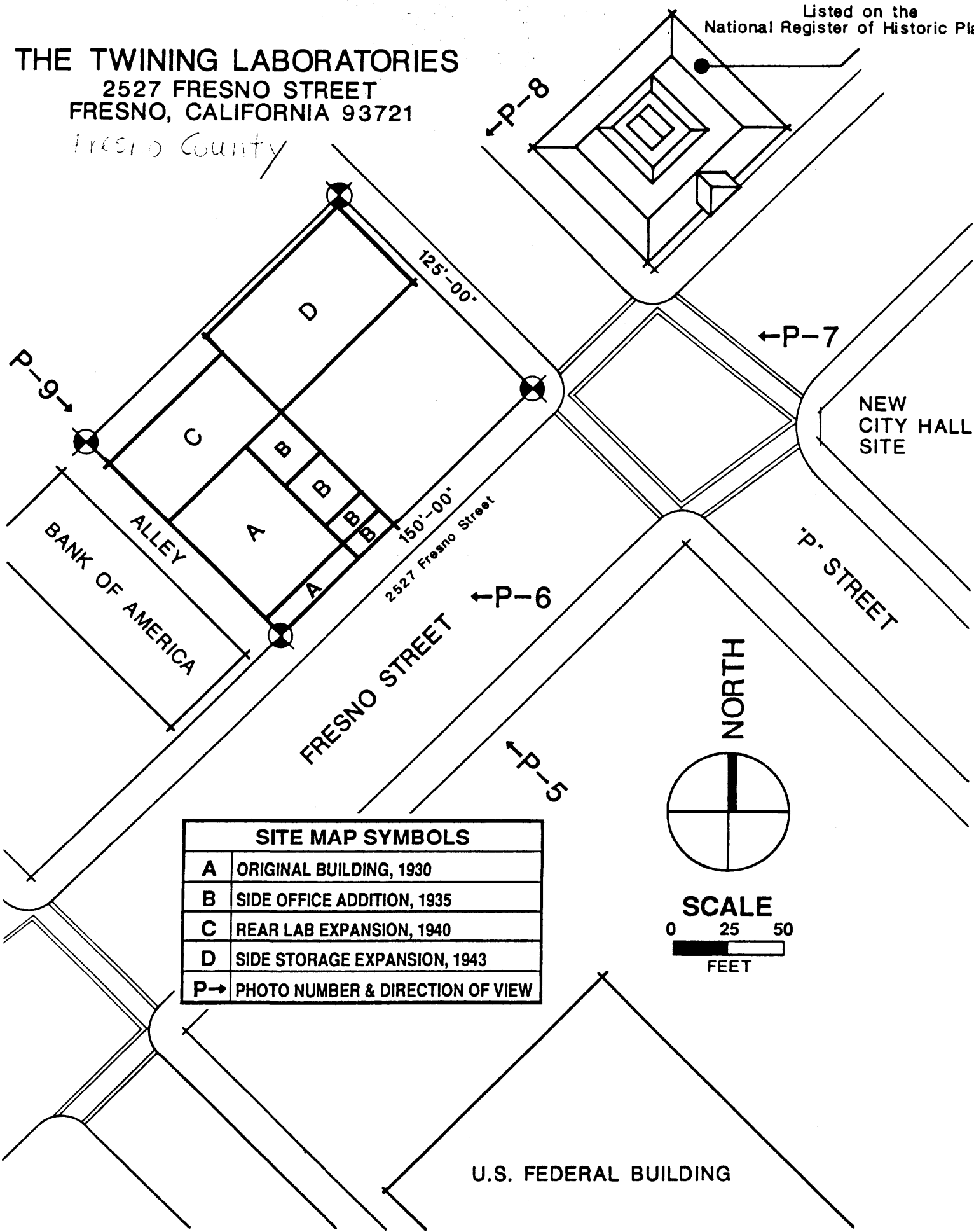
Re-recorded March 18, 1957  
Book 3899  
p. 437

# THE TWINING LABORATORIES

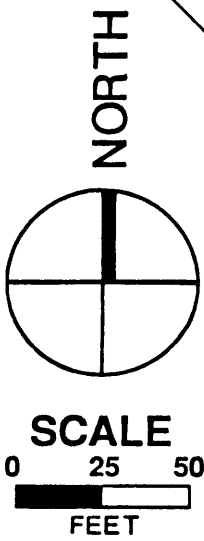
2527 FRESNO STREET  
 FRESNO, CALIFORNIA 93721

*Fresno County*

PHYSICIANS BUILDING (192  
 Listed on the  
 National Register of Historic Plac



SITE MAP SYMBOLS	
A	ORIGINAL BUILDING, 1930
B	SIDE OFFICE ADDITION, 1935
C	REAR LAB EXPANSION, 1940
D	SIDE STORAGE EXPANSION, 1943
P→	PHOTO NUMBER & DIRECTION OF VIEW



U.S. FEDERAL BUILDING