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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Hallidie Building is a steel-frame structure with glass facade and masonry side walls, having eight stories with high ceilings typical of loft buildings. The street elevation is internationally significant in its anticipation of the glass curtain wall, one of the first clear expressions of such. The frame has cantilevered floors so there are no columns at the facade, the curtain wall being supported by four columns placed behind the glass front.

The entire front is beautifully subdivided into glass panels which are balanced against fret-like cornices and stair balconies. The iron lacework cornices (at the second, third and eighth floors) join ornate balconies at the extremities masking fire escapes on each floor, and the whole is surmounted by a similarly detailed primary cornice. The intricate lacy iron ornamentation thus provided is Victorian Gothic in style and appears to be integral to the overall design despite the modernity of the basic concept.

At the ground level, beneath the lower cornice, the arched main building entrance is to the right. Also at this level, a much altered commercial space detracts from the overall majesty of the building.



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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Designed by <u>Willis</u> Polk as an investment for the University of California, the Hallidie Building was <u>dedicated</u> in <u>1918</u> to Andrew S. Hallidie, an early Regent of the University who is best known for his invention of the cable car in 1872-73.

The building's importance to San Francisco's architectural history cannot be stated too strongly. The most significant architectural innovations are, <u>first</u>, the glass curtain, a forerunner of modern architectural techniques, hung in front of a more conventional building and allowing an increase in the penetration of light; and <u>second</u>, the use of <u>Victorian Gothic</u> ironwork (once painted blue and gold) to simulate cornices and for balconies masking fire escapes, thereby imagin atively relieving an otherwise severe facade.

As an innovator in design in the Bay Area, Willis Polk was rivalled in his time only by Bernard Maybeck. Polk, who played a major role in the rebuilding of the city after the 1906 disaster and perhaps designed more buildings in that period than any other local architect, had been trained in Chicago under the renowned architect and city planner Daniel Burnham. After heading Burnham's San Francisco office for several years following the Earthquake and Fire, Polk took the office over on his own. Polk's free use of traditional forms, his comprehension of indigenous regional styles, his imaginative spirit and willingness to experiment assure him a place in San Francisco's Pantheon.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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