

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: California
COUNTY: San Francisco
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE JAN 23 1975

1. NAME

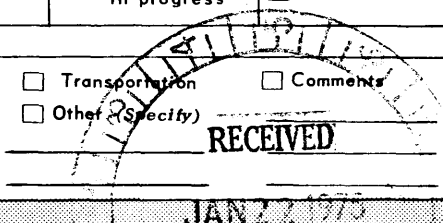
COMMON:	The City of Paris (Building)
AND/OR HISTORIC:	The City of Paris

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: 181-199 Geary Street, Southeast corner of Geary and Stockton Streets			
CITY OR TOWN: San Francisco		CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: 5th (becomes 6th in 1975)	
STATE California	CODE 06	COUNTY: San Francisco	CODE 075

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____



4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: Broadway-Hale, Edwin W. Carter, Chairman of the Board		NATIONAL REGISTER RECEIVED JAN 22 1975	STATE: California
STREET AND NUMBER: 600 Spring Street			
CITY OR TOWN: Los Angeles	STATE: California, 94014		

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Recorders Office--City Hall			
STREET AND NUMBER: Polk at McAllister			
CITY OR TOWN: San Francisco	STATE: California	CODE 06	COUNTY: San Francisco

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board Case Report (Final)			
DATE OF SURVEY: June 5, 1974 <input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local			
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: San Francisco City Hall			
STREET AND NUMBER: Polk at McAllister			
CITY OR TOWN: San Francisco	STATE: California	CODE 06	ENTRY NUMBER DATE

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	See below		<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The City of Paris Building is six stories with a full basement and a four-story high interior central rotunda. It is exactly square with frontages of 137.5 feet (the dimensions of the original 50 vara lot) on Geary Street and Stockton Street, and it is oriented facing the southeast corner of Union Square.

The exterior of the building is the original as built in 1896, with the exception of the windows on the bottom two floors, that are finely carved art nouveau casements added after the 1906 earthquake. The exterior design represents an interesting early effort to utilize the new Neoclassical style at a time when buildings were still largely Victorian. This was accomplished by articulating the exterior into a series of panels, the lower panels enclosing the first and second floor windows described above. The upper panels encompass the remaining four floors by which pairs of windows are defined in two-story intervals by pairs of columns, the lower columns Ionic and the upper columns Corinthian. The upper and lower windows of each pair are separated from each other by a richly detailed frieze which is repeated in variation in the architrave between upper and lower pilasters and repeated again above the sixth floor in a bold continuous horizontal band.

All friezes contrast with the remainder of the structure producing a composition of great simplicity and interesting variety. All original windows are double hung and are rectangular, with the exception of the top row which differs from the others by being arched; the only noticeable concession to prevailing Victorian fashions.

Street level entrances, centered on the Geary Street side and offset on the Stockton Street side are rendered in ornately carved Sierra granite. The Geary Street entrance is the most impressive, consisting of an elongated arch spanning the entrance doorway with symmetrical narrow display panels with circular openings above. Detail working is of high quality typical of the time with delicately carved flowing ornamentation in late French Renaissance idiom contrasting with simple engaged Ionic columns of exaggerated strength.

The original Stockton Street entrance was below an existing projecting third story balcony which appears to have been to a lobby running the full depth of the building to the internal stairs and serving an internal entrance to the City of Paris on the left and elevators on the right. This entrance has subsequently been blocked but interior columns matching the exterior ones, a mezzanine with ornate cast iron railings, and fine French Renaissance detailing indicate that this was once a grand and monumental lobby. Lobby design appears to have been revised after the earthquake removing whatever internal partitions separated it from the City of Paris interior. The internal columns appear to be the original 1896 design or are deliberate attempts to copy the original exterior flanking columns after the quake.

The present Stockton Street entrance is relocated directly to the left of the original and has been recessed approximately six feet from the building

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7. Description (continued)

face. The presence of hinge mortises at the original building face at this opening indicates that the 1896 City of Paris probably had a street entrance adjacent to the Spring Valley lobby, as well as the interior lobby entrance. A matching opening on the right of the lobby entrance (now blocked) may have been originally a small street level store (i.e., cigar or flowers). This entrance assembly contrasts with the Geary Street entrance by not having the French carved arch and circular Oiel de Boef openings (which must have been requested specifically by the Verdiers). No evidence of alteration to the stonework on the Stockton Street entrance is visible, so the entrance must originally have derived character from an ornate iron and glass fenestration expressing the importance of the lobby space within which has subsequently been removed.

The exterior is in perfect condition and is complete, except for a projecting soffit removed some time ago; shows no effects of the 1906 earthquake. One of the major features of the exterior of the building is a miniature copy of the Eiffel Tower about four stories tall that sits atop the building at the Geary-Stockton corner and incidentally is a source of pride for the City of San Francisco's small but prominent French community.

The interior of the City of Paris is by far the building's most dramatic feature. It has a four-story high elliptical rotunda (thought to be the only one of its kind in existence) approximately 40 feet wide by 70 feet long by 80 feet high topped with an ovoid shaped stained and leaded glass dome of approximately the same dimensions. The rotunda is flanked by pairs of four columns arranged in horizontal semi-circular arcs around each side of the ellipse, approximately at fifth points, so that the space between the center and the ends of the arcs align with the Stockton-Geary Streets entrances respectively.

Each floor of the rotunda is treated distinctly; the first floor contains a marble ellipse of contrasting grays, defining the base of the rotunda. The second floor is supported on heavy composite columns, the projecting side containing an elaborate rosette, and the opposing sides bear the faces of caryatides linked with the rosettes by festoons of laurel leaves.

The third and fourth floors are supported jointly by a fluted flat column of Corinthian order, the opposing sides of which are bracketed with triglyphs at the intersection with each floor. These columns support a concave cantilevered frieze embellished with gold festoons that alter patterns in rhythm with both the supporting columns and the balustrade it in turn supports. This composition in effect establishes and completes the oval shape of the rotunda.

The fourth and top floor that supports the dome is designed in contradiction to the elegance of the floors below. Austere doric columns support a curved cornice set back from the balcony and are completely understated in order to

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7. Description (continued)

not conflict with the ornate glass dome. At the north and south ends of the rotunda the cornice is suddenly squared off and flares upward, forming a scrolled pediment bearing symmetrical pairs of garlands and cornucopias. At the juncture of the two scrolls appears a head of Neptune that sets the theme for the oval skylight. From the heads radiate shafts of yellow light superimposed over intertwining bands of vegetable designs and strapwork in bolder yellow colors against a background of soft white, all in leaded glass. These designs converge upward terminating in an oval drum of the same glass in which a stylized ship, symbolic of the "Ville de Paris" first site of the store, sails against a background of fleur-de-lis over a swirling sea bearing the City of Paris' motto "battered, but never sinking".

Attention should be called to the ornate wrought iron balustrades, especially that of the second level, which follows the undulations of the balcony while maintaining its own swirling "Greek wave" pattern in great complexity--an amazing feat of design and craftsmanship.

The soffit of each balcony contains continuous series of holes at six-inch intervals woven into a repetitive raised fretwork. These holes originally contained light bulbs and the effect of these layers of light defining and highlighting the surfaces of gold leaf and soft colors must have been impressive.

The only significant alteration made to the interior has been to paint out the soft colors and gold leafwork; but fortunately some still remains at the top level of the rotunda. This remodeling, undertaken by the building's last tenant, does not detract from what may well be the finest Neoclassical interior of a commercial building in America.



8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian; | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The City of Paris Building is one of the few buildings in San Francisco's downtown business district to survive the earthquake and fire of 1906. The present establishment still bears the anglicized name of the ship on which in San Francisco's harbor, its proprietors, the Verdiers, opened their French imported dry goods store 125 years ago next year.

The building was built in 1896 for the Spring Valley Water Company as the company's headquarters and as income property. The Verdiers were the building's first tenants, occupying the first two floors and probably having considerable influence in the building's design. The architect was Clinton Day, several of whose post-earthquake works of high quality still remain in the downtown area. This may be his only surviving pre-earthquake building in San Francisco. Its style is representative of two major trends in architecture, the late Victorian era (see description) ending in 1900, and the Neoclassic or Beaux-Arts era, inspired by the Chicago World's Fair of 1893, and ending with the Depression. Its construction date would indicate that its design was novel and progressive for its time. Though much Neoclassic commercial architecture built prior to 1900 may be seen in the Eastern United States, surviving examples in the Far West are rare.

Though the building survived the earthquake and fire of 1906, because of internal damage its interior was demolished leaving its two street facades intact. The Verdiers took advantage of this opportunity to occupy the entire building and commissioned John Bakewell, Arthur Brown and Louis Bourgeois, all three of which had graduated from the Ecole de Beaux-Arts in Paris, to act as their consultants for the remodeling. (This team of architects and designers later became San Francisco's greatest Neoclassic architects, whose works include the San Francisco City Hall, War Memorial Opera House, and most of the other major buildings of the Civic Center Complex.) They made few modifications to the exterior, adding only carved casement windows to the two lower floors; but internally they produced the great elliptical rotunda, thought to be the only one of its type in existence. The design of the rotunda is subdued, yet elegant, and occasionally even playful--a quality lacking from their later public commissions. It even ingeniously incorporates the store's nautical origin into its decoration (see description).

More than any other commercial building in San Francisco's downtown district (even more than San Francisco's famed Palace Hotel) the City of Paris rotunda represents architecturally the vigor, optimism and bold elegance

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Here Today--Junior League of San Francisco, Inc.
 Guide to Bay Area Architecture--American Institute of Architects
 San Francisco Chronicle--1909 Thurs., July 22, 1909, Page 2
 Notre Centenaire--J. E. Nainne Bietry-Salinger 1949 (Published by the French Community)

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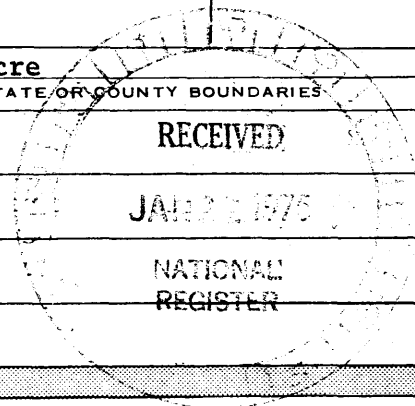
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	0 . .	0 . .		37	47	14
NE	0 . .	0 . .		122	24	20
SE	0 . .	0 . .				
SW	0 . .	0 . .				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **.434 acre**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



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11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: **John Weld Eliassen, Architect & Consultant**

ORGANIZATION: **Director, California Heritage Council** DATE: **Oct. 15, 1974**

STREET AND NUMBER: **623 E Street**

CITY OR TOWN: **Petaluma** STATE: **California** CODE: **06**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: [Signature]
 Title: **State Historic Preservation Officer**

Date: **JAN 14 1975**

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

[Signature]
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 1/23/75

ATTEST:
[Signature]
 Keeper of The National Register

Date: 1-22-75

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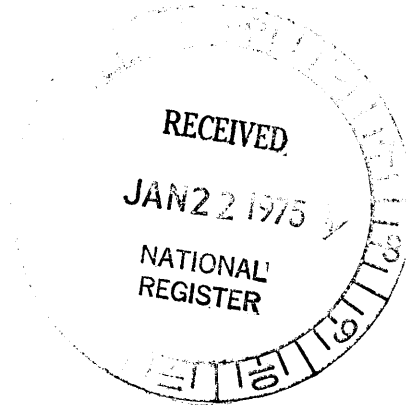
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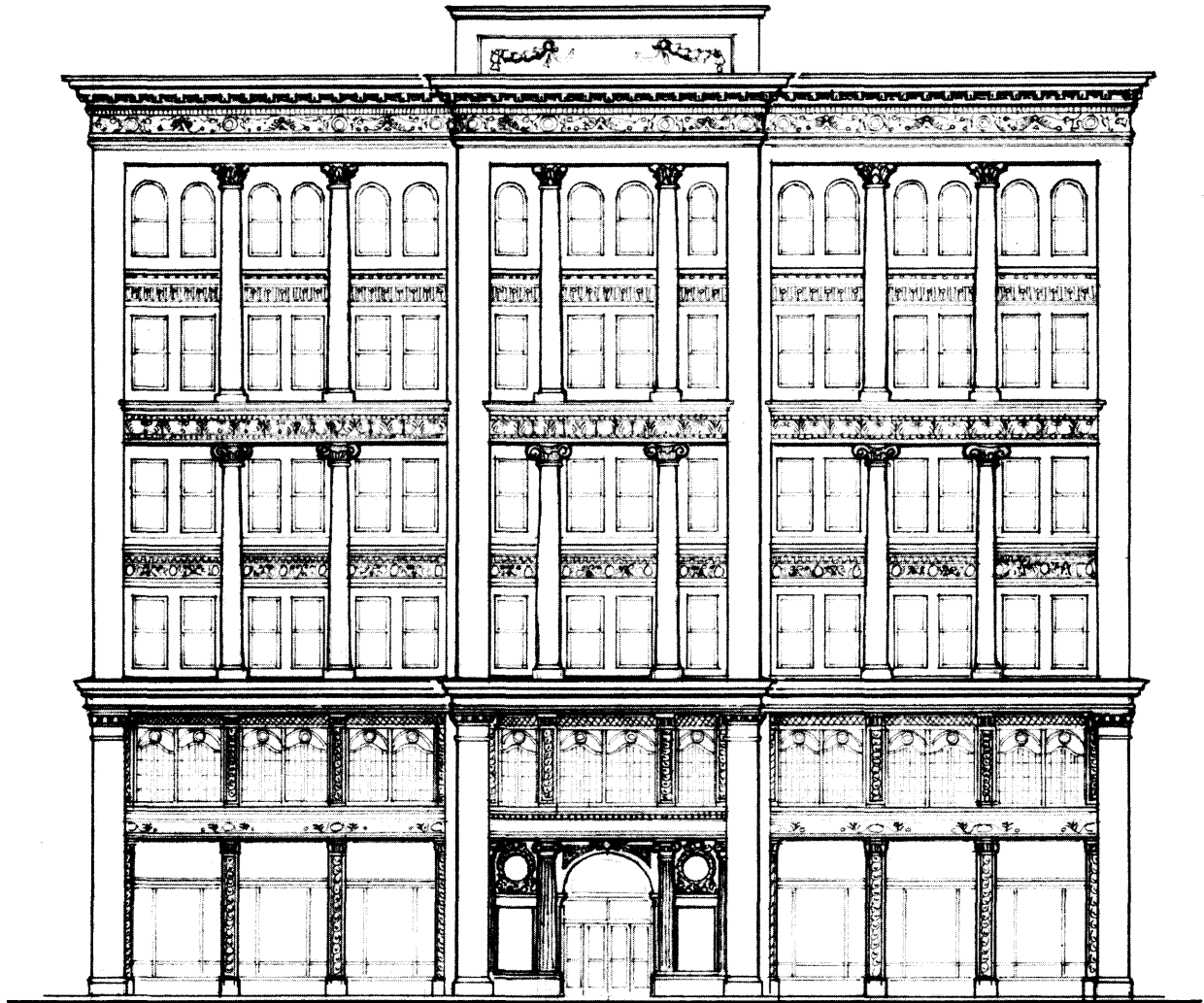
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8. Significance (continued)

with which San Francisco rebuilt itself following the earthquake and fire of 1906. At least four generations of San Franciscans hold the sight of a sixty-foot Christmas tree under the gigantic lead glass dome as one of their best memories; in fact the City of Paris' motto set in the uppermost glass panel of the rotunda, "battered but unsinking" remains the undeniable sentiment of San Francisco itself.





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CITY OF PARIS BUILDING

