

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic TRACY CITY HALL AND JAIL

and/or common Old Tracy Jail/VFW Building

2. Location

street & number 25 West Seventh Street not for publication

city, town Tracy vicinity of congressional district 14

state California code 06 county San Joaquin code 077

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: storage

4. Owner of Property

name San Joaquin County

street & number San Joaquin County Courthouse, 222 East Weber

city, town Stockton vicinity of state California

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Deeds, Book A, Volume 71, Page 634
San Joaquin County Courthouse

street & number 222 East Weber

city, town Stockton state California

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title City of Tracy Architecture
and Historic Survey

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date January 1978 federal state county local

depository for survey records California Office of Historic Preservation, P. O. Box 2390

city, town Sacramento state California 95811

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Constructed of brick, the old Tracy City Hall and Jail is a one-story rectangular building 24 x 43 feet in dimension. A 25-foot false truncated gable with decorative pilasters and cornice embellishes the facade. Further exterior detailing appears in the round-arched front window and door, each with fanlight. The door itself is of coffered design. Above the windows on each side a geometric design is detailed within the brickwork. These windows apparently once were each covered by iron shutters hinged into the brickwork. Remaining only on the building's west side, these shutters are of a type most commonly found on structures of an earlier period, usually ca. 1850's. At the rear of the jail, smaller windows with protective bars service the two cells. These are also shuttered. Originally the brickwork was left unpainted. At some later date a white coating was added; today this has in part weathered away.



On the interior, a simple room arrangement exists. A small entry hall opens onto the body of the building. At the rear, two jail cells occupy the remainder of the space with a small dividing area between them. No outstanding interior decoration exists.

The rear section of the building has been altered somewhat by the conversion of the central window to a door, while one of the jail cells has been modified for use as a small kitchen. A lean-to metal shed in the rear, as well as a metal sign on the facade, have been recently attached by the VFW. These are the only intrusions to the original structure.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1899-1900 (constructed) **Builder/Architect** Charles Beasley and Son, Architects
J. F. Hoerl, Builder

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The old Tracy city hall and jail is significant for its local historical and architectural values. Built after a fire destroyed the earlier town hall, the 1899-1900 building was the center of local government during the town's early years. Founded in 1878, Tracy developed rapidly as a railroad center, and by the turn of the century was becoming the center of a rich agricultural area. The new city hall served as the seat of local government during these formative years. The building was designed by an important local architectural firm, which produced a number of major works in the area. It is an interesting interpretation of academic architectural styling "appropriate" for a turn-of-the-century civic structure; its elements convey effectively a sense of dignity in a small scale building. The utilization of an Italian Renaissance model, scaled appropriately for its location and use as the local community's major public building, reflects the importance of published architectural source material in the late 19th century. The old city hall and jail has been an important local visual landmark throughout its history, and is one of only 14 structures which received a rating of "Exceptional" in the recently completed Tracy historical resources inventory.

San Joaquin County commissioned the Tracy City Hall and Jail in November-December 1899 following the destruction of that city's former jail by fire in late August. Located at 25 West Seventh Street, the structure was designed by Charles and William Beasley. A prominent architectural firm practicing in Stockton, California, Beasley and Son were responsible for numerous business, governmental, and residential buildings in Stockton throughout ca. 1870-1906, and had been awarded the Tracy project after open bidding. J. F. Hoerl received the builder's contract. Begun in late 1899, the jail was officially completed in March 1900. Although no longer extant, a painted sign originally occupied the space between the gable pilasters announcing: "Town Hall and Jail. Erected A. D. 1900." Initially functioning both as a city hall and jail, the building later became solely a city hall. In 1940, the Tracy Veterans of Foreign Wars rented the building, utilizing it first as a meeting hall and then as a storage facility.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 0.04

Quadrangle name Tracy, California

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	0	6	3	8	7	5	0	4	1	7	7	4	6	6
Zone		Easting					Northing							

B

Zone		Easting					Northing						

C

Zone		Easting					Northing						

D

Zone		Easting					Northing						

E

Zone		Easting					Northing						

F

Zone		Easting					Northing						

G

Zone		Easting					Northing						

H

Zone		Easting					Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification

Property is located on its original site, a rectangular city lot 27' x 65' at 25 West Seventh Street in the city of Tracy, San Joaquin County, California. Lot fronts on Seventh Street within block bounded by C Street, Seventh Street, Central, and Alley, as shown on attached Assessor's plat map.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state _____ code _____ county _____ code _____

state _____ code _____ county _____ code _____

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dr. Karen J. Weitze, Architectural Historian

organization State Office of Historic Preservation date _____

street & number P. O. Box 2390 telephone (916) 445-8006

city or town Sacramento state California - 95811

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Karen M. Weitze

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 7/12/1978

For HCERS use only

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

Carol Skelly date 10-18-79
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: [Signature] date 10-16-79
Chief of Registration

FOR HCRS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	OCT 03 1979
DATE ENTERED	OCT. 18 1979

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

- Beasley, Charles, obituary, Stockton Record, September 19, 1913.
- "Beasley and Beasley," Stockton Mail, December 14, 1904
- Fergusson, James. A History of the Modern Styles of Architecture, Second Edition, London, 1874.
- Guppy, Henry, M. A. and Vine, Guthrie, M.A., A Classified Catalog of the Works on Architecture and the Allied Arts in the Principle Libraries of Manchester and Salford, Manchester, London, 1909.
- Pinkham, George, A History of San Joaquin County, California, Los Angeles, 1923.
- Pinkham, George, A History of Stockton, San Francisco, 1880.
- San Joaquin County, Board of Supervisors, Record Book N, 1899.
San Joaquin County Courthouse, Stockton, California.
- San Joaquin County, Board of Supervisors, Record Book O, 1900.
San Joaquin County Courthouse, Stockton, California.
- Stockton Agricultural Pavilion, photo with information, Pioneer Museum, Stockton, California.
- Stockton City Directory, 1873-1874-1910.
- Stockton Rural Cemetery, phone call of April 28, 1978. Regarding the family plot held by the Beasleys.
- Thompson and West, A History of San Joaquin County, California - 1879, Reprint, Berkeley, 1968.
- Tracy Jail, Stockton Mail, November 8, 1899.
- Tracy Jail, Stockton Mail, November 9, 1899.
- Tracy Jail, Stockton Mail, December 9, 1899.

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

Tracy Jail, Stockton Mail, December 27, 1899.

Tracy Jail, Stockton Mail, December 28, 1899.

Tracy Jail, Photograph, held by the Tracy Press, undated: pre-1910

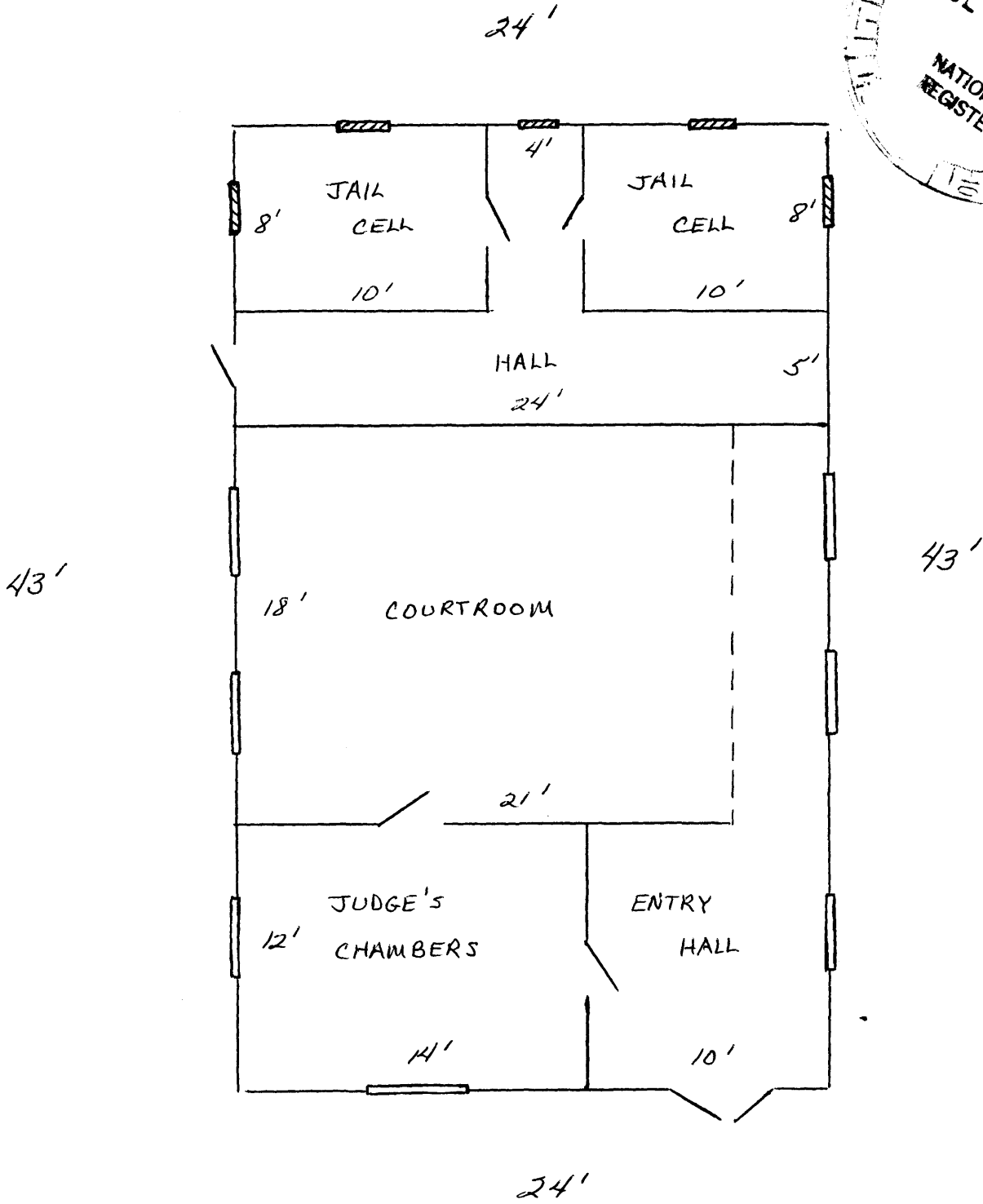
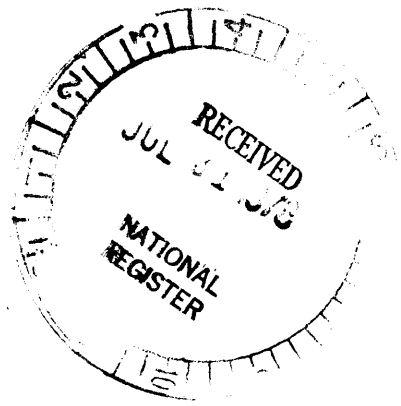


Fig. 3.

Tracy City Hall and Jail,
K. Weitze, Interpretive ground plan taken from
textual description, Stockton Mail, December 28, 1899.

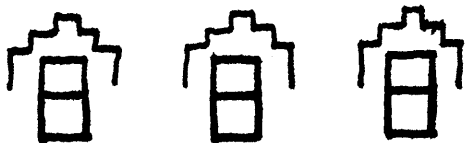
Architectural Analysis of the Tracy City Hall and Jail
by
Dr. Karen J. Weitze, Architectural Historian

Beasley and Son's Tracy Jail is an excellent example of a particular method of architectural practice in eighteenth and nineteenth century America. Although the jail was not designed until 1899, it was executed by a firm that began practice in the 1870's. At that time, Stockton, as the focal point of San Joaquin County, was still very much a part of the frontier and as such was an urban settlement seeking sophistication. Like other architects well removed from centers of population, Charles Beasley apparently relied upon a set of architectural volumes for inspiration and details of design. In this way, a breadth of world monuments could be reinterpreted for the Stockton community. At times only certain architectural details would manifest themselves--for instance, the Greek cross plan and Oriental decoration utilized by Beasley in the Agricultural Pavilion of 1887-1888. In other cases, however, a more nearly imitative method would be employed. Poignantly illuminating the latter technique, the Tracy Jail is taken with little modification from the facade of San Francesco di Rimini by the Renaissance architect Alberti.

San Francesco de Rimini, a fifteenth century church located near Venice in northern Italy, was not commonly illustrated in the late nineteenth century, and it is thus at first surprising to find it appearing in 1899 Tracy. Apparently, Beasley and Son based their design on an etching of Alberti's San Francesco (Fig. 1-2) published in James Fergusson's A History of the Modern Styles of Architecture, London, 1874. Well circulated, and often republished, Fergusson's compendium of architectural history filled four large volumes and contained numerous etchings of elevations and plans, including that of San Francesco di Rimini. The crystalline, simplified appearance of many famous monuments in unshaded, line drawing form offered architects an unusual tool for design. As often times happened in architectural prints from this period, however, simplification of a three-dimensional form to a two dimensional line illustration introduced awkward passages. Numerous particular details of San Francesco di Rimini are carried over from Fergusson's print to the exterior treatment of the Jail. In attempting to be sensitive to the design, Beasley reproduced both correct and incorrect details present in the Fergusson print.

The most prominent parallel between Beasley and Beasley's design for the Tracy Jail published in the Stockton Mail of December 28, 1899 and the etching of Alberti's San Francesco di Rimini published in Fergusson's History of the Modern Styles of Architecture is the chosen angle of perspective. In each case the buildings are shown in a perspective view illuminating the facade and right side of the structures. It would have been a most unusual coincidence for Beasley and Son to have produced an original design with this identical feature. Furthermore, in Fergusson's design the round arch over the door in San Francesco has been rendered as contiguous to the entablature, when in fact the arch is a slight measure removed on the actual facade of the church. Beasley also rendered the arches over

over both door and window as contiguous, apparently modeling these after the center arch shown in Fergusson's print. Here an incorrect detail that resulted from Fergusson's transference of reality to etching has been copied and multiplied. Seemingly a small detail, the abutment of arch and entablature is extremely awkward and is a tell-tale clue to Beasley's methodology. Other details give more support to the thesis that Fergusson's volumes were the source of Beasley's design. Beasley has maintained the truncated gable, here "finishing it off" by modifying the angle and completing the cornice; he has also retained the two pilasters and detailing of the entablature. The rectangular space between the pilasters has again been "finished off" to remove the ruined appearance of the model. (Alberti's church was never finished.) Beasley has also attempted to maintain the motif of side arches through the decorative device of geometric brickwork over each of the main's windows.



This type of vernacular translation was common; it is also precisely the kind of detail that should be present. Finally the appearance of coffered door, raised foundation and fanlights also bespeak

Beasley's use of Fergusson. (The fanlights undoubtedly have been utilized as the appropriate delineation of the coffering under the arch of the main doorway in Fergusson's print.)

The one striking difference between Beasley's and Fergusson's rendering of San Francesco di Rimini is the facade. Beasley has changed the triple arch to a double one, thus destroying the originally symmetric design. This change however is fully explained through an examination of the projected floor plan published textually by the Stockton Mail of December 28, 1899. At the time the exterior design was illustrated in the Mail showing one window and one door asymmetrically placed, the interior was to have an entryway, a judge's chamber, a courtroom, a separating hall and two jail cells. From dimensions given in the Mail only one room arrangement is possible (Fig.3). This clearly demonstrates the need to render the facade as it is, with one door and one window aligned with the judge's chamber and the entryway. Sometime between late December and the building's completion in March, a decision was made to simplify the interior to include only an entryway, a courtroom and jail cells. Evidently the exterior design was not changed, however, creating the lack of correlation between the built exterior and interior.

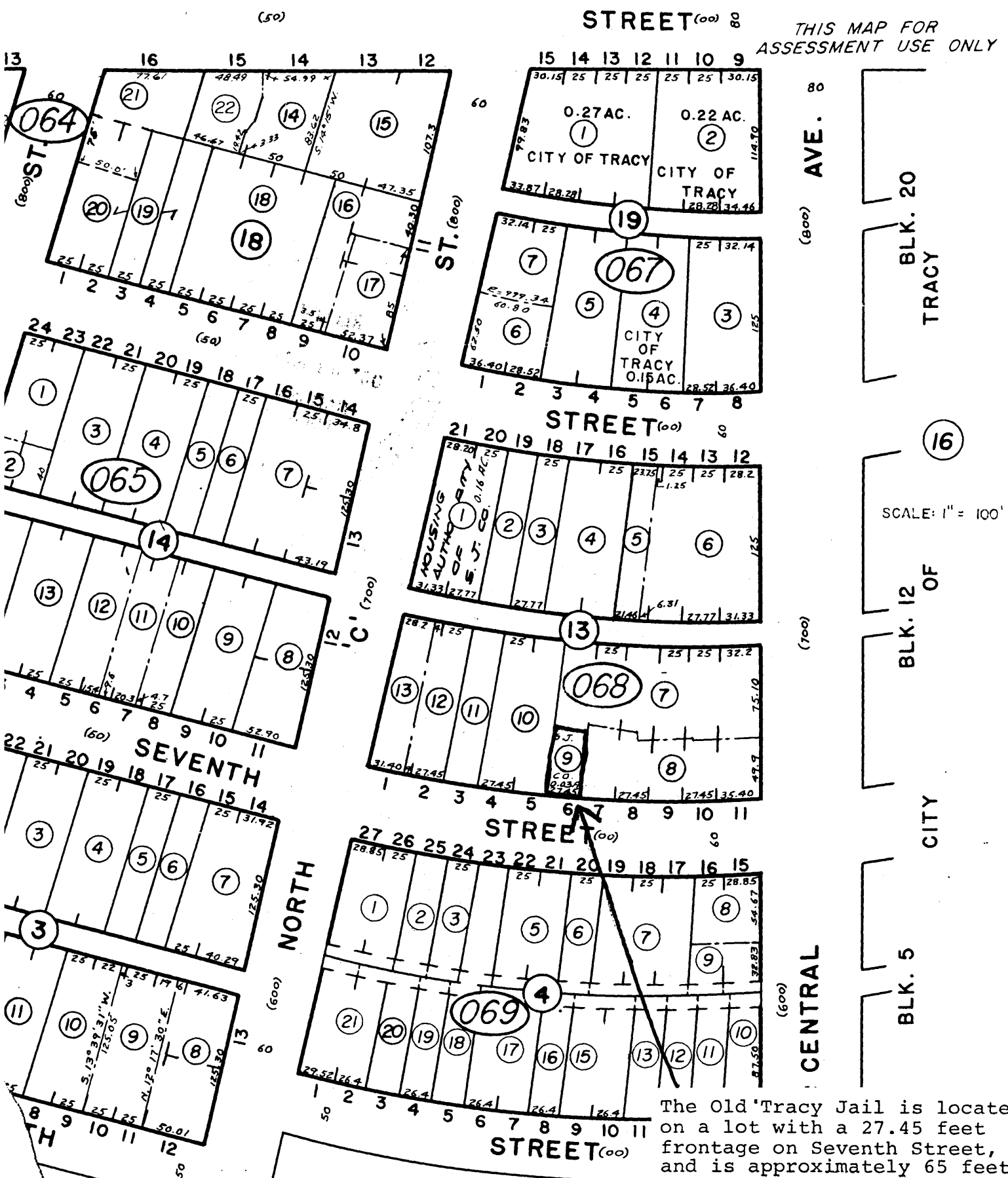
The Tracy Jail by Beasley and Beasley represents a rare instance in which an actual building clearly demonstrates how the architect transcribed a design from a volume of architectural history to reality. It also raises more significant questions for interpretation. Why would Charles Beasley have chosen this particular building to imitate? Here, until more is known about Charles Beasley and Son's work, one can only speculate. Nonetheless, a pattern is tentatively emerging. Beasley and Beasley worked in an area of California whose population was largely composed of immigrants. (Charles himself was from Missouri.) It appears as if Beasley used the Fergusson volumes, his imagination and his growing expertise to design buildings that would please his clientele and that would fit with the surrounding built fabric as well.

Charles Beasley's Agricultural Pavilion of 1887-1888 in Stockton incorporated Oriental details into the exterior design; interestingly

enough, the pavilion was located adjacent to Stockton's Chinatown district, while Fergusson's volumes also included one entirely devoted to Oriental architecture. This particular accord between an academic methodology and environmental design surfaced again in the later work of Beasley and Beasley. Thoroughly established in Stockton by 1904, the firm left for San Francisco in 1906 to practice there. Following the 1906 earthquake and fire in the Bay City, Beasley and Son were responsible for the rebuilding of San Francisco's Chinatown.

In another vein, Beasley and Son appear to have been responsive to the Italian population in San Joaquin County. This segment, too, was a significant one. Thompson and West noted in their History of San Joaquin County of 1879 that the "Compagna Italiana de Bersaliera" was a prominent society in Stockton, grouping it with the "Irish American Benevolent Association" and the "Stockton Turn-Verein." In 1916, Calestini's Guida generale italiana della contea di San Joaquin, an Italian commercial and residential directory, was published in Stockton. Of some size, this directory must indicate a settled population of Italian immigrants that had grown over the preceding decades. Beasley and Son designed the Tivoli Theater and Cafe in 1899, the Tracy Jail after Alberti's San Francesco in 1899, and a business building in 1900 that appeared to be responsive to the Italian population. Possibly Charles Beasley's choice of Alberti's design for the Tracy Jail was directly motivated by a consideration of the growing prominence of the Italian Canale family living in Tracy and Banta at the turn of the century.

This technique of community planning is certainly a fascinating one, one that illustrates both conservative and progressive trends in the work of Charles and William Beasley; the study of more designs by this firm will undoubtedly prove enlightening. We know very little about the "average" architect in nineteenth and twentieth century California. Here an architectural firm appears to have relied on copyism/revivalism in its most conservative strain and yet simultaneously to have responded sensitively to the cultural differences present in the county. As a statement of both architectural and cultural history, then the Tracy Jail of 1899 by Charles Beasley and Son is a vivid representation of California's uniquely cosmopolitan growth and maturation.



THIS MAP FOR ASSESSMENT USE ONLY

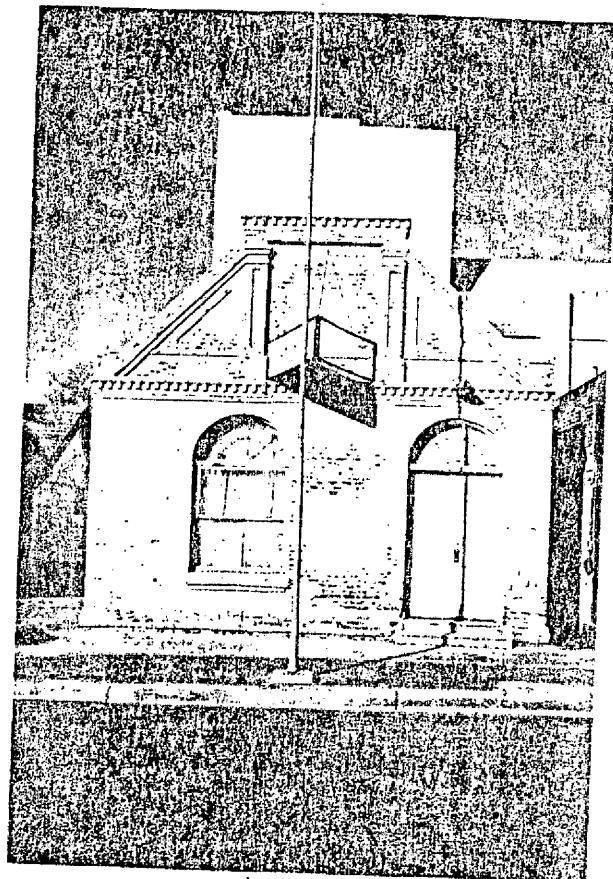
SCALE: 1" = 100'

The Old Tracy Jail is located on a lot with a 27.45 feet frontage on Seventh Street, and is approximately 65 feet deep. The building itself basically covers the entire lot.

TRACY

Regarding: Charles Beasley and Son,
Tracy Jail, 25 West Seventh St.,
Tracy, 1900.

*San Joaquin Co. Jail & Tracy City Hall
25 West Seventh St.*



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4/11