

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received JAN 23 1986

date entered FEB 20 1986

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

1. Name

historic Dohrmann Building

and/or common Dohrmann Building

2. Location

street & number 325 S. First Street

N/A not for publication

city, town San Jose

N/A vicinity of

state California

code 06

county Santa Clara

code 085

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name GCB Associates c/o The Firm of Bonnie L. Bamberg

street & number 247 N. Third Street, Suite 200

city, town San Jose

N/A vicinity of

state California 94133

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Santa Clara County Building

street & number 70 W. Hedding Street

city, town San Jose

state California

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic Preservation Survey,
San Jose, 1980

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1980

federal state county local

depository for survey records San Jose Historical Museum

city, town San Jose

state California

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date <u> N/A </u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Dohrmann Building is a diminished scale commercial design categorized as an urban loft. The four story facade is clad in terra cotta and decorated with elements of Spanish colonial and classical revival styles. The almost square facade is composed of three horizontal blocks that are defined by fenestration changes and modifications in the ornament applied to the structural frame. Constructed in 1926, a retained continuity exists between the remaining 1920's buildings on this block of South First St. The loss of the original ground floor was the only alteration and that has been restored following the original design.

An independent structure, the Dohrmann Building was constructed to the parcel line with undetectable separation from its neighbor to the north. The same was true to the south, however, that structure has been demolished. The urban siting dictated three unfinished walls with the ornamented prime architectural facade on the front. The building is 153.3 feet deep by 54 feet wide and is four stories over a full basement.

The facade defines the building's architecture and is, therefore, of foremost interest. Divided horizontally by the tripartite of the classic revivals, the vertical composition is divided into three equal bays. A transition style in the commercial category, the urban loft retains classical elements, however, the fenestration, large openings, is the predominant feature. The three classic divisions are incorporated in the Dohrmann facade with the reduced building height occurring in the center horizontal block. Instead of six to eight floors in the center block, as are normally found in buildings of this style, the Dohrmann Building has only two.

The street level of an urban loft is devoted to storefronts that contain a maximum of window display area. The Dohrmann Building presents a frame of black polished marble to distinguish the retail functions and entrance to the building. This twelve inch frame is broken only at the base for the entrance doors. Within the marble frame the storefront has a recessed central entry.

Above the first floor the architectural material changes to terra cotta, glazed with a slightly pink cast reminiscent of Mediterranean marble or granite. The two stories in the center of this composition are set out with full height pilasters. Designed to give the appearance of structural piers, these are paired at the side in classic tradition while the two inside are single. All are decorated with a modified Corinthian-style capital and an urn and foilage motif adorning the shaft immediately above the base and below the capital. Between the second and third floors, a terra-cotta band is divided into projecting rectangles (spandrels) in width corresponding to the windows above and below. The bays contain three widths of large pane wood frame windows that pivot to open. A fixed glazed smaller window is above.

The third and fourth floors are separated by a wide plain band with moulding courses at the top. The band acts as a frieze sitting atop the two story pilasters.

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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1926 **Builder/Architect** Ashley & Evers

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Dohrmann Building, located at 325 South First Street is an important element in the architectural heritage of San Jose, as it is one of three remaining terra-cotta clad, commercial building in the downtown that displays its original design.

It is the only such building to portray integrity in the retail storefront rehabilitated as well as the terra cotta upper floors. Constructed in 1926, the refined revival design depicts the scale of development, transition in style, and use of materials that represented the development mode during this period. Developed by T.S. Montgomery, this building was a key structure in his plan to make San Jose "the best city between Los Angeles and San Francisco." The significance is attributed to he architecture, building materials, a dn the association with T.S. Montgomery, a regionally important personage. This building is City of San Jose Landmark #24, one of only three city landmarks dating from the 1920's in San Jose.

To achieve the quality of building and business necessary to accomplish his plan, T.S. Montgomery sought out experienced architects and established businesses in San Francisco. The Dohrmann Building is a statement to the talents of architects Ashley and Evers, known for their work in multi-use (urban loft) designs in the Market Street area, and A.B.C. Dohrmann, a successful businessman in several fields, including luxury retail and hotel supply.

Achitecturally unique in San Jose, the building is noteworthy for its design, materials, and because it is a chronicle of the scale of development in the city. The urban loft became popular in metropolitan areas where warehousing was accommodated in the upper floors of mid-rise buildings while retail and other more intense commercial activities occupied the prime space of the lower floors. This four story adaptation retained the elements and horizontal blocking of the taller buildings designed by Ashley and Evers for San Francisco. The retail space at street level was defined with a frame of imported marble, black with w white veins and large display windows. The storefront with slanted central entrance provided large areas for display. The terra-cotta sheathing on the facade replicates polished granite, giving the appearance of columns, engaged columns, and at the fourth floor columnettes, all with ornately detailed capitals. The cornice is articulated with a stylish Spanish tile psuedo roof line. The element appears to be a favorite of T.S. Montgomery as this Spanish influence is incorporated in most of his buildings. The architectural presentation is a refined classic revival interpretation, reduced in scale, of the urban loft commercial style. The building was well suited to its original function, communicating quality of design and materials.

The building successfully conveyed the atmosphere of quality necessary for the very expensive luxury retail sales of Dohrmann Company. Beyond the entrance to

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property .174

Quadrangle name San Jose, West

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 110 591871010 41131191910
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification Located 100 ft. south of the intersection of E. San Carlos and S. First Street, the property is #58 on page 29 of Book 264 as shown in the Appraiser's Maps, County of Santa Clara. The property is a single parcel. Boundaries encompass the building and its historic lot.

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

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Bonnie L. Bamburg

organization The Firm of Bonnie L. Bamburg

date April 8, 1985

street & number 247 N. Third Street, Suite 200

telephone (408) 971-1421

city or town San Jose

state California 95113

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

 national state X 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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Kathryn Guattieri

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 1-10-86

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

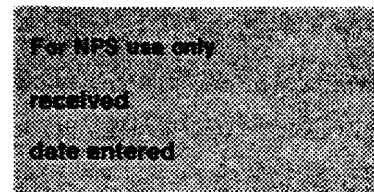
J. Alvarez Byrne
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:
Chief of Registration

2/20/86

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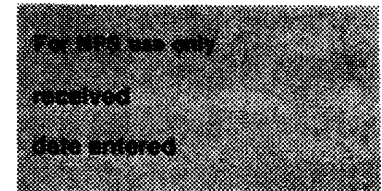
2

Representation in Existing Surveys (Continued)

City Landmark Number 24 1984
City of San Jose x Local
City Planning Department
San Jose City Hall
San Jose, California

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The fourth floor loft, maintains the vertical bays with single story pilasters. These separate double casement in French style windows. The pilasters are paired above the single two-story pilasters and occur single in each division between, except at the corners where there is a substantial structural effect created by projecting the pilaster from what appears to be large stone piers. These smaller pilasters have ionic capitals upon which rests the entablature, mouldings, and frieze. Fleur-de-lis ornaments are a part of the frieze above each pilaster. The cornice line is defined with a reach of Spanish tile implying a roof covering.

The north and west walls contain banks of steel frame industrial pane windows. Aside from the windows, the walls, including the entire south wall, are smooth finish concrete.

The interior was designed for maximum display and storage. It is punctuated by two free-standing rows of columns and two set into the side walls. This is the base for the structural system of post and beam.

In line with the building's entrance on the first floor, a wide stairway provides both access and light to the basement. The balustrade, composed of balustra of turned design with square base and head, is repeated as stair rail, railing around the stair opening, surrounding a 46'x22' mezzanine opening on the second floor and as stair rail for the stairway to the second floor. A brass rail has been added to the surrounding balustra to achieve additional height.

The interior spaces reflect their intended uses providing great expanses of open floor area, visibility between retail areas, and a high level of natural light.

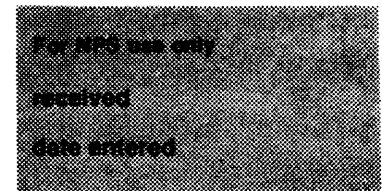
With the exception of the balustrades and octagonal shape of the exposed columns, all decorative elements were provided by the casework and merchandise.

Floors three and four were used for warehousing the stock and hotel supplies. These floors had maximum use of the space. Office areas were alternately located at the front and rear of the floors. The rear and side wall (N) contain steel frame industrial window openings. The rear wall fenestration coverage is equal to the front providing natural light to virtually the entire interior. Against the south wall is located the elevator, stairway and restrooms.

The Dohrmann Building, described in architectural terms as commercial in style with the further description of urban loft, is a statement of the transition between the classic revival and the modern commercial styles. The reduction in height from that of other commercial style urban loft buildings found in metropolitan areas is in itself a transition design that reflects both taste and development scale in the Santa Clara Valley during the 1920's.

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retail sales area in the center of the facade, a broad stairway with handsome turned balustrade led to the basement and the kitchenware. Above and behind the matching mezzanine railing that surrounds the 46 foot x 22 foot opening of the second floor were European antiques and clocks, while the first floor was a showcase for crystal, silver and lovely china. The public shopping on these floors were unaware of the volume of hotel supplies stocked on floors three and four.

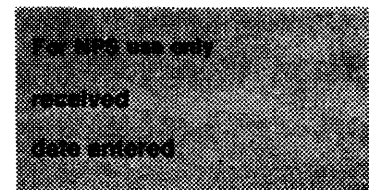
Located on the main N/S commercial street, the facade is opened by large areas of glass. Since the development in this quadrant was controlled by T.S. Montgomery, provision was made to allow windows on all but the south wall. Natural light was brought from the north and west through steel frame windows illuminating most of the interior spaces. The stairways, elevators and restrooms were located along the south wall, leaving the space open, punctuated only by the eight sets of columns that run the depth of the building to provide the structural frame. Two rows are exposed and these were designed in an octagonal shape.

The Dohrmann Building is a significant element in the architecture of San Jose. Scaled to the lower development in the city, it is the only loft commercial style structure and one of a very few remaining terra cotta clad buildings. For this reason, the structure was designated an architectural Historic Landmark by the City Council in 1983. The two other terra cotta structures so designated, the Sainte Claire Hotel and Bank of America, are both listed in the National Register.

T.S. Montgomery was a powerful personage in San Jose. Locally educated, he saw the potential for substantial redevelopment as the city entered its third phase of significant growth. The Dohrmann building is located in what was destined by Montgomery to become the new commercial and retail center. The area was to the south of established commercial development and was occupied by residences and a vacant brewery. It was also just to the south of City Hall. In his plan, T.S. Montgomery included major buildings for a hotel, retail, office building, and a theatre. In planning for this development, T.S. Montgomery was certain that a high quality of development would overcome any hesitancy to utilize this area. The development was planned so that the buildings were completed and opened within months of each other in 1926. Those buildings that remain from this development are all determined eligible for the national Register or are individually listed and include the Sainte Claire Hotel, Saint Claire Office Building, and the Fox-California theatre. A few years later, the building of the San Jose Civic Auditorium on San Carlos Street across from the hotel culminated his real estate development and public service career of 45 years. In this development, T.S. Montgomery donated land for the Auditorium and loaned the City money to construct the building. He dictated that the pattern of commercial development would occur to the south along First Street, thwarting attempts by other businessmen to extend on the east-west axis of Santa Clara Street, two blocks to the north. Through his influence in business and civic affairs, T.S. Montgomery shaped the design of the City.

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In this development, the Dohrmann Building was the first to be completed. This allowed the Dohrmann Hotel Supply Company to be stocked and ready to supply the new Saint Claire Hotel when it opened in October, 1926.

A.B.C. Dohrmann, founder of several businesses that bear his name was well - established in San Francisco before expanding to San Jose. The hotel supply was an expansion that did not change in name or services until it went out of business after San Jose's lean hotel years in the 1950's-60's.

Trinkler-Dohrmann opened for business in the summer of 1926 stocked with an array of the finest kitchenware, imported china, crystal, silver clocks and antique pieces between San Francisco and Los Angeles. John Trinkler, a retailer and local businessman was the operating partner for several years before selling his interest back to Dohrmann who then renamed the business Nathan-Dohrmann's and under that final name the business was regionally known for luxury items. For 34 years, gifts contained within Dohrmann boxes were held in esteem. Newspaper accounts of weddings or other ceremonies indicate the importance ascribed to Dohrmann's by the number of the boxes from the store. A local tradition grew around viewing the elaborately decorated holiday windows. Dohrmann's became an important element in the social patterns of San Jose as it fulfilled a retail specialty associated with the ceremonies of life.

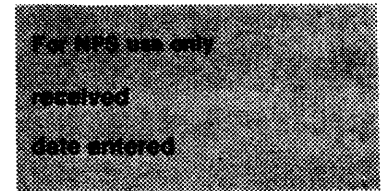
Ironically, an even more successful Dohrmann Company, The Emporium, contributed to its ultimate demise. As San Jose grew in the third major phase following World War II, retail development shifted away from the downtown area. A 1955 regional shopping center on Steven's Creek Boulevard (the western extension of San Carlos Street), which included The Emporium, brought an end to the shoppers at Dohrmann's downtown location. In 1960, the business closed. The Dohrmann Hotel Supply moved and two years later, it closed.

The building has recently (1984) been included within a City of San Jose redevelopment area. The City Historic Landmark designation (one of only 24 city-wide) has encouraged the owner to proceed with rehabilitation that has returned the first floor facade to its original storefront design. The remainder of the facade is the original terra cotta front the Gladding McBean factory in Lincoln, California, and is in good condition.

The Dohrmann Building is a unique element in the architectural heritage of San Jose and is directly associated with a local citizen of significant importance and an era of retail identity that was important in the social life of San Jose citizens.

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A Guide to the Styles, M.I.T., Cambridge, Mass., 1969.

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UNPUBLISHED MATERIAL

San Jose Historic Resources Inventory, 1980
San Jose Historic Landmark Nomination No. 24
City of San Jose Resolution No. 56786

MAPS

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1921 & 1928

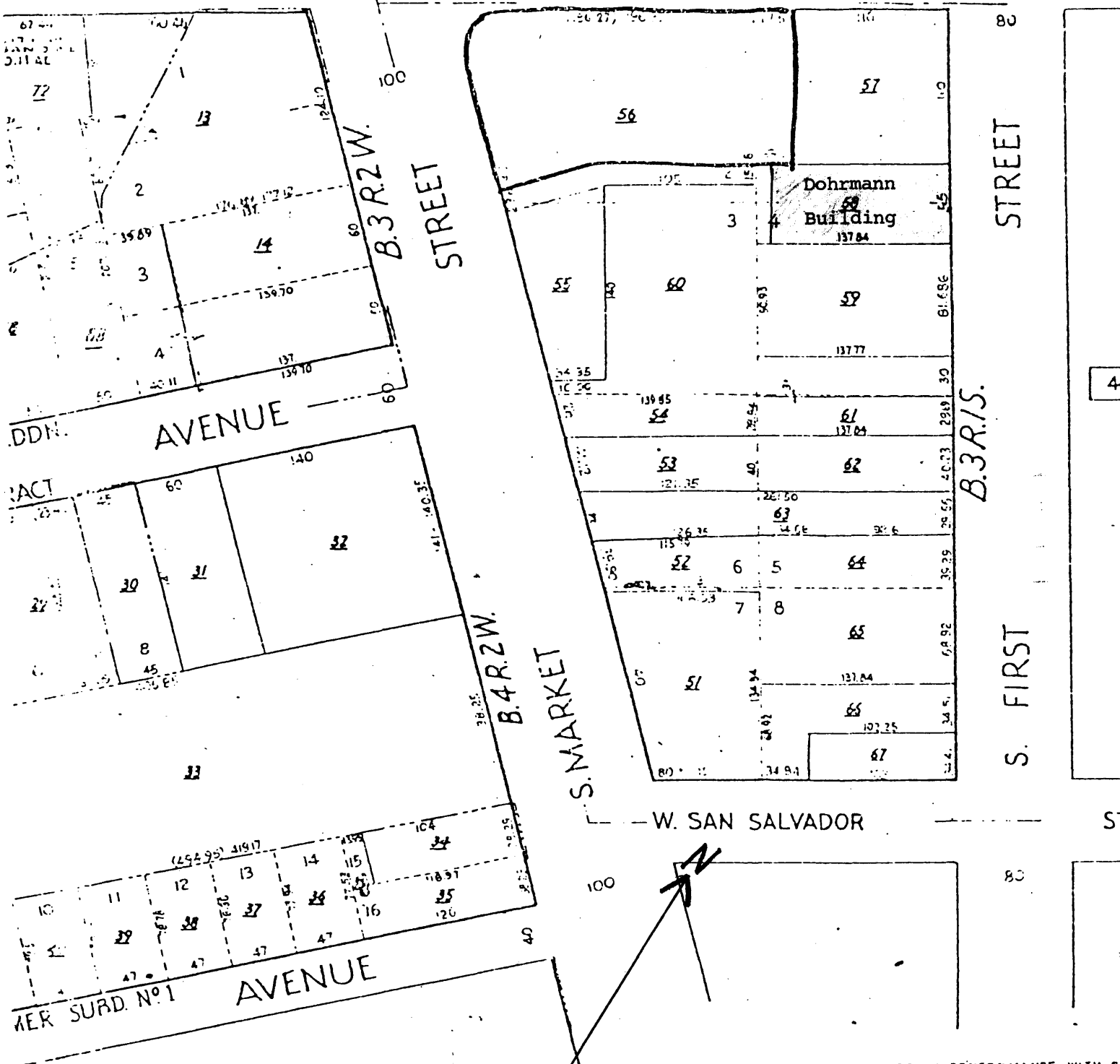
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SKETCH MAP

Dohrmann Building
325 S. First Street
San Jose, Santa Clara County, CA

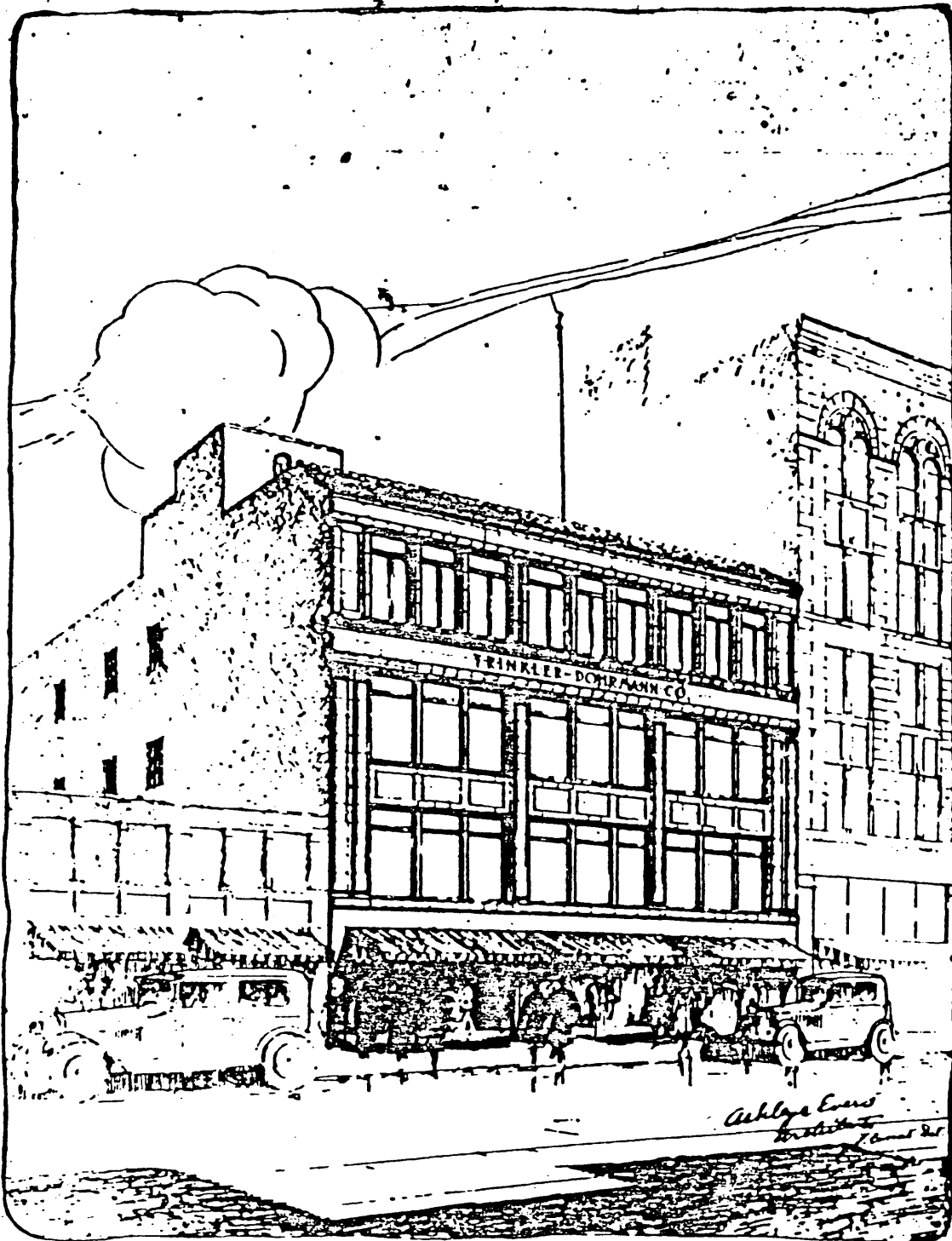
259

STREET



30

IS BEING BUILT FAST BUT WELL



The new four-story Trinkler & Dohrmann building on South First street is going up at the rate of a story a week. With work now in progress on the second floor, the structure is expected to be turned over to the owners by June 1 and they are planning to occupy it in August.