

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

JUN 16 1989

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 Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco  
other names/site number Two Embarcadero Center West

2. Location

street & number 400 Sansome Street N/A not for publication  
city, town San Francisco N/A vicinity  
state California code CA county San Francisco code 075 zip code 94111

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>    </u>	<u>    </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>    </u>	<u>    </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 Guadagni 6-9-89  
Signature of certifying official Date

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. Amy Schlager 7/31/89  
 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:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

---

**6. Function or Use**

---

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/FEDERAL RESERVE BANK  
XII DISTRICT  

---

---

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/BUSINESS  

---

---

---

**7. Description**

---

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19th AND 20th CENTURY  
NEOCLASSICAL REVIVAL  

---

---

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation WOOD PILESwalls STONE/GRANITEBRICKroof COPPERother METAL/BRONZE AND IRON  

---

---

---

**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

The Federal Reserve Bank building was constructed in 1922 as a specialized banking and administrative center for the system's District XII. It is an eight-story steel frame structure with raised basement. Exterior walls are brick with granite facing on the principal facades. The classically influenced facades are composed of two stacked three-story temples, each with a giant order. The main facade is distinguished by a recessed entry behind a monumental portico composed of Ionic columns supporting architrave, frieze, and cornice. Alterations over the years relate to increasing available space and security and have not damaged the overall appearance and significance of the building.

The Old Federal Reserve Bank Building was constructed as a specialized banking and administrative center for the system's District XII. It is an eight-story structure with raised basement and a sub-basement, bearing on 40-foot wood pilings. It is of steel frame construction with reinforced concrete floors. Exterior walls are brick with Sierra White granite facing on the principal facades. Occupying an entire half block, it stands free of other buildings and presents imposing facades to Sansome, Sacramento, and Battery Streets. The fourth, Commerical Street, facade is clad with glazed brick.

The structure meets the property lines on four sides; the upper floors have a north-facing light court. Some U-shaped floors have been filled in over the years with the loss of the banking hall skylight. A copper-clad hipped roof encloses an earlier brick penthouse. The facades are composed of two stacked three-story banking temples; each has a giant order describing seven bays on the short sides (Sansome and Battery) and 13 bays on the long (Sacramento) side. The attic of the lower temple serves as base to the upper temple, which culminates with an attic floor.

The upper giant order has pilasters with capitals of the Corinthian Order modified with Art Deco stylization. The upper attic story terminates in a minor cornice of upright anthemias which screen the eaves of the roof. A Greek fret course runs below the base of each order, but the lower fret course runs only on the Sansome and Sacramento facades. Ground floor and basement windows are protected by decorative wrought and cast iron grillwork, and spandrel panels are dark and recessed, accenting the vertical lines of the orders and the depth of the facades.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

JUN 16 1989

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

Section number 7 Page 1

The building has two main entrances, one old and one new. The historic public entry on Sansome Street includes three pair of bronze and glass doors, each pair furnished with cast bronze sliding grilles. This two-story lobby contained public use elevators and leads to the banking hall, on axis to the east.

Both spaces are two stories high and finished in artificial travertine with genuine marble columns. The lobby contains four giant columns defining the major axis of movement to the banking hall, and smaller columns defining a cross axis to subsidiary elevator and reception areas. It has a coffered ceiling and is furnished with high marble tables topped by oak writing stands, and bronze torcheres. Above the door to the banking hall--and behind a pair of columns--is a 40' x 9' high mural, oil on canvas, called "the Traders of the Adriatic", by Jules Guerin, in a range of red to terra-cotta tones, with accents in green and bright blue. Its subject is the supposed Venetian origins of banking: merchant shipping masters accept receipts for their goods on deposit in Venice, an excuse for painting the sea, fine architecture and exotic costumes with flowing draperies, all in a style similar to Maxfield Parish and in the colors Guerin had chosen for the Panama Pacific International Exposition of 1915.

The banking hall is a basilica in plan with piers along the sides supporting a mezzanine at the second level, and columns at either end. The present public area reached fully into the space and was partitioned from the rest by travertine counters, iron tellers cages and a glass guard booth. The original skylight was filled in.

Upstairs the building is generally open plan office building with executive offices, a paneled board room with a fireplace, and the president's bedroom on the third floor; and a variety of dining, meeting and lounging rooms and a library on the fourth floor. Downstairs there are vaults in both basements.

Alterations over the years relate to increasing the available space and security. The original building was the banking lobby and the Sansome and Sacramento facades in an L-shape around it (1922-1924). Then the matching Battery Street facade was added, making a U-shape (1924-1925). Next the "U" was filled in through the third floor, leaving a hollow core over the banking lobby skylight (late 1920s). Finally that core was filled in through the seventh floor (1955-1957). The late 1920's addition matches the rest in structure and ornament, but it is clad in brick of a pale grey hue harmonizing with the granite. Even the string course is executed in brick, and the fenestration matches. The motor-security platform on Battery, now removed, was redone in 1951. Multiple interior alterations include partitioning and reflooring the banking hall (1975) and elsewhere changing floors, ceilings, and partitions to accommodate the needs of computers and office practice.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

JUN 16 1989

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

Section number   7   Page   2  

---

Thirty feet down under the motor-security court at the corner of Battery and Sacramento are some remains of the Gold Rush full-rigged sailing ship Apollo, which was part of the landfill. During excavation in 1925, she was found to be almost entirely rotted away, but forty artifacts were removed, including a piece of oak stem that measures 4'x 10"x 6". These relics are now in the National Maritime Museum, Golden Gate Recreation Area, San Francisco. Everything else was re-covered.

The original main entrance is set back 26 feet from Sansome and features a slightly projecting Octastyle Ionic portico and a broad granite stair. Eight curved granite proud-chested eagles with half-raised wings stand free above its entablature, and between them, on the portico, are small lion heads. The end columns stand on platforms shared with cast iron lighting standards. A new entrance is added to the Battery Street side, at the location of a former depressed armored car loading area. This new concrete-faced portico and podium refers in proportion and scale to the original west entrance features.

**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

Economics

1924-1939

1924

Architecture

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Kelham, George W

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

The Federal Reserve Bank is significant in the economic history under criterion A and the architectural history under criterion C in the San Francisco Bay Area. The building was the head office for the 12th District of the Federal Reserve System from 1923 to 1982, some 60 years and, as such, is important for its association with an institution whose intent was the economic stability of the western states. The building is also important as a finely designed classically derived government building having high artistic value.

The Federal Reserve Bank is significant as a combination of San Francisco's banking temple tradition with the Federal Government's monumental, Classical architecture; as the work of George Kelham, San Francisco architect, Jules Guerin, New York muralist, and H. J. Brunner, San Francisco structural engineer; as the final resting place of a Gold Rush sailing ship; and as, for some 60 years, head office for the 12th District of the Federal Reserve system.

In San Francisco's financial district, where high-rises crowd the sidewalk, the Federal Reserve Bank makes a statement by its setback. The giant portico clearly refers to the city's important collection of temple-style local banks, such as the Bank of California (S. F. Landmark No. 3) one block away. The Heritage survey Splendid Survivors identifies a potential National Register thematic district of monumental banks which includes nine of these banking temples, as well as the Federal Reserve Bank. Here, however, the setback staircase platform, the eagles and upper giant order mark this building's different function as the bank of banks, the Federal Government's presence in the western banking community. The stacking of one banking temple atop another, together with the filling of the whole block, symbolizes an organization both of and above the San Francisco financial community.

The building's architect, George W. Kelham (1871-1936), came to San Francisco from Massachusetts via Harvard, the Ecole des Beaux Arts, Rome and New York, whence Trowbridge and Livingston sent him in 1906 as supervising architect for

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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:

New Federal Reserve Bank,  
San Francisco

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property 0.8

UTM References

A 

1	0	5	5	2	8	7	0	4	1	8	2	9	6	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

D 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The property occupies City Lot 3 of Block 229, which is the entire half block bounded by Sansome, Sacramento, Battery, and Commercial Streets.

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 Allen Lowry, Project Manager  
organization Kaplan/McLaughlin/Diaz date 18 April 1988  
street & number 222 Vallejo Street telephone 415-398-5191  
city or town San Francisco state CA zip code 94111

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

JUN 16 1989

NATIONAL  
REGISTERSection number 8 Page 1

the Palace Hotel. In San Francisco, he developed a stellar practice which included the Sharon Building on New Montgomery (1912), the main Public Library (1917), the Standard Oil Building (1922), the Medico-Dental Building at 490 Post (1925), the Russ Building (1927), the Shell Oil Building (1929), the Hills Brothers coffee plant (1933), and bank buildings in Salt Lake City and Stockton and Oakland, California. Succeeding John Galen Howard as Supervising Architect for the University of California, he designed the campus plan and the first four buildings for U.C.L.A. After 1936, his work was continued by Henry A. Thomsen, who designed the lightcourt infill of the Bank Building in 1955. At the time of Kelham's death he was chair of the Architectural Commission for San Francisco's 1939 International Exposition, as he had headed the Architecture Department of the 1915 Panama Pacific International Exposition (PPIE).

The 1915 Exposition also brought west muralist Jules Guerin (1866-1946) as Director of Color, an important function since the City hoped to create as great an impression as had Chicago's "White City" fair in 1933. In this role, Missouri-born Guerin had selected all the muralists as well as the colors for the buildings, flowers, and flagpoles: imitation travertine and a warm red-pink-orange range with green and bright blue accents. He had used the same colors in magazines and book illustrations. It is no accident that, a few years later, the PPIE's Director of Architecture Kelham chose its Director of Color Guerin to paint the Federal Reserve Bank's mural, which perpetuates the PPIE colors in the travertine entry lobby. Guerin also painted decorations in: the Lincoln Memorial, Washington; Pennsylvania Station, New York; the Merchandise Mart and the Illinois Merchant's Trust, Chicago; the Louisiana State Capitol; the Liberty Memorial, Kansas City; and the Union Trust and Terminal Tower, Cleveland. The Federal Bank mural is Guerin's only known work in San Francisco.

The building's structural engineer was Henry John Brunnier (1882-1935), born and trained in Iowa, who specialized in large buildings and harbor structures. His San Francisco work includes the Russ, Standard Oil, Shell, Hunter-Dulin, Commercial Union and Hills Brothers Buildings, many of them in cooperation with architect George Kelham. In Los Angeles, Brunnier did buildings for the Examiner, Standard Oil, the California Club and the University of California. On harbor structures he worked for the California State Board of Harbor Commissioners (San Francisco Harbor, 1909-1910), in Hawaii and for the United States Engineering Fleet. He was active in professional organizations.

In 1925 during excavation for the rear motor-security area, at 30 feet below the corner of Battery and Sacramento Streets, workers found the remains of the Gold Rush full-rigged sailing ship Apollo, which had sailed from New York on 16 January 1849 with 82 passengers. Abandoned in San Francisco Bay like many other sailing ships in the mad rush for gold fields. The Apollo had

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

JUN 16 1989

NATIONAL  
REGISTERSection number 8 Page 2

---

been adaptively reused first as a storehouse, then as a saloon and lodging house secured in and as part of the bay fill. She was found rotted in 1925. The bank construction covered her over again but first removed a number of ship artifacts (40), which were displayed inside the Bank along with a log of the Apollo. On 23 April 1980, these relics were donated to the National Maritime Museum, which displays some of them on the second floor at the foot of Polk Street.

Just ten years before the Federal Reserve Bank Building was first occupied, Congress created the Federal Reserve System to even out fluctuations in the economy, reform the monetary system and supervise banking. San Francisco became headquarters for the 12th District Federal Reserve Bank, now embracing the nine Western States. At first the new bankers' bank occupied rented quarters at 25 New Montgomery. In 1917 and 1918, it purchased the subject block and, deferring construction because of World War I and its aftermath, moved temporarily into a remodeled building it would later demolish at the southwest corner of Battery and Commercial Streets. Kelham's plans were first published in 1919, the cornerstone was laid in 1922, and the Bank moved into its new building in December 1923. It has been there ever since, through the growing role of the Federal Reserve, which is now a major influence in global economics.

The bank continued in use until 1982; however, nothing of exceptional significance occurred within the last 50 years. The arbitrary terminating date for Period of Significance is therefore chosen.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

JUN 16 1989

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

Section number 9 Page 1

---

Architect and Engineer, Nov. 1920: 71-72; March 1924; Oct. 1930; June 1932: 27; Dec. 1936: 55; April 1937: 56.

Beach, Joseph Perkins, "Log kept aboard the Ship Apollo on her voyage from New York City to San Francisco, Jan.-Sept. 1849".

Corbett, Michael, Splendid Survivors, San Francisco, 1979, California Living Books: 51, 217, 248, 253, 263, 266.

Federal Reserve Bank Properties, San Francisco, California: Invitation to Offer, San Francisco, 1 April 1982.

Heritage, files on George Kelham, H. J. Brunnier, Federal Reserve Bank.

Hichins, Robert, The Near East, New York, 1913, The Century Company: illustrations by Jules Guerin.

Kirker, Harold, California's Architectural Frontier, Santa Barbara and Salt Lake City, 1973, Peregrine Smith: 37.

Lockwood, Charles, Suddenly San Francisco, San Francisco, 1973, California Living Books: 19.

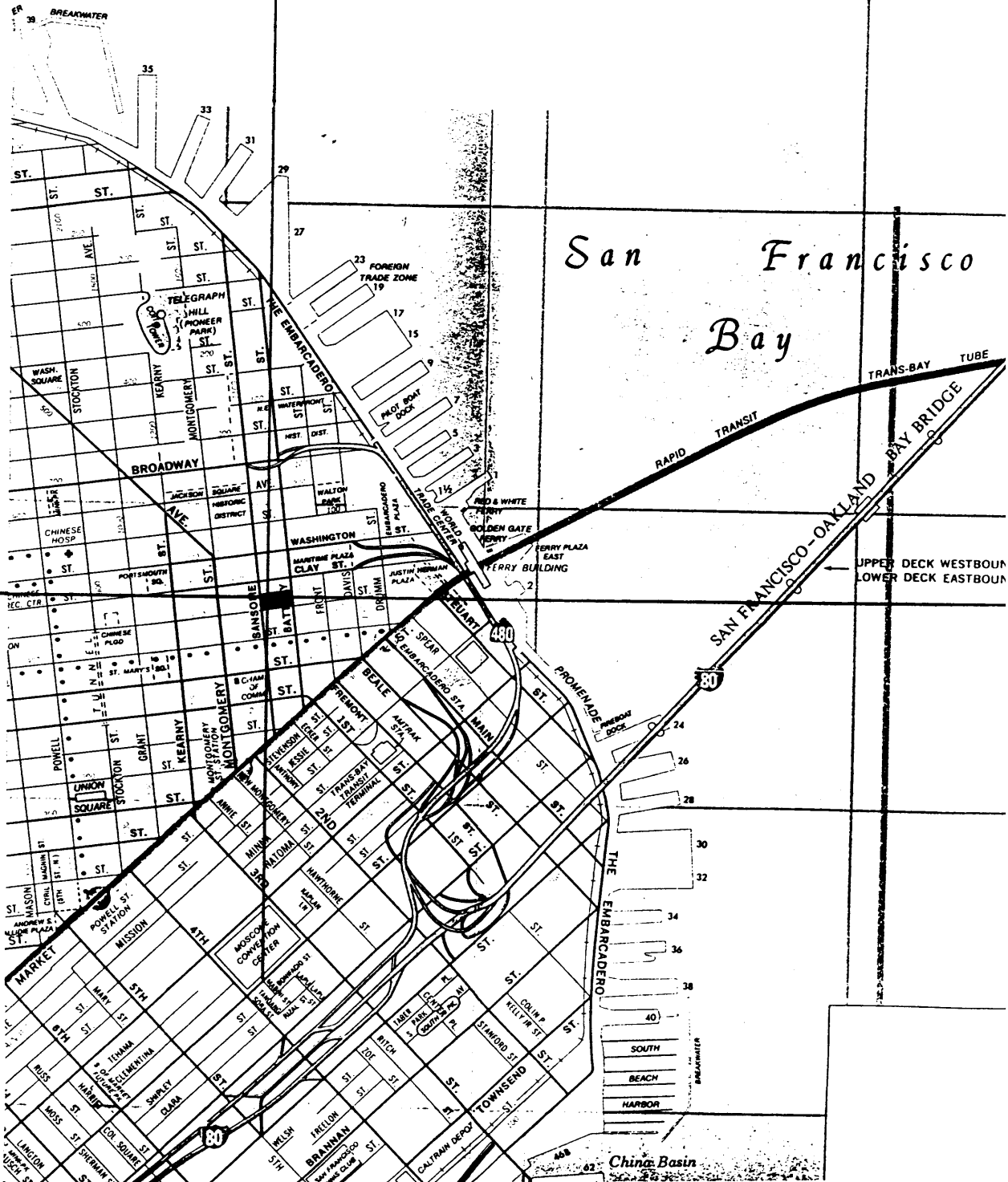
Malone, Jonathan, "Draft Case Report, Federal Reserve Bank Building", San Francisco Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board, 1982.

National Maritime Museum, Apollo Accession, No. 108.

---, file of pamphlets on Gold Rush Vessels: material on The Apollo.

# Federal Reserve Bank UTM 10/552870/4182960

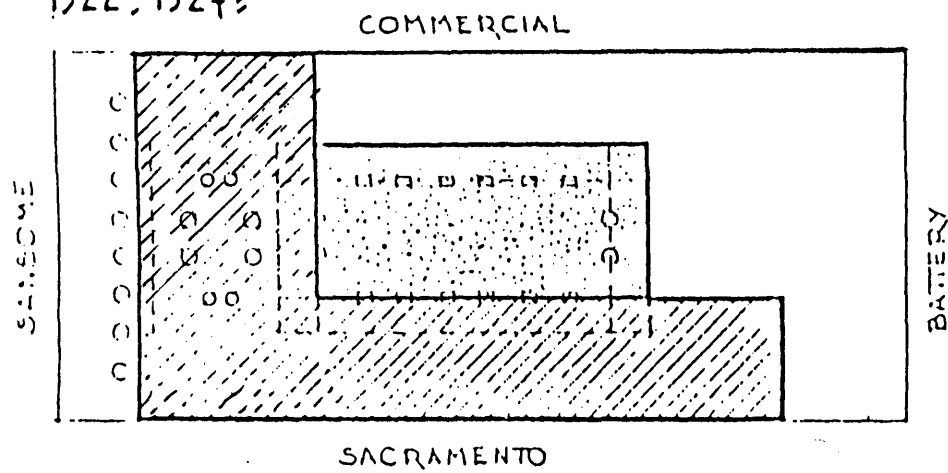
400 Sansome Street  
San Francisco, CA  
San Francisco, County



Federal Reserve Bank  
 400 Sansome Street  
 San Francisco, CA San Francisco County

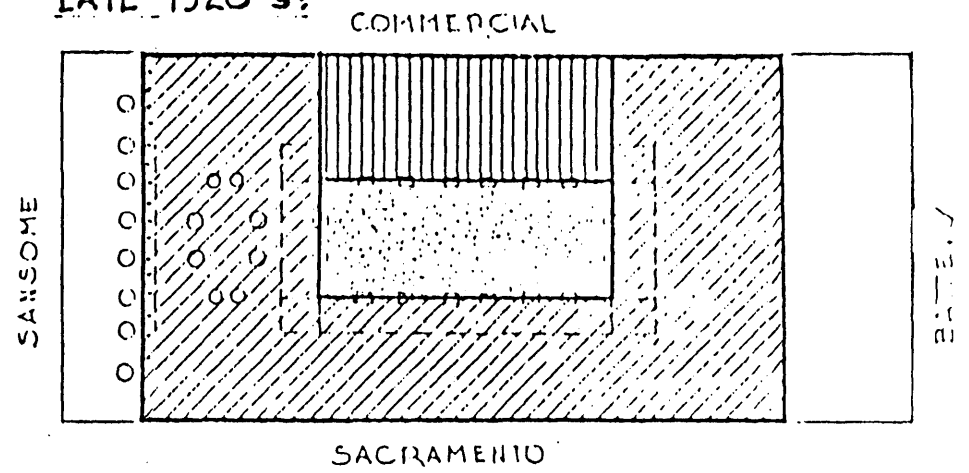
FEDERAL RESERVE BANK BLDG,

1922, 1924:

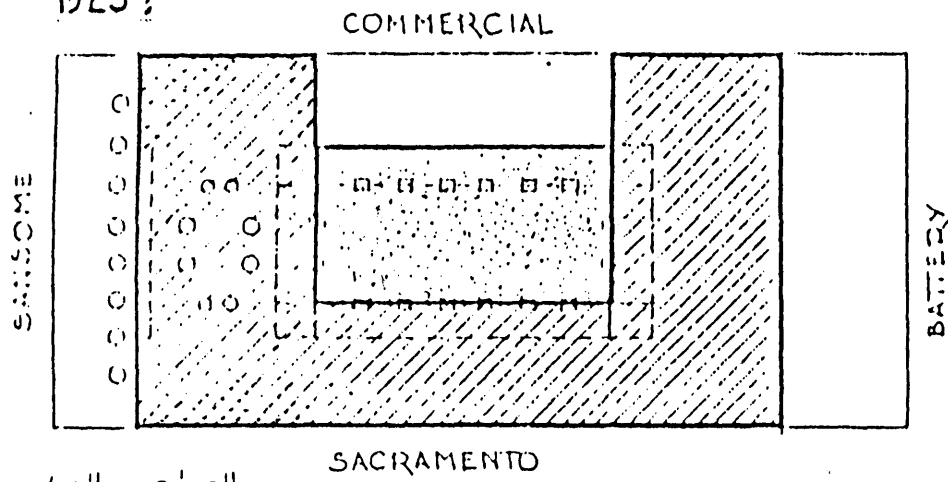


2 FLOORS,  
 4 FLOORS,  
 7 FLOORS,  
 8 FLOORS.

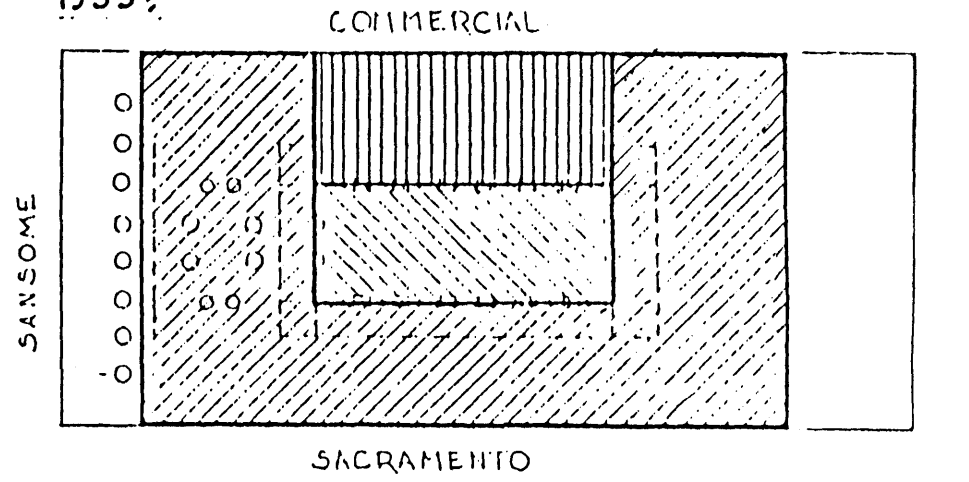
LATE 1920's:



1925:



1955:



E: 3/16" = 12'-0"