

**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 The Fresno Bee Building
and/or common Carlos K. McClatchy Building
Fresno Metropolitan Museum of Art, History and Science

2. Location

street & number 1555 Van Ness Avenue n/a not for publication
city, town Fresno n/a vicinity of congressional district 15th
state California code 06 county Fresno code 019

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum (proposed)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<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"/> 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"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Fresno Metropolitan Museum of Art, History and Science Corporation
street & number 1555 Van Ness Avenue
city, town Fresno N/A vicinity of state California 93721

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Fresno County Hall of Records
street & number 2281 Tulare Street
city, town Fresno state California

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Local Official Register of Historic Resources has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date March 4, 1980 federal state county local
depository for survey records Fresno City Hall, 2326 Fresno Street
city, town Fresno 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 _____ n/a
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Fresno Bee Building (1922) is located on the southwest corner of Van Ness Avenue and Calaveras Street in Downtown Fresno, California. It has been recently buffered from encroaching urban renewal projects by its somewhat isolated location just north of the natural boundaries of the Fulton Mall. An immediate nine block zone of influence is stable. The area includes a telephone communications center, television and radio broadcast facilities, financial institutions, and a lively legitimate theatre district.

The original six-floor structure measured 75x100 feet, but utilized only two-thirds of the corner site. The remainder of the land protected the building from being "walled-up" by other buildings, and provided ample room for the newspaper's own anticipated expansion. Structurally, the publishing plant was built of reinforced concrete with cast cement ornamentation and a veneer of rose-colored Cannon brick, which was identified as special in design. The bottom third of the building housed a basement press room with an intermediate mezzanine for employee services and restrooms. This basement space was excavated 9'-0" below ground level and elevated 8'-6" + above ground level, to provide adequate natural light and ventilation to the mechanical bowels of the building.

A 1923 article in ARCHITECT AND ENGINEER provided the following detailed description of the functional layout of the building:

The first floor of the building contains the business offices, executive offices, mailing room, advertising department and the delivery room for the newsboys, which is accessible from Calaveras Street. On the second floor is the editorial staff, also the reporters' room, library, etc. The third floor is devoted to the composing department. The composing room has a special system of ventilating so as to take care of all fumes, etc., directly from the linotype machines. In addition to this special ventilation, the roof slab over the composing room is flat, and upon this has been built a wooden deck supporting from two to three feet of earth and a lawn with sprinkler system. This lawn is accessible from the main elevators and stairways.²²

Both in scale and detail, the Fresno Bee Building was a modified Palazzo in appearance. Its Renaissance inspired ornamentation and fenestration was

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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates	1922	Builder/Architect	George D. Hudnutt, General Contractor Leonard F. Starks, Architect
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Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

On October 17, 1922, "From the midst of an unfinished building with the clatter of hammers drowning the click of typewriters, **THE FRESNO BEE** ..." emerged "...with its first paper for Fresno and the San Joaquin Valley."¹ Unhampered by a tardy construction schedule, the fledgling evening newspaper printed a five-section, sixty-page premier edition, which launched a decade of intense competition with the politically entrenched **FRESNO MORNING REPUBLICAN**. As the newest arm of the Sacramento-based James McClatchy Publishing Company, **THE FRESNO BEE** initiated an aggressively competitive advertising and subscription campaign to capture the daily circulation stakes in this vast region of Central California. By 1932, The McClatchy-owned paper successfully absorbed the ailing **MORNING REPUBLICAN** into its bannerhead. In one short decade, **THE BEE** had closed down a fellow pioneer California newspaper which had itself been founded in 1876.

This classic contest of journalistic enterprise came slightly more than a half century after the parent paper, **THE SACRAMENTO BEE**, had been founded in 1857 by James McClatchy. McClatchy, an itinerant baker who emigrated to New York City from Liburn, County Antrim, Ireland, had "the fever of journalism ... in his veins, and ... drifted around the office of **THE NEW YORK TRIBUNE** where he became a fast friend of Horace Greeley."² Greeley secured a position for McClatchy with the paper, then encouraged the young man to travel West as a correspondent for **THE TRIBUNE**. After a treacherous journey via the Isthmus of Panama to California, McClatchy settled into reporting the colorful and often violent territorial news. As a regional correspondent, he relayed his observations in the form of personal letters to Charles A. Dana, Managing Editor at **THE TRIBUNE**. The 33 year-old McClatchy, however, was a fiercely independent man, whose instincts sensed the limitless opportunities of the Western Territories. With characteristic ambition, he decided to publish his own newspaper in the sparsely populated Gold Rush Territory. "**THE BEE** from the beginning was a militant paper, having strong opinions and expressing them plainly."³ The strength of his convictions resulted in "one of the longest unbroken lines of newspaper ownership in California, if not the longest,"⁴ and assured that, as an out-of-town challenger, **THE FRESNO BEE** would succeed in a traditionally self-sustaining agricultural community.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheets 9-1 and 9-2

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 0.83
 Quadrangle name Fresno, South, California

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	1	1	2	5	1	0	4	5	1	0	4	1	0	6	1	9	5	1	0	1	0
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 Building occupies its historic 150' x 242' parcel. All of Lots 1 through 9 and the northerly 17' of Lot 10 in Block 88 of the Town of Fresno, according to the map thereof recorded June 8, 1876 in Plat Book 1, at Page 2, in the office of the County Recorder of Fresno County

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

state	n/a	code	county	n/a	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title John Edward Powell, Architectural Historian *John Edward Powell*

organization Allen Y. Lew & William E. Patnaude, Inc. date March 29, 1982

street & number 1050 "S" Street telephone (209) 486-8150

city or town Fresno state California 93721

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 *R. M. Ellison*

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 9-29-82

For HCRS use only
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register
John McClelland date 11/1/82
 Keeper of the National Register
 Attest: _____ date _____
 Chief of Registration

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layered in a manner typical of Classic Revival commercial buildings designed during the 20's. The raised basement served as a grand base which supported a two-part building composition split by a molded and bracketed belt course, and capped by a terra cotta tile mansard- roof. An intricately detailed cast concrete cornice consisting of dense bracketing, rosette grilles, a brightly colored soffit, and a frieze band of garlands and festoons marked a rigid contrast to the more casual California flavor of the mission style roofing material. The raised base was accented by a pronounced plinth course, marble entablature inserts, cast ornaments, and a continuous Greek key detail along its top. These simple embellishments added to the monumental impact of the rusticated triple arched entrance on the Van Ness elevation. Each entry arch featured a pronounced keystone bust, more than likely representations of guardian muses. The arched motif was repeated above the main entrance in the form of a recessed loggia with a cast plaster balustrade. A row of executive suites and editorial offices opened onto the open-air loggia through Florentine doors and windows.

The monumental upper fenestration which dominated the Van Ness elevation was repeated above the belt course on the Calaveras facade in a row of five arched Florentine windows. A shallow balustrade, less decorated than the balustrade along the front loggia, completed this second level scheme. Below the belt course on the side street elevation, two rows of double hung sash windows introduced the utilitarian fenestration which characterized the south and rear elevations of the building. These 'backsides' of the structure were unadorned expanses of functional concrete plaster, punctuated by industrial window openings, service entrances, ventilation hoods, and fire escape platforms and ladders.

The most decoratively appointed interior space was the central business office and public information area, located on the elevated first floor of the building. Public access to this 2,000 square foot room was made via either of two centrally opposed biaxial stairways. These stairways were tiled in a mosaic basketweave pattern with a side wainscoting of Tennessee pink marble. A pair of cast bronze and glass display cases, mounted within the outermost arched openings, served as safety railings along the upper stairway landings. The stairwell cavity was topped by an ornately painted vaulted ceiling. Two brightly painted metal doors opened into the sumptuous business office, which was nearly 18 feet in height from floor to ceiling. The two-story space was composed on a strict axis which focused on a vault door set into a classic frontispiece of wood, marble and

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cast mythological ornamentations. A Tennessee pink marble wainscoting was applied throughout the room in addition to a Caen stone wall treatment. Four simple square columns and a series of perimeter pilasters supported a rather massive beamed and coffered ceiling. The floors were surfaced in tile and marble. A marble faced counter, trimmed in lignum vitae, separated a public reception area from the main business office. Compared to the practical planning which was employed in most of the 80,000 square feet of functional space in the building, only the Architectural scheme in the business office effectively echoed the classic revival trappings which were expressed on the exterior.

During its sixty year life, the Fresno Bee Building underwent a continuous evolution of physical modification, which was the natural consequence of tremendous growth in staff operations, and massive changes in printing technology. Except for minor repairs and alterations, the 1922 structure, built by prominent Sacramento General Contractor, George D. Hudnutt (1879-1941), remained virtually original until 1936. A significant addition to the building was constructed that year to house an enlarged engraving department and a studio space for Radio Station KMJ. Designed by the Fresno Architectural firm of Franklin and Kump, this four floor addition was thoughtfully connected to the old building at the south elevation. Its sensitive extension of the textural and ornamental patterns from the original facade rendered the enlarged structure nearly as successful a design as the original. Moderate changes were again made to the building in 1947, by Lake and Hastrup, Architects, of Fresno. These alterations included relocation of stairways, installation of additional floor levels, and modernization of interior appointments. The most damaging addition to the building, however, came in 1951, when a large pressroom and new entrance wing were designed by Lockwood Greene and Dunbar Beck. Although the additions succeeded in increasing the production requirements of the newspaper, they seriously compromised the integrity of the original 1922 design, and totally annihilated the facade on the 1936 addition.

The newspaper's Van Ness facility was totally abandoned in 1975, when the Fresno Bee completed its phased relocation into a modern printing plant located in a West Fresno Redevelopment Area. In spite of the unfortunate effects of the 1951 addition, a substantial amount of original fabric remains intact in the lofty old business office, as well as on the exterior of the old building. Nevertheless, there have been numerous curious

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casualties during a half century of change, including the total destruction of the business office vault, and the almost baronial wall which that vault created; the removal of the original chandeliers, and their replacement with fluorescent fixtures wired through rough surface-mounted conduit; the wholesale partitioning of the once-disciplined arrangement of offices and work spaces, into a jumbled maze of corridors and interconnected rooms; the multiple repaintings of decorative features in an impasto of industrial coatings totally alien in color to the theatrical tonal range known to have been used throughout the building; and the removal of the mansard-like roof, which was replaced by a pipe rail parapet.

With the assistance of the McClatchy Newspaper Corporation, which specifically encouraged the reuse of the Fresno Bee Building as a museum or cultural center, a community group has successfully formed the Fresno Metropolitan Museum of Art, History and Science. A comprehensive reconstruction and expansion project is currently underway to historically adapt the 1922 building, remodel the various nonhistoric additions and build a new galleria entrance to compensate for the historic entry stairways which cannot be modified to comply with exit requirements. The architectural firm of Allen Y. Lew & William E. Patnaude, Inc., has prepared the plans for this comprehensive adaptive reuse of the old publishing complex. The conversion program calls for the former basement-level pressroom to serve as a work area for conservation, preparation, archival and general storage needs. A basement level mezzanine will become related office space. Exhibition areas have been neatly tucked into existing spaces, most effectively in the old two-story business office where the original columns, beamed ceiling and marble decoration will be retained. The business office mezzanine level will open onto this central core exhibit area to provide additional display surfaces for the principal fine arts gallery in the museum. A research library and a smaller gallery space will be adapted within areas once utilized by the newspaper in the 1936 radio station addition. The original second floor of the 1922 building will be entirely converted into gallery space, with the extended second floor area to be adapted for use as an auditorium and for other public accommodations. The two remaining floors will be cleared out for future development. The pressroom addition (1951) will be adapted to house permanent Science and History exhibits.

The exterior of the 1922 structure is being totally restored to its original condition. Overly painted ornamental features are being power cleaned to expose base surfaces before being repainted in historically

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documented colors. A temporary security barrier, constructed of concrete block in the main entrance, will be permanently removed and replaced by a wrought iron gate system. Wood trim and sash will be repaired and/or replicated where necessary. Decorative wrought iron window grills, long since removed from the original building, have been found in storage in Sacramento and will be reinstalled. The radio tower, water tank, cooling tower and related piping will be removed from the roof. The proposed addition of the galleria entrance will include new elevator services to meet handicapped and general exit requirements, as well as provide primary access to a restaurant facility which is planned as an addition atop the 1951 structure.

Phase I of the rehabilitation program, which includes general demolition, roofing repairs, drainage system, total weatherproofing of the building shell and the complete cosmetic restoration of the 1922 facade, will be completed during the summer of 1982. Phase II of the project, scheduled for completion by Autumn of 1983, will encompass structural repairs, seismic modifications, new construction, and interior improvements to meet the specific requirements of museum functions.

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Generally speaking, the advent of a major new building, particularly one destined to dramatically alter Fresno's skyline, was greeted with at least moderate enthusiasm, if not outright elation by local residents. During the mid-teens and early 20's, such projects provided a continual source of civic pride as well as local and regional news. Newspaper articles from the period record that as Fresno attracted its first skyscrapers, the City began to adopt a cosmopolitan view of itself. The Fresno Bee Building (1922), however, was designed by a Sacramento Architect, built by a capital city General Contractor and owned by a newspaper chain which was making its move with expansionist fervor into new territory. Not surprisingly, the local press was reluctant to extend much fanfare about this new architectural face in town. The first paper off THE BEE'S giant Scott Multi-Unit Octuple Press would provide the first reasonable portrait of the impressive structure.⁵

Six decades later, the six-floor structure had stood empty, and vulnerable to threats by Urban Renewal, for nearly seven years. In 1981, a community supported adaptive reuse plan assured the survival of the Renaissance-inspired building as a museum complex. Ironically, James McClatchy editorialized in his 1857 inaugural edition that "the object of this paper is not only independence, but permanence."⁶ He further stated that he would rely "upon a just, honorable, and fearless course of conduct for its support."⁷ If Architectural justice prevails, The Fresno Bee Building will take its permanent place among a handful of buildings which recall the City's historic skyline; and a citizen effort will have preserved the sole representative work in this community by Sacramento Architect, Leonard F. Starks.

Leonard F. Starks was born in Healdsburg , Sonoma County, California, in 1891. Following his graduation from San Francisco's Lick Wilmerding Technical High School in 1908, Starks continued his Architectural studies in San Francisco under the auspices of a seven-year duplicate study system offered by The Ecole Des Beaux Arts. This program was monitored by a New York extension division of The Paris Ecole, most likely the Society of Beaux-Arts Architects, and managed at the local level through the "Atelier" method of instruction.⁸ ⁹ Starks appears to have been a member of an Atelier, which had as its patron Charles Peter Weeks; Weeks had been

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affiliated in Paris with Atelier La Loux in 1893.¹⁰ Starks met his long-time future partner, Edward F. Flanders (1889-1941), during this period of apprenticeship. An obituary in **ARCHITECT AND ENGINEER** acknowledged that Flanders had also begun his Architectural career as a "Protege" of Weeks.¹¹ Starks worked as a Designer on the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco between 1913-1915, before relocating to the East Coast to work for Waddy Butler Wood, F.A.I.A. (1869-1944) in Washington, D.C. Wood, who established his private practice in 1892, had a significant reputation in the nation's capital as the designer of many prominent commercial buildings and exclusive private residences, including The Stock Exchange Building, The Chinese Embassy, The Irish Ambassador's Residence and Woodrow Wilson House, the former Henry Parker Fairbanks Residence (1915).¹² A year after joining Wood's firm, Starks moved to New York City to accept a position as Office Manager for Thomas W. Lamb (1871-1942). Over the next three years, Lamb would design many of New York's spectacular theatres, including the Rivoli and the Capital.¹³ Lamb's reputation as a master of Theatre Architecture would be confirmed in 1927, when he designed the famed Ziegfeld in collaboration with early modernist, Joseph Urban.¹⁴

In 1921, Lamb, who had signed an exclusive Architectural contract with the Famous Players theatre chain, sent young Starks to California to "design and construct a chain of theatres on the Pacific Coast, the first of which [The Senator] was to be built in Sacramento."¹⁵ When an anti-trust suit blocked Famous Players from building the cinema, Starks "stayed on, established his own firm and gave up a promising position" with the New York office of Thomas Lamb.¹⁶ Later that same year, Starks was commissioned by the James McClatchy Publishing Company to design a building for **THE FRESNO BEE**, which was to become the publishing company's first major expansion outside the Sacramento area. The Fresno Bee Building (1922) appears to have been one of Leonard Starks' first major designs working on his own, although it reflects the influences of both his Beaux-Arts training and his theatre work adapting the flamboyant idiom popularized by Lamb. The Bee Building blatantly broke with the conservative and sedate Architectural styles which characterized most of the town, and became something of a 'Painted Lady' with her classic details rendered in shades of Yellow Ochre, Venetian Red, and Cerulean Blue. In

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mid-1923, Starks joined E. C. Hemmings as a partner in the firm of Hemmings and Starks, Architects and Engineers. Hemmings, however, succumbed to a lingering illness a year later, leaving young Starks to complete a sizable backlog of projects. Edward Flanders joined Starks as an associate during this period, and in 1925 accepted a full partnership in the new firm of Starks and Flanders. This historically significant firm existed until Flander's death in 1941.

By 1965, Starks had retired to paint water colors and sculpt after fifty-six years in the Architectural profession. The catalogue of works by Starks and Flanders was formidable and included the Fox Senator (1924)*, the Elks Temple (1925)*, The Alhambra (1927)*, the U. S. Post Office and Courthouse (1932)*, the Marysville City Hall (1939), and countless small commercial projects and residences which helped fashion much of the Architectural character of greater Sacramento and numerous Sacramento Valley communities. Starks was extremely active in civic affairs during his career, and served as President of the Society of Sacramento Architects in 1932, Chairman of the Sacramento Board of Appeals, Member of the Sacramento Planning Commission, and First President of the Central Valley Chapter of the A.I.A. At age 90, he maintains an active membership in the American Institute of Architects. 17 18 19 20

Ben R. Walker, President of the Fresno County Historical Society wrote in the first edition of THE FRESNO BEE that "Fresno and Central California in general have almost no connection whatever with that California past whose romantic record has been so glowingly described by historians," and he went on to remark that "we cannot know the Fresno of tomorrow, to say nothing of today, unless we know its brief but vivid past."²¹ Even today, events which have taken place in this region, particularly those associated with the state's Architectural history, remain only marginally documented. The museum project, which is currently underway to rehabilitate the old Fresno Bee Building, has been conceived to permanently house both private and public collections of historic artifacts and memorabilia from the Central San Joaquin Valley. Most of these collections have never been seen by the general public. The old building's new use is an encouraging move by the town to recognize its origins. The history of the building and its Architect, Leonard F. Starks, represents a significant episode in the Architectural legacy of this area, and therefore qualifies the structure for placement on the National Register of Historic Places.

*Located in Sacramento.

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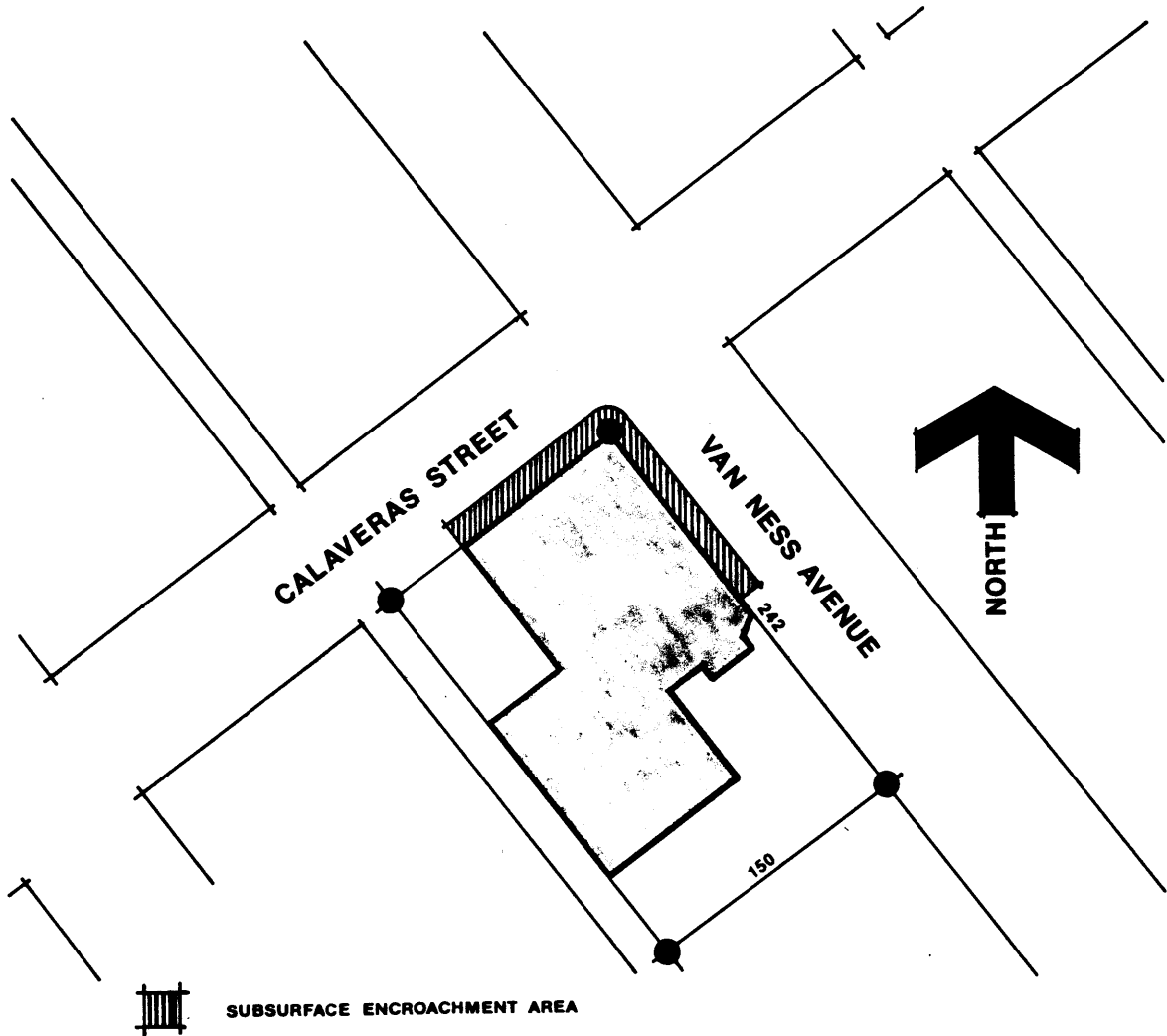
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FRESNO BEE BUILDING (1922)
FRESNO, CALIFORNIA