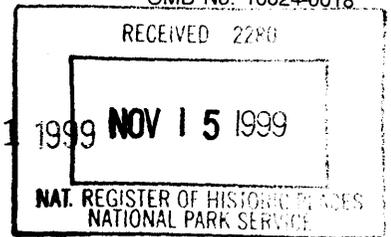


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

1565

AUG 31 1999 NOV 15 1999



National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name San Diego Trust & Savings Bank Building

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 530-540 Broadway not for publication

city or town San Diego vicinity

state California code CA county San Diego code 073 zip code 92101

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Harold Abeyta Nov. 10, 1999
 Signature of certifying official/Title Date
California Office of Historic Preservation
 State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

 Signature of commenting official/Title Date

 State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register. 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
Edson H. Beall 12/17/99

SDTS Bank Building

Name of Property

San Diego, California

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade

Financial Institution

Commerce/Trade

Business

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Vacant/Not In Use

Work In Progress

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Italian Romanesque Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Reinforced Concrete

walls Brick

roof Tile

other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Continuation Sheets

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1928

Significant Dates

1928

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

**Johnson, William Templeton
Simpson Construction Company**

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Office Of Marie Burke Lia

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 11 485140 3619610
Zone Easting Northing

3
Zone Easting Northing
4
Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Scott A. Moomjian, M.A., J.D., Historic Property Consultant

organization Office Of Marie Burke Lia date August 30, 1999

street & number 427 C Street, Suite 416 telephone (619) 235-9766

city or town San Diego state CA zip code 92101

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name AGL Investment No. 4 Limited Partnership

street & number 1050 17th Street, Suite 1220 telephone (303) 534-6322

city or town Denver state Colorado zip code 80265-1050

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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SAN DIEGO TRUST & SAVINGS BANK BUILDING
530-540 BROADWAY
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92101

7. Narrative Description

INTRODUCTION

The San Diego Trust & Savings Bank is located at 530-540 Broadway in downtown San Diego, California. Designed in Italian Romanesque Revival style, the building served as a combination bank and office building. It occupies a corner site of 100' frontage on the north side of Broadway and 150' on the west side of 6th Avenue, and is rectangular in shape including the first and mezzanine floors. Above the mezzanine floor, the building is a modified "L" shape. The structure rises thirteen stories, plus basement and mezzanine, but as the bank has no thirteenth floor, the top floor has been referred to as the fourteenth floor. The building is in excellent condition.

EXTERIOR

The buff coloring of this building is created through the jointed polished Briar Hill sandstone, from the Briar Hill quarry in Ohio, gracing the first and second floors, and the matching terra cotta from above the second floor. The architect, William Templeton Johnson, believed that this represented the first time that sandstone had been used for exterior construction on the West Coast and felt that it would prove durable in San Diego's mild climate, free from frost.¹ The building rests on a base of Scotch Rose granite. Rich detailing predominates the exterior of this building, including the bank entrance, located on Broadway.

South Facade (Broadway)

The office building entrance is located at the extreme southwest corner of the building on Broadway. The entrance is composed of plate glass doors surrounded by bronze. It has an overhang, supported by cables, beneath multi-pane windows and decorated arch doorway. This recessed entrance is flanked by round columns. Above the entrance, on the second floor are recessed windows fronted by an archway, separated by a similar round column. An identical

¹ Theodore Davie, *Landmark, A Commitment To San Diego*, 1978, p.26.

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window with column is located at the southeast corner. On the second floor, west of center, can be found a balcony leading from two multi-paned windows.

The entrance to the bank is located just east of center, near the southeast corner of the building on Broadway. The entrance is composed of two carved bronze framed doors with plate glass panels flanking the revolving door. All are fitted with bronze trim. Above the main entrance was located the bank's logo, topped by multi-paned windows with columns and detailing. A cast iron lamp hangs atop the doorway. The entrance is recessed, surrounded by a decorated archway of sculptured sandstone containing two arched windows. Above the entrance are two carved flag poles, now weather-worn to a blue-green color. Two multi-paned windows are located between the two Broadway entrances.

Atop the second floor is the first in a series of profusely corbeled horizontal bands which run along the exposed south and east sides of the building. Single sashed windows, grouped in twos and threes, are found from the second floor to the eleventh floor. Window groupings are divided vertically by round columns. At the base of each column, in the second floor corbeling, is a lion's head gargoyle, cast in terra cotta. Dentils grace the top of the windows on the third floor, along with corbeling. Atop the windows from the fourth to the tenth floors are designs in the terra-cotta. The eleventh floor windows have the same dentil design as the third floor, also with corbeling. Arches rise above the fourteenth floor windows. Decorated boxed cornice, frieze decorated with the corbeling, tops the fourteenth floor.

East Facade (Sixth Avenue)

On the east side of the building, fronting Sixth Avenue, is the same rich ornamentation found on the Broadway facade, with the exception of the first two floors. At street level, a series of arches two stories high, surround the multi-pane windows and one entrance. Medallion decorations, cast in terra cotta, are centered between the arches. At the extreme northeast corner of the building is the Sixth Avenue entrance. It consists of glass double doors, fitted with bronze. Beside the bank entrance is a simple office building entrance, topped by a balcony leading from multi-paned windows. Aside the balcony is a fire escape. Along the Sixth Avenue side of the building, on the second vertical window row set, modified louvered windows are present on the fourth and seventh floors.

The north and west sides of the building lack any decoration, as only a portion of their walls are exposed. The building roofing consists of Spanish tile. Located on the roof is a penthouse structure housing offices and elevator machinery, all of which is topped by a cupola

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and beacon. The cupola has arched openings on all four sides, and is constructed of terra-cotta, with a tile roof and a dome of copper.

INTERIOR*Bank Lobby*

The banking hall is accessed through the bank main entrance or through the office building entrance, both of which are located on Broadway. The bank's lobby or main floor, is an impressive array of marble floors and columns, coffered ceiling and chandeliers. The floor lobbies in both the bank and office building areas consist of pink marble from the Grey Eagle quarry in Tennessee. Thirty-five massive marble pillars rise from the marble floor, which is richly detailed with an emerald green marble border. The marble border is verd antique, a greenish marble used extensively in bank buildings in the United States commencing about 1950.² The column pilasters are faced with marble and crowned by ornate capitals of a modified Corinthian order.³ Nineteen different types of marble are displayed in the arches and marble columns. These were quarried from locations in the United States, Greece, Italy, France, Great Britain, and North Africa.⁴ Atop the columns, which rise to the lobby ceiling, are a series of arched clerestory windows decorated with wrought iron grills. Flanking the windows are smaller, three foot marble columns, in a variety of colors. Over each of these columns are circular marble disks. The lobby's coffered ceiling consists of plaster with painted design detail.⁵ Crowning the arcade are the hall's circular antique chandeliers.

The specifications for outfitting the banking spaces or areas were not included with those for the building. It appears, though, that the colorful marble used for counters, walls, and some columns, may be giallo antico (i.e. antique yellow marble) or similar to it.⁶ Along the east of the hall are the teller's windows, each detailed with marble and bronze. Two rows of six square

² Davie, p.31.

³ Davie, p.24.

⁴ Davie, p.32.

⁵ Davie, p.24.

⁶ Davie, p.24.

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pillars each, faced with fine Escalette marble and decorated with carved stone capitals, set off the tellers' windows on the east side of the banking hall, and the officer's space to the west. To additional marble faced pillars stand in a large bay to the west, where the ceiling is not as lofty as in the main part of the banking room.⁷ To the west of the entrance is a marble counter surrounding the area which once contained various customer service desks. This area is completely carpeted. Through this area is reached the glass and bronze doors leading to the Trust Department, Safe Deposit boxes, elevators and the office building's exit. To the north of the main hall is the bank's former museum area, which detailed the history of banking in San Diego. This area once housed banking paraphernalia and other important aspects of the history of San Diego. It is completely carpeted. On the exterior wall, above the entrance to the museum area is a large painted mural of President Abraham Lincoln as he appears sculptured and marbled in the Lincoln Memorial. It was painted in 1942, shortly after the start of the Second World War, by La Jolla artist Walter Kumme.⁸

Several sturdy standup tables, made of bronze with inch-thick glass are displayed throughout the banking hall. In the extreme southeast corner of the bank lobby, there is a small work-station alcove containing wood partitions topped with glass. In the extreme northeast corner, stairs descend to the basement area. This area is thoroughly carpeted. Modern fluorescent lighting is located primarily above the northwest corner, and west and east side work stations. The banking hall is in excellent condition.

Office Building Lobby

Similar to the bank lobby, entrance to the office building lobby is made along Broadway. A marble security station is located immediately east of the office building lobby entrance, added during the 1980s. Above and behind the security station, on the east wall, and across on the west wall, situated between marble paneling and the ceiling, are two large mural paintings of the southern and western United States and parts of Mexico. These were based on maps from the 16th and 17th centuries.⁹ Immediately above the office building lobby entrance, is a coffered

⁷ Davie, p.32.

⁸ Davie, p.34. The Abraham Lincoln mural was a "faithful reproduction of Daniel Chester French's famed statue of the Great Emancipator in the Lincoln Memorial, Washington D.C." Kumme regarded this painting as one of his best murals. *San Diego Union*, August 21, 1942.

⁹ Davie, p.37.

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ceiling with exposed wood beams running both north-south and east-west, forming square patterns. A circular chandelier hangs from this ceiling section. This ceiling extends north until it gives way to a marble arch, at which point, the ceiling becomes marble with evenly-spaced decorative arch supports located along the east and west walls. The wall area between the marble supports and marble ceiling, consist of plaster. All paneling throughout consists of Sienna marble.

From the office building entrance north, through the marble arch, is located the elevator lobby. Four service elevators, constructed of sculptured bronze run from the basement to the fourteenth floor. Marble paneling, along the west side, which extends to a height just over the elevators, and is capped by a broad, wooden wainscot, and runs the length of the entire elevator lobby wall. Matching marble and wainscot also runs along the east side elevator lobby wall. The east side elevator lobby wall includes several recessed areas, including a bronze and glass mail chute. Three chandeliers hang from the ceiling and modern lighting is present above the wainscot. At the northern end of the elevator lobby, wrought iron partition panels are located on the east and west walls. These panels give way to an arched entrance, capped by marble paneling, leading up to five steps and the interior bank entrance. Modern fluorescent lighting is above the steps. The interior bank entrance consists of two carved bronze framed doors with plate glass panels, similar to the bank's exterior bronze doors. Northwest of the arched entrance are marble stairs which descend to the basement area.

Basement

The basement is accessible through either the service elevators or the stairs, both of which are located along the west side of the building, and open into the basement lobby area. The four elevator door exteriors are made of plastic laminate. The flooring is of smooth vinyl. Original flooring was of checkered tile which extended throughout much of the basement area. Marble wall paneling, which exists throughout the basement lobby, frames the elevator doors, accented by single scalloping in the top two corners of each. Across from the elevators are two semi-arched openings above two decoratively cast and painted outer metal vault gates. While the outer vault gate to the south is fixed, entrance to the inner vault area is made through the outer gate to the north. Behind the north and south outer vault gates, running east, is a third vault gate, the entrance through which consists of two, thick sliding glass doors between two large glass panes. Extending atop and across the vault gate entrance, are decoratively cast and painted metal bars which rise to the ceiling. This vault gate served as the entrance to the inner safe deposit vault. Immediately north of the third vault gate is the original marble-framed security station.

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Behind the third vault gate, to the southeast, is a massive circular, steel vault door and safe deposit vault area, constructed by the Mosler Safe Company of Hamilton, Ohio. The vault door, typically fixed in an open position, is secured and hinged on its southeast corner, and is capable of rotating 90 degrees northeast to close. This door was also manufactured by the Mosler Safe Company of the finest stainless steel quality then available. It bears the name "donsteel door" and was installed in 1928 after extensive testing.¹⁰ Directly southwest of the vault area are wooden booths that were used "for coupon clipping."¹¹

Numerous safe deposit units are contained in the safe deposit vault area, along the north and south walls. The ceiling consists of sheet metal and two large fluorescent bars provide illumination. A second vault area is located near the north-central basement area. Access to this vault is made through crossing the basement lobby area, through the outer vault gate to the north, and then through a small arched entrance and decoratively cast and painted gate. On the north side of this entrance and gate, there is a hallway running east to west. The second vault lies at the east end of the hallway, through a door-shaped entrance and cast metal gate.

Peripheral hallways and former staff support rooms are located throughout the basement area. The southwest corner includes restrooms and a kitchen area. Along the south side is located an employees dining area. This area includes thick hardwood recessed columns, and decorative hardwood paneling with glass casing along the east wall. It is believed that this area was remodeled in 1959 by respected San Diego architect Sam Hamill, who had worked with William Templeton Johnson in the past.¹² The east side has a number of small rooms including those formerly used for a dining room annex, reading room, cafeteria office, storage, employee locker room, telephone room, trash area, and smaller vault. The north side includes an engineer's shop, storage area, engineer's office, and air handling equipment area.

Mid-Mezzanine

The mid-mezzanine is located directly over the former museum area. Access to this area is through stairs leading up from the northeast corner of the banking hall. This area, constructed most likely during the 1950s or 1960s, is nondescript, consisting of carpeted open space.

¹⁰ Davie, p.36.

¹¹ Davie, p.39.

¹² City of San Diego Building Permit Record, January 1959.

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Mezzanine

Access to the mezzanine area is made through the central elevators, elevator lift in the banking hall, or fire stairs located in the northeast corner of the floor. The mezzanine area consists of approximately 14,750 square feet. From the elevator lobby area, access to the mezzanine area is made through wooden and glass double doors, which open into the grouped, central clerestory window feature. These arched windows, viewed from this level, have two sets of triple paned glass panels which open inward to expose wrought iron grillwork on the outside of the windows. These windows are similar throughout the entire level. The west side of this level consists of open, existing office space. The northwest corner of this level contains the former Boardroom or conference room. Polished hardwood paneling decorates the area between the clerestory windows rising to the window arch, and exists around the room doorways.

The north side of the mezzanine includes a small kitchen area east of the Boardroom and a raised floor office space exists across from the kitchen, to the south. A vault is located east of the kitchen area. The east side of the mezzanine is composed of open office space, which runs almost the entire length of this side. In the southeast corner, there is an office which includes hardwood paneling and bookshelves. In the extreme southeast corner of this room, there are two sets of four large arched openings, set behind two wrought iron railings, which are visible from street level. Large clear multi-paned windows cover these openings. A small, narrow corridor or passageway with parquet flooring connects the southeast corner with the rest of the south side. This corridor leads into an open space. At the southwest corner of the mezzanine there is an office.

Second Floor

The second floor is composed of approximately 11,777 square feet. From the elevator lobby area, there is a hallway corridor which runs east and then turns north. A wooden door with glass panels is placed at the elevator lobby/hallway corridor junction. The northernmost suite contains double hardwood doors. Lining the hallway corridor are approximately twenty-one executive office suites, each of which opens into the main hallway. Three stairways exist on this floor. One is located across from the elevator lobby, behind the lobby wall; another is located down the hallway corridor at the east/north hallway junction; and one is located at the extreme northeast corner of the floor. Typical of each upper floor plan in the building, all stairways, landings, and flooring are constructed of marble. Lining each and every corridor is a wainscot of colored marble, and wooden doors with wood transoms. Suites lining the south side of the floor include interiors which have polished redwood paneling throughout. This paneling was installed

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by Frost Hardwood Lumber Company in during the 1980s. The interior of the bank building, principally the Second through Fourteenth Floors, underwent major refurbishment during the late 1950s and 1960s. Some of the improvements included the addition of a more modern elevator system, heating and air-conditioning installation, the modernization of work areas through installing partitions, hallway lighting improvements, and numerous interior suite/office remodels.

Third Through Twelfth Floors

The third through twelfth floor layouts are almost identical to that of the second floor plan. These floors include, however, approximately twenty-five offices, and the northern most offices, rather than having double hardwood doors, have two single doors, opening into two separate offices. There is no thirteenth floor. Rather, the thirteenth is considered the fourteenth.

Fourteenth Floor

The fourteenth floor differs from the second through twelfth floors principally in terms of size. The fourteenth floor consists of approximately 5,637 square feet. Unlike the floors below it, the fourteenth floor does not have suites or offices along its south and east sides. This floor has approximately four offices a large office space area. This floor also has three stairways. One is located just across from the elevator lobby area (and is used to access the fifteenth floor); one is located at the entrance to the large office space; and the other is located at the southeastern end of the floor.

From the elevator lobby area, two offices are located in the northwest corner of the floor. A wooden door with glass panels, across from the elevators, separates the elevator lobby from the rest of the office buildings on this floor. Past this door, there are two small sets of stairs leading to the building's roof.

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SAN DIEGO TRUST & SAVINGS BANK BUILDING
530-540 BROADWAY
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92101

8. Statement of Significance

The San Diego Trust & Savings Bank Building qualifies for the National Register of Historic Places under "Criterion C: Design/Construction," as an excellent example of an San Diego Italian Romanesque Revival style commercial building, the only one of its kind, designed by noted San Diego master craftsman and architect William Templeton Johnson.

The San Diego Trust & Savings Bank Building qualifies for the National Register of Historic Places under "Criterion C: Design/Construction," as an excellent example of an San Diego Italian Romanesque Revival style commercial building, the only one of its kind, designed by noted San Diego master craftsman and architect William Templeton Johnson. It has been said that Johnson, who spent forty-four years practicing architecture exclusively in San Diego, "has most shaped the character of San Diego in the first half of the twentieth century principally through his public buildings. In this respect he had few peers, if any, among his contemporaries."¹ Known primarily for designing some of San Diego's most spectacular and popular public buildings, Johnson also designed many private individual residences, as well as a number of buildings for the business community. Of the latter, the San Diego Trust & Savings Bank Building, is arguably his finest downtown design.

The San Diego Trust & Savings Bank is only one of three banks ever designed by Johnson. It is by far the most architecturally significant and aesthetically pleasing. Over the course of Johnson's career, his design projects tended to reflect a preference for Spanish Colonial styles. However, he was not adverse to using or experimenting with different architectural styles. The San Diego Trust & Savings Bank Building is most significant as it represents the only commercial structure designed by Johnson in a purely Italianate Renaissance Revival style. When completed in 1928, the San Diego Trust & Savings Bank Building represented a milestone in San Diego's architectural development, as it was not only San Diego's tallest structure, but had the most technologically advanced, modern features to date.

¹ Martin E. Petersen, "William Templeton Johnson, San Diego Architect, 1877-1957," *Journal of San Diego History*, Fall 1971, p.23.

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SAN DIEGO TRUST & SAVINGS BANK BUILDING
530-540 BROADWAY
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92101

William Templeton Johnson (1877-1957)

William Templeton Johnson was born on Shore Road, West New Brighton, Staten Island, New York, August 31, 1877, the son of Oliver and Caroline Sophia (Thomas Johnson).² The second of four children, Johnson described himself shortly before his death, as a "terribly shy little boy"³ and "not...very strong" who was rather "timid."⁴ Johnson would grow to a physical appearance resembling that of his father, "a big fellow"⁵ six-feet in height. William Templeton Johnson would have blue eyes and brown hair, "with a youthful appearance that in the later years of his life was greatly admired."⁶

As a young boy growing up on Staten Island, Johnson both worshiped and was devoted to his father.⁷ Among other activities shared between father and son, the two would often attend baseball games, athletic sports, boat races, and go on long Sunday walks together.⁸ It comes as little surprise that when his father died of typhoid fever in the middle of 1891, at the age of thirty-nine, Johnson was "so utterly crushed...that for five or six years [he] could not even mention" his father's name.⁹ With the tragic death of his father, at thirteen years of age, Johnson was thrust in the position of being the man of the house with three aunts, his mother, two sisters and a younger

² Petersen, p.21.

³ Alan W. Johnson, Unpublished Biography of William Templeton Johnson, p.36.

⁴ Johnson, p.25.

⁵ Johnson, p.16.

⁶ Petersen, p.21.

⁷ Johnson, pp. 25,35.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Johnson, p.38.

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SAN DIEGO TRUST & SAVINGS BANK BUILDING
530-540 BROADWAY
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92101

brother.¹⁰

In 1893, Johnson attended the Staten Island Academy. He graduated from this institution in 1896, but did not attend college immediately thereafter, since he knew that his family could not afford it.¹¹ In September 1896, after graduation, Johnson was offered a position working at the Warren Chemical and Manufacturing Company, located at 81 Fulton Street, New York.¹² The company, which conducted an asphalt and gravel roofing business, as well as serving as a roofing contractor throughout New York,¹³ served to initiate Johnson in the field of architecture.¹⁴ From his employment with Warren, he learned much about roofing materials, how to be a roofer, and even performed light payroll duties for the company.¹⁵ Warren, which operated branch offices in Boston, Cleveland, Rochester, Buffalo, and Detroit, decided in 1899, to close the Detroit branch. Johnson was chosen to complete all necessary wind-up operations. This took approximately six months, and soon thereafter, Johnson found himself back in New York. The company then sent him off again, this time to supervise roofing operations at the Seaboard Airline railroad terminus in Savannah, Georgia.¹⁶ In this capacity, Johnson first undertook the responsibility of hiring and supervising a large number of workers, mostly African-American. This project completed, Johnson returned to New York, and was then assigned to supervise an asphalt roofing project on a bank building in Monterrey, Mexico.

¹⁰ Johnson, pp.33,38.

¹¹ Johnson, p.1,42-43.

¹² Petersen, p.21; Johnson, p.50.

¹³ Johnson, p.50.

¹⁴ Petersen, p.21.

¹⁵ Johnson, p.52.

¹⁶ Johnson, p.60.

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530-540 BROADWAY
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Johnson found Mexico "a revelation."¹⁷ In Mexico City, for example, he was fond of the peasants, admired the native crafts, and found that the bright colors of clothing and serapes had great appeal.¹⁸ Johnson further enjoyed "the palaces of the rich, many houses faced entirely with ceramic tile and many churches with sparkling tile domes. In contrast were miles and miles of one story adobe."¹⁹ It was here, in Mexico, that Johnson "learned the construction business and absorbed the beauties of the Spanish Colonial design."²⁰ Throughout his life, Johnson would have a deep interest in Spanish art and architecture.²¹

After completing his work in Monterrey, Johnson visited Vera Cruz and the Yucatan Peninsula before sailing to Havana, Cuba in route to the United States. Ultimately, Warren would send Johnson to Canada and the cities of Quebec and Montreal.²² After Johnson returned from Canada, Warren was sold to the Barrett Manufacturing Company. As a result, there was no job for him but that of a traveling roofing materials salesman. Having worked as a salesman in such states as Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas for a time, Johnson apparently found that his change in status, from superintending construction to being a salesman of building materials did not agree with him.²³ Admittedly having "great difficulty in making sales" and "not a good salesman,"²⁴ Johnson decided to forego his current profession. Exactly when he decided to embark upon an

¹⁷ Johnson, p.70.

¹⁸ Johnson, p.73.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Davie, *Landmark*, p.18.

²¹ Johnson, William Templeton, "Beginnings Of The Art Gallery," n.p.

²² Johnson, pp.74-77.

²³ Johnson, p.81.

²⁴ Johnson, pp.78,80.

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architectural career is uncertain. Most likely, the decision coincided with his marriage to Clara Delafield Sturges, the daughter of a prominent Chicago banker, on June 21, 1905.²⁵ The couple most likely honeymooned in Europe.²⁶ Over the years, to this union, were born three sons and a daughter, Winthrop, Arthur, Alan, and Katherine.²⁷

In the first decade of the twentieth-century, one of the most highly regarded emerging architectural firms was that of Delano & Aldrich, composed of William Adams Delano and Chester Holmes Aldrich. Both men had trained at L'École des Beaux Arts in Paris, and worked in the popular Carrère & Hastings and McKim, Mead & White, before starting their own firm.²⁸ Delano, in particular, was also a Professor of Design at Columbia University from 1903-1910. Johnson called on him and then enrolled as a special, non-degree student under Delano for the 1906-1907 academic year.²⁹ Johnson did not graduate, but presumably was taught that in order to become successful in his chosen profession, he must study in Paris.

Johnson went to Paris and continued his studies in architecture at Atelier Chifflet from 1907-1908, and at the Academie des Beaux Artes from 1908-1911.³⁰ Under the Beaux-Arts tradition, students were subjected to an intensely disciplined approach to design and related technical requirements. They were taught to seek their sources in specific historical examples of recognized excellence. They composed their designs with a view both to beauty and utility,

²⁵ Johnson, p.91.

²⁶ Johnson, p.91.

²⁷ Petersen, p.22.

²⁸ Johnson, p.93.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Petersen, p.22; Johnson, pp.93-94.

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stressing variety in design and ornament.³¹ The funding for Johnson's four year studies presumably came from the wealthy Sturges family, since Johnson himself had limited resources.³²

With his education completed in 1911, Johnson returned to the United States and briefly settled in New York.³³ While in New York, he may have designed a residence in Scarsdale.³⁴ In 1912, Johnson and his wife decided to move west and settle in San Diego. The reason for the move stemmed largely with the Sturges family association with San Diego. As early as 1888, with the opening of the Hotel del Coronado, and the favorable Santa Fe Railroad rates, George Sturges, Clara's father, would take his family on vacation to San Diego and Coronado.³⁵ The Sturges family would come to own property in Coronado. Considering Clara's familiarity with the San Diego region, its moderate climate, and the fact that her relatives were living in the area, the couple was influenced to move there and begin a new life and career in architecture.

William Templeton Johnson's architectural career in San Diego can best be discussed by dividing it into three periods. His "early years" lasted from 1912-1916. These years include the period when Johnson first arrived in San Diego, to the year when noted San Diego architect Irving Gill closed his practice. Johnson's "middle years" lasted from about 1916-1928. These years begin with the "critical year" of 1916, when Johnson, "[w]ith greater concentration...studied

³¹ Davie, *Landmark*, p.15.

³² Johnson, p.93.

³³ Petersen, p.22.

³⁴ Alan Johnson, "W.T.J. Buildings: Chronological List," p. 1.

³⁵ Johnson, p.88.

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and applied the Spanish Mission styles prevalent in the Southwest³⁶ to his design in 1928, of the San Diego Trust & Savings Bank and its innovative Italian Romanesque Revival style.³⁷ Johnson's "later years" between about 1929-1938, reflect a maturity and a return to his earlier Spanish Mission styles. Although Johnson remained active and continued to practice architecture until 1955, many of his works after 1938 were handled by his firm and office associates. These post-1938 works have been called "undistinguished."³⁸ While Johnson was inevitably associated with every project produced by his firm, by 1938, his career had reached its conclusion, as civic and government buildings were undertaken. After 1938, it was apparent that his career had followed the usual pattern of architects, that is, designing residential homes, then public buildings, and finally commercial and governmental structures.³⁹

The Early Years, 1912-1916

When Johnson first arrived in San Diego, he designed a number of individual homes and small bungalows in Coronado, San Diego, La Jolla, and Point Loma. His earliest work was the design of a Coronado residence for Mr. and Mrs. Arthur DuBois in 1911.⁴⁰ From the very onset, Johnson set out to establish his reputation as a major architect in the community. Concerned about the education of children, his wife Clara founded the private and independent Francis W. Parker School in 1912, a school that has produced many of the community's business, civic and cultural leaders. Based on the concept of the Chicago educational philosopher, Colonel Francis W. Parker, a belief of relevancy of education, the school's tenets stressed a sense of community

³⁶ Petersen, p.23.

³⁷ Lia, Marie Burke and Mellon, Dolores, "San Diego Trust & Savings Building," Historic Preservation Certification Application, Part One.

³⁸ Petersen, p.28.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Johnson, *List*, p.1.

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and the development of character. For this school, Johnson designed a building of simple Spanish Mission character. The first units were dedicated in January, 1913. In 1915, San Diego's California Pacific International Exposition, with its highly creative and elaborate architectural setting designed by Bertram Goodhue, resulted in focused community attention on a more refined and sophisticated style of architecture steeped in a Churrigueresque, Plataresque, and even Moorish tradition.⁴¹ At this time, Johnson's work began to reflect an obviously changing public taste. The attractiveness expressed in the work of Irving Gill began to give way to the romantic style embodied by Johnson. Although quite active in the San Diego community between 1895-1916, it was clear, that by 1915, Gill's influence on San Diego architecture was beginning to diminish. Consequently, "Johnson became San Diego's leading practicing architect when Gill closed his office."⁴²

The Middle Years, 1916-1928

The year 1916, has been considered a critical year in the professional life of Johnson, as it represents a thorough application of Spanish Mission and Spanish Colonial styles. After 1916, Johnson seems to have deeply tapped into his interest in Mexican and Spanish arts and architecture.⁴³ While Johnson was attracted to these styles, he felt comfortable with other architectural styles as well and often utilized them.⁴⁴ His preference for residential homes, especially during this period, can best be described as Mediterranean. A very good example of this style is the Hildreth Peckham residence, designed in 1927, located in Point Loma. This is a marvelous and harmonious structure with a formal setting to match its formality of design.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Petersen, p.22.

⁴² Petersen, p.23.

⁴³ Davie, *Landmark*, p.15.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Petersen, p.23.

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Other Johnson residential designs during this period have been described as Southwestern, influenced by the low and long adobe Pueblo structures of New Mexico.⁴⁶

In 1921, Johnson designed his first major public structure, the La Jolla Public Library. Designed in Spanish Colonial Revival and Italian Renaissance styles, it was designed as a San Diego Historic Landmark on July 27, 1988.⁴⁷ This building is low and one-storied. The decoration is restrained, a small portico with refined pillars and pilasters capped by modified Corinthian-inspired capitals form the principal facade decoration. Recessed windows add a low-keyed decor.⁴⁸ At the extreme termination of the building's right wing, Johnson designed the Athenaeum, while in the left wing, he placed a filigree of metal, bracket lights, and graceful stair railing, creating a subtle and refined appeal.⁴⁹ Between 1922-1925, in addition to residences, Johnson continued to design public buildings including La Jolla Junior-Senior High School, the Roosevelt Junior High School Music Building (demolished), the La Jolla High School Auditorium, as well as two private research laboratories.⁵⁰

In 1924, Johnson designed what has often been "considered [his] outstanding achievement in San Diego,"⁵¹ the Fine Arts Gallery (now the San Diego Museum of Art) in Balboa Park. Construction of the \$400,000 gallery began in April, 1924, and was completed by February, 1926. This structure, along with the Natural History Museum, comprise two of twelve "El Prado

⁴⁶ Petersen, p.30

⁴⁷ *City of San Diego Historical Site Board Register*, La Jolla Public Library, Number 228, July 27, 1988.

⁴⁸ Petersen, p.26.

⁴⁹ Petersen, p.25.

⁵⁰ Johnson, *List*, p.5.

⁵¹ Petersen, p.25.

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Complex" buildings, a collection of structures, buildings, gardens, and plazas. This complex was listed on the City of San Diego Historical Site Board Register on September 7, 1967, approved by the California Landmarks Commission on March 7, 1974, and approved and listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a Historic District on May 14, 1974.⁵²

The Fine Arts Gallery, designed in a Spanish Plateresque style⁵³ with an Italian Renaissance edifice and a richly embellished entrance, the Gallery is reminiscent of the Colonial Spanish era.⁵⁴ It has been said that the intricate design of the entrance was fashioned on that of the University of Salamanca in Spain.⁵⁵ According to Johnson, "I decided that it should cover about...roughly two hundred feet in length. I chose, in designing, the Plateresque type of Spanish architecture, knowing that it would be in general harmony with the existing structures, but more representative of the highest type of Spanish Renaissance than most of the old Exposition buildings which were more in the spirit of Spanish work in Mexico. I then started the sketches on that basis."⁵⁶ In 1966, a west wing was added, and in 1975, an east wing was added. The Fine Arts Gallery, as it was before the west and east wings were constructed has been called "a major contributing element" to the National Historic Landmark District, while the wings have been classified as "non-contributing."⁵⁷ In 1926, Johnson designed the first unit of a building in La Jolla

⁵² *National Register of Historic Places Inventory--Nomination Form*, "El Prado Complex," Approved National Register, May 14, 1974; City of San Diego Historical Site Board Register, Number 1, September 7, 1967.

⁵³ *Balboa Park Building Survey*, San Diego Museum of Art.

⁵⁴ Petersen, p.25.

⁵⁵ Davie, *Landmark*, p.16.

⁵⁶ W.T. Johnson, n.p.

⁵⁷ *Balboa Park Building Survey*, San Diego Museum of Art.

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called "Los Apartamentos de Seville," in what would later become La Valencia Hotel,⁵⁸ and in 1927, Johnson would design his first confirmed bank building,⁵⁹ the Southern Trust & Commerce Bank. In 1928, Johnson designed the San Diego Trust & Savings Bank Building (see "*The San Diego Trust & Savings Bank Building*" below). Johnson was so enamored with the design of the San Diego Trust & Savings Bank Building, that he decided to relocate his practice there on the Fourteenth Floor soon after the building was completed.

The Later Years, 1929-1938

Between 1929-1954, Johnson solidified his position as one of San Diego's premier architects. During this period, Johnson became firmly associated and best known as the designer of public buildings in the Presidio and Balboa Parks as well as some private buildings.⁶⁰ In 1929, Johnson was invited by Commissioner General Thomas E. Campbell to submit examples of his work in consideration of designing three buildings, comprising the American contribution, to the Iberian-American Exposition to be held in Seville, Spain from June 1929 through June 1930.⁶¹ Johnson was selected from a field of six American contestants. Of the three buildings erected for the occasion only one was made the permanent official United States Consulate. Johnson attended the inaugural ceremonies and personally received special recognition and honor from

⁵⁸ Johnson, *List*, p.5; Petersen, p.29.

⁵⁹ Martin Petersen notes that, "during World War I...records exist referring to his Mid-City Trust and Savings Bank in Chicago." Petersen, p.29. Subsequent research indicates that the design of the Mid-City Trust and Savings Bank, located at 801 West Madison Street, was by architects Hamilton, Fellows & Wilkinson around 1911. There is no evidence to suggest that Johnson, nor the Sturges family, had any connection whatsoever in the design or operation of the Mid-City Trust and Savings Bank.

⁶⁰ Petersen, p.23.

⁶¹ Petersen, p.26; Johnson, *List*, p.6.

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King Alfonso XIII.⁶² The consulate building is a two-storied structure, with sparse decoration emphasizing the entry, roof line and window openings. This characteristic architectural concept associated with Johnson indicates the preference of a prevalent Baroque style. It also demonstrates an element of tradition rigidly adhered to and seemingly preferred by the populace. The commission earned him international reputation.⁶³

In 1929, Johnson designed the Junipero Serra Museum in Presidio Park. Johnson considered this museum among his finest achievements of Spanish Colonial style.⁶⁴ It has also been called "one of the finest examples of Spanish Colonial Revival style architecture in the city," and was designated a San Diego Historic Landmark on September 27, 1989.⁶⁵ The project, largely conceived by George W. Marston, a friend of Johnson's, was dedicated on July 16, 1929. It has been described as, "an outstanding modern example of the best our heritage of Mission Architecture, admirably fitted to a commanding site, and expressing with remarkable vigor the fine dignity of Father Serra."⁶⁶ The building's prominent tower has a sweeping view of Mission Valley and toward the ocean. A long covered ambulatory with its red tile roof and arcade leads into a large single room with high walls and beamed ceiling. It has three foot thick walls of reinforced concrete and tile floor. Although it lacks the exterior ornateness to be found in some of his earlier public buildings, it has been considered by some historians "the most successful expression in his chosen stylistic idiom."⁶⁷

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Petersen, p.28.

⁶⁴ Petersen, p.24.

⁶⁵ *City of San Diego Historical Site Board Register*, Junipero Serra Museum, Number 237, September 27, 1989.

⁶⁶ Petersen, p.23.

⁶⁷ Petersen, p.24.

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Also in 1929, Johnson returned to downtown San Diego where he designed the Samuel I. Fox Building at the southwest corner of Sixth Avenue and Broadway, across the street from the San Diego Trust & Savings Bank Building. The building was designed in Mission Revival and Mediterranean styles, and was designated as part of the National Gaslamp Quarter Historic District in June 1978, as well as a San Diego Historic Landmark in March 1983.⁶⁸ Constructed as the Lion Clothing Company department store, the building has a feeling of lightness despite the larger proportion of the upper floors in ratio to the lower ground floor. Johnson used walls of glass with tracery of engaged slender pillars separated by a screening device to sustain them and to conceal the actual number of floors. Exterior emphasis on verticality enhances the size of the building and adds a sense of greater height. Finials depicting a lion holding a shield seem appropriate to the richness of the building's decoration. These cement creatures alternate with a basin like projection. Beneath the overhanging tile roof, evidence of painted design can still be detected between the eaves. Although different in feeling and concept, the San Diego Trust and Savings Bank Building and the Fox Building are in complete concert, unified by decoration and common ancestry.⁶⁹

Between 1930-1933, Johnson spent much of his time devoted to construction projects within Balboa Park. In 1930, he designed the base of the statute of *El Cid Campeador*, which was itself created by Anna Hyatt Huntington. The heroic statue of the Spanish savior who united Spain in common cause and became legendary was put upon a base of stone that Johnson designed. Of Indiana limestone, fifteen feet long, fourteen feet high and eight feet wide, the base conveys simple dignity and solidity, characteristic of the buildings of the master architect. The *El Cid* statue, at the time, was the first public sculpture erected in San Diego. Johnson himself was never pleased with the location of the monument. He visualized it as a terminal element for Laurel Street. Approaching the park, one would see a silhouette of the equestrian. The side view of *El Cid* is the most powerful perspective, and would effect a greater visual impact upon the

⁶⁸ *Gaslamp Quarter Historic District*, National Register of Historic Places, Number 2A, 79, June 2, 1978; *City of San Diego Historical Site Board Register*, Samuel I. Fox Building, Number 79, March 1983.

⁶⁹ Petersen, p.28.

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In 1931, Johnson was commissioned by the Society of Natural History to design the Museum of Natural History Building in Balboa Park. The Society, founded in 1874, is the oldest scientific organization in Southern California, and the second oldest west of the Rockies.⁷¹ As membership grew between 1874 to the mid-1920s, the Society realized its pressing need for a permanent, adequate and fireproof building. A \$125,000 gift from Miss Ellen Browning Scripps, one of the Society's most generous benefactors, along with matching funds to be generated by public subscriptions, provided the impetus and necessary capital to construct the museum.⁷² The choice of Johnson as an architect stemmed directly from his association with the San Diego Trust & Savings Building. The president of the bank, one of the driving forces behind the Panama-California Exposition of 1915, Joseph W. Sefton, Jr., was also president of the Society of Natural History from 1922-1951. Greatly pleased with Johnson's design of the Bank, Sefton's decision to choose Johnson from a "short list" of architects seems both obvious and natural.⁷³

Johnson's design of the Natural History Museum is one of his finest public works.⁷⁴ Construction of the museum began in December, 1931, and the building was dedicated on January 14, 1933.⁷⁵ Johnson's design called for a fireproof and earthquake proof three-story building with two wings to the north and an archway connecting an additional building across the street

⁷⁰ Petersen, p.28.

⁷¹ Scott A. Moomjian, *Brief History Of The Natural History Museum*, p.1.

⁷² Petersen, p.24; Moomjian, p.2.

⁷³ Moomjian, p.2.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Petersen, p.24.

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where the Casa del Prado now stands. The original building conceived by Johnson was much larger than what was built. Because of the depression and a lack of adequate funding, only one building was built, with the single wing, as it is today. However, Johnson did plan for expansion by constructing the north wall of plaster and wood rather than poured in place concrete as the rest of the building, in order to accommodate the Society's needs to complete the original plan in a cost-effective manner.⁷⁶

The three-storied Museum of Natural History is composed of a reinforced concrete edifice, designed in the Classical Revival style, but embellished with Mediterranean features.⁷⁷ The central pavilion is elevated by a large stairway leading to the front entrance. Entrance is through a large arch flanked by ornate stylized Corinthian columns. The sculptural detail on the facade is the work of Arthur Putnam. Exterior ornamentation depicts flora and fauna that is typically studied and exhibited by the museum. In the spandrels are two round medallions, each containing a facing head of a Bighorn Sheep. The columns support a cornice made up of acanthus leaves, followed by a band of dentils, and topped by several layers of classical molding. Below the cornice is a band of stylized mythological creatures. Above the cornice is a peaked pediment made up of similar molding, topped by a band of facing griffins. At the peak of the pediment is a double-headed spread eagle. To each side of the pediment is a pedestal supporting a large statue of an Egyptian cat.⁷⁸ The Natural History Museum has been determined to be a contributor and part of the National Historic Landmark District.⁷⁹

Between 1935-1938, Johnson continued to design public structures. In particular, he designed buildings for the federal government and City and County of San Diego. In 1935, Johnson, with other noted San Diego architects Louis Gill, Richard Requa, and Sam Hamill

⁷⁶ Moomjian, p.3.

⁷⁷ Davie, p.16.

⁷⁸ Moomjian, pp.4-5.

⁷⁹ *Balboa Park Building Survey*, Natural History Museum.

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designed the County Administration Building on Pacific Highway. Completed in 1938, this building has been called "a prime example of American civic center architecture built in the 1936-38 time period during the Great Depression when public works of significance were financed in great part by the W.P.A., part of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal."⁸⁰ Designed in Spanish Revival/Streamline Moderne with Beaux-Arts classical touches, it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on November 14, 1988.⁸¹ In 1937, Johnson designed the United States Post Office, located on E Street between Seventh and Eighth Avenues. David Gebhard has described this building as designed in an Art Deco style. The three public facades of this reinforced-concrete building employs fluted piers that have neither bases nor capitals. At each end of the primary facade, along E Street, are projecting pavilions treated in a cubist fashion. The walls of the lower rear section of the building are articulated by pilasters that rise to the top of the parapets. The decoration is as reserved as the building itself. Quotations incised in gold leaf occur in a horizontal band just below the cornice. Above the three-story window-and-spandrel recesses on the main facade are terra-cotta panels entitled *Speed of Transportation*, designed by the sculptor Archibald Garner.⁸²

Between 1939 until Johnson retired in 1955, Johnson and his firm produced a number of designs. While the firm did design a number of residences, most of the projects were largely devoted to the public community. For example, during the Second World War, a number of schools, community centers, and churches were designed. These include the Bandini Elementary School (1939), Muir Elementary School (1940), Fourth Church of Christ, Scientist (1940), Andrew Jackson Elementary School (1942), and Linda Vista Elementary School (1943). After the war, the Ocean Beach Community Center (1947), the Bandini School Elementary Addition (1948), the Fremont Elementary School Addition (1948), Institute of Aeronautical Sciences Building (1948), Woodrow Wilson Junior High School (1949), and the San Diego State

⁸⁰ *National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form*, "San Diego Civic Center/San Diego County Administration Center," November 14, 1988.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² David Gebhard, *The National Trust Guide To Art Deco In America*, pp.221-222.

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University master plan development (1949-1950) were all designed, in addition to the San Diego Public Library, Main Branch in 1954. During the last years of his life, there were three projects which were designed but never completed. These were a new stadium for the Pacific Coast League San Diego Padres, an Administration Building for Lindbergh Field, and an Administration Building for Solar Aircraft, Inc.⁸³

Over the course of his life, William Templeton Johnson received much praise for his work. Perhaps one of the most important achievements over his forty-four year career came on September 25, 1939 at the seventy-first annual meeting of the American Institute of Architects. On that date, Johnson was inducted as a Fellow. At that time, less than three hundred architects throughout the country associated with the institute had been so honored. The award, bestowed by Charles D. Maginnis, head of the organization stated, "The profession of architecture has been well served by Mr. Johnson. His contributions to design, research, literature, education and public service fulfill the exacting criteria of a vital architecture."⁸⁴

It has been noted that the lasting legacy of William Templeton Johnson was manifest particularly in his public buildings in San Diego. In these buildings is implicit the personal philosophy that underlies them. Johnson, quite simply, studied the simple, beautiful lines of California Mission Architecture. During the first quarter of the twentieth-century and throughout his life, Johnson encouraged an adaptation of the Spanish Mission architectural style with its red tile roof and stucco walls, discouraging any style that he felt was out of keeping with the climate and scenic background of Southern California.⁸⁵ Johnson was remembered best as the man who put the Spanish stamp on San Diegan architecture.⁸⁶ However, he also felt comfortable occasionally using Renaissance styles. Johnson's concern concern for an attractive and appealing

⁸³ Johnson, *List*, pp.8-12; Petersen, p.29.

⁸⁴ Petersen, p.21; Moomjian, p.3.

⁸⁵ Petersen, p.21.

⁸⁶ University of San Diego, *San Diego Architects, 1868-1939*, p.94.

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San Diego extended beyond his architectural contributions however, as he directed his attention to a variety of worthwhile activities to better the community. His involvement in San Diego's civic and cultural affairs is significant, and reflects the diversity of his interests in the community. Johnson, for example, served on the Park Commission from 1920-1925, and in 1939, he was elected President of the Fine Arts Society, an organization which long held a special interest for him.⁸⁷ In 1957, Johnson died at the age of eighty.

The San Diego Trust & Savings Bank Building

Early in 1924, the directors of the San Diego Trust & Savings Bank decided to construct a large combination bank and office building in the heart of downtown San Diego.⁸⁸ With such a decision, then vice-president Joseph Weller Sefton, Jr., was appointed "a committee of one," consisting of himself, to plan the building and have it constructed. In 1926, Sefton, the son of the founder of the San Diego Savings Bank, hired Johnson to design the San Diego Trust & Savings Bank Building. Johnson, who had been in practice for fifteen years by this time, was approaching the zenith of his career as an architect,⁸⁹ and began to design plans for the building. In the meantime, Sefton called a committee of the National Association of Building Owners and Managers meeting to San Diego in order to evaluate plans for the new structure. Sefton along with Johnson and other local officials, joined the committee, which was comprised of building managers from several large cities. All important features of the planned building were discussed in great detail. Many changes to the plans resulted from the meeting and were incorporated into Johnson's working drawings.⁹⁰ Sefton was particularly pleased with the plans for the lofty banking hall, the layout of the safe deposit vaults, the accessibility of the trust department, the elevator serving these areas, the entrances and stairways, all of which he felt provided a fine set of

⁸⁷ Petersen, p.21.

⁸⁸ Davie, *Landmark*, p.7.

⁸⁹ Davie, *Landmark*, p.15.

⁹⁰ Davie, *Landmark*, pp.11,14.

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interrelated spaces through which there would be ease of circulation.⁹¹

Johnson's architectural drawings for the bank, dated February 1927, were meticulously rendered on linen and included detailed specifications for the building.⁹² These plans were put out for bid and the Simpson Construction Company of San Diego was selected to erect the fourteen story combination bank and office building. The site of the building, located at Sixth Avenue and Broadway, measures 100 by 150 feet and comprises three city lots. The land was purchased in 1924 for \$600,000, which was at the time, the largest real estate transaction in downtown San Diego up to that time. When the land was purchased in 1924, the site was occupied by the Kline Block. Occupying the corner of Sixth and Broadway was the Hotel Beacon. Demolition of this structure and another adjoining structure was followed by excavation of the site, completed in mid-April, 1927. The first steel column for the San Diego Trust & Savings Bank Building was seated on June 8 and the cornerstone laid on November 1. Sefton, as vice-president, presided over this ceremony. Records of the bank were placed in the cornerstone, which was then sealed in place by the Bank's president M.T. Gilmore, Mayor Harry Clark, and Howard Wirth, president of the San Diego Chamber of Commerce, who had also attended the ceremony.⁹³

Designed in Italian Romanesque Revival style, the San Diego Trust & Savings building occupies a corner site of 100 foot frontage on the north side of Broadway and 150 feet on the west side of Sixth Avenue. The building is rectangular in shape, including the first and mezzanine floors. Above the mezzanine floor, the building is a modified "L" shape⁹⁴ (*for more discussion of the building's physical appearance and features, see Section 7 "Narrative Description"*). The building's design is heavily influenced by the Beaux-Arts style, as well as the work of Chicago

⁹¹ Davie, *Landmark*, p.14.

⁹² Davie, *Landmark*, pp.17-18.

⁹³ Davie, p.18.

⁹⁴ Lia and Mellon, "San Diego Trust & Savings Building."

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architect Daniel Burnham and the firm of McKim, Mead & White.⁹⁵ This is not surprising since Johnson himself studied at the Academie des Beaux Artes in Paris and was exposed to the Beaux-Art style. Similarly, he was influenced by the work of William Delano, who had once practiced with McKim, Mead & White, and Johnson's affiliation with Chicago would have exposed him to the work of Burnham. The San Diego Trust & Savings Bank Building was designated as a historic site by the City of San Diego Historic Site Board on June 26, 1996.⁹⁶

The San Diego Trust and Savings Bank Building is significant as it embodies distinctive characteristics of a style and period of construction, namely its Italian Romanesque Revival style of architecture, of which the building is a fine example. The rich ornamentation, changes in building material and horizontal courses obliterate the cell-like monotony of repeating units. Its novel treatment of terra-cotta, particularly in cast panels and column capitals, further softens the fortress-like facade. The use of terra-cotta, as a building material, was common during this era. Featured on the Bank Building, and typical of the Romanesque Revival is the use of massive arches surrounding the first floor's windows and doorways.⁹⁷ The dominant arch forms and their detailing harken back to the Richardsonian Romanesque of the 1880s and 1890s.⁹⁸ Also typical is the belt course atop the second, third and eleventh floors, and the use of decorative brackets in the roofline's detail. Johnson also successfully combined some features of Italianate in the structure. The low pitched roof with cupola, the appearance of columns cast in the terra-cotta, and inverted "U"-shaped window crowns on the top windows, are reminiscent of Italianate. The design of the building's interior is equally remarkable. Approximately nineteen different marbles create a most beautiful effect. The building's marble was imported from throughout the world,

⁹⁵ David Gebhard and Robert Winter, *A Guide To Architecture In Los Angeles & Southern California*, p.444.

⁹⁶ City of San Diego, Historical Site Number 335, June 26, 1996.

⁹⁷ Lia and Mellon, p.5.

⁹⁸ Gebhard and Winter, p.444.

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and tastefully adorns both interior and exterior.⁹⁹

Johnson chose the Romanesque architectural style well, for he was designing what would become, at that time, San Diego's highest building. Once completed, the building represented a milestone in San Diego's architectural development, as the structure towered 243 feet above the pavement. The entire city could be viewed from its rooftop. The building featured the most technologically advanced, and modern features to date, including elevators with a maximum speed of 660 feet per minute, at a time when most buildings' elevators only reached speeds of 300 feet per minute. The use of Briar Hill sandstone on the first and second floors represents the first time this material was used on the Pacific Coast, and adds to the building's beauty. In 1928, the Bank, as San Diego's tallest building, was chosen to house San Diego's first revolving aviation beacon. At over 240 feet above the sidewalk, the beacon, which emitted a white and red beam alternately,¹⁰⁰ was visible for a radius of more than 25 miles. In the interest of air safety, San Diego Savings and Trust Bank operated the beacon from dusk until dawn, nightly.¹⁰¹ In 1933, the building received an A.I.A. award for its "outstanding design showing infinite care and study."¹⁰² The San Diego Trust & Savings Bank Building, therefore, qualifies as an excellent example of an San Diego Italian Romanesque Revival style commercial building, the only one of its kind, designed by noted San Diego master craftsman and architect William Templeton Johnson.

⁹⁹ Lia and Mellon, p.5.

¹⁰⁰ Davie, *Landmark*, p.42.

¹⁰¹ Lia and Mellon, p.5.

¹⁰² Ibid.

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10. Geographical Data

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Assessors (Legal) Parcel Number: 533-424-07

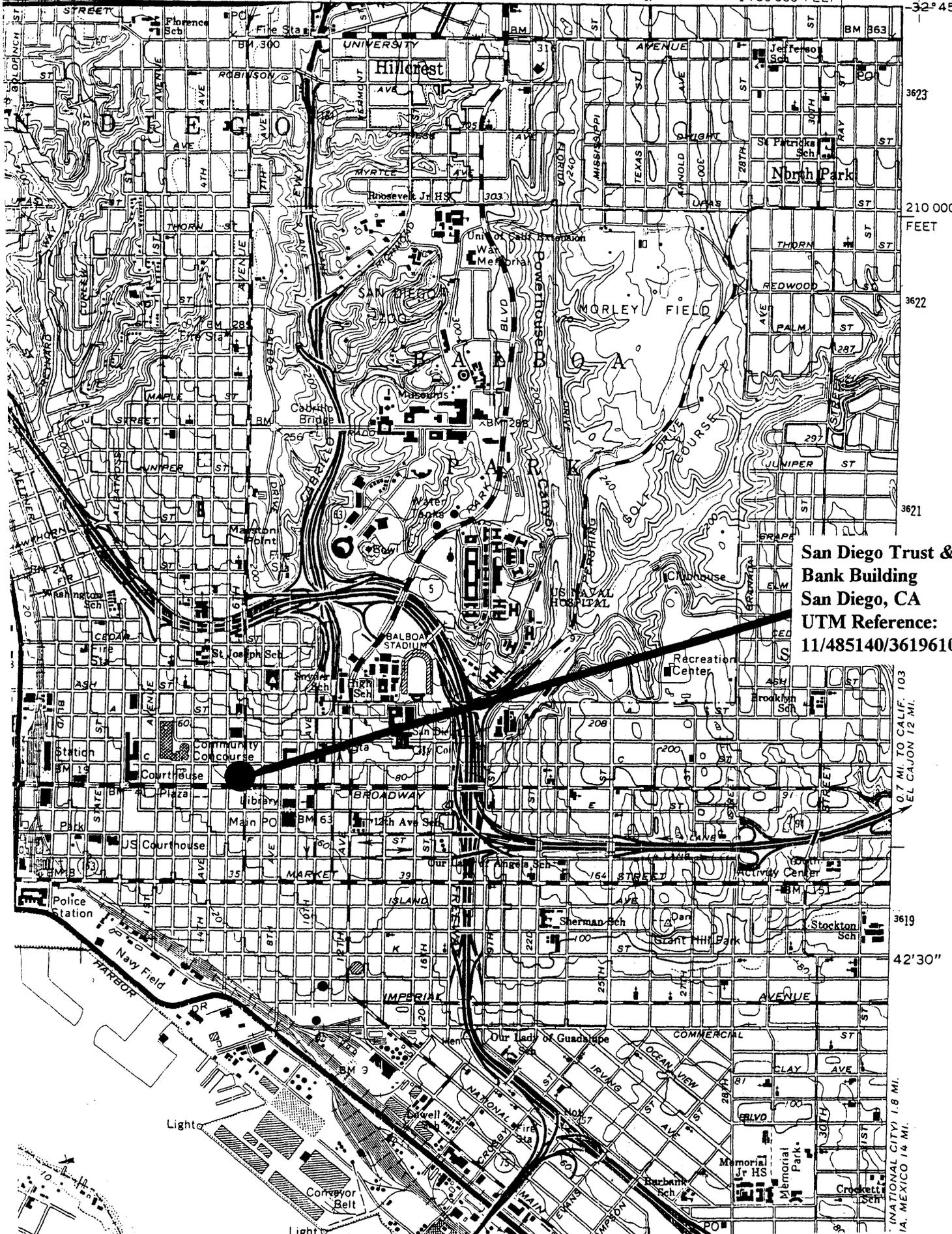
BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The San Diego Trust & Savings Bank Building is located at 530-540 Broadway, San Diego, California, 92101, in the County of San Diego, State of California. It is located on the northwest corner of Sixth Avenue and Broadway on Lots G, H, I in Block 35 of Horton's Addition. These boundaries were selected as they encompass the building area.

POINT LOMA QUADRANGLE
CALIFORNIA-SAN DIEGO CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

25491 SE
(LA MESA)

194 10' ESCONDIDO 28 MI. 1 MI TO INTERSTATE 8 486 487 1 730 000 FEET 117°07'30" 32°45'



San Diego Trust & Savings
Bank Building
San Diego, CA
UTM Reference:
11/485140/3619610

0.7 MI. TO CALIF. 103
EL CAJON 12 MI.

NATIONAL CITY 1.8 MI.
LA, MEXICO 14 MI.