

**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 Union Iron Works (P.G.&E.) Power House

and/or common Bethlehem - Alameda Shipyard Power House

2. Location

street & number 2308 Webster Street ___ not for publication

city, town Alameda ___ vicinity of congressional district 9

state California code ~~94501~~ 06 county Alameda code 001

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Alameda Marina Village Associates

street & number 3000 Sand Hill Road, Building 3, Suite 255

city, town Menlo Park ___ vicinity of state California

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Alameda County Courthouse

street & number 1225 Fallon Street

city, town Oakland state California

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None (City Planning Dept. Survey, in progress, has not reached this area) has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Union Iron Works Power House is a one-story rectangular industrial building, 25 feet high, 53 feet wide and 110 feet long, which rests on a concrete base. It is of steel frame construction with reinforced concrete walls and it is covered with a brick veneer, the building is fire-proof except for exposed steel trusses which carry a flat roof and a monitor skylight. Bay divisions are determined by a series of 5 arched openings which dominate the east and west elevations, creating an arcade effect.

Each arch is trimmed with concrete moldings and capped by a keystone. An identical single arch commands both north and south elevations. The openings are glazed in industrial sash which is now boarded up. Entrances located in the east and north elevations are also boarded up.

Projecting end blocks on the east and west elevations are outlined with alternating quoins and enriched with ornamental brickwork consisting of a continuous diamond pattern done in black and red brick. Both north and south elevations are completely covered with the same diamond pattern, while the east and west elevations are laid in Flemish bond.

The interior consists of a single space, open from floor to ceiling. Steel truss work and a 4 foot high wire glass monitor skylight which runs the length of the building lend a spacious quality to the interior. The concrete foundations of electrical generating and switching equipment are a reminder of the building's original use.

The building is located at the western edge of the old Union Iron Works property, parallel to the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks, and sited in a generally north-south direction. Most of the buildings it originally provided with power have been demolished and it now sits on an overgrown lot, adjacent to a gravel railroad feeder road.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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

Specific dates 1917 **Builder/Architect** Frederick H. Meyer, architect
Lange and Bergstrom, builders

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Union Iron Works Power House is an excellent example of a building type -- the "beautiful" power house -- for which the San Francisco Bay Area was nationally known, designed by an architect -- Frederick H. Meyer -- who was one of the most prominent figures in the evolution of that type. It is also of interest as the principal power house for a shipyard that played a major role in both World Wars. It is one of the last buildings remaining from that shipyard, along with the Turbine Machine Shop (being separately nominated to the National Register).

The building is one of many designed for the Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) in northern California between 1905 and the 1920s, which was treated in imagery borrowed from classical antiquity and the Renaissance. As such it represented the influence of the City Beautiful Movement in the respectful treatment of what had previously been considered a type of building unworthy of the consideration of an architect. The designs of those buildings and the attitudes that produced them were praised in several books and magazine articles of the period. While this building was not specifically mentioned, its careful and well-executed design and its imaginative brickwork places it well within that category of buildings that was being praised.

Frederick H. Meyer was one of San Francisco's leading architects between about 1905 and 1955. He is best known for his role in the development of the San Francisco Civic Center, for his many downtown San Francisco office buildings, and for his careful and imaginative use of orthodox ornamental detail. He was one of those architects most closely associated with the design of classical power houses for PG&E.

The building is the first PG&E substation in Alameda, for the city had its own Bureau of Electricity, as it does to this day. The power requirements of the Iron Works were so great that they established a contract with PG&E in 1916, to the great displeasure of the city. Considerable discussion was raised over the issue.

The building was built by Lange and Bergstrom for about \$60,000. During the First World War, it was the main electrical generating plant for what had become known as the Alameda Works of the Union Plant, a division of the Bethlehem Shipbuilding Corporation. The Alameda Works was the largest shipbuilding plant on the Pacific Coast at the time, and during the War it set numerous records for speed of construction and tonnage produced per man.

Between the wars, the power house continued to supply power for scaled

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet - page 2

10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED
ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Acreage of nominated property .133 acres

Quadrangle name Oakland West, California

Quadrangle scale 7.5 minute

UMT References

A

1	0	5	6	3	9	1	0	4	1	8	2	2	0	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

See Continuation Sheet - page 3

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

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Michael Corbett and Margaret Welden for Alameda Marina Village Association (Owners)

organization Charles Hall Page & Associates, Inc. date 24 September 1979

street & number 364 Bush Street telephone 415-362-5154

city or town San Francisco state California 94104

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 *K. Miller*

title _____ date 11/29/79

For HCERS use only
I hereby certify that this property is a historic resource.

[Signature]
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: *[Signature]*
Chief of the National Register

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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Significance continued

down shipyard operations, and after 1933, for the fabrication of structural steel as well. At the outset of World War II, the whole Alameda Works, which by that time was known as the Bethlehem Alameda Shipyard, was modernized, including equipment in the power house. The shipyard repaired over 1,000 commercial vessels during World War II, it built a new series of large troop transport ships, and it continued to produce structural steel.

Since World War II, the shipyard's activities were at first greatly reduced, and then ended. Through a succession of owners most of its buildings have been destroyed, with the notable exceptions of the power house and the Turbine Machine Shop. The power house is part of a proposed mixed use redevelopment scheme that would retain the power house itself, perhaps as a restaurant or for some other commercial use. The present owner wishes to place the building on the National Register in order to take advantage of the Tax Reform Act of 1976.

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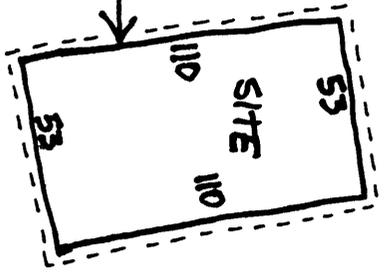
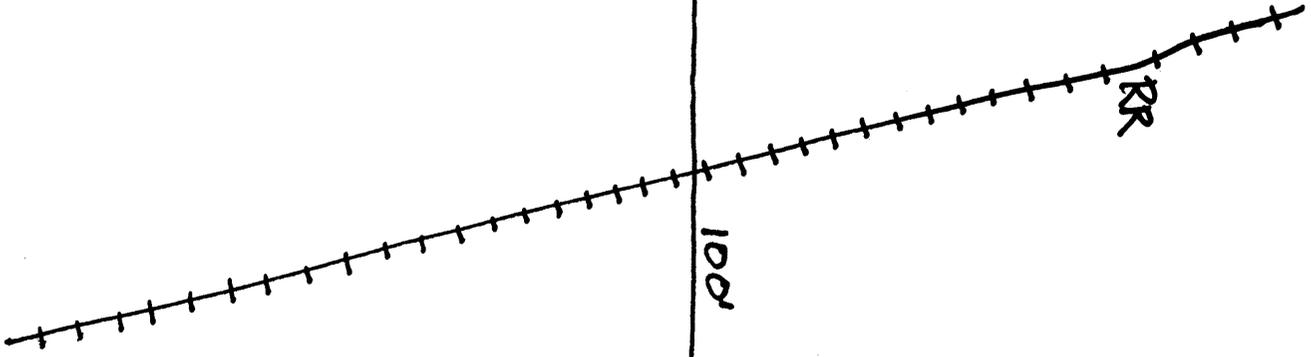
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Verbal boundary

The nominated property is located on assessor's lot #74-906-11 and measures 110 feet by 53 feet. It is situated approximately 100 feet east of Webster Street, and is bounded on the north, east, and south by Alameda Village Associates property. Please refer to the accompanying map entitled "Boundaries of the Union Iron Works Power House."

WEBSTER STREET




NORTH

UNION IRON WORKS (P. G. & E.) POWER HOUSE
ALAMEDA, CALIFORNIA

DEC 03 1975

JAN 10 1976

