

1876

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

RECEIVED
NOV 27 1991

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property The Bellevue-Staten

historic name none

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 492 Staten Avenue

n/a not for publication

city, town Oakland

n/a vicinity

state California

code CA

county Alameda

code 001

zip code 94610

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

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

Category of Property

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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
_____	_____ sites
_____	_____ structures
_____	_____ objects
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register _____

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Kathryn M. Martini
Signature of certifying official
State Historic Preservation Officer

11-14-91
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____

Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register. 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): _____

Entered in the
National Register

Hugh M. Lapsley

12/27/91

for Signature of the Director

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
 Domestic: multiple dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
 Domestic: multiple dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
 (enter categories from instructions)
Early 20th Century American/Modern
Movement/Spanish Mediterranean
Revival and Art Deco

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete
 walls Brick and cast stone
 roof Concrete with asphalt
 other Iron

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

SUMMARY:

The Bellevue-Statens is a 14-story (189 feet high), 36-unit apartment building of steel-frame construction clad in cast stone and brick. The building has an L-shaped plan and occupies an L-shaped corner lot which has a drive-in court and some parking on the north side and a garage on the adjoining lot on the east side. The garage is a square, four-story, steel-frame and concrete structure clad in brick and cast stone. Both buildings were designed in an eclectic Spanish Mediterranean Revival/Art Deco style. The property, which has minimal landscaping of shrubs and trees around the main building, remains unaltered. The garage is also unaltered. The only alterations to the apartment building exterior in the last 30 years are a porte cochere added to the secondary entrance on the north side and metal and glass solarium placed on terraces on the 12th floor level, which are barely visible from the street and do not change the character of the building. Since the solarium are not integrated with the building walls, these alterations are reversible. On the interior, the apartments have received various alterations over the years, mostly to kitchens and bathrooms, but many of them have a high degree of integrity.

The Bellevue-Statens building has a three-part composition: the two-story base is rusticated cast stone (concrete); the shaft is variegated brick with an orange tone cast in an American bond; and the three-story capital combines brick and cast stone in fanciful ornament drawn from stylized foliate forms that is used in window heads and architraves and other geometric motifs used as finials. The main entry is on the Staten Street facade and is composed as a frontispiece, four stories high. The section with the entrance doors on the ground floor is a three-part composition in cast stone. The central part has the entrance, the upper part of which has a glazed transom set in a round arch; the entrance door is faced with an intricate metal grill in a metal frame with a paneled base and side lights which have the same grill. Metal colonettes divide the door from the side panels. Above the door is a metal frieze with a running vine with leaves and grapes. Above the frieze, the three-part division continues with the central section divided into three panels with an heraldic shield in the center flanked by two portrait heads. On either side, above the side lights, are portrait heads in Spanish-style hats. All of the heads are set in wreaths. The doorframe is surmounted by a central, heraldic composition in metal composed of a shield surrounded by ribbons and foliate forms flanked by two heraldic creatures, probably phoenixes. The entrance is set within

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 2

a scrolled arch on engaged columns. At the keystone of the arch is a male head, possibly Mercury; above the head is another heraldic composition with a shield and putti which is executed in high relief. Flanking this central section are identical side sections with rich and complicated compositions of foliate and heraldic motifs. The lower parts have niches which house wrought iron lanterns on stands; the upper parts have engaged colonettes with chevrons and voluted pediments. These reliefs combine strapwork in low relief and more plastic depictions of human and animal forms. The windows on either side of the ground-floor part of the frontispiece have ornamented wrought iron balconies. Above the two-story ground floor composition, the central section rises two more stories in the form of a three-sided bay window with an architrave that bears variations of the decorative motifs used in the lower section in the spandrels of the three windows and the scrolled pediment that caps the bay. Foliated finials and stylized foliated staffs also enrich the architrave. All windows are steel casements with transoms. The only alteration is the addition of a porte cochere to the north side.

The building was only slightly damaged in the October 1989 earthquake; some bricks were lost because of cracks in the walls. The cracks have been repaired and the brickwork replaced.

The unaltered lobby is two stories high and has square columns supporting a cast-plaster, coffered ceiling enriched with polychromed ornament, mainly in foliate forms. The walls have a blind arcade and are executed in imitation travertine. The same vocabulary of Churrigueresque ornament used on the exterior appears on the lobby walls and columns. A large, wrought iron chandelier hangs from the ceiling. The bronze elevator doors have 16 panels each bearing reliefs of stylized foliate forms alternating with images of squirrels encircled by vines. The floor has a geometric pattern made with rectangular tiles of varying sizes glazed in earth tones. The lobby suffered some minor cracking during the earthquake, but this damage has been repaired. The mezzanine floor has an ornamented wrought iron railing overlooking the lobby.

The third through the eleventh floors have three apartments; the twelfth through fourteenth have two apartments. Floor plans are shown in the attached brochure.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 3

The garage, which occupies the adjoining lot, is also a steel-frame and concrete structure clad in brick with a cast stone (concrete) portal and pilasters that extend through the roof parapet as finials. The decorative detail is minimal and confined to the portal. The parapet has a modified crenelation and is enriched with simple shields and a diapered pattern in brickwork. The garage has four stories and is set back from the Staten Avenue frontage to provide an auto court off the street. The building contains an automobile elevator. The garage was completed in 1929, about a year after the apartment building.

The two buildings occupy two different lots. The apartment building lot has a 120-foot frontage and is 60 feet deep; the garage has a 57-foot frontage and a depth of 120 feet. The corner lot is close to the lakeshore, providing the apartment tower with a visibility from many locations around the lake.

3. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1928-1929

Significant Dates

1928-29

Community Planning and Development

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Thebo, Starr & Anderton

BAUMANN, HERMAN C.

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

The Bellevue-Staten Apartments and Garage are significant under Criteria A and C. Under Criterion A, the properties contribute to the broad pattern of the development of apartment buildings on the shores of Oakland's Lake Merritt in the 1920s. Under Criterion C, the design of this two-building complex possesses high artistic value as a masterwork of the Oakland and San Francisco architect, Herman C. Baumann, who designed over 500 apartment buildings between 1925, when he began his practice, and 1959, the year he died.

CONTEXT FOR CRITERION A:

Lake Merritt resulted from the damming of a tidal slough at 12th Street in 1869-70. Dr. Samuel Merritt, Mayor of Oakland in 1867-68, was so identified with the creation of this civic amenity that the lake was named for him. Subsequent mayors were also committed to improving the lake and its shores, which had become a prime location for mansions of the wealthy. Frank K. Mott, who was mayor from 1905 to 1914, established a Park Commission in 1908, which created Lakeside Park. The lakeshore was landscaped, and the swampland was reclaimed south of the 12th Street dam. During the tenure of Mayor John L. Davie, 1915-1931, more improvements were made, including the completion of Lakeside Boulevard between Oak and Harrison Streets in 1922. Oakland boomed in the 1920s. As part of this accelerated growth in the downtown and suburban areas in the 1920s, eight high-rise (above five stories) apartment buildings were constructed near Lake Merritt. They are: The Regillus, 1921; 244 Lakeshore Drive, 1924; The Lake Merritt, 1927; Lakehurst Apartments, 1927; 2122 Lakeshore Drive, 1928; The Bellevue-Staten, 1928-29; Tudor Hall, 1929; and The Hill Castle, 1929. All of these buildings have been maintained over the years and are in good condition. Except for the 2122 Lakeshore Drive building on the east shore and the Bellevue-Staten on the north shore, these apartment towers were constructed in the south shore area, which was closest to the central downtown district. The demand for dwellings by the lake brought an end to the era of single mansions. Instead, towers such as the Regillus and 244 Lakeshore Drive began to dominate the skyline along the south side of the lake. The Great Depression

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

halted this development. Indeed, the Bellevue-Staten, 1928-29, marked the end of the boom and was the only apartment tower built on the north shore that rivaled those on the south side. Today, the urbane character of the lakeshore is still defined in a major way by these 1920s apartment towers.

CONTEXT FOR CRITERION C:

Herman C. Baumann, architect of the Bellevue-Staten, was born in Oakland on April 13, 1890. His parents, German immigrants, then moved to San Francisco where Baumann lived for the rest of his life. Like many early 20th century architects, Baumann had no academic training in architecture, even though he took what courses were given at the San Francisco Architectural Club by local architects who volunteered their time. Most of his training was gained through apprenticeships with architects Thomas Edwards and John Sexton. After receiving his architectural license in 1921, Baumann worked for the George Wagner Construction Company until 1925, when he opened his own office. Between 1925 and 1931, he designed some 500 apartment buildings in San Francisco, many of which were built by important contractors such as Oliver M. Rousseau and Theodore G. Meyer & Sons. Many of these buildings were luxury apartments in upper-income neighborhoods.

In Oakland, the only luxury apartment building that Baumann is known to have designed is the Bellevue-Staten at 492 Staten Avenue on the edge of Lake Merritt. Whereas the Spanish Mediterranean Revival style that favored the Churrigueresque vocabulary of ornament was almost a trademark of Baumann's work in the 1920s, the Bellevue-Staten has an innovative combination of Churrigueresque and Art Deco ornament, particularly in the top three stories and the roof parapet. The finials on the roof parapet have an exuberant Gaudiesque quality that is unrivaled in any of Baumann's other buildings, or for that matter, in any other apartment building in the Bay Area. The addition of a private garage building designed to be compatible with the main building is also unusual.

The most prominent features of Baumann's apartment buildings were the entrance and lobby, which he believed were important to the residents' image of the building. No matter what their size, Baumann's entrance porticos and lobbies are lavishly decorated. Even the Bellevue-Staten's garage has an entrance enriched with ornamental cast stone. The Italian craftsmen with whom Baumann regularly worked were skilled at creating the elaborate molds for the cast stone and plaster that typically adorned the entrances and lobbies. His craftsmen also executed the wrought-iron work for railings and lighting fixtures and the glazed tile for floors and stairs.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 3

The peak years of Baumann's practice in the late 1920s produced such notable works as the apartment buildings at 1945 and 1985 Broadway, 2070 and 2090 Pacific, 555 Buena Vista Avenue West, and the Gaylord Apartments at 620 Jones. Unfortunately, he invested most of his capital in a 20-story, reinforced concrete apartment building called the Belleaire on the southwest corner of Green and Leavenworth streets in San Francisco, which was completed in 1930 and, because of the Great Depression, became a financial disaster. During the fallow Depression years, Baumann's work, like that of many architects, was in alterations and additions to existing buildings. During World War II, Baumann had several hundred thousand dollars' worth of contracts for the United States Navy's Bureau of Yards and Docks. After the war, he designed commercial and industrial buildings, but few apartment buildings.

The Bellevue-Statens was a development of the Lakeview Building Corporation, which combined personnel from Thebo, Starr & Anderton, Inc., an international engineering and construction firm based in San Francisco, and the Fred T. Wood Company, realtors based in Oakland. The firm advertised the building in the 1929 Oakland Tribune Year Book as "Distinctive Cooperative Homes" having "four, five and six room suites for those who appreciate the best." The brochure (attached) proclaimed that, "The Bellevue-Statens is positively the last work in ultra modern Home Apartment construction. Located in a setting of great beauty and convenience, it offers all the home comforts that are now considered a necessity in the finest of modern private residences." Although the building did not become a cooperative until 1986, the adjective "distinctive" applies as fully today as it did over fifty years ago.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Kenyon, "Lakeshore Style," Bay City Business Journal, Nov. 1983: 29-30
Oakland Tribune Yearbook, 1929: 67, 171
Byington, S., History of San Francisco, 1931, Vol. 3: 39-40
The Baumann Brochure for the Bellevue Staten (attached).
C. Nelson, "Herman C. Baumann," Heritage Newsletter (The Foundation for the Preservation of San Francisco's Architectural Heritage), Vol. 14, no. 2, June 1986, Pacific Heights Supplement: iv.
Oakland Cultural Heritage files on the Bellevue-Staten and Garage and Herman C. Baumann.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property approximately 1/3 of an acre

UTM References

A 110 5658000 41846000
Zone Easting Northing

C _____

B _____
Zone Easting Northing

D _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See attached sheet.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire city lot that has historically been associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sally B. Woodbridge date July 30, 1991
organization none telephone (510) 848-4356
street & number 2273 Vine St. state CA zip code 94709
city or town Berkeley,

A-098389

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION FOR THE BELLEVUE-STATEN APARTMENTS

EXHIBIT "A"

Description:

The Land referred to herein is situated in the State of California, County of Alameda, City of Oakland, described as follows:

Lots 5 and 6, and a portion of Lot 7 in Block 22, as said lots and block are shown on the map of "Lakeside Tract, Adams Point Property", filed October 9, 1907, in Book 23 of Maps, Page 39, in the office of the County Recorder of Alameda County, described as follows:

Beginning at the intersection of the eastern line of Staten Avenue, with the northern line of Bellevue Avenue, as shown on said map; and running thence along said line of Bellevue Avenue, South $83^{\circ} 00'$ east, 68.19 feet; thence parallel with said line of Staten Avenue, north $6^{\circ} 18'$ east, 114.71 feet to the southern line of said Lot 5; thence along the last mentioned line south $83^{\circ} 33'$ east; 52 feet to the eastern line of said Lot 5; thence along the last mentioned line north $6^{\circ} 18'$ east, 57.37 feet to the northern line of said Lot 5; thence along the last mentioned line north $83^{\circ} 33'$ west, 120 feet to the said line of Staten Avenue; thence along the last mentioned line south $6^{\circ} 18'$ west, 177.37 feet to the point of beginning.

This is to certify that this is a true copy of the document on file in this office.

ATTEST:

MAY 25 1973

R. C. ...
COUNTY RECORDER,
ALAMEDA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

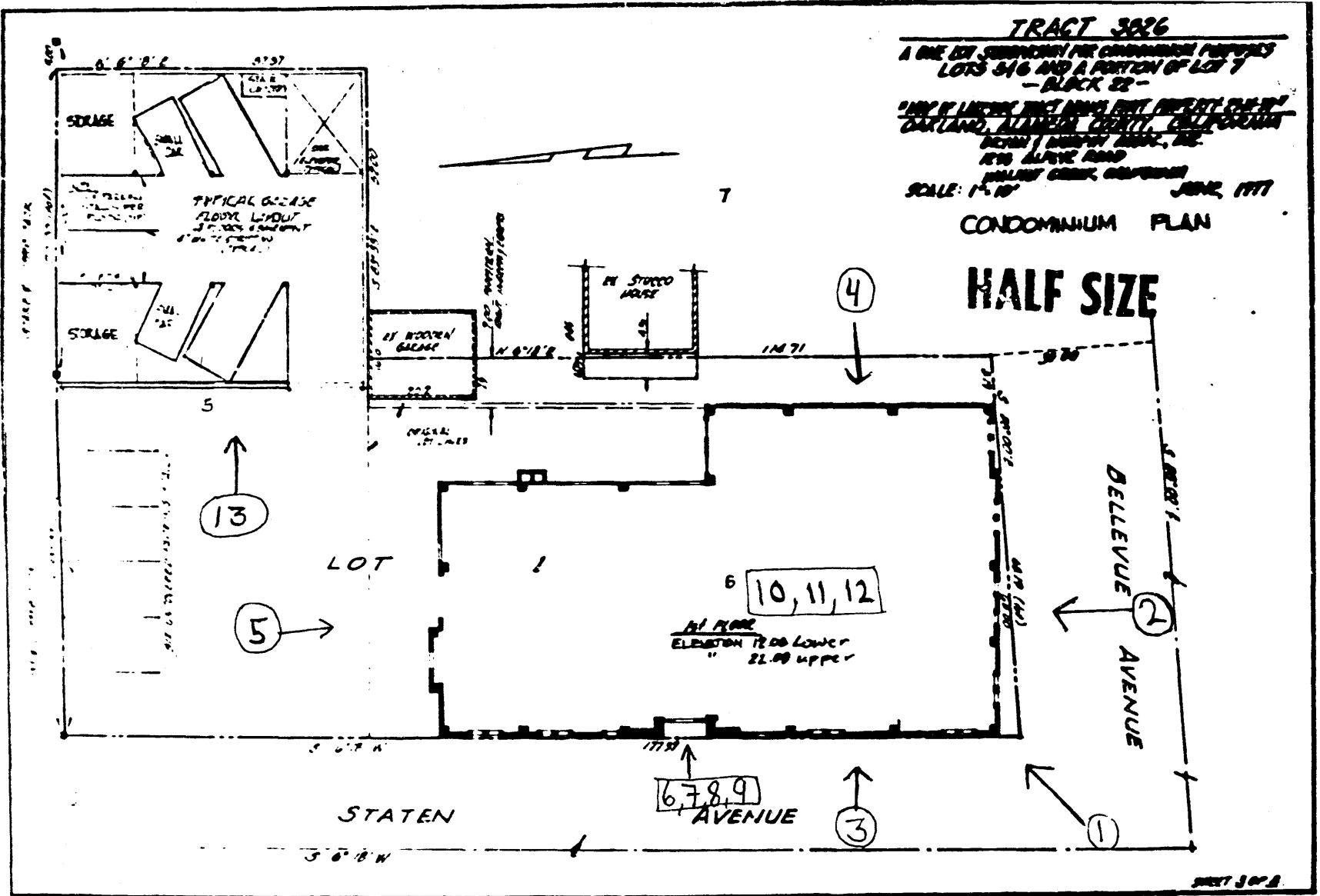
RE: 5289 AM 386

NO 021761

TRACT 3026
 A ONE LOT SUBDIVISION FOR CONDOMINIUM PURPOSES
 LOTS 5-6 AND A PORTION OF LOT 7
 - BLOCK 22 -
 "ANY OF WHICH ARE NOT NOW BEING OFFERED FOR SALE"
 OAKLAND, ALAMEDA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
 BEHAVIOR & ASSOCIATES, INC.
 1810 ALVARO ROAD
 BAYVIEW CREEK, CALIFORNIA
 SCALE: 1" = 10' JUNE, 1977

CONDOMINIUM PLAN

HALF SIZE



SCALE: 1" = 10'

5047-1

SITE PLAN FOR THE BELLEVUE-STATEN APARTMENT BUILDING

492 Staten Ave.
 Oakland, CA
 Alameda County