



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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## National Register Nomination Case Report

HEARING DATE: JANUARY 17, 2018

1650 Mission St.  
Suite 400  
San Francisco,  
CA 94103-2479

Reception:  
**415.558.6378**

Fax:  
**415.558.6409**

Planning  
Information:  
**415.558.6377**

*Date:* January 10, 2018  
*Case No.:* **2017-015656FED**  
*Project Address:* **220 Golden Gate Avenue (San Francisco Central YMCA)**  
*Zoning:* C-3-G (Downtown-General)  
80-X Height and Bulk District  
*Block/Lot:* 0345/031  
*Project Sponsor:* California Office of Historic Preservation  
1725 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, Suite 100  
Sacramento, CA 95816  
*Staff Contact:* Frances McMillen – (415) 575-9076  
[frances.mcmillen@sfgov.org](mailto:frances.mcmillen@sfgov.org)  
*Reviewed By:* Timothy Frye – (415) 575-6822  
[tim.frye@sfgov.org](mailto:tim.frye@sfgov.org)  
*Recommendation:* **Send resolution of findings recommending that, subject to revisions, OHP approve nomination of the subject property to the National Register of Historic Places**

### BACKGROUND

In its capacity as a Certified Local Government (CLG), the City and County of San Francisco is given the opportunity to comment on nominations to the National Register of Historic Places (National Register). Listing on the National Register of Historic Places provides recognition by the federal government of a building's or district's architectural and historical significance. The nomination materials for the individual listing of the San Francisco Central YMCA at 220 Golden Gate Avenue were prepared by Frederic Knapp and Leigh Schoberth of Knapp Architects.

### PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

220 Golden Gate Avenue is located in San Francisco's Tenderloin neighborhood on the northwest corner of Golden Gate Avenue and Leavenworth Street. The property comprises a nine-story Renaissance Revival-style building with classical detailing designed by the McDougall Brothers. The building was completed in 1910 for the San Francisco YMCA. The steel-frame, rectangular-plan building is clad in a mixture of stone, terra cotta, brick, and cement plaster. The primary façade consists of three-bays with a monumental pedimented entry supported by Ionic columns rising to the building's third floor. The first and second floors sit atop a gray granite podium faced with terra cotta blocks forming piers with wide, molded rustication topped by a denticulated terra cotta cornice. A wide terra cotta cornice with egg-and-dart molding tops the third floor. The fourth through eighth floors on the two street-facing elevations are clad in buff-colored brick. A projecting cornice with dentil molding and deep modillion blocks is located above the eighth floor. The building is a contributor to the Uptown-Tenderloin Historic District.

## **NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA**

The National Register is the official list of the Nation's cultural resources worthy of preservation. The National Register's criteria for evaluating the significance of properties were designed to recognize the accomplishments of all peoples who have made a contribution to the Nation's heritage. The following four National Register criteria are designed to guide state and local governments, federal agencies and others in evaluating potential entries into the National Register:

- |                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Criterion A (Event):                 | that are associated with events that have made significant contribution to the broad patterns of history; or   |
| Criterion B (Person):                | that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or  |
| Criterion C (Design/Construction):   | that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or |
| Criterion D (Information Potential): | that yielded, or may likely yield, information important in prehistory or history.   |

According to the nomination, the San Francisco Central YMCA is locally significant under Criterion A (Events) in the areas of social history and education as the headquarters and lead branch of the YMCA and as the birthplace of Golden Gate University. The San Francisco YMCA was founded in 1853 to offer spiritual, social, recreational, and educational programs to young men in the city. The YMCA established San Francisco's first night school in 1881, a four-year law college in 1901, and expanded its programs through the early twentieth century eventually leading to the establishment of Golden Gate University. The university served thousands of San Francisco residents and operated on the site until 1967 when it relocated to a new location. Golden Gate University remains in operation and is one of the few universities nationwide that evolved from programs offered by a YMCA. The period of significance is 1910 to 1967. The period begins with the date of the building's completion and ends with the date of Golden Gate University's relocation. The nomination states the McDougall Brothers designed building is also locally significant under Criterion C (Design) as an example of Renaissance Revival style architecture and is a representative example of an early twentieth-century community building. The period of significance is 1910, the date of the building's construction.

The Department agrees that the property is locally significant under Criterion A for the YMCA's role in providing social services, recreational, and educational programs to the residents of San Francisco. However, the department recommends expanding the discussion of the social programs offered at the Central YMCA, including programs for youth, veterans, unemployed, and homeless, and their impact on city residents. The nomination provides a strong overview of the education programs offered, but would benefit from more detail on the social welfare programs that were a strong component of the institution's mission. The Department further agrees the building is locally significant under Criterion C as an

example of Renaissance Revival style architecture. However, the department recommends further analysis of the work of the McDougall Brothers. The nomination provides an overview of their projects, but does not discuss how the property fits within their body of work or the firm's role in the history of the built environment in San Francisco. The department does not agree that the YMCA is eligible under Criterion C as representative of an "early twentieth-century community building." As detailed in the nomination, YMCA buildings were designed to meet the programmatic needs of the organization and provided spaces for their educational and recreational offerings along with lodging for patrons. This required a thoughtfully considered building plan unique to the needs of the YMCA, but it is unclear how this differs from other large scale mixed-use buildings, such as a residential hotel, apartment building or university campus building, offering public and private spaces tailored to the needs of an occupant constitutes a new building type.

The department recommends copy editing the document to ensure consistency and improve the organization and readability of the nomination. In particular, the discussion of the social history significance of the YMCA in Section 8 (pages 17-20) would benefit from further editing to make sure it includes relevant information on the founding of the YMCA, its mission, programs, organization, and the populations it served. This information is discussed at length in the "Developmental history/additional historic context information," beginning on Section 8, page 31. It would be helpful to move this discussion to the front of the document to provide readers more immediately with the necessary background information to understand the history, function, and significance of the YMCA.

In addition, the department recommends providing current interior and exterior photographs of the building. The department did not have the benefit of property photographs during the review of the nomination.

## **ACTION REQUESTED**

- Review the completed National Register of Historic Places Registration Form;
- Provide comments on whether the San Francisco Central YMCA meets the criteria of significance of the National Register; and
- Recommend or not recommend the nomination of the San Francisco Central YMCA for listing on the National Register, subject to revisions including a more indepth discussion of the social welfare programs offered by the YMCA, where the building fits within the work of McDougall Brothers firm; copy editing the nomination; and providing current photographs of the property.

## **BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- The property is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A (Events) and C (Design), subject to revisions recommended by staff including:
  - A more in-depth discussion of the social welfare programs offered at the Central YMCA;
  - A more in-depth discussion of the work of the McDougall Brothers firm and how the subject property fits within their body of work;
  - Copy editing the document to ensure consistency and improve the organization and readability of the nomination;

- Revising the social history overview in Section 8 (pages 17-20) so it includes relevant information on the founding of the YMCA, its mission, programs, organization, and the populations it served;
- Removing “early twentieth-century community building” from the discussion of eligibility of the property under Criterion C; and
- Providing current photographs of the interior and exterior of the property.

<p><b>RECOMMENDATION: Send resolution of findings recommending that, subject to revisions, SHPO should approve nomination of the property to the National Register</b></p>
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**Attachments:**

Draft Resolution

Letter from Julianne Polanco, State Historic Preservation Officer

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form





# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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## Historic Preservation Commission Resolution No. XXX

HEARING DATE: JANUARY 17, 2018

1650 Mission St.  
Suite 400  
San Francisco,  
CA 94103-2479

Reception:  
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*Case No.* 2017-015656FED  
*Project:* 220 Golden Gate Avenue (San Francisco Central YMCA)  
National Register Nomination  
*Action:* Adopting findings and recommendations to  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
*Staff Contact:* Frances McMillen (415) 575-9076  
[frances.mcmillen@sfgov.org](mailto:frances.mcmillen@sfgov.org)  
*Reviewed By:* Tim Frye – (415) 575-6822  
[tim.frye@sfgov.org](mailto:tim.frye@sfgov.org)

ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER THAT 220 GOLDEN GATE AVENUE (AKA SAN FRANCISCO CENTRAL YMCA), ASSESSOR'S BLOCK NO. 0345 LOT 031, BE NOMINATED TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES AND THAT THE OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROCESS THE NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION.

### PREAMBLE

WHEREAS, On November 29, 2017, Julianne Polanco, State Historic Preservation Officer, forwarded a request to the San Francisco Planning Department (hereinafter "Department") for Historic Preservation Commission review and comment on the amendment of the nomination of 220 Golden Gate Avenue, also known as San Francisco Central YMCA, Assessor's Block No. 0345, Lot 031, to the National Register of Historic Places (hereinafter "National Register").

WHEREAS, Pursuant to the Certified Local Government Agreement between the Office of Historic Preservation (hereinafter "OHP") and the City and County of San Francisco, the Historic Preservation Commission (hereinafter "Commission") has a forty-five (45) day review and comment period to provide written comments to the OHP before the State Historical Resources Commission takes action on the above-stated National Register nomination.

WHEREAS, The National Register is the official list of the Nation's cultural resources worthy of preservation. The National Register's criteria for evaluating the significance of properties were designed to recognize the accomplishments of all peoples who have made a contribution to the Nation's heritage in the areas of Events, Persons, Design/Construction, and Information Potential. The four National Register criteria are designed to guide state and local governments, federal agencies and others in evaluating potential entries into the National Register.

WHEREAS, At its hearing on January 17, 2018, the Commission, acting in its capacity as San Francisco's Certified Local Government Commission, reviewed the National Register nomination amendment of 220 Golden Gate Avenue, also known as San Francisco Central YMCA, Assessor's Block No. 0345, Lot 031.

WHEREAS, In reviewing the nomination, the Commission had available for its review and consideration reports, photographs, and other materials pertaining to the nomination contained in the Department's case file, and has reviewed and heard testimony and received materials from interested parties during the public hearing on the Project.

WHEREAS, According to the nomination's summary, 220 Golden Gate Avenue is locally significant under National Register Criterion A (Events) in the areas of social history and education as the headquarters and lead branch of the YMCA in San Francisco and as the birthplace of Golden Gate University and under Criterion C (Design) as an example of Renaissance Revival style architecture.

WHEREAS, The Commission agrees that the property is locally significant under National Register Criterion A in the area of social history and education and Criterion C in the area of architecture.

WHEREAS, Properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places are automatically included in the California Register of Historical Resources and afforded consideration in accordance with state and local environmental review procedures.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby supports the National Register nomination of 220 Golden Gate Avenue to the National Register of Historic Places, subject to revisions consisting of:

- A more in-depth discussion of the social welfare programs offered at the Central YMCA;
- A more in-depth discussion of the work of the McDougall Brothers firm and how the subject property fits within their body of work;
- Copy editing the document to ensure consistency and improve the organization and readability of the nomination;
- Revising the social history overview in Section 8 (pages 17-20) so it includes relevant information on the founding of the YMCA, its mission, programs, organization, and the populations it served;
- Removing "early twentieth-century community building" from the discussion of eligibility of the property under Criterion C; and
- Providing current photographs of the interior and exterior of the property.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby **recommends** that the property located at 220 Golden Gate Avenue, also known as San Francisco Central YMCA, Assessor's Block No. 0345, Lot 031, be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places, and that the Office of Historic Preservation process the National Register nomination.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby directs its Recording Secretary to transmit this Resolution, and other pertinent materials in the case file 2017-015656FED to the State Historic Preservation Officer.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was **Adopted** by the Historic Preservation Commission on January 17, 2018.

Jonas P. Ionin  
Commission Secretary

AYES:

NAYS:

ABSENT:

ADOPTED:     January 17, 2018

**OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION**

1725 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, Suite 100  
SACRAMENTO, CA 95816  
(916) 445-7000 Fax: (916) 445-7053  
caishpo@parks.ca.gov  
www.ohp.parks.ca.gov



**MEETING NOTICE**

**FOR:** State Historical Resources Commission Quarterly Meeting

**DATE:** Friday, February 2, 2018

**TIME:** 9:00 A.M.

**PLACE:** State Resources Building—Auditorium  
1416 9<sup>th</sup> Street  
Sacramento, California 95814

This room is accessible to people with disabilities. Questions regarding the meeting should be directed to the Registration Unit (916) 445-7008.



**DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION  
OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

Lisa Ann L. Mangat, Director

Julianne Polanco, State Historic Preservation Officer  
1725 23rd Street, Suite 100, Sacramento, CA 95816-7100  
Telephone: (916) 445-7000 FAX: (916) 445-7053  
calshpo.ohp@parks.ca.gov www.ohp.parks.ca.gov

November 29, 2017

Tim Frye, Historic Preservation Officer  
San Francisco Planning Department  
1650 Mission Street, Suite 400  
San Francisco, California 94102

**RE: Historic Preservation Commission Review and Comment on the Nomination of  
San Francisco Central YMCA to the National Register of Historic Places**

Dear Mr. Frye:

Pursuant to the Certified Local Government Agreement between the Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) and your governmental entity, we are providing your historic preservation commission with a sixty (60) day review and comment period before the State Historical Resources Commission (SHRC) takes action on the above-stated National Register of Historic Places (National Register) nomination at its next meeting. Details on the meeting are enclosed.

As a Certified Local Government under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, your commission may prepare a report as to whether or not such property, in its opinion, meets the criteria for the National Register. Your commission's report should be presented to the Chief Elected Local Official for transmission, along with their comments, to California State Parks, Attn: Office of Historic Preservation, Julianne Polanco, State Historic Preservation Officer, 1725 23rd Street, Suite 100, Sacramento, California 95816. So that the SHRC may have adequate time to consider the comments, it is requested, but not required, that OHP receives written comments fifteen (15) days before the SHRC's meeting. If you have questions or require further information, please contact the Registration Unit at (916) 445-7009.

As of January 1, 1993, all National Register properties are automatically included in the California Register of Historical Resources and afforded consideration in accordance with state and local environmental review procedures.

Supplemental information on the National Register is available at our website at the following address: [www.ohp.parks.ca.gov](http://www.ohp.parks.ca.gov).

Thank you for your assistance in this program.

Sincerely,

Julianne Polanco  
State Historic Preservation Officer

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# 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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.

**DRAFT**

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name: San Francisco Central YMCA

Other names/site number: Kelly Cullen Community

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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

## 2. Location

Street & number: 220 Golden Gate Avenue

City or town: San Francisco State: California County: San Francisco

Not For Publication: ☐

Vicinity: ☐

## 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide \_\_\_ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

\_\_\_ A \_\_\_ B \_\_\_ C \_\_\_ D

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau  
or Tribal Government

San Francisco Central YMCA

Name of Property

San Francisco, California

County and State

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register  
☐ determined eligible for the National Register  
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register  
☐ removed from the National Register  
☐ other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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#### 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

☐

San Francisco Central YMCA  
Name of Property

San Francisco, California  
County and State

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>          </u>	buildings
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	sites
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	structures
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 1

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL/meeting hall

EDUCATION/college

OTHER/sports facility

RECREATION & CULTURE/auditorium

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/institutional housing

HEALTH CARE/clinic



San Francisco Central YMCA  
Name of Property

San Francisco, California  
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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS/Italian Renaissance

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Walls: TERRA COTTA, BRICK, STUCCO;

Other: TERRA COTTA, STONE/Granite, METAL/Steel, METAL/Aluminum

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

#### Summary Paragraph

The San Francisco Central YMCA is a nine-story, rectangular Italian Renaissance Revival style athletic-fraternal building adapted to provide 174 units of supportive housing to formerly homeless people. Located on the northwest corner of Leavenworth Street and Golden Gate Avenue, the building has formal and regular street façades. The steel framed building has concrete walls with brick infill; the interior has concrete floor slabs with plaster and gypsum board walls and ceilings. In some locations, suspended acoustic tile ceilings are found. The primary exterior materials are stone, terra cotta, brick and cement plaster walls, and wood and metal windows. A large projecting metal cornice caps the masonry exterior. In 2012, a Historic Preservation Certification Application was approved for rehabilitation completed in conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The property, a contributing resource in the National Register-listed Uptown Tenderloin Historic District, retains a high degree of integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association, as well as the overall integrity of design, materials, and workmanship.

San Francisco Central YMCA  
Name of Property

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## **Narrative Description**

### **Context and Site**

The property is located in the Tenderloin neighborhood of San Francisco, just east of the Civic Center. The Uptown Tenderloin Historic District, listed in the National Register in 2009, roughly forms an inverted pentagonal shape, with the Central YMCA near the vertex at the bottom. Located on the northwest corner of Golden Gate Avenue and Leavenworth Street, the building fills a square lot measuring 137' 6" on each side. Grade slopes gently down to the north on Leavenworth Street and is nearly flat on Golden Gate Avenue. The primary façades are the south and east, respectively facing Golden Gate Avenue and Leavenworth Street. The city block is densely developed, like the rest of the Uptown Tenderloin Historic District. Almost all buildings in the district are built to their front and side property lines, creating an unbroken street face in most blocks. The predominant building type in the district is residential, with heights of three to seven stories. The YMCA is the tallest building on the blocks it faces on both Golden Gate Avenue and Leavenworth Street.

There is no landscaping or setback on Golden Gate Avenue or Leavenworth Street. 220 Golden Gate Avenue is built to the property line the full width of its lot on both streets. The north elevation is exposed and visible through the parking lot on Leavenworth Street at an oblique angle. The west elevation is built tight to the adjoining building at 240 Golden Gate Avenue up to the fifth floor, where it rises above the roof of its neighbor. There are concrete sidewalks between 220 Golden Gate Avenue and the curb on both streets. Aside from one street tree at the north end of the frontage on Leavenworth Street, the sidewalk is featureless except for typical items such as fire hydrants, lampposts, and parking meters.

### **Construction**

The building has a concrete foundation; a structural framework of steel columns, beams, and girders; and concrete floor slabs. The exterior walls are composed of reinforced concrete with brick infill, supported by the steel framing and concrete floor slabs. Interior walls are mostly plaster or gypsum board on metal framing; some interior walls are concrete shear walls faced in plaster or gypsum board on metal furring. The roof is covered with a walkable deck coating or single-ply elastic roofing supported by the concrete roof slab.

The primary exterior materials are terra cotta, stone, brick, cement plaster, and sheet metal. The two street elevations are faced in buff-colored face brick. The north and west elevations and the walls of the internal light court are faced in painted cement plaster (stucco) as is the addition on the eighth and ninth floors on the north side of the light court. Windows are wood and metal; doors are wood and metal. The main cornice is painted sheet metal.

### **Exterior**

The overall form of the building is rectangular. The height is slightly less than the width of the building, but its form is nearly cubical. The east façade on Leavenworth Street is an unbroken plane. On Golden Gate Avenue, the central three bays of the south façade are slightly recessed

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from the three bays that flank them on each side. There is a large central light court, which extends somewhat irregularly to the upper floors of a recessed segment of the west elevation. A similar recess from the top of the first floor to the seventh floor on the north elevation is topped by a slightly recessed two-story addition at the eighth and ninth floors with narrow vertical recesses for fenestration. The flat roof at the ninth and tenth floor is concealed from view by parapets; it includes a roof terrace at the ninth floor level overlooking the central light court, as well as utilitarian roof areas with various devices for building systems. The roof of the north addition at the tenth floor level has a series of solar energy panels.

The street façades on Golden Gate Avenue (south) and Leavenworth Street (east) are formal, highly regular compositions with restrained use of classical architectural devices to provide order and hierarchy, modulating the large wall planes into smaller elements with more visual complexity while maintaining a unified relationship among them. Fenestration is organized into consistent bays from the first to seventh floors, with only the center bays on Golden Gate Avenue deviating from the scheme to create a monumental pedimented entry at the first three floors. These façades are divided into four horizontal zones. The first and second stories sit on a simple gray granite podium. They are faced with terra cotta blocks forming piers of stacked blocks with wide, molded horizontal rustication, and are topped by a denticulated terra cotta cornice. The third floor is topped by a deeper, wider terra cotta cornice with an egg-and-dart molding. The terra cotta facing at the third floor is also rusticated, with smaller recesses and a rectangular profile. The third floor window openings have flat arches with five-part voussoirs. The fourth through eighth floors are faced in buff-colored brick. Above the eighth floor, and composed of the same buff brick, is a shallow horizontal projecting band with a simple square medallion centered in each bay. A short distance above is the main cornice, which begins with a cyma reversa molding, topped by a course of dentils, above which is a band of deep modillion blocks, and which terminates in a flat molding below a cyma recta molding. The main cornice wraps onto the west elevation from the south façade and onto the north elevation from the east façade; the intermediate cornices and brick band do not. Above the main cornice is the very short, unadorned attic story.

The windows at the first and second floors span the full width between the piers, and there is a terra cotta spandrel panel between the first and second floor windows. The first floor windows stretch from just above floor level to the bottom of the spandrel panels and are generally divided into a few large lights. The second floor windows rest on shallow, ribbed terra cotta sills and are typically tripartite in each bay, with wood mullions. The third floor windows are generally similar and are narrower than the second floor openings. The windows on the fourth through eighth floors are double-hung units, paired in almost all cases. The windows on the first through fourth floors are wood, while many units on the fifth through eighth floors are aluminum replacement units that closely match the dimensions and profiles of the original wood windows. These windows rest on a terra cotta sill.

### **South Façade**

The primary façade is divided into nine bays, forming a symmetrical composition dominated by the three-story entry. This entry portal is flanked by paired, freestanding Ionic terra cotta

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columns on an elevated granite stylobate extending from the recessed face of the building. The columns support a tall entablature, above which a flat-faced pediment in plain cement plaster begins at the level of the cornice over the third floor; the peak of the pediment rises to nearly the top of the fourth floor windows. At the base of the blank pediment are the original bronze letters in the frieze reading "Young Men's Christian Association" with a bronze roundel at each end, painted the same color as the pediment. The pediment has a simple rake with a rectangular profile.

There are pilasters on the main building wall behind the Ionic columns; in between the pilasters, the arched entry opening rises two and a half stories. Paired replacement metal doors with sidelights, topped by a single-light, fixed glazed transom fill the bottom of the opening. Above this doorway is a flat travertine spandrel panel, topped by a tripartite fixed bronze window with a wide center light and narrow sidelights. The lower portion of this window is capped by a bowed bronze arch punctuated by 18 small, round glazed openings and culminating in a roundel filled with the YMCA's 1895 triangular symbol with the words "Body Mind Spirit" superimposed on the letters Chi and Rho (X and P) with which the word Christian begins in Greek. An acanthus leaf tops the roundel. The window continues above the bowed arch with the same divisions, culminating in a semicircular arch with radial muntins in between the inner bronze mullion and the edge of the bronze window framed by the terra cotta voussoirs of the rusticated opening. Flanking the pedimented projecting portal on each side at the recessed wall of the building is a double-hung window at each of the first three floors.

At the first floor level, there is a different condition in each of the three bays flanking the entry portal on each side. Starting on the west side, there is a blank bay with a flush door; the second and third bays have a simple, replacement aluminum storefront window and entry door with sidelight, respectively. The first and third bays east of the entry portal have rehabilitated original storefront windows, while the second bay (at the center of the east zone) has a modified original, recessed storefront entry. On the second floor, the three bays flanking the recessed entry zone on each side have four-part fenestration; the end units are operable casements while the two center lights are fixed. The narrower windows at the third floor similarly have three equal casement sash, with the center unit fixed. There are projecting metal lanterns just below the second-floor level on the piers between the bays of the outer zones of the façade.

The fourth through eighth floors of the south façade are generally more uniform, though the zone above the monumental arch is articulated slightly differently from the two outer zones. The center three bays are slightly narrower than the three bays that flank them on each side. In the center zone, there are three bays of paired windows with a single bay of shorter, narrower windows at each side of the zone. The paired windows in the center zone and the middle bay in each of the flanking zones have narrower windows than the outer bays of the two end zones.

### **East Façade**

The east façade is similar to the south façade in almost all respects, with a few exceptions. This façade lacks the monumental entry portal. Instead, it has a secondary entry on the first floor. While the bays are equal in overall width, the piers that divide them at the first and second floor

San Francisco Central YMCA

Name of Property

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are narrower at the south end of the façade (near the corner of Leavenworth Street and Golden Gate Avenue) than at the north end, making the south end openings at the building corner wider to match the ones on the south façade. The entry occurs in the sixth bay from the south—one bay north of the center of this façade—and features a recessed entry with wood double doors with sidelights at the top of a five-riser exterior stair that begins at the sidewalk line. The entry opening is flanked by flat pilasters with brackets at the lintel.

To address the gentle downward slope of grade to the north, the granite podium blocks and spandrel panels below the first floor windows gradually increase in height along the length of the building. The first two first floor openings at the south end of the east façade match those on the south façade, with storefront windows divided both vertically and horizontally into four lights. The third bay is similar, and narrower because the pier on its north side is roughly twice the width of the piers to the south. The fourth and fifth bays differ from the third only in that they are again slightly narrower because they have wider piers on both sides. The seventh and eighth bays each have two casement windows with transoms, separated by a wood mullion. The northernmost bay has a service door at mid-story height between the basement and ground floor. The paired blank doors are topped by paired, double casement windows filling the small gap below the typical first floor transom. There is a steel fire escape from the roof to the second floor in the northernmost bay. The second through eighth floors of the east façade are the same as the three outer bays on each end of the south façade, except that the second floor openings have three sashes on the east façade instead of the four on the south façade.

### **North Elevation**

This utilitarian side of the building is composed of four segments. A wide eight-story zone on the east end and a narrower seven-story one on the west end are built to the property line, and are windowless flat plaster, except for one window each at the seventh and eighth floors in the west area. At the center of this elevation, the face of the building is slightly recessed up to the top of the seventh floor. A variety of windows, loosely organized in consistent bays, occurs in the flat plaster wall in addition to expanses without windows. At the eighth and ninth floors in this zone, further recessed, is the north wall of an addition from the 2012 project that replaced the original handball courts. This addition, faced in cement plaster, has four narrow recesses with aluminum windows.

### **West Elevation**

The west elevation is the same in character as the north elevation. Below the fifth floor, it is blank and concealed by adjoining buildings, except for a recessed zone at the center. Above the fifth floor, windows in a variety of sizes occur singly and in pairs and groups of three. The eighth and ninth floor addition wraps onto the north end of this elevation, with one narrow recess with aluminum windows.

### **Light Court**

The light court is similar to the north and west elevations. There are windows on all four of its cement plaster elevations. They vary in size, groupings, and configuration although they generally align in consistent bays at all floors. At the fourth-floor level, the roof that forms the

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bottom of the light court has a large, hipped weather skylight, which lights the main lobby on the second floor.

### **Interior—Building Layout**

The most important public spaces are laid out in an axial sequence that begins at the monumental entry portal on the south façade. Most of the interior of the building, including its vertical circulation, is configured in a practical and somewhat ad-hoc way that differs from the regular and rational composition of the south and east façades. A grand stair leads from the main entry to the monumental lobby on the second floor, a space that rises to the top of the third floor. The two-story-high auditorium opens onto the lobby opposite the grand stair. The largest space in the building, the three-story-high gymnasium, is located on the fifth floor on the north side of the building. Access to this space occurs through the circulation route that also serves the dwelling units on this floor, similar to floors above and below that lack significant public spaces. Flanking the grand stair in the lobby are twin open stairs from the second floor to balconies that ring the lobby at the third floor. They do not lead to stairs that continue to the floors above. Although corridors on the second and third floors lead to the lobby, they access typical residential units and offices, not grand spaces. The community room in the basement that contains the building's flooded-over swimming pool, originally a much taller space, is accessed through the building's egress stairs.

There are stairs the full height of the building just east of the center of the south side of the building, near the northeast corner, and in the center of the west side of the building; these were built during the 2012 rehabilitation. There is an original stair at the northwest corner of the building. There is one elevator near the south stair and two near the northeast stair. On most floors, double-loaded corridors parallel the two city streets, located midway between the exterior façade on the street and the wall of the light court; a short corridor reaches north from the western portion of the corridor on the south side of the building to provide access to rooms on the west side. The eighth floor is unique in having a continuous double-loaded corridor lying on all four sides of the light court.

In terms of functional layout, the basement houses service spaces in addition to the community room. The first floor has a medical clinic, a separate operation from the housing that occupies the upper floors, although it is geared to the needs of the same under-served population, and a retail space, occupied by an art gallery, on the corner. The second floor has offices for the building and its services, and a café in addition to housing units, the lobby, and the auditorium. The third floor has a housing unit for the building manager on the southeast corner, and offices and a multipurpose room on the west side in addition to residential units. Other than the gymnasium at the fifth floor and incidental and service spaces, the fourth through ninth floors have only residential units.

### **Notable Spaces**

**Basement:** The community room has the original swimming pool under its floor. The walls and two rows of columns—that originally lined the long sides of the pool—retain their beige, brown, and green ceramic tile; the floor retains similar tile under its carpet. The green tile wainscot has a



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distinctive wave pattern border. The ceiling in the center of the room is higher than at the periphery; the suspended acoustic tile ceiling system was installed in the 2012 rehabilitation. The basement also retains the original, non-operational, boiler.

**First Floor:** There is a tenant entry lobby on the east side of the grand stair. This space, constructed in the 2012 rehabilitation, has a security/tenant services desk and mailboxes. The entry on Leavenworth Street leads into a wood-paneled lobby and marble stair to the second floor. The stair has an iron newel and balustrade with a wood cap. This space was originally the boys' entrance.

**Second Floor:** The lobby, three stories in height from the marble mosaic flooring at the second-floor level to the peak of the hipped skylight over the center of the space, is centered on the north-south axis of the grand stair and the monumental entry portal on the south façade. Opposite the grand stair is a large fireplace, faced in Verde marble, framed by twinned Ionic pilasters supporting an arched pediment with the inscription "Body Mind Spirit" in the frieze. A colonnade of square columns aligned with the inner pair of columns at the entry portal flanks the grand stair and forms part of the inner ring of columns that order the space and surround the skylight. The columns sit on Verde marble plinths and have a high veined white marble wainscot, with plaster shafts and stylized classical capitals. The metopes in the frieze above the colonnade feature reliefs with the triangular 1895 YMCA logo.

The hipped skylight sits above a vertical base with thin clathri screens that originally provided ventilation through vertical windows at the base of the skylight. There are scrolled brackets where the columns engage the balcony at the third floor that overlooks the lobby on three sides. At the north wall, the east and west sides of the balcony terminate in quarter-circle-shaped extensions set a few risers below the main level of the third floor. The balcony has a railing with turned balusters frame and two square piers in each bay supporting a wide wood cap. Twin wood stairs flanking the grand stair lead from the lobby up to the balcony at the third floor; they share the same balustrade seen at the balcony. Doors and windows connect the balcony to adjacent third floor rooms and corridors.

The auditorium is oriented perpendicular to the main axis of the lobby, so that the doors provide access to the center and rear of the south side, with the stage at the west side. A balcony at the rear (east) end of the auditorium wraps onto the north and south sides, terminating at the walls flanking the proscenium at the west end of the room. Narrow stairs at the rear lead from the flat, open second floor of the auditorium up to the stepped balcony, which has fixed seats. The curved proscenium opening is lined with a wide molding of rosettes set in interlocking garlands, bordered by bead-and-reel moldings. The arched ceiling is divided into shallow square coffers. There are rectangular windows on the lower level of the north wall, and arched windows at the balcony.

In the property management offices at the northeast corner of the second floor, there is a large fireplace with a nearly monumental face in buff-colored brick, stepped to create a shallow mantel and upper frontispiece with copper light fixtures with glass globes in the upper panels that flank

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a recessed zone aligned with the firebox opening below. The original plans show the space—much larger before the 2012 rehabilitation—was the boys' reception room.

**Third Floor:** Adjacent to the balcony on the west side of the upper zone of the lobby is a multipurpose room. It has a window onto the balcony and a folding wood partition that can subdivide the space. The original drawings label this room Educational and Banquet Room Also Ladies Meeting & Lecture Hall, and do not show the folding partition. At the southeast corner of the third floor, the resident manager's unit has a high wood-paneled wainscot at the walls, topped by a band of faux-gold-leaf; wood-faced piers rise the full height of the wall, with stylized guttae below the molding of the wood beams of the coffered ceiling. Centered on the north wall is a fireplace faced in square red ceramic tile, with a high, shallow wood mantel and a low, small firebox with an undulating copper hood with decorative bosses on its vertical base molding. Built-in bookcases with leaded glass doors in a geometric pattern flank the fireplace. The room was originally the office of the general secretary of the YMCA.

**Fourth Floor:** This level consists entirely of residential units and associated service spaces. Of note are the corridor walls of units 413, 415, 417, and 419 on the east side of the corridor that parallels the east façade. These walls consist of a solid plaster wainscot and a simple chair rail, below a glazed wall. A glazed transom fills the space between the door head and the line of the top of the windows adjoining the door. The doors and glazed panels are roughly equal in width. There is opaque construction immediately behind the windows to ensure privacy for the residential units. In each unit, one wall is finished with a folding wood partition that has been fixed in place, with a conventional wall constructed behind it. The spaces were originally classrooms, with glazed walls at the corridor and folding partitions that could be used to divide the space into smaller rooms or open it into one large room.

**Fifth Floor:** The gymnasium—originally the men's gymnasium—is located on this level in the northwest quadrant of the building. The space has a wood floor with markings for basketball and is ringed at the sixth floor level by a continuous track with rounded corners banked to allow easier turning at running speeds. There is a similar open gallery on three sides of the gymnasium at the seventh floor level. There are windows on the north and west walls.

### **Alterations—Exterior**

The largest documented exterior alteration was the demolition of the original handball courts at the eighth and ninth floors on the north side of the building and construction in their place of two stories of residential units. This was part of the 2012 certified rehabilitation project. Because of its location on the building, this change is only partially visible from street level and is likely unnoticed by most passersby. The pediment over the main entry on Golden Gate Avenue was originally terra cotta and matched the profile of the cornice above the third floor, with which it was continuous. A large globe occupied the peak of the pediment. This was apparently removed in the 1950s. The 1967 YMCA logo was later applied to the large, flat pediment and was removed in the 2012 rehabilitation.



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### Alterations—Interior

The first and second floors were significantly altered in the 1950s with the demolition of the original grand stair and reconfiguration of the ground floor spaces. Innumerable small interior partition changes were made over the years. Until construction began on the 2012 rehabilitation, most of the original interior layout—and most of the materials and features—remained in place. The largest documented change was the removal of the grand stair in the 1950s, accompanied by extensive alterations to the first-floor spaces. The 2012 rehabilitation made a series of major interior changes:

- The original hotel rooms on the fifth to eighth floors, approximately seven feet wide, and the shared bathrooms, along with most of the corridors that served them, were demolished. New corridors similar to the original ones were constructed, with new, larger residential units behind them—each with its own bath and compact kitchen.
- The eighth floor handball courts and fifth floor boys' gymnasium, both two-story spaces, were replaced with two stories of residential units. The interior corridor network was extended and made more uniform from floor to floor to provide access to the new residential units.
- The grand stair was reconstructed, reconnecting the main entry to the lobby.

Interior circulation has changed since the building was completed, although the overall character of the circulation system has not changed significantly. The original elevator on the west side of the building was demolished in the 2012 rehabilitation, and the freight elevator in the northeast quadrant, originally labeled boys' elevator, was replaced with two new elevators a short distance away. The original elevator in the southeast quadrant for the YMCA hotel rooms was replaced in nearly the same location. The corridor layout on the upper floors is more consistent than before the 2012 rehabilitation. Of the original stairs that ran the full height of the building, only the one at the northwest corner was retained.

The original ceiling of the indoor pool in the basement was altered, possibly in the 1950s, with the construction of a new, lower ceiling. This blocked the original windows in the podium level on the east façade, which had provided natural light and ventilation. The ceiling was replaced in the 2012 rehabilitation, still lower than the original ceiling. In the 2012 rehabilitation, seismic shear walls were constructed on the south wall of the poolroom, closing off the original spectator gallery below the sidewalk on Golden Gate Avenue.

The grand stair from the first floor to the second floor lobby was reconstructed as part of the 2012 rehabilitation. This feature is similar to the original grand stair removed in the 1950s. The 2012 project re-opened the spatial connection between the main entry doors and the second floor lobby and reconstructed the portion of one of the twin stairs from the second floor lobby to the balconies on the third floor that overlook it.

The multipurpose room on the third floor was altered at an unknown time before the 2012 rehabilitation, which again changed the partition layout at its north end.

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### **Materials and Features**

Original spaces vary considerably in the level of detailing and ornamentation and in finish materials used. While plaster ceilings and walls are nearly ubiquitous, larger and more public spaces have wall features such as columns and paneling in stone and wood. Some spaces such as the auditorium and gymnasium have wood floors, the lobby has mosaic a tile floor with a decorative Greek meander border, and less prominent spaces have concrete floors or wood subflooring for carpet. Original wood doors, some with glazing, have been retained in some openings. Spaces built as part of the 2012 rehabilitation, including all the residential units, have gypsum board walls and ceilings, and resilient sheet flooring. The mechanical, plumbing, electrical, and fire sprinkler systems were all replaced in their entirety in the 2012 rehabilitation.

### **Condition**

The building is in very good condition. As part of the 2012 rehabilitation, extensive repairs were made to existing materials and features on the exterior and the interior. The building received a seismic upgrade. All painted surfaces were repainted. Original stone, tile, metals, and wood that were damaged, deteriorated, partially missing, or soiled were repaired and cleaned, with new protective coatings applied where appropriate.

### **Integrity**

The Central YMCA retains a high degree of integrity overall. The individual aspects are as follows.

**Location:** The property is in its original location.

**Setting:** Although the property was constructed only a few years after the 1906 earthquake and fire, the building is still situated in a densely developed urban area, giving it a very high degree of integrity of setting despite the construction of newer buildings nearby.

**Design:** The exterior and main interior spaces have been minimally changed. Despite alterations to secondary interior spaces, the interior organization still reflects the original design.

**Feeling:** The building retains the most important spaces of the YMCA—and the name on the exterior—even though it is no longer a YMCA. Like the YMCA, it continues to serve members of the public who can benefit from supportive resources in navigating city life.

**Workmanship:** The most important features and details that characterized the original building survive in good condition, giving evidence of the crafts that created the property. Some of these features and details—including the General Secretary's office on the third floor, the mosaic tile floor in the lobby, the exterior stone and terra cotta, the metal cornice, many of the wood windows, and the plaster details, especially at the lobby—survive in good condition, giving evidence of the crafts that created the property.

**Materials:** Nearly the entire exterior has been retained, and the vast majority of the walls, floors, and structural system, as well as most of the finishes in important spaces, remain in place.

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Association: The exterior still says “Young Men’s Christian Association,” over the monumental entry, the building still has its most important large and public spaces, it still houses people of limited means, and it is open to the public. These physical characteristics—and the use of the building—maintain a reminder of its original association with the larger community.

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## 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.)

- ☐ 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL HISTORY

EDUCATION

ARCHITECTURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1910-1967

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1910

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

McDougal Bros.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The San Francisco Central YMCA is eligible for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Social History, as the lead branch of the San Francisco Metropolitan YMCA, and in the area of Education, as the birthplace of the Golden Gate University, one of a few universities that can tie their origins to the educational programs offered at a local YMCA. The period of significance is from construction in 1910 to 1967 when Golden Gate University separated itself from the YMCA and moved to its own location. The building is also individually eligible at the local level of significance under Criterion C in the area of Architecture because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of an early twentieth-century community building for an organization that was evolving along with the society that created it and that it sought to serve. Under Criterion C the period of significance is 1910, the year construction was completed.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

### **Criterion A: Social History**

#### **Mission**

In addition to catering to the social, economic, and educational needs of its members and program participants, the early San Francisco YMCA explicitly tracked their church membership and profession of faith. This focus gradually changed over the years, with a great increase in educational and athletic programs, and facilities, and a corresponding loss of focus on the religious. "However, after 1921 a gradual shift in the Association's program of religious activities is noted. Less and less attention was being given to the methods once so effective and popular as evangelistic services, public decisions for Christ, weekly prayer meetings, and the like. More attention was paid to group activities and character building projects."<sup>1</sup> This trend eventually led it away from any stated religious purpose. A 1975 study of organizations in the Bay Area offering services similar to those of the YMCA divided services into 36 types grouped in eight categories—none of which was religious or spiritual.<sup>2</sup>

#### **Participants**

Like its counterparts in other U.S. cities, the San Francisco YMCA catered to young men, initially focusing on those who were "Christian"—meaning members of mainline Protestant denominations, but it quickly began a transition toward accepting evangelicals, Catholics, Jews, and atheists as well. In 1920, the YMCA counted 1,101 Protestants (of whom only 727 were members of a church), 331 Catholics, 36 Jews, 86 Christian Scientists, 438 unaffiliated with any denomination, and 1,726 whose religious leanings were unknown. "In general, the San Francisco

<sup>1</sup> Drury, 181.

<sup>2</sup> Bay Area Social Planning Council, "Inventory of Agencies Providing Like Services in the Area Served by the YMCA of San Francisco" (Inventory, YMCA San Francisco, December 31, 1975).

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YMCA during these years...proceeded on the assumption that only members of an evangelical church could vote and hold office but there is no evidence that any special effort was made to enforce such a rule." Only in 1947 did the San Francisco YMCA change its official policy to recognize the interfaith religious composition its membership had already achieved.<sup>3</sup> The membership statement explicitly recognized the membership of Catholics, Jews, and "persons who have no religious affiliations," saying it "aims to help every individual to grow...to be an intelligent and loyal participant in his own religious culture...to find the spiritual home that meets his own needs."<sup>4</sup>

The Gold Rush was noted for its comparatively free environment where fortune-seekers of different religions, nationalities, and races mixed to a greater degree than in older U.S. cities, and that openness endured to some extent in the following decades. The attitude toward diversity extended only so far. During World War II, an influx of African American civilians in the Western Addition section of San Francisco resulted in the conversion of the Japanese Branch—which lost its original members when they were forced to relinquish their property and move into isolated rural relocation camps under President Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066—into a USO center for African American service members. The San Francisco Central YMCA began to serve servicemen of all races, but management was concerned that white members might object. The swimming pool was a particular concern, because according to management "the number of colored civilians who will apply will also increase; for the man (sic) are not in uniform while they are in the pool... We know that (white) members are concerned, and some of them disturbed. The fact remains that there are no swimming facilities set up for colored men, and we feel that it is our duty to serve them—costly as it may be in the loss of members who do not understand." In July 1944, the San Francisco Central YMCA began accepting African American men as regular members—with "no noticeable discontinuance" in white memberships.<sup>5</sup>

### Services and Growth

The program most closely associated with the YMCA from its early years to the present was athletics. "Weak men are made strong, & strong men are made stronger," said General Secretary Henry McCoy, expressing the connection between physique and character that was important to the San Francisco YMCA.<sup>6</sup> In 1921, there were 97 basketball teams at the San Francisco YMCA. In 1922, the San Francisco YMCA's athletic programs enrolled 76,000 men and boys citywide.<sup>7</sup> The building's extensive athletic facilities, including men's and boys' gymnasiums, running tracks above the men's gym, an indoor pool, squash courts, and locker rooms, differentiated the building from residential, religious, or commercial facilities.

Documentation of lodging at the San Francisco YMCA begins with an 1871 report in a Presbyterian publication that the San Francisco YMCA had provided more than 700 nights' stays

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<sup>3</sup> Drury, 195-196.

<sup>4</sup> Drury, 223.

<sup>5</sup> Drury, 220.

<sup>6</sup> McCoy, 33.

<sup>7</sup> Drury, 183.

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and 52 meals for “homeless searchers after employment.”<sup>8</sup> The immediate and sustained success of the hotel rooms in the San Francisco Central YMCA prompted the general secretary to propose a Men’s Hotel in 1911.<sup>9</sup> In 1921, the board bought two lots for the hotel on Turk Street with 137-1/2 feet of street frontage for \$65,000. The board announced in September 1926 it had the final approval, but construction did not start until March 1928 and it opened that December. It contained 376 singles, 36 doubles, and 2 triples.<sup>10</sup> When the YMCA Hotel opened in 1928, occupancy of the sleeping rooms at 220 Golden Gate Avenue was running above 98 percent.<sup>11</sup> The YMCA Hotel had a separate Board of Managers that owned that property until 1955 when it was absorbed by the Metropolitan YMCA board.<sup>12</sup>

The Central YMCA was the headquarters—and the largest facility—of the San Francisco Metropolitan YMCA from the time it opened until its sale in 2009. Over its years of operation, the role of branches in the YMCA changed along with the organization’s mission and the growth of the geographical region. Early branches tended to serve distinct social groups. By the time the organization left the building, branches catered more to geographic requirements of suburban development. As the seat of the Metropolitan Association, the Central YMCA was the base for widespread expansion of sites in its early decades, including operations geared to the needs of specific ethnic communities, the military, and boys.

### Other Organizations

The YMCA was one of the earliest organizations of its kind in San Francisco, and there were many others over the years. After the success of the Protestants’ YMCA, the Roman Catholic Church—which had centuries of experience in social services, education, and cultural institutions—introduced a similar group with a similar name, aimed at young Catholic men: the Young Men’s Institute. The San Francisco chapter was founded in 1883, and it built a five-story home on Oak Street in 1914, about six blocks from the Central YMCA, adding an annex on an adjoining parcel to the west in 1923 with a gymnasium, handball court, and billiards room.<sup>13</sup> As the YWCA formed to serve the same role for women that the YMCA filled for men, the Young Ladies’ Institute joined the Young Men’s Institute. The San Francisco chapter was formed in 1887; there were also branches in Honolulu, Hawaii and Tacoma, Washington. The Catholic women’s organization provided a social setting for members in addition to more religious undertakings such as battling immoral entertainment and anti-religious university professors, and funding scholarships at Catholic colleges. Many San Francisco parish churches had chapters.<sup>14</sup>

By 1975, many other organizations were offering some of the services provided by the YMCA—though no one organization matched all its programs and few offered more than half the programs of the YMCA, according to a study commissioned by the Metropolitan Association. Of

<sup>8</sup> Drury, 68.

<sup>9</sup> Drury, 144.

<sup>10</sup> Drury, 177-178.

<sup>11</sup> Drury, 169.

<sup>12</sup> Drury, 231.

<sup>13</sup> “Conservatory of Music in Civic Center.” *Heritage News* Vol. XXX, No. 1 (2002): 4.

<sup>14</sup> “Proceedings of the Thirty-third Grand Institute” (Young Ladies’ Institute Ephemera Collection, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library, July 17-19, 1933).



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84 organizations in San Francisco running two or more programs similar to those of the YMCA, none offered Health Clubs or School Camp and only two offered Residence. One of these two was listed as a Switchboard and the other was the YWCA. Only three offered a Family Life Program, and four each offered a Residence Camp or Special Needs Camp. The Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts both had programs in 20 of the 36 program categories surveyed, the Camp Fire Girls had 19, the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department had 18, and the Hunter's Point Boys' Club and Kimochi, Inc. each had 13.<sup>15</sup>

### **Criterion A: Education**

#### **Golden Gate University**

The San Francisco Association was typical of many big city YMCAs in its early educational offerings. The endeavor that occupied the classrooms of the Central YMCA from its opening in 1910 proved unusual and significant to the local history of education because it ultimately spawned an independent university still in operation. Golden Gate University evolved from informal lectures and courses offered at the Central YMCA into an accredited university offering a variety of fields of study. The beginnings of Golden Gate University make it one of a small number of colleges across the United States that can trace their inception to a local YMCA. As the progenitor of Golden Gate University, the San Francisco YMCA was among the fifteen local associations that began offering courses by the end of the 1880s.

The beginning of Golden Gate University can be traced back to the year the San Francisco YMCA opened. That year the YMCA offered an eight-session lecture series for members in the assembly room. These early lectures due to the YMCA's strong religious affiliation were typically topics from the Bible and eventually began incorporating a variety of subjects driven by interests of the members. As the lecture series grew a larger following, it eventually took on a more formal structure. Courses included speaking and writing English, gold assaying, and bookkeeping.<sup>16</sup>

Outside of the lectures and courses, the San Francisco YMCA established a reading room with daily newspapers, and various periodicals and journals. When the reading room opened in 1861, it was the only free reading room in the city. As with the other educational programs offered by the YMCA, the reading room grew. By 1869, a full-time librarian was hired and the library boasted over 4,000 volumes in its collection.<sup>17</sup>

When Henry J. McCoy of Lowell, Massachusetts became the General Secretary of the San Francisco YMCA, he made expanding the YMCA's school his first priority. McCoy started a night school in 1881, offering Spanish, French, elocution, bookkeeping, vocal music, and photography. It was the first night school in San Francisco. Two years after it started, attendance

<sup>15</sup> Bay Area Social Planning Council, "Inventory of Agencies Providing Like Services in the Area Served by the YMCA of San Francisco" (Inventory, YMCA San Francisco, December 31, 1975).

<sup>16</sup> Nagel T. Miner, *The Golden Gate University Story* (San Francisco, CA: Golden Gate University Press, 1982), 1-2.

<sup>17</sup> Miner, 3.

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was 1,100 per month. The school added German, shorthand, English, mechanical drawing, and architecture to its classes in its early years.<sup>18</sup>

In 1894, with the opening of a new YMCA building at Mason and Ellis Streets, the Night School was officially renamed the Evening College by the Board of Directors. The new building had classrooms, a separate reading room, and a library.<sup>19</sup> As many young men and boys worked to help support their families, many went without a high school education. In 1899, the Evening College also began offering courses for working individuals who did not have a high school education. Grammar school courses were offered three nights a week separately from the Evening College. This expanded the available courses from spelling, penmanship, and arithmetic to chemistry and calculus.<sup>20</sup>

The Evening College attracted 266 students its first year, and the University of California Extension attracted 500. The night school reported 13,050 men and 2,925 boys attending in its first year. In 1901, The San Francisco YMCA inaugurated a four-year evening law school, which later became Golden Gate University School of Law. By 1903, the other programs had been divided into three categories: commercial, scientific and industrial, and language and art, and correspondence courses alone enrolled 513 students. In 1902, an average of 300 students attended educational and Bible study programs each day.<sup>21</sup>

Despite the destruction of the YMCA facilities during the 1906 earthquake and fire, the law school continued to operate. Temporarily, YMCA programs including the evening college were held under tents erected on the site of the destroyed building. Just four years later, the school was incorporated as the YMCA Law College, with its own board of trustees drawn from the YMCA's board.<sup>22</sup> With incorporation, the school was able to confer degrees and literary honors like other universities, colleges, and seminaries in the United States.<sup>23</sup>

Following the earthquake of 1906, the YMCA Evening College continued to expand, opening the School of Accountancy—a four-year evening program—in 1908.<sup>24</sup> The YMCA, Night School, and Law College moved into the Central YMCA when it opened in 1910.<sup>25</sup> The YMCA Evening College occupied the third and fourth floors of the new building. The third floor housed the law library, offices, and a semi-circular counter for the office secretary. The classrooms were located on the fourth floor. The classrooms consisted of two rooms that could seat thirty students, two rooms that could accommodate twenty-four students, five rooms for eighteen to twenty students, and one small room that could accommodate ten students. The courses were assigned to rooms based on their enrollment numbers. Rooms included tables and large

<sup>18</sup> Miner, 3; Drury, 80.

<sup>19</sup> Drury, 102.

<sup>20</sup> Miner, 227- 278.

<sup>21</sup> Drury, 103.

<sup>22</sup> Drury, 9; Miner, 8.

<sup>23</sup> Miner, 8.

<sup>24</sup> Miner, 8.

<sup>25</sup> Miner, 8.

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blackboards.<sup>26</sup> The School continued to add new departments of study and incorporated as Golden Gate College in 1923.<sup>27</sup>

- 1914 The School of Foreign Trade and The School of Automobiles
- 1918 Programs established for returning WWI veterans
- 1927 The School of Insurance
- 1930 The School of Traffic
- 1932 The Graduate School of Accountancy
- 1940 The School of Advertising
- 1945 The School of Management
- 1965 The Graduate College
- 1967 The School of Taxation
- 1987 The College of Business Administration

In 1920, the Central YMCA had 1,320 students, in addition to those taking citizenship and English. By 1923, all the courses were at the college level and they were incorporated under California law as a degree-granting school called Golden Gate College. The School of Traffic was the first on the West Coast. A survey in 1926 found 75 percent of the students were in their 20s, 60 percent were single, and 60 percent had no prior college study.<sup>28</sup> From 1932 to 1935, Golden Gate College offered 1,654 class meetings, attended by 22,040 students. In 1933, Golden Gate College was a junior college, and reverted to its previous program with the establishment of San Francisco Junior College.<sup>29</sup> Golden Gate College had an enrollment of 1,782 in 1944.<sup>30</sup> Enrollment at Golden Gate College increased to 2,700 in 1947 and 3,061 in 1950. It received accreditation in 1950 from the Northwest Association of Secondary and Higher Schools.<sup>31</sup>

As early as 1962, the longevity of the College's occupancy of the YMCA building was being questioned. At a board meeting in February 1963, a decision was reached: the College would purchase and move into a building of its own within the next five years.<sup>32</sup> To take on the search for a new location, the Plant and Facilities Committee was raised from a sub-committee of the Administration Committee to full committee status. The function of the Committee was to explore various possible locations, to determine the approximate cost of a new building or renovations of an existing one, to identify methods of financing, to set fund goals, and to develop specific plans for the new facility.<sup>33</sup> In 1964, the College purchased the Allyne Building at 532-536 Mission Street.<sup>34</sup> The College began renovations on the first three floors in August 1964. During December of 1965, the law library moved from 220 Golden Gate Avenue to 532-536 Mission Street. The first classes were taught in January the following year. Renovation on the

<sup>26</sup> Miner, 27-28.

<sup>27</sup> Miner, 15-16.

<sup>28</sup> Drury, 182.

<sup>29</sup> Drury, 207.

<sup>30</sup> Drury, 223.

<sup>31</sup> Drury, 227.

<sup>32</sup> Drury, 221-223.

<sup>33</sup> Drury, 224.

<sup>34</sup> Drury, 227

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remainder of the floors continued in 1967 after leases of previous tenants terminated.<sup>35</sup> The general plan for the building was:

Basement: purchasing office, receiving room, bookstore, copy center, law review office and student newspaper  
Ground Floor: student services, business offices, law and general library, with a study area on the mezzanine  
Second Floor: Law School offices and classrooms  
Third and fourth Floor: Business school offices and classrooms  
Fifth Floor: auditorium, small kitchenette, student center, audiovisual room, and administrative offices<sup>36</sup>

In 1970, the College began to acquire property immediately to the west of the Allyn Building to expand its facilities. Construction began on the new West Wing in 1977. The West Wing was connected to the Allyn building by entrance lobby and the Plaza Courtyard between the buildings. The project was completed in 1979.<sup>37</sup>

### **Criterion C: Architecture**

#### **Planning and Construction of Building**

The YMCA's previous building at Mason and Ellis Streets, barely a dozen years old, burned on the second day after the San Francisco earthquake of 18 April 1906. The San Francisco YMCA quickly erected six tents on the site of the burned building at Mason and Ellis Streets and also built tents at six other locations, including Portsmouth Square, 11<sup>th</sup> and Market Streets, and Ellis and Jones Streets. By the end of August of that year, the San Francisco YMCA had raised \$420,000, including a \$250,000 matching grant from John D. Rockefeller, Jr.<sup>38</sup> General Secretary Henry McCoy raised a total of \$500,000 in two trips to the East Coast.<sup>39</sup> The board of directors voted in 1907 to sell the property at Mason and Ellis Streets for at least \$350,000 and build on a parcel that was to be chosen elsewhere; the old site ultimately sold in 1914 for \$250,000. In 1908, the San Francisco YMCA bought the lots at Golden Gate Avenue and Leavenworth Streets for \$135,000.<sup>40</sup> Contracts were signed for a new building located within the area later known as the Uptown Tenderloin.

The groundbreaking was conducted in October 1908 and the cornerstone laid one year later with President William Howard Taft officiating. The building was to have 140 sleeping rooms—each with hot and cold water and a telephone—two gymnasiums, a swimming pool, showers and a Turkish bath, a “lobby or reception hall...the feature of the building, and from it will open the

<sup>35</sup> Mike Koperski, email message to author, March 23, 2017.

<sup>36</sup> Drury, 395.

<sup>37</sup> Koperski.

<sup>38</sup> Drury, 122-128.

<sup>39</sup> Bill Boldenweck, “75 Years of Young Men, Gyms and Decent Lodgings,” *San Francisco Examiner* (San Francisco, CA), December 11, 1985, A-1.

<sup>40</sup> Drury, 132-3.

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auditorium with a seating capacity of 1000,” a restaurant and a café, a lunch room for boys, three floors of education rooms, a “machinery hall” in the “trade school for boys,” and a “camera section.”<sup>41</sup> The swimming pool was fed by pipes bringing salt water “direct from the ocean.”<sup>42</sup> The building had six wells and its own generating plant, an in-house laundry, and a built-in vacuum system.<sup>43</sup> In 1910, the San Francisco YMCA raised an additional \$75,000 to furnish the building, as the \$500,000 initial fund paid only for the bricks and mortar. The completed building was dedicated 24 November 1910.

### Post-1906 Earthquake & Fire Reconstruction

As of 1905, the Uptown Tenderloin neighborhood had been predominantly wood-framed houses and flats with a few brick buildings and multi-story hotels. The Uptown Tenderloin neighborhood had been completely devastated by the earthquake and fire, leaving only a few walls and the exterior shell of St. Boniface Church standing. Following the earthquake, the city imposed new regulations that greatly affected the rebuilding and future character of the Uptown Tenderloin neighborhood. The new regulations extended the fire limits, which included the entire Uptown Tenderloin neighborhood—requiring all new buildings within the limits to be constructed of fire resistant building materials and construction methods. All new buildings in the Uptown Tenderloin neighborhood were constructed of brick or reinforced concrete exterior walls.<sup>44</sup>

The extensive collection of wood dwellings that had previously occupied the area could not be rebuilt. Due to the high cost of the new construction requirements, many owners sold their lots. Those who remained constructed larger buildings to generate more income from rents to offset the high construction costs.<sup>45</sup> Prior to the 1906 earthquake and fire, the lot later occupied by the Central YMCA was occupied by 18 one- and two-story single-family dwellings, which represented the typical pre-earthquake buildings in the area. Eight dwellings lined Golden Gate Avenue, four bordered Leavenworth Street, and six were located on a lane in the interior of the block named Buchanan Place.<sup>46</sup>

### Concrete Construction

Prior to 1906, earthquake building laws were written so that a building could not be constructed entirely of reinforced concrete. The use of reinforced concrete had been limited to use as intermediate beams in structural steel frame buildings, as floor slabs, and for fireproofing columns. Due to these restrictions, the effects of an earthquake on reinforced concrete were largely untested during the 1906 earthquake. Public investigation into the fire and earthquake

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<sup>41</sup> Drury, 136.

<sup>42</sup> Henry McCoy, *Home Again: A True Story for Young Men & Boys* (San Francisco, CA: Stanley-Taylor Company, 1910), 34.

<sup>43</sup> Drury, 28-29.

<sup>44</sup> Michael Corbett, “Uptown Tenderloin Historic District, San Francisco, CA” (National Register of Historic Places Nomination, United States Department of Interior National Park Service, 2009): 8-7 to 8-9.

<sup>45</sup> Corbett, 8-9 to 8-13.

<sup>46</sup> “Insurance Maps San Francisco, California” (New York, NY: Sanborn Perris Map Co., Vol. 1 [1899-1900]): 75.

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resistant properties of reinforced concrete compelled the Board of Supervisors to permit its use in all building components with the issuing of the new fire limit regulations.<sup>47</sup>

As of June 1910, 132 building permits had been issued for reinforced concrete buildings. Between 1906 and 1910, 17,820 building permits had been issued in the city of San Francisco. A substantial portion (15,844 building permits) of these were for frame construction, likely reflecting new residential buildings located outside of the fire limits. The remaining buildings being constructed were a combination of steel frame (105 building permits) and mill constructed, a wood construction method designed to provide fire protection without actual fireproofing (1,739 building permits). An *Architects and Engineers* article dating to 1910 indicates that the number of buildings constructed in reinforced concrete was hindered by banks declining loans for the construction of reinforced concrete buildings, forcing owners to build in structural steel, due to the lack of financing.<sup>48</sup> The Central YMCA was constructed of a combination of steel frame and reinforced concrete walls.<sup>49</sup>

### The YMCA Building & Style

The first YMCA building designed in the United States was in New York in 1868-1869. The YMCA as a building type was a new and complicated edifice. The building was to be both religious and secular, to both shape the moral character of its members and serve as a clubhouse. To tackle the unprecedented building type, the selected architect, James Renwick Jr., looked to other large-scale buildings in New York as examples. Each of the buildings he considered provided precedents for different aspects of the new YMCA building. The Copper Union was founded for industrial technical and scientific education of working men. The first three floors were public shops, meeting rooms, and the grand hall. The revenues from the public spaces supported the educational programs of the upper floors. The Union League Club building designed by Richard Morris Hunt, although never constructed, was planned with a similar layout with stores and artist studios on the lower levels and the men's club occupying the upper stories. Renwick designed the Booth Theater for the actor Edwin Booth. The building was being constructed at the time of the planning of the YMCA building and included ground floor retail space, three stories dedicated to rehearsal studios and office spaces, and the top floor as a private apartment. The multi-use character of these buildings served as precedent for the YMCA building.<sup>50</sup>

The New York YMCA was a five-story building with a complicated building program that included elements of a school, private club, art gallery, stores, and theater. It had areas that were public, semi-public, and private. The ground level was occupied by public shops and there were artist studios on the fourth and fifth floors. The YMCA occupied the second and third floors. The floors were divided into the semi-public reception and reading rooms, and members-only parlors, reference library, classrooms, and gymnasium. Circulation was a key element in the design of the

<sup>47</sup> John B. Leonard, "The Use of Reinforced Concrete in San Francisco and Vicinity," *Architect and Engineer*, 24 (February 1910): 48-57.

<sup>48</sup> "Benj. G. McDougall, Architect," *Architect and Engineer* (San Francisco, CA), August 1937: 58.

<sup>49</sup> Leonard, 57.

<sup>50</sup> Paula Lupkin, *Manhood Factories* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 50-55.



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building to regulate access to public and private areas of the building. The building was organized around the central staircase that both promoted and controlled circulation. As the public or members ascended the stairs from the public shops to the YMCA-occupied second floor, the stairs opened onto the YMCA reception room. The members-only spaces—parlors, gymnasium, research library, etc.—were all entered by passing through the reception room.<sup>51</sup>

The choice architectural style for the building was complicated by the somewhat conflicting associations of religion, commerce, and public life. Originally, the building was to be designed in the High Gothic style and was later redesigned in the Second Empire style with Gothic accents. The High Gothic style had strong religious connotations, while the Second Empire style was being utilized in New York for the design of new public and commercial buildings downtown. The hybrid style provided a building that did not exhibit overtly religious connotations nor a total identification with commerce.<sup>52</sup> This provided a style that illustrated the YMCA's association with the sacred and the secular.

### **San Francisco YMCA Buildings**

The first purpose-built YMCA building constructed in San Francisco was a close simulation of the New York building. It was also designed in a combination of the High Victorian Gothic and Second Empire with retail space, reading rooms, lounges, and library on the lower stories and offices on the third story. The building at 232 Sutter Street was completed in 1868, with its first meeting held in July of that year.<sup>53</sup> The YMCA occupied this building until 1894 when it moved to its location at Mason and Ellis Streets. The building at Mason and Ellis Streets was destroyed in the 1906 fire and earthquake. The nominated building replaced the destroyed building with the completion of its construction in 1910.

The original design based on 1908 drawings from the McDougall Bros. shows the building was designed with special-use spaces specific to the YMCA's function. The building featured a retail space on the ground floor, with the primary public space for the YMCA located on the second floor, the lobby accessed by the grand staircase and opening onto the auditorium, a café, and reception rooms on the second and third floors. The building also included two gymnasiums—one for men and a smaller separate one for boys—and offices, classrooms, and sleeping rooms on the upper stories.

### **Italian Renaissance Revival**

The exterior of the building was designed in the Italian Renaissance Revival style. Renaissance Revival styles provided a clear order and unity as buildings began to grow in height during the late nineteenth century, and provided architects with an architectural vocabulary that could be applied to new building types. The Italian Renaissance Revival style was inspired by fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Italian palazzos. The original Italian Renaissance style was derived from Greek and Roman building forms. The Italian Renaissance Revival style was used primarily in commercial and civic buildings, and can also be found in large-scale private residences and

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<sup>51</sup> Lupkin, 66.

<sup>52</sup> Lupkin, 44-49.

<sup>53</sup> Drury, 58.

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apartment complexes. The style is conveyed on the Central YMCA through its prominent scale, rustication and quoining in the masonry at the first three floors, symmetrical façades, elaborate string courses, and an articulated cornice. Renaissance-inspired motifs are continued to the interior in the lobby through the application of classical motifs and columns.<sup>54</sup>

### **McDougall Bros.**

The Central YMCA was completed in 1910 according to designs by the architecture firm McDougall Bros. The firm was formed by the partnership of two brothers, Charles C. McDougall and George B. McDougall. Together, they were considered to be among the lead architects in San Francisco according to a *San Francisco Call* article from 1910.<sup>55</sup>

Charles, Benjamin, and George were the sons of California architect Barnett McDougall. His sons followed him in both profession and design inclination. Barnett McDougall, the founder of the firm B. McDougall & Sons, was a native of New York. In 1856, he left New York and after his arrival in San Francisco, began to work as a builder. In later years, he started his own architectural practice and was commissioned to design buildings in San Francisco and other California cities.<sup>56</sup>

Charles C. McDougall, the eldest son, was born in San Francisco in 1857. He began his career and training in his father's office. Subsequently, he worked in an office with his brothers, then alone until his retirement in 1920. Charles passed away in 1930.<sup>57</sup> Benjamin G. McDougall was born in San Francisco in 1865. He began his studies in 1883 at the California School of Design, before working in his father's office. Benjamin was noted as one of the first San Francisco architects to use reinforced concrete for the construction of a high-rise office building, in his designs for the Sheldon Building at Market and First streets. Benjamin passed suddenly in 1937, from a heart attack.<sup>58</sup> George B. McDougall was born in 1868, and like his brothers trained and began his career in his father's office. From 1912 to 1916, he served as the President of the San Francisco Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. In 1913, he was appointed the California State Architect. As State Architect, George supervised the construction of the State Normal School at Santa Barbara, the Mt. Whitney Fish Hatchery at Inyo, and the State Normal School at Fresno. Benjamin retired from his post in 1938. During his lifetime he was a director of the San Francisco YMCA, and an active member of the Calvary Presbyterian Church. He passed away in 1957.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>54</sup> "Italian Renaissance Revival: 1910-1930," *Washington State Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation*, accessed August 29, 2016, <http://www.dahp.wa.gov/styles/italian-renaissance-revival>.

<sup>55</sup> "McDougall Bros., Architects, Have Worked for Greater City: Great Structures Planned by Firm," *San Francisco Call* (San Francisco, CA), February 20, 1910, 47.

<sup>56</sup> Henry F. Withey, *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects* (Los Angeles, CA: New Age Publication, Co., c.1956), 405-406.

<sup>57</sup> John Edward Powell, "Biographies of Architects, Designers, and Builders: McDougall Bros.," *A Guide to Historic Architecture in Fresno, California*, accessed August 29, 2016, <http://historicfresno.org/bio/mcdougall.htm>.

<sup>58</sup> "Benj. G. McDougall, Architect," *Architect and Engineer* (San Francisco, CA), August 1937: 58.

<sup>59</sup> Powell; "McDougall Bros., Architects, Have Worked for Greater City: Great Structures Planned by Firm," *San Francisco Call* (San Francisco, CA), February 20, 1910, 47.



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By the mid-1890s, the brothers had left their father's firm, and established offices in San Francisco and Bakersfield. The San Francisco office was primarily run by Charles and George and operated as the McDougall Bros. until 1913 when George was appointed the California State Architect. Among the firm's designs were several public library branches, churches, and schools in San Francisco. The McDougall Bros. had a reputation for conscientious consideration of the user's experience. Their design approach included special studies of the disposition and preservation of books, proper lighting, air circulation, and acoustic properties. They worked primarily in the Renaissance Revival style, with imposing scale in their designs of masonry construction. Their buildings featured identifiable classical details, such as columns and round arches, arcades, rusticated stone, and porticos. Among their noted buildings are the Calvary Presbyterian Church (1901) and Park Branch Library (1909) in San Francisco, and the Hotel Shattuck Plaza (1909) in Berkeley, all of which remain in their original use as of 2017.<sup>60</sup>

Benjamin worked in the Bakersfield office, and within a few years, the office moved to Fresno. While in Fresno, he designed prominent commercial, public, and private residential buildings. After the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake, Benjamin closed the Fresno office and set up his own private practice in the San Francisco Bay Area.<sup>61</sup>

### Ongoing Use and Alterations

The San Francisco Central YMCA attracted intensive use from its opening in 1910. Membership increased immediately and the hotel rooms were occupied fully, with a waiting list of 35 to 40 by August 1911.<sup>62</sup> From 1938 to 1942, the San Francisco Central YMCA was remodeled at a cost of \$45,000. The work included "the installation of deluxe swimming and bathing facilities."<sup>63</sup> In 1951 and 1952, the San Francisco YMCA spent about \$300,000 renovating the building. The work included removal of the original power plant that had made the building independent of the city's electrical grid, removal of the laundry facilities, and demolition of the original grand stair from the street to the second floor lobby: "The main lobby was put on the first floor and modernized." Automatic elevators and "health club facilities for men" were installed.<sup>64</sup> The project created a low-ceilinged lobby entered directly off Golden Gate Avenue, leaving the original lobby on the second floor accessible through blank doors leading to enclosed stairs, or by elevator.

In 1982, the San Francisco Association announced a \$23 million renovation plan for all its facilities, including the Central YMCA and the 12 branches of the Metropolitan Association. The program was to be funded with the help of "public and private well-wishers." The YMCA said that the Central YMCA had not been renovated since its completion in 1910.<sup>65</sup> In 2005, the San Francisco YMCA announced it was seeking bids to buy the building at 220 Golden Gate

<sup>60</sup> "McDougall Bros., Architects, Have Worked for Greater City: Great Structures Planned by Firm," San Francisco Call (San Francisco, CA), February 20, 1910, 47.

<sup>61</sup> Powell.

<sup>62</sup> Drury, 141.

<sup>63</sup> Drury, 203.

<sup>64</sup> Drury, 227.

<sup>65</sup> Lloyd Watson, "People in Business/A Plan for the '80s," *San Francisco Chronicle* (San Francisco, CA), July 20, 1982.

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Avenue. The organization planned to team with nearby UC Hastings College of Law on a new building that would include sports facilities for the YMCA in addition to parking for the law school.<sup>66</sup> In 2007, the San Francisco YMCA sold the property to Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation, a neighborhood nonprofit housing developer and social services provider, and AF Evans Inc., a Bay Area housing developer, for \$12.2 million.<sup>67</sup> Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation was founded in 1981 by several individuals in the Tenderloin District of San Francisco; they provide affordable housing and services for over 4,100 residents throughout San Francisco.<sup>68</sup>

The YMCA closed its operations in the building in 2009. The following year construction began on the historic rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the Central YMCA building. In 2012, the building reopened as the Kelly Cullen Community.<sup>69</sup> Kelly Cullen Community is one of 39 properties acquired by the Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation in their efforts to provide safe and affordable housing.<sup>70</sup> Kelly Cullen Community provides residential accommodations—172 efficiency studio units—for chronically homeless individuals, on-site social services for residences, a Department of Public Health-managed health clinic for homeless and formerly homeless clients, and retail space. Kelly Cullen Community retains the restored historic auditorium and fifth floor gymnasium.<sup>71</sup>

## SIGNIFICANCE

The Central YMCA is significant at the local level under Criterion A in the area of Social History as the headquarters and main program location of the YMCA, a public organization with important associations with social services, health, athletics, culture, and religion. Although the YMCA was not the only organization serving the needs that motivated it, the combination of services it offered was unique and its prominence among community organizations was clear. Completed soon after the 1906 earthquake and fire, the building at 220 Golden Gate Avenue for almost a century was used by tens of thousands for the many programs that made “the Y” an important institution—and locus of community life. Designed by a prominent local architecture firm specifically for the YMCA, the building conveys its historical importance by its size, its prominent public entry and grand sequence to the near-monumental lobby adjoining the large auditorium, and by its variety of facilities, including a gymnasium, classrooms, and an indoor pool. The original hotel rooms—recalled by the 174 residential units of TNDC’s Kelly Cullen Community—supplied a housing opportunity important to the YMCA’s mission of meeting the

<sup>66</sup> Dan Levy, “YMCA to Sell Tenderloin Site, Build a New Gym Nearby/Joint project with Hastings to Include Garage,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (San Francisco, CA), March 31, 2005.

<sup>67</sup> Robert Hollis, “YMCA Building to Shelter Homeless,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (San Francisco, CA), July 10, 2007.

<sup>68</sup> “About,” *Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation*, accessed April 2017, <http://www.tndc.org/about/vision-mission-history/>.

<sup>69</sup> Meredith May, “S.F. Central YMCA members sad it will close,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (San Francisco, CA), May 17 2009.

<sup>70</sup> “About,” *Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation*.

<sup>71</sup> “Kelly Cullen Community – 220 Golden Gate,” *Tenderloin Neighborhood Development*, accessed April 2017, <http://www.tndc.org/property/kelly-cullen-community-220-golden-gate/>.

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needs of new and under-served urban residents. These factors make the Central YMCA individually significant at the local level under Criterion A.

The Central YMCA is also individually significant at the local level under Criterion A in the area of Education for its association with Golden Gate University. Although the San Francisco YMCA began with an important educational component in 1853 and had a significant program from 1881, Golden Gate College did not take on its own independent identity until it incorporated in 1923. From the time the Central YMCA was completed in 1910 until Golden Gate University moved to its own home on Mission Street in 1965-67, the building at 220 Golden Gate Avenue was the university's home. As a significant provider of graduate education—and as a longtime leader in evening study, especially in law—Golden Gate University is important in the history of education at the local level. The property has a significant association with this institution, in that Golden Gate University grew directly out of education programs started by and at the YMCA and the university was located in the building from the time of its incorporation until 1967. Even after the 2012 rehabilitation, the Central YMCA retains architectural features that convey its original use for education. A multipurpose room on the third floor, visible from the lobby, was historically used for classes, and the glazed corridor walls of former classrooms on the fourth floor remain in place, although the spaces behind them are now housing units. These features convey the original YMCA programs that evolved into the university. For these reasons, the Central YMCA is significant under Criterion A in the area of Education for its association with Golden Gate University. The period of significance is 1910 for completion of the building and initiation of education programs in it, to 1967 for completion of Golden Gate University's move to its own building.

The Central YMCA is individually significant at the local level under Criterion C in the area of Architecture because it represents the distinctive characteristics of a type. The McDougall Bros. used the architectural language of the Renaissance Revival and contemporary building techniques to express the cultural identity of the YMCA and meet the programmatic requirements of a relatively new building type. Unlike late nineteenth century YMCAs—including the Gothic building it replaced after the 1906 earthquake and fire—the Central YMCA did not invoke religious connections in its outward design. The architects used the Renaissance Revival style—one of their mainstays—to impose order and regularity on the two street façades of what might otherwise have been an ad-hoc design, like the north and east elevations, which were not intended for public view. The monumental entry portal provided a prominent reference to classical values which English-speaking Protestants—and the immigrants and newcomers of other origins and religions who used the YMCA alongside them—looked to for inspiration and cultural validation as San Francisco recovered from the 1906 disaster and California sought to take its place nationally alongside more established states to the east. The building illustrates how emerging technologies were combined with traditional architectural devices, to meet the needs and reflect the aspirations of the YMCA. The exterior street façades and the most important interior spaces—from the lobby and auditorium to the gymnasium and original general secretary's office—continue to convey the importance of this design. Because these characteristics took their form in 1910 and have changed very little since then, that year is the period of significance under Criterion C.

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## Developmental history/additional historic context information

### YMCA Background

The Young Men's Christian Association began in London, England in 1844. George Williams, a 23-year-old merchant's apprentice, established the organization to address the social, religious, and practical needs of young men who had moved to London and found themselves alone in the city. The 12 charter members of the avowedly, but not exclusively, religious group belonged to the Anglican, Methodist, Congregational, and Baptist denominations.<sup>72</sup> The first YMCA in North America was founded in Montreal, Quebec in 1851; a branch opened in Boston, Massachusetts later the same year.<sup>73</sup> The London organization founded a branch in New York City in 1852, but the Boston branch had greater influence over early U.S. outposts, including San Francisco. "So closely was the San Francisco Y modeled after that in Boston that [SF President E.D.] Sawyer called it 'The Boston society.'"<sup>74</sup> By the beginning of 1853, the year the San Francisco YMCA formed, there were seven in the United States. Though San Francisco was the fifth American city to form a YMCA that year, it was the first one west of the Mississippi.

### Founding the San Francisco Association

Less than 10 years after the Gold Rush, San Francisco was very different from London in most respects, but like the capital of England, it had many young men who had migrated there and found themselves in an unfamiliar setting where they had few contacts or social ties. William K. Osborn, a young lawyer from Dayton, Ohio, came to San Francisco in November 1850 and felt "something definite should be done to help young men." A few others he talked to suggested starting a YMCA.<sup>75</sup> Osborn took the initiative, reportedly calling a meeting "of a few Christian young men in his office...July 1853 to discuss what should be done for the young men of the city." The constitution of the SF branch was clearly modeled on the Boston document.<sup>76</sup> The founding members agreed to have one representative from each of the Protestant denominations in the city help draft a constitution. Unlike Boston, San Francisco had an age cutoff—40—which it eliminated in 1859.<sup>77</sup>

Within two months of its first meeting, the Association printed 1,000 copies of a 16-page pamphlet with its constitution, which prescribed a format for meetings including the reading of scripture, prayer, singing, and a lecture by a member.<sup>78</sup> That same month, the organization rented rooms in the California Exchange Building on Portsmouth Square, which was then the public center of the Gold Rush city, for \$125 a month.<sup>79</sup> In June 1856, the organization moved into three rented rooms in the Armory Building, and then in 1858 to 629 Washington Street. The next year, in an effort to raise money to buy a lot, the San Francisco YMCA sponsored a "Floral

<sup>72</sup> Clifford M. Drury, *100 Years by the Golden Gate 1853-1953* (Glendale, CA: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1963), 20.

<sup>73</sup> Drury, 21.

<sup>74</sup> Drury, 22.

<sup>75</sup> Drury, 20.

<sup>76</sup> Drury, 22.

<sup>77</sup> Drury, 25.

<sup>78</sup> Drury, 26.

<sup>79</sup> Drury, 27.

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Festival”—organized and run by women from the churches that supported the organization.<sup>80</sup> In 1862, stimulated by a \$1,000 bequest conditioned on raising \$6,000 for a building, the annual meeting voted to raise \$7,500 for that purpose.<sup>81</sup> In 1864, the organization bought its first building, at 522 California Street, though it had a ground lease of \$50 per month from the owner of the land.<sup>82</sup> This made San Francisco the second YMCA chapter in the United States to own its own building.

A flurry of fund-raising efforts and appeals to churches in 1865 and 1866 led to the purchase of a lot at 232 Sutter Street in 1867, the deadline a court had set for the terms of the \$1,000 bequest. The new building was to cover the entire 54 x 120-foot lot, with a basement and three upper stories. The building was to have retail spaces on the first two floors on Sutter Street, with a gymnasium (a bowling alley was added later), reading rooms, lounges, and a library, and a grand hall with seating for 800, filling the rest of the first two stories. The third story was to be committee rooms and offices for rent.<sup>83</sup>

Construction of the building brought the YMCA into what would become a recurrent theme: the determination to build facilities and provide services even when funds were insufficient to pay for them. The lot cost \$19,075 and the completed building and furnishings cost \$61,300—but the Y had raised only \$23,000 by the time it was completed. The lot was purchased with a mortgage on two-thirds of its price. When the building opened in 1868, there was a debt of \$57,000 at ten percent interest, which grew to \$75,000 by 1878.<sup>84</sup> A leadership shakeup in 1881 resulted in fund-raising of \$83,866 that retired the organization's debt.<sup>85</sup>

The Sutter Street building quickly attracted more participants than it could accommodate, and the board voted to prepare for building a larger one, even though it struggled to cover operating expenses. In 1888, it put down \$7,500 on a \$145,000 lot at Mason and Ellis Streets. Ultimately, the lot was subdivided and the board relied on a group of members to buy it. In 1893, construction began and in 1894, the San Francisco YMCA moved to Mason and Ellis Streets, its final location before moving to the nominated building.<sup>86</sup> The five-story Romanesque masonry building had a gymnasium, salt-water swimming pool, marble-lined showers, a bicycle room, “camera section” (presumably a dark room), bowling alleys, firing range, handball court, classrooms (with some courses part of the University of California extension program), and separate reading room, library, gymnasium, and parlor for boys 12-16 years old. The organization had almost \$200,000 in debt on the building.<sup>87</sup> The debt was finally erased in 1903, when President Theodore Roosevelt officially dedicated the building, striking a match to light the mortgage document on fire.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Drury, 39-40.

<sup>81</sup> Drury, 45.

<sup>82</sup> Drury, 29 and 46.

<sup>83</sup> Drury, 53-59.

<sup>84</sup> Drury, 54, 59, and 69.

<sup>85</sup> Drury, 70 and 72.

<sup>86</sup> Drury, 47, 93-97.

<sup>87</sup> Drury, 101-102.

<sup>88</sup> Drury, 114 and 116.

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### Mission

At its founding, the San Francisco YMCA was strongly religious in outlook. While it focused on young men and their location in rapidly changing urban environments, it viewed their religious lives as a central concern and the moral temptations of the city as one of young men's greatest struggles. "The sum total of all the religious forces within San Francisco raised but a feeble dam against the flood of moral turpitude which had engulfed the city," said one contemporary observer.<sup>89</sup> In its early years, the San Francisco YMCA aimed consciously to cater to both the spiritual and practical needs of its participants, and it began with the spiritual.<sup>90</sup> The 16-page pamphlet the San Francisco YMCA published to introduce itself in 1853 proclaimed, "No where [*sic*] is moral principle more severely tried than in this new country; no where [*sic*] is piety more endangered; no where [*sic*] is physical and moral ruin more often accomplished."<sup>91</sup> The minutes of the initial meeting to form the San Francisco YMCA on 18 July 1868 at the Pine Street Baptist Church, recorded by participant F. L. Rising, proclaimed the organization's purpose was "to be the moral and mental improvement of young men...a pleasant and profitable intercourse...a Library of religious, moral, and scientific works, and a Reading Room."<sup>92</sup> From the start, the organization sponsored religious services—and it took them to the streets to reach those who did not come to its services. In 1865, the San Francisco YMCA organized street preaching in front of the What Cheer House on Sacramento Street in an attempt to improve on the reputation street preachers had for coarse language and bad behavior, and continued the activity for 15 years.<sup>93</sup>

While the YMCA was founded in part to guide young men toward a specific religious and cultural norm, it also concerned itself with their economic and personal challenges. An 1874 letter by the leaders of the San Francisco YMCA, appealing to members of the State Senate for \$10,000 in aid, said the organization had for many years,

performed an immense amount of good, in relieving the needy and distressed, furnishing food, obtaining employment, and giving shelter and rest to the weary and wayworn, thus preventing crime, giving greater security to life and to increase the value of property.<sup>94</sup>

The YMCA listed the five "objects" of its programs for young men (and women) as financial assistance, referrals for housing and employment, obtaining medical care, providing for "decent interment," and cooperating in a "systematic and persevering effort for the reformation of young criminals of both sexes."<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Drury, 20.

<sup>90</sup> Drury, 21 and 34.

<sup>91</sup> Drury, 26.

<sup>92</sup> Drury, 24.

<sup>93</sup> Drury, 52.

<sup>94</sup> Drury, 185.

<sup>95</sup> J.S. Taber, B.F. Sherwood, A.S. Hubbard and H. Cox, "Letter to California State Senators" (Letter, Bancroft Library, Berkeley, February 5, 2874).



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### Participants

As the first two letters of its name convey, the YMCA was founded for the benefit of young men. In its earliest days, this meant those old enough to be living on their own—and challenged by the lack of a structured environment that came with nineteenth century urban development and social mobility. At its second meeting, in August 1853, the San Francisco YMCA addressed the definition of young, limiting membership to men under 40. This cutoff was eliminated in 1859. Though the needs of boys and young females did not take long to arise, they were overlooked in the first years.

The third letter in name signified simply Christian, but the reality was more specific. Overwhelmingly Protestant during the initial immigration from England in the seventeenth century, the United States became less so in the second half of the nineteenth-century—and Protestantism itself continued to evolve, becoming more diverse denominationally. In 1851, the YMCA started in Boston, where,

the major evangelical denominations were fighting to preserve their churches against the inroads of Unitarianism and Roman Catholicism... These two factors, namely the rise of Unitarianism and the introduction of Roman Catholicism, were the primary reason why the Trinitarian and evangelical denominations in Boston hailed with joy the new organization founded in their midst in December 1851. Here was a new arm of the church dedicated to the great task of winning and holding young men to the evangelical Protestant faith. Full membership in Boston Y was limited to members in regular standing of an Evangelical Church.<sup>96</sup>

Associate (non-voting) membership was offered to any young man of “good moral character.”<sup>97</sup> In contrast, the first YMCA in North America, the Montreal Association, organized earlier the same year, had no religious test—but Montreal had been a Catholic, French city before Britain obtained dominion over Canada. The first international YMCA conference voted in Paris in 1855 to require only that members be Christian.<sup>98</sup>

An 1868 survey showed that 60 percent of YMCAs in the United States retained the evangelical test. Eight percent required members to belong to a church—any church—and 30 percent had a good character requirement instead. The 1868 International Convention in Detroit adopted a recommendation that membership be limited to “Evangelical” churches, but did not define that term. The 1869 International Convention in Portland, Maine adopted a theological definition of Evangelical churches for the membership requirement for new YMCAs. The evangelical test was weakened in 1907 with a more general requirement that members of student YMCAs merely recognize “Jesus Christ as He is offered in the Holy Scriptures as their God and Saviour,” and in 1925 the evangelical test became optional for all Associations.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Drury, 21.

<sup>97</sup> Drury, 21.

<sup>98</sup> Drury, 193.

<sup>99</sup> Drury, 194-195.

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The primary denominations that formed a symbiotic relationship with the San Francisco YMCA in its first decades were the Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Episcopal, Congregational, and Baptist churches. Eleven San Francisco churches had members on the YMCA's Board of Managers in 1858.<sup>100</sup> Although voting membership in the San Francisco YMCA was limited to members of evangelical (Methodist, Lutheran, Episcopal, and Presbyterian) churches, Catholics were the most numerous group in a 1903 breakdown of members' affiliations. Jews outnumbered Methodists and Lutherans and were nearly as numerous as Episcopalians and Presbyterians. In addition to mainstream Protestant church members such as Baptists, members of the Latter-Day Saints, Society of Friends, Christian Science, Seventh-Day Adventist, and Swedenborgian sects were also represented.<sup>101</sup> The San Francisco YMCA affirmed in 1905 the requirement that full members belong to "an evangelical church," but the trend of widening membership continued.

San Francisco presented a special case of the social dynamics of a growing city, and the changing family and economic structure that prompted the founding of the YMCA in London. The original organization in London was less than five years old when gold was discovered at Sutter's Mill in 1848 and the migration it touched off was dominated by single men. San Francisco continued to attract young men from the rest of the United States for decades. The 1895 Thanksgiving dinner included a song celebrating members' migration,

from the shores of New England,  
and plains of the West,  
from North and from South-land,  
From homes we love best,  
We've gathered to-day,  
And from lands o'er the sea,  
all voices united.<sup>102</sup>

In San Francisco, where fortune-seekers came from many parts and demographic groups in the United States as well as Europe, Asia, and Latin America, the YMCA soon encountered racial diversity and reflected broader social attitudes about it. In the first year, the San Francisco YMCA saw two immigrants from China join. In 1870, a Chinese YMCA was organized, originally not connected to the San Francisco Association. In 1857, the San Francisco Association passed a resolution opposing racial segregation.<sup>103</sup>

The end of World War II led to discontinuation of the USO operation in the former Japanese Branch, but the confiscation of the property of West Coast Japanese Americans under Executive Order 9066 meant that the original residents of Japantown no longer had homes in the neighborhood. "Thus a new approach to the community had to be made. In 1947 in cooperation with the YWCA, an interracial program was inaugurated at the branch to meet the needs of the

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<sup>100</sup> Drury, 38.

<sup>101</sup> Drury, 106.

<sup>102</sup> "Thanksgiving ... San Francisco Nov. 28 1895," (Dinner program, Ephemera Collection, California Historical Society, San Francisco, 1985).

<sup>103</sup> Drury, 36.



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youth of the community. The Board of Managers and staff of the branch was also interracial. The new approach met with an immediate and favorable response.”<sup>104</sup> In 1953, the San Francisco YMCA’s movement toward racial diversity was reflected in comments about its new Mission Branch building, where “several groups were operating on an inter-racial basis.”<sup>105</sup>

### Services and Growth

For the first 15 years, the San Francisco YMCA followed the same meeting format. From August to October 1853, regular Sunday meetings rotated among First Presbyterian Church, First Methodist Church, First Baptist Church, and Holy Trinity Episcopal Church. It also had eight lectures by clergymen in the first year and saw 20 to 40 members joining at each monthly session.<sup>106</sup> The members formed Employment, Visitation, and Boarding Houses committees.<sup>107</sup> In 1855, the San Francisco Association hired its first employee, George W. Chapin, as the registrar and became the twenty-second Association to join the North American confederation of YMCAs.<sup>108</sup>

In 1854, the San Francisco YMCA treasurer reported 64 members had paid their dues and by August of that year, the rolls had grown to 343, though one-quarter were delinquent on dues.<sup>109</sup> Membership fluctuated in the early years, resulting in the layoff of the paid registrar.<sup>110</sup> In its first year in the Sutter Street building, the YMCA gained 115 new members.<sup>111</sup> Membership grew to 1,001 by the end of 1881, 1,200 three years later, and 1,600 after another 5 years.<sup>112</sup> In 1914, the San Francisco YMCA reported that only four city associations in the United States received more income from membership fees.<sup>113</sup>

In 1892, the San Francisco YMCA reported that in the building at 232 Sutter Street, the German branch had three parlors and the Deaf Mute branch had one. Programs included bookkeeping, German, Spanish, elocution, and stenography classes, concerts and lectures including medical topics such as a presentation by G. F. Hanson, M.D. entitled “Pills and People,” a lyceum and debating society, and seven religious services a week, including “special addresses to young men by clergy and prominent figures on Sunday afternoons.” The Y also published its own newsletter.<sup>114</sup>

Although the earliest, rented, facilities are not recorded as having sports rooms or programs, the Sutter Street building had a gymnasium from the time of construction, and a bowling alley was

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<sup>104</sup> Drury, 230.

<sup>105</sup> Drury, 227.

<sup>106</sup> Drury, 32.

<sup>107</sup> Drury, 34.

<sup>108</sup> Drury, 36.

<sup>109</sup> Drury, 25 & 33.

<sup>110</sup> Drury, 36-38.

<sup>111</sup> Drury, 68.

<sup>112</sup> Drury, 79.

<sup>113</sup> Drury, 143.

<sup>114</sup> “This Year’s Privileges/New Year’s Souvenir presented by the Young Men’s Christian Association,” (Ephemera Collection, California Historical Society, 1892).

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added later. On 10 April 1890, a canvass of the 720 members who used the building that day found that 220 of them were bound for the gym.<sup>115</sup> Basketball—the sport invented at a YMCA by one of its early leaders—became a mainstay at the San Francisco Association.<sup>116</sup>

In addition to hosting Bible study, prayer meetings, and religious lectures, the meeting rooms of the San Francisco YMCA were also the venue for secular, cultural events and educational presentations, which led ultimately to the founding of Golden Gate University. The assembly hall in the San Francisco YMCA's first purpose-built home at 232 Sutter Street seated 750, and was used for a well-attended co-ed singing school, debates, recitations, and musical performances—but not dances.<sup>117</sup> The YMCA was the venue for events that were part of social and historic developments important to wider society. In 1878, the San Francisco YMCA sponsored a speech by Henry Ward Beecher, the prominent abolitionist and religious leader.<sup>118</sup>

Education programs were offered informally in the early years, and evolved into a night school in 1881. When the building at Mason and Ellis Streets opened in 1894, programs included an Evening College and extension programs of the University of California.

### Branches

As early as 1870, there were other YMCAs in San Francisco. As the headquarters, the Central YMCA had the largest facilities, hosted the most programs and members, and served as the offices of the leaders of the YMCA. Operations that started in San Francisco in 1853 came to control or influence the growth and operation of the YMCA throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. This role also played out through participation in state and national YMCA circles, and the most important aspect was the founding and operation of branches. At their inception in San Francisco, branches were a vehicle through which the YMCA reached out to men in communities other than the white, English-speaking Protestant newcomers to the city for whom the YMCA was founded. Later, as the social and economic dynamics that spawned many of the early branches waned, and small towns and villages near San Francisco grew into cities and suburbs, the branch system became more of a geographic expansion.

The Chinese YMCA organized in 1870, initially completely independent of the main (predominantly white) San Francisco Association. By 1876, it had 500 members and several branches outside San Francisco.<sup>119</sup> The YMCA of San Francisco organized a German branch in 1883, a Deaf-Mute branch in 1884, the Twentieth Street Branch in 1887, and the Park Branch in 1891; the first two did not initially have their own buildings. The German Branch, serving a community estimated at 40,000 the year it formed, stemmed from a Bible class of 25 that began the previous year, and was allocated two rooms on the third floor of the Sutter Street building.

<sup>115</sup> Drury, 88.

<sup>116</sup> Donald S. McCuaig, "Basketball: a YMCA Invention," World YMCA, accessed February 24, 2017, <http://www.ymca.int/who-we-are/history/basketball-a-ymca-invention/>.

<sup>117</sup> Drury, 61.

<sup>118</sup> "Closing Sermon by Rev. Henry Ward Beecher at the Grand Opera House, on Sunday, Sept. 1st, 1878...under the auspices of the Young Men's Christian Association of S.F." (Admission Ticket, Ephemera Collection, California Historical Society, San Francisco).

<sup>119</sup> Drury, 66.

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The Deaf-Mute Branch also had a room on the same floor and conducted religious services in sign language. The Twentieth Street Branch rented rooms in the Excelsior Hall at 2319 Mission Street, with a reading room/library, parlor, gymnasium, and bathroom and dressing room. The Park Branch, which occupied donated space in a new building at Baker and Fell Streets, was geared to serve the employees of nearby streetcar lines.<sup>120</sup>

When the San Francisco Theological Seminary moved from its original San Francisco location at 121 Haight Street to San Anselmo in Marin County (the Presbyterian institution remains at the second location), the Japanese YMCA took over the original location, not connected with the main San Francisco Association.<sup>121</sup>

The Deaf-Mute and Car-Men's (or Park) branches closed by 1894. In 1899, the German Branch that used the main building at Mason and Ellis Streets voted to join the main YMCA. In 1897, the Twentieth Street Branch changed its name to the Mission Street YMCA and became independent. It moved from 2319 Mission Street to Hill and Valencia Streets and rejoined the main Association in 1899. In 1911, the Mission Street Branch closed.<sup>122</sup> It had been losing money even when the main YMCA was in rented quarters after the 1906 earthquake and fire, and declined further after the opening of the 1910 Central YMCA building.

Lyman Pierce, who served as general secretary of the San Francisco YMCA from 1915 to 1919, introduced the Metropolitan Plan, which had been used first in New York in 1887 and then in Philadelphia, Brooklyn, St. Louis, and Chicago. This structure united the individual associations that had grown separately in an expanding city into a single organization and allowed the metropolitan organization to expand by creating branches. When Pierce arrived, San Francisco had the Central YMCA, two Army-Navy associations, the Chinese association, and the Japanese association. The plan called for a single board and centralized administration, with an individual board for each branch.<sup>123</sup> The Chinese and Japanese associations, both affiliated with the Presbyterian Church, quickly joined the Metropolitan Plan after its launch. The military branches, funded nationally, stayed on their own at first.

From 1921 to 1928, the San Francisco Association raised \$483,000 for the Chinese Branch, Presidio Branch, Embarcadero Branch, and Turk Street Hotel, and received \$800,000 in grants from the national headquarters, for a total budget of \$1,662,000. It had locally raised another \$102,000 for the Japanese, Mission, and Park-Presidio branches.<sup>124</sup>

Formed in 1911, the Chinese Branch leased permanent quarters at 1028 Stockton Street in 1912 and a double storefront at 830 Stockton Street in 1915. The branch offered lectures on health,

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<sup>120</sup> While the YMCA had railroad branches in many U.S. cities geared to serving employees who worked for long-haul railroads or in large yards, the Park Branch served the workforce of the local streetcar system. There is no record of a conventional railroad branch in San Francisco.

<sup>121</sup> Drury, 88-91.

<sup>122</sup> Drury, 107-108.

<sup>123</sup> Drury, 153-154.

<sup>124</sup> Drury, 178.

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education, and religion as well as English and mechanical drawing classes. It also sponsored Boy Scouts, and stocked Mandarin and English books, newspapers, and magazines; later, it organized a training program with the Ford Motor Company and introduced sports programs.<sup>125</sup> The Chinese Branch launched a building campaign in 1918 with a \$10,000 goal to buy a site. The branch Committee of Management recommended a site on Sacramento Street, for which the Metropolitan board approved spending \$13,000 though the site is reported to have cost \$14,000.<sup>126</sup> In 1921, the International Committee of the YMCA offered \$100,000 toward construction of a building for the Chinese branch if the San Francisco YMCA could match that amount. Construction began in 1924, and by 1925, the International Committee, Chinese community—in San Francisco and around the United States—and the San Francisco Metropolitan Association had raised the funds for the \$208,000 building at 855 Sacramento Street which opened formally the next year.<sup>127</sup>

In 1918, the board approved a building at 1409 Sutter Street for the Japanese branch.<sup>128</sup> The San Francisco Association bought a house at 1409 Sutter Street that year, but it became overcrowded and in 1924 John Mott of the International Committee, offered a matching grant of \$75,000 if local funds could be raised for a new building. In 1929, a lot at 1530 Buchanan Street was purchased and a building committee formed, but the effort to raise matching funds fell short and the project stalled.<sup>129</sup> In 1919, the San Francisco Association had just started a branch in South San Francisco, sponsored in part by local businesses in that industrial suburb. The new general secretary, Richard Perkins, closed it in 1921.

In 1920, at the instigation of Congregational and Presbyterian national organizations, the San Francisco Association initiated a branch in North Beach to serve Spanish and Italian young men. A leased building on Green Street led to purchase of a lot and \$22,000 pledged toward construction of a \$70,000 building, but news of the Methodist Church starting a similar endeavor shuttered the branch in 1923.<sup>130</sup> In 1923, the board approved the purchase of a house at 21<sup>st</sup> Street and South Van Ness Avenue in the Mission District for \$32,575. In addition to baseball, handball, and basketball facilities, the building provided sleeping rooms for 27 men. In 1924, the board approved the purchase of a lot on 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue just north of Geary Boulevard for the Richmond Branch, later known as the Park-Presidio Branch. The lot had an existing building that was renovated for YMCA programs, with a game room, library, clubrooms, and a 30 x 60 feet gymnasium.<sup>131</sup> The Park-Presidio Branch in 1953 dedicated a new building to replace the one on 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue.<sup>132</sup>

<sup>125</sup> *Historical Sketch, Fiftieth Anniversary Chinese YMCA San Francisco*, ed. Thomas W. Chinn (San Francisco: The YMCA, 1961), 10.

<sup>126</sup> Drury, 153-155; *Historical Sketch, Fiftieth Anniversary Chinese YMCA San Francisco*, ed. Thomas W. Chinn (San Francisco: The YMCA, 1961), 10.

<sup>127</sup> Drury, 169-170.

<sup>128</sup> Drury, 153-155.

<sup>129</sup> Drury, 172-173.

<sup>130</sup> Drury, 167.

<sup>131</sup> Drury, 173-174.

<sup>132</sup> Drury, 228.

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The San Mateo County branch was organized in October 1924. Even during the Depression, the Metropolitan YMCA continued branch and suburban expansion. It paid \$15,000 for the Jones Gulch site in San Mateo County for a camp that was dedicated in 1934 and it finally completed a building for the Japanese Branch in 1936.<sup>133</sup> When Perkins retired in 1942, the San Francisco Metropolitan YMCA had nine branches in addition to the Central YMCA at 220 Golden Gate Avenue.<sup>134</sup>

The Peninsula Branch bought a lot in San Mateo in 1948 and dedicated a new \$175,000 building in 1951. The Peninsula Family YMCA remains an operation of the Metropolitan YMCA of San Francisco. In 1947, the Redwood City programs, known as the Sequoia Branch, became independent from the Metropolitan Association.<sup>135</sup> The Mission Branch opened its own building "of the institutional type which majored on small group activities" at 4080 Mission Street in 1953. The Mission YMCA operates at this location.

In 1930, the San Francisco YMCA organized what it first called the Balboa District, later serially renamed the Southwest Branch, the Sunset Branch, and finally, the Golden West Branch.<sup>136</sup> The Golden West Branch dedicated a new building at 333 Eucalyptus Avenue in 1954. It was located on a lot the Metropolitan Association had acquired in 1945, which the Stoneson Brothers obtained from the Metropolitan Association in exchange for the building so that they could develop the Stonestown shopping center. The branch remains in operation as the Stonestown Family YMCA.<sup>137</sup> Not all YMCA branches had their own facilities; over the decades, various branches were programs that operated in spaces made available by other organizations or building owners. In the 1930s, three branches—Park-Presidio, Peninsula, and Golden West—did not have buildings.<sup>138</sup>

An important and distinct type of branch was the military, which was the largest part of the San Francisco Association's work with the Army and Navy, although the YMCA did provide services to the military through programs and facilities that were not part of separate branches. In 1898, with the Spanish-American War, the San Francisco YMCA became the second in the country (after Brooklyn, New York) to organize an Army and Navy Christian Commission to serve the members of the armed services based in San Francisco for deployment to the Philippines. When the war ended, the Army decided to retain permanently some of the strength that had been added in the Presidio for the war. In response to this development, the board of the San Francisco YMCA decided to keep the branch it had established there for the war open indefinitely.<sup>139</sup> San Francisco was also the launching point for the Army YMCA established in 1899 in the Philippines.<sup>140</sup>

<sup>133</sup> Drury, 192. The building at 1530 Buchanan Street is still extant as the Buchanan YMCA.

<sup>134</sup> Drury, 203.

<sup>135</sup> Drury, 228.

<sup>136</sup> Drury, 203.

<sup>137</sup> Drury, 227-228.

<sup>138</sup> Drury, 205.

<sup>139</sup> Drury, 108 and 111.

<sup>140</sup> "First Annual Report of the Army Department Young Men's Christian Association at Manila P.I.," (YMCA Ephemera Collection, California Historical Society, San Francisco, September 1, 1899).

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In 1908, the YMCA rented a three-story building at 52-58 Beale Street as a temporary Navy branch to serve the US Fleet during its call in San Francisco on a worldwide tour. The temporary Navy YMCA evolved directly into a permanent branch in rented space at 84 Market Street, and doubled in space by 1910, expanding further five years later. Renamed the Army and Navy YMCA, it moved in 1917 to 226 Embarcadero. The Panama-Pacific International Exposition, which opened in 1915, included a building for members of the armed forces, donated to the Presidio branch of the YMCA when the exposition closed. It was moved onto the Presidio, becoming the only branch in the West located on government property.<sup>141</sup> The Army and Navy branch on the Embarcadero bought an adjacent lot at 172 Embarcadero and in 1926 after a local campaign of \$250,000 and a national headquarters grant of \$650,000, the cornerstone was laid for a new branch to serve both military and civilian members. The building contained a gymnasium, swimming pool, restaurant, club and social rooms, and facilities geared to military branches. Its dormitory wings could sleep 400 men.<sup>142</sup> The Embarcadero YMCA continues in operation at this location, significantly changed. The hotel rooms dropped to 23 percent occupancy, and the building was renovated to meet health spa expectations for YMCA branches.<sup>143</sup> The Presidio Branch and the Army and Navy Embarcadero Branch merged in 1931.<sup>144</sup> In 1954, the YMCA relinquished management of the Presidio branch, which became an Army operation. The YMCA later resumed its role and continues to operate a branch in the Presidio, which closed as an Army base in 1994.<sup>145</sup>

### YMCA & Universities

Through the course of the YMCA's history, YMCA education programs evolved with the demands of its members and society. Initially, the educational program at YMCAs began as reading rooms, libraries, and occasional lectures on the Bible or scientific topics.<sup>146</sup> Interest in sponsoring a night school for working adults was conceived as early as the first International Convention at Buffalo in 1854, but it was over a decade before YMCAs began offering courses. The lectures eventually developed into a more formal class structure with the earliest courses documented in 1866. By 1889, approximately 201 associations were offering courses. By 1915, the number of associations offering courses more than doubled to 468.<sup>147</sup> Of the associations that offered courses, about two dozen independent colleges evolved from informal beginnings at their local YMCA to independent colleges. Not all of these colleges prospered. Approximately 20 colleges with origins in the YMCA night school still exist.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Drury, 149-151.

<sup>142</sup> Drury, 175.

<sup>143</sup> "Embarcadero Y to be Health Spa," *San Francisco Progress* (San Francisco, CA), July 23, 1973.

<sup>144</sup> Drury, 203.

<sup>145</sup> Drury, 227.

<sup>146</sup> Dorothy E. Finnegan, "Origins of the YMCA Universities: Organizational Adaptations in Urban Education," *History of Higher Education Annual*, 21 (2002): 47.

<sup>147</sup> Finnegan, 47 & 52.

<sup>148</sup> Finnegan, 75-76.



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Nationally, the YMCA educational programs evolved through four distinct phases, *Experimental Phase* (1870-1889), *Expansion and Standardization Phase* (1890-early 1920s), *College Development Phase* (1916-1930s), and the *Independence Phase* (starting in 1931).

### **Experimental Phase**

During the *Experimental Phase*, the intention of the program was to provide technical training or a new skill for employment for those who were unable to afford or attend day classes at established schools. Institutions offering job-related education were scarce, and a valued asset. By the end of the 1880s, at least fifteen North American YMCAs were providing classes. Due to the decentralized nature of the YMCA, courses offered at individual associations varied based on local needs. Local associations conducted community audits to understand the needs of the local population, which resulted in courses provided on new subjects.<sup>149</sup>

### **Expansion and Standardization Phase**

During the *Expansion and Standardization Phase*, individual associations continued to offer technical training geared towards employment and local needs, while nationally the YMCA established standardization of curriculum and examinations for courses offered nationwide. Many began offering courses in law, business, and technology, and expanded their course offerings to address nationwide occupational trends like secretarial, insurance, advertising, and sales work, while others offered specialty programs such as automobile and traffic schools.<sup>150</sup>

### **College Development Phase**

During the *College Development Phase*, YMCA schools began to move towards the established higher education system. They followed established colleges and universities in their efforts towards standardization through the development of the United YMCA Schools Committee, and many were granted the authority to award degrees. The schools began to offer programs during the day, and continued their evening programs for working adults.<sup>151</sup>

### **Independence Phase**

During this period, YMCA schools were faced with the decision of dissociating themselves from their local associations. YMCA schools risked waiving the legitimacy of accreditation if they remained or the loss of financial support if they left.<sup>152</sup>

### **Other Organizations**

Other than the Young Men's Institute, the sizeable Catholic organization most similar to the YMCA in the early years was the Knights of Columbus, which first organized in California in 1882.<sup>153</sup> The national organization began with a parish meeting in New Haven, Connecticut only

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<sup>149</sup> Finnegan, 51-52.

<sup>150</sup> Finnegan, 52-60.

<sup>151</sup> Finnegan, 60-62.

<sup>152</sup> Finnegan, 62-63.

<sup>153</sup> "By-Laws and List of Members of SF Council No. 615 Knights of Columbus" (Ephemera Collection, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library, May 1908).

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the previous year.<sup>154</sup> By 1908, the San Francisco chapter listed almost 1,000 members.<sup>155</sup> In 1912, the local chapter built a four-story, Romanesque-style masonry building one block east of the Central YMCA.<sup>156</sup> In 2005, a building permit was issued for its demolition, and the St. Anthony Foundation built a new headquarters on the site.

Broadly similar in some ways and not affiliated with a church was the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, founded in eighteenth-century England and present in the United States from the beginning of the nineteenth century. The charter for the first lodge in California was issued in 1849 in Philadelphia according to the national organization, although local records say that before establishing the lodge formally, Odd Fellows organized in 1847—before the discovery of gold in Coloma, which led to the village of Yerba Buena becoming the city of San Francisco.<sup>157</sup> The group founded a hospital in Sacramento. Rebekah, the Odd Fellows' female counterpart, formed a San Francisco lodge in 1870. The two groups built a Gothic headquarters at Seventh and Market Streets in 1884. After that building was dynamited to fight the fire caused by the 1906 earthquake, it was replaced by a seven-story masonry Renaissance Revival building in 1909.<sup>158</sup> According to its website, Yerba Buena Lodge #15 is the oldest fraternal organization in San Francisco.<sup>159</sup>

The Grand Encampment of the Knights Templar, a division of the Masonic fraternal organization, issued a charter for San Francisco by 1856.<sup>160</sup> In 1881, the Golden Gate Commandery of the Knights Templar was chartered. The organization first met in the Masonic Temple at Montgomery and Post Streets and later dedicated its own Gothic building at 131 Post Street. In 1886, the organization built a "stately temple" at 625 Sutter Street.<sup>161</sup> The organization's next building, located at 2135 Sutter Street, was not yet complete when damaged by the 1906 earthquake; it was completed in 1907. The statewide California Grand Commandery had a building at 6 Post Street in 1880.<sup>162</sup>

<sup>154</sup> "The Founding: 1882-1899," Knights of Columbus, accessed March 14, 2017, <http://kofc.org/en/todays-knights/history/1882-1899.html>.

<sup>155</sup> "By-Laws and List of Members of SF Council No. 615 Knights of Columbus."

<sup>156</sup> "Time capsule from 1912 unearthed by St. Anthony's," *Central City Extra* (San Francisco, CA) Feb. 2007: 2.

<sup>157</sup> Don R. Smith and Wayne Roberts, "IOOF History." The Sovereign Grand Lodge Independent Order of Odd Fellows, Accessed March 14, 2017, [http://www.ioof.org/IOOF/About\\_Us/IOOF\\_History/history\\_California/IOOF/AboutUS/History\\_California.aspx?hkey=e103f4ba-d884-411d-893c-c64681a11837](http://www.ioof.org/IOOF/About_Us/IOOF_History/history_California/IOOF/AboutUS/History_California.aspx?hkey=e103f4ba-d884-411d-893c-c64681a11837); "The Constitution and By-Laws of Templar Lodge No. 17, IOOF of the State of California," (Ephemera Collection, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library, 1858).

<sup>158</sup> Laurie Espinoza, "Mission California Rebekah Lodge No. 1 1870-1995" (Ephemera Collection, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library).

<sup>159</sup> "Yerba Buena Lodge No. 15 – Odd Fellows," Facebook, accessed March 14, 2017, [https://www.facebook.com/pg/Yerba-Buena-Lodge-No-15-Odd-Fellows-254450707933239/about/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/Yerba-Buena-Lodge-No-15-Odd-Fellows-254450707933239/about/?ref=page_internal).

<sup>160</sup> "By-Laws of San Francisco Encampment Knights Templars No. 1. San Francisco," (Ephemera Collection, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library, 1856).

<sup>161</sup> "Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration 1881-1931 Golden Gate Commandery No. 16 Knights Templar San Francisco" (Ephemera collection, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library, 1931): 11, 16, and 18.

<sup>162</sup> "California Commandery," (Brochure, Ephemera Collection, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library, n.d).



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There is also documentation of more purely charitable organizations in San Francisco from the nineteenth century. Organized in 1881, the California Froebel Society reported an average daily attendance of 60 at its Boys' Free Library and Reading Room in 1897 and provided kindergarten classes as well as a Housekeeper's Class for girls.<sup>163</sup> Gelett Burgess, probably more associated with art and poetry than with child development in the minds of many San Franciscans, founded the Harrison Street Boys Club in 1891. It became the San Francisco Boys' Club in 1893 and moved to 2520 Folsom Street after the 1906 earthquake. It established additional branches in 1927, 1947, and 1950, as well as a 200-acre camp in Mendocino County.<sup>164</sup> Phoebe Apperson Hearst, a prominent California philanthropist, established the San Francisco Settlement Association to serve needy families, donating a house in 1895. Programs included training for girls in domestic skills, a boys' club offering crafts and socializing, and a library.<sup>165</sup>

<sup>163</sup> *Annual Statement of the Silver Street Kindergarten Society for the Year Ending December 31, 1896* (San Francisco, CA: C.A. Murdock & Company, 1897).

<sup>164</sup> Jim Kelly, "Panorama: S.F. Boys Club—Head Start Toward Good Life," *San Francisco Progress* (San Francisco, CA), December 7, 1980.

<sup>165</sup> "The First Annual Report of the San Francisco Settlement Association."

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**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 # \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office  
☐ Other State agency  
☐ Federal agency  
☐ Local government  
☐ University  
☒ Other  
Name of repository: San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** less than one acre

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 37.781920 Longitude: -122.414240

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**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary of the Central YMCA includes Block 0345, Lot 031 and Lot 032

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes the lots historically associated with the Central YMCA building.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Frederic Knapp and Leigh Schoberth  
organization: Knapp Architects  
street & number: 5 Third Street, Suite 920  
city or town: San Francisco state: CA zip code: 94103  
e-mail frederic@knapp-architect.com  
telephone: (415) 986-2327  
date: March 2017; Revised November 2017

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

**Photographs**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

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**Photo Log**

Name of Property: San Francisco Central YMCA  
City or Vicinity: San Francisco  
County: San Francisco  
State: California  
Photographer: Knapp Architects  
Date Photographed: August 2017

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 20 West façade (partial), street view looking northeast from corner of Hyde Street and Golden Gate Avenue.
- 2 of 20 East façade (partial), street view looking northwest from Golden Gate Avenue at Jones Street.
- 3 of 20 South and east façades, looking northwest at the corner of Golden Gate Avenue and Leavenworth Street.
- 4 of 20 East façade and southeast building corner, looking northwest.
- 5 of 20 North facade (partial), looking southwest.
- 6 of 20 South façade (partial), looking northwest at the pedimented entry with Young Men's Christian Association on the pediment.
- 7 of 20 South façade, main entry at Golden Gate Avenue looking north, upward: original bronze arched window.
- 8 of 20 South façade, at Golden Gate Avenue looking northwest, upward: brick, terra cotta sills, and sheet metal cornice.
- 9 of 20 East façade, looking southwest at the former Boys' Entrance.
- 10 of 20 Basement, Multi-purpose room (formerly the swimming pool): looking northwest at the original tile and pool depth markers located on the columns.
- 11 of 20 Second floor, lobby looking south towards the grand entry stair.
- 12 of 20 Second floor, looking south up the secondary stair leading to the third floor.
- 13 of 20 Third floor, overlooking lobby: looking northwest from the balcony at plaster columns with ornamental capitals.

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- 14 of 20 Second floor, stair hall (former boys' lobby): looking east.
- 15 of 20 Second floor, the upper portion of two-story-high lobby: looking upward from the balcony at the skylight.
- 16 of 20 Second floor, auditorium: looking west at the proscenium.
- 17 of 20 Second floor, auditorium: looking east, up at the balcony and coffered ceiling.
- 18 of 20 Fifth floor, corridor looking south.
- 19 of 20 Fifth floor, gymnasium: looking northwest at running track level above the main floor of the gymnasium.
- 20 of 20 Roof: view from northeast corner looking southwest.



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## Location Map

Latitude: 37.781920 Longitude: -122.414240

USGS Map 2016



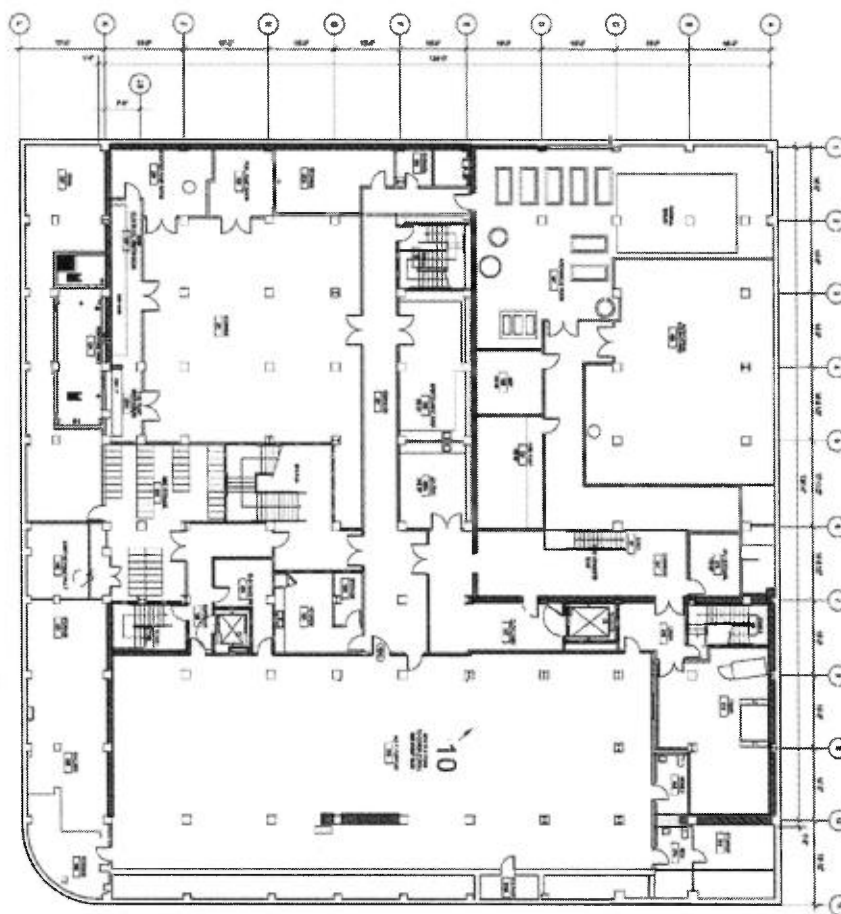
**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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**Floor Plan/Photo Key 1 of 11: Basement [Interior Photo 10]**

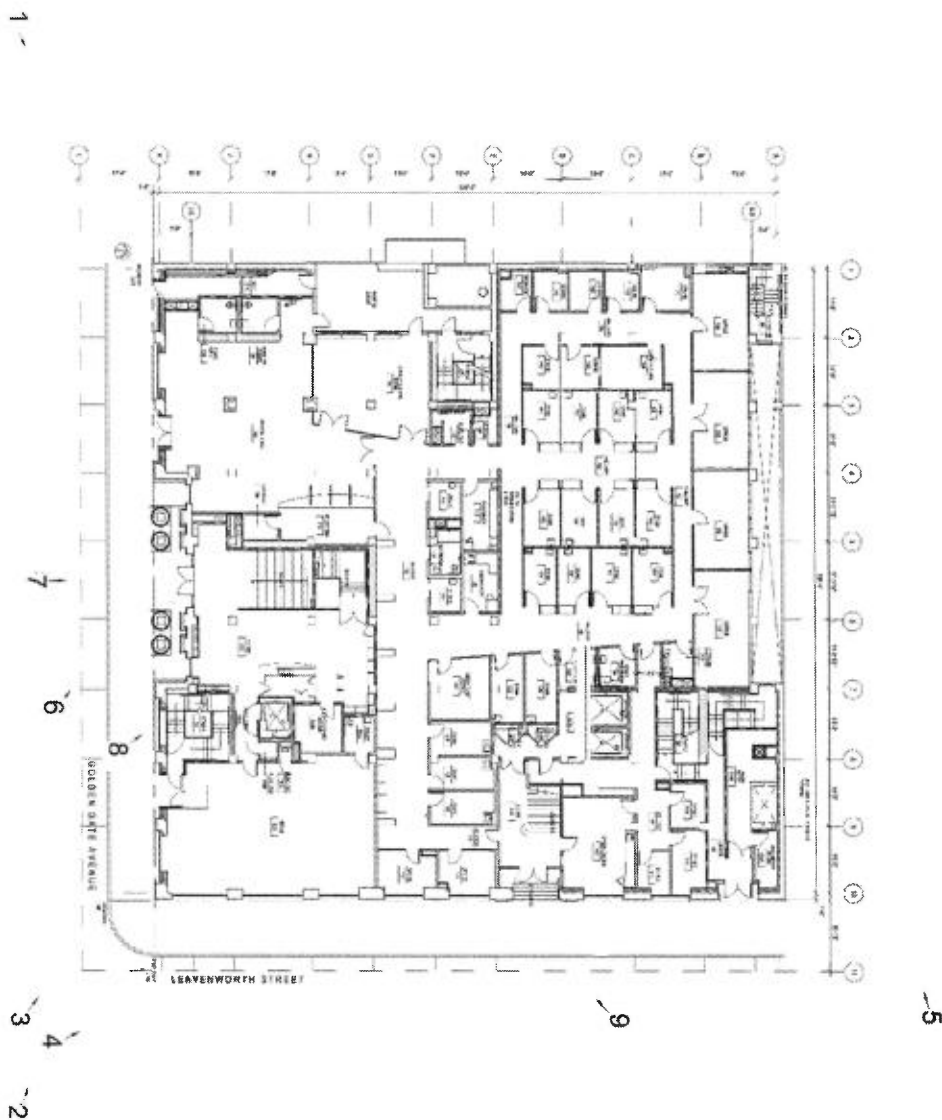


San Francisco Central YMCA  
Historic Preservation  
BASEMENT PLAN - PHOTO KEY  
North  
August 2017  
Knapp Architects  
Plan Drawing  
Gelfand Partners Architects

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Floor Plan/Photo Key 2 of 11: First Floor [Exterior Photos 1-9]

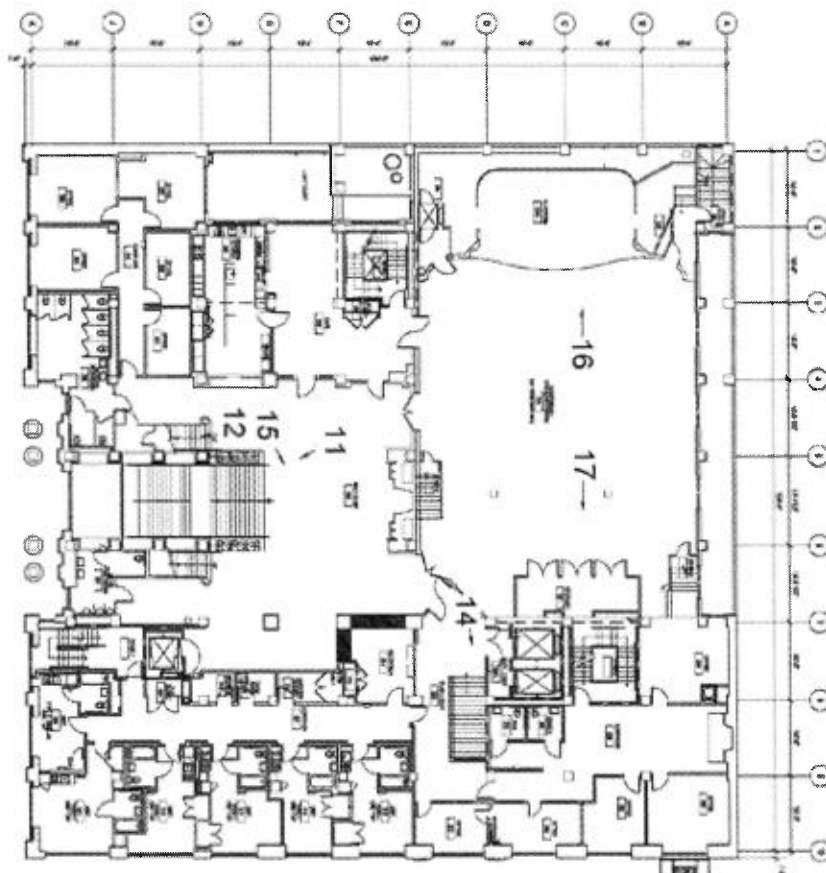


San Francisco Central YMCA  
Historic Preservation  
1ST FLOOR PLAN - PHOTO KEY  
North  
August 2017  
Knapp Architects  
Plan Drawing  
Gelfand Partners Architects

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**Floor Plan/Photo Key 3 of 11: Second Floor [Interior Photos 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, and 17]**

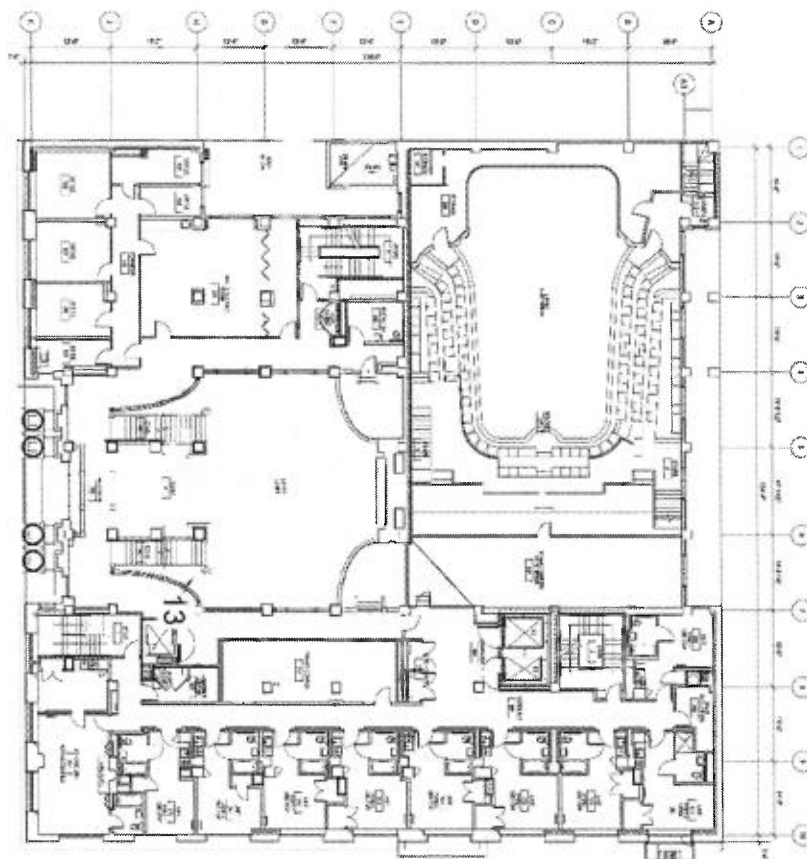


San Francisco Central YMCA  
Historic Preservation  
2ND FLOOR PLAN - PHOTO KEY  
North  
August 2017  
Knapp Architects  
Plan Drawing  
Gelfand Partners Architects

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**Floor Plan/Photo Key 4 of 11: Third Floor [Interior Photo 13]**

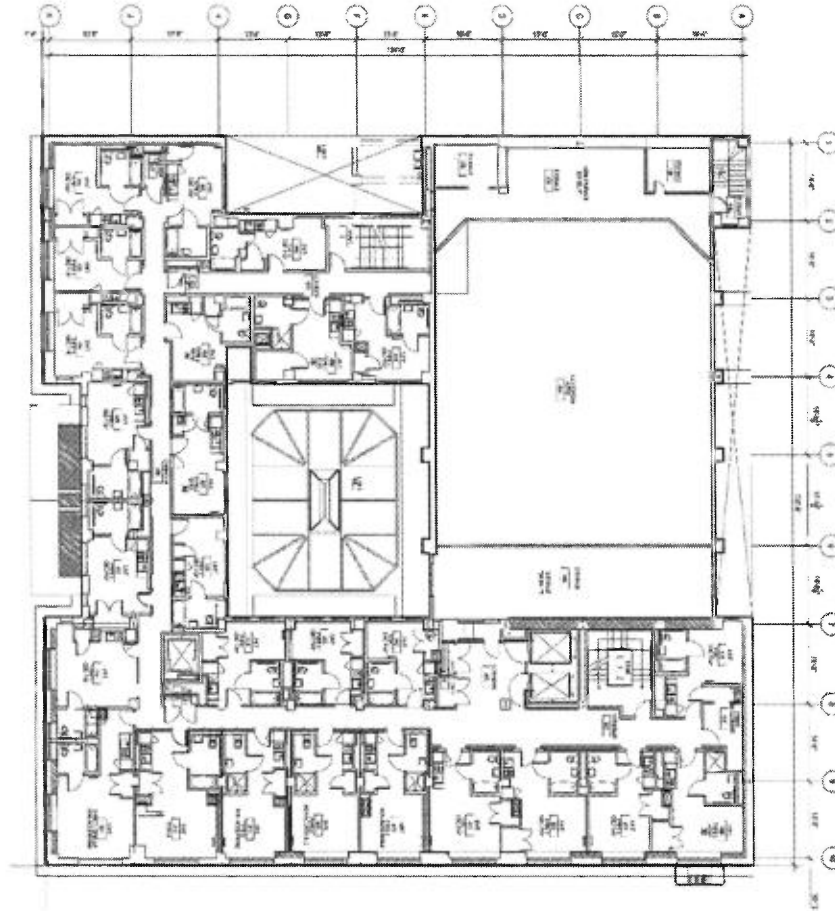


San Francisco Central YMCA  
Historic Preservation  
3RD FLOOR PLAN - PHOTO KEY  
North  
August 2017  
Knapp Architects  
Plan Drawing  
Gelfand Partners Architects

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**Floor Plan 5 of 11: Fourth Floor [no photos]**

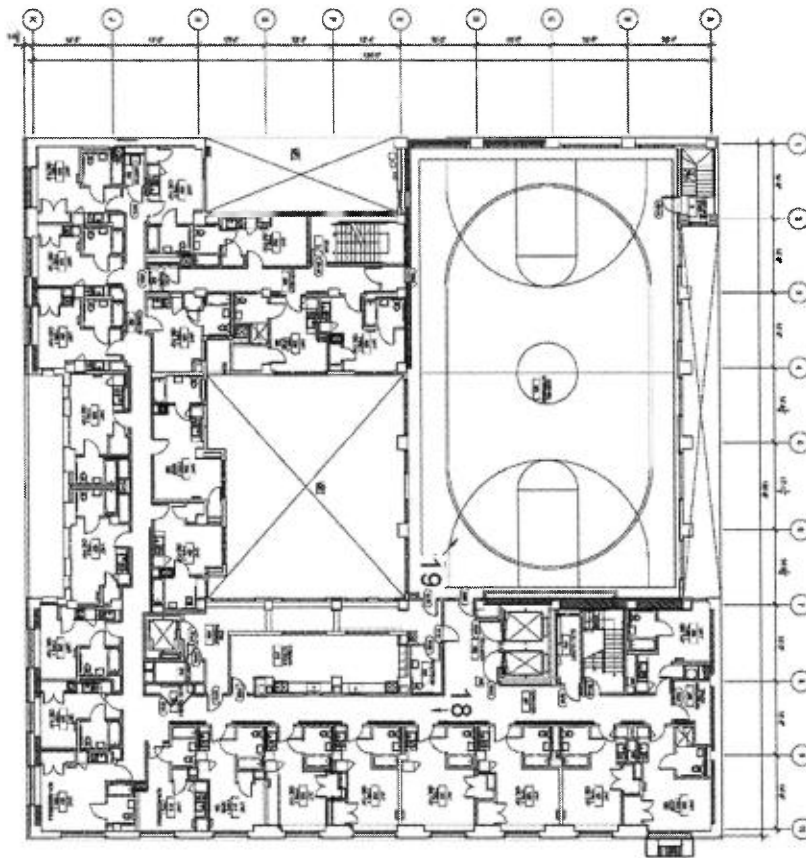


San Francisco Central YMCA  
Historic Preservation  
4TH FLOOR PLAN - PHOTO KEY  
North  
August 2017  
Knapp Architects  
Plan Drawing  
Gelband Partners Architects

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**Floor Plan/Photo Key 6 of 11: Fifth Floor [Interior Photos 18 and 19]**

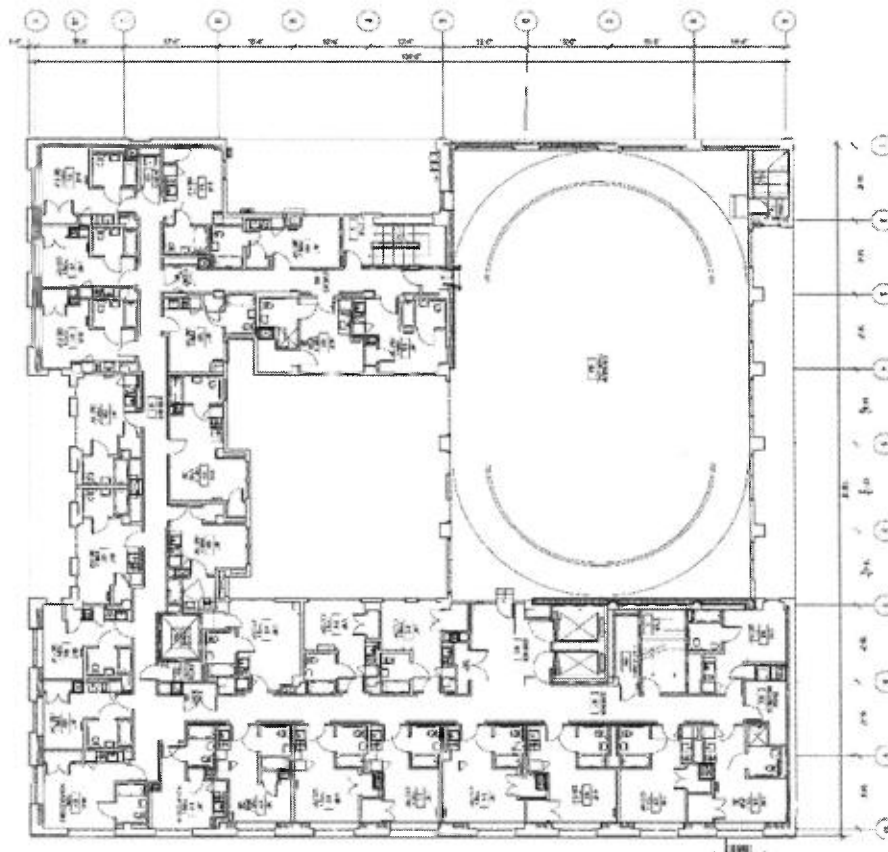


San Francisco Central YMCA  
Historic Preservation  
5TH FLOOR PLAN - PHOTO KEY  
North  
August 2017  
Knappe Architects  
Plan Drawing  
Gelfand Partners Architects

San Francisco Central YMCA  
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**Floor Plan/Photo Key 7 of 11: Sixth Floor [no photos]**



San Francisco Central YMCA  
Historic Preservation  
6TH FLOOR PLAN - PHOTO KEY  
North  
August 2017  
Knapp Architects  
Plan Drawing  
Gelfand Partners Architects

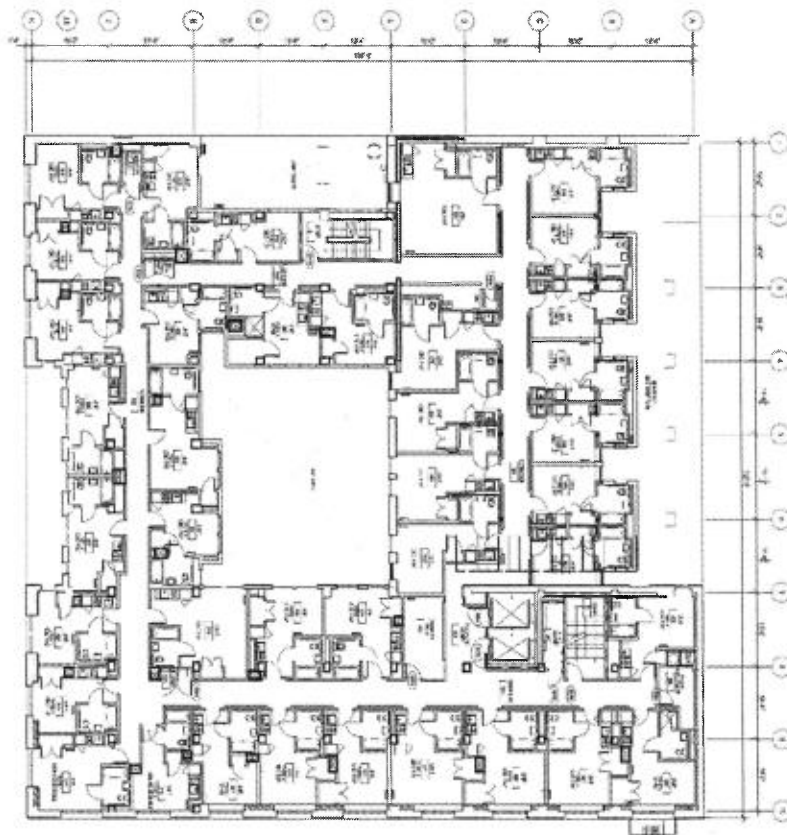




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**Floor Plan 9 of 11: Eighth Floor [no photos]**



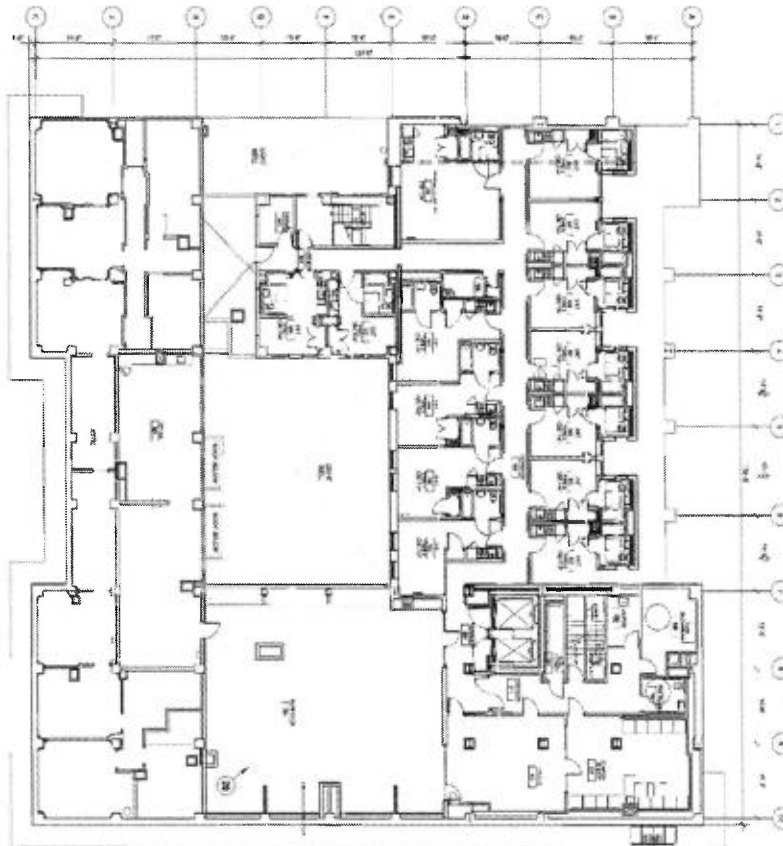
San Francisco Central YMCA  
Historic Preservation  
8TH FLOOR PLAN - PHOTO KEY  
North  
August 2017  
Kaapp Architects  
Plan Drawing  
Gelfand Partners Architects

San Francisco Central YMCA

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**Floor Plan 10 of 11: Ninth Floor [no photos]**

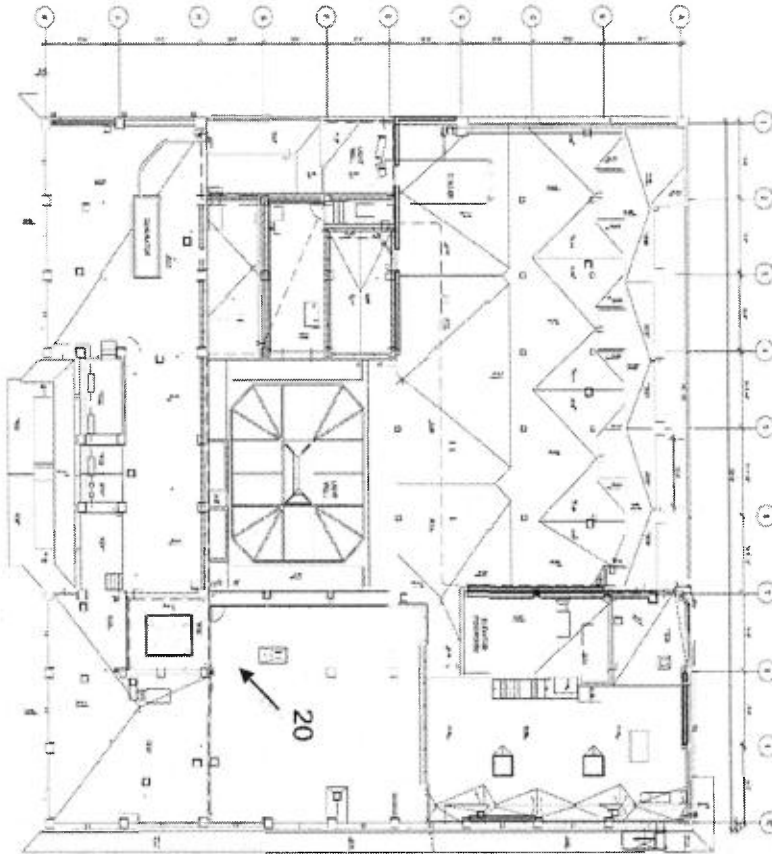


San Francisco Central YMCA  
Historic Preservation  
9TH FLOOR PLAN - PHOTO KEY  
North  
August 2017  
Knapp Architects  
Plan Drawing  
Gelfand Partners Architects

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**Floor Plan/Photo Key 11 of 11: Roof [Photo 20]**



San Francisco Central YMCA  
Historic Preservation  
ROOF PLAN - PHOTO KEY  
North  
August 2017  
Knapp Architects  
Plan Drawing  
Gelfand Partners Architects

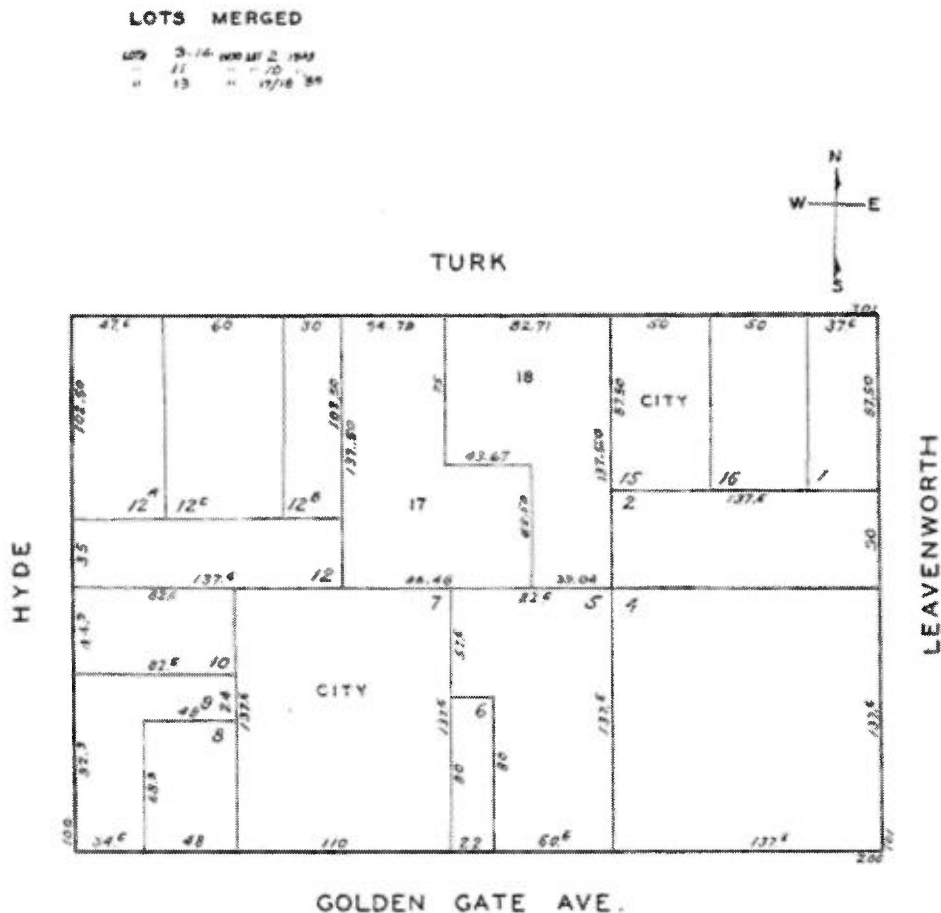
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Assessor's Map



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## Aerial Maps

1938



1946



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1987



2002





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Sanborn Maps

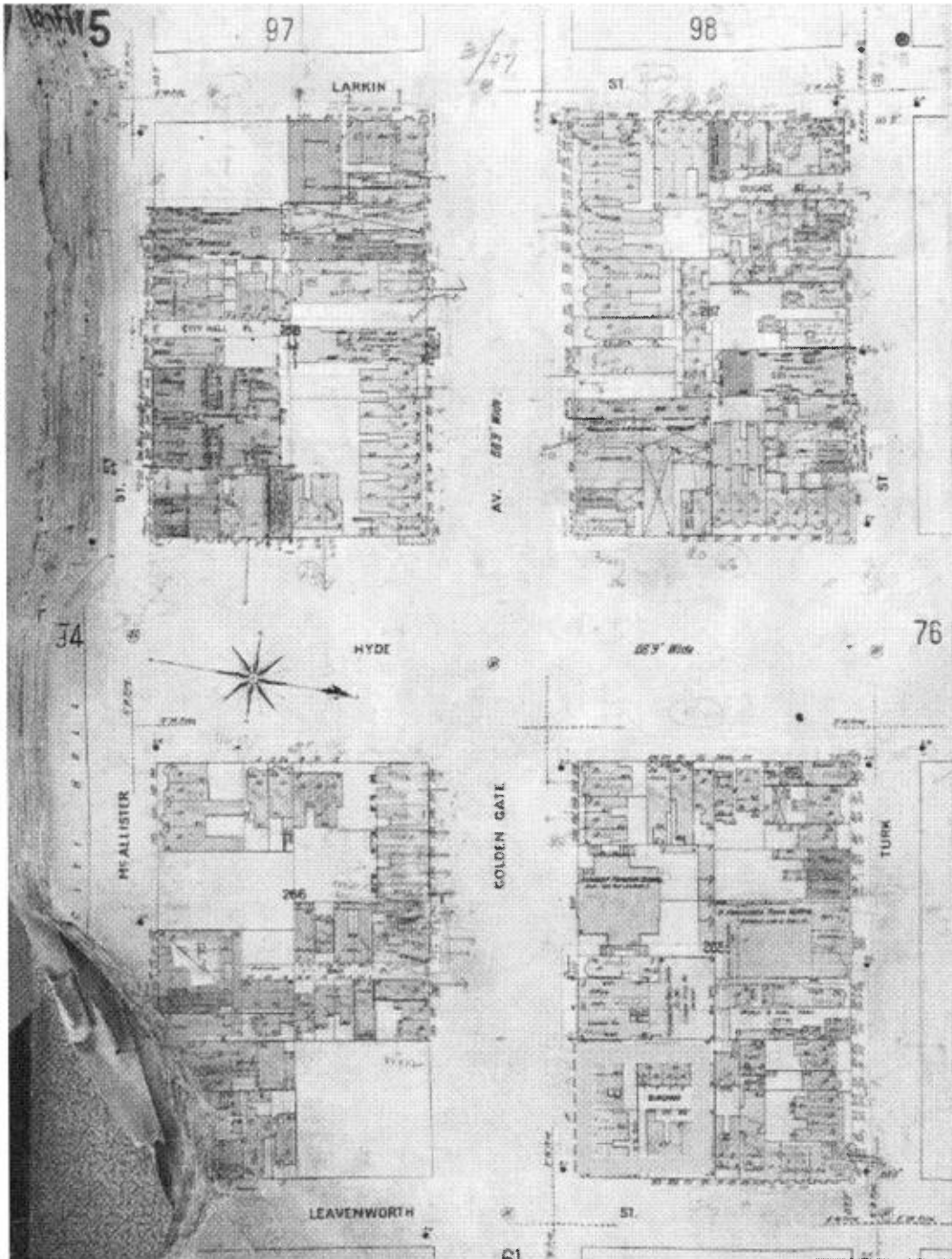
1899-1900



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1905



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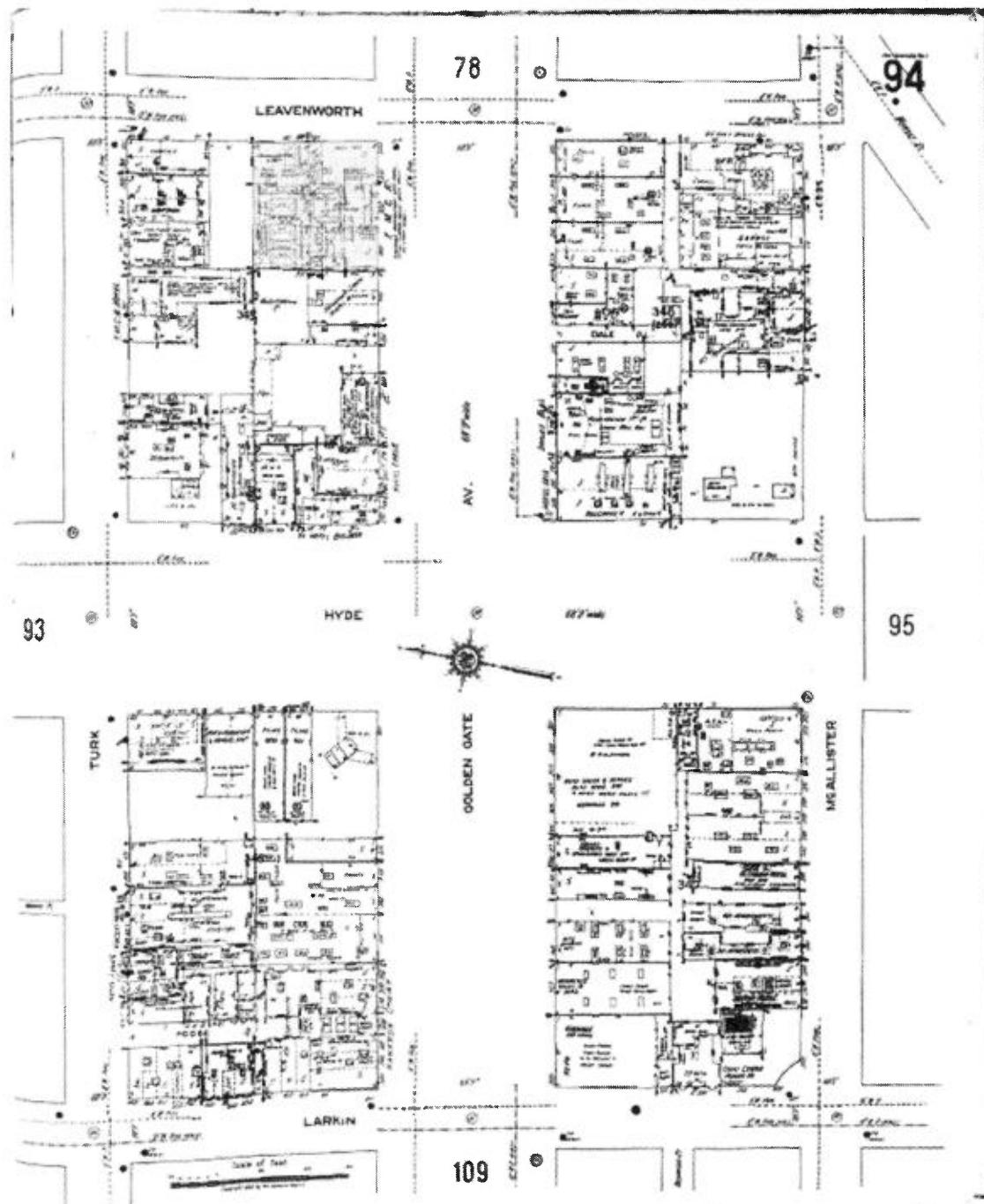
1913-1915



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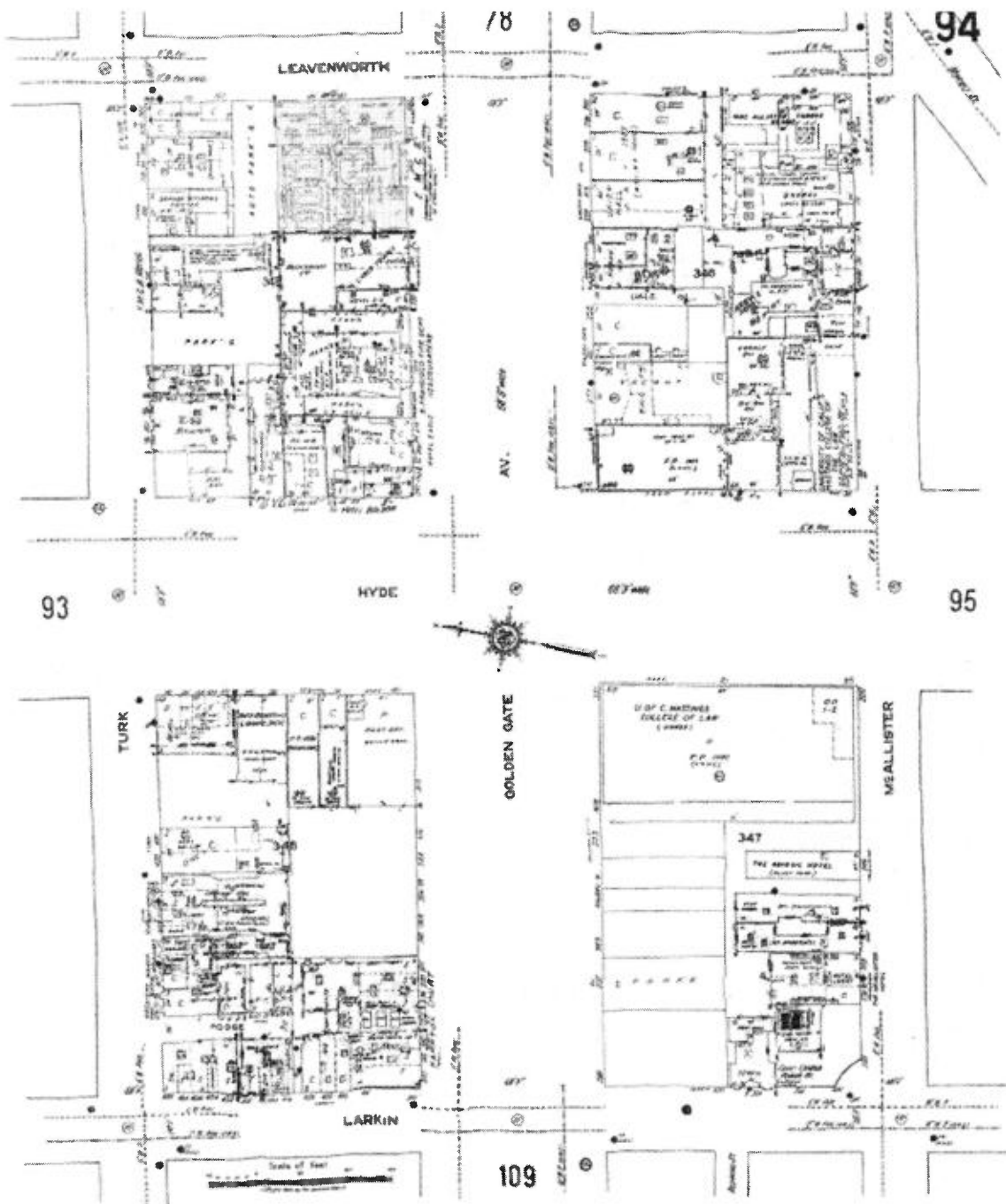
1913-1949



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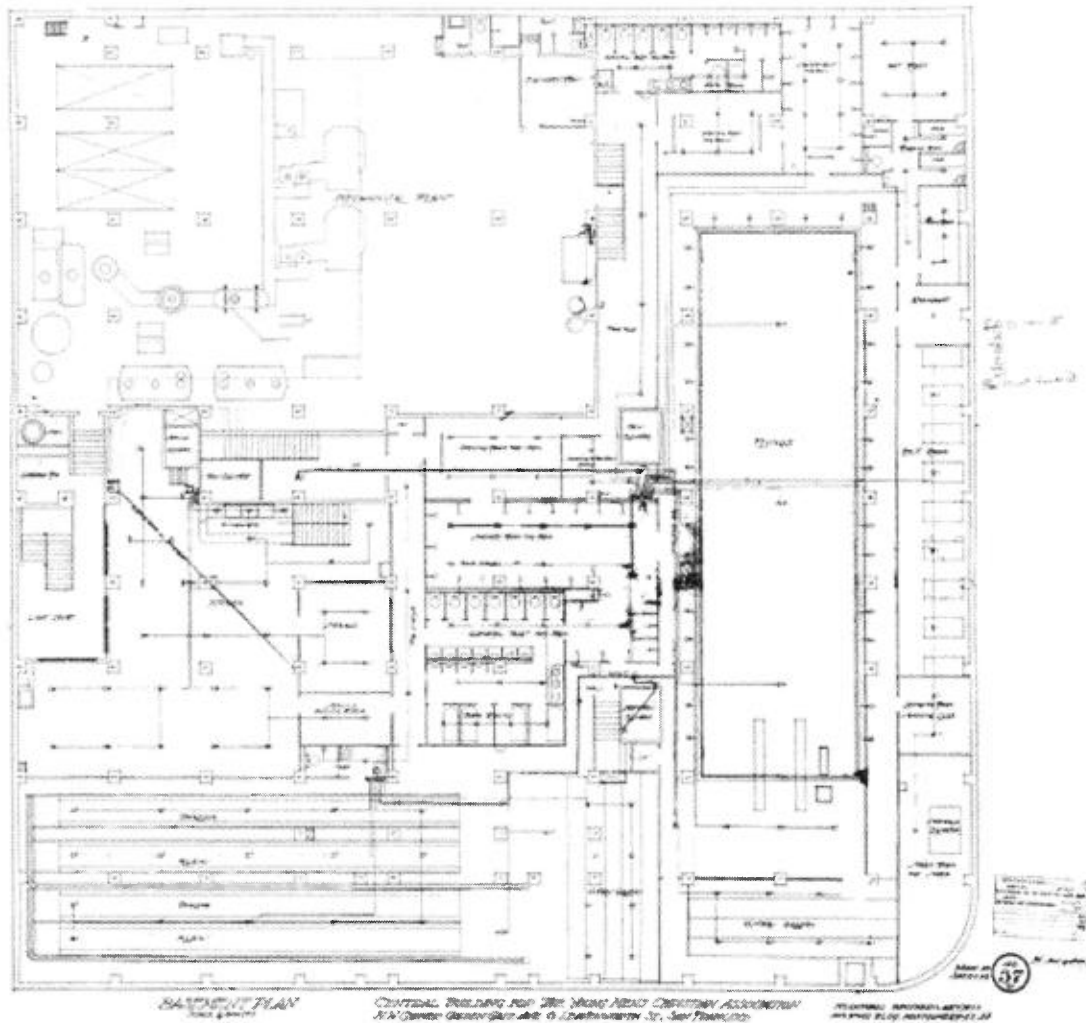
1990



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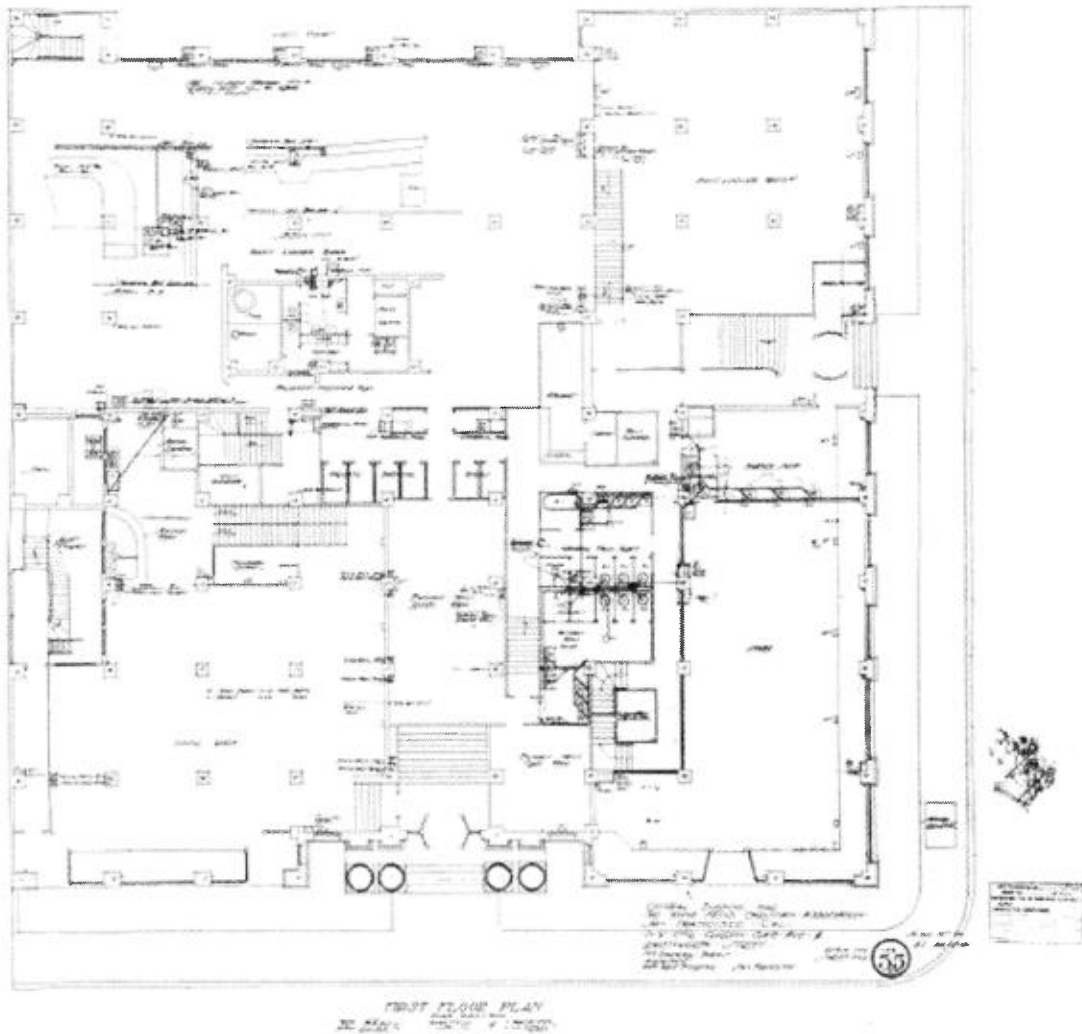
**Figure 1. 1908 Drawings - Basement**



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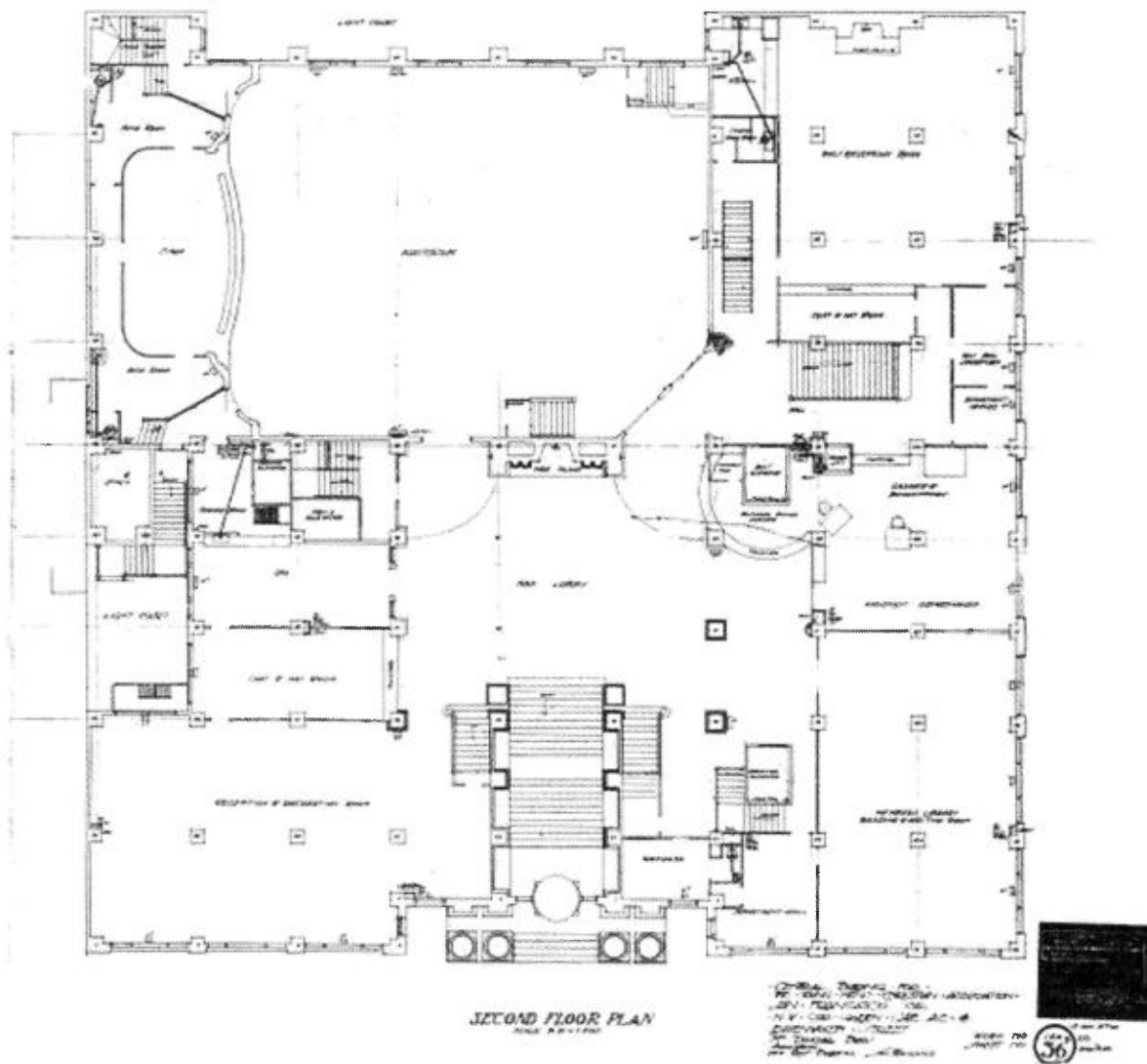
Figure 2. 1908 Drawings – First Floor



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Figure 3. 1908 Drawings – Second Floor





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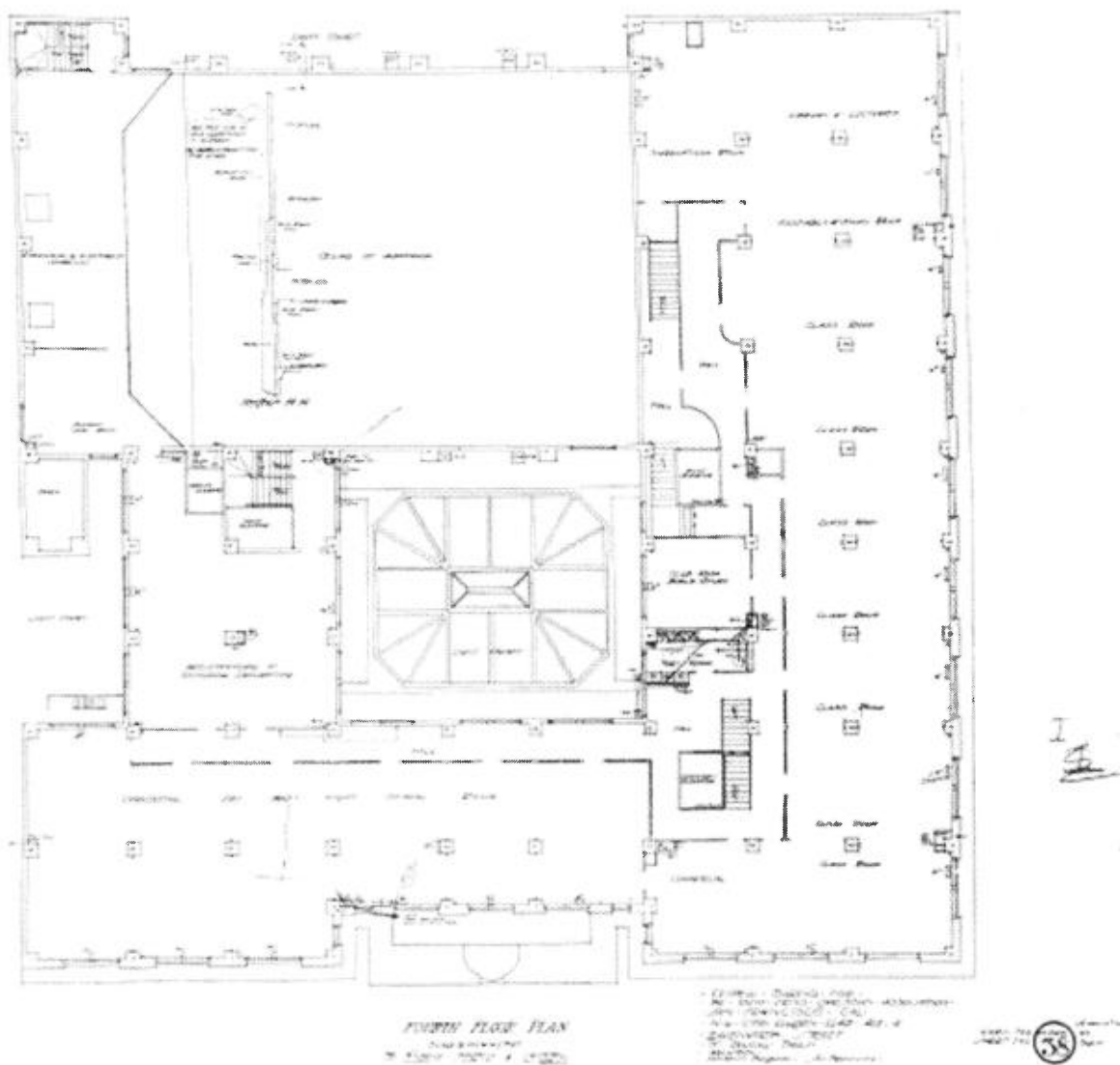
**Figure 4. 1908 Drawings – Third Floor**



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Figure 5. 1908 Drawings – Fourth Floor



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Figure 6. 1908 Drawings – Fifth Floor



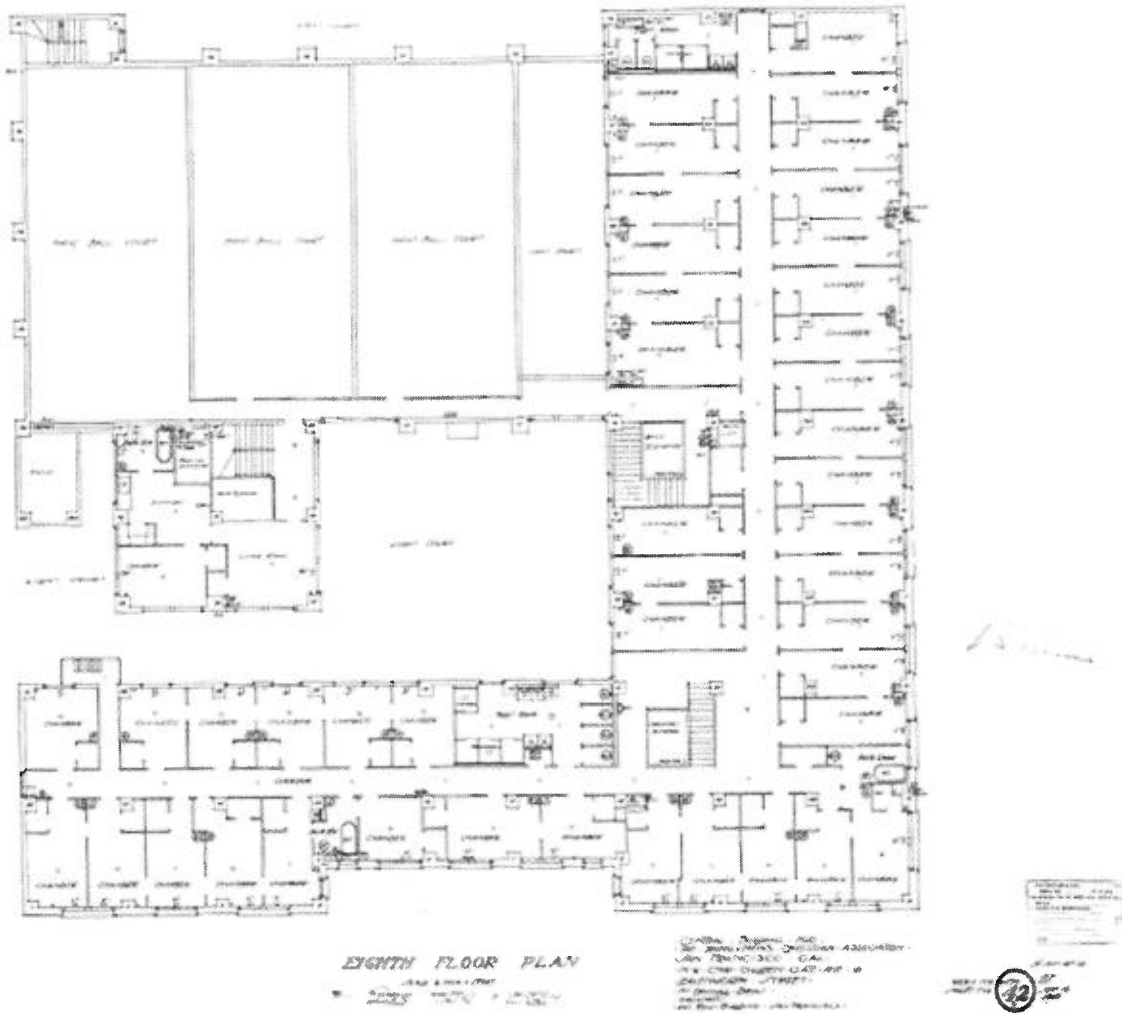




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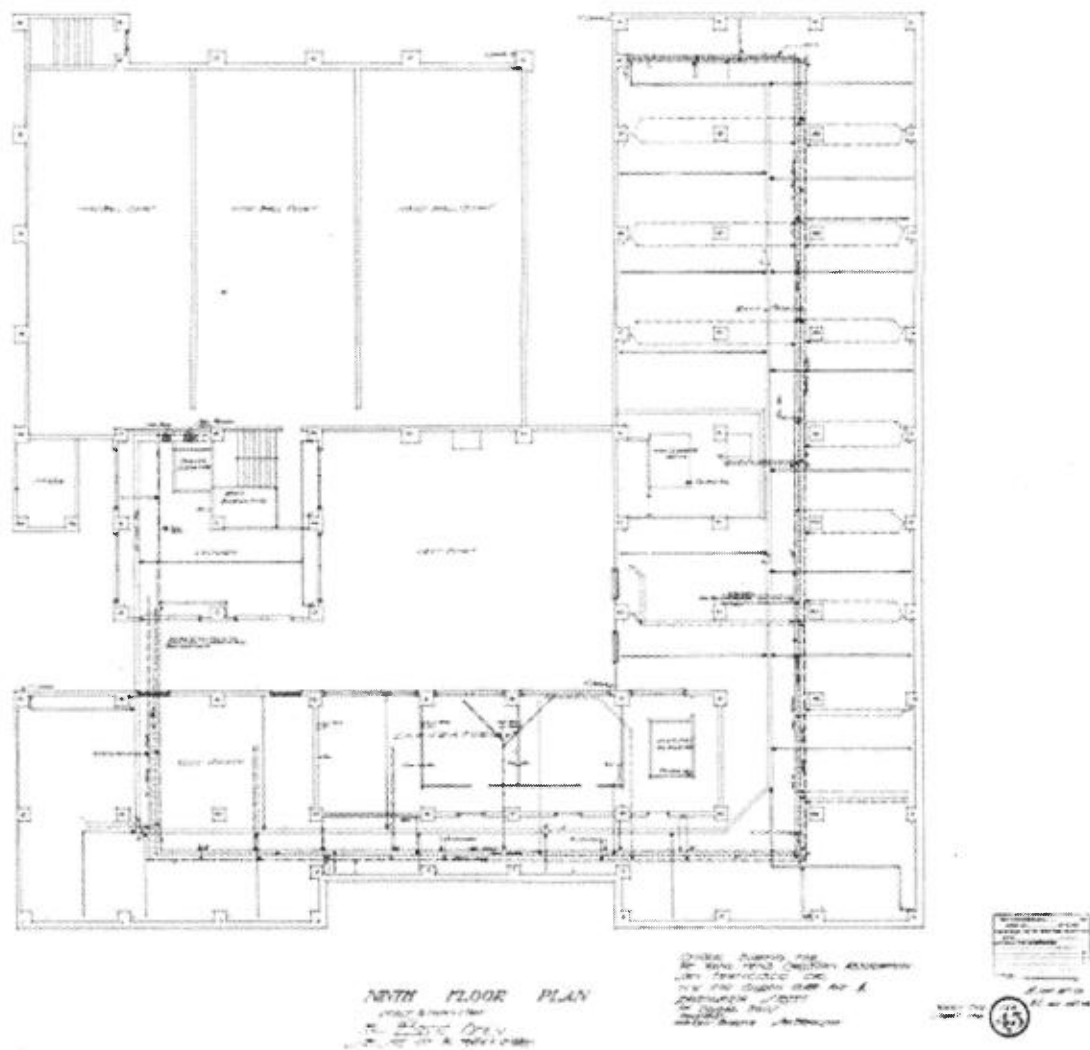
**Figure 9. 1908 Drawings – Eighth Floor**



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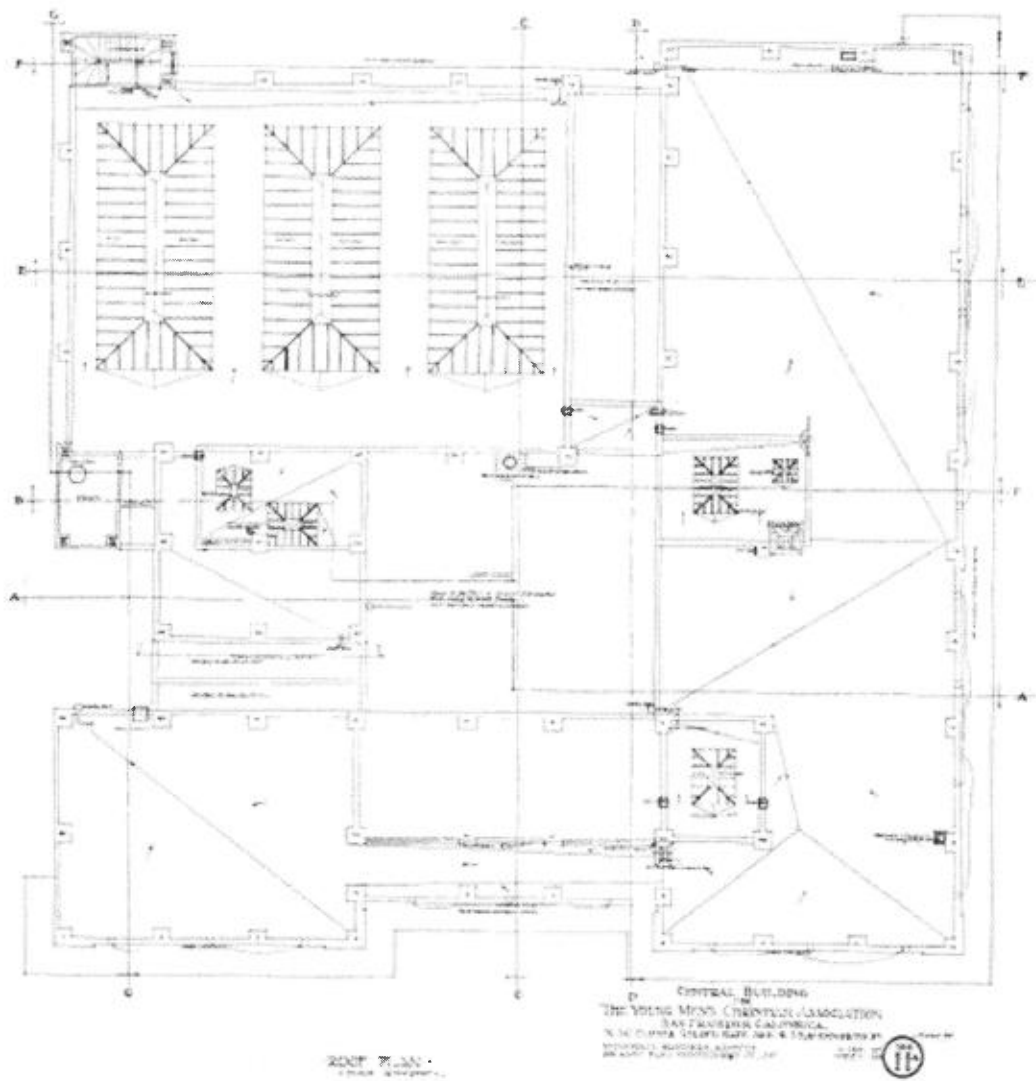
Figure 10. 1908 Drawings – Ninth Floor



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**Figure 11. 1908 Drawings – Roof Plan**





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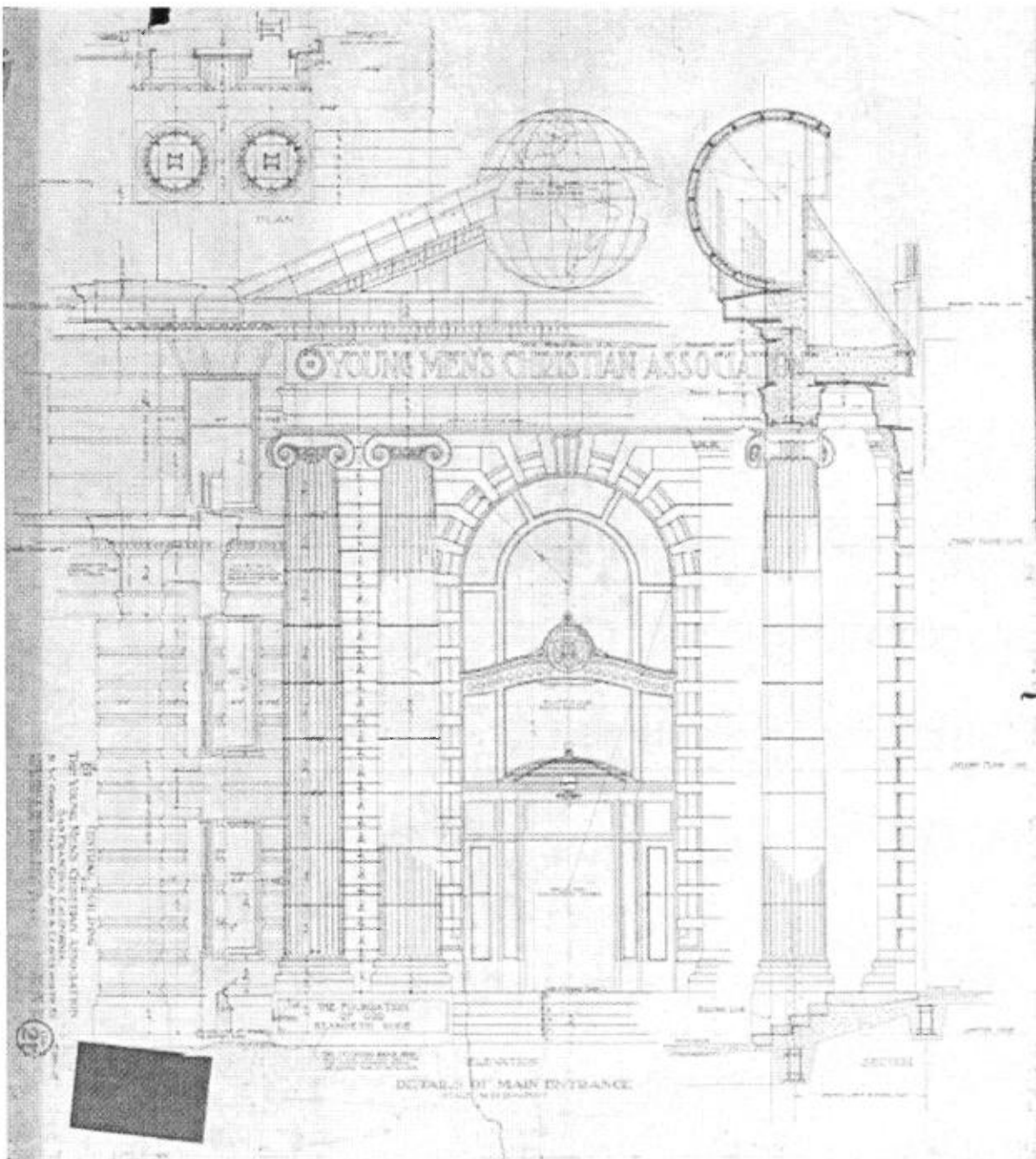
Figure 12. 1908 Drawings – South Elevation



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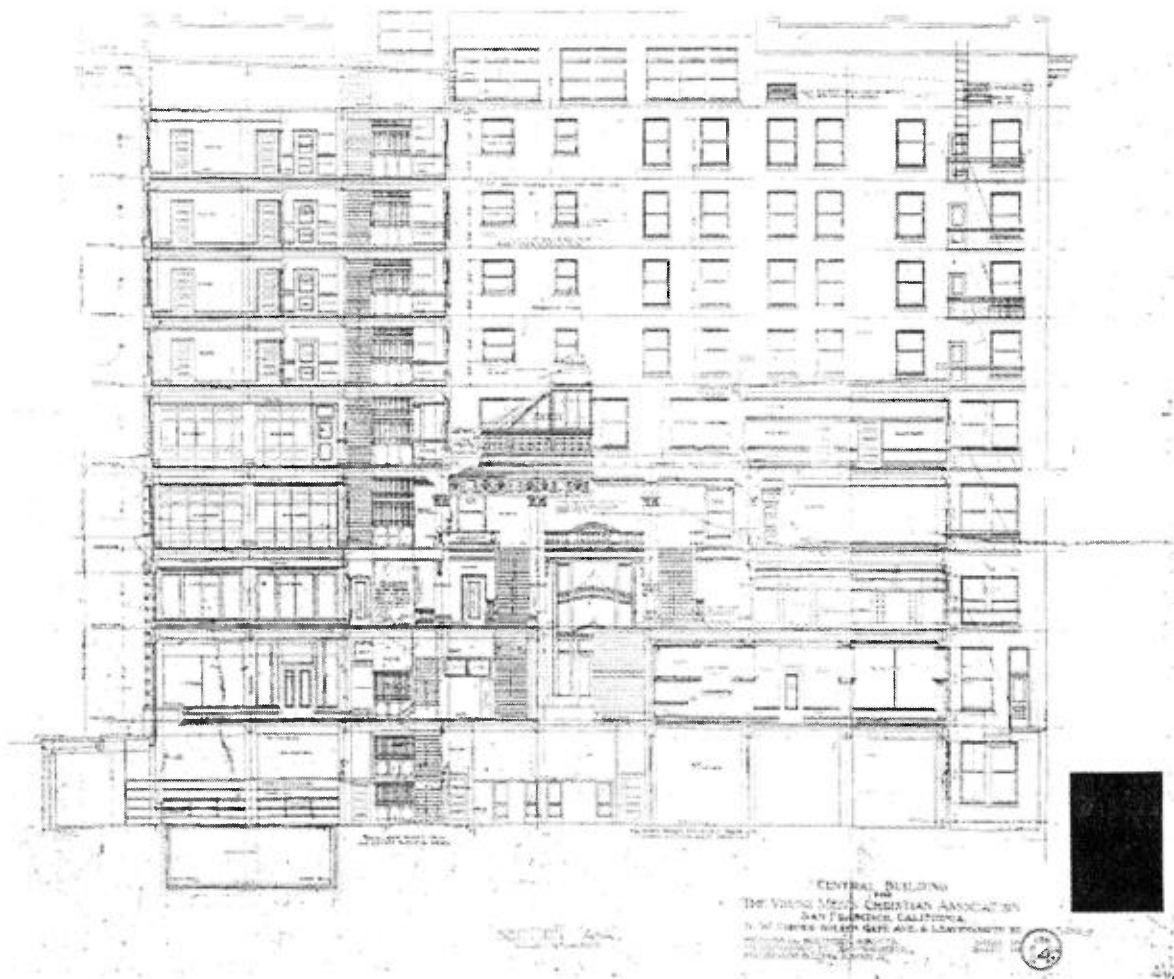
**Figure 13. 1908 Drawings – Main Entrance**



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**Figure 14. 1908 Drawings – Section A-A**



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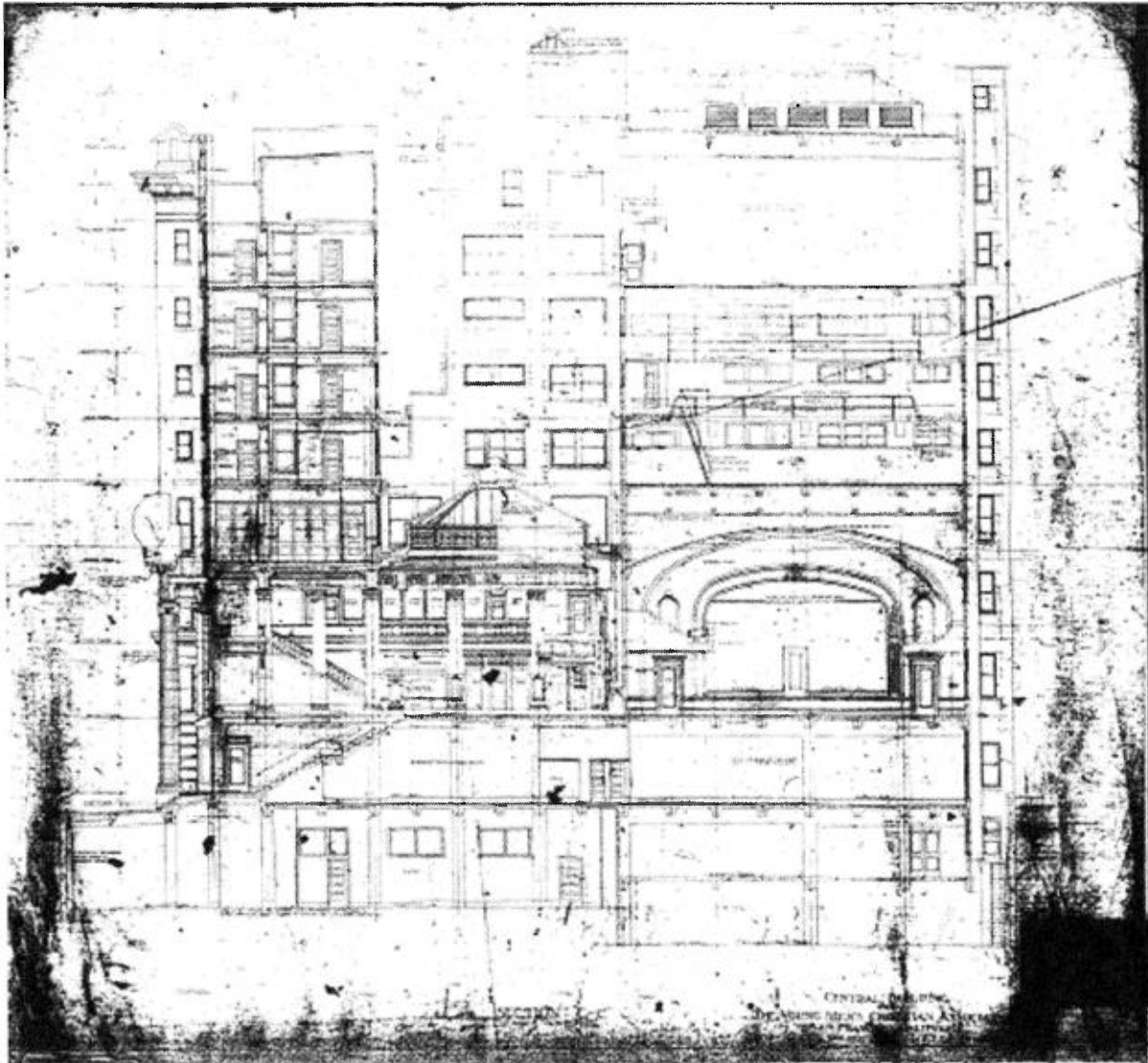
**Figure 15. 1908 Drawings – Section B-B**



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**Figure 16. 1908 Drawings – Section C-C**



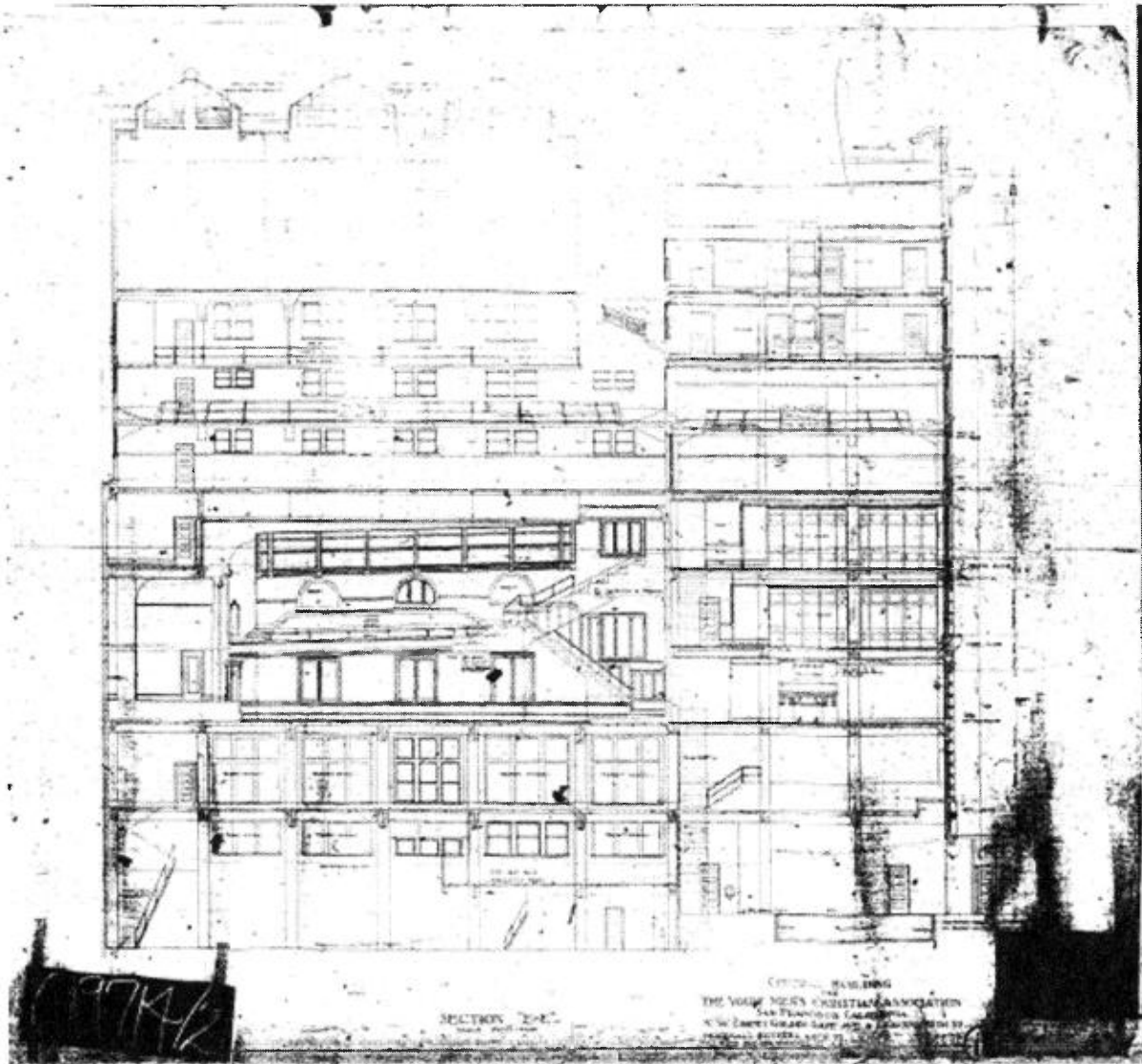




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Figure 18. 1908 Drawings – Section E-E



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**Figure 19.** View looking northwest, 1910. Courtesy of the San Francisco Public Library.





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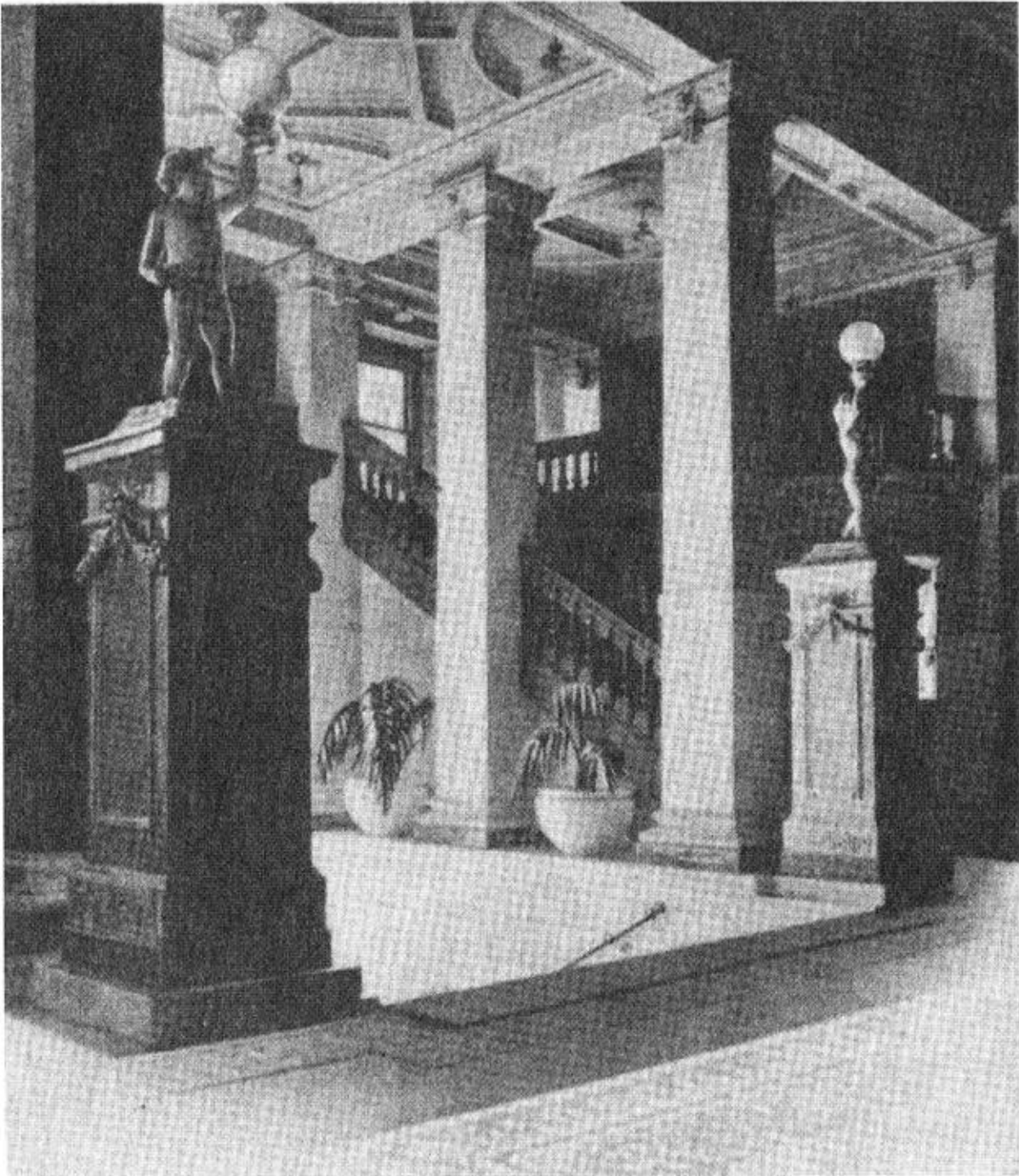
**Figure 20.** View looking at monumental front entrance, circa 1922. Courtesy of the San Francisco Public Library.



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**Figure 21.** View of main lobby of the Central YMCA, prior to 1950 renovations, n.d. Courtesy of the San Francisco YMCA.



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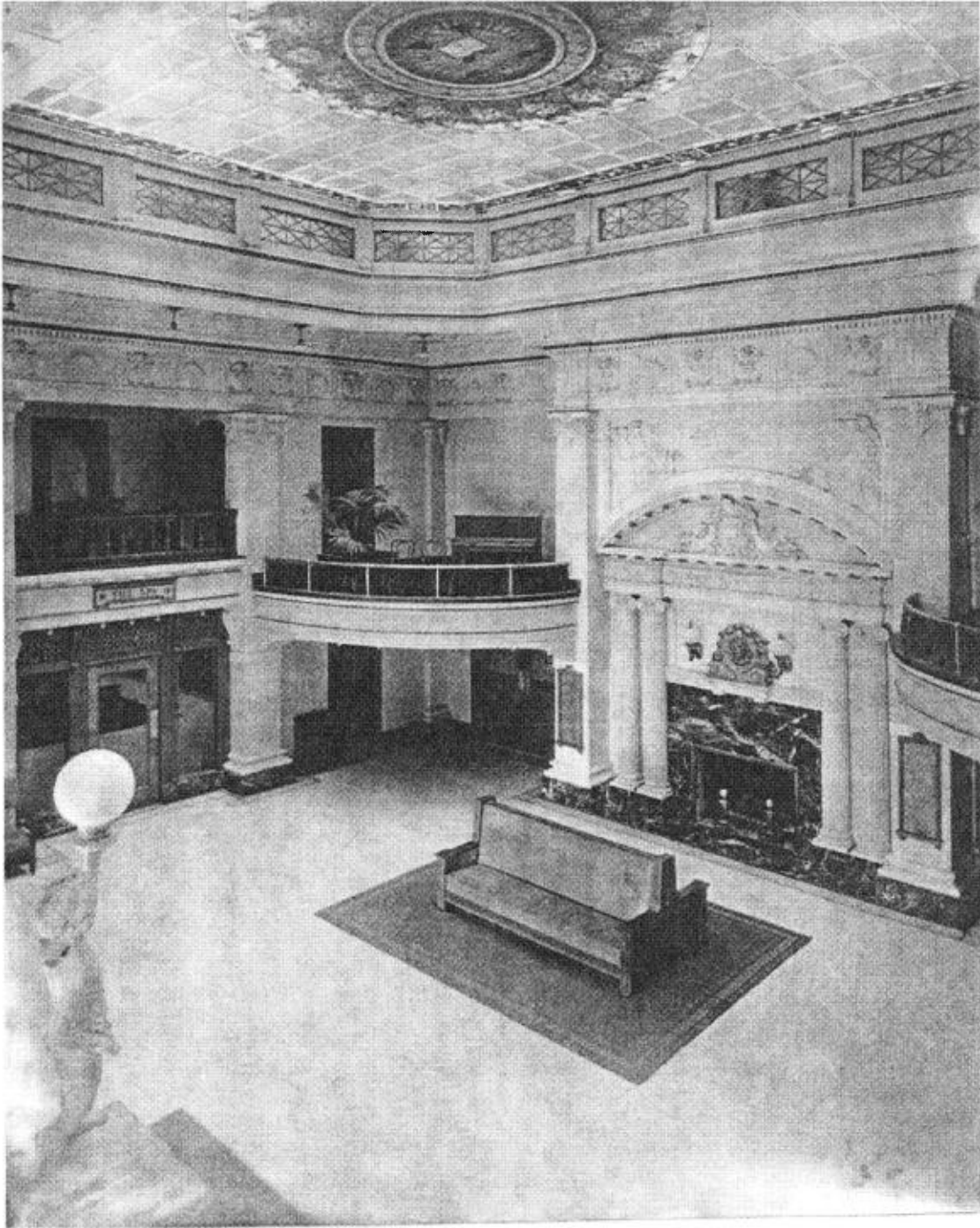
**Figure 22.** View of main lobby looking northeast, 1910. Courtesy of San Francisco YMCA.



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**Figure 23.** View of main lobby from gallery walk, 1920. Courtesy of San Francisco YMCA.

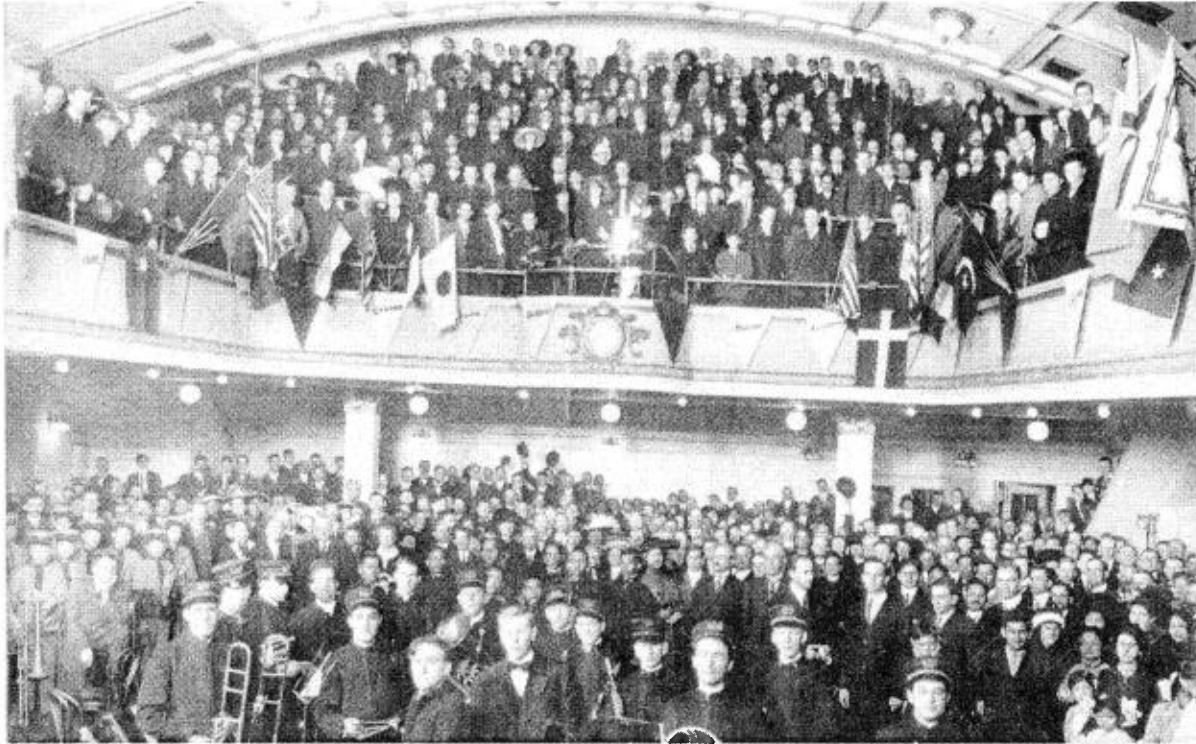




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**Figure 24.** View of auditorium, 1915. Courtesy of San Francisco YMCA.



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**Figure 25.** View of men's gymnasium, 1923. Courtesy of the San Francisco Public Library.

