



DRAFT LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT



New Era Hall 2117-2123 Market Street

Draft Article 10 Landmark Designation Report submitted to the Historic Preservation Commission, **November 21, 2012.**

City and County of San Francisco
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Landmark No.
XXX

Cover: New Era Hall, 2012.

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) is a seven-member body that makes recommendations to the Board of Supervisors regarding the designation of landmark buildings and districts. The regulations governing landmarks and landmark districts are found in Article 10 of the Planning Code. The HPC is staffed by the San Francisco Planning Department.

This Draft Landmark Designation Report is subject to possible revision and amendment during the initiation and designation process. Only language contained within the Article 10 designation ordinance, adopted by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, should be regarded as final.

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New Era Hall

2117-2123 Market Street

Built: 1906
Architect: August Nordin

OVERVIEW

New Era Hall, located at 2117-2123 Market Street in the Upper Market Street neighborhood, is a Reconstruction-era social hall and commercial building. It is significant as a rare example of its property type, as the work of a master architect August Nordin, and for its association with the Visalia Stock Saddle Company. Completed and occupied within seven months of the earthquake and fire of April 1906, New Era Hall played a role in the social history of San Francisco from 1906-1914 as the home to several benevolent associations that were left without meeting spaces.

New Era Hall is architecturally significant for its architectural qualities embodying Classical Revival organization and scale with Craftsman-style ornament. As a two-story building, it is proportionally designed to be a large-scale edifice; however, the utilization of Craftsman ornament maintains a small-scale feeling, despite its size. Of the seventy-two social halls in San Francisco in 1907, New Era Hall is one of nine surviving examples that retains excellent integrity. New Era Hall is an early example of master architect August Nordin's work. Nordin's San Francisco career began in 1899, ending with his death in 1936, after designing over 300 structures. New Era Hall also employs innovative structural techniques borrowed from railroad bridge technology in its roof truss design.

Significant for its association with the rebuilding of San Francisco following the earthquake and fire of 1906, New Era Hall provided meeting space for numerous displaced organizations seeking a venue for meetings and events. The Name "New Era" itself implies a conscious participation in the rebuilding of San Francisco.

A significant pioneer Mexican-American business dating from 1869, the Visalia Stock Saddle Company occupied the ground floor storefronts of New Era Hall for nearly 50 years starting in 1911. Recognized as significant by the Office of Historic Preservation for its contribution to the development of the "western saddle" and for the astonishing quality of the handiwork of the saddles that were manufactured in this building, the Visalia Stock Saddle Company's other California locations are lost, leaving this site as the remaining best location to commemorate this significant California enterprise.

The building survives with few alterations from its original design, and retains a high degree of architectural integrity.



Figure 1: Eastern storefront: 2117 Market Street



Figure 3: Central entry: 2121 Market Street

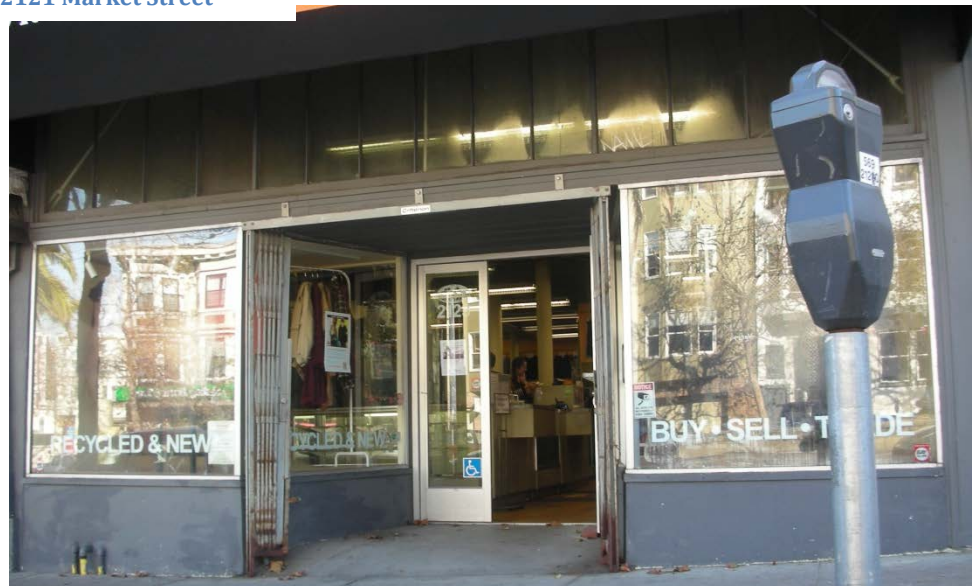


Figure 2: Western storefront: 2123 Market Street

BUILDING DESCRIPTION

2117-2123 Market Street is a two-story wood frame commercial building built in 1906 designed in combination of Classical Revival and Craftsman ornament. It contains two storefronts on the ground floor and two assembly rooms on the upper floor. The rectangular-plan building, clad in wood flush board and channeled siding, is capped by a flat roof. The rear half of the building is approximately ten feet taller than the front to accommodate a second floor double-height space of Lodge Room No. 1. (Fig. 8)



Figure 4: facade of 2117-2123 Market Street

The primary façade faces north and is three bays wide. The symmetrically arranged ground floor consists of a centrally placed entry to the upper floor flanked by recessed plate glass storefronts on the ground floor. The eastern storefront (2117 Market, Fig. 1) consists of a shallow recessed entry with a pair of wood sash doors flanked by modern metal-frame plate glass over a painted stucco base. Modern metal security bars span the width of the recess. A wooden divided-light storefront transom runs across the storefront. A modern fixed awning covers the storefront transom. The main entrance to the upper story (2121 Market, Fig. 2) is fitted with double-leaf, glazed, wood doors. The door has a surround with flared jambs and a shallow hood on projecting members with beveled ends. The western storefront (2123 Market, Fig. 3) is nearly identical to the eastern; however, the recessed entry is

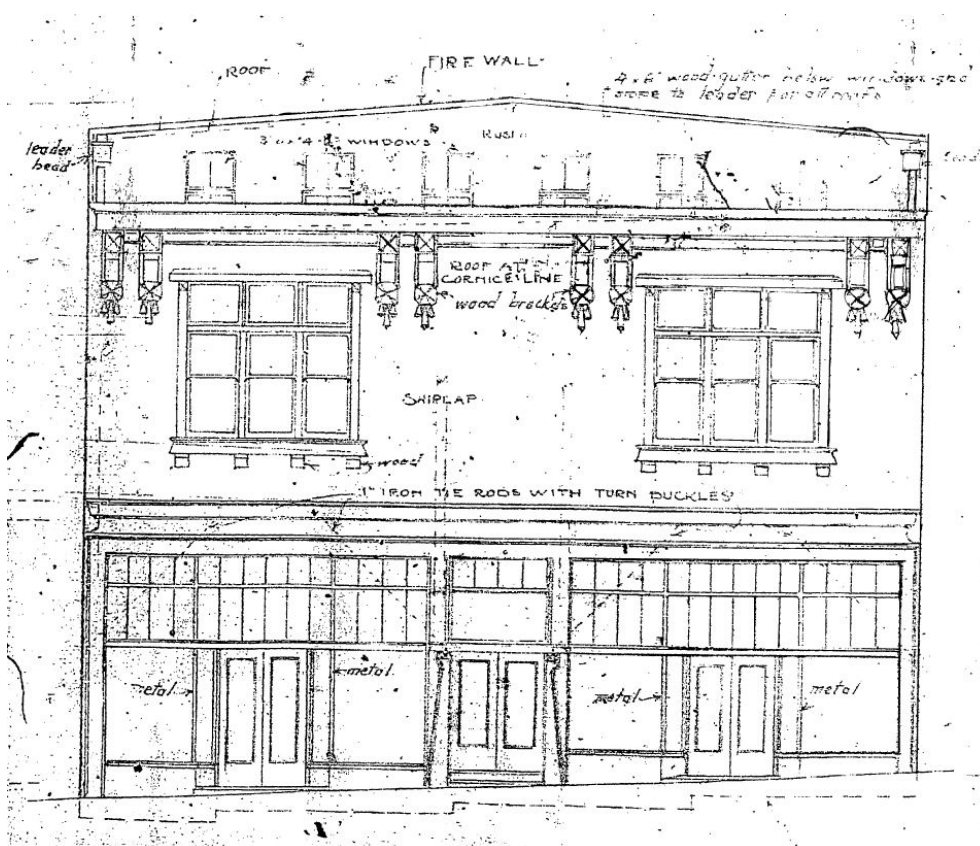


Figure 5: Original permit application drawing of 2117-2123 Market Street façade

deeper, and has non-historic aluminum doors. A wood belt course divides the façade between the ground and upper floor. The façade of the second floor is clad in tongue-and-groove flush wood siding, and features a single, double-hung, wood-sash window with transom in the central bay with three similar contiguous windows in the flanking bays. The window surrounds include shallow bracketed hoods and bracketed sills in the flanking bays only, and consist of simple wood trim in the central bay. Although not visible from the street, the forward face of Lodge Room No. 1 that rises above the roof of the lower front portion of the building features a series of six double-hung windows (Figs. 7 and 8). The primary façade terminates in a projecting cornice with oversize, paired, decorative wooden brackets.



Figure 6: Rear elevation

The second floor of the rear elevation is visible from Church Street over the roof of the adjacent building. Clad in wood shiplap siding, the fenestration pattern is original and consists of a pair of double-hung sash windows with transoms, and a single window of the same configuration. The central and eastern bays have been obscured by non-historic lean-to additions leaving only the transom windows exposed to the exterior. The roof is flat.

Major Interior Spaces

The interior of New Era Hall building is composed of two major elements: the ground floor with two commercial spaces, structurally designed to be adaptable to varying tenants; and the Lodge Rooms on the second floor, designed to provide large, open, spaces and high ceilings without vertical posts.

As built, the eastern storefront floor level is approximately one foot lower than the western storefront. The current tenant occupies both storefronts and has raised the eastern floor level to that of the western. The interior is one large space with ten turned posts spaced



Figure 7: Interior of Lodge Room No. 1 with exposed Howe Trusses. (Google Maps)

symmetrically along the length of the space, dividing the width roughly into thirds. What appears to be an original pressed tin ceiling is found in the western storefront area.

The upper floor of New Era Hall is accessed from a pair of wood sash doors centered on the Market Street façade, into a small, paneled vestibule. Inner doors within the vestibule have been removed. Ascending the wood stairs, board and baton wainscot panels the lower walls. The upper wall paneling is clad in shiplap siding. At the top of the stairs is a small entrance hall. From the hall, men's and women's toilet facilities are accessed, as are two ante rooms.

The west ante room leads to Lodge Room No. 1, a large open space 49 feet by 49 feet, with a ceiling height of approximately 21 feet. A set of three exposed eight-panel Howe trusses support the roof (Fig. 7).¹ A small, elevated platform or stage is located on the southern wall of the room within the lean-to addition. Board and baton wainscot is used throughout the upper floor.

From the east ante room is Lodge Room No. 2, a smaller open space 49-feet by 20-feet with 16-foot ceiling height, and windows facing Market Street. Originally spanning the width of the building, a portion of the western end has been enclosed for an office. Two six-panel Howe trusses that have been enclosed in wood panels span the room and support the roof.



Figure 8: Aerial view of New Era Hall looking southeast showing raised portion of double-height Lodge Room No. 1. (Google Maps)



Figure 9: Interior of Lodge Room No. 2 with enclosed trusses (Google Maps)

¹ A Howe truss uses vertical iron rods in tension and diagonal heavy timber members in compression to support weight.

Construction History

The lot on which New Era Hall was built was vacant and unimproved before the present building was erected in 1906². According to the 1894 Block Book, the 50-foot by 100-foot lot was owned by Mrs. Caroline Sharp. The Sharp's were an early California pioneer family, and held extensive land holdings along San Francisco peninsula. In the 1901 Block Book, the owner of the lot was Catherine Cheesman, a Sharp descendant.

Following the earthquake and fire of April 1906, San Francisco businessman and real estate investor, Edwin W. Bennett, purchased the lot and commissioned New Era Hall. Edwin W. Bennett (ca. 1854-unknown) emigrated from England in 1886 while in his 30s and owned a metal polish manufacturing plant in San Francisco. The architect of New Era Hall, August Nordin (1869-1936) was born in Stockholm, Sweden, and arrived in San Francisco in 1895. The contractor that built New Era Hall was C. L. Wold (birth and death unknown).

The original building contract for New Era Hall of July 3, 1906 was published in Edwards Abstract from Records on July 6, 1906. It states: "E. W. Bennett (owner) with C. L. Wold (contractor). August Nordin (architect) – All work except deafening shades and light fixtures for a 2-story frame building on the southeast Market Street 105 [feet] southwest Church street SE 100 x SW 50 for \$9,895." The original building permit, Number 1292, was filed on July 5, 1906. The permit details construction of a wood frame building 50 feet wide, 92 ½ feet deep, and 40 feet tall. Interior heights of the lower floor are listed as 14 and 15 feet, and at the upper floor 16 and 24 feet. Two sheets of the original drawings survive and show the front elevation, longitudinal section (Fig. 10) and cross section showing rear walls, as well as plans for the foundation, first and second floor.

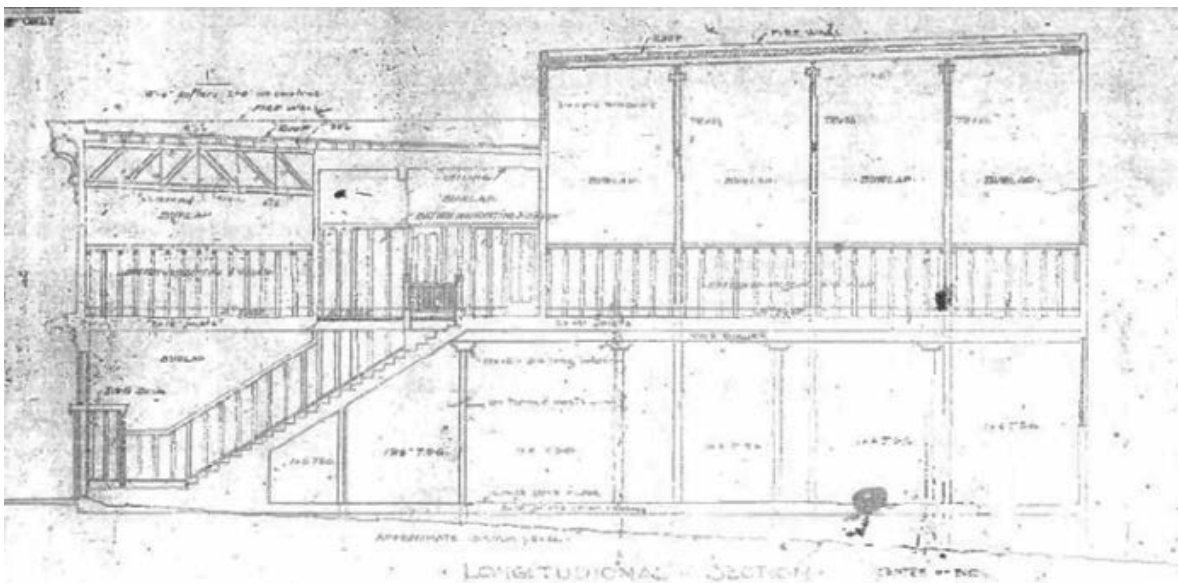


Figure 10: Original longitudinal drawing of 2117-2123 Market Street.

² Both the 1899 and 1905 Sanborn maps show that there were no buildings on this side of Market Street between Church and 15th Streets.

As with many ground story commercial spaces, the storefronts of 2117-2123 Market Street were altered to accommodate the needs of the early commercial tenants. In 1907, a building permit was issued to alter the western storefront (2123 Market) for use as a nickelodeon, which included the opening of an exit door into the side passage. In 1909, the same storefront was restored to its original condition. In 1929, a saddle factory installed large equipment, inserted windows in the western side wall of the building, and



Figure 11: Entry doors to New Era Hall rooms from Market Street

installed interior doors between the two stores. In 1920, the Headquarters of the Christian Philosophical Institute located to the upper floor of New Era Hall, requiring that the small hall known as the Lodge Room No. 2 be divided into three offices, with a central window being cut into the center of the Market Street façade. A fire in 1929 to the lower floor required repair to the floor joist and exterior siding; however, it is not known what portion of the building was damaged. In 1950, the saddle shop on the lower floor extended a mezzanine. In 1954, George E. Bennett (son of the original owner) sold the building to the Open Bible Church, which was located immediately south of the property at 2135 Market Street. The interior partitions of the lower floor were removed in 1956 as one of the two storefronts was transformed to be used as a “servicemen’s center”; the upper floor was a dance studio, and the remaining store was selling western wear. In 1975, repair work to the front by owners, the Open Bible Church, document the differing depths of the two recessed storefronts. In 2002, the lower floor storefronts were combined internally; the eastern floor level was raised to the elevation of the western storefront, and all interior partitions and mezzanines were removed.

Classical Revival and Craftsman Architectural Styles

The architectural style of New Era Hall is designed in a combination of Classical Revival and Craftsman ornament. Classical Revival styles derive from ancient Greek and Roman precedents. The style emphasizes symmetry, geometry, proportion and scale. Craftsman aesthetic generally was incorporated into small-scale buildings, with an emphasis on simplicity of design; hand-made elements are evident. Natural materials such as wood paneling were left unpainted.

The Classical Revival elements include the building’s absolute symmetry, heavy projecting cornice, and overall form and massing. Related to Beaux-Arts, Classical Revival is traditionally built of stone or other masonry; New Era Hall was made of wood.³ The wood façade is made of tongue-and-groove boards which form a very smooth surface. In the months following the earthquake of 1906, there was an unprecedented demand for all building materials, as well as skilled labor in the construction trades. Wood in California was plentiful, and generally did not require great skill to work. The design of New Era Hall exhibits another aspect of Classical Revival, a feeling of solidity in its massing. Windows on the upper floor, though large, are proportionately smaller than the solid wall. As originally designed, there was no central window, further emphasizing the solidity of the façade.

³ Wood was used for New Era Hall out of both financial necessity, but also out of scarcity of materials.

Craftsman ornamentation is found in the rectilinear theme of ornament throughout the design, including the facets on the paired brackets, window surrounds and cornice. The door surround of the main entry to the halls (Fig. 11) and triple pendant designs below the brackets supporting the cornice (Fig. 12) are influenced by Secessionist ornamentation found in continental Europe at the time. The storefront designs are standard designs from the period; however, the divided-light transoms are taller than many, responding to the ground floor commercial spaces' fifteen-foot ceiling height. The interior displays craftsman ornament in the board-and-baton paneling found throughout the spaces and the paneled doors. All woodwork is presently painted; however, like the Swedish American Hall, designed by Nordin a year later in 1907, similar paneling and woodwork is remains unpainted in most of the interior spaces. New Era Hall likely would have been unpainted as well.



Figure 12: Secessionist pendants below brackets

Engineering of New Era Hall

A rare and unusual feature in buildings of any era, the Howe truss structure present at New Era Hall was primarily employed in bridge construction. The Tennessee Department of Transportation has summarized the functional engineering of the Howe truss: "In 1840 William Howe patented the Howe truss, which was most popularly utilized for covered wooden bridges. Howe based his design on the limited stress analysis information available at that time – the first designer to do so. The Howe truss

used metal vertical tension rods and timber diagonal compression members. This joint use of metal and wood materials, called a "combination truss," was a significant transitional feature in the eventual development of an all-metal truss. The popularity of the Howe truss resulted, in part, from its comparatively simple erection. The Howe truss design eliminated the need for skilled carpenters to notch and peg wooden joints by using threaded iron rods for verticals and simple junction boxes as connections."⁴ As bridge historian Eric DeLony wrote, "The Howe truss may be the closest that wooden-bridge design ever came to perfection. For simplicity of construction, rapidity of erection, and ease of replacing parts, it stands without rival"⁵.

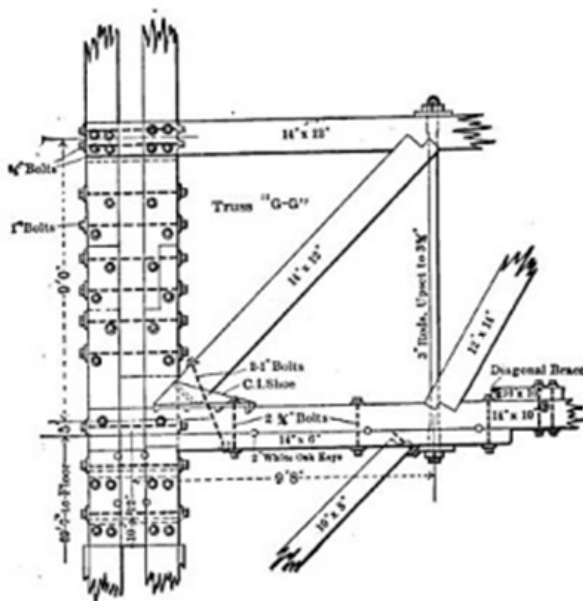


FIG. 6d.—Howe Truss, Horticultural Building, Pan-American Exposition.

Figure 13: Howe truss illustration published in 1902

⁴ <http://www.tdot.state.tn.us/bridges/historybridges.htm> Accessed December 20, 2012.

⁵ Delony, Eric: *The Golden Age. Invention and Technology*. Fall 1994 :pages 8-22.

The 1902 publication of *“The Design of Simple Roof-trusses in Wood and Steel”* included engineering tables outlining materials and necessary Howe truss sizes needed to span various widths.⁶ This publication, the first to be available to architects and building designers, came out just four years before the erection of New Era Hall. It included illustrated designs of the Howe truss. An illustration on page 139 (Fig. 13) forms a model for the trusses found in New Era Hall. The Howe truss design is primarily made of wood – in good supply in San Francisco after the earthquake – and uses iron sparingly, as it was in short supply. The Howe truss was a perfect solution to create a wide span of 49 feet without columns and with the material at hand.

At New Era Hall, weight of the roof and upper floor is carried on a post-and-beam structural system as opposed to a typical western platform frame that distributes the loads over many smaller studs. The post-and-beam system extends to the roof of the structure, where several Howe trusses allow for a 49-foot clear span opening (Fig. 7). The use of Howe trusses enabled the architect to reduce the amount of lumber necessary to span the width of the building, which otherwise would have necessitated a gable roof form or posts within the Lodge spaces.

The ground floor of New Era hall was designed to have the structural flexibility for a variety of tenant uses. Built with two storefronts on Market Street, structural 10-inch posts that support the weight of the upper floor are turned so that they could be exposed or integrated into demising walls. This allows for one occupant as is presently the case, or the ability to create non-structural walls to divide the space for more than one. Iron tie rods with turnbuckles provide lateral tension to the building immediately behind the storefront transom, providing some protection from earthquakes.

August Nordin, Architect and the Construction of New Era Hall

August Nordin was born in Stockholm, Sweden in 1869. He opened his architectural firm in San Francisco in 1899. His formal training is not known, but the importance of his works is great. Nordin’s oeuvre consists of mid-scale buildings – fraternal halls, churches, apartment houses, multi-family dwellings and large private residences. His practice was located in the Mills Building until his death in 1936 at age 67 having designed more than 300 structures.⁷ Nordin’s obituary added that Mr. Nordin was a member of Islam Temple Shrine and the Scottish Rite. Built in 1906, New Era Hall is an early example of Nordin’s work in San Francisco.

August Nordin is considered to be a master architect for the overall quality of the body of work he designed in San Francisco between 1899 and 1936. Nordin’s strengths as a designer are evident in the careful balance of scale, proportion and ornament. Visual interest was achieved in not only ornamentation but in the relationships between solid walls, and voids. No design is flat, but buildings display articulation and have strong shadow lines.

Surviving known examples of Nordin’s designs demonstrate Nordin’s



Figure 14: Nordin design for the E. W. Bennett residence at 140 Divisadero, 1905. (Google Maps)

⁶ A full text of the book is available online at: http://books.google.com/books?id=8_s4AAAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false

⁷ August Nordin Obituary: *The Architect and Engineer*, January 1936.

skills at working in divergent styles and building materials, employing individualized designs as opposed to variants on a design theme. None of the designs are rote copies from pattern books, but each



Figure 15: Nordin's design for the Swedish American Hall, 1907.

address the client's programmatic needs without sacrifice of design. Nordin designed a private residence for E. W. Bennett (Fig. 14) at 140 Divisadero, the nearby Swedish American Hall (Fig. 15) at 2168 Market Street (1907), the Whiteside Apartments (Fig. 16) at 150 Franklin Street (1912), as well as the Ebenezer Swedish Lutheran Church at the corner of Dolores and 15th Streets (1903, destroyed by fire 1993).

Neither staid nor flamboyant, neither a copy, nor directly influenced by a particular ideal, the design of New Era Hall is uniquely Nordin's. At New Era Hall, Edwin W. Bennett commissioned a building to be designed with the dual purpose of a retail ground floor, and large-scale halls above. This resulted in a two-story building that is 30-feet tall at the street and 40-feet at the rear. Nordin's skill at adapting style

and scale make for a balanced façade that does not appear to be as large as it actually is. The simplicity imbued in the Craftsman style is usually applied to small-scale buildings, but at New Era Hall, Craftsman



Figure 16: Nordin's design for Whiteside Apartments, 1912.

is enlarged to a Classical Revival scale to producing a proportionate façade that appears smaller than it actually is. Nordin's membership in such societies as the Islam Temple⁸ and the Scottish Rite⁹ would have familiarized him in the internal functions of meeting and fraternal halls.

Little biographical information is known about Edwin W. Bennett who commissioned August Nordin to design New Era Hall. Bennett was born in England and his wife Hermana Brekke Bennett was a native of Dramm, Norway.¹⁰ Together they had at least one son, George Bennett. He owned a company that manufactured "E. W. Bennett's Brilliantshine Metal Polishing Paste" (Fig. 17) at the northwest corner of 16th and Utah Streets now known as San Francisco's Showplace Square neighborhood.



Figure 17: A tin of Bennett's Brilliantshine Metal Polishing Paste, 1912.

There may have been some cultural fidelity from the Norwegian Mrs. Bennett, in the hiring of Nordin, a Swede for so many commissions; however, his skills as a designer were highly desirable. Bennett had previously commissioned Nordin to design two buildings on the same block as New Era Hall in 1901 (262 and 292 Church Street).

⁸ Fundamentally a Masonic Order, the Islam Temple is associated with the Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, also commonly known as Shriners.

⁹ The Scottish Rite is one of the two branches of Freemasonry to which a Master Mason may proceed after he has completed the three degrees of Symbolic or Blue Lodge Masonry. The other branch is known as the York Rite.

¹⁰ Olaf Brekke obituary. (d. 3/20/1918) San Jose Mercury Herald, Thursday morning, March 21, 1918.

Nordin had also designed Bennett's residence at 140 Divisadero in 1905.¹¹

The contractor who built New Era Hall was C. L. Wold. He is not listed in San Francisco city directories either immediately before or after the disaster of 1906. Given the time of its construction, it is reasonable to assume that C. L. Wold came to San Francisco in search of work in rebuilding the City. The 1914 City Directory lists Christian L. Wold, builder, and his wife Anna, residing nearby at 132 Scott Street. The C. L. Wold Company, General Contractors, with offices at 75 Sutter Street in partnership with Joseph Dunn, advertised later in the 1910s in *The Western Architect and Engineer*.

UPPER MARKET STREET AND POST-1906 DISASTER RECONSTRUCTION

1906 Earthquake and Fire¹²

In the early morning of April 18, 1906, a great earthquake rocked San Francisco. The tremendous temblor shook a few buildings to the ground, knocked some off their foundations, severed gas and water lines, and ignited fires that burned for three days, destroying much of the city. The South of Market area was hit especially hard by the temblor, which liquefied the expanses of filled or "made" ground in the area. In the South of Market area, many of the hotels and boarding houses collapsed on their inhabitants. Fires quickly swept through the area killing trapped survivors. The adjoining Mission District was also hit hard. Liquefaction occurred along the filled lands of the old creeks and lagoons, collapsing and submerging buildings, followed shortly thereafter by the flames that eventually devoured a wide swath bounded roughly by Dolores Street to the west, Market Street to the north (except for two blocks on the west side of Guerrero Street just below Market), Howard Street (now South Van Ness Avenue) to the east, and Twentieth Street to the south. North of Market Street, nearly everything east of Octavia Street was leveled by the "Ham and Eggs Fire." Although the entire South of Market and much of the Mission District were destroyed, other areas near 2117-2123 Market Street suffered only earthquake damage, including most of Hayes Valley and all of Eureka Valley, Duboce Triangle, and the Lower Haight.

Reconstruction¹³

The first task in the process of recovery was to house homeless earthquake refugees. During the first days after the disaster, many refugees who had been burned out of their homes set up impromptu camps on scraps of vacant land and in parklands throughout the city. Within the Market and Octavia Plan Area, the Orphan Asylum and the adjoining corner gore block bounded by Market, Hermann, and Buchanan streets became the location of a hastily assembled camp consisting of tents and shacks erected with scraps of wood, tin, and burlap. The Relief Committee of San Francisco soon established a series of official relief camps in city parks. Small redwood refugee cottages were assembled by union carpenters to provide temporary housing just in time for the rainy season. Within the Plan Area, Duboce Park became a refugee camp. Nearby, Mission High School served as a relief center immediately after the disaster, and refugee camps were set up at Dolores Park and Alamo Square. In all, Relief District IV, which included all of the

¹¹ Edwards Abstract from Public Records: Building Contract February 25, 1905.

¹² Page & Turnbull, Historic Context Statement: Market & Octavia Area Plan Historic Resource Survey (San Francisco Planning Department, December 20, 2007).

¹³ Page & Turnbull, Historic Context Statement: Market & Octavia Area Plan Historic Resource Survey (San Francisco Planning Department, December 20, 2007).

areas north of Market Street, housed 10,737 refugees. District V, which included the South of Market, Mission and Eureka Valley neighborhoods, housed 8,384 refugees.

In general terms, residential sections of San Francisco recovered more quickly than industrial areas. This can be explained largely by the fact that people needed shelter first. A wood-frame building (the material of choice for most dwellings) was much easier and cheaper to build than a masonry one. Masonry was typically used for more complex industrial facilities. Furthermore, industrial areas such as the South of Market area recovered at a slower pace due to uncertainty regarding insurance settlements, proposed changes to building codes, and speculation.

Eureka Valley escaped destruction in the aftermath of the 1906 Earthquake and Fire, mostly because the fires were stopped at Dolores Street. Although brick chimneys and foundations were damaged, the rocky slopes resisted the seismic forces much better than the marshy subsoils of the Mission and South of Market. The still-rural district filled an important role after the disaster, supplying much of the milk, vegetables, and meat consumed by homeless refugees filling the City's parks. However, the pastoral days of Eureka Valley came to an end in the years after the quake as thousands of earthquake refugees began purchasing lots and erecting cottages and flats in the steadily urbanizing area.

Demographically, Eureka Valley was populated by large numbers of Irish, German, and Scandinavian immigrants and their American-born offspring. Taking a cue from the Mission Promotion Association, the Eureka Valley Improvement Association formed in 1905 and lobbied for improvements in the Upper Market area during the post-quake era, such as improved streetcar service, better lighting, and public school construction. Eureka Valley experienced a sharp upturn in building activity between 1906 and 1914. The momentum continued after the completion of Municipal Railway's J-Church streetcar line in 1917 and the Twin Peaks Tunnel in 1918. In addition, the association lobbied owners of large tracts of vacant land to sell to residential property developers "to fill out the district."

Upper Market Street Commercial Historic District¹⁴

New Era Hall is a contributory property to the Upper Market Street Commercial Historic District that was found to be eligible for the California Register. The eligible district was identified in the historic resource survey undertaken in conjunction with the Market and Octavia Area Plan.

The Upper Market Street Commercial Historic District is a three block long stretch of Market Street between Church and Castro Streets. The neighborhoods flanking the Upper Market Street corridor are primarily residential, with mixed use and commercial buildings located closer to Market Street. This results in the properties fronting on Market Street being almost entirely commercial. Buildings in the district are typically one to four stories in height, or between approximately 15 and 55 feet tall, with the majority being three-story structures about 40 feet tall. Those four story structures that are present are primarily grouped together near the center of the northwest block face of Market Street between Church Street and Sanchez Street. Nearly all of the buildings are of wood frame construction and clad in wood or stucco siding. A few examples of concrete construction and one brick masonry building are present.

Victorian-era and commercial-oriented architectural styles are the most widely represented, with the Classical Revival style most prevalent. In keeping with commercial stylistic conventions, rectangular, flat roofed structures dominate. The Upper Market Street Commercial Historic District is made up of 46

¹⁴ Page & Turnbull, Upper Market Street Commercial Historic District DPR 523D form: Market & Octavia Area Plan Historic Resource Survey (San Francisco Planning Department, June, 2007).

contributing and eleven non-contributing properties, giving the district a notably high concentration of significance and integrity.

The significant historic themes of the Upper Market Street Historic District are derived from the trends that influenced the development of the surrounding neighborhoods. The most influential trend, which sparked the initial development period in the Upper Market area, was the advent of public transportation routes into the area, providing a connection with the City's downtown core and encouraging residential development in the outlying neighborhoods such as Duboce Triangle and Eureka Valley. The area was finally made fully accessible with the extension of the Market Street Cable Railway from Market and Valencia to Castro Street in 1886. This, in turn, influenced the establishment of businesses along Upper Market Street, which echoed the commercial development further east on Market Street, and served the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Much of the Market Street Corridor was destroyed during the 1906 Earthquake and Fire. Though Upper Market Street did not experience major destruction, it was influenced by the Earthquake and Fire nonetheless. As relatively unscathed areas of the City, neighboring Duboce Triangle and Eureka Valley experienced a huge influx of new residents and a subsequent boom in residential development. Correspondingly, the commercial development along Upper Market Street swelled to match. In the Upper Market Street Commercial Historic District, over a third of the contributing buildings were

constructed within three years following the earthquake. This amounts for the largest construction boom in the history of the district area.

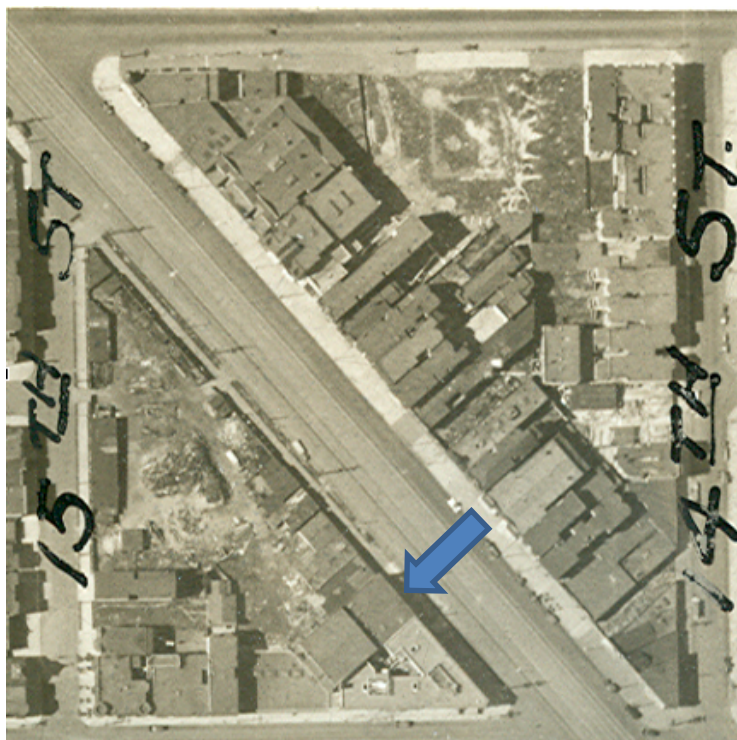


Figure 18: Aerial of block containing New Era Hall, 1920.

Quite common along Market Street were single-story retail buildings typically built after the 1906 earthquake, presumably with the proceeds of insurance settlements. Based on the simple construction techniques and lack of architectural detailing, it is apparent that many of these buildings were erected quickly in order to establish a commercial presence on a given lot without a substantial outlay of funds. Many were demolished and replaced with larger, more permanent buildings with office or residential floors above. Others were clearly designed to accommodate extra floors in anticipation of future expansion.

Further developments in transportation, such as the growing popularity of automobiles in the 1920s, resulted in a westward shift in population and were an additional reason for development in the Upper Market area. Small periods of stagnation correspond with historic events like the World Wars and the Depression; however, these simply illustrate the rising and falling patterns in development that occurred throughout the country. Particular to the Upper Market area, however, was a lengthy period of stagnation that occurred from 1960 to 1970. After a small post-World War II building boom, the

construction of the Central Freeway and various Redevelopment Agency undertakings were catalysts for neighborhood decline and subsequent lack of new construction. For this reason and a corresponding lack of resources dating to that period, the 1960s are excerpted from the district's period of significance. A second period of significance begins in 1970, when issues of minority identity (specifically that of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender community) became influential topics in the area and movement toward the eventual demolition of the Central Freeway began to stimulate renewed development and construction along Market Street. This sparked the revitalization of the area and influenced the types of businesses that came to be established in new and existing buildings.

New Era Hall

The building at 2117-2123 Market Street was named the "New Era Hall" as San Francisco was in the midst of a recovery from a major disaster. While there is no surviving documentation, the phrase "New Era" commonly emphasizes a division between times past and times future. As San Francisco's seal is a phoenix, rising from ashes, its recovery from the 1906 disaster was a new era in its history. No building or business used the name "New Era" in San Francisco prior to 1906.



Figure 19: Seal of San Francisco

The construction of the building on Upper Market Street immediately following the 1906 Earthquake and Fire anticipated the need for meeting space for organizations left homeless by the disaster. It also was part of the increasing civic and commercial development on Upper Market Street in the early 20th century that was a result of the mass displacement. New Era Hall was one of the earliest buildings constructed on this block along Market Street. The block was largely vacant until after the 1906 Earthquake and Fire, despite being outside of the fire zone. By 1913, the block held several small, wood-frame commercial buildings housing both commercial and industrial uses (see Fig. 15). By 1950, the Market Street side of the block was well developed with commercial interests such as a large used car dealer (1923), multiple-unit retail shops, and the Open Bible Church (1946).

New Era Hall was listed in the San Francisco city directories as a public building and hall, used as a meeting place for societies and other social groups that did not have a building of their own. No fraternal society, social society, or otherwise was found to be associated with the establishment of New Era Hall; it appears to have been a real estate investment for the original owner, Edwin Bennett. The hall appears to have been a successful venture from the time it opened (seven months to the day following the Earthquake and Fire of 1906) to the mid-1910s; however, the commercial storefronts did not have stable tenants until the late 1910s. This is further detailed in the following section of this report. As a meeting hall, success was measured by occupancy. The halls appear to have been in full use in the first few years. Slowly, the organizations it was intended to serve began to build permanent halls of their own, obviating the need for a shared space. While demand for the hall diminished, the surrounding neighborhood grew as did the demand for retail storefronts.

2117-2123 MARKET STREET COMMERCE AND OCCUPANTS

When New Era Hall first opened its doors sometime after October 1906 when the water was turned on to the site, it contained two storefronts, 2117 Market Street to the east, and 2123 Market Street on the western

side.¹⁵ The halls on the second floor were at 2121 Market Street. The November 18, 1906 San Francisco Call advertised that the Hermann Lodge had secured meeting rooms at Newly completed New Era Hall – seven months to the day following the earthquake that struck on April 18th of that year. The Crocker-Langley San Francisco Directories provide detailed information on an annual basis to identify the uses and occupants of the building. The address 2119 Market Street was never used for this building.

2117 Market Street Storefront Uses

In 1907, the 2117 storefront was occupied by Wacker & Allemann (Charles F. Wacker and John Allemann) pork packers, but they do not appear in subsequent directories together. A second directory listing for Hencken & Hencken (Rudolph and John H.) poultry was also located in the shared storefront. Additionally, the listing for John Allemann indicates that he also resided at 2117 Market Street. The butchers were only briefly here, as the 1908 directory listed Frederick A. Cook as the proprietor of “amusements” (presumed to be theater-related) in the space. Cook was operating the nickelodeon in the western storefront, and likely attempted to expand his business. This too was short-lived, as Cook is not found in the 1909 directory, nor are there any other listings for the space in that year. Another short-term tenant, Roy E. Perry operated a billiards hall from the storefront in 1910.

Beginning in 1911, the Visalia Stock Saddle Company occupied this eastern storefront. A detailed discussion of the Visalia Stock Saddle is located in the next section of this report. Al Church’s Western Ware Riding Habits (Alan A. Church) then occupied the storefront until 1960. The 1961 Land Use map shows the storefront as vacant. In 1975, repair work to the bases of the storefronts at the sidewalk document the differing depths of the two recessed storefronts as currently configured.

In 2002, the two storefronts were combined internally for the present (2012) tenant. To accomplish this, the eastern floor level was raised to the elevation of the western storefront, and all interior partitions and mezzanines were removed from the 2117 storefront’s interior.

2123/5 Market Street Storefront Uses

In 1907, the 2123 Market Street storefront was occupied by Stein & Falk (Abraham Stein and Henry Falk) restaurant. Additionally, the storefront appears to have been the residence of J. Mahoney, who may have been an employee of the restaurant. This venture was very short-lived, as in September 1907 a building permit was issued to convert the space for use as a nickelodeon, which required the insertion of another door to the side passage to supplement the side and rear exits. The 1908 directory identifies this as the Majestic Nickelodeon. It was one of eleven nickelodeons in San Francisco that year, but it was short-lived, and was not listed in subsequent directories. A building permit in May of 1909 rebuilt the storefront to the original specifications.

Beginning in 1909, and lasting until 1917, Hermana Bennett, the wife of the building owner, operated a millinery shop selling hats from this storefront. By 1912, she shared her space and/or business with Mrs. Margaret McIlveen. McIlveen appears to have resided at the shop as well, as she is listed in both the 1912 and 1913 directories here, and her husband Matthew, employed in mining was also residing here. Mrs. Bennett appeared to run the shop for a year without assistance in 1914. From 1915-1917, Elizabeth O’Brien, a resident of 209 Church Street was co-listed in the millinery shop with Mrs. Bennett. The 1918 directory does not list the millinery shop or any other use at the store, nor are there listings for Elizabeth O’Brien in San Francisco.

¹⁵ The western storefront was sometimes addressed as 2125 Market Street.

Between 1919 and 1950, the Visalia Stock Saddle Company occupied this western storefront as well as the adjacent eastern storefront. In 1950, the mezzanine was extended. The interior partitions of this storefront were removed in 1956 by the Open Bible Church as it was transformed to be used as a “servicemen’s center” presumably for veterans of the Korean War. The Alert Display Co. occupied the storefront in the 1960s; The Wish Center in the 1970s; Valentine and Leon Photo (1980); and Hibernia International Travel (1980) also occupied the ground floor.

2121 Market Street, New Era Hall Uses

New Era Hall was listed as one of 72 halls in the 1907 directory. From late 1906 until 1953, New Era Hall provided two large spaces for clubs, organizations, and secret societies to rent for regularly scheduled ongoing meetings, and to the public for special occasions. Only for the year 1908, did New Era Hall have a live-in janitor, Louis J. Switzer, listed in the city directory. This appears to coincide with the busiest year for the rentals of the halls.

Starting in November 1906, and ending by 1914, several major clubs and associations advertised their regular meetings at New Era Hall. An appendix detailing each, as well as a selection of advertised political meetings is found at the end of this report. Known groups that did meet regularly include: Order of Scottish Clans; Order of the Eastern Star; Knights of Pythias; Woodmen of the World; Patriarchs Militant Independent Order of Odd Fellows; Ancient Order of Hibernians; Foresters of America; Rebekah Assembly, I.O.O.F.; Native Daughters of the Golden West; and National Association of Post Office Clerks.

Between 1914 and 1920, it is not known how the upper hall rooms were used. No groups advertised that they were holding regular meetings there, and no business is listed for the address in the city directories. New Era Hall continued to be listed in the city directory as a hall; therefore, it appears that it was used generically as an event space for daily rental. As the hall declined in use, it was removed from hall use, and rented out to a single-user.

In 1920, the Headquarters of the Christian Philosophical Institute located to the upper floor of New Era Hall, requiring that the small hall known as the Lodge Room No. 2 be divided into three offices, and a new window be cut into the center of the Market Street façade. The Christian Philosophical Institute, widely accepted as a cult, was organized in the 1910s by Wilbert LeRoy Cosper, and did not occupy the hall space for long. Moving to Oakland, it faded into relative obscurity in the 1930s. Its lasting legacy is a silent film “The Kingdom of Human Hearts” made in Marin County in 1921¹⁶.

From the mid-1920s to 1953, uses of the hall are not known; however, in the years 1931 and 1932 it was named Liberty Hall (formerly located at 1791 Mission), so it may be assumed that it was used as a general hall for hire, as was the original Liberty Hall. The 1940 and 1948 Land Use survey by WPA and Planning Department identified the upper floor as a “hall”. With the decline of the need for a rental hall, and without fraternal organizations to sustain the space, the halls were once again rented out for a single user.

Both the Lodge Hall No. 1 and No. 2 spaces were converted to the present (2012) dance studio in 1953. Guillermo Del Oro and Carolyn B. Parks established the Academy of Ballet in the halls, with Del Oro residing on site as well.¹⁷ Aside from teaching classical ballet, the Academy of Ballet also allowed other groups to utilize the space. From the time Del Oro opened the studio in May 1953 until September 1954,

¹⁶ The American Film Institute catalog of motion pictures produced in the United States. Berkeley : University of California Press, 1971. Page 407

¹⁷ 1954 City Directory.

the Reel and Strathspey Club, a troupe of folk dancers, rehearsed at 2121 Market Street¹⁸. A former principal dancer for the San Francisco Ballet, Gina Ness, summed another aspect of the space: "This studio has a lot of history. It was the only large space during the 60s and 70s that big touring companies could rent to use for rehearsal. When you walk into this old, spacious studio, you know that Ulanova, Plisetskaya, Fracci, Bruhn, Fonteyn, Nureyev, (well...you get the picture!) have all danced in that room. Alan Howard was the director of the Academy during these years, another of my teachers. It's a San Francisco treasure, as far as I'm concerned!"¹⁹

Visalia Stock Saddle Company²⁰

For nearly 50 years, the Visalia Stock Saddle Company, a significant business in California history, was housed at 2117-2123 Market Street. The building is therefore historically significant for its association with this important enterprise. The survey, *Five Views: An Ethnic Historic Site Survey for California*, forms the basis for evaluation of the Visalia Stock Saddle Company as a significant Mexican-American business in California:²¹

"In 1869, three experienced saddle makers from Sonora, Mexico formed the Visalia Stock Saddle Company. Ricardo Mattley carved the saddle trees from oak, Juan Martarell did most of the leatherwork and Alsario Herrera did the silver smithing. According to tradition, Martarell had first hit upon his saddle design while repairing a worn Spanish saddle. Instead of making simple repairs, Martarell completely transformed the equipment. His model lacked the high horn and long stirrups of the classic Spanish saddle, and it added a skirt for protection of the rider's legs. As this pattern was developed by Martarell and others, Visalia saddles defined an ideal of saddle design for skilled riders wherever the Hispanic vaquero tradition spread."²²

"David (D.E.) Walker bought the company in 1870 but retained the founders for the next 20 years. This company, an extremely successful pioneer enterprise, emphasizes the importance of Mexican contributions to the growth of California's economy and cultural life. Many of California's most skilled saddlemakers, including some still active today, received their training in the shops of this firm. They have carried on the tradition of Martarell, Herrera, and Mattley, a notable legacy in the history of the open-range cattle industry, not only in California but throughout half the world."²³

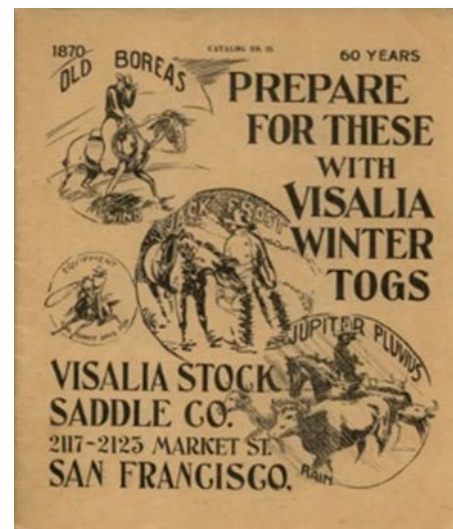


Figure 20 Visalia Stock Saddle catalog cover

¹⁸ <http://www.rscds-sf.org/history/1946%20ReelAndStrathspeyClub.php> accessed November 20, 2012.

¹⁹ <http://dancers.invisionzone.com/index.php?showtopic=23768> accessed November 20, 2012.

²⁰ A history of the Visalia Stock Saddle Company was included in a profile article for one of their saddlemakers:

<http://news.google.com/newspapers?id=SaNUAAAAIBAJ&sjid=J48DAAAAIBAJ&pg=6600%2C5043752> accessed November 20, 2012.

²¹ The survey was originally conceived in order to broaden the spectrum of ethnic community participation in historic preservation activities. Published in 1994, it provides the following information on ethnic history and associated site.

²² http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/5views/5views5h98.htm

²³ http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/5views/5views5h98.htm



Figure 21: Visalia Stock Saddle Co., San Francisco, Ca. No. A14881. Made for G.R. Burke c. 1935.

“D. E. Walker was a skilled businessman and brilliant promoter. Walker was extremely successful in building up the company's trade, especially through his catalogs which brought in a large mail-order business. Visalia Stock Saddles and other company products found a market throughout the American West, as well as in British Columbia, the Hawaiian Islands, Central America, Argentina, Chile, and Australia.”²⁴

In 1887, Walker sold the business to his nephew Edmund Meeks. Meeks moved the entire operation to San Francisco in 1890. At the time of the 1906 earthquake and fire, the Visalia Stock Saddle Company was located in downtown San Francisco. All was lost, but after finding a temporary location, permanent saddle-making operations and sales rooms were located on the ground floor of New Era Hall in 1911.

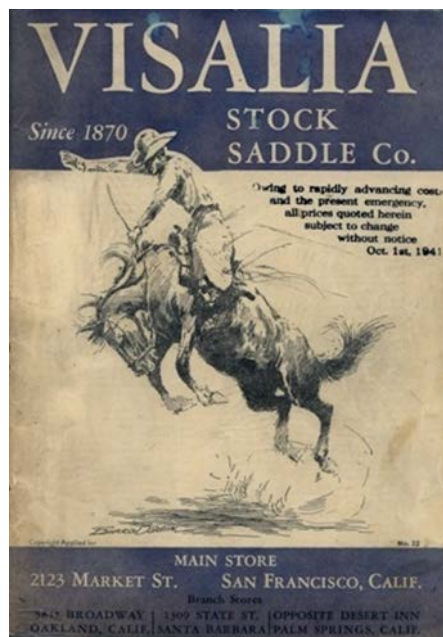


Figure 22: Visalia Stock Saddle catalog cover, 1941.

Beginning in 1911, the Visalia Stock Saddle Company occupied the eastern storefront (2117 Market). The saddle company not only sold saddles, but they were manufactured here, and provided housing for some employees on-site as well. In 1911, saddle makers Martin J. Reardon and John W. Wilson both lived at 2117 Market. They were joined in 1913 by Arthur McLea and Steven (Estevan) Ybarra. No residential listings were found in 1914. Many of the saddlers were found living in other parts of San Francisco including Estevan Ybarra and his wife Carmen on Fell Street. In 1915, Estevan Ybarra was again listed as a resident of 2117 as were Edward P. Hardenbrook and Frederick K. Bradlee. Hardenbrook stayed another year, and Bradlee was last listed as a resident in 1917, with no residents listed in 1918. The Visalia Stock Saddle Company was cross-listed with D. E. Walker, saddler. The Visalia Stock Saddle Company and D. E. Walker remained in the building until 1949.

In October of 1919, a permit was issued to combine this storefront with that of the adjacent 2123 for the Visalia Stock Saddle Company. At this time, additional windows were added to the western wall, and two doors were opened to communicate

between the two storefronts. A 3-horsepower motor with shafts and pulleys was installed that ran a band saw, a cross-cut saw, and a lathe – all employed in the manufacture of the saddles. A fire in 1929 to the lower floor required repair to the floor joist and exterior siding.

²⁴ http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/5views/5views5h98.htm

When Meeks died in 1930, the company was taken over by Leland Bergen. Bergen sold the company in 1945 to Sheldon Potter who moved the company to Sacramento in 1950. The company was sold four more times (1958, 1964, 1977 and 1982), however, the Visalia Stock Saddle brand has retained its reputation of one of the finest saddles made.

For these reasons, the Visalia Stock Saddle Company is significant in California history and is worthy of local designation for the building's association. The original Marysville, Yuba County location of the Visalia Stock Saddle Company is lost, and is marked with a plaque. The first San Francisco location was destroyed in 1906. The Sacramento location following the company's relocation from San Francisco is likewise lost to a fire. The storefront location at 2117 Market Street, where the company was located from 1911 to 1949 is the remaining best location to commemorate this significant California enterprise.

SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND FRATERNAL ORGANIZATIONS AND HALLS²⁵

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the fraternal society was one of the primary sources of health care and health insurance for the working classes. At their peak in about 1920, over one-quarter of all adult Americans were members of fraternal societies.²⁶ Fraternal organizations in general were important to residents of the area. Once widespread in the United States, fraternal organizations of many types provided a sense of community to their members, and provided important social benefits such as assistance with health care and burial costs. Some fraternal groups limited membership to a particular ethnic or religious group. Others were pan-ethnic and centered on business or professional affiliations, often combined with an interest in pseudo-religious rituals and protocol. Of the latter, the Masons and the Odd Fellows are well-known examples. Lesser known are groups such as the Knights of Pythias or the Woodmen of the World—two fraternal lodges once active in the area surrounding New Era Hall.

The Order of Knights of Pythias is an international, non-sectarian fraternal order established in 1864 in Washington, DC, by Justus H. Rathbone. In 1909, the order built a large brick office building with meeting rooms at 101 Valencia Street. Designed by San Francisco architects Charles Paff and John Baur, the building was subsequently purchased by the Salvation Army, which used the building as its Northern California and Nevada headquarters until 1989. It was converted to residential use in the 1990s. Another former fraternal organization headquarters building in the area is the Woodmen of the World (W.O.W.) hall located at 2140 Market Street (1906). It moved from the temporary quarters on Market Street to 154 Valencia in 1932. The building designed by architect Harold Stoner, is a notable Art Deco style lodge building is now occupied by the Baha'i faith.

As the groups that regularly met here built their own permanent meeting halls, including the Woodmen of the World at 2140 Market (1906), Odd Fellows Hall at 7th and Market Streets (1907), the Masonic lodge at Van Ness and Oak Streets (1911), their need for a rented hall diminished. Also contributing to the lack of use of New Era Hall lodge rooms was the overall trend of decline for the fraternal orders themselves, as insurance companies and doctors became more professionalized, and as working class San Franciscans found other diversions for their spare time.²⁷

²⁵ Page & Turnbull, Historic Context Statement: Market & Octavia Area Plan Historic Resource Survey (San Francisco Planning Department, December 20, 2007).

²⁶ Woodmen and Fraternalism (booklet), Form 4154 R-5/97; Modern Woodmen of America History, 1997.

²⁷ Siddeley, Leslie, *The Rise and Fall of Fraternal Insurance Organizations*. Humane Studies Review, V7, No. 2 Spring 1992.

New Era Hall does not appear to be significant for its association with the known groups that did meet regularly including: Order of Scottish Clans; Order of the Eastern Star; Knights of Pythias; Woodmen of the World; Patriarchs Militant Independent Order of Odd Fellows; Ancient Order of Hibernians; Foresters of America; Rebekah Assembly, I.O.O.F.; Native Daughters of the Golden West, and National Association of Post Office Clerks. No known events significant to any of the groups occurred at the lodge rooms of New Era Hall, and in time, most moved to independent buildings of their own, or simply ceased operations.

Comparative Analysis of Similar Halls

New Era Hall derives architectural significance as a rare surviving example of its property type – a purpose-built mixed-use hall from the period before 1907. Of the 71 other halls listed in the 1907 directory, eighteen survive. Surviving buildings that housed the halls generally conform to one of three sub-types. The first sub-type were single-story buildings that may or may not have been intended to be temporary. Simple in construction, they did not use many materials, and they did not support other uses. Of the dozen or so originally built, one of this first type has survived, the Woodmen of the World lodge at 2140 Market Street. Many were replaced by permanent buildings on the same site such as the Equality Hall at 139 Albion Avenue, while others became residential building sites such as the Veteran Hall at 432 Duboce Avenue.

The second type was temporary occupancy as a hall in other building types. Some examples include pre-quake buildings where a generic storefront was used as a hall, or the lowest flat in a multi-story apartment building was used as a hall. Two examples of this type are extant: Callegari's Hall (421 Union Street); and Coleman's Hall (1988 Bush Street); however, there are no physical indicators of this use evident on the facades.

The third type, to which New Era Hall belongs are purpose-built mixed-use buildings where the ground floor was occupied by rented storefronts, and the hall rooms are located on the upper floor. Of those that survive and have good integrity, similar properties are limited to nine examples: Divisadero Hall (321 Divisadero), Equality Hall (139 Albion Ave), Findlay's Dancing Academy (3245 16th Street), Mission Turn Verin Hall²⁸ (3543 18th Street), New Era Hall (2121 Market), Oakland Hall (1805 Divisadero), Richmond Hall (309 4th Avenue), the Sheet Metal Workers Hall²⁹ (224 Guerrero) and Stegeman's Hall (225 Valencia).

²⁸ San Francisco Landmark #178

²⁹ San Francisco Landmark #150

ARTICLE 10 LANDMARK DESIGNATION

This section of the report is an analysis and summary of the applicable criteria for designation, integrity, period of significance, significance statement, character-defining features, and additional Article 10 requirements.

Criteria for Designation

Check all criteria applicable to the significance of the property that are documented in the report. The criteria checked is (are) the basic justification for *why* the resource is important.

- ☒ Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ Association with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ Embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
- ☐ Has yielded or may be likely to yield information important in history or prehistory.

Statement of Significance

New Era Hall, located at 2117 Market Street derives its significance from its high quality architecture, as a rare example of its property type, as the work of a master architect as well as its association with the rebuilding of San Francisco after the disaster of 1906, the establishment of Upper Market Street as a commercial corridor, and for its association with the Visalia Stock Saddle Company. The building survives with few alterations from its original design, and retains a high degree of architectural integrity.

Significant Architecture

New Era Hall is architecturally significant for its architectural qualities embodying Classical Revival organization and scale with Craftsman-style ornament. As a two-story building, it is proportionally designed to be a large-scale edifice; however, the utilization of Craftsman ornament maintains a small-scale feeling, despite its size. Of the seventy-two social halls in San Francisco in 1907, New Era Hall is one of nine surviving examples of this rare property type.

Master architect August Nordin's San Francisco career spanned from 1899 to 1936. Built in 1906, New Era Hall is an early example of Nordin's work. New Era Hall also employs innovative structural techniques borrowed from railroad bridge technology in its adaption of a Howe truss in its roof design.

Association with Significant Events

Completed and occupied within seven months of the earthquake and fire of April 1906, New Era Hall played a role in the social history of San Francisco from 1906-1914 as the home to several benevolent associations that were left without meeting spaces.

The property is associated with the development of local civic infrastructure in the Upper Market Street area in the early 20th century. New Era Hall is a contributory property to the Upper Market Street Commercial Historic District, a three-block stretch of Market Street between Church and Castro Streets that supported the neighboring residential areas beginning in 1886. Significant for its association with the rebuilding of San Francisco following the earthquake and fire of 1906, New Era Hall provided meeting space for numerous displaced organizations seeking a venue for meetings and events. The name "New Era" itself implies a conscious participation in the rebuilding of San Francisco.

A significant pioneer Mexican-American business dating from 1869, the Visalia Stock Saddle company occupied the ground floor storefronts of New Era Hall for nearly 50 years starting in 1911. Visalia Stock Saddle is recognized as significant by the Office of Historic Preservation for its contribution to the development of the “western saddle” which is also widely renowned for the astonishing quality of the handiwork of the saddles that were manufactured in this building. The Visalia Stock Saddle Company’s other California locations are lost, leaving this site as the remaining best location to commemorate this significant California enterprise.

Period of Significance

New Era Hall has a period of significance of 1906 to reflect the architecture from the year it was built, and as a rare surviving property type of a purpose-built mixed-use lodge hall. The building also has a period of significance from 1911-1949 to coincide with the Visalia Stock Saddle company occupancy of the commercial storefronts.

Integrity

The seven aspects of integrity are considered to be location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, and association in relation to the period of significance established above. Cumulatively, the building at 2117-2123 Market Street retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance in the period of significance (1906, 1911-1949), as detailed in the integrity analysis below.

New Era Hall retains integrity of location, setting, and association with a commercial context. Although it is no longer in use as a lodge hall the interior arrangement of the interior hall spaces appear to be little changed. Interior office partitions installed in Lodge hall No. 2 were removed in the 1950s restoring the open space of the space. The building retains a high degree of integrity of design, materials, workmanship, and feeling, with alterations limited to the installation of metal-frame lower storefront windows and doors to the storefront at 2123 Market in 1975 on the first story, and the addition of a second-story central window in 1920. The remaining elements on the ground floor including the main entrance surround and storefront transoms, upper floor fenestration and cornice are unaltered.

Location and Boundaries of the Landmark Site

The boundaries of the landmark site encompass Lot 12 in Assessor’s Block 3543 on the south side of Market Street between Church and 15th Streets.

Features that Should be Preserved

Whenever a building, site, object, or landscape is under consideration for Article 10 Landmark designation, the Historic Preservation Commission is required to identify character-defining features of the property. This is done to enable owners and the public to understand which elements are considered most important to preserve the historical and architectural character of the proposed landmark.

The character-defining *exterior* features of the building are identified as:

- All exterior elevations, architectural details, motifs and rooflines;
- Two-story, over scale height and massing; flat roof;
- Upper floor flush wood siding;

- Recessed storefront entries, solid storefront bases, and wood sash doors;
- Divided light wood storefront transom and plate glass storefronts systems at the ground floor;
- Flared, crossette door surround with lintel on beveled joist ends;
- Triple wood double hung windows with transoms in the first and third building bays with heavy supported sills and lintels on the upper story windows;
- Entablature with plain frieze, bracketed, paired, beveled joist ends at the roofline; extended triple pendants; and deeply projecting cornice and banded moldings.

The character-defining *interior* features of the building are identified as:

- Upper floor Lodge Room No. 1
 - o Wood paneling
 - o Three exposed Howe trusses
 - o Open volume approximately 49-feet square with 24-foot ceilings
- Upper floor Lodge Room No. 2
 - o Wood paneling
 - o Howe trusses (presently enclosed in non-historic paneling)
 - o Open volume (presently reduced in length) 20-feet wide with 16-foot ceilings

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Historic Name: New Era Hall

Popular Name:

Address: 2117-2121 Market Street

Block and Lot: 3542 012

Owner: CTC RE III LLC

Original Use: Stores and lodge halls

Current Use: Store and dance studio

Zoning: Upper Market Neighborhood Commercial Transit District

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX

Starting in 1907, and ending by 1914, the following major clubs and associations advertised their regular meetings at New Era Hall:

- 1907: Order of Scottish Clans, Clan Frasier, No. 78. Meets first and third Thursday evenings each month at 2121 Market Street. David Mowatt, Chief
- 1907: Order of the Eastern Star, Yerba Buena Chapter, No. 228. Meets 1st and 3rd Saturday evenings at 2121 Market Street.
- 1907; 1908: Knights of Pythias: Phoenix Lodge, No. 53. Meets every Monday at 2121 Market Street
- 1907; 1908; 1909: Woodmen of the World: Golden Gate Camp, No. 64. Meets every Friday at 2121 Market Street.
- 1907; 1908; 1909; 1910: Patriarchs Militant Independent Order of Odd Fellows: Subordinate Herman Lodge, No. 145. Meets every Friday evening at 2121 Market Street.
- 1908; 1909: Ancient Order of Hibernians: State officers meet at New Era Hall. Michael Donahoe, President; William O'Brien, Vice President; T. P. O'Dowd, Secretary; T. Lynch, Treasurer; Rev. T. Carather, Chaplin. County Officers meet at New Era Hall every 4th Monday. William Boyle, President; James J. Barry, Financial Secretary; Con Herlihy, Recording Secretary.
- 1908; 1909; 1910; 1911; 1912; 1913; 1914: Foresters of America (white males 18-50) Court California, No. 4. Meets 2nd and 4th Wednesdays at 2121 Market Street. Court Justice, No. 16. Meets 1st and 3rd Thursdays at New Era Hall. Court Presidio, No. 40. Meets 1st and 3rd Tuesdays at New Era Hall. Court Mayflower, No. 41. Meets 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at 2121 Market Street. Court Sunflower No. 187. Meets 1st and 3rd Thursdays at 2121 Market Street. Court James G. Blaine, No. 207. Meets 1st and 3rd Wednesdays at New Era Hall.
- 1909: Rebekah Assembly, I.O.O.F. of California. Oriental Rebekah Lodge, no. 90. Meets every Wednesday evening at 2121 Market Street.
- 1909; 1910; 1911: The National Union; San Francisco Council, no. 540. Meets second Thursday of each month in New Era Hall, 2121 Market Street. E. H. Hills, Secretary.
- 1910; 1911; 1912: Native Daughters of the Golden West. Castro Parlor, no. 178. Meets Wednesdays at New Era Hall.
- 1911; 1912: National Association of Post Office Clerks, Branch No. 8. Joseph Cone, President; George P. Feely, Secretary. Meets second Saturday of each month at 2121 Market, New Era Hall.

Known other events and political meetings:

The October 24, 1910 edition of the San Francisco Call reported on a meeting of the James G. Conlin Club at New Era Hall. Conlin was running as an independent candidate for the elected office of Justice of the Peace.

The September 12, 1911 edition of the San Francisco Call announced a meeting to occur on the following evening of the Thirty-Fourth District Central Nonpartisan Rolph Club, to be chaired by Joseph L. Taaffe

The April 29, 1912 edition of the San Francisco Call announced a meeting of the Taft Republican meeting to be held at New Era Hall. The group was presided by Joseph Duffy.

The October 6, 1912 edition of the San Francisco Call covered a fundraising card party held at New Era Hall by the Daughters of Isabella, listing dozens of the several hundred who attended the affair.