NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018 (Expires 5/31/2012)

117

FEB 2 2011

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. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name South San Francisco Opera House

other names/site number Bayview Opera House

2. Location

street & number 4701-4705 Third Street/1601 Newcomb Avenue | n/a not for publication

city or town San Francisco | n/a vicinity

state California code CA county San Francisco code 075 zip code 94124

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this x 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 x 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 x local

Signature of certifying official/Title — State Historic Preservation Officer — Date 1 FEB 2011

California Office of Historic Preservation
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

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

x 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:)

per Edson Beall — 3.24.11

Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

South San Francisco Opera House
Name of Property

San Francisco, California
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- [ ] private
- [X] public - Local
- [ ] public - State
- [ ] public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

- [X] building(s)
- [ ] district
- [ ] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		**Total**

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL/meeting hall
RECREATION AND CULTURE/theater

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL/meeting hall
RECREATION AND CULTURE/theater
OTHER/community and youth arts programs

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE VICTORIAN/Italianate

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: BRICK
walls: WOOD Frame with WOOD Siding
roof: ASPHALT Shingle
other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

See continuation sheet.

South San Francisco Opera House
Name of Property

San Francisco, California
County and State

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.)

[X] 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.

[X] C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

[ ] D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

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

Property is:

[ ] A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

[ ] B removed from its original location.

[ ] C a birthplace or grave.

[ ] D a cemetery.

[ ] E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

[ ] F a commemorative property.

[x] G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL HISTORY
ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION
PERFORMING ARTS
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance
1888 – 1965

Significant Dates
1888 – Building constructed by South San Francisco Masonic Lodge No. 212
1965 – Building sold to private owner

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Henry Geilfuss, Architect
Cornelius E. Dunshee, Builder

Period of Significance
The South San Francisco Opera House's period of significance begins with its date of construction, 1888. It was constructed by South San Francisco Masonic Lodge No. 212 and remained under their control until it was sold to Arthur Viargues in 1965. From 1888 to 1965, the building was operated and maintained by the Masons and served as a performance space and gathering hall for the Lodge and the community at large.

Statement of Significance
See continuation sheet.

Criteria Considerations

Criteria Consideration G

Properties that have achieved significance within the last 50 years must satisfy Criteria Consideration G. The South San Francisco Opera House's period of significance extends over the nearly eight decades (1888-1965) that the building was operated and maintained by the Masons and served as a performance space and gathering hall for the Lodge and the community at large. Because the Mason's period of ownership continued until 1965, the building's period of significance extends into the last 50 years. As a result, Criteria Consideration G is applicable, though the South San Francisco Opera House did not achieve any new significance within the past 50 years; rather, it maintained the significance that it already possessed due to its association with the Masons. By the time the building was sold in 1965, the character of the neighborhood had changed, the Masons' presence had largely disappeared and the building (at that time) was no longer used for community purposes.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

See continuation sheets 9-25 to 9-28 (four sheets).

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

____preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
____previously listed in the National Register
____previously determined eligible by the National Register
____designated a National Historic Landmark
____recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
____recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
____recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

____State Historic Preservation Office
____Other State agency
____Federal agency
__X__Local government (SF Planning Department)
____University
__X__Other: Architectural Resources Group
Name of repository: **See continuation sheet 9-25.**

South San Francisco Opera House
Name of Property

San Francisco, California
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	10N	553831	4176406	3			
2				4			

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

The boundaries of the subject property correspond to the footprint of the South San Francisco Opera House, including both the 1888 building and its 1970s addition. The building occupies an approximately 60 foot wide by 100 foot long parcel comprising the eastern half of Lot 036 in Block 5311 in the City and County of San Francisco, California.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes the South San Francisco Opera House, including contemporary additions (this follows the recommendation for single-building boundaries specified in the bulletin "How to Complete the National Registration Form"). The western portion of the original lot has been excluded because the plaza that occupies that half of the site dates from after the Opera House's period of significance. The plaza was installed in the mid-1970s, when the Masonic Hall that was built in conjunction with the Opera House was demolished. The plaza immediately south of the Opera House (including the brick stage) was also excluded, because it post-dates the Opera House's period of significance and, moreover, because it occupies a lot that was never owned by or associated with South San Francisco Masonic Lodge No. 212.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Katherine Petrin (Senior Associate) and Matthew Davis (Preservation Planner)

organization Architectural Resources Group date September 23, 2010

street & number Pier 9, The Embarcadero telephone 415-421-1680

city or town San Francisco state CA zip code 94111

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Additional Documentation

Additional documentation submitted with this completed form includes:

- A **USGS map** indicating the property's location.
- A **Sketch map** of the property, including a photograph key.
- **Continuation Sheets:** 47 sheets, including 2 historic drawings, 7 historic photographs, and 3 Sanborn maps (1900, 1915 and 1951).

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO OPERA HOUSE
San Francisco, CA
Photographer: Matthew Davis/Katherine Petrin, Architectural Resources Group
Date: July 2010
15 Photographs

Property Owner:

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

name City and County of San Francisco, San Francisco Arts Commission (Attn: Judy Nemzoff)

street & number 25 Van Ness Avenue, Suite 240 telephone 415-252-2590

city or town San Francisco state CA zip code 94102

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 18 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.

SUMMARY PARAGRAPH

The South San Francisco Opera House (now known as the Bayview Opera House) occupies a triangular lot at the southeast corner of Third Street and Newcomb Avenue in the Bayview-Hunters Point district of San Francisco. The Opera House was built in 1888 in conjunction with a Masonic Hall that formerly occupied the portion of the lot immediately west of the Opera House. The Masonic Hall was demolished in 1975, at which time an open-air entrance porch was added onto the west wall of the Opera House. The original footprint of the building is rectangular in plan, symmetrical, and approximately 50 feet wide by 100 feet long. The main (and historic) entrance to the building is along the building's north façade, facing Newcomb Avenue. Plaza areas that post-date the building's period of significance occupy the portions of the lot to the south and west of the Opera House. The perimeter of the lot is lined with a metal fence.

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Exterior (2010)

The South San Francisco Opera House is a one-story building of wood-frame construction with horizontal, drop wood siding and a gable roof clad in asphalt shingles. Decorative elements, all in wood, are concentrated on the building's front (north) façade, which is an ornate expression of the Italianate style. The symmetrical façade consists of an elaborate parapet, two sets of paired wood windows, and a central entrance. Corner boards, with pilasters at ground level, frame the façade. A triangular projection emblazoned with an applied sunburst ornament occupies the center of the parapet and sits in front of the abutting gable.

The parapet consists of a profiled molding supported by decorative brackets comprised of block modillions supported by curved vertical members. A band of blind, pointed arches runs between the brackets just below the cornice with an enriched molding below. Beneath this molding runs a horizontal band of trim clad in stucco. Simple vertical wood strips extend downward from the bases of the brackets, framing the window frames and main entrance below. The corner boards and the strips above the main entrance feature incised decorative carving.

Two sets of paired windows with decorative surrounds occupy the upper portion of the façade on either side of the ground-level entrance. The windows are wood, double-hung sash, with semicircular upper sashes. The top portion of the window surrounds consist of paired dentil courses beneath a projecting molding with a triangular peak occupied by foliate decoration incised above each window. Below, three pilasters sit atop a projecting sill and frame the windows. Beneath the sill are rectangular panels with ornamental pellets. These panels are set amidst a horizontal course that extends across the façade and is clad in vertical wood siding.

Concrete steps lead to the main entrance, which consists of paired, wood, paneled doors flanked by paired pilasters with Corinthian capitals beneath an elaborate pediment. The batten-style doors include vertical, horizontal and diagonal boards. The central portion of the pediment is occupied by an arched panel with the words "South San Francisco Opera House" carved in low relief. A dentil course runs between the pendants beneath the pediment's raking cornices. Carved wooden finials sit atop the midpoint and either end of the pediment. A bracket with a harp-shaped appliqué flanked by curvilinear

moldings sits below the central finial, which is rendered in a pineapple motif. The first floor walls on either side of the main entrance are clad in drop siding, but are unornamented and have no window openings.

The upper central portion of the façade is occupied by a rectangular panel containing the numbers "1888" beneath sunburst-themed ornament and a segmentally arched pediment. This panel, which is buttressed by carved wood boards with incised ornamentation, sits atop a slightly projecting molding with decorative pendants.

Original decorative pellets (currently painted gold) punctuate several portions of the façade, including, at the base of the stucco trim, the corner boards and vertical strips above the outer edges of the entrance; the corners of the rectangular 1888 panel; the rectangular panels beneath the windows; the central portion of the pediment above the entrance; and the ends of the parapet's sunburst flares.

The building's east wall, which is clad in horizontal, drop wood siding, includes two entrances and a loading dock on the ground level and three windows at the upper level. The windows are wood, double-hung with divided sash (four-over-four). These narrowly proportioned windows have simple surrounds with slightly projecting sills. The two entrances are towards the south end of the wall. The northern entrance, which opens directly into the auditorium, consists of double doors, a small hood, and an entrance ramp. The southern entrance, which connects to the platform behind the stage, consists of a single door. The loading dock punctuates the wall between these two entrances.

A porch addition is centered on the building's west wall, which formerly abutted the Masonic Hall. The addition, which is set back from the building's front façade, consists of multiple rooms and a porch with simple wood posts and a closed rail. The addition is clad in horizontal, drop wood siding with a band of vertical wood siding immediately beneath the cornice. The concrete floor of the porch is accessed by concrete steps at its north and south ends. Two large counters clad in hand-painted tile occupy the recessed central portion of the porch, flanked by two entrances to the auditorium that consist of paired wood, paneled doors. Wood relief in the wall areas above the entrances matches the paneling in the doors. The wall at the base of the porch has a roll-up door; three rectangular, louvered vents; and three one-over-one wood windows. A fenced concrete plaza sits west of this wall.

The building's windowless south wall is clad in stucco. A brick stage extends southward from the wall, with wood and metal benches beyond.

Interior (2010)
The interior of the Opera House is comprised of a narrow entry lobby with bathrooms on either side; a central auditorium with stage and proscenium arch at south end; a mezzanine at the north end; a perimeter balcony; and a partial basement. The main assembly area floor consists of wood framing over unreinforced masonry piers. The ceiling is approximately 25 feet above the main floor. The stage sits approximately 4 feet above the main floor of the auditorium. The projecting stage is faced with access doors concealing storage space. The stage's proscenium arch, which was restored in 2010 consistent with its original design, is decorated with foliage-themed painted and stenciled designs. Wainscoting consisting of vertical boards between a baseboard and a cap molding runs along the auditorium's east, west and north walls. The doors to the exterior (including two along the west wall, one along the east wall, and the main entrance on the north wall) have decorative wood frames.

The U-shaped perimeter balcony is approximately four feet wide and is hung from the roof trusses via one-inch, steel rods. The balcony is lined with a closed, arched balustrade that is approximately two feet high. The three windows along the east wall of the building have decorative wood surrounds, similar in design to the door frames below. A cove molding runs along the tops of the east and west walls.

An interior stairway with hand-painted risers leads from the west side of the main entrance to the mezzanine, which has been modified. This mezzanine, which has been partially in-filled with a projection room and an office, sits at the north end of the balcony. Three metal frame windows open from the projection room onto the auditorium. The office, at the building's northeast corner, has one non-original window and an interior door that opens onto the eastern portion of the balcony.

A partial basement consisting of two dressing rooms (including toilet facilities) and a storage room sits beneath the auditorium stage. Three rooms, including a meeting room, storage room and mechanical room, occupy the basement of the porch that was added along the building's west wall. A large, rectangular mass of exposed bedrock occupies much of the crawl space that extends beneath the auditorium's floor and is a unique original feature. The building's foundation consists of wood framing over brick masonry piers.

Alterations
The 1974-77 South San Francisco Opera House Renovation and Plaza Project, carried out by the City and County of San Francisco, included the following modifications to the Opera House and site:[1]

- The Masonic Hall that originally stood immediately west of the Opera House was demolished.
- An addition consisting of an open-air porch over multi-purpose rooms was added to the building's west wall. Specifically, the porch, snack bar room and storage room were added at the auditorium's floor level, with the meeting room, mechanical room, and storage room added at basement level.
- The stage floor was rebuilt and the front of the stage was extended approximately nine feet forward into the auditorium space. Historically, the stage terminated at the outside edge of the proscenium. The area beneath the stage addition is used as storage space.
- The unreinforced brick masonry wall at the building's south end was replaced with a wood-frame wall clad in stucco on metal lath.
- Additional seismic strengthening was completed, including sheathing the roof diaphragm and some walls with plywood, and adding hold-downs and anchor bolts to the brick foundation. In some locations, new concrete footings were built to strengthen the original unreinforced masonry footings.

[1] This summary is based on a review of (1) Department of Building Inspection, Permit No. 397092, May 21, 1974, and (2) project plans dated May 2, 1974. The plans are in the keeping of the Bureau of Architecture, San Francisco Department of Public Works.

- On the building's east wall, the double door was replaced within the original opening. A single doorway farther south was removed and filled in.
- The outdoor brick stage abutting the building's south wall was installed.
- Concrete slab plazas, including several planters, were added to the west and south of the building.
- Mendell Street was closed to vehicle traffic between Newcomb and Oakdale Avenues.

Various alterations to the Opera House to address termite and water penetration were made in late 1996 by Clark Pest Control of Burlingame, California at a total estimated cost of $9,385.[2] Specific alterations included:

- A trench was dug around the building to expose at least six inches of the building's brick foundation below the natural exterior grade, and a properly flashed and sloped concrete curb was formed and poured.
- The double door and frame on the east side of the building was removed and replaced.
- Portions of the wood trim at the main entrance were removed and replaced-in-kind.
- At the main entrance, the wood stairs from the sidewalk were replaced with concrete stairs.

The Opera House was re-roofed in 1996 at an estimated cost of $16,330.[3] In 1997, permits were filed to make improvements to the projection room, including installation of new interior gypsum board, partition walls, windows, and door at an estimated cost of $18,000.[4] This work appears to have been completed in 1998. In 2002, architects Gerson/Overstreet of San Francisco oversaw repairs to the building's roof and work on the building's HVAC systems, including replacement of the furnace. The estimated cost of these tasks was $65,000.[5]

In addition to these changes, other alterations have been made to the building at unknown dates:

- Paired cornice brackets flanking the front façade's central bay were removed sometime between 1970 and 1990.
- As a multi-use building from its inception, the Opera House, including the balcony, was never equipped with fixed seating. No original seats remain.

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[2] Department of Building Inspection, Permit No. 808371, October 25, 1996. Planned alterations are detailed in the "Wood Destroying Pests and Organisms Inspection Report" that accompanies the permit.
[3] Department of Building Inspection, Permit No. 801651, August 20, 1996.
[4] Department of Building Inspection, Permit No. 819340, February 25, 1997. Permit extension No. 847363, April 1998.
[5] Department of Building Inspection, Permit No. 972281, July 25, 2002.

- The auditorium's original wood flooring was refinished and restored in 2010. This work involved removal of a non-original linoleum covering.

- A skylight was added to the rear of the roof's eastern slope sometime after 1965.

Original Elements
The Opera House façade appears to have undergone little alteration since its construction in 1888. Virtually all extant design elements appear in Henry Geilfuss' architectural drawings for the Masonic Hall and Opera House, including:[6]

- A central entrance composed of six-paneled double doors flanked by paired pilasters beneath a pediment with dentils, three finials, pendants, harp ornamentation, and a large name plate identifying the building.

- A rectangular "1888" date plate with sunburst-themed decoration, curved pediment, and pendants.

- A parapet composed of brackets, a band of pointed arches, and a cornice, with sunburst-themed ornament on the gable peak above.

- Double-hung windows with rounded upper sashes set in surrounds that feature dentil courses, triangular moldings, pilasters, and panels below.

- Incised ornamentation on the corner boards, on the vertical strips above the outer edges of the main entrance, on the triangular peaks above each window, and on the carved wood boards that buttress the date plate.

In addition, the building's horizontal board drop siding on the north and east walls, and on the west wall above the 1970s addition, appears to be original, as are the three wood windows in the upper portion of the west wall.

The Opera House also retains several original interior elements.

- The auditorium appears to have been maintained as a single open space undivided by intervening walls since its original construction.

- Though the stage floor has been has been rebuilt and extended into the auditorium approximately nine feet, the stage is at its original height and retains its original proscenium arch.

- The painted finishes and stencils on the proscenium plaster date from the building's period of significance and are clearly visible in a 1920 photo of the Opera House interior.

- The wainscoting and narrow perimeter balcony that wrap the east, north and west walls of the auditorium appear to be original.

[6] These drawings show a balustrade atop the parapet, which was not executed.

Integrity

Dating to 1888, the South San Francisco Opera House retains a good level of integrity. Throughout most of its 122-year history, the building has maintained its original intended use as a performance space and community social hall. The building has not been moved and retains integrity of location. The building's immediate setting has been altered by demolition of the Masonic Hall, which was built in conjunction with the Opera House and directly abutted its west wall. The Opera House, however, retains its original orientation facing Newcomb Avenue, and sits amidst a neighborhood that consists primarily of one- and two-story residential buildings with larger mixed-use commercial buildings with flats above along nearby Third Street, an important transportation and commercial corridor. As a result, the building retains good integrity of setting. The building's ornate façade appears today much as it did originally, with the elimination of a few minor elements. The original interior configuration as a central auditorium space with a stage and proscenium at the south end has not been modified. While the 1970s addition of a porch and basement rooms along the west wall modified the building's original footprint, that side addition is set back from the building's principal façade and is distinguishable from, and subservient to, the original building. As a result, the building retains good integrity of design.

The Opera House also retains high integrity of materials and workmanship. The building retains features associated with the Italianate and Stick styles, including: parapet with brackets and pointed arches; wood siding; narrow, rounded windows set in elaborate surrounds; extensive use of decorative trim; and use of corner boards, pilasters and strips to emphasize the building's verticality. Portions of these features have been replaced using similar, and visually indistinguishable, materials, with the exception of the concrete entrance steps, which replaced wooden steps. The building also retains key interior features, including the proscenium and balcony, associated with its historic use as a performance venue. These features together serve to articulate the Italianate/Stick character of the property and provide physical evidence of construction methods of Victorian theaters of the late nineteenth century. With its intact façade and auditorium, the building is still easily legible as a late nineteenth century performance venue and social hall and conveys a sense of development in South San Francisco when that district was still a fledgling, and remote, community. As a result, the Opera House retains good integrity of feeling and association.

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE

The South San Francisco Opera House possesses both historical and architectural significance. Now known as the Bayview Opera House, it appears to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criteria A and C.

The South San Francisco Opera House appears eligible for the National Register at the local level of significance under Criterion A within the context of the early social and cultural development of the Bayview-Hunters Point district, then known as South San Francisco. Built in 1888 by South San Francisco Masonic Lodge No. 212 in tandem with their adjacent Masonic Temple, the building served as a public social hall for gatherings, cultural events and entertainment. The Opera House was the first cultural building constructed in the neighborhood and served for decades as the chief social center of the Bayview-Hunters Point district, regularly hosting dances, fairs, political rallies, and charity benefits. As one of the few entertainment venues located outside the downtown area, the Opera House also offered a wide variety of theatrical performances – including dramas, comedies, minstrelsy and vaudeville – in its first two decades of existence. It retains its original use as a community center and performance venue, and remains among the oldest surviving entertainment venues in San Francisco.

The South San Francisco Opera House also appears eligible for the National Register at the local level of significance under Criterion C within the context of architect Henry Geilfuss' career. One of San Francisco's most prolific architects during the 1880s and 1890s, Geilfuss blended Italianate, Gothic, Eastlake, and Stick elements into a style that came to define Victorian architecture in San Francisco. The South San Francisco Opera House, which was built at the height of Geilfuss' career, is representative of his style and craftsmanship, and is particularly notable as a rare, non-residential example of Geilfuss' work.

The South San Francisco Opera House's period of significance extends from 1888, its date of construction, until 1965, when the building was sold by the Masons. From 1888 to 1965, the building was operated and maintained by the Masons and served as a performance space and gathering hall for the Lodge and the community at large. Though aspects of the building have been modified (see section 7 above), the South San Francisco Opera House retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance under both Criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places.

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Criterion A: Association with the Early Development of San Francisco's Bayview-Hunters Point District

The South San Francisco Opera House was built in 1888 by Masonic Lodge No. 212. It was the first cultural building constructed in the Bayview-Hunters Point neighborhood, then known as South San Francisco, a fledgling district of cottages, farms and slaughterhouses at the City's southeast corner. Seen upon its construction as "one of the most

substantial improvements in that quarter," the Opera House established South San Francisco as a viable community that would offer more than simply housing and employment to its residents.[1]

Masonic Lodge No. 212 and the Construction of the South San Francisco Opera House

Fraternal organizations – associations of people bound together for philosophical, religious, literary, social, athletic, or philanthropic purposes – were ubiquitous in America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the last two decades of the nineteenth century, Americans created almost 500 national beneficiary orders that hosted many thousands of local lodges. Many of these groups were patterned after the Freemasons, with a focus on bringing together members of the local business community for benevolent or service-related reasons. These organizations also provided a range of benefits to their members, including financial help in times of poverty or illness or contributions to help defray burial expenses. Among the early U.S. fraternal organizations that exist to the present day are: the Freemasons (which came to America in 1730); the Odd Fellows (1819); Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks (1868); Loyal Order of Moose (1888); and the Fraternal Order of Eagles (1898).

South San Francisco Lodge No. 212 of the Free and Accepted Masons was formally chartered on October 14, 1871, the thirteenth Subordinate Lodge in San Francisco.[2] Fourteen founding members, men "whose vocation required them to live there," had begun meeting in South San Francisco the year before.[3] These founding members included South San Francisco real estate investor Henry F. Williams and future South San Francisco Opera House builder Cornelius E. Dunshee. The establishment of the lodge in South San Francisco was seen as "the first step in closing the gap between the Lodges in San Francisco and Redwood City."[4] At the time of Lodge No. 212's creation, agreement was made with existing lodges in San Francisco that, in order to avoid infringing upon their boundaries, Lodge No. 212's members would be drawn "only from persons who reside south of Chennel Street or Channel Street extended westwardly."[5]

The lodge's first Master was Henry F. Williams. Williams, along with the officers and charter of the state's first Masonic Lodge (California Lodge No. 1), had arrived in San Francisco on February 28, 1849, aboard the first steamship (the *California*) to ever enter the Golden Gate. Soon upon his arrival, Williams became the first man to petition for the degrees of Masonry in California.[6] Making "a great personal sacrifice," Williams left California Lodge No. 1 in order to establish a new lodge in the remote southeast corner of San Francisco, a part of the city that was "not in a condition very inviting":

> The way through the Potrero and "Butchertown," or *putrid row*, as it was termed, was offensive and unpleasant, but it had to be traversed in going to and from, and it was insalubrious as the Valley of Jehosaphat; yet beyond it South San Francisco Lodge set up its altar and went to work.[7]

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[1] "Around Butcherville, The New Opera House."
[2] Sherman, *Fifty Years of Masonry in California*, 401; 1871 City Directory.
[3] Sherman, 400; Whitsell, *One Hundred Years of Freemasonry in California*, 1110.
[4] Whitsell, 1110.
[5] South San Francisco Lodge No. 212, "One Hundred Years of Masonry, 1870-1970," 4.
[6] Sherman, 400-401.
[7] Ibid., 401.

In the first years of its existence, South San Francisco Lodge No. 212 met in social halls that it shared with other similar associations.[8] In 1887, lodge members decided to purchase a lot for the construction of a dedicated Masonic Temple and associated public hall.[9] To raise money for the purchase, the lodge formed a corporation, the Masonic Hall Association of South San Francisco, and sold stock in the corporation to the lodge's 77 members at $10 a share.[10] They purchased a vacant lot at the southeast corner of Railroad (3rd Street) and Paraguay (Newcomb) Avenues, diagonally across from the San Francisco Brewery and one block from South San Francisco's unofficial center at Railroad and Teneriffe (Oakdale) Avenues.[11] At the time of the purchase, the blocks east of Railroad Ave were still largely vacant, while the parcels along the west side of the avenue were lined with storefronts. When the corner lot proved too small to support their desired building, the Masons acquired the adjacent lot to the east for $2,000 as the site of the future Opera House.[12]

The cornerstone of the South San Francisco Lodge No. 212 Masonic Hall was laid on May 30, 1888. As made clear by a contemporary newspaper account, this was a significant event for the surrounding neighborhood:

> South San Francisco was all excitement yesterday, the occasion being the laying of the corner-stone of the new Masonic Temple on the lot fronting on Railroad and Fourteenth avenues and M street, in that part of our city. Men, women and children turned out en masse, and by their presence gave additional interest to the exercises of the day.[13]

The day's pomp and circumstance, which included a formal procession with choral accompaniment, culminated in an oration delivered by Lodge Master Henry F. Williams. The newspaper account concluded that the building "will mark the era for renewed prosperity in the southern part of the city."[14]

In tandem with the construction of the Masonic Temple, Lodge 212 planned an adjacent public hall for their use as well as for public gatherings and entertainment.

> At the rear of the main building will be a public hall, one story in height, fitted up with a complete stage and other paraphernalia suitable for public gatherings and entertainments of all descriptions...[The building's] size will be 50x100 feet.[15]

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[8] South San Francisco Lodge No. 212, 5. Lodge No. 212 met at Hare Hall until 1878, when they moved to Myrtle Hall. According to City Directories, Hare Hall was on Tenth (Jerrold) Avenue and Myrtle Hall was on Railroad Avenue.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid.; "New Masonic Temple." South San Francisco Lodge No. 212 was never a particularly large lodge. Lodge membership grew to 116 by 1900, peaking at 305 in 1929, before declining to 224 in 1940 and 260 in 1949 (Whitsell, 1111).
[11] Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1888. Present-day street names are included in parentheses. Based on a Sanborn Map of the area, the brewery was known as the "South San Francisco Brewery" by 1900.
[12] South San Francisco Lodge No. 212, 5.
[13] "New Masonic Temple." Note the 1888 newspaper article's use of pre-1880 street names.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.

This public hall, soon named the "South San Francisco Opera House," was a central component of the Mason's vision for their ongoing relationship with the district that was developing around them. From the beginning, the members of Lodge No. 212 intended the South San Francisco Opera House be used for the benefit of the larger public:

> Our early brethren were not only good Masons but conscientious citizens. They realized that the area around our Temple, known as 'Butchertown,' was growing and blossoming into a thriving residential and commercial region. This area was lacking one important element though, a cultural center. Recognizing this need, they built along with the Temple an adjoining hall known as the "South San Francisco Opera House."[16]

The Masons looked to their own ranks for the expertise needed to complete the new Masonic Hall and Opera House, tapping Henry Geilfuss to serve as architect, and Cornelius E. Dunshee to be "master builder."[17] Cornelius Dunshee had served as Secretary of Lodge No. 212 from its beginning in 1870 until 1886. After being elected Junior Warden in 1887, and Senior Warden in 1888, Dunshee went on to serve two consecutive terms as Master in 1889 and 1890.[18] Architect Henry Geilfuss was a member, and one-time Master, of Hermann Lodge No. 127. This Lodge, which had been founded in San Francisco in 1858, had been granted permission to work entirely in the German language.[19] Architectural plans for the Masonic Hall and Opera House list the address of Geilfuss' office as 33 Kearny Street, San Francisco.[20]

The total cost of the lot, construction of both buildings, and furnishings was estimated to be $25,000, with the Opera House's share of construction costs estimated at $10,000.[21] Construction of the Masonic Hall and South San Francisco Opera House was completed in September 1888, four and one-half months after the cornerstone was laid, and the Lodge held its first meeting in the building on October 4, 1888.[22] The buildings, which were recognized as among "the most substantial improvements in that quarter" of the city, were formally dedicated on May 30, 1889, exactly one year after the cornerstone had been laid.[23] Approximately 300 Masons and their families attended the celebration, which included a grand march, dancing "until long after midnight," and "an elaborate collation" served at 11 P.M.[24]

From the start the Opera House hosted concurrent uses, social gatherings and theatrical performances. Newspapers of the 1890s and 1900s announced upcoming dances, political rallies and other events of local interest. A survey of the *San Francisco Chronicle* from 1888 to 1922 identified the following events held at the South San Francisco Opera House:

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[16] South San Francisco Lodge No. 212, 7.
[17] "New Masonic Temple."
[18] Sherman, 402.
[19] Ibid., 293. At the time of the Opera House's construction, there were 231 Subordinate Masonic Lodges in California, and 16 in San Francisco.
[20] "South San Francisco Opera House" file, the Foundation for San Francisco's Architectural Heritage.
[21] "New Masonic Temple"; "Around Butcherville, The New Opera House"; *California Architect & Building News*, June 15, 1888, 80. The *California Architect & Building News* lists a 2-story brick [sic] building built for $10,000 by the Masonic Hall Association at the corner of Paraguay (Newcomb) Avenue and Yazoo (Mendell) Street. Since neither the address nor the number of stories applies to the Masonic Hall building itself, the $10,000 appears to refer to the Opera House.
[22] "Around Butcherville, The New Opera House"; South San Francisco Lodge No. 212, 7. The contract called for completion of the Opera House within 60 days ("New Masonic Temple").
[23] "In Its New Hall."
[24] Ibid.

November 1889:	Second anniversary party, Bradford Council, No. 190, Organization of Chosen Friends
September 1890:	Public addresses, Henry H. Markham, Republican nominee for Governor and John B. Reddick, Lieutenant-Governor nominee
September 1891:	"Apron-and-necktie party," Bradford Council No. 190, O.C.F.
February 1892:	Entertainment and dance, California Specialty Company
May 1892:	Charity entertainment and ball, Catholic Ladies' Aid Society
October 1892:	Public address, Wendell Easton, Republican candidate for Mayor
April 1894:	South End Forester's Bazar, Oak Leaf Circle, Companions of the Forest
October 1896:	Fair, including exhibition drill by Company A.L.C.C., in aid of All Hallows' Church
January 1897:	Public address, P.C. Yorke of the Young Men's Institute
March 1897:	Relief fund benefit, Catholic Ladies' Aid Society
November, 1902:	Masquerade ball, Native Sons of the Golden West
May, 1904:	Minstrel show and ball, Butchertown branches of the Journeyman Butcher's Union
November, 1905:	Political rally, John Partridge, Republican nominee for Mayor
October 1907:	Political meeting, Republican Party
October, 1909:	Political meeting, Democratic campaign committee
October 1909:	Public address, Good Government League
February 1910:	Entertainment and dance, Native Daughters of the Golden West
March 1910:	St. Patrick's Day ball, Division No. 4, Ancient Order of Hibernians in America
April 1910:	Fundraising ball, Bay Shore Greens baseball team
August 1911:	Public address, Republican mayoral candidate James Rolph Jr.
September 1911:	Public address, Republican mayoral candidate James Rolph Jr.

Together, these announcements make it clear that the Opera House, as much as serving as a theater for traveling troupes, was built as "a social center for the German, Irish and French Americans who lived in Butchertown."[25]

Performance at the South San Francisco Opera House

The South San Francisco Opera House first appears in city directories in 1890. In Langley's 1890 San Francisco directory, it is listed under "Amusement, Places of," together with gardens and amphitheaters. The other listings were primarily downtown theaters, including the Alcazar, the Baldwin, the Bella Union, the California, and the Palace Variety. The South San Francisco Opera House is listed in city directories through 1900, during which time the number of listed theaters remained fairly constant. With the exception of the Potrero Opera House at Tennessee and 17th Streets, the South San Francisco Opera House is the only listed theater outside the downtown area. Beginning in 1901, the South San Francisco Opera House no longer appears in city directory listings.

When it opened in late December 1888, the South San Francisco Opera House was a fairly simple structure, consisting of a central assembly area that could accommodate a few hundred people, with a stage at the south end, a mezzanine at the north end, a narrow perimeter balcony, and dressing rooms within a partial basement. An 1889 account explains that "the aisles on the main floor are a little narrow and the chairs are not fastened down."[26] Nor were the benches in the balcony attached to the floor. This, combined with the modest size of the stage (approximately 30 feet by 15 feet) reflects the multi-purpose nature of the Mason's desire to be able to clear the space and use it for non-theatrical purposes.[27]

Despite the space's simplicity, the Opera House was not without its decorative features. Foliage-themed decorations from plaster molds adorned the stage's proscenium arch, and the balcony was lined with an arched balustrade. Probably the most grandiose element of the theater's interior was the main drop curtain, which came from the recently demolished California Theater. The California Theater, built in 1869 by William Ralston on the north side of Bush Street between Kearny and Dupont (Grant) Streets, had been regarded as one of the most lavish theaters in San Francisco, second only to the Baldwin Theater at Market and Powell Streets.[28] The hand-painted drop curtain displayed a landscape scene with Classical ruins and two figures along a rocky coastline at the base of a hill, with two trees at the water's edge to the right.[29] According to several sources, the South San Francisco Opera House had a curtain emblazoned with Victorian-era advertisements, including "ads extolling the virtues of Lydia Pinkham, seasick remedies, Doctor Pierce's Pleasant Pellets and the local corsetiere."[30] This was presumably a different curtain than the one obtained from the old California Theater.

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[25] "The Old Op'ry House."
[26] "Around Butcherville, The New Opera House."
[27] Rinear, "Old Theatres Are Not Always Significant Theatres," 2.
[28] McElhaney, 56. The theater demolished in 1888 was replaced by a new California Theater on the same site in 1889.
[29] "California Theater" clippings file, Museum of Performance & Design Performing Arts Library, San Francisco, CA. Several newspaper articles on the South San Francisco Opera House, including "The Old Op'ry House" (October 1, 1937); "Theatrical Relic from the Days Before Film" (May 31, 1959); and Jordan, "Standing Room Only, Grand old opera" (September 29-30, 1965), are accompanied by photographs that show portions of this curtain.
[30] Brill, "A San Francisco Landmark: Misnamed old theater due for reopening"; see also, for example, Robbins, "Theatrical Survivor of '06."

In their survey of nineteenth-century performance halls, David Naylor and Joan Dillon cite the South San Francisco Opera House as a classic example of a western boomtown opera house.[31] In the latter part of the nineteenth century, these opera houses, which sprang up across California and the West, provided "some semblance of conventional community life" for residents of the makeshift boomtowns.[32] These halls, which were often attached to larger commercial buildings, hosted a wide variety of events, including dances, political rallies, and theatrical performances. Despite their common moniker, however, few of these Opera Houses actually showed opera. As such, the "Opera House" name appears to have been more an ironic reference to the "rough and ready" nature of life in the Western mining towns than an indication of the specific theatrical fare on tap. According to a survey of nineteenth century theater in Oregon, these "so-called opera houses were quite often built by either the Masonic or Odd Fellows lodges, doubling valiantly as community centers."[33]

In the 1950s, George Poultney chronicled the South San Francisco Opera House's first performances:

> The South San Francisco Opera House opened during Christmas week, 1888, with Frank Daniels and Bessie Mason in *Little Puck*, which was followed by Neil Warner in *Richelieu* and *Richard III*. Then came Atkinson's original *Peck's Bad Boy* company, followed by Charles H. Hoyt's *A Midnight Bell*, Jeffreys Lewis in *La Belle Russe*, E.E. Rice's *Evangeline* with George Knight and Fay Templeton, Marie Wainwright in *Virginius*, and a production of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* that offered two funny Topsys, twenty-five plantation singers, imported bloodhounds, a comical trick donkey, beautiful scenery and a company of fifty people on stage.[34]

An extensive record of performances held at the South San Francisco Opera House was known due to the markings on the walls of the basement dressing rooms, which were covered with graffiti from visiting performers.[35] Together with the recollections of audience members, the graffiti indicated that "minstrelsy and vaudeville were the...main bill of fare" at the San Francisco Opera House during its first two decades of existence.[36] The companies and performances included:

- Mabel Prahl, Frances Campbell, Dec. 23, 1888
- A.W. Belasco as "Pete" in "The Octoroon," Dec. 20-21,1889
- "True As Steel," April 22-23, 1889
- "The Myrtle Club and Pandora's Co.," June 29, 1889
- "The Pawnee Indian Medicine Co.," July 30, 1890
- "The Royal Nippon Japanese Troupe," Dec. 27, 1891, and again on Nov. 27, 1893, appearing with "The Mullen and Morris Novelty Co." for one week
- "Runaway Wife," Aug. 17, 1901

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[31] Naylor and Dillon, *American Theaters: Performance Halls of the Nineteenth Century*, 126-145. Other California examples still extant include the Winters Opera House, the Woodland Opera House, the Napa Valley Opera House, and the Sonora Opera House.
[32] Ibid., 126.
[33] Ernst, *Trouping in the Oregon Country: A History of Frontier Theatre*, 155.
[34] Poultney, "Famous American Theaters."
[35] This graffiti is no longer visible, as all original dressing room walls have been either removed or resurfaced.
[36] Rinear, 8.

- "The Versatile and Eccentric Comedians Peguillen and Flaherty," Nov. 25, 1901, Thanksgiving Day
- "The Columbia Park Boys Club of San Francisco," March 11, 1904.[37]

A 1937 account waxes nostalgic about the Pawnee Indian Medicine Company, which was led by Pawnee Bill, a medicine showman of the kind made more famous by Buffalo Bill:

> Memories of a drum being frantically pounded to the sound of wild war whoops by Big Chief Pow-how-taw-nee, accompanied on the banjo by some brass-lunged Jeff Peters who would twang the strings and shout a spiel about his show! Memories of pitch or gasoline torches lighting up the faces of gaping yokels, scoffing sports, awestruck small boys. The Pawnee Indian Medicine Show![38]

In the Opera House's first decade, before the rail line along Railroad Avenue had been completed, access to the Opera House was limited to those who could walk or obtain horse-drawn transportation:

> The people of San Francisco would come out and enjoy a good time. They came in surreys and buggies. The opposite corner on Third Street there was a brewery [the South San Francisco Brewery] where the patrons enjoyed refreshments during intermission. These were the horse and buggy days.[39]

Similarly, the acting companies "came to the Opera House in horse-drawn wagons, carrying their costumes and scenery with them."[40] The rail line that was installed along Railroad Avenue near the turn of the century included a stop just two blocks from the Opera House, further expanding access to the theater.[41]

Most early performances were short runs, typically a night or two. Given the theater's location in comparatively remote South San Francisco, this suggests that at least some of the acting troupes were stopping off to perform at the Opera House on their way into or out of San Francisco's downtown theater district.

The venue appears to have been used by smaller companies performing for local crowds.[42] This impression is reinforced by the way Opera House performances were reputedly advertised, in keeping with the building's role as the community center for South San Francisco:

> Most of the advertising for the productions done at the Opera House was through the medium of the Masonic Bulletins and by word-of-mouth. There was also a brass band which played to advertise the performances. This was a most effective form of advertising because there were still few houses in the area and the sound would carry for miles.[43]

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[37] Ibid., 9-11; "Scrawls on the Walls."
[38] "Scrawls on the Walls."
[39] Letter from Henry T. Conserva Sr., Past Master, South San Francisco Lodge No. 212 to Arthur Viargues. Included in Rinear, 5.
[40] Rinear, 12.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Rinear.
[43] Ibid., 7; South San Francisco Lodge No. 212, 7-8.

Declining Use of the South San Francisco Opera House as a Performance Venue

With the exception of Butchertown, which was largely destroyed by the earthquake and fires that laid waste to much of San Francisco in 1906, South San Francisco was relatively little affected. The fires that extended southward from downtown were stopped miles north of South San Francisco, and the substantial bedrock beneath much of the district likely reduced the effects of the earthquake itself.[44] Despite its remoteness, South San Francisco hosted thousands of refugees in the wake of the disaster.[45]

Even though the South San Francisco Opera House had survived the 1906 earthquake and fire, its use as a performance venue slowed in the wake of the cataclysm. The earthquake and fire had destroyed virtually every other theater in the city, leaving acting companies, at least temporarily, with no reason to travel to San Francisco, and thus no reason to pass through South San Francisco.[46]

The Opera House's use as a stop-over for traveling performers was further reduced by the Southern Pacific Railroad's completion of the ambitious "Bayshore Cutoff" in 1907, which made stopping off in South San Francisco both inconvenient and unnecessary. This line, which markedly improved rail access between San Bruno and downtown San Francisco, had required extensive tunneling and related excavation to maintain a continuous grade separation.[47] Unlike the earlier line, the Bayshore Cutoff did not pass right by the South San Francisco Opera House. Instead, the Bayshore Cutoff ran a couple blocks to the west of the Railroad Avenue rail line, emerging from tunnels just northwest of the intersection of P (Phelps) Street and 16th (Palou) Avenue South and heading northward, over a bridge across Islais Creek, before going underground again near 25th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue.

Over the next several decades, the Masons continued to use the Opera House as a community social hall. The building hosted card parties, club meetings and barn dances, among other events. The 1951 Sanborn Map of the area identifies the Opera House as the "Bayview Center Recreation Hall." For several years in the 1950s and early 1960s, Olsen's Saddlery Shop, which occupied the first floor of the Masonic Lodge, rented the Opera House from the Masons for $100 a month for use as a warehouse.[48] In 1964, forty of the Opera House's velvet-upholstered iron seats, which had been packed away in the balcony, were sold to Macy's, which reupholstered the seats with leather and installed them in the men's shoe department of their new Sacramento store.[49] At the time, the original curtain, "ablaze with ads of its heyday," was still in place and "roll[ed] up and down without much difficulty."[50] South San Francisco Lodge No. 212 sold the Masonic Hall and Opera House to life-long area resident Arthur Viargues for $100,000 in 1965, after 77 years of continuous occupation.[51]

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[44] Kelley & VerPlanck, "Bayview-Hunters Point Area B Survey," 68.
[45] Ibid., 69.
[46] Rinear, 13. The latest date that appeared in the graffiti on the dressing room walls was November 29, 1906.
[47] Kelley & VerPlanck, 66.
[48] Rinear, 13.
[49] Poultney; Robbins, "History in a shoe shop."
[50] Robbins, "Theatrical Survivor of '06."
[51] Rinear, 14; Jordan. After selling the building, Lodge 212 moved to Daly City, where they remain today (South San Francisco Lodge No. 212, 8).

Criterion C: Representative Example of the Work of Architect Henry Geilfuss
The South San Francisco Opera House appears eligible for the National Register at the local level of significance under Criterion C as a representative example of the work of architect Henry Geilfuss, one of the most prolific architects in San Francisco during the 1880s and 1890s.

Architect Henry Geilfuss was born in Thurin, Germany in 1850. He attended architecture school in Erfurt, Weimar and Berlin, and began his architectural practice in Berlin and Schlessing, where he designed railroad bridges and related masonry structures.[52] He left Germany and came to San Francisco in 1876. After working two years as a draughtsman, Geilfuss opened his own office at 637 Kearny Street.[53] He remained in practice until at least 1910, and by the late 1880s he was known in San Francisco for having designed "some of the best buildings erected here."[54] Geilfuss was one of the foremost practitioners of the Victorian style of residential architecture – a style that incorporated Italianate, Gothic, Eastlake, and Stick elements – that has since become synonymous worldwide with "historic San Francisco architecture."

Henry Geilfuss appears in San Francisco City Directory architect listings from 1879 to 1910. He is listed under his own name from 1979 to 1903, except for the 1891 directory, which has the listing "Geilfuss, Zimmerman & Co." From 1904 to 1910, the directories list "H. Geilfuss & Son."[55] Geilfuss moved his office to 33 Kearney Street in 1881, moving again to 935 Market Street in 1888. By 1891, Geilfuss had moved to a "fine" office in his own five-story building at 120 Fulton Street.[56] His practice was still there as of his final appearance in the 1910 city directory.[57]

Based on an index of *California Architect Building News* compiled for the period, Geilfuss appears to have been one of the most prolific architects in San Francisco in the 1880s and 1890s.[58] During that time, he designed hundreds of buildings throughout San Francisco, quite possibly more than anyone else. Most of his buildings were located outside of downtown, in the neighborhoods of the Mission, Eureka Valley, the Haight and Hayes Valley. While primarily a residential architect, Geilfuss also designed several important commercial buildings, including the Italian-Swiss Colony Building (since demolished), the Armour & Co. meatpacking building at 1050 Battery Street (added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2009), as well as several breweries, including the U.S. Brewery (600 Franklin and 315 Fulton), the National Brewing Company (740 Webster), and the Jackson Brewing Company (1428 Mission), none of which remains. Whether residential or commercial, the majority of Geilfuss' clients appear to have been German, which may be expected, given his prominent association with the German-speaking Hermann Masonic Lodge.

The 1891 opening of the Golden West, a seven-story brick and stone hotel on Ellis Street designed by Geilfuss, drew a celebratory account in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, complete with a sketch of the "handsome" building. The article clearly demonstrates Geilfuss' prominence in late nineteenth-century San Francisco:

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[52] *California Architect and Building News*, September 15, 1889.
[53] Ibid.; Lowell, *Architectural Records in the San Francisco Bay Area: A Guide to Research*, 272.
[54] *California Architect and Building News*, September 15, 1889.
[55] "Henry Geilfuss" file, the Foundation for San Francisco's Architectural Heritage; Lowell, 272.
[56] Lowell, p. 272; *The Bay of San Francisco*, V. 1, 532.
[57] Lowell, p. 272. The final address change likely reflects a street renumbering, rather than an office relocation.
[58] John William Snyder, 139-157; "Henry Geilfuss" file, the Foundation for San Francisco's Architectural Heritage.

The entire structure was planned by Henry Geilfuss, who has been in business as an architect in this city for upward of fifteen years and is now the head of the architectural firm of Geilfuss, Zimmerman & Co. of 150 Fulton street. This is one of the largest architectural firms of the city, and their offices have recently been opened in their own new handsome building at the address named. The firm consists of Henry Geilfuss, Robert Zimmerman, Fritz Gereke and Albert E. Cobby, all gentlemen of experience in architecture and practical building. The firm is particularly well known to the German residents of the city, having designed a large proportion of the buildings owned here by them.[59]

Several important examples of Geilfuss' work remain, including three City of San Francisco Landmarks: the Romanesque Revival St. Mark's Lutheran Church (1895) at 1135 O'Farrell Street, the Stick-style Charles Dietle House (1878) at 294 Page Street, and the Gothic/Victorian Westerfeld House (1889) at 1198 Fulton Street. The Westerfeld House, recognized as "virtually the symbol of San Francisco's Victorian architecture," is also listed on the National Register of Historic Places.[60] Other, less well known buildings that illustrate Geilfuss' flair for Victorian massing and ornament include the 1886 Brune-Reutlinger House at 824 Grove Street, the 1882 house at 811 Treat Avenue, the 1882 house at 23 Henry Street, the 1893 house at 969 Page Street, the 1889 house at 1231 Page Street, and the 1888 paired houses at 605 and 611 Haight Street.

DEVELOPMENTAL HISTORY/ADDITIONAL HISTORIC CONTEXT INFORMATION

The Development of South San Francisco

The South San Francisco Opera House is one of the oldest surviving buildings in Bayview-Hunters Point, a large district at San Francisco's southeast corner. The history of Bayview-Hunters Point recently completed by Kelley & VerPlanck Historical Resources Consulting provides an excellent backdrop for understanding the historical context of the South San Francisco Opera House:

> Bayview-Hunters Point is one of San Francisco's oldest and most historic communities. Originally occupied by plains of coastal grasslands, hillsides covered in coastal sage scrub, and extensive marshlands, the physical character of the district has been extensively transformed from the initial contact era between Spanish explorers and the native Ohlone inhabitants. During the Spanish and Mexican periods, what is now the Bayview-Hunters Point district was home to cattle herds, belonging first to Mission Dolores, and later José Bernal's Rancho Rincon de las Salinas y Potrero Viejo. After the American conquest of California, the land comprising today's Bayview-Hunters Point district was quickly subdivided into house and garden lots and gradually sold off to diverse group of American and European settlers. The area soon became San Francisco's most ethnically varied community, housing British, Scandinavian, and German boat builders at India Basin; several Chinese fishermen's camps at Hunters Point; Italian, Maltese, and Portuguese truck farmers in the Bayview; and French tannery workers and Mexican and southwestern vaqueros at Butchertown.[61]

[59] "The Golden West."
[60] Bloomfield, "National Register of Historic Places Nomination, William Westerfeld House."
[61] Kelley & VerPlanck, 1.

From the Gold Rush era through the early years of the twentieth century, the area that today comprises Bayview-Hunters Point was known as "South San Francisco," though "this technically only referred to one of a half-dozen nineteenth-century subdivisions in the area."[62] When the San Mateo County community of Baden incorporated as the City of South San Francisco in 1908, many residents instead began using their individual neighborhood names, such as Hunters Point, Bay View, Silver Terrace, or Bret Harte, to avoid confusion with the new city. The term Bayview-Hunters Point was not used as an umbrella term for the district until the 1960s.

The South San Francisco Opera House lot at 3rd Street and Newcomb Avenue is part of the subdivision map that was filed by the South San Francisco Homestead & Railroad Association in April of 1867. The Association had been formed in 1862 with Henry F. Williams as president (Williams would later serve as the first Master of Masonic Lodge No. 212.) The association's 800-acre tract, which extended from Railroad Avenue (3rd Street) eastward to San Francisco Bay, between 5th (Evans) and 15th (Oakdale) Avenues, was subdivided into two thousand 75' x 100' lots. The association planned to sell the lots as shares in a joint stock company, which was a common method of subdividing outlying parts of San Francisco in the late 1800s. In South San Francisco, each share entitled the owner to claim three 75' x 100' lots.[63]

The Association, under the leadership of Henry F. Williams, also acquired much of the land to the west of their original subdivision, on the other side of Railroad Avenue. This area, which was surveyed in 1867, was known as the O'Neill and Haley Tract. The same year, Williams established the Bayview Tract No. 1 Homestead Association. Bayview Tract No. 1 was immediately south of the original South San Francisco Homestead subdivision.[64]

Unfortunately, none of these subdivisions sold well, and only a few lots were developed in the San Francisco Homestead & Railroad Association's first five years of existence. As of 1869, residential and commercial development in South San Francisco was still concentrated around the intersection of Railroad Avenue (3rd Street) and 15th (Oakdale) Avenue, one block from the future site of the South San Francisco Opera House.[65]

South San Francisco's remoteness and lack of necessary infrastructure, including utilities, paved streets, and rail service, no doubt slowed the pace of residential development in the area. In the late nineteenth century, utilities and transportation infrastructure were still provided by private companies, who likely considered major infrastructure investments in outlying areas like South San Francisco to be an unnecessary financial risk. Water service, for example, was not extended to the Bayview-Hunters Point area until 1924, before which most households in the area obtained water through local wells, springs and septic systems.[66]

South San Francisco was connected to San Francisco proper by a single thoroughfare, a two-part causeway and bridge across Mission Bay and the Islais Creek Estuary completed in 1869 and known as "Long Bridge." While the San Francisco Homestead & Railroad Association did manage to extend a horse-drawn street railway across Long Bridge, the line stopped at the southern bank of Islais Creek, instead of running along Railroad Avenue as originally planned. Passengers

[62] Ibid., 4.
[63] Ibid., 32-3.
[64] Ibid., 39-40.
[65] Ibid., 33, 44.
[66] Ibid., 57, 87.

who wanted to continue on to South San Francisco could either walk or take a bumpy carriage ride along pre-macadamized Railroad Avenue. This situation was not remedied (and then only partially) until the spring of 1890, when the Omnibus Cable Company's line from 24th and Harrison Streets was extended to Railroad Avenue and Teneriffe (Oakdale) Avenue. A party was held at the newly completed South San Francisco Opera House to celebrate this important victory for the district. Rail line service along Railroad Avenue itself, however, does not appear until the 1901 Coast Survey map of the area, and 3rd Street was not widened and properly paved until the mid-1920s.[67]

Residential development of the Bayview-Hunters Point area was also slowed by relocation of the city's slaughterhouse district there in the late-1860s. The "Butcher's Reservation" had previously been located along Mission Bay at 9th and Brannan Streets, but by the 1860s, this area had been encompassed by residential development in the Mission and Potrero districts. As a result, in 1867, wholesale butchers were required to relocate to a tidelands area at the north end of South San Francisco. The 80-acre area, which came to be known as "Butchertown," consisted primarily of wharves constructed above Islais Creek, so that the offal could be swept out by the tides.[68] Though the slaughterhouses (and related industries such as tanneries and glue factories) drove the burgeoning economy of South San Francisco, they also served to stigmatize the area as a less-preferable residential district:

> Straddling Railroad Avenue, Butchertown marked the main entrance to South San Francisco. As such it was probably what most people thought of when they thought of South San Francisco. Butchertown's nasty stench and gruesome atmosphere probably deterred people of means from moving to South San Francisco, presumably sealing its fate as a working-class district.[69]

By 1900, Butchertown, bound by Islais Creek to the north and west, extended eastward to K (Keith) Street and southward to 6th Avenue South (Fairfax Avenue). Not surprisingly, the geographic isolation combined with a concentration of industrial facilities led to a markedly self-contained district. According to Kelley & VerPlanck's review of contemporary census records, most South San Francisco residents worked in one of the nearby industries, "making South San Francisco an informal company town consisting primarily of manual laborers of various origins who lived in the area because they worked in the local slaughterhouses, shipyards, breweries, and truck farms."[70]

Early residential and commercial construction in South San Francisco was concentrated within a four-block wide swath of territory along Railroad Avenue (3rd Street) between 11th (Kirkwood) and 16th (Palou) Avenues, and consisted primarily of one- and two-story wood-frame residential buildings, with larger mixed-use commercial buildings with flats above located along Railroad Avenue.[71] By the turn of the century, development, which was still concentrated along Railroad Avenue, extended northward to 5th (Evans) Avenue South.[72] The O'Neill & Haley tract immediately west of Railroad Avenue was still more densely settled than the South San Francisco Homestead & Railroad Association tract to the east, which still had

[67] Ibid., 32, 33, 57, 62, 87; A streetcar line running northwesterly along Teneriffe (Oakdale) Avenue to San Bruno Road (Avenue) appears on an 1897 Rand McNally Map of San Francisco (David Rumsey Map Collection, http://www.davidrumsey.com)..
[68] Ibid., 7, 42.
[69] Ibid., 59.
[70] Ibid., 64-65.
[71] Ibid., 8.
[72] Ibid., 63; Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1900.

a multitude of vacant parcels. The latter tract, which was still approximately one-third vacant lots as of 1915, was likely filled-in in the second half of the 1920s, when Bayview-Hunters Point, like most of the city's outlying areas, saw a significant boom in residential construction.[73]

Street Name Changes

The street names in Bayview-Hunters Point have been changed on multiple occasions. The original naming convention comes from the 1867 South San Francisco Homestead & Railroad Association subdivision map, on which the east-west avenues were numbered from 1st (Arthur) Avenue to 24th (Yosemite) Avenue, while the north-south streets were designated by letters of the alphabet, beginning with 'A' (Alvord) Street and terminating with 'S' (Selby) Street.[74] Around 1880, the U.S. Postal Service petitioned the San Francisco Board of Supervisors to change these street names to avoid confusion with the newly subdivided "Park District" (today's Sunset, Parkside, and Richmond districts), which used a similar system of numbered north-south avenues and east-west streets named for the letters of the alphabet. In response, avenues in South San Francisco were renamed after exotic geographic locales, such as Denmark (Burke), Bahama (Hudson), Servia (McKinnon), Teneriffe (Oakdale), Falkland (Palou) and Mauritius (Thomas) avenues. Meanwhile, the streets were renamed for American rivers, including Monongahela (Jennings), Platte (Lane), Tombigbee (Quint), and Potomac (Rankin) streets. Under this new convention, 14th (Newcomb) Avenue became Paraguay Avenue, and M (Mendell) Street became Yazoo Street. This rather grandiose renaming scheme was soon revised:

> Local residents never took kindly to the new names, finding them difficult to pronounce and most refused to use them in either conversation or for addressing correspondence. In September 1890, local residents successfully petitioned the Board of Supervisors to revert to the original nomenclature with the addition of the prefix "South" to distinguish between streets of the same name in South San Francisco and the Park District.[75]

Thus, from 1890 to 1909, the South San Francisco Opera House, though in its original and present location, was at the corner of 14th Avenue South and M Street South.

In December 1909, street names in the area were changed once again. In this new system, which remains largely intact today, both the east-west avenues and the north-south streets were named in alphabetical order for famous persons. Specifically, the east-west avenues were named for "American heroes," while the north-south streets were named for "local pioneers."[76] At the Opera House, 14th Avenue South became Newcomb Avenue and M Street South became Mendell Street. Based on a review of Sanborn Maps and Block Books for the area, Railroad Avenue was not renamed 3rd Street until a few years later, sometime between 1915 and 1924.

The Mid-century Transformation of Bayview-Hunters Point

At the outset of World War II, the Bayview-Hunters Point area was home to approximately 14,000 residents. By 1945, the population had ballooned to 43,000, as people from across America came to San Francisco to work in the Hunters Point Shipyard. The influx of workers also significantly changed the ethnic mix of the area. In 1940, Bayview-Hunters Point was

[73] Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1915; Kelley & VerPlanck, 86.
[74] Kelley & VerPlanck, 33.
[75] Ibid., 55.
[76] Ibid., 70-1.

overwhelmingly white, with a grand total of seven African-Americans counted among the 14,000 inhabitants. By 1945, approximately 20 percent of the population of Bayview-Hunters Point, or about 9,000 persons, were African-American. Thousands of makeshift apartments and dormitory units, most segregated by race, were built to house the war-time workers. The San Francisco Housing Authority assumed control of many of these units after the war. As post-war employment at the shipyard fell, many white workers were able to move to market-rate housing elsewhere, an option that, due to discriminatory practices in the private housing market, was open to few African-Americans. By the early 1950s, the converted war housing, occupied predominately by African-Americans, was overcrowded and deteriorating.[77]

A "sustained period of activism" by African-American residents grew out of dissatisfaction with this housing situation and, more generally, with the Bayview-Hunters Point ongoing neglect by the rest of the city.[78] Activist Gene K. Walker formed the Hunters Point Project Committee in the early 1950s to advocate for physical improvements throughout the district. In 1954, the Committee successfully lobbied the San Francisco Housing Authority to replace much of the temporary war-time housing with new public housing. Another of the Committee's first acts was to request $12,000 to buy and rehabilitate the South San Francisco Opera House, which was being used as a warehouse.[79] While the Committee did not ultimately buy the building, their efforts reflect the Opera House's recognized importance, despite years of non-public use, as a potential community center for the area.

The history of a second group, the Bayview Neighborhood Community Center, would prove to be more intimately connected with the Opera House. Founded in 1954, the Bayview Neighborhood Community Center moved into the South San Francisco Opera House in November of 1965, renting the building from owner Art Viargues for $1,000 a month.[80] In addition to a performance space, the Center used the Opera House to house an anti-poverty program and a group called the Neighborhood Youth Corps.[81]

Growing racial tensions in the area came to a head in the summer of 1966. On September 27, 1966, a 16-year-old African-American named Matthew Johnson was shot in the back by a white police officer as he fled from a car that had been reported stolen. Anger over the incident quickly escalated:

> After giving chase, the police officer claimed that he fired two shots in the air and one at the youth, but witnesses claim that he fired all three at Johnson. Johnson, who was shot in the back, died in a ditch on the north side of Navy Road on SFHA property. A crowd gathered at the scene while police investigators and medical personnel responded. Word of what happened spread and by that evening crowds of several hundred youth began roaming 3rd Street breaking shop windows, throwing bricks and Molotov cocktails at police, and looting stores. The first call to the police was from a store at 4917 3rd Street. Mindful of the Watts Riots, the SFPD instituted a curfew and closed all bars and liquor stores in the area. Following a night of disorder on the streets of Bayview-Hunters Point and the Fillmore, Police Chief Thomas Cahill requested Governor Edmund G. Brown to send 2,000 National

[77] Ibid., 97-99.
[78] Ibid., 104.
[79] Ibid., 104-105.
[80] Canter, "Old Opera House is Renovated." Prior to renting the building, Viargues had the roof repaired and some missing portions of the exterior molding replaced (Jordan).
[81] Canter.

Guard troops to San Francisco. With troops on the way, Cahill sent in more than 500 police armed with shotguns to stop the looting. At the request of local leaders, Mayor John Shelley and Police Chief Cahill attended a meeting at the Bayview Community Center to answer questions but they were quickly evacuated when bricks began flying. Following this incident, the police marched down 3rd Street firing live ammunition over the heads of the protesters, clearing 3rd Street of protesters from Newcomb to Palou.[82]

As the office of the Bayview Neighborhood Community Center, the South San Francisco Opera House was at the center of the next day's violence:

> The next day, on September 28, 1966, a crowd assembled at 3rd Street and Newcomb Avenue. The temperature was a record-breaking 86 degrees and the mood was tense. Around 11 AM, members of the crowd, which had grown to around 700, began throwing bottles and other objects at the police and at white motorists. With the situation clearly out of control, Chief Cahill requested back up. At 4:00 PM, tactical squads made up of police and highway patrolmen began blockading 3rd Street. After about an hour-and-a-half, while waiting for more back up, the combined forces began attempting to push the protesters south along 3rd Street. When they reached Newcomb Avenue, the police began taking rifle shots and Molotov cocktails from the windows of the Bayview Community Center. The police fired at the Community Center, silencing the gunshots. Seven people were injured by police gunfire. Meanwhile, the National Guard began marching north along 3rd Street with bayonets drawn.[83]

The Bayview Neighborhood Community Center remained in the building until 1967.[84] According to Owner Viargues, the tenant "damaged the building and didn't pay its rent," and he successfully won a case suing the Center for several thousand dollars of unpaid back rent.[85]

On May 27 and 29, 1968, the Western Opera Theatre, a company sponsored by the Equal Opportunities Council, performed the *Barber of Seville* and *La Boheme* at the Opera House. At the time, it was asserted that these were probably the first performances since the early twentieth century, and the first operas ever, to be held in the Opera House.[86]

Local Landmark Designation and City Ownership of the Opera House

At its July 10, 1968 meeting, the members of San Francisco's Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board (LPAB) passed a resolution recommending that the South San Francisco Opera House be designated a City Landmark.[87] This recommendation was approved by the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors, and the Opera House became City of San Francisco Landmark No. 8 on October 28, 1968.

The LPAB's effort to landmark the Opera House, which began in late 1967, had been driven in part by fears that the building, which had recently been vandalized and the site of an arson attempt, was in danger of being irreparably

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[82] Kelley & VerPlanck, 116.
[83] Ibid., 117.
[84] Rinear, 14.
[85] "South SF Opera House Renewal"; Rinear, 14.
[86] "The History of Bayview Opera House," Victorian Alliance Newsletter.
[87] The Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board was formed in 1967, and had identified 34 landmarks in San Francisco by 1970.

harmed.[88] LPAB members explored the possibility of having the Opera House moved to a safer area of the city, and conferred with several city departments and related institutions, including the Parks and Recreation Department, the Port of San Francisco, the San Francisco Maritime Museum, and San Francisco City College, to see if any of these bodies were interested in relocating and making use of the building. The only positive response came in the spring of 1968 from the City College drama department, which expressed an interest in moving the building to its campus (at an estimated cost of $60,000 to $65,000) and using it as a theater.[89] By June 1968, however, City College was no longer interested in obtaining the building, as Opera House owner Viargues had entered into a long-term lease with a new tenant and was apparently no longer interested in having the building moved.[90]

The new tenant was the San Francisco Youth Organizers, a group of African-American longshoremen who reopened the building as the "Opera House Cinema" on August 23, 1968 with a showing of "Cool Hand Luke."[91] In addition to movies, the building was to be used for "various community projects and activities including dances, tutorial programs and counseling."[92] Within a year of the Opera House becoming a City Landmark, however, the San Francisco Planning Department, in its South Bayshore Plan, recommended that the City purchase the property. Once this component of the South Bayshore Plan became common knowledge, Viargues was unable to find tenants to replace the departed San Francisco Youth Organizers, and the building was vacant.[93]

By September of 1969, the City had received preliminary approval of $140,530 in federal historic preservation and open space grants (to be matched dollar-for-dollar by the City) for purchasing and restoring the South San Francisco Opera House.[94] Specifically, the City's plan was to purchase the Opera House and adjacent Masonic Hall; restore and preserve the Opera House; demolish the Masonic Hall; and develop an urban plaza on the Masonic Hall's former site. The City of San Francisco bought the property from Arthur Viargues for $150,000 in December 1971.[95] The south end of the block, which was also purchased by the city, was cleared of several buildings that had previously been used for offices, car repair and storage, leaving only the Opera House and Masonic Hall on the block.[96]

Demolition of the Masonic Hall was complete by May 30, 1975.[97] Unlike the Opera House, the exterior of the Masonic Hall had been significantly altered over time, including addition of stucco cladding. According to a planning department official in 1974, the building was torn down because it was uneconomical to rehabilitate it.[98]

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[88] LPAB meeting minutes, September 13, 1967; October 11, 1967; and November 15, 1967.
[89] LPAB meeting minutes, April 10, 1968; April 24, 1968.
[90] LPAB meeting minutes, June 26, 1968. Before leasing to the San Francisco Youth Organizers, Viargues had turned down an offer to lease his land to Shell Oil Company ("South SF Opera House Renewal").
[91] "South SF Opera House Renewal"; "Glory Days Return At Old Opera House."
[92] "Glory Days Return At Old Opera House."
[93] LPAB meeting minutes, September 24, 1969.
[94] "Preliminary OK: U.S. Money for Old Opera House"; LPAB Minutes, January 7, 1970.
[95] Brill.
[96] The 1915 Sanborn Map of the area shows a two-story dwelling with detached garage and a hay and grain storage facility on the southern portion of the block. By the 1951 Sanborn Map, these structures had been replaced by a reinforced concrete car repair garage with concrete floor and wood posts.
[97] Department of Building Inspection, Permit No. 10582, May 15, 1975. The demolition was done by William McIntosh & Son, 633 Texas Street, San Francisco.

The South San Francisco Opera House Rehabilitation and Improvement Plan submitted to the LPAB in April 1974 makes it clear that the project was as much about restoring the Opera House's historic role as an important community center as preserving the building's historic materials. According to the Planning Department, "[w]hile the restoration program is sensitive to its architectural heritage, the intention of the proposal is to develop a viable community center for visual and performing arts rather than an architectural museum piece."[99] As such, the project was also consistent with the recently completed South Bayshore element of the Master Plan, which indicated that portion of 3rd Street near the Opera House would be the preferred location for the development of a community center.

The project was approved by the LPAB in June of 1974 and begun later that year.[100] The project budget, financed by the federal and city governments, had grown to $800,000.[101] The City retained San Francisco architects Gerson/Overstreet to oversee the rehabilitation, which included seismic strengthening of the Opera House and addition of an entrance platform along the building's west side (which had previously adjoined the Masonic Hall).[102] As part of the project, Mendell Street was closed to vehicular traffic between Newcomb and Oakdale Avenues, as it remains today.[103] The project was completed in the summer of 1977.[104]

In conjunction with the building's rehabilitation, the Opera House was transferred to the San Francisco Art Commission in 1976, for incorporation into its Neighborhood Arts Program as a community theater for the Bayview-Hunters Point neighborhood.[105] The building remains under the jurisdiction of the San Francisco Arts Commission today.

In 1995, the Board of Supervisors renamed the building the Bayview Opera House Ruth Williams Memorial Theater in honor of the woman "who virtually saved it from demolition" thirty years before.[106] A longtime advocate for the Bayview-Hunters Point area, Williams had raised money to hire African-American architect Harry Overstreet to renovate and restore the building in the wake of the 1966 violence. She had also testified before the U.S. Senate in the 1970s on the need for ongoing economic development in Bayview-Hunters Point, "which community members say led to millions in Housing and Urban development funds."[107] In addition to being an activist, Williams founded the Bayview Repertory Theatre Company and wrote and produced 37 plays and musicals at the Bayview Opera House and other city venues.[108] As both an engaged community member and a respected artist, she serves as the perfect namesake for the South San Francisco Opera House.

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[98] "City landmark will be restored."
[99] "South San Francisco Opera House Rehabilitation and Improvement Plan."
[100] "Landmark Opera House Plans OKd."
[101] Ibid.
[102] Department of Building Inspection, Permit No. 397092, May 21, 1974.
[103] "South San Francisco Opera House Rehabilitation and Improvement Plan."
[104] Department of Building Inspection, Permit No. 397092, May 21, 1974.
[105] Wong, "Bayview Opera has grand plans," B-4; Brill.
[106] Lewis, "Opera house to bear name of its savior."
[107] Ibid.; Kelley & VerPlanck, 122.
[108] Lewis.

PRIMARY LOCATION OF ADDITIONAL DATA

North Baker Research Library, California Historical Society

Performing Arts Library, San Francisco Museum of Performance and Design

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INDEX OF FIGURES

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO OPERA HOUSE
San Francisco, CA
From the collection of The Foundation for San Francisco's Architectural Heritage
Date: circa 1888
Exterior – Architectural drawing, South San Francisco Opera House and Masonic Hall, Henry Geilfuss; looking south
Figure 1 of 9

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO OPERA HOUSE
San Francisco, CA
From the collection of The Foundation for San Francisco's Architectural Heritage
Date: circa 1888
Exterior – Architectural drawing, South San Francisco Opera House, Henry Geilfuss; looking south
Figure 2 of 9

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO OPERA HOUSE
San Francisco, CA
From the collection of the Bayview Opera House, Inc., photographer unknown
Date: 1920
Interior – View of auditorium, South San Francisco Masonic Lodge No. 212's Fiftieth Anniversary celebration; looking southwest
Figure 3 of 9

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO OPERA HOUSE
San Francisco, CA
From the collection of the San Francisco Public Library, photographer unknown
Date: 1941
Exterior – View of entrance, north façade; looking south
Figure 4 of 9

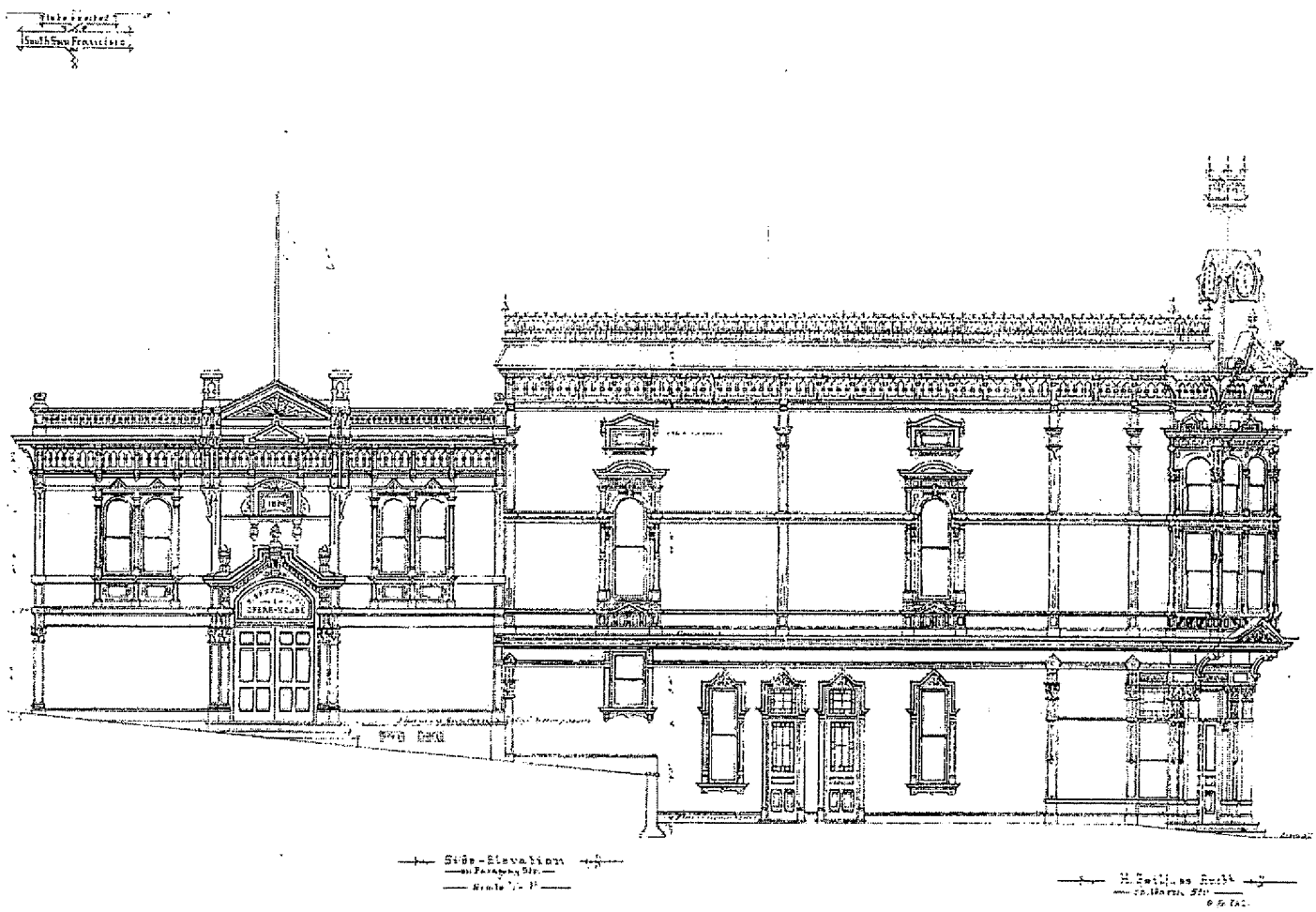
SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO OPERA HOUSE
San Francisco, CA
From the collection of the San Francisco Public Library, photographer unknown
Date: circa 1950
Exterior - View of east and north façades of the Opera House, with the now demolished Masonic Hall to the right; looking southwest
Figure 5 of 9

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO OPERA HOUSE
San Francisco, CA
Photographer: From the collection of the San Francisco Planning Department, photographer unknown
Date: circa 1968
Description: Exterior – View of north façade; looking south
Figure 6 of 9

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO OPERA HOUSE
San Francisco, CA
Photographer: From the collection of the San Francisco Planning Department, photographer unknown
Date: circa 1968
Description: Exterior– View of east and north façades of the Opera House, with the now demolished Masonic Hall to the far right; looking west
Figure 7 of 9

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO OPERA HOUSE
San Francisco, CA
Photographer: From the collection of the San Francisco Planning Department, photographer unknown
Date: circa 1968
Description: Exterior – View of north façade; looking south
Figure 8 of 9

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO OPERA HOUSE
San Francisco, CA
Photographer: From the collection of the Performing Arts Library, San Francisco Museum of Performance & Design, photographer unknown
Date: 1970
Description: Exterior – View of north façades of Opera House and now demolished Masonic Hall; looking southwest
Figure 9 of 9



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Date: circa 1888
Exterior – Architectural drawing, South San Francisco Opera House and Masonic Hall, Henry Geilfuss; looking south
Figure 1 of 9

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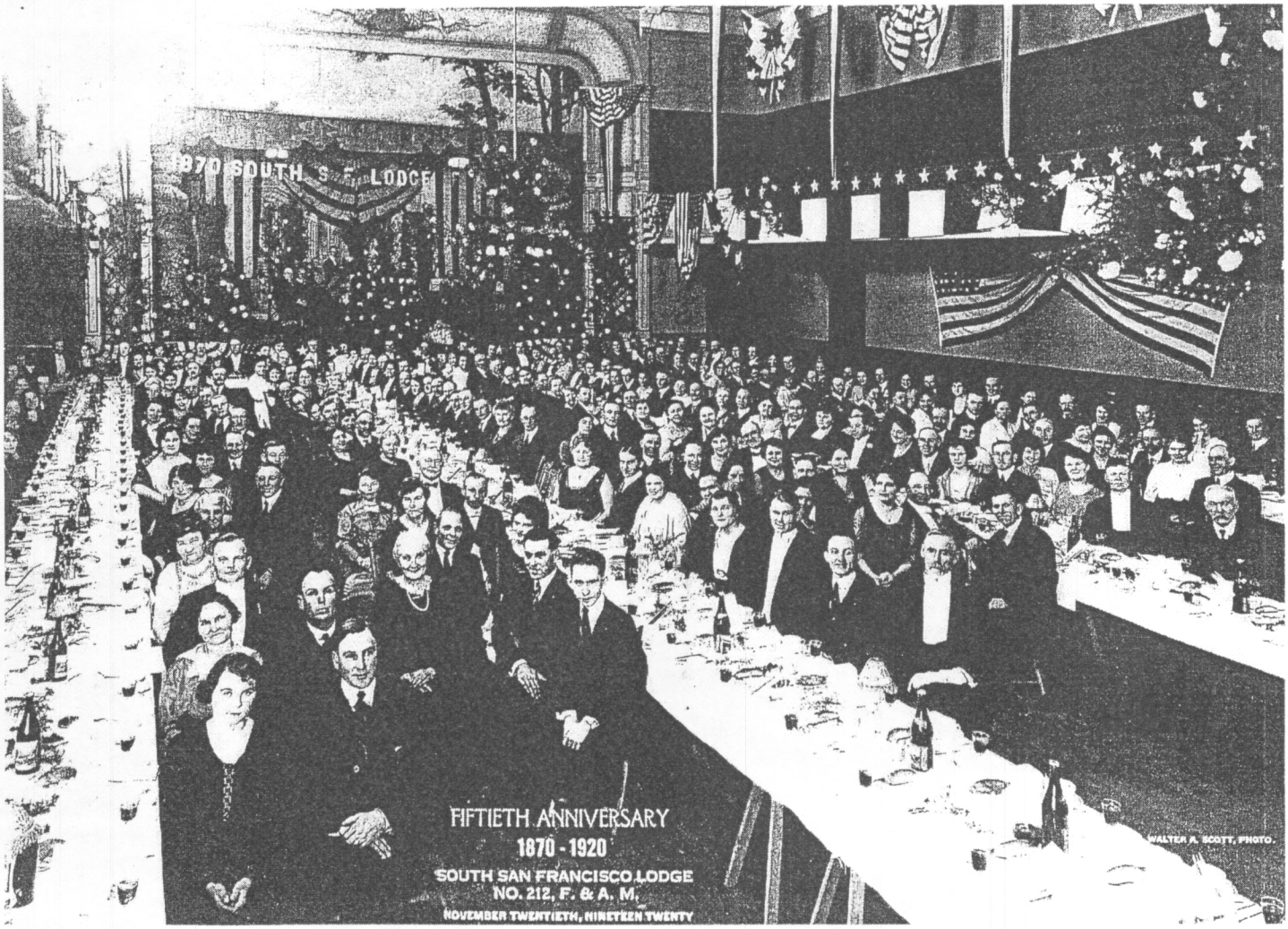
Date: circa 1888
Exterior – Architectural drawing, South San Francisco Opera House, Henry Geilfuss; looking south
Figure 2 of 9



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Interior – View of auditorium, South San Francisco Masonic Lodge No. 212's Fiftieth Anniversary celebration; looking southwest
Figure 3 of 9

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO OPERA HOUSE
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From the collection of the San Francisco Public Library, photographer unknown
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Exterior – View of entrance, north façade; looking south
Figure 4 of 9

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO OPERA HOUSE
San Francisco, CA
From the collection of the San Francisco Public Library, photographer unknown
Date: circa 1950
Exterior - View of east and north façades of the Opera House, with the now demolished Masonic Hall to the right; looking southwest
Figure 5 of 9

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO OPERA HOUSE
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Date: circa 1968
Description: Exterior – View of north façade; looking south
Figure 6 of 9

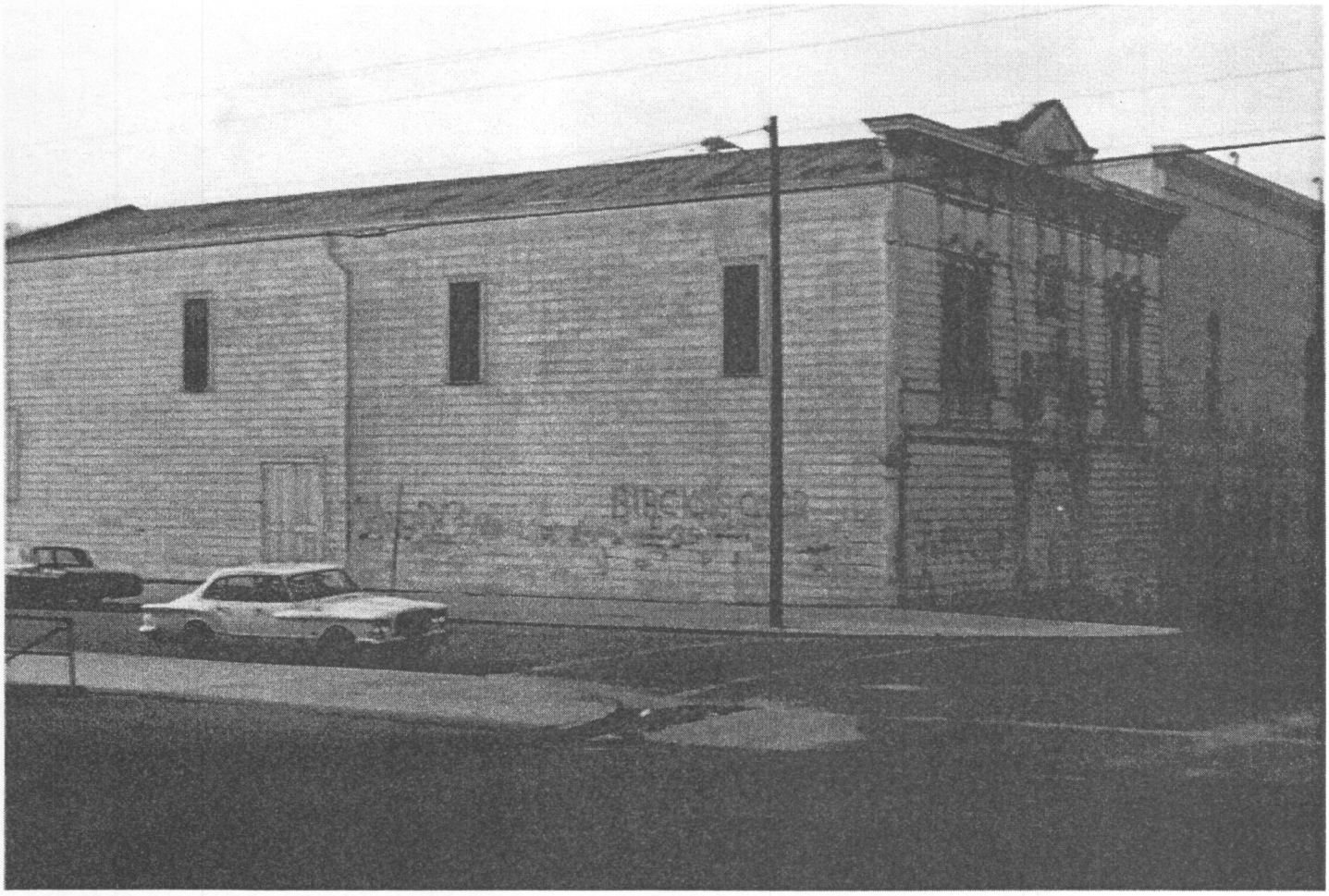

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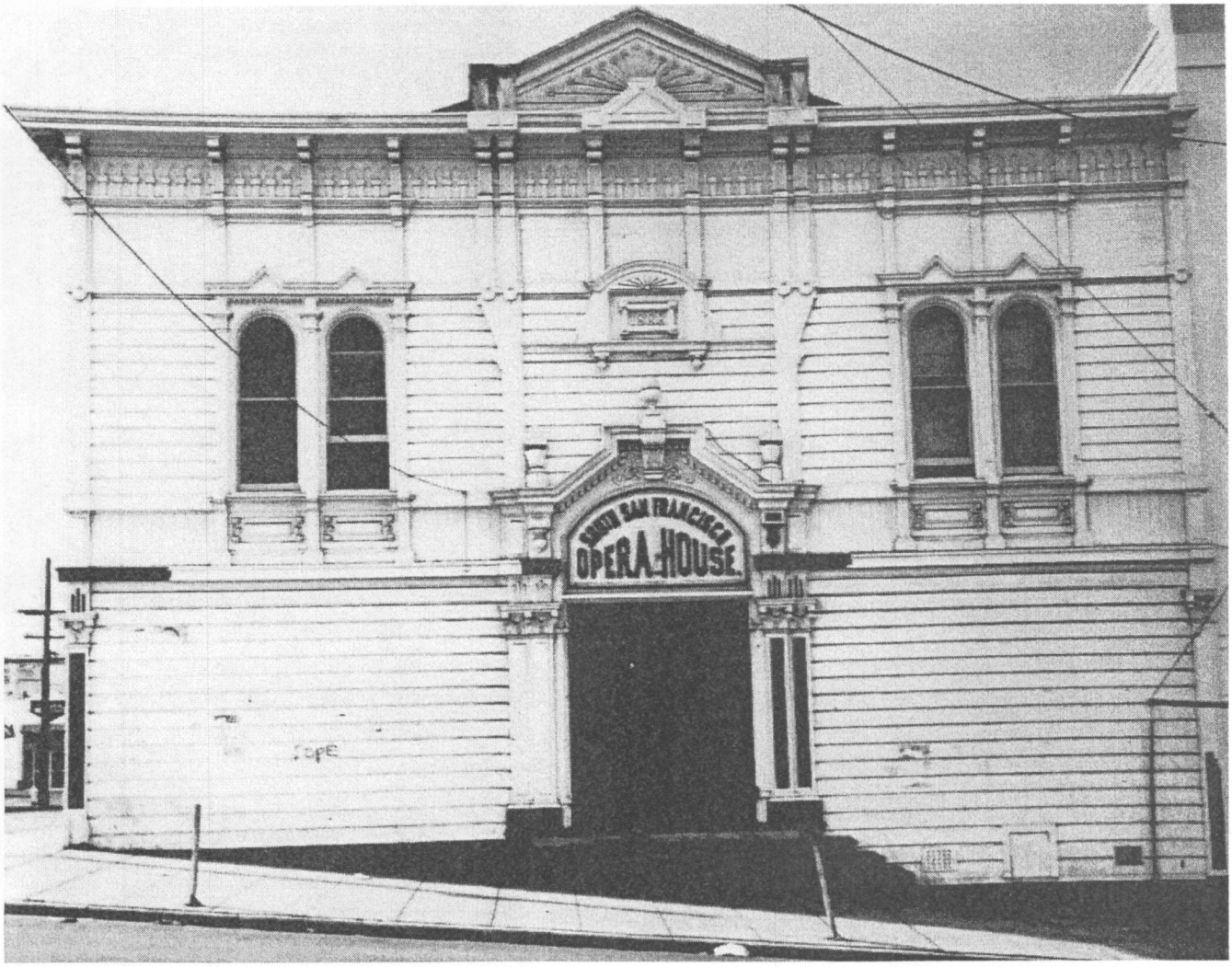
Figure 7 of 9



SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO OPERA HOUSE
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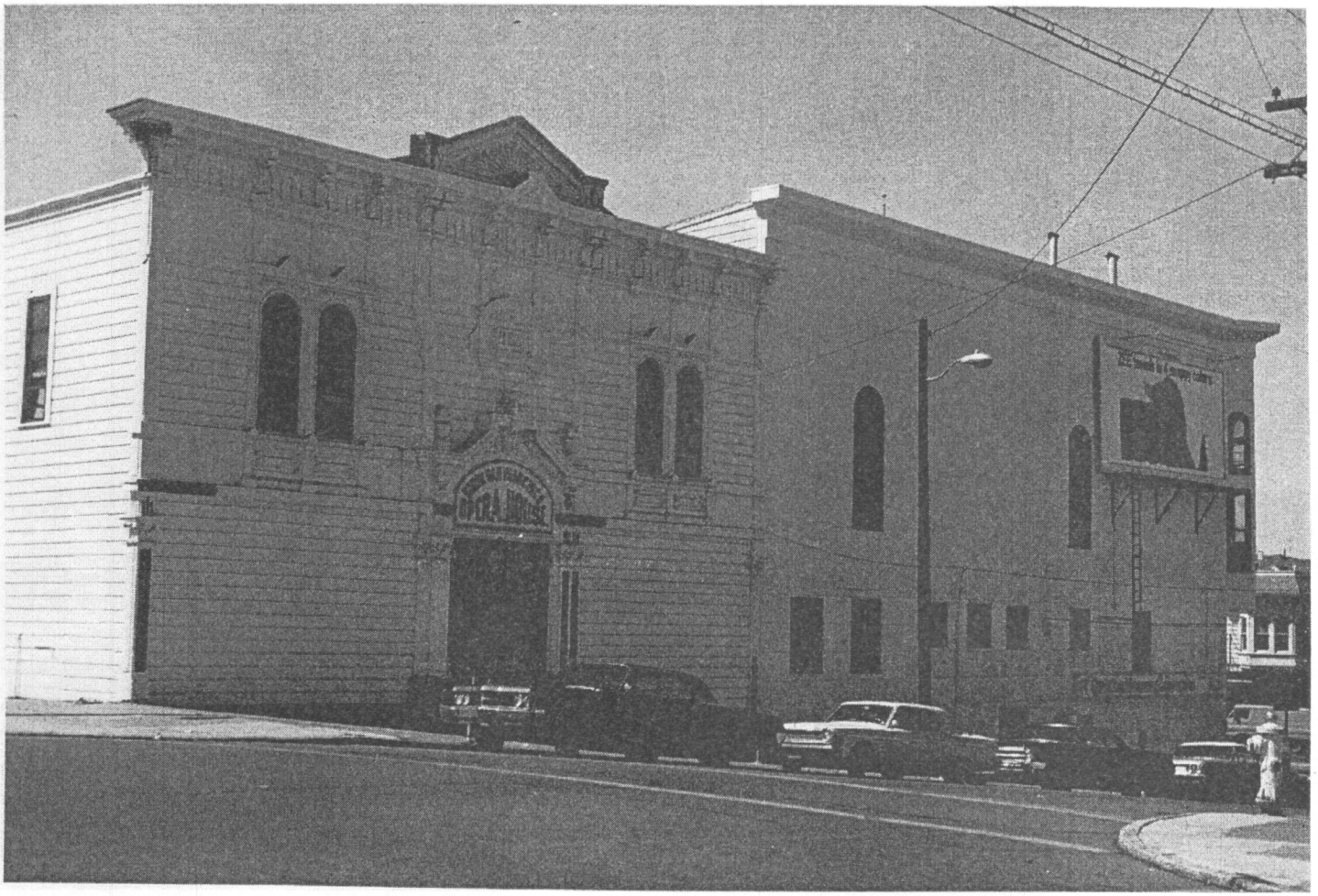
Date: circa 1968
Description: Exterior – View of north façade; looking south
Figure 8 of 9



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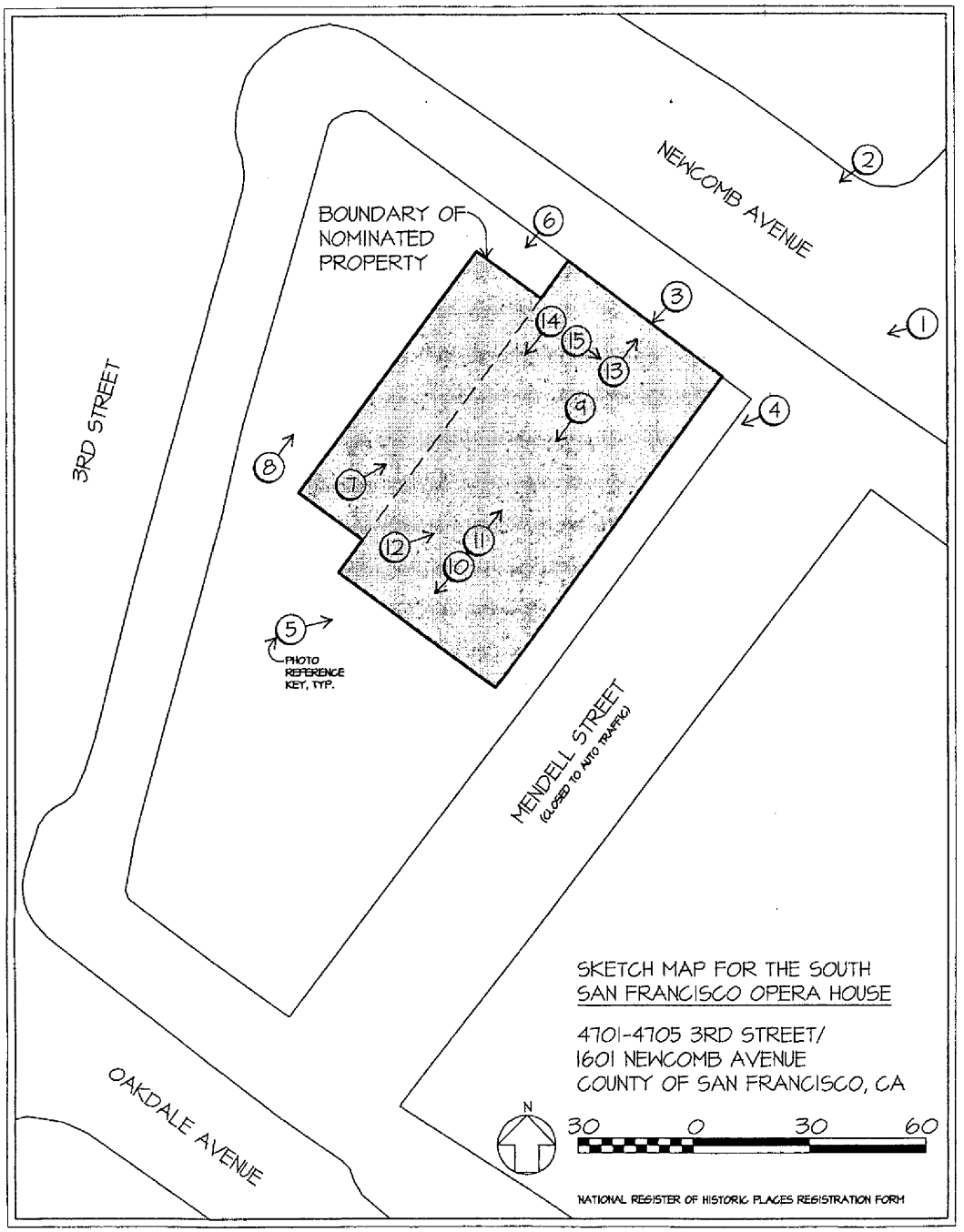
Description: Exterior – View of north façades of Opera House and now demolished Masonic Hall; looking southwest
Figure 9 of 9


NEWCOMB AVENUE
BOUNDARY OF NOMINATED PROPERTY
3RD STREET
MENDELL STREET
(CLOSED TO AUTO TRAFFIC)
OAKDALE AVENUE
PHOTO REFERENCE KEY, TYP.
SKETCH MAP FOR THE SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO OPERA HOUSE
4701-4705 3RD STREET/
1601 NEWCOMB AVENUE
COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO, CA
N
30 0 30 60
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

PHOTOGRAPHY LABELS

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO OPERA HOUSE
San Francisco, CA
Photographer: Matthew Davis, Architectural Resources Group
Date: July 2010
Description: Exterior – View of east and north façades; looking southwest
Photograph 1 of 15

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO OPERA HOUSE
San Francisco, CA
Photographer: Matthew Davis, Architectural Resources Group
Date: July 2010
Description: Exterior – View of north façade; looking south
Photograph 2 of 15

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO OPERA HOUSE
San Francisco, CA
Photographer: Matthew Davis, Architectural Resources Group
Date: July 2010
Description: Exterior – View of pediment and date plate, north façade; looking south
Photograph 3 of 15

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO OPERA HOUSE
San Francisco, CA
Photographer: Matthew Davis, Architectural Resources Group
Date: July 2010
Description: Exterior – View of east façade; looking southwest
Photograph 4 of 15

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO OPERA HOUSE
San Francisco, CA
Photographer: Matthew Davis, Architectural Resources Group
Date: July 2010
Description: Exterior – View of south façade; looking north
Photograph 5 of 15

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO OPERA HOUSE
San Francisco, CA
Photographer: Katherine Petrin, Architectural Resources Group
Date: July 2010
Description: Exterior – View of 1970s addition to west wall; looking south
Photograph 6 of 15

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO OPERA HOUSE
San Francisco, CA
Photographer: Matthew Davis, Architectural Resources Group
Date: July 2010
Description: Exterior – View of 1970s addition to west wall; looking northeast
Photograph 7 of 15

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO OPERA HOUSE
San Francisco, CA
Photographer: Katherine Petrin, Architectural Resources Group
Date: July 2010
Description: Site – View of plaza immediately west of Opera House; looking north
Photograph 8 of 15

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO OPERA HOUSE
San Francisco, CA
Photographer: Katherine Petrin, Architectural Resources Group
Date: July 2010
Description: Interior – View of auditorium, including stage, proscenium and balcony; looking south
Photograph 9 of 15

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO OPERA HOUSE
San Francisco, CA
Photographer: Katherine Petrin, Architectural Resources Group
Date: July 2010
Description: Interior – View of stage and proscenium; looking south
Photograph 10 of 15

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO OPERA HOUSE
San Francisco, CA
Photographer: Katherine Petrin, Architectural Resources Group
Date: July 2010
Description: Interior – View of auditorium, including wainscoting, balcony and mezzanine; looking north
Photograph 11 of 15

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO OPERA HOUSE
San Francisco, CA
Photographer: Katherine Petrin, Architectural Resources Group
Date: July 2010
Description: Interior – view of auditorium, including wainscoting, balcony and the three east-wall windows; looking northeast
Photograph 12 of 15

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO OPERA HOUSE
San Francisco, CA
Photographer: Katherine Petrin, Architectural Resources Group
Date: July 2010
Description: Interior – View of wood paneled doors at main entrance; looking north
Photograph 13 of 15

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO OPERA HOUSE
San Francisco, CA
Photographer: Katherine Petrin, Architectural Resources Group
Date: July 2010
Description: Interior – View of balcony along west wall; looking south
Photograph 14 of 15

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO OPERA HOUSE
San Francisco, CA
Photographer: Matthew Davis, Architectural Resources Group
Date: July 2010
Description: Interior – View of balcony along mezzanine at north end of auditorium; looking east
Photograph 15 of 15

1888
SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO
OPERA HOUSE

1888
SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO
OPERA HOUSE
STOP

1888
SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO
OPERA HOUSE.

TRASH

EXIT

EXIT

Men
EXIT
Women
Emergency
Exit ONLY
Emergency
Exit ONLY