



# DRAFT LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT



## Swedish American Hall 2168-2174 Market Street

Draft Article 10 Landmark Designation Report submitted to the Historic Preservation Commission, March 4, 2015

City and County of San Francisco  
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Landmark No.  
**XXX**

Cover: Swedish American Hall, 2013.

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

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

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# Swedish American Hall

## 2168-2174 Market Street

**Built:** 1907  
**Architect:** August Nordin  
**Builder:** Andrew Olson

### OVERVIEW

The Swedish American Hall at 2168-2174 Market Street (APN 3542/017) is a combination social hall and commercial building constructed in 1907. It is located in San Francisco's Upper Market area, within the Upper Market Neighborhood Commercial Transit zoning district and the California Register-eligible Upper Market Street Commercial Historic District. Completed a year after the 1906 Earthquake and Fire, the building is the most significant extant building associated with San Francisco's Swedish community, and is also emblematic of the development of a larger Scandinavian enclave in the Mission Dolores and Upper Market area at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Indeed, the building's location was central to the city's Scandinavian population, as evidenced by the nearby construction of a number of cultural institutions, including the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Ebenezer Church at 15<sup>th</sup> and Dolores (1904), and St. Ansgar's Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church at 152 Church Street (1905).<sup>1</sup> Since its construction the building has served as the home of the Swedish Society of San Francisco, founded in 1875, while also providing a meeting place for scores of fraternal and social organizations related to San Francisco's Scandinavian community.

The building is also architecturally significant as an embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, and method of construction, as well as for being an architecturally significant work of master architect, August Nordin. The building's architectural finishes are unusually fine and demonstrate a superior level of craftsmanship. The building's exterior employs a rich palate of materials and ornament which conveys an unusually strong street presence commensurate with its use as a public meeting hall. The interior includes a number of lodge rooms that also feature superior detailing and are individualized such that each has its own distinctive identity, while remaining harmonious within the overall composition. The building's largest public assembly space, Freja Hall, features highly ornamental finishes and soaring truss work that rank it among the finest expressions of the Arts & Crafts style in California. The building survives with relatively few alterations from its original design, and retains an outstanding level of architectural integrity.

Adding weight to its significance is the building's outstanding level of preservation. Other than its storefronts, the building has experienced relatively few alterations to its character-defining features and retains a high degree of physical integrity.

Note that the photos in this document were taken in November 2013 and February 2014, just before a major rehabilitation project was undertaken. This project, now nearing completion, is designed to insert a new restaurant within the building, as well as renovate the Cafe Du Nord. The work included inserting a new ADA accessible elevator, reconfiguring the interior partitions and finishes of the two, previously altered, commercial storefront spaces, as well as reconfiguring a non-historic kitchen space on the second floor. Changes were also made to the vestibule area for Freja Hall, and several bathrooms were relocated or upgraded.

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<sup>1</sup> Edward Martinus Stensrud, *The Lutheran Church and California*, (San Francisco: E. M. Stensrud, 1916), 73-75.

# BUILDING DESCRIPTION



Known throughout its history as the Swedish American Hall, 2168-2174 Market Street is a three-story-over-basement (plus mezzanine), wood frame, commercial and public assembly building located along the north side of Market Street between Church Street and Sanchez Street (APN 3542/017). Designed with a blend of Scandinavian and Arts & Crafts influences, the cornerstone was laid in July 1907 and the building was formally dedicated in December 1907. The Swedish American Hall is rectangular in plan, clad predominately with unpainted wood shingles on its primary façade, and clad with wood rustic channel siding on its secondary facades. The building is capped by two roof sections which differ in height. The front of the building features twin gables piercing a flat-roofed section. The rear section is lower in height and includes a shallow gable roof with twin skylights crowning a double-height interior hall. A non-historic metal fire escape is affixed to the center of the building, with landings at the second and third floors, as well as a ladder to the roof.

### Primary Façade

The primary façade faces southeast onto Market Street and is three bays wide. The first story is clad with polychrome brick with clinker brick accents laid in a Flemish bond and includes the primary entrance to the Swedish American Hall at the west end. This entry features a shallow brick arch flanked by large wooden brackets and truss work supporting a gable hood with notched rafter tails and scalloped barge boards. A non-original copper light fixture hangs from the central purlin of the gable hood, while wooden dimensional letters reading “Swedish American Hall” are affixed to the base of the truss. To the left of this entry is a pink-colored cornerstone stating “Erected by the Swedish Society 1907.” An iron security gate screens the entry vestibule, which includes polychrome terrazzo

flooring with a yellow field surrounded by borders of green and brown. An additional, non-original hooded copper light fixture hangs from the center of the vestibule ceiling.

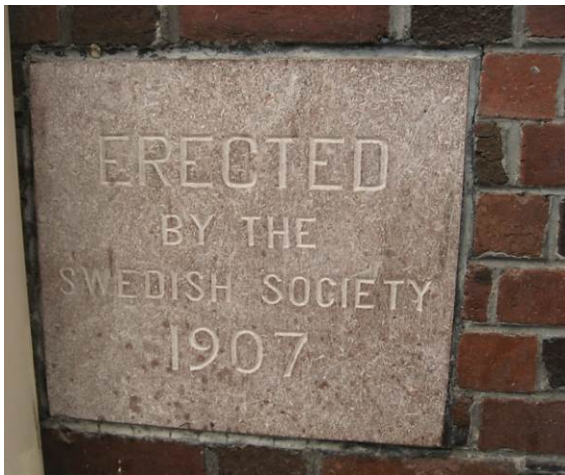
West of the main entry are two storefronts divided by the entrance to the Cafe Du Nord. Both of the storefronts feature non-historic multi-light windows. The western storefront includes a brick stoop and a multi-light pedestrian door at its west end. It is framed by flat board trim. The eastern storefront is similarly configured, although the brick at the base of the windows does not appear original. The Cafe du Nord entrance is screened by a wrought iron security gate and features a recessed entry vestibule with a terrazzo threshold. The terrazzo field is yellow, with green terrazzo letters reading "Cafe Du Nord." Beyond are wood double doors with diamond-light glazing leading to a stairway which runs down to access the café. An aluminum and fabric awning crowns the Cafe entry, while above a black and white porcelain neon sign also reads "Cafe Du Nord." The sides of the entry are flanked by non-historic metal and glass sign boxes.



*Gable hood above the main entrance to the hall*



*View of the storefronts. Note the non-historic brick cladding beneath the storefront window at right*



*Detail of cornerstone*



*Detail of terrazzo threshold at the main entry*

The upper floors are dominated by a massive bay window at the center of the second floor, rising to a pair of twin gables featuring massive scalloped barge boards and twin finials. At the second floor level, the bay window features double-height, double-hung wood windows with leaded sixteen-over-sixteen light sashes. The windows are set within a paneled wood surround and crowned with individual, single-light transoms. To the west, a small beveled bay window with double-hung, twelve-over-twelve light wood-sash windows is located above the gable hood of the

main entry. This bay window is capped by a hip-roofed hood with shaped rafter tails, while above is another double-hung wood window with a flat board sill. At the east end of the second story is a Tudor-arch window with nailhead trim returns. It features twin, double-height, double-hung sixteen-over-sixteen leaded glass lights, with a flat board base accented by nailhead wood trim.

The third story includes four, double-hung sixteen-over-sixteen leaded glass windows at center, with a massive sill resting on nailhead blocks. At the center of these windows is a pilaster crowned with a lantern capital, while above is one of three notched wooden brackets resting beneath the barge boards. Flanking the base of these windows are two projecting metal flagpoles with ball finials. The gable ends are flanked by two dormer windows featuring gable hoods with scalloped barge boards. Each dormer is clad with wood shingles and includes a double-hung, wood-sash window with leaded glass diamond lights. Above the windows is a depressed arch header crowned with a branching "W" of flat board trim. Beneath these dormers is a side-gable roof element with rounded and notched rafter tails. The façade terminates in a parapet with tabs at the east and west ends crowned by metal flagpoles.



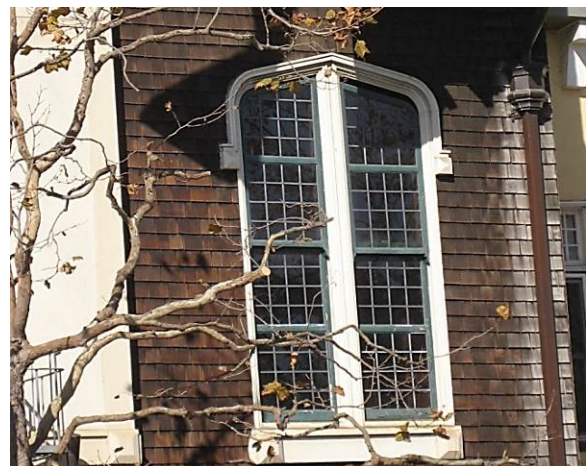
*Gable dormer at the west end of the roof.*



*Detail of the barge boards and shadow lines*



*Detail of trim work on the upper facade*



*Detail of arched window*

### **West & Rear Facades**

The west facade of the Swedish American Hall faces Sanchez Street. Until recently, it included two light wells toward Market Street, one of which was removed in 2014 for the construction of an ADA elevator. A large freestanding billboard in this area was also removed in 2014 to accommodate construction of a new residential building on the

adjacent lot. The southernmost light well begins at the second story level and includes a double-hung, one-over-one wood-sash windows with flat board trim at the second, mezzanine and third story levels. Leaded art glass wood windows providing illumination for the main interior staircase also face south onto this light well. Metal conduits are likewise located within the light well. The northern light, since removed, included double hung, wood sash windows, including leaded art glass lights at the mezzanine level.

The rear façade of the building features irregular massing, with an L-shaped projection supported on wood posts at the center. A metal vent runs along the east end of the rear elevation, while a fire escape is located at the west end. The ground floor level is enclosed by metal and wooden fencing and includes double wood doors at the west end which provides egress from an interior kitchen. A paneled wood door with two leaded glass lights is located at the second floor level and provides egress from a main hall to a metal fire escape. Visible fenestration includes a band of three single-light wood windows with flat board at both the east and west ends of the second floor. Within the main hall, these windows have been blocked off with removable panels. The rear façade terminates in a stepped parapet with center tab.



*View of the west and rear (north) facades*

### **Entry Hall**

The main entry hall is accessed from the exterior vestibule through a pair of fully-glazed wooden doors with narrow sidelights and a fixed transom. Immediately to the left in the entry hall is a carpeted wood stair featuring a board and batten wainscot on the exterior wall, and a decorative screen railing on the interior side featuring a pierced teardrop motif. The newel post is painted white and includes an incised floral motif. The newel post cap and the handrail topping the screen are both stained wood. These finish details are used on this stair at all levels of the building.

The entry hall features wood flooring with a stained rectangular border immediately in front of the stair. The walls in the hall feature a tall board-and-batten wainscot. Many of the wainscot panels feature a cladding material that appears to be a version of “leather paper,” a relief wall covering designed to copy the grain and patterns of antique leather. Leather paper and other embossed wall coverings, such as “Lincrusta” (a linoleum like product), were among the most popular wall coverings from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century through the 1920s.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Smithsonian Institution National Museum of Design, *Wallpaper in the Collection of the Cooper-Hewitt Museum*, (Eastern Press, 1981), 26-27.

Beyond the stair to the left is a vestibule featuring a non-historic bar island. The north wall of this vestibule includes a storage closet, which in 2014 was being converted to an elevator shaft. The elevator shaft was originally designed for this location, but not built. The south wall of the vestibule includes a paneled wood door which provides access to a wooden staircase leading down to a basement mechanical room.

Continuing down the hall, a woman's restroom is located along the west wall, while a storage closet and unisex restroom are located along the east wall. Beyond the women's restroom is a wooden staircase which runs down in a quarter turn to access a back of house area for the Cafe Du Nord. The upper staircase landing features a newel post and decorative screen railing identical to that used for the main stair. The upper walls of the stair enclosure feature board and batten panels with leather paper cladding.



*View of main entry doors and entry lobby.*



*Detail of the staircase.*



*View south along the entry hall. Note the visual connection to the former store at 2172 Market Street at right.*



*Detail of the leather paper wall cladding*



### **Odin Lodge Room (First Floor)**

Opposite a set of stairs near the north end of the main entry hallway is a small vestibule with an angled doorway leading to the Odin lodge room. A tall stained wood board-and-batten wainscot wraps the room and features nailhead trim blocks crowning the battens beneath the rail. The ceiling features boxed-beam detailing and is supported by two metal columns which divide the center of the room into thirds. Where the box beams meet the wall they join with decorative piers crowned with scalloped and notched wooden brackets. The upper wall features a continuous band of flat board crown molding with a bullnose detail. The floors are wood and feature a stained grid pattern. The north end of the room is fenestrated at the east and west ends with three double-hung wood windows. These windows feature textured glazing with a floral pattern in the upper sash and a wave pattern in the lower sash. A paneled wood door is located near the northwest corner of the room and accesses an adjacent kitchen. Lighting is provided by half-round hanging fixtures and sconces attached to the perimeter piers.



*View of the Odin lodge room. The windows look out to the rear of the lot.*



*Detail of trim work in the first floor meeting room.*



*Detail of window glazing in the first floor meeting room*

## Freja Hall (Second Floor)



*View east across Freja Hall showing trusses and trim work.  
Note the staircase leading to the balcony level at lower right.*

Located at the north end of the second story, Freja Hall is the principal interior room of the building and the focus of its most lavish ornamentation. Its elaborate wood trusses and spectacular trim work mark it as among the finest expressions of the Arts & Crafts style in California. Occupying the entire north end of the second story, this double height space, measuring approximately 51 feet deep by 48 feet wide, is crowned with a series of three massive wooden trusses interlaced with knotted X-braces. These trusses span the entire east-west length of the hall and are connected to smaller north-south braces at the rear of the hall above the balcony. The exterior perimeter of the balcony, as well as a staircase at the southeast end of the hall, both feature stained wood fretwork set against a field of red. This color scheme was reinforced by two pairs of steel-frame, red-glazed skylights (recently replaced with clear glazing) located near the center of the room flanking the roof ridge. Mechanical lighting is provided by pendant lights hanging from the trusses and beneath the balcony. The ceiling consists of white-painted exposed rafters and diagonal board sheathing.

The lower portion of Freja Hall features a wooden floor (re-stained in 2015) with raised wooden platforms approximately three feet wide along the east and west walls, and an approximately five-foot-wide platform along the north wall. The walls themselves are wrapped by a tall stained wood board-and-batten wainscot with nailhead trim blocks crowning the battens beneath the rail. There are three entry points at the south end of the room beneath the balcony. The primary entrance is accessed via a vestibule and coat check area at the southwest end of the hall and features a pair of original, paneled wood doors. A second entry is located near the southeast end of the hall and includes a paneled wood door accessing an ante room and hallway to the Balder lodge room. Near the center of the south end of the hall is a paneled wood door with textured glass glazing in the upper panel. This door accesses a storage area adjacent to the coat check area.



*View south across Freja Hall showing entries beneath the balcony.*



*View west in Freja Hall.*

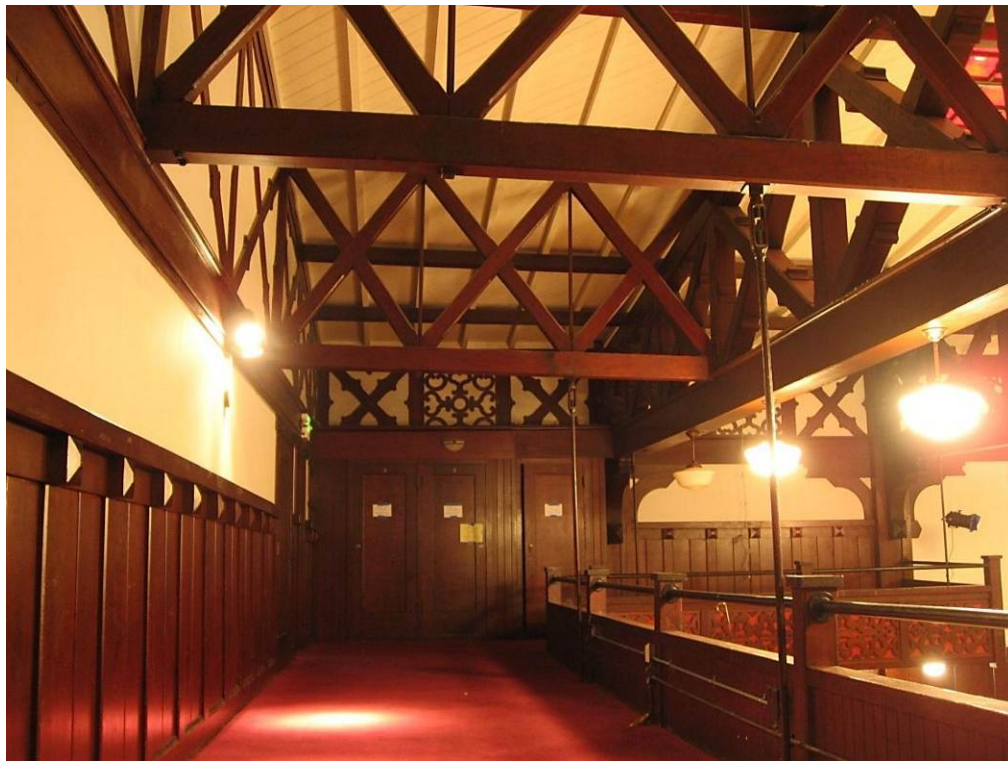
The focal point of the room is the stage along the north wall, which features a stepped maple platform and a proscenium framed by darkly-stained wood posts, oversized brackets and nailhead trim. To the right (east) of the stage is a paneled wood door partially glazed with two “bullseye” lights which accesses a small dressing room. To the left (west) of the stage is a partially glazed wood door with panic hardware providing access to a rear fire escape. Other notable features of the lower portion of Freja Hall include a paneled enclosure near the southwest corner with a leaded glass window featuring circular green-tinted lights. There are also a series of cast iron radiators with embossed floral ornament, including two radiators flanking the stage, a radiator near the southwest end of the room, and a radiator along both the east and west walls. These radiators include eleven fins and feature embossed floral ornamentation.



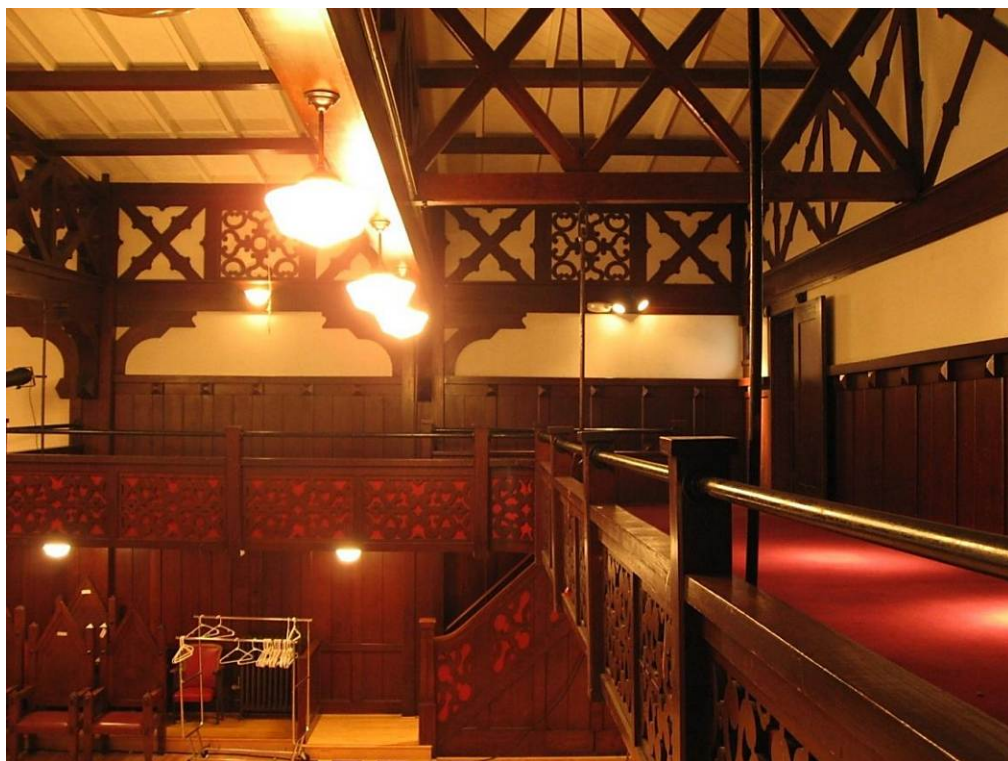
*View northeast from the balcony of Freja Hall to the stage.*

The balcony of Freja Hall runs the full length along the back (south) wall, and partial width along the north and south walls. It floats above the main floor supported by six metal rods which run through, and are suspended from, the truss work at the ceiling. These bars connect to additional metal bars secured along the interior edge of the balcony railing. The walls of the balcony feature a paneled wainscot perimeter identical to that used on the main floor. The interior railing of the balcony features a beadboard base crowned with wooden posts and a brass railing. The west wall of the balcony includes three paneled wood doors which access storage closets.

There are two entrances at either end of the south wall of the balcony. Each features a paneled wood door with stained flat board trim. These doors are flanked on the outside edge by small leaded glass windows featuring green-tinted bullseye lights. The door at the southwest end of the balcony accesses a small vestibule with a batten wainscot with leather paper cladding. A double-hung, four-over-four leaded glass window in the vestibule provides access to a light well. The door at the southeast end of the balcony accesses the Valhalla banquet room.



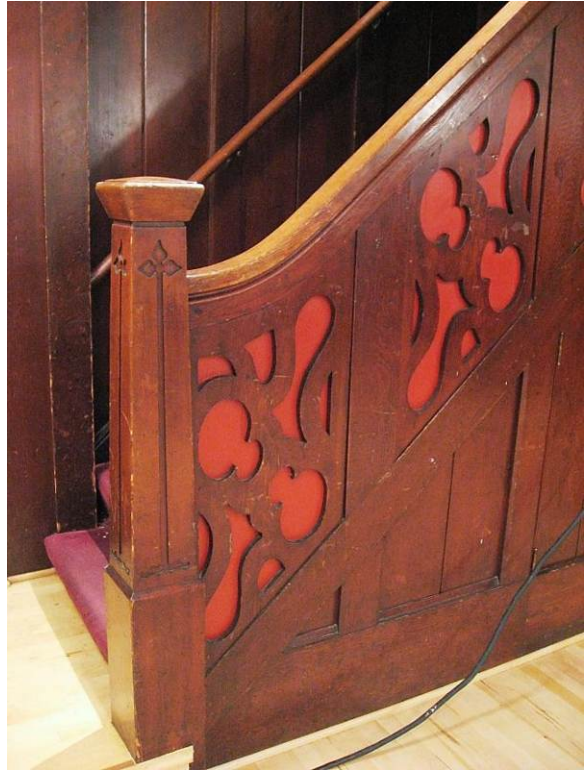
*View west along the balcony. Note the metal bars which help suspend the balcony above the floor.*



*View east along the balcony*



*Detail of skylights*



*Detail of stair newel post and fretwork*



*View northwest from balcony using only natural light*



*Detail of balcony fretwork*

### **Balder Lodge Room (Second Floor)**

The Balder lodge room is located at the southeast corner of the second floor. The hall features two bracketed trusses which divide the ceiling into thirds. Nailhead trim blocks run along the lower face of the truss, and brass caps cover the truss rods. Three pendant lights hang from the base of each truss. The walls are clad with a batten wainscot featuring leather paper wall covering. The leather paper in the upper portion of the wainscot features four yellow-painted squares in each panel. The north, east and south walls are crowned with a band of flat board trim. The flooring appears to be sheet vinyl.

The east end of the room features two battered engaged columns crowned with capitals featuring an “X” motif. The upper face of each column includes yellow-painted square and rectangle reliefs, as well as a lighting sconce. Running between the tops of the columns is a wooden mantle resting on nine scrolled brackets. The wall beneath the mantle includes a paneled wood base with a leather paper panel above. The wainscot at the west end of the room is also capped by a mantle with scrolling brackets.

The southwest end of the room is illuminated by four pairs of sixteen-over-sixteen light, leaded glass, double-hung windows crowned with transoms. A leaded glass arched window is located near the southeast corner of the room. There are two, ten-fin, cast iron radiators embossed with floral ornament in the room: one located near a doorway at the southwest corner of the room, as well as toward the center of the north wall. An electrical panel is also located to the right of the doorway at the southwest corner.



*Second floor lodge room, view to west wall*



*Second floor lodge room, view along north wall*



*Second floor lodge room, view to east wall*



*Detail of scrolled brackets beneath the east wall mantle*



*Detail of leather paper wall cladding. Note damage.*



*Detail of arched window near the southeast corner of the room*

A doorway at the southwest corner of the Balder lodge room accesses an ante room to the west. The south wall of the ante room includes a stained batten wainscot with leather paper panels, as well as a small ceramic water fountain. A pointed bay window with an interior seat is located in a nook at the southwest corner of the ante room. The double-hung wood windows features twelve-over-twelve leaded glass lights, and the ceiling of the nook is clad with stained bead board. The west wall of the ante room includes a number of paneled lockers with a stained wood finish. The flooring is sheet vinyl. South of the ante room is a short hallway and women's restroom.



*Detail of radiator in the Balder lodge room*



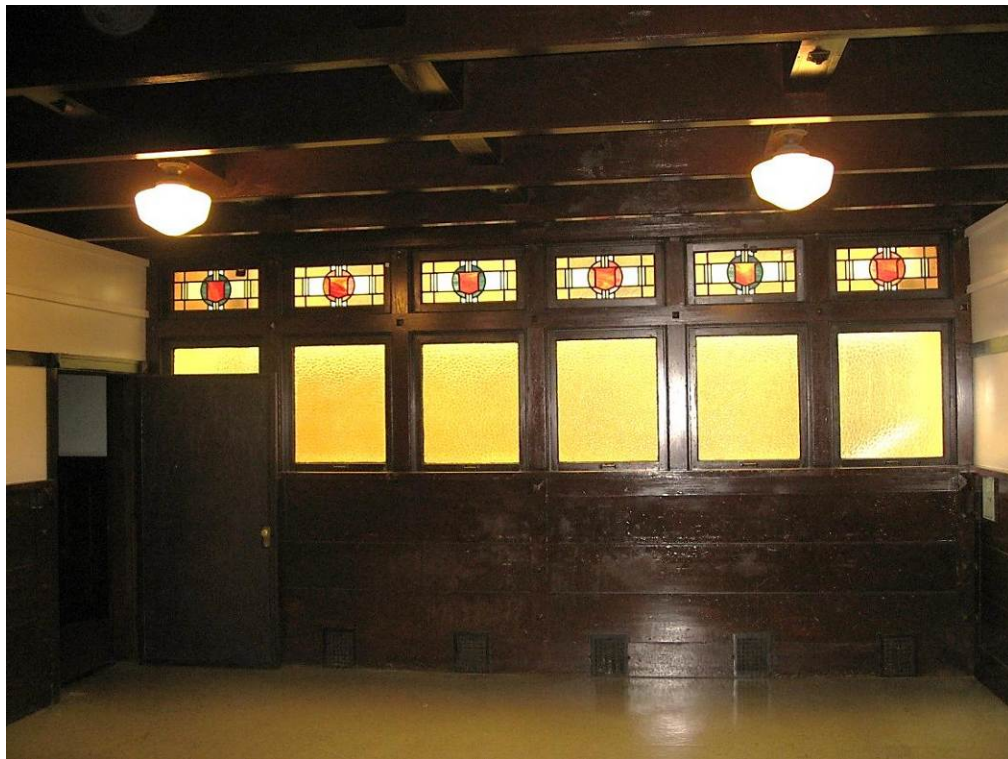
*Detail of ante room with pointed bay window at left.*



### **Valhalla Banquet Room (Second Floor, Mezzanine Level)**

The Valhalla banquet room is located at the second floor mezzanine level, directly south of the Freja Hall balcony. The room is wrapped by a modified board and batten wainscot featuring wide, horizontal boards separated by beadwork trim. The battens feature small nailhead trim blocks, with the largest sitting beneath the rail. A stained flat board stringcourse wraps the upper level of the wall, surmounted by a narrower painted wood stringcourse. The flooring is sheet vinyl, and the room is crowned with a boxed beam ceiling and painted beadboard. There are three entrances: a pair of paneled wood double doors at the west end of the room adjacent to the stair landing, and paneled wood doors at the northeast and northwest corners of the room which access the balcony aisle. Above the double doors is a boxed soffit featuring simple flat board panels and small nailhead trim blocks.

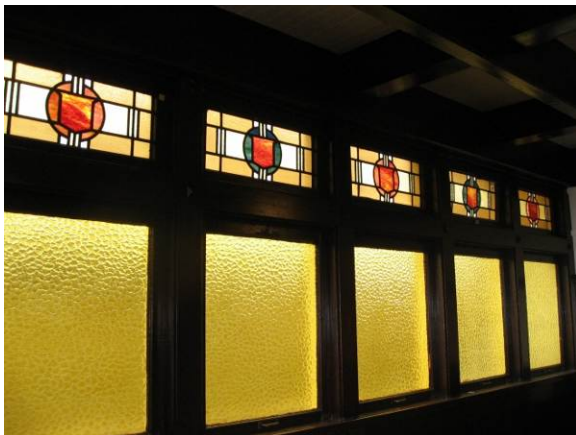
The room's most outstanding architectural feature is a ribbon of six windows along the east wall, each featuring a textured amber glass light crowned with a stained glass transom featuring a shield motif. These windows feature operable hopper mechanisms and face an interior light well crowned by a skylight. Beneath these windows, the baseboard includes a series of decorative metal vents. There is also an original, four-fin cast iron radiator along the north wall of the room which features embossed floral embellishment.



*View east of windows in the Valhalla room.*



*View west in the Valhalla room toward the mezzanine level stair landing.*



*Detail of textured and stained glass windows*



*Detail of wainscot in the Valhalla room*

### **Verdandi Club Room (Third Floor)**

The Verdandi club room was traditionally used as a library by the Swedish Society and is located on the third floor opposite the stair landing. It is accessed by a small, straight run of four steps with a solid, painted wood bannister featuring an incised floral motif. The entry is a stained, paneled wood door with flat board trim. A metal sign reading: "Club Room SW Society's Members Only" is located on the upper portion of the door. A similar sign reading "Verdandi" is located on the flat board trim above the door.

The interior of the room features wood flooring and includes a fireplace inglenook against the east wall. The fireplace features a firebox crowned with an arched brick surround with keystone, while the base features green-glazed ceramic tiles. A stained wood mantle is supported by nailhead trim blocks. Flanking the fireplace are built-in bookcases with a stained wood finish. At the outer edge of the bookcase tops are curved wooden elements with a pierced heart motif. The upper walls flanking the fireplace feature small wood windows with bullseye glazing. The inglenook itself is flanked by closets featuring paneled wood doors with bullseye-glazed lights.



*Entry to the Verdandi club room*



*View east in the Verdandi club room*



*Detail of the fireplace inglenook in the Verdandi club room*



*View west in the Verdandi club room*

The room is crowned with a boxed beam ceiling, while the walls feature stained wood piers and a chair rail with nailhead trim blocks. Large brackets with a scrolled profile are located where the piers meet the boxed beams. Three window openings are located along the north wall. These feature bullseye glazing and stained wood surrounds with nailhead trim blocks at the corners. Mechanical lighting in the room is provided by non-historic wall sconces, as well as two large non-historic pendant lights.

Large, floor-to-ceiling built-in bookcases are located along the west wall of the room flanking the doorway. These feature cabinets with paneled doors at the base, and glass-fronted bookshelves at the top. A set of stairs at the southwest corner leads down to the Svea lodge room to the south.

### **Svea Lodge Room (Third Floor)**

The Svea lodge room is located at the southern end of the third floor and houses the Swedish Society's archives. The room features trapezoidal walls angling inward to meet a stained wood boxed beam ceiling. At the center and west end of the room, stained wood piers with oversized brackets join with the boxed beams. The walls feature a stained wood wainscot set in a grid pattern. The flooring is carpeted. A low platform is located at the east end of the room. The rear of the platform is flanked by two battered engaged columns which are essentially identical to those found in the Balder lodge room. The columns are crowned with capitals featuring an "X" motif, and the upper face of each column includes painted linear reliefs, as well as a lighting sconce. Running between the tops of the columns is a wooden mantle resting on nine scrolled brackets. The wall beneath the mantle includes a stained wood chair rail.



*View toward the east end of the Svea lodge room*



*View toward the west end of the Svea lodge room*

The south wall of the room includes two small built-in bookcases beneath punched window openings. Small metal ladders are affixed to the window sills. The room also includes two original, ten-fin cast iron radiators along the north and south walls, respectively. A stained wood door is located near the northwest corner of the room and accesses the hallway adjacent to the stair landing. In this same area is a short staircase with a solid bannister featuring a pierced floral motif rising to meet the door to the Verdandi club room. (Members of the Swedish Society state that the bannister is not historic, but was installed for safety reasons and was designed to match the stair railings elsewhere in the building.) In addition to natural lighting, the room is illuminated by six non-historic pendant lights suspended from the boxed beam ceiling.

### **Interior: Main Stairway and Landings**

The main stairs in the Swedish American Hall are carpeted and feature similar finishes on all levels. These include a painted board and batten wainscot with leather paper cladding on the exterior walls, and a decorative painted wood screen on the interior side featuring a pierced teardrop motif. The newel posts are painted and include an incised floral motif, while the newel posts and handrails consist of stained wood. The stair landings at each floor level feature sheet vinyl flooring and access a north-south hallway. Moving south down the hallway, one turns right to access the continuation of the stairs to the next level.

From the Swedish American Hall main entry, the stairs rise in a straight run to the second floor landing. Opposite the landing is a paneled wood closet door (unpainted) with flat board trim painted white. The door header is crowned with nail head trim blocks. To the right of the closet is an identical door which accesses a men's restroom. The closet area and restroom have since been converted to an elevator shaft.<sup>3</sup> To the right (east) of the second floor landing are the doors for the coat check area for Freja Hall. To the south is a hallway which accesses a restroom and an ante room for the Balder lodge room.



*View north up the stairs from the main entry to the second floor landing.*



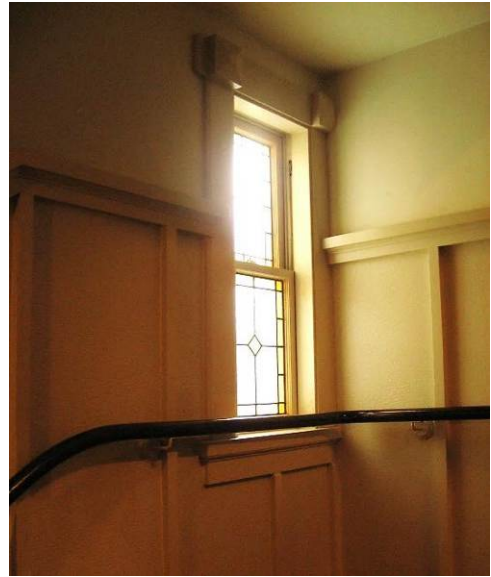
*Second floor landing. From left to right a closet, men's room and double doors leading to the Freja Hall ante room. Both the closet and men's room were removed in 2014 to install an ADA compliant elevator.*

From the second floor to the mezzanine level, the stairs include a quarter turn illuminated by a double-hung, wood-sash leaded art glass window facing a light well. The window includes textured glass panels with a diamond motif at center. The frame consists of painted wood and is crowned with nailhead trim blocks. To the right (east) of the mezzanine level landing are the doors to the Valhalla banquet room. To the north is a hallway and door to the Freja Hall balcony. To the south is a hall accessing the door to a kitchen.

<sup>3</sup> In 2014 the closet and restrooms at the upper stair landings were removed to install an ADA compliant elevator. Doors and trim work were salvaged for reuse or storage where possible.



*Detail of stairs at second floor as they rise toward the mezzanine.*



*Detail of leaded glass window at the quarter-turn landing of the staircase.*

From the mezzanine level to the third floor, the stairs include a quarter turn illuminated by a single leaded art glass window facing the light well. This window is very similar to double-hung window described above, but is more horizontally oriented. The frame consists of painted wood and is crowned with nailhead trim blocks. Opposite the top of the landing is a paneled wood closet door (unpainted) with unpainted flat board trim. The door header is crowned with nail head trim blocks. To the right of the closet is an identical door which accesses a women's restroom. As mentioned above, the closet area and restroom have since been converted to an elevator shaft.

The third floor landing is illuminated by a large, pyramidal multi-pane skylight with a paneled wood base. Flanking the skylight are two Arts and Crafts style hooded brass light fixtures hanging by metal rods from the ceiling. The light fixtures appear to be converted gas lights and are presumed original to the building. To the right (east) of the third floor level landing are the stairs and door for the Verdandi club room. To the south is a hallway which accesses the door to the Svea lodge room and library.



*Detail of window at the stair landing between the mezzanine level and the third floor.*



*View from the stairs toward the third floor landing. The door accesses a closet since converted into an elevator shaft.*



*Detail of skylight above the third floor landing.*



*Detail of light fixture.*

**Interior (First Floor): Former Commercial Space at 2172 Market Street**

To the right of the entry hall is a reception area, formerly used as a store addressed as 2172 Market Street. The room can be accessed via open doorways at the northwest and southwest corners. The upper portion of the wall on the west side of the room has been partially opened to create a visual connection with the entry hall. This opening is flanked by simple pilasters. The room features a board-and-batten paneled wainscot, although this finish does not appear original. The northeast corner of the room includes a built-in non-historic cabinet bookshelf with glass doors. At the northwest corner of the room is a fully-glazed wood door with flat board trim which accesses an office. This door, which does not appear original, features frosted glazing and lettering that reads “Swedish Society of San Francisco 1875 Office.” Lighting is provided by non-historic sconces with tulip shades. As of early 2014 this room—as well as the store to the east, historically addressed as 2168 Market Street—was in the process of being converted into a restaurant seating area.



*View south of the reception area, formerly used as a store at 2172 Market Street.*



*View north of the reception area, formerly used as a store at 2172 Market Street.*

### **Interior (First Floor): Former Commercial Space at 2168 Market Street**

The commercial space addressed as 2168 Market Street was most recently used as a restaurant. None of the finishes in this room appear original. The flooring consists of black and composite floor tiles. A curved wooden counter is located at the northeast end of the room, and the southern end of the west wall includes a wooden wainscot. At the northeast corner of the room is a doorway accessing a food preparation and storage area with ceramic tile flooring. A doorway in this area connects to a hall with ceramic tile flooring. The hall runs west to connect with the main entry hallway.



*View south of the store area formerly addressed as 2168 Market Street.*



*View north of the store area formerly addressed as 2168 Market Street.*

### **Interior: First Floor Ante Room & Kitchen**

At the northwest corner of the first floor, just beyond the rear stairway leading down to the basement, is an ante room and a kitchen. The east wall of the ante room features two bands of unpainted flat boards with hanging hooks. The west and south walls include large wooden storage cabinets with paneled doors. The flooring in the ante room includes a stained border. Beyond the ante room is a small kitchen with a refrigerator, sink and cabinets along the west wall. The center of the east wall of the kitchen includes a paneled, unpainted wood door which accesses the meeting room. This door is flanked by large paneled wooden cabinets (painted white) that may be original to the building. Lighting is provided by a pendant globe fixture mounted to the ceiling. The north wall of the kitchen features non-historic paneled wood double doors which access an outdoor area enclosed by fencing. Above the doors is a large wood transom with a wire screen. Some finishes in this previously remodeled interior space were altered by the 2014 rehabilitation project.





*View north from rear stairway toward the ante room. This stairway leads to a back of house area for Cafe Du Nord.*



*View south from ante room into the kitchen. Note the rear exit doors.*

#### **Interior (Second Floor): Freja Hall Coat Check and Vestibule**

Turning right at the second floor landing is an entrance to an ante room providing a coat check area for Freja Hall. The south end of the room features a long, non-historic bar with a laminate top. The walls behind the bar are clad with non-historic wood paneling. The flooring in the room appears to be sheet vinyl. The ceiling is bead board. The north side of the room includes double doors opening into Freja Hall. A large closet is located at the northeast corner of the vestibule. Its walls are clad with a board-and-batten wainscot with leather paper panels.



*Ante room with non-historic bar and wall paneling*



*View north along the vestibule hallway toward Freja Hall.*

A wooden door is located at the east end of the coat check area and accesses a vestibule providing passage between Freja Hall and the Balder lodge room. Along the east wall are a series of paneled wood doors

opening to storage lockers. Although the finish stain on the doors is similar to that used elsewhere in the building, the lockers do not appear historic as the back walls of the locker interiors reveal a batten leather paper wainscot. A women's restroom is accessed from the hallway by a paneled wood door. It features peach-colored floor and wall tiles, likely installed at midcentury. The non-historic bar, wall cladding and lockers in this area were removed by a 2014 rehabilitation project.

### **Interior (Mezzanine Level): Kitchen**

A kitchen is located at the southwest corner of the mezzanine level. It is accessed via a hallway with two doorways: one doorway opens into the southwest corner of the Valhalla banquet room, and the other opens into the hallway off the mezzanine level stair landing. The kitchen features wood paneled cabinets, gypsum board walls and composite floor tiles. A commercial grade gas stove is located near the southwest corner of the room adjacent to a double-hung wood window. A stainless steel sink is set at an angle in the northwest corner of the kitchen adjacent to a pair of double-hung wood windows with textured glazing facing a light well. This kitchen was remodeled by a 2014-2015 rehabilitation project.



*Detail view south of the kitchen at the southwest corner of the mezzanine level.*



*Detail view north of the mezzanine level kitchen.*

### **Interior: Restrooms**

The Swedish American Hall includes a number of restrooms located on each floor except the mezzanine level. One-stall men's restrooms located adjacent to the stair landings on the second and third floors were removed and relocated in 2014 to install an accessible elevator. Other restrooms were remodeled or relocated.

### **Cafe Du Nord**

The Cafe Du Nord occupies the majority of the basement level of the Swedish American Hall. It is accessed from the sidewalk via a terrazzo threshold and paired wood doors with diamond lights. A straight-run staircase leads down into the main room, which features a painted wood boxed beam ceiling. The room is divided approximately in half by a series of square columns running north-south through the space. These columns feature paneled wood bases, and some include sconce light fixtures as well as painted acanthus leaf brackets where they meet the ceiling beams. Similar acanthus leaf brackets are also used at the base of some of the box beams above the bar, as well as in the southwest corner of the room. The room is wrapped by a stained wood paneled wainscot. The flooring is a mixture of carpet and composite floor tiles.



*Detail of neon sign for the Cafe Du Nord*



*Detail of terrazzo threshold*

To the east is the bar, which appears original to the building. The front of the bar features a polished wood top and a brass railing at the base. The back bar is mirrored and includes a series of square, paneled columns with a triangle motif in the panels. These columns support an entablature consisting of a paneled frieze with floral ornaments, echinus and astragal molding, and leaf molding. The base of the service bar includes a series of drawers and cabinets with metal hardware. Near the center of the bar is an inlaid panel featuring various silhouettes, including those of a person and a spoon. At the southeast end of the room adjacent to the bar is a kitchen and storage area.

At the northeast corner of the room adjacent to the bar is a small seating area featuring a stained wood paneled wainscot. A passageway running east-west from this area runs beneath the stairs to connect with the southwest corner of the room. The southwest corner of the room features a raised platform segregated by brass railing and two paneled wood posts featuring a triangle motif identical to that used on the bar. In 2014, this portion of the room was converted into a restroom area, while other areas within the Cafe Du Nord were substantially remodeled.



*View north of the Cafe Du Nord from the base of the entry stairs. The stage is visible in the distance at center left.*



*View of the southwest corner of the Cafe Du Nord. In 2014 this area was reconfigured to accommodate restrooms.*

A stage and dance floor are located toward the rear (north) end of the café. The east side of this area features a raised seating platform separated from the dance floor by a wooden railing. The east wall of the seating area includes a paneled wood wainscot. A sound booth is located at the southwest corner of room, and an additional bar is located along the west wall. This bar features a paneled wood base with a brass railing.

A passageway at the west end of the stage accesses a quarter-turn staircase rising to the first floor. A flush wood door near the base of the stairs provides access to a small dressing room/storage area with concrete flooring.



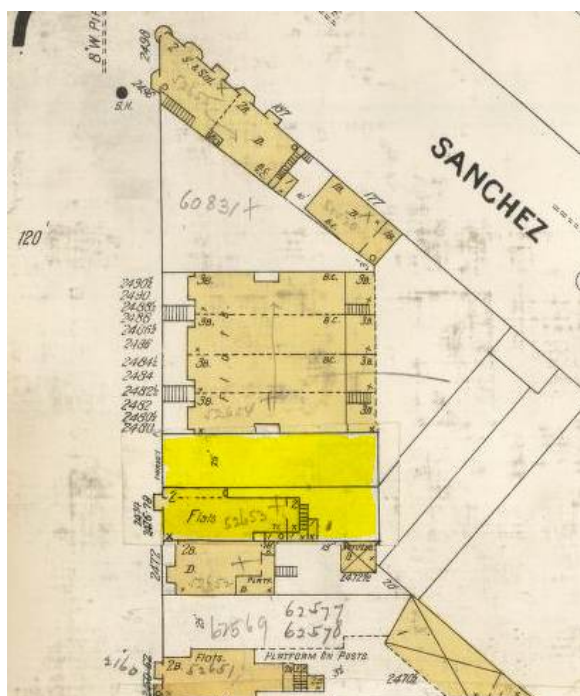
*Detail of the bar.*



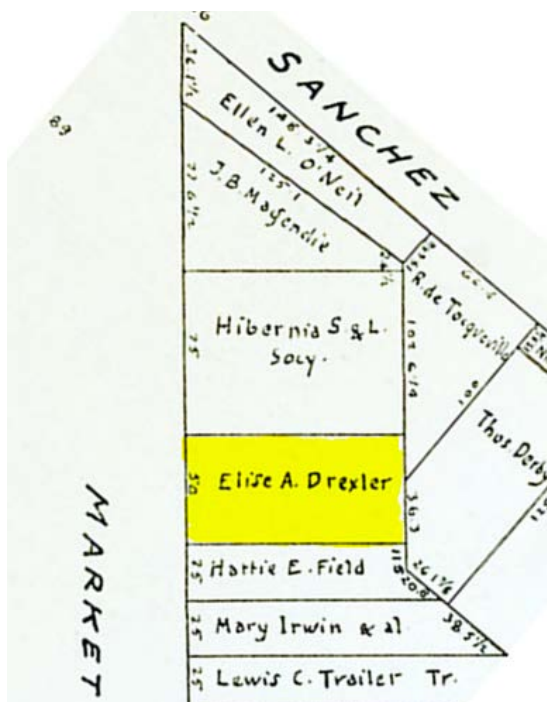
*View of the dance floor and raised seating area.*

## CONSTRUCTION HISTORY

The Swedish American Hall was constructed in 1907 as a combination social hall and commercial building for the Swedish Society of San Francisco. It served as a replacement for Scandia Hall, another social hall owned by various Swedish societies, which was destroyed during the 1906 Earthquake (see the discussion of the Swedish Society later in this report). The lot where the Swedish American Hall now stands was previously occupied by a two-story flats building and a vacant lot owned by Elise A. Drexler, widow of the millionaire Lomis P. Drexler, who had died in 1899. A notice in *The San Francisco Call* in 1901 states that, while she was “not a society woman in the usually accepted meaning of the phrase,” the Van Ness Avenue mansion owned by her and her husband was the site of many social gatherings.<sup>4</sup> The article also mentions that she owned a large number of buildings in the city, and that as “a woman of strong opinions” she prohibited the sale of liquor at properties owned by her. Drexler was a noted developer in the city during the early 20th century, while also using her fortune for a variety of philanthropic pursuits.



1905 Sanborn Map (sheet 267) with the parcel today occupied by the Swedish American Hall highlighted



1901 San Francisco block book showing the parcel as being owned by Elise A. Drexler.

Drexler sold the parcel to the Swedish Society of San Francisco in September 1906.<sup>5</sup> Initially, the Swedish Society considered keeping the existing building on the lot, but it “proved upon investigation not to be fit for repairs—it could not be altered as to meet the requirements.”<sup>6</sup> The existing building was then sold and moved by its new owner to another location.<sup>7</sup> The Swedish Society then formed a building committee, and “the results were quick and decisive. The well known architect, Mr. Aug. Nordin, engaged by the committee, soon had the plans and specifications ready, and these were accepted.”<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *The San Francisco Call*, “Mrs. Elise Drexler Notifies Wine Dealers That They May Not Remain on Her Premises,” March 28, 1901, 12.

<sup>5</sup> *The San Francisco Call*, “Real Estate Transactions,” September 12, 1906, 12.

<sup>6</sup> Swedish Society of San Francisco, *The Swedish Society's Golden Jubilee 1975-1925*, (San Francisco, Swedish Society of San Francisco, October 1925, 21.

<sup>7</sup> San Francisco Architectural Heritage, “Swedish Society Continues Proud Stewardship of its Historic Home,” *Heritage News*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 3 (May/June 2000), 6-7.

<sup>8</sup> Swedish Society of San Francisco, *The Swedish Society's Golden Jubilee 1975-1925*, (San Francisco, Swedish Society of San Francisco, October 1925, 20.

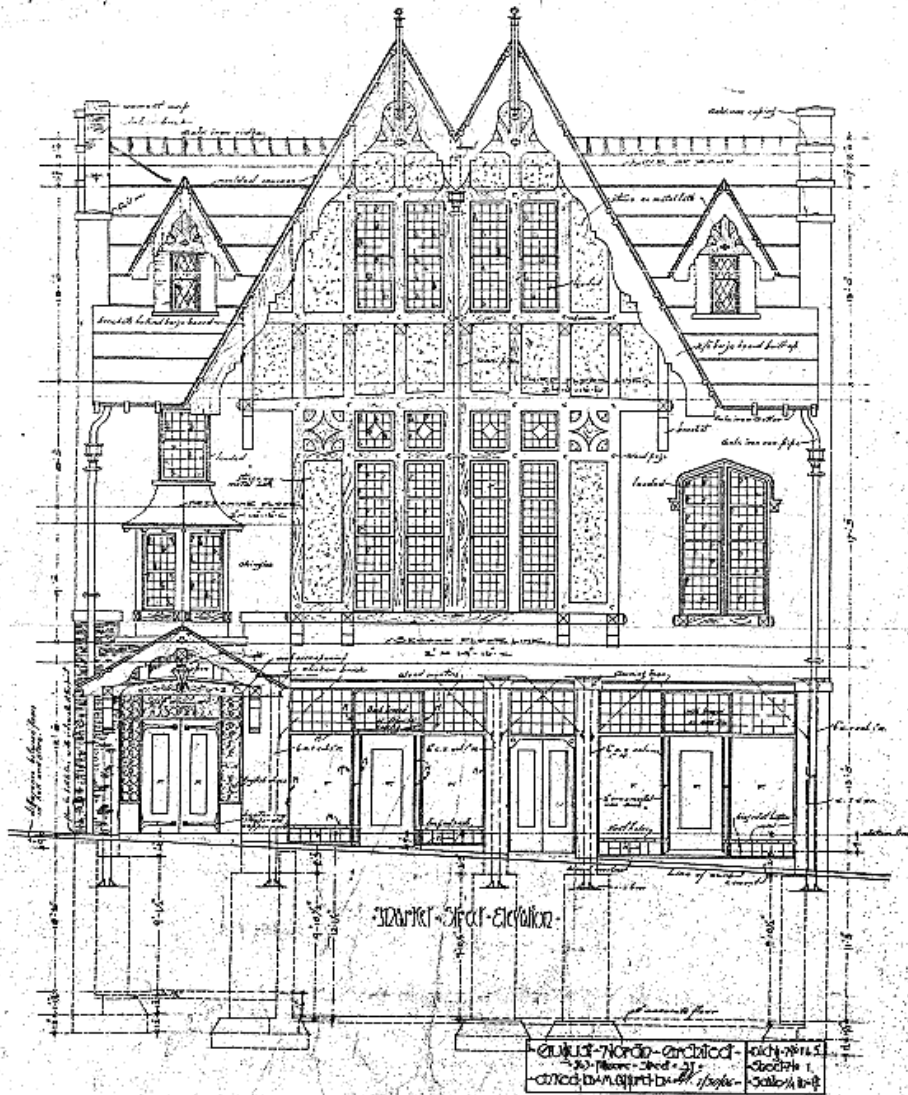
Funding for the land purchase and construction of a new hall was provided by the Swedish Society, as well as a large sum offered by Erik O. Lindblom, known as one of the “Three Lucky Swedes” who discovered gold in the Nome mining district during the Alaska Gold Rush. Lindblom invested his considerable fortune in a variety of pursuits, and in 1908 helped create the Swedish-American Bank, for which he served as vice president.



March 1907 view of Market Street. The arrow points to the future location of the Swedish American Hall  
San Francisco Metropolitan Transportation Authority archives, photo UO1220.

Plans for the new hall were drawn by architect August Nordin, who is discussed at length later in this section. They show the building much as it appears today, including the unusual twin gables with oversized barge boards. Among the various items specified for the primary facade are “English discs,” apparently corresponding to bullseye glazing, surrounding the main entry; storefront windows and transoms with hinged sashes; leaded glass windows; stucco on metal lath cladding in the gable ends; a clinker brick chimney; and a galvanized iron roof ridge. Other drawings show that the building was served by both electric incandescent and gas lighting, and that it was designed to accommodate an elevator shaft located adjacent to the main stairs.

- Elevator to History trace -



Original drawing of the Swedish American Hall.

The original building permit, number 9876, was filed in May 1907. The permit specifies the construction of a three-story-plus-mezzanine wood frame building. Several sheets of original drawings also survive in the Swedish Society's archives<sup>9</sup> and show the front elevation and all floors except the basement level. A footing and drainage plan is also included (see Appendix).

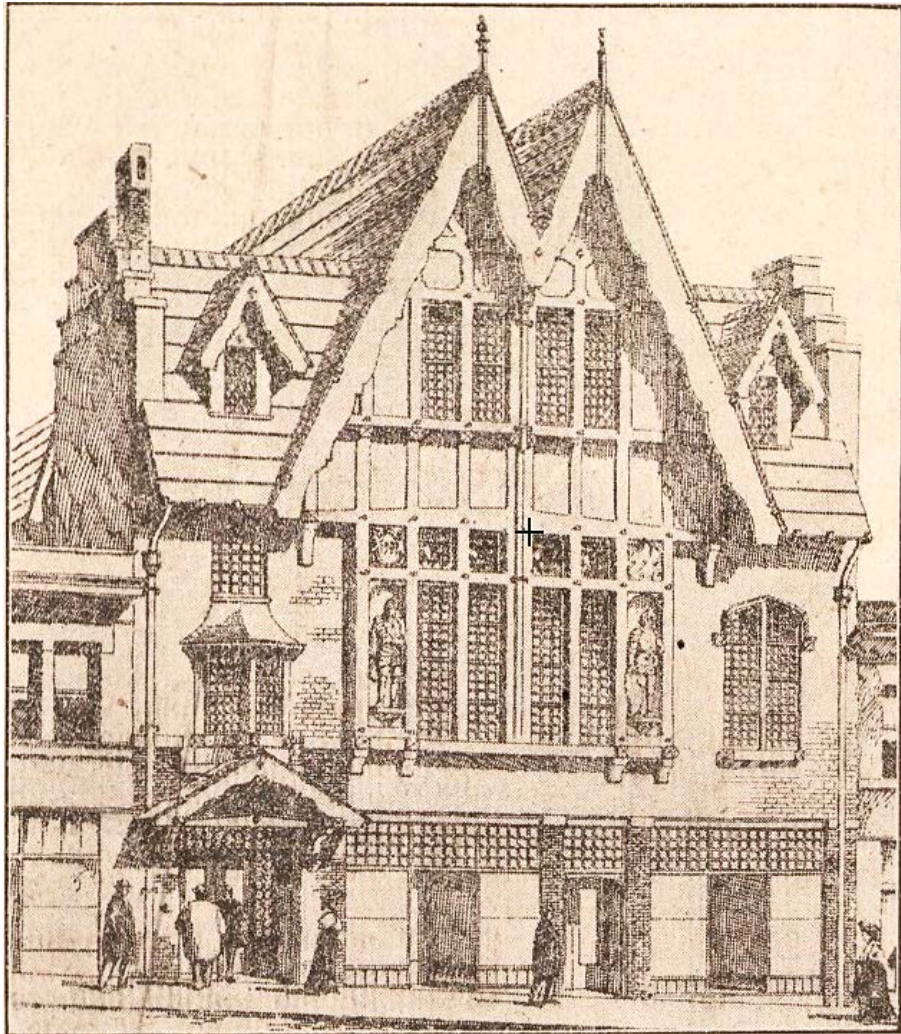
On May 4, 1907 the building contract was announced in *The San Francisco Call*: "The Swedish Society of San Francisco with Andrew Olson Ross & McCormack, Carlson & Swanson, Victor Stanquist and Richard J. H. Forbes—To erect a three story frame building on NW line of Market Street ... \$35,204." According to the Swedish Society's golden jubilee history, Andrew Olson completed the woodwork, Carlson and Swanson the painting and decoration, Standquist the brick and foundation work, and Mr. Pontus Franklin installed the plumbing.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> These are not record drawings or "as built" drawings.

<sup>10</sup> Swedish Society of San Francisco, *The Swedish Society's Golden Jubilee 1875-1925*, (San Francisco, Swedish Society of San Francisco, October 1925, 22-23.

By June the building was under construction. A notice in the Swedish language newspaper, *Vestkusten*, included a conceptual drawing of the building. The accompanying text states:

We are pleased to produce a picture of the Swedish Society building as it will look when finished. Up to now the walls are erected to the first floor only, but the work is progressing rapidly under builder Andrew Olson's leadership. The architect, who as well as the builder is Swedish, is August Nordin. The building should be completed at a cost of approximately \$40,000 and includes a large basement, two stores and a meeting room on the first floor, a large hall and two lodge rooms on the second floor. The front of the building is divided into two floors above the shops and contains a lodge room, pantry, etc. and a clubroom .... No expenses have been spared in the building's construction, thanks to Mr. E. Lindblom's benevolence in placing all necessary means at the society's disposal. The cornerstone of the building will be placed to coincide with a singing festival here at the end of July.<sup>11</sup>



*A conceptual drawing of the Swedish American Hall appearing in Vestkusten in June, 1907.*

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<sup>11</sup> *Vestkusten*, June 27, 1907



The cornerstone for the Swedish American Hall was laid on July 27, 1907, with the attendant ceremony described in the *San Francisco Chronicle* the following day.

The Swedish Society of San Francisco and Oakland laid the corner stone of the Swedish-American hall yesterday afternoon with much ceremony and great rejoicing. The members of the society assembled at the Swedish Lutheran Church, Fifteenth and Dolores streets, and marched behind an orchestra to Veterans' Hall on Duboce avenue, where the United Swedish Singers of the Pacific Coast, now holding a convention and singing festival in San Francisco and Oakland, joined the local society, and the procession then marched to the new structure on Market Street .... The hall which is in the course of construction covers a site 50 by 100 feet; is of most attractive design and will be quite an ornament to that part of Market street. The ground floor will contain two stores and a meeting hall. The banquet-room and kitchen will be located in the mezzanine floor, while the second floor will contain a large assembly hall, a lodgeroom, ladies parlor, committee rooms and other apartments. The library and clubrooms will be located on the third floor, and a large banquet hall for special occasions will be located in the basement, with a separate entrance from the street. The building is to be completed and ready for occupancy in about four months.<sup>12</sup>



*San Francisco Chronicle,*  
July 28, 1907

The Swedish American Hall was formally dedicated on December 22, 1907. The *San Francisco Chronicle* mentions that the dedication for the new \$50,000 building included a holiday themed celebration:

Evergreen decorations, appropriate to the holiday season and not lacking in significance to these people whose memories hark back to a certain country of Northern Europe, were artistically arranged throughout the interior of the beautiful banquet hall of the new building. President R. Dybergh acted as toastmaster of the evening, and the responses of the officers and members of the society on whom he called were all of a congratulatory nature and full of praise for E. O. Lindblom, the society's honorary member .... Both the architect and builder were heartily congratulated for the successful termination of their plans.<sup>13</sup>

One of the only early photographs known of the Swedish American Hall confirms many of the details in Nordin's drawing. The storefronts originally featured recessed entry vestibules flanked by display windows, and were crowned by multi-light transoms. The piers (or pilasters) flanking the storefronts and the entrance to Cafe Du Nord feature simple capitals. The light fixture hanging at the entrance was a round globe. Among other interesting details in the image, the roofing shingles were applied in patterned courses, and the finials rising from the twin gable ends were crowned with globes. The photo also shows that the north and south ends of the roofline were crowned with flagpoles flying the flags of the United States and Sweden.

<sup>12</sup> *San Francisco Chronicle*, "Corner Stone of Swedish Hall," July 28, 1907.

<sup>13</sup> *San Francisco Chronicle*, "Fraternal Hall is Dedicated," December 23, 1907.



*The Swedish American Hall, ca. early 1908. Note that the storefront at 2168 Market Street is still under construction.  
(Ted Olsson Collection)*

### **Architectural Influences**

Nordin's design for the façade of the Swedish American Hall is unique in San Francisco. Some elements flow from traditional Swedish design conventions, such as the steeply-pitched gable ends with decorative bargeboards, as well as the stepped roofline parapets which recall crow-stepped gables used on many historic buildings in Sweden. Other features of the building's exterior are clearly rooted in Arts and Crafts design as practiced in the Bay Area, including exposed rafters and brackets, as well as the use of wood shingle and clinker brick cladding.

The building's most conspicuous exterior feature is the central bay capped by twin gables which, along with the third floor gable dormers, provides a symmetrical hierarchy at the roofline. Yet the primary façade is also distinguished by a pronounced asymmetry, as evidenced by the contrasting flush and bay window treatments at the second floor, as

well as the projecting gable above the primary entry. The building's scale is also cleverly manipulated along the façade, such that it presents as a three-story structure, while the interior includes three stories and a mezzanine level.

The building's interior is marked by a number of hall rooms distinguished by their fine woodwork, most frequently expressed through the use of stained wood wainscots, brackets and boxed beam ceilings. While some of the interior decorative motifs may recall Swedish or Scandinavian designs, the building's overall interior aesthetic is most clearly rooted in Arts & Crafts design conventions.

In 1916, the *San Francisco Chronicle* wrote of the building:

The structure is of most attractive design. The lower story, including the vestibule, is of clinker brick and the interior is elaborately finished in stain pine and pressed leather panels. The floors and roofs are carried on exposed timber trusses, highly ornamented. Leaded windows of opalescent glass give a quaint effect to the interior. The lodge rooms, halls, banquet-room and library are all furnished in the most approved style and the building throughout is homelike and decidedly comfortable. The ventilation and lighting and heating systems could not be improved upon.<sup>14</sup>

The Arts and Crafts style took root during the late 19th century and remained popular through the 1930s.<sup>15</sup> Aesthetically, the style emphasized simplicity of design, the use of unadorned natural materials and hand-crafted construction, and was applied to both architecture and the decorative arts. As expressed in the San Francisco Bay Area by architects such as Bernard Maybeck, the style was also strongly influenced by Gothic design, as well as elements of the Shingle style, and is sometimes referred to as the First Bay Tradition style.

The Craftsman style was a subset of the Arts and Crafts movement, most frequently employed on a mass scale for the construction of Craftsman bungalows. Indeed, the rectilinear themes and extensive use of stained wood trim used for the interior of the Swedish American Hall shares much in common with the finishes used in contemporary Craftsman houses. It is worth noting that one distinctive interior feature, the copious use of nailhead trim blocks, was also employed by August Nordin in his designs for New Era Hall—another combination social hall and commercial building located on the 2100 block of Market Street.

### **August Nordin, Architect**

Swedish American Hall is significant as an early work by master architect, August Nordin (1869-1936). Between circa 1897 and 1936, Nordin designed more than 300 buildings, including fraternal halls, churches, apartment houses, multi-family dwellings and private residences.<sup>16</sup> Surviving examples of Nordin's work demonstrate his mastery of divergent architectural styles and his skill in working with a variety of building materials. Nordin more frequently employed individualized designs as opposed to variants on a single design theme, and his strengths as a designer are evident in the careful balance of scale, proportion and ornament.

August Nordin was born in Stockholm, Sweden in 1869 and immigrated to the United States in 1891. Between 1892 and 1899, San Francisco city directories list August Nordin (aka Norden, Nordan, Nicolaus A. Nordin and N. August Nordin) as "carpenter" or "contractor."<sup>17</sup> The Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased) reports that Nordin had received "a thorough training in



August Nordin, ca. 1910  
(Collections of the Swedish  
American Hall)

<sup>14</sup> "Swedish Society is a Growing Organization – Big Fraternal Body Strongly Established Here," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 9, 1916, 19.

<sup>15</sup> In San Francisco some variations of the Craftsman Style evolved into the First Bay Tradition architecture.

<sup>16</sup> August Nordin Obituary: *The Architect and Engineer*, January 1936.

<sup>17</sup> Research by Tom Mayer, San Francisco Architectural Heritage, Heritage News/Vol. XXVIII, No. 3, Page 7.

architecture” and opened an office in San Francisco in 1899. However, a newspaper real estate notice indicates that Nordin was building houses at least as early as 1896.<sup>18</sup>

The 1900 city directory lists August Nordin as an architect, with offices at 1926 Market Street. Following the 1906 Earthquake, Nordin temporarily relocated to an office at 563 Fillmore Street, running almost daily advertisements of his services in the *San Francisco Call* from June through September. By 1908, Nordin had set up practice in the Mills Building at 220 Montgomery Street where he remained until his death.

Nordin was a member of the Swedish Society of San Francisco and served on the Swedish Exhibition Committee in preparation for the 1915 Panama Pacific International Exhibition where it was reported that his practical ideas were repeatedly adopted at meetings.<sup>19</sup> He also oversaw the onsite construction of the Swedish building for Exhibition and was lauded for his ability to overcome numerous difficulties. At the time it was noted that Nordin had already designed “no fewer than 300 buildings since he belonged to our society [the Swedish Society], among which are several major hotels and residences for some millionaires.”<sup>20</sup>

City directory and U.S. Census records indicate that Nordin frequently moved within San Francisco during his career, living at 853 Folsom Street in 1900; 501 Emma Street in 1905; 1858 Fell Street in 1910; 412 Ashbury Street in 1912; and 1541 Oak Street in 1917; 1360 Page Street in 1920; and 1390 Central Avenue in 1930. Nordin had several children with his first wife, Annie Nordin, a native of Ireland, who passed away in 1898. Nordin was remarried by 1910 to Florence Nordin, and had one additional child. Nordin appears to have trained his sons, Leonard and Robert, in the building trades. Both identified themselves as carpenters during the 1910s and early 1920s, and by 1924, records indicate that Leonard was working as a building superintendent. Robert Nordin received an architectural license in 1931 and also worked in the Mills building.<sup>21</sup> Several of Nordin’s siblings also lived in the Bay Area. Nordin’s sister, Alice Nordin, was a trained sculptor, while his brother was described as a “prominent electrician” living in Oakland.<sup>22</sup>

Nordin worked directly with the owners of the buildings he designed, rather than for developers who would sell the completed building to a third party. In this respect, each commission was unique, and individually designed to address the client’s programmatic needs without sacrifice of design. Nordin’s buildings frequently play with massing and volumes, such as used for the 1905 house of Edwin Bennett, a real estate investor who also commissioned the construction of New Era Hall at 2117 Market Street the following year. Nordin also favored strong articulation and shadow lines, amply represented by the Whiteside Apartments and the Altamonte Hotel, both completed in 1912. For these buildings Nordin used the thickness of the wall to create bay windows that are partially inset within the exterior plane of the building.

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<sup>18</sup> “Builder’s Contracts,” *San Francisco Call*, July 3, 1896.

<sup>19</sup> *Vestkusten*, “Svenske arkitekten,” June 26, 1913.

<sup>20</sup> *Vestkusten*, “Arkitekt August Nordin,” June 24, 1915.

<sup>21</sup> Mary Brown, *San Francisco Modern Architecture and Landscape Design 1935-1970 Historic Context Statement*, (San Francisco: San Francisco Planning Department, 2010), Appendix B, p.4.

<sup>22</sup> *Vestkusten*, “San Francisco Personal News,” January 4, 1906.



1080-1082 and 1086-1088 Fulton Street, designed by August Nordin and completed in 1902. (Google Maps)



Flats at 847-851 and 853-857 Cole Street designed by August Nordin and completed ca. 1904.<sup>23</sup> (Google Maps)

Nordin's designs most frequently display Classical Revival style ornament, which was dominant in San Francisco architecture from the turn of the century through the late 1920s. However, Nordin was equally adept at designing buildings influenced by Queen Anne, Art Nouveau, Spanish Colonial Revival and Craftsman precedents, as well as interpreting Scandinavian architecture through his designs for the Swedish American Hall and his work as supervising architect for the construction of the Swedish Pavilion for the 1915 Panama Pacific International Exhibition. Nordin also designed several churches with strong Gothic influences. These include the Trinity English Evangelical Lutheran Church at 722 South Van Ness Avenue (1905), and the Ebenezer Swedish Lutheran Church at 15th and Dolores Streets (1903), which was destroyed by fire in 1993.

Over the course of his career, Nordin demonstrated flexibility in adapting his designs to different construction methods. These include the brick masonry Twin Oaks Hotel at 1010 Post Street (1907), the steel frame (clad with brick) Windeler Apartments at 424 Ellis Street (1915), and a reinforced concrete parking garage at 675 Post Street (1919). Other examples of Nordin's work that maintain a high degree of integrity include the Lange house at 199 Carl Street (ca. 1900); a mixed-use building at 2761 Hyde Street that houses the Buena Vista Cafe (1911); a residence at 435 Cabrillo Street (1912); the Cristobal Apartments at 750 O'Farrell Street (1913); and a mixed-use building at 295 Miramar Avenue (1917).



Whiteside Apartments at 150 Franklin Street, designed by August Nordin and completed in 1912. (Google Maps)



The Altamonte Hotel at 3048 16<sup>th</sup> Street, designed by August Nordin and completed in 1912. (Google Maps)

<sup>23</sup> "Builders' Contracts." *San Francisco Call*. November 11, 1903.



1950-1952 15<sup>th</sup> Street, designed by August Nordin and constructed in 1901 as a can factory. The building was severely damaged in 1906 and subsequently replaced. (Bancroft Library)



Ebenezer Swedish Lutheran Church and rectory, designed by August Nordin and completed in 1903. (San Francisco Public Library Historical Photograph Collection, AAB-1410)



Twin Oaks Hotel, 1010 Post Street, designed by August Nordin and completed in 1907. (Google Maps)



Cristobal Apartments at 750 O'Farrell Street (1913) at top; Parking garage at 675 Post Street (1919) at bottom.



*Edwin Bennett residence at 140 Divisadero Street completed in 1905. (Google Maps)*

*buildings incorporate a Greek key motif. (Google Maps)*



*New Era Hall at 2117 Market Street, commissioned by Edwin Bennett and completed in 1907. (Google Maps)*

Several of Nordin's buildings, including 750 O'Farrell and 424 Ellis Street, are listed on the National Register as part of the Uptown Tenderloin District. The flats at 1080-82 and 1086-88 Fulton Street are listed locally in the Alamo Square Landmark District. 150 Franklin Street is listed locally in the Market Street Masonry Landmark District. The other buildings are well represented on historic surveys conducted by the Junior League in the 1960s, and the Planning Department in 1976.

August Nordin died of a heart attack at the University of California Hospital in January 1936. His obituary noted that he was a member of Islam Temple Shrine and the Scottish Rite.<sup>24</sup>

### **Early Social Halls**

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, fraternal societies were one of the primary sources of health insurance for the working classes, as well as burial services. At their peak in about 1920, over one quarter of all adult Americans were members of fraternal societies.<sup>25</sup> Some fraternal groups limited membership to a particular ethnic or religious group. Others were pan-ethnic and centered on business or professional affiliations, often combined with defined rituals and protocol. Of the latter, the Masons and the Odd Fellows are well-known examples. Lesser known are groups which include the Knights of Pythias and the Woodmen of the World, two fraternal lodges that were once active in the area surrounding Swedish American Hall.

Of the 72 social halls listed in the 1907 city directory, only eighteen remain extant. Surviving buildings that housed these halls generally conform to one of three subtypes. The first includes single-story buildings that may or may not have been intended to be temporary. Simple in construction, they did not require elaborate building materials, nor did they support other uses. Many were later replaced by permanent buildings on the same site, such as the Equality Hall at 139 Albion Avenue, while others were redeveloped as residential building sites such as the Veteran Hall at 432 Duboce Avenue. Of the dozen or so examples of this type known from the period, only one has survived: the Woodmen of the World lodge at 2140 Market Street (now the Lucky 13 bar), located on the same block as the Swedish American Hall.

The second type included social halls that occupied temporary sites within other buildings. These might include pre-1906 Earthquake buildings where a generic storefront was used as a hall; or when the lowest flat in a multi-story apartment building was used as a hall. Two examples of this type are extant: Callegari's Hall at 421 Union Street

<sup>24</sup> August Nordin Obituary: *The Architect and Engineer*, January 1936.

<sup>25</sup> Woodmen and Fraternalism (booklet), Form 4154 R-5/97; Modern Woodmen of America History, 1997.

(1906); and Coleman's Hall at 1988 Bush Street (ca. 1902). However, the facades of these building give no indication of their use as social halls.

The third type, to which Swedish American Hall belongs, are purpose-built mixed-use buildings where the ground floor was occupied by storefronts, while the meeting rooms were located on the upper floor(s). There are only nine examples of this type constructed prior to 1907 which survive and have good integrity: Divisadero Hall at 321 Divisadero Street (1896); Equality Hall at 139 Albion Street (1908); Findlay's Dancing Academy at 3245 16th Street (1907); Mission Turn Verin Hall at 3543 18th Street (1910); Oakland Hall at 1805 Divisadero Street (1903); Richmond Hall at 309 4th Avenue (1908); the Sheet Metal Workers Hall at 224 Guerrero Street (1906); Stegeman's Hall at 225 Valencia Street (1907) and New Era Hall at 2121 Market Street (1906). The Sheet Metal Workers Hall is San Francisco Landmark #150, while Mission Turn Verin Hall is San Francisco Landmark #178.

It should be noted that New Era Hall was also designed by August Nordin. Less than three months after the 1906 Earthquake, businessman Edwin W. Bennett commissioned Nordin to design a speculative commercial and public assembly building just over two blocks west of the Dolores Street fire line. Bennett, as a real estate investor, was clearly responding to the soaring demand for both commercial space and fraternal meeting rooms. New Era Hall was to be a rental property with two lodge rooms that could be rented to organizations in need of meeting places, with added revenue from two commercial storefronts on the ground floor. The building is currently part of the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission's Landmark Designation Work Program.

In the years following the 1906 disaster, many fraternal societies rebuilt their own permanent social halls. These included the Odd Fellows, who constructed a new hall at 7<sup>th</sup> and Market Streets in 1907. The Order of Knights of Pythias built a large brick office building with meeting rooms at 101 Valencia Street in 1909, and the Masons constructed a new lodge at Van Ness Avenue and Oak Street in 1911.<sup>26</sup> After World War II, membership in many fraternal organization began a steady decline. Contributing factors included a diminishing need for fraternal orders as insurance companies and doctors became more professionalized. Working class San Franciscans were also presented with an increasing variety of diversions for their spare time.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Designed by San Francisco architects Charles Paff and John Baur, the Knights of Pythias hall was subsequently purchased by the Salvation Army, which used the building as its Northern California and Nevada headquarters until 1989. It was converted to residential use in the 1990s.

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



## SCANDINAVIAN IMMIGRATION AND THE SWEDISH SOCIETY OF SAN FRANCISCO

The history of Swedes in San Francisco dates to the Gold Rush, and a Swedish Consular Corps was established in the city as early as May 1850.<sup>28</sup> The first great peak of Swedish immigration to the United States, however, occurred in the late 1860s, due in large part to several crop failures in Sweden. This was followed by a sustained wave of immigration during the 1880s, when some 330,000 Swedes left for America.<sup>29</sup> By 1890, approximately 478,000 Swedes lived in the United States—although only a fraction of that number lived in California. U.S. Census figures indicate that the Swedish population in California numbered only about 2,000 persons in 1870, although it would more than double over the following decade. By 1900, the Swedish population in California had grown to some 14,500 persons.<sup>30</sup>

As Swedish immigrants arrived in San Francisco, they formed various organizations rooted in their ethnic identity. Many of these also included immigrants from other Scandinavian countries. One of the earliest such organizations was the Scandinavian Society of San Francisco, established in 1859 and dedicated to the “welfare and kinship of emigrants from Sweden, Norway and Denmark.”<sup>31</sup> The charter membership included 46 Swedes, 19 Norwegians and 12 Danes, and all of these languages were spoken at the Scandinavian Society’s meetings. Along with fostering a communal social atmosphere, the expressed common goal was to provide a meeting place for Scandinavians living in the Bay Area.<sup>32</sup> The group produced theatricals, hosted numerous picnic outings, and also held an annual Midsummer festival. By 1874, a visitor to San Francisco stated that there were over 400 members of the Scandinavian Society, and that the group had some \$30,000 in capital contributed by the members.<sup>33</sup> Along with many immigrant groups, the Swedish and Scandinavian community was then centered South of Market—at the time the city’s most populous neighborhood.

During this same period, the Svenska Sällskapet af San Francisco (Swedish Society of San Francisco) was formed, in many ways following the model established by the Scandinavian Society. According to an article in *Heritage News*, the Swedish Society traces its roots to 1873 and the formation of the Original Orpheus Singing Club:

After that group changed its name to the Singing Society Svea, it held its first recorded monthly meeting, April 12, 1875. According to the 1925 official history, “from this date it might be truthfully stated dates our present Swedish Society.” At the same time, the Svea Society, like so many ethnic associations in San Francisco, took steps to provide its members with sick benefits. Bylaws adopted June 14, 1875, stated: “It shall be the purpose and object of this Society to assist the sick and bury its deceased members, to work for the maintenance of a choir, and to give literary and social entertainments.” For a time, it appears there were two classes of members: the singers and the ordinary members, who probably joined for the social activities and to take advantage of the benefits.

The name “Svea Society” did not survive long. One attempt to change it, to “The Swedish Union,” failed, but at the meeting of September 6, 1875, the membership abandoned Svea in favor of “The Swedish Society of San Francisco” .... The Society’s first meetings took place in a building on Montgomery Street, on the present site of the Mills Building. In the years that followed, City Directories show the organization at a variety of downtown locations.<sup>34</sup>

The 1876 city directory listing for the Swedish Society states that it was “Organized September 20, 1875. Numbers of members, eighty. Meets every Monday evening at 71 New Montgomery Street. Objects: To take care of sick members,

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<sup>28</sup> Muriel N. Beroza, *Golden Gate Swedes*, (Yosemite, CA: The Range of Light Works, 2000), 35.

<sup>29</sup> Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center, “Swedish Immigration to North America,” accessed 26 October 2014 from: <http://www.augustana.edu/general-information/swenson-center/swedish-american-immigration-history>

<sup>30</sup> Allan Kastrup, *The Swedish Heritage in America*, (Minneapolis: Swedish Council of America, 1975), 481.

<sup>31</sup> Muriel N. Beroza, *Golden Gate Swedes*, (Yosemite, CA: The Range of Light Works, 2000), 49.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*: 50.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*: 31.

<sup>34</sup> San Francisco Architectural Heritage, “Swedish Society Continues Proud Stewardship of its Historic Home,” *Heritage News*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 3 (May/June 2000), 6-7.

aid the destitute, and bury the dead." Along with these objectives, a later Constitution of the Swedish Society states objectives to "encourage good singing; to arrange literary and social entertainments, and to own and maintain a library for the profit and pleasure of the members."<sup>35</sup>

Nearly all of the early records of the Society were destroyed by the 1906 Earthquake and Fire, but a retrospective published in 1916 by the *San Francisco Chronicle* provides some illumination of the Swedish Society's formation and early years.

At that time there was \$830.30 in the treasury and plenty of enthusiasm in the membership. The early days of the society were marked by numerous pleasant events, such as concerts, dances and picnics. New talent was developed among the singers, and the strangers and relatives from the old country found at once upon their arrival here a warm and earnest reception ... The first meeting place in San Francisco of the old Society of Svea was in Sanders' Hall on New Montgomery Street. Later the Swedish Society met in Irwin Hall on Post Street, Pythian Castle on Market Street, and Alcazar Hall on O'Farrell Street. The early day concerts, entertainments and theatricals were held by the society in Platt's Hall, Odd Fellows' Hall, Turnverein and Saratoga Halls.<sup>36</sup>

The information above is largely confirmed by a history of the Swedish Society which states that the period between 1877 and 1890. "... seems to have been a period of steady growth and increasing membership and financial strength for each passing year. Annual outings, usually held at the old Shell Mound Park ... socials, musicals and theatrical entertainments appear to have been frequent, and, as appears from the programs still in existence, must have furnished the membership with splendid entertainment."<sup>37</sup>

Numerous other Swedish organizations were formed in San Francisco during the late 19th century, including the Swedish Women's Benevolent Society (1874), Swedish American Political Club (1890), The Swedish Gymnastic

Club (1894), Swedish Drama Society (1895), and the Swedish Ladies Society (1896).<sup>38</sup> A number of Swedish religious institutions were also established—all of them in the South of Market. In 1884, Swedish immigrants purchased a lot at Mission and 9<sup>th</sup> Street and erected the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Ebenezer Church. The Mission Covenant Church, established in 1877, moved into a former German church located at Jessie and Sixth streets in the late 1880s. The Covenant Church also operated the Seaman's Home at Drumm and Commercial streets. In 1897, the Swedish Baptist Church constructed a new church on 10<sup>th</sup> Street in the South of Market.<sup>39</sup>

One of the most important developments for the Swedish community was the establishment of *Vestkusten* (The West Coast), a Swedish language newspaper launched in 1886. Originally published by Pastor Johannes Telleen of the Ebenezer Church, and subsequently by Alrik G. Spencer, the paper was acquired in 1894 by Ernst Skarstedt and Alexander Olsson, both of whom had previously worked on the newspaper's staff. In 1897 Olsson assumed sole ownership, and over the ensuing decades established *Vestkusten* as the paper of record for the Bay Area's Swedish population. Through *Vestkusten*, Olsson documented births, deaths and marriages, advertised commercial comings



Swedish Society of San Francisco membership card, 1901.  
(Collections of the San Francisco Public Library)

<sup>35</sup> "Objects of the Society are Explained," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 9, 1916, 19.

<sup>36</sup> "Swedish Society is a Growing Organization – Big Fraternal Body Strongly Established Here," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 9, 1916, 19.

<sup>37</sup> Swedish Society of San Francisco, *The Swedish Society's Golden Jubilee 1875-1925*, (San Francisco, Swedish Society of San Francisco, October 1925, 15.

<sup>38</sup> Muriel N. Beroza, *Golden Gate Swedes*, (Yosemite, CA: The Range of Light Works, 2000), 62-64.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*: 42-45.

and goings, and kept his readers apprised of community events and celebrations.<sup>40</sup> Olsson would also serve as president of the Swedish Society from 1903 to 1905.

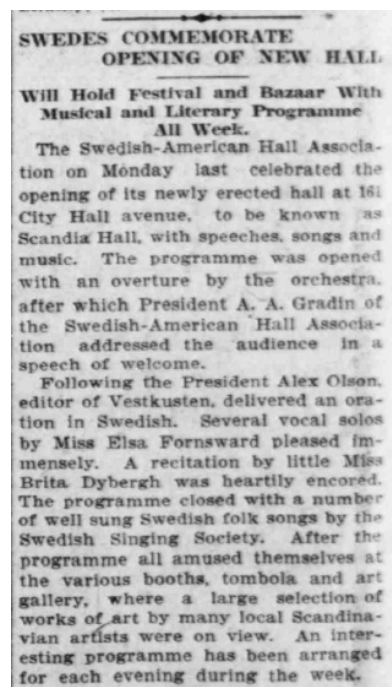
The most important annual event for the Swedish community was the Midsummer Festival, which provided a symbolic bond between immigrants in the new world and their ancestral home. The prominence of the Midsummer Festival was such that the a number of Swedish organizations formed a committee to organize festivities for a Sweden Day, held May 14, 1894 during the Midwinter Fair in Golden Gate Park. The event included a parade of Swedish societies, as well as a concert given by the Swedish orchestra and Swedish male chorus.<sup>41</sup> According to a pamphlet prepared for the Swedish Society's golden jubilee, over 6,000 Swedes participated, marking Sweden Day as "the first time on the Pacific Coast that Swedish people gathered in such great numbers to celebrate."<sup>42</sup>

An outgrowth of the organizing committee was the founding of the Swedish American Patriotic League—heavily promoted by Alexander Olsson in *Vestkusten*—which would provide a central organization to promote similar events. Initially, the group consisted of 26 delegates from 10 organizations, of which the Swedish Society was the oldest and largest.<sup>43</sup> The League was also instrumental in forming the Swedish-American Hall Association, incorporated in 1898.<sup>44</sup> As with the League, The Swedish-American Hall Association was comprised of members of various Swedish societies in San Francisco and Alameda County, including the new Swedish Society of Oakland, formed in 1901 as Branch No. 1 of the Swedish Society of San Francisco.<sup>45</sup> In October 1902, the Swedish-American Hall Association hosted a bazaar with the proceeds to be credited in "equal shares to the several societies participating."<sup>46</sup>

In April 1904, the Swedish-American Hall Association celebrated the opening of a new building known as Scandia Hall and located at 161 City Hall Avenue near what is today the intersection of Grove and Larkin streets in the Civic Center area. Among the speakers was Alexander Olsson, editor of *Vestkusten*, and a program of songs was sung by the Swedish Singing Society.<sup>47</sup> At the time of its construction, Scandia Hall served as headquarters for the Swedish Society, as well as the home for its library.<sup>48</sup> Research did not reveal any photographs of Scandia Hall, but the 1905 Sanborn map shows it as a two-and-a-half story brick structure with lodge rooms on the second floor. At the rear, the building was connected to another brick building facing Market Street which included a saloon on the ground floor and a dance hall on the second story. The southwest corner of the old City Hall stood immediately across the street, while adjacent to the west was the California Pottery Works.

Less than two years later, Scandia Hall was destroyed by one of the numerous fires that broke out following the 1906 Earthquake. Its destruction offered an opportunity for the Swedish Society of San Francisco—which previously had been only one of several societies involved in the construction of Scandia Hall—to construct its own facility. As related in *Heritage News*:

In April 1906, their [the Swedish Society of San Francisco] meeting place, Skandia Hall, on City Hall Avenue, fell to the flames on the first day of the fire that followed the great earthquake. With it, the



San Francisco Call, May 4, 1904

<sup>40</sup> Ibid: 45-46.

<sup>41</sup> "For Old Sweden," *The Morning Call*, May 15, 1894, 4.

<sup>42</sup> Swedish Society of San Francisco, *The Swedish Society's Golden Jubilee 1975-1925*, (San Francisco, Swedish Society of San Francisco, October 1925, 15.

<sup>43</sup> Ted Olsson, "The Swedish American Patriotic League, A Historical Perspective on the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary," accessed November 7, 2014 from <http://www.sveadal.org/#/history/cee5>.

<sup>44</sup> *Sacramento Daily Union* "Articles of Incorporation," June 10, 1898.

<sup>45</sup> Muriel N. Beroza, *Golden Gate Swedes*, (Yosemite, CA: The Range of Light Works, 2000), 64.

<sup>46</sup> *San Francisco Call*, "Swedish Societies Hold Bazaar," October 7, 1902.

<sup>47</sup> *San Francisco Call*, "Swedes Commemorate Opening of New Hall," May 4, 1904.

<sup>48</sup> Muriel N. Beroza, *Golden Gate Swedes*, (Yosemite, CA: The Range of Light Works, 2000), 57.

conflagration consumed all the Society's papers and other property, including its cherished library, begun in 1877 with a handsome \$500 appropriation to purchase books. The Swedish Lutheran Church, at 15th and Dolores, which itself had barely escaped the fire, generously offered a temporary home to the Society. The disaster focused the members' attention on having a permanent home. The Society's official history states, "For many years it had been a latent wish, an unrealized ambition; but catastrophe and adversity had brought the question to the fore; it was to be now or never." With the generous assistance of a member of the Swedish community who did not even belong to the society, and insurance money, paid in full by a Swedish company, the Society began its recovery.<sup>49</sup>



*The Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Ebenezer Church at 15th and Dolores streets in 1906. Dolores Street had been used as a fire break in the aftermath of the 1906 Earthquake. (California Historical Society)*

The events of 1906 were also recounted in a retrospective article about the Swedish Society published by the *San Francisco Chronicle* in 1916:

At the time of the fire of April, 1906, the Swedish Society was comfortably situated in Scandia Hall ... The conflagration swept away all the records of the society, furniture in its rooms, regalia and a library of several thousand volumes. But the funds of the organization, amounting at that time to \$25,000 were on deposit and did not disappear in the flames. Not disconcerted in the least by the calamity, but, in fact, bound together in closer friendship by the disaster which affected all, the members immediately reassembled and for some time conducted their meetings in the Swedish Lutheran Church, Fifteenth and Dolores streets. The society did not lose a member during these days of calamity. Prompt aid was given to those affiliated with the organization and also to their countrymen. Two months after the fire the building committee of the order recommended the purchase of the fifty-foot lot 2174 Market, near Sanchez Street .... The building committee was composed of the following: R. Dybergh, Alfred Lundquist, Alex Olsson, N. Trubeck, O. Sjorgren, O. Pearson and Emil Hogberg.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>49</sup> San Francisco Architectural Heritage, "Swedish Society Continues Proud Stewardship of its Historic Home," *Heritage News*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 3 (May/June 2000), 6-7.

<sup>50</sup> "Members Give Aid to Brothers Sick or in Distress," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 9, 1916, 19.

The decision to purchase the lot on Market Street was made in cooperation with other Swedish organizations, including the resurrected Swedish Hall Association, which expressed a desire to erect a new meeting place so long as the Swedish Society could furnish the funds for the building site.<sup>51</sup> According to Muriel Beroza in her book, *Golden Gate Swedes*, the Swedish Society of San Francisco had sufficient funds to acquire the lot for a new building, but not enough to construct the building they envisioned:

The property was purchased on July 26, 1906 for \$12,000. The old building on the property was sold and moved and a new building was erected .... The Swedish American Hall was completed in December 1907 at a cost of \$42,720 in addition to the original price of the lot. The society's funds were now \$21,285.41, not enough for the property and a new building. Luckily, one of the more affluent members of the Swedish colony, Erik O. Lindblom of Alaska Gold Rush fame, lent the Society \$40,000 to complete the Swedish meeting hall. By the 25th anniversary of the building in 1925 [sic], the mortgage was paid off, including the 2% interest rate. At the dedication ceremony on December 22, 1907, the Society rewarded the generous Lindblom with the first honorary membership in the Swedish Society. It is remarkable that the building was erected with such speed. The cornerstone was laid in July of that year complete with a copper box of memorabilia including the by-laws, a list of the membership, copies of the local newspapers and the Swedish paper *Vestkusten*. The Hall was ready for occupancy by the end of the year and was available to the Swedish people. The building was promptly put to use as a meeting place by all of the now numerous Swedish organizations, a function which it still serves to this day.<sup>52</sup>



Detail from a circa 1910 photo collage celebrating the construction of the Swedish American Hall. Note Erik Lindblom at center, architect August Nordin at center right, and *Vestkusten* publisher Alexander Olsson at lower left. (Collection of the Swedish Society of San Francisco)

<sup>51</sup> Swedish Society of San Francisco, *The Swedish Society's Golden Jubilee 1875-1925*, (San Francisco, Swedish Society of San Francisco, October 1925, 20.

<sup>52</sup> Muriel N. Beroza, *Golden Gate Swedes*, (Yosemite, CA: The Range of Light Works, 2000), 58-59.

### Scandinavians in Upper Market

Along with the Swedes, the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century was also marked by large-scale immigration from other Scandinavian countries. Initially, most Scandinavians settled in the Midwest, but sizeable West Coast populations were also established in California and Washington. Between 1890 and 1910, it is estimated that some 150,000 Swedes, Norwegians and Danes settled along the Pacific Coast, many of whom worked in lumber, shipbuilding, and fishing industries. Many others worked as carpenters and masons.<sup>53</sup> In California, the Swedish population nearly doubled during the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, rising from approximately 14,500 to 26,000 persons between 1900 and 1910.<sup>54</sup>

When the Swedish American Hall was completed, it stood in the midst of an emerging Scandinavian enclave that had begun to coalesce in the Mission Dolores, Duboce Triangle and Upper Market areas at the turn of the century. With the exception of an older Mexican-American residential enclave adjacent to Mission Dolores, these areas were largely developed between circa 1885 and 1915. The catalyst for sustained development of the area was the opening of new mass transit routes, including two new lines developed in 1883: the Market Street Cable Railroad's Blue Line, which ran out Market Street to Valencia Street, as well as the Red Line, which ran out Haight Street to Golden Gate Park. These were followed by the White Line, which opened in 1888 and ran out Market Street to Castro Street. These lines provided a connection with the City's downtown core, and by the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the blocks in what are today the Duboce Triangle, Mission Dolores and Castro neighborhoods were in various stages of being built out.

A major impetus in the development of the Scandinavian enclave in the area was the 1906 Earthquake and Fire, which displaced tens of thousands of residents living in the South of Market—including a substantial portion of the city's Scandinavian population. Even before the calamity of 1906, however, two major touchstones of the Scandinavian community had already relocated to the area. The Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Ebenezer Church moved from the South of Market to 15<sup>th</sup> and Dolores streets in 1904. Also nearby was St. Ansgar's Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church at 152 Church Street, constructed in 1905.

Given the presence of these existing institutions, it was natural for many displaced Scandinavians to relocate to the area, much of which had been spared through heroic firefighting efforts which confined the conflagration to the blocks east of Dolores Street.<sup>55</sup> The *Vestkusten* newspaper likewise moved to the area shortly after the 1906 Earthquake. Publisher Alexander Olsson purchased a house at 30 Sharon Street, converting the downstairs to house offices and the printing presses. The paper would remain at this address until 1928, when new office space was acquired at 253 Church Street.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Kay Melchisedech Olson, *Norwegian, Swedish and Danish Immigrants 1820-1920*, (Mankato, Minnesota: Capstone Press, 2002): 21-22.

<sup>54</sup> Allan Kastrup, *The Swedish Heritage in America*, (Minneapolis: Swedish Council of America, 1975), 503.

<sup>55</sup> This section is derived from Page & Turnbull, Upper Market Street Commercial Historic District DPR 523D form: Market & Octavia Area Plan Historic Resource Survey (San Francisco Planning Department, June, 2007).

<sup>56</sup> Muriel N. Beroza, "From Ebenezer to Vestkusten," *Nordstjernen*, accessed November 7, 2014 from [http://www.nordstjernen.com/news/pacific\\_states/1166/](http://www.nordstjernen.com/news/pacific_states/1166/)



*The new home of the Vestkusten newspaper at 30 Sharon Street, 1908. (Nordstjerner)*

In the wake of the disaster, numerous other Swedish and Scandinavian churches relocated to the area, as well as a few recreational facilities and social service organizations. Over time, the local Scandinavian community grew to be served by an array of institutions, most of which were concentrated west of Mission Street, north of 18th Street, east of Castro Street and south of Duboce Avenue. These included the following:

- Swedish Lutheran Ebenezer Church (200 Dolores Street)
- Swedish American Hall (2168-2174 Market Street)
- St. Ansgar Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church (152 Church Street)
- Swedish Evangelical Mission Church / Mission Tabernacle (455 Dolores Street)
- First Swedish Baptist Church (3459 17<sup>th</sup> Street)
- First Swedish Methodist Episcopal Church (439 Guerrero Street)
- Norwegian Lutheran Church (407 Dolores Street)
- Norwegian Singing Society (431 Duboce Avenue)
- Swedish Home for Girls (3744 17<sup>th</sup> Street)
- Central Methodist (Norwegian & Danish ) Church (750 14<sup>th</sup> Street)
- *Vestkusten* Swedish newspaper (30 Sharon Street)
- Finnila's Finnish Baths (4032 17<sup>th</sup> Street)
- Swedish Athletic Club (3276 16<sup>th</sup> Street)



1930 view of the Swedish Tabernacle at 455 Dolores Street, constructed in 1908. (San Francisco Public Library Historical Photo Collection)



1930 view of the Swedish Methodist Church at 439 Guerrero Street, constructed in 1909. (San Francisco Public Library Historical Photo Collection)

As discussed in *Golden Gate Swedes*, a number of commercial enterprises were also established in the area and the “whole neighborhood had acquired a definite Swedish flavor.”<sup>57</sup> In addition to businesses such as the Cafe Du Nord and Swedish Mercantile Company, both located in the Swedish American Hall (see following section), some of the neighborhood businesses established in the vicinity over the years included George Holmgren’s cafe and bakery, Aron Swanson’s barber shop, and Linde’s Market at 15th and Noe streets. The advertising pages of *Vestkusten* also point to a strong concentration of Scandinavian-owned businesses in the immediate vicinity of the Swedish American Hall.

<p><b>OKERBLAD'S</b> FRED. JACOBSON, Egare. Gross- och minuthandlare i alla slags Viner och Spirituosa. 718 14th Street, nära Church. Telefon Park 5977</p> <p>Specialiteter: Falu Pomeransbränvin, Reymersholms absolut rent, Vadstena sädesbränvin, Cederlunds &amp; Söners, Wilken &amp; Tegners samt Arracs Punsch bästa kvalitet. Dubbla malörtsdroppar, Batavia Arrac, Carnegies Porter m. m.</p> <p>Agentur f. Castle Rock mineralvatten. Sänd beställning pr bref eller postkort.</p>	<p><b>CAFÉ DU NORD</b> I Svenska Hallbyggnadens Källarvåning, 2170 Market St., SOM BOES AF “THE SWEDISH - AM. MERCANTILE CO.”, är nu öppen för publiken. Alla välkomna! Alla slags importerade och inhemska Viner och Likörer. Skandinaviska och Tyska delikatess-rätter serveras.</p>
<p><b>H. Brunells Urhandel</b> 2150 MARKET STREET. Telefon Market 2984 Fick- och Väggar af alla slag till resonabla priser. Särskild upp- märksamhet ägnas första klas- sens Ur-reparationer.</p>	<p>R. M. DONNELLY C. M. BECK. <b>RÖKA RED SEAL CIGAR</b> Tillverkas af RED SEAL CIGAR CO., 133 Hartford St. Telefon Market 232 mellan Castro och Noe, 18th och 19th.</p>
<p><b>N. Nelsons Specerihandel</b> Viner och Likörer. Gods levereras överallt i staden 300 Church St. hörn. af 15th, S. F. Tel. Market 922.</p>	

Detail from the advertising section of *Vestkusten*, September 24, 1908. Note that all of the businesses shown are concentrated within a few blocks of the Swedish American Hall.

<sup>57</sup> Muriel N. Beroza, *Golden Gate Swedes*, (Yosemite, CA: The Range of Light Works, 2000), 59.



During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Swedish and Scandinavian organizations also formed in the Mission, Potrero Hill and Bernal Heights areas, including the Swedish Lutheran Emanuel Church on Cortland Avenue near Gates Street, the Swedish Finnish Lutheran Church at 1303 Florida Street, the Swedish Salem Baptist Church at 856 Capp Street, and the Swedish Lutheran Church at 1330 Vermont Street.

## USE OF THE SWEDISH AMERICAN HALL

The Swedish American Hall was designed as combination commercial building and social hall. Income was raised from renting its commercial spaces, as well as by leasing the lodge rooms to a variety of fraternal organizations. Nearly all of the interior lodge rooms were given names associated with Norse mythology. For example, the Odin lodge room is named for the chief god in Norse mythology, while the building's principal hall is named for Odin's wife, the fertility goddess Freja. The Balder lodge room is named for the Nordic god of peace, while the Verdandi club room is named for one of the three *norns*, or "fates." Likewise, the Valhalla banquet room is named for a mythological hall of the afterlife. By contrast, Svea is a Swedish female name that can be translated simply as "Swede," or as the female personification of Sweden.<sup>58</sup>

The Swedish American Hall opened its doors in December 1907. At that time it contained two storefronts: 2168 Market Street to the east, and 2172 Market Street to the west. The lodge rooms were accessed from the primary entry addressed as 2174 Market Street, and the Cafe Du Nord was addressed as 2170 Market Street.

### Early Commercial Tenants

During its first two decades of operation, the building's most durable commercial tenants were the Cafe Du Nord, liquor merchants, and a shoe store. Cafe Du Nord opened no later than September 1908. A letter in the Swedish Society archives dated 18 September 1907 from Thomas Hain to the Hall Committee states that: "I hereby make application for the renting of the Basement in the Swedish Hall Building, 2174 Market Sts to be fitted up by me as a first class Saloon and Billiard Parlor." It is unclear whether Hain served as the original proprietor, as an advertisement for the Cafe Du Nord the following year shows Alex Pihlstrom as manager. Of interest, Pihlstrom was also a musical director for numerous Swedish singing groups during this period.



Circa 1910-1915 view of the Swedish American Hall. Note the sign for Cafe Du Nord. (Ted Olsson Collection)

<sup>58</sup> Muriel N. Beroza, "The Swedish American Hall in San Francisco," *The Swedish-American Historical Quarterly*, Vol. LVIII, No. 4, October 2007, 276.

Regardless of management, there was a clear ongoing business connection between the Cafe Du Nord and liquor merchants operating from the 2168 Market Street storefront. As related in *Golden Gate Swedes*: “The Cafe Du Nord was first owned by the Swedish Mercantile Association. The president of the company was August Gradin and the manager was Mrs. Nels Cronfelt. Gradin was a painter and served as president of the Building Fund for Scandia Hall.”<sup>59</sup> A September 1908 advertisement in *Vestkusten* lists the Swedish-American Mercantile Company, dealers in wholesale liquor, at the same address as the Cafe Du Nord: 2170 Market Street. By late November of that year, a similar advertisement states that the company had recently opened its store at 2168 Market Street where they provided “every kind of wine and spirit, both domestic and imported.”<sup>60</sup>



September 3, 1908 advertisement in the *Vestkusten* newspaper for the Cafe Du Nord and the Swedish-American Mercantile Company. The translated text<sup>61</sup> reads in part that: “In the Swedish Hall building’s basement, 2170 Market St., The Swedish-Am. Mercantile Co. is now open to the public. All welcome! All kinds of imported and domestic wines and liqueurs. Scandinavian and German delicacy dishes served.

Subsequent advertisements from early 1909 show the Swedish-American Mercantile Company as being located at both 2168 and 2170 Market Street. In the 1909 and 1912 city directories, however, the company is shown only with an address of 2168 Market Street. But again in 1914 the city directory shows the company as sharing an address with the Cafe Du Nord. In addition, Nils Cronfelt, liquors, is also shown at the same address. In 1920, the Cafe Du Nord is shown as sharing space with Nils Cronfelt, but there is no mention of the Swedish American Mercantile Company.

Subsequent advertisements in *Vestkusten* show that the Swedish American Mercantile Company served as agents for a number of European brands. A July 1, 1909 advertisement states: “Swedish American Mercantile Company (Swedish Import Company) Dealing in all kinds of wines & spirits wholesale and retail. Agents for Stillahafskusten, for Tegner & Wilckens Punch, Carlsten Porter and Bisquit Dubousche & Co. authentic French cognac. ‘Blue and Gold’ whiskey punch and our own well-known brands.” In addition to selling liquor, the Swedish American Mercantile Company also carried specialty foods. Advertisements for the Cafe Du Nord show that it likewise served ethnic foods, such as herring breakfasts and oysters. The Cafe also featured a reading room and billiards.

<sup>59</sup> Muriel N. Beroza, *Golden Gate Swedes*, (Yosemite, CA: The Range of Light Works, 2000), 58-59.

<sup>60</sup> *Vestkusten*, November 26, 1908.

<sup>61</sup> The wording is likely not exact. Translations made using Google Translate.



March 25, 1909 advertisement in the Vestkusten newspaper for the Swedish-American Mercantile Company. The text reads in part that the company "recommends its well-stocked inventory of absolutely first-rate, domestic and imported wines and spirits. We also desire to point out that we will soon combine our business with a chosen stock of salable groceries and delicacies"



November 19, 1908 advertisement in the Vestkusten newspaper. The text reads "In the Swedish Hall building's basement, 2170 Market Street. First class bar and grill. Herring breakfasts, oysters and all kinds of delicacies served. Reading room, billiards, etc. Axel Pihlstrom, proprietor".

The other longstanding tenant during the early years of the Swedish American Hall was a shoe store, sometimes named as Svea Shoes, at the 2172 Market Street storefront. The shop was opened in early 1908 by C. J. Larson, who resided nearby 2079 15<sup>th</sup> Street. City directories, however, show Charles Anderson as operating the shoe store from at least 1909 through 1925. By 1929, the store had been taken over by Charles Leandro, and apparently closed during the early 1930s when it was replaced by a delicatessen known as "Nordic Health Foods." Another important figure in the Swedish American Hall's operation was Charles Ramberg, who served as a lifelong superintendent of the Swedish Hall from its beginning in 1907 until his death in 1935.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>62</sup> Muriel N. Beroza, *Golden Gate Swedes*, (Yosemite, CA: The Range of Light Works, 2000), 58-59.



April 15, 1915 advertisement in the *Vestkusten* newspaper for Charles Anderson's Shoe Store (Svea Shoes) at 2172 Market Street. The Swedish text reads: "New stock of all kinds of footwear for men, women and children. Repairs of all kinds of footwear made quickly and cheaply."

### Fraternal Organizations

While the building's commercial tenants provided a vital source of income, the Swedish American Hall's primary purpose was to provide meeting space for an array of social and fraternal organizations. As discussed previously, most of the meeting rooms were named after figures in Norse mythology. The names of these rooms also appear to have been specifically associated with some of the fraternal societies that used them. These included the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F.) Odin Lodge No. 393, formed in 1904 from the Knights of the Golden Banner, as well as a women's auxiliary of the I.O.O.F., Freja Rebekah Lodge No. 284, organized in 1905. According to the Swedish Society's golden jubilee history, these two organizations were the first to apply for space in the building, and practically all the rooms were rented prior to the building's completion.<sup>63</sup> The Balder lodge room appears to have served as the meeting space for Balder Lodge No. 393 of the Free and Accepted Masons, formed in 1908.



Early 20<sup>th</sup> century view of the Balder lodge room  
(Ted Olsson Collection)

<sup>63</sup> Swedish Society of San Francisco, *The Swedish Society's Golden Jubilee 1975-1925*, (San Francisco, Swedish Society of San Francisco, October 1925), 23-24.

Other longstanding users of the lodge rooms included the Vasa Fylgia Lodge No. 119, formed in 1907 as a branch of the largest Swedish American fraternal organization in America.<sup>64</sup> City directories also point to extended use of the building by parlors of the Native Sons of the Golden West, Native Daughters of the Golden West, and the Ancient Order of Druids. A list of occupants, including the various fraternal organizations using the Swedish American Hall, is included as Appendix A.

Another longstanding feature of the building was its use by various singing groups, especially the Swedish Singing Society. As with other fraternal organizations, the singing group provided a social outlet for members, while also providing a link to the homeland. As related by Irving Babow in a history of the Swedish Singing Society of San Francisco:

The interest in the mother country and its folk music is sentimental and poetic rather than political ... The nostalgic Swedish chorus, unlike the protest type of singing society found in some other immigrant groups, does not perform songs which reflect immigrant experiences in this country, advocate changes in the institutions or social order, or move outside its immigrant community in its identifications. The stress is on kindling and keeping alive pleasant memories of the homeland .... Both in its social organization and in the content of the folk music which it performs and helps to keep alive, the singing club is a way of transplanting and maintaining in the immigrant community part of the cultural environment of the homeland.<sup>65</sup>



*Detail from a photo of the United Swedish Singers of the Pacific Coast in front of the Swedish American Hall, June 1918. Note the awning-style storefront transom windows and sign for Acme Beer at far right above the 2168 Market Street storefront. (Collections of the Swedish Society)*

<sup>64</sup> Muriel N. Beroza, *Golden Gate Swedes*, (Yosemite, CA: The Range of Light Works, 2000). 66-67.

<sup>65</sup> Irving Babow, "The Swedish Singing Society of San Francisco," *The Chronicle*, Vol. 1. No. 3 (Autumn 1954), 6.

As discussed previously, singing had been a significant aspect of ethnic identity for Swedish immigrants in San Francisco, and a singing group was at the heart of the formation of the Swedish Society. In 1892 an exclusively singing society was organized, and from the turn of the century through 1933 was under the direction of Axel Pihlstrom, who also directed Danish and Norwegian male choruses in San Francisco.<sup>66</sup> Other men's singing groups were formed in Oakland. These groups also formed a local federation, the United Scandinavian Singers, for pan-Scandinavian celebrations, such as Leif Ericson Day. During World War II, the Swedish American Patriotic League joined with Scandinavian singers in a program to aid "Wings for Norway."

During the first decade of its existence, the Swedish American Hall also played a vital role as the central meeting place for organizing the construction of a Swedish Pavilion at the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition (PPIE). Although this world's fair was ostensibly held to celebrate the opening of the Panama Canal, it also offered an opportunity for San Francisco to celebrate its recovery from the 1906 Earthquake. The fair opened in February 1915 in what is today the Marina District, featuring scores of halls showcasing technological achievements, as well as pavilions representing various U.S. states and nations from around the globe. By the time the fair closed in December 1915, more than 15 million persons had attended.

When San Francisco was chosen to host the fair in 1911, the Swedish American Patriotic League soon formed an exhibition committee to work on fundraising for the construction of a Swedish pavilion. In addition to these efforts, William Matson, owner of the Matson Navigation Company and Swedish Consul General at San Francisco, announced in 1913 that the Swedish government was appropriating \$160,000 for construction of the pavilion.<sup>67</sup> Ferdinand Boberg of Stockholm, architect of the Malmo Exhibition of 1914, was engaged to design the building, with August Nordin serving as the supervising architect on site.



*The Swedish Pavilion at the 1915 Panama Pacific International Exposition  
(San Francisco Public Library Historical Photograph Collection)*

<sup>66</sup> Ibid: 3-7.

<sup>67</sup> Frank M. Todd, *The Story of the Exposition: Being the Official History of the International Celebration Held in San Francisco in 1915, Volume II*, (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons The Knickerbocker Press, 1921), 117.

Groundbreaking for the pavilion took place on May 7, 1914, but its construction was beset by difficulties, not least of which was the outbreak of World War I. The distance between San Francisco and Sweden also complicated communications and made it difficult to resolve problems quickly as they arose. Through all of this, it appears that August Nordin played a leading role in the project's success. As related by *Vestkusten* on June 24, 1915:

One must consider the tangled process for approval of the drawings by the exhibition board and other horrors to a degree more onerous, along with an appropriation made by parliament that had to be used with extreme frugality. Architect Nordin was the man to bring the great work to fruition, despite all the difficulties. King Gustaf V honored him on the opening day of the Swedish exhibition building by appointing him Knight of the Royal Vasa Order, First Class.

The Chairman of the Swedish-American Exhibition Committee, Richard Bergstrom, as well as secretary A. O. Lindstrom, Alexander Olsson, and builders Arvid H. Bergstrom and Eric Lange, were similarly honored.<sup>68</sup> It is interesting to note that August Nordin was not the only member of his family recognized for his contributions to the P.P.I.E. His sister, Alice, was awarded a silver medal at the fair for her sculpture of a Fisherman's wife.

As described by a contemporary reviewer, the Swedish Pavilion was built of "gray stone in the style of a country manor in the sixteenth century, with a tower reminiscent of an old church in Dalecarlia. The famous design of the three crowns, which may be seen everywhere in Sweden ... has been used effectively for a broad stone frieze running at the base of the tower, as well as for interior decorations."<sup>69</sup> Based on the Official Swedish Catalogue produced for the fair, the Swedish Hall featured a number of large rooms where visitors could see examples of work by various Swedish companies and artists, as well as learn about Sweden's culture, natural resources and industry.<sup>70</sup> A Sweden Week was held at the fair from June 20-26, with activities that included "motion pictures from Sweden, a Midsummer's Eve presentation, and a parade from Van Ness Avenue to the fairgrounds."<sup>71</sup> The Swedish Singing Society of San Francisco also arranged a singing festival during the exposition featuring the United Swedish Singers of the Pacific Coast, described as "one of the greatest efforts ever made by Swedish organizations in the United States."<sup>72</sup>

Throughout 1915, the Swedish American Hall received numerous Swedish visitors, and according to a golden jubilee history, "Banquets and festivities of all kinds were frequent, and it might not be too boastful to say that all citizens of San Francisco of Swedish birth or descent, whether members of the Swedish Society or not, pointed with a great amount of pride to the beautiful building at 2174 Market Street."<sup>73</sup> An important outgrowth of the fair were continued fundraising efforts by the Swedish American Patriotic League to purchase Sveadal, a recreational and retirement facility located on 110 acres in Uvas Canyon near Morgan Hill. The land was purchased in 1926 and continues to be used today.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> *Vestkusten*, March 4, 1915.

<sup>69</sup> "The North at the Golden Gate," *The American-Scandinavian Review*, Vol. III Containing Issues of 1915, (New York: American-Scandinavian Foundation, 1915), 221-222.

<sup>70</sup> *Official Swedish Catalogue Panama-Pacific International Exposition San Francisco 1915*, (Stockholm: Centraltryckeriet, 1915).

<sup>71</sup> Muriel N. Beroza, *Golden Gate Swedes*, (Yosemite, CA: The Range of Light Works, 2000), 83.

<sup>72</sup> "Swedish Society is a Growing Organization Big Fraternal Body Strongly Established Here," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 9, 1916, 19.

<sup>73</sup> San Francisco Architectural Heritage, "Swedish Society Continues Proud Stewardship of its Historic Home," *Heritage News*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 3 (May/June 2000), 6-7.

<sup>74</sup> Muriel N. Beroza, *Golden Gate Swedes*, (Yosemite, CA: The Range of Light Works, 2000), 85.





Early 20<sup>th</sup> century view of Freja Hall. Note the Masonic symbols hanging from the balcony.  
(Ted Olsson Collection)

In July 1916 the *San Francisco Chronicle* published a feature article on the Swedish Society entitled, "Swedish Society is a Growing Organization, Big Fraternal Body Strongly Established Here." It included a brief history of the organization and its founders, as well as a discussion of the events of 1906 and the subsequent construction of the Swedish American Hall. The article states that the number of first generation Swedish immigrants residing in San Francisco, Oakland, Alameda and Berkeley at that time was estimated at more than 16,000. It also states that "any able-bodied, morally and physically sound man, born of parents speaking the Swedish language, is eligible for membership. The initiation fee is \$5."<sup>75</sup> At that time, the *Chronicle* noted the financial health of the organization, which included assets of \$74,000 in addition to the value of the Swedish American Hall and lot, estimated at \$60,000.

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<sup>75</sup> "Swedish Society is a Growing Organization Big Fraternal Body Strongly Established Here," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 9, 1916, 19.

# Swedish Society Is a Growing Organization Big Fraternal Body Strongly Established Here

## MEMBERS GIVE AID TO BROTHERS SICK OR IN DISTRESS

Fraternity Had Its Origin in Love of Songs and Literature of Fatherland

**L**OVE for the song, the literature, the noble history and the traditions of the land of their birth inspired six men, residents of San Francisco, forty-one years ago, to organize a society which today is known as the Swedish Society of San Francisco.

The history of this society, or order, dates back to April 12, 1874. The organizers' idea was to bring together the singers of their nationality living here at the time. They not only succeeded in doing this, but they laid the foundation for a strong and successful fraternal organization which has accomplished great good and which is increasing in power as the years roll by. Uninterrupted success has been the good fortune of the society. Its social features alone are a great pleasure to its members, while a great many thousands of dollars have been paid out to members in illness, or distress.

### NAMES OF THE FOUNDERS

The founders were P. E. Erickson, Rudolf Armstrong, G. A. Hall, J. P. Johnson, C. T. H. Larsson and Sven Ekland, all well-known, substantial and respectable citizens. The original society was called the Society of Five. On July 12, 1876, the first regular meeting was held with N. E. Jansson as president, A. K. Kjolstrand, vice-president, and J. T. Link, secretary.

September 1, 1876, the Society of Five went out of existence and its 43 members formed an incorporated organization, the Swedish Society of San Francisco. At that time there was \$100.00 in the treasury and plenty of enthusiasm on the membership.

The early days of the society were marked by numerous pleasant events, such as concerts, dances, etc. New talent was developed among the singers, and the singers and relatives from the old country found at once upon their arrival here a warm and almost reception.

### FIRST BIG PUBLIC EVENT

So the society progressed, making no halt for time or necessity, and it is recorded that its first big public event was Swedish Day at the Winter Fair, celebrated May 31, 1874. Dr. A. O. Lindstrom was master of the occasion and Dr. Frederick Westberg, orator.

The society at that period encouraged Swedish gymnastics, and in 1882 a number of its members organized an athletic club. Previous to this time, in 1861, the Swedish Ladies' Society was formed. Although independent of the Swedish Society, it has proved a most valuable auxiliary and has enjoyed a prosperous career.

The Swedish Society of Oakland, a branch of that of San Francisco, came into existence in 1891. It now has a membership of 254, which includes a large number of the most influential Swedish residents of that city.

The first meeting place in San Francisco of the old Society of Five was in Sanders' Hall on New Montgomery street. Later the Swedish Society met in Trott's Hall on Post street, Pythian Castle on Market street and Alexander Hall on O'Farrell street. The early day concerts, entertainments and theatricals were held by the society in Platt's Hall, Old Hollow's Hall, Turner and Soratoga halls.

### SOCIETY NIGHTS DIMINISHED

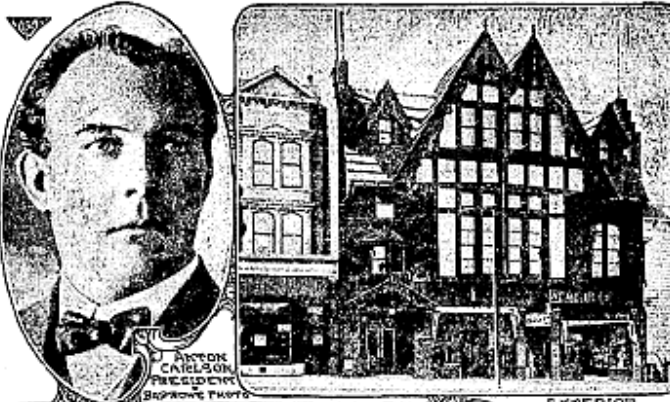
At the time of the fire of April, 1895, the Swedish Society was temporarily situated in Scandian Hall, 201 City Hall avenue.

The conflagration swept away all the records of the society, furniture, its files, regalia and a library of several thousand volumes. Out the funds of the organization, amounting at that time to \$2,500 were a deposit and did not disappear in the flames. Notwithstanding all, the members immediately reassembled and for some time continued their meetings in the Swedish Lutheran Church, Fifteenth and Debrae streets.

The society did not have a number during these days of calamity. Prompt aid was given to those afflicted with the organization and also to their

## OFFICIALS AND HALL OF SWEDISH SOCIETY

High officers of the Swedish Society of San Francisco, an honorary member, and Swedish-American Hall, 2174 Market Street, San Francisco.



## Objects of the Society Are Explained

**T**HE objects of this society are to assist sick members, to bury deceased members or to contribute to their funeral expenses; to encourage the practice of good singing; to arrange literary and social entertainments, and to own and maintain a library for the profit and pleasure of members. From the Constitution of the Swedish Society of San Francisco.

and let are visited at more than \$50,000.

It has been estimated that the number of Swedes residing in San Francisco, Oakland, Alameda and Berkeley who were born in the old country exceeds 10,000. They, with their descendants, constitute a goodly part of the population of the cities mentioned.

## SMALL BEGINNING IN 1875 BECOMES STRONG ORDER

Accomplishes Great Good and Influence Is Increasing With the Years

time there is only one branch, that being Oakland.

No religious nor political questions may be discussed at the meetings of the society.

The constitution, by-laws and ritual of the society have been printed both in the Swedish and English languages—in English for the benefit of those members who, while descendants of Swedish-speaking parents, do not themselves read that language.

There has been a revival of interest among those affiliated with the society in Swedish gymnastics. Plans have been made by the younger element to establish such a firm foundation a club which will make its progress felt in the athletic world.

### SINGING IS FAVORED

Sweden, the land of Jenny Lind and Christian Nilsson, has been called a "singing nation." And it is only a natural consequence that the cherished practice of chorusing singing should be kept up by the people of such a country, even after they have emigrated. Wherever the Swedes have congregated in any large numbers in this country, a male chorus or quartet of more or less prominence is sure to be found among them.

And so it is in the United Swedish Society of the Pacific Coast. It was organized in Portland, Oregon, during the Lewis & Clark Exposition in the year 1905. The local society of this institution is the Swedish Singing Society of San Francisco. The Swedish Chorus of Oakland is also prominent in the united order.

The Swedish-American Patriotic League of California succeeded in securing the Swedish Singing Society of San Francisco, the Swedish Ladies' Society, the Swedish Singing Society, the Swedish Club, the Swedish Relief Society, the Swedish Dramatic Club, the "Odin" Lodge No. 215, F. O. C. 2, the Swedish Lodge, F. O. C. 1, the "Fylgia" Lodge No. 115, V. O. of A., the Swedish-American Patriotic Club, the Swedish Masonic Association, the Singing Society "Sångens Vänner," the Swedish Society of Oakland, the Swedish-American Republican Club of Oakland, the "Teutonic" Lodge, V. O. of A., Oakland, and the Svenska Mäns Chorus, Oakland.

### WORK AT EXPOSITION

The story of Sweden's participation in the Panama-Pacific International Exposition is one of cooperation between the Swedish Government and the Swedish-Americans, urged on to action by the alert and energetic Swedes of San Francisco and California.

The Swedish-American Patriotic League of California took the initiative in the year 1911, and appointed an executive committee to attend to the securing of a Swedish building.

Dr. A. O. Lindstrom was president of this committee; George Larson, vice-president; Alex Olsson, secretary; and O. T. Peterson, treasurer. The plans were carried out most successfully, and the programme of Swedish week, June 20-25, was the most elaborate ever presented to the Swedish people in this part of the country.

In the fall of 1912 the Swedish Government decided to participate in the Panama-Pacific International Exposition. A beautiful building was erected, and it proved one of the most pleasing attractions, not only to the thousands of Swedes who visited the big show, but to people of all countries. It was completed in time for the opening of the fair, February 20, and the dedication was held with proper pomp and ceremony March 2.

In the fall of 1913, the Swedish Singing Society of San Francisco took the initiative in arranging a singing festival during the exposition for the United Swedish Singers of the Pacific Coast. This festival will go down into history as one of the grandest events ever made by Swedish organizations in the United States.

"It has been said of the Swedes that they are among the most loyal of citizens of the United States," said a prominent officer of the Swedish Society a few days ago. "It is a fact that swears, perhaps, than any other people born under a foreign flag they become patriotic citizens of the United States of America. Hence of them are so ready to do this that they may be said to be at fault in forgetting, in such a short time, all about their native land. The Swedes are a splendid people with a grand history. Those who are living under the Stars and Stripes are proud of this country and ready to fight for it at the drop of the hat."

### DUKS ARE TO BE PAID

Members of the Swedish Society of San Francisco who have joined the colors, either with the flint Guard of the regular Army, will be put to an inconvenience as to the payment of dues during their absence in the country's service. The payment of such dues will be made by the society.

Officers of the Swedish Society of San Francisco: president; Alf Tuhrness, vice-president; Harry Sawyer, recording secretary; Albin L. Johnson, financial secretary; J. L. Jacobson, treasurer.

Trustees—Gustave Peterson, Rana Forsberg, John Carlson, Vilhelm Jonsson—Charles Anderson, Charles J. Kilar, Charles Bamberg, Funeral committee—Alexander Olsson, Arthur H. Nelson, William Nelson, E. W. Nelson—J. P. Johnson, John Peterson, August Björner.

Liturgical, Ernest Olson; sergeant-at-arms, Oscar Zachariassen; organist, John Öster; superintendent of Swedish-American Hall, 2174 Market street—Charles Bamberg; physician, Dr. W. H. Wallgren.

Branch societies of the Swedish Society may be organized in localities where the inhabitants of such branches seems favorable. At this

The article was accompanied by photos including a photograph of the exterior of the Swedish American Hall, as well as an interior photograph of the library, today known as the Verdandi room. The latter shows that the inglenook in that room is today virtually unchanged from that time. A grandfather clock shown in the image was donated to the Swedish Society by Eric O. Lindblom and is still located in the building, although no longer in that room.<sup>76</sup> The article concludes with a discussion of Swedish American patriotism, quoting a Swedish Society officer as follows: "It is a fact that sooner, perhaps, than any other people born under a foreign flag, they become patriotic citizens of the United State of America. Some of them are so ready to do this that they may be said to be at fault in forgetting, in such a short time, all about their native land."<sup>77</sup>



*Early 20th century photo of the Odin lodge room.  
Note the original light fixtures, no longer extant.  
(Swedish Society Archives)*

In October of 1925 the Swedish Society of San Francisco celebrated its fifty-year anniversary, memorialized in a booklet entitled *The Swedish Society's Golden Jubilee 1875-1925*. That document notes that the Society then counted 520 active members, and during its existence had paid out more than \$100,000 in sick and burial benefits, as well as donations to members.<sup>78</sup> The progress of the Swedish Society's Oakland branch was also noted, including the construction of "Jenny Lind Hall" in 1915. This building remains extant at 2267 Telegraph Avenue in Oakland, although it today serves as the headquarters for a Buddhist Association.

From the 1920s through the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Swedish American Hall continued to serve as the central meeting place for Swedish social and fraternal organizations in San Francisco. It was likewise the site of concerts, dances and social gatherings which are too numerous for this report. On several occasions, the hall also hosted visits from members of the Swedish royalty, as well as political leaders, including Prince Wilhelm in 1927; Prince Bertil in 1958,

<sup>76</sup> Swedish Society of San Francisco, *The Swedish Society's Golden Jubilee 1875-1925*, (San Francisco, Swedish Society of San Francisco, October 1925), 24.

<sup>77</sup> "Swedish Society is a Growing Organization Big Fraternal Body Strongly Established Here," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 9, 1916, 19.

<sup>78</sup> Swedish Society of San Francisco, *The Swedish Society's Golden Jubilee 1875-1925*, (San Francisco, Swedish Society of San Francisco, October 1925), 26.

1960 and 1971; Prime Minister Tage Erlander in 1961; Crown Prince Carl Gustav—today King Carl XVI Gustaf—in 1967; and Crown Princess Victoria in 2001.<sup>79</sup>

While many Swedish organizations that used the Hall remain extant in some form, their memberships are a fraction of their former size. In 1996, with only a few members remaining, the Swedish Society was reorganized. This included adopting new bylaws and cancelling the sick and burial benefits of membership. Around the same time, the Society began a program of improvements that included a new reception area and management office at the 2172 Market Street storefront, as well as the installation of fire alarms and security features. A new Swedish Cultural Heritage Foundation was also launched, with a twenty-year lease on the library and archives located on the fourth floor of the Swedish American Hall.<sup>80</sup>



*The Swedish American Hall in June, 1978. One of the few historic exterior photos of the building. Note the altered storefronts and the loss of the stepped parapets at the east and west ends of the roof. (Max Kirkeberg Collection, San Francisco State University)*

Some of the reasons for the decline in interest in Swedish organizations was observed in *Golden Gate Swedes*, published in 2000:

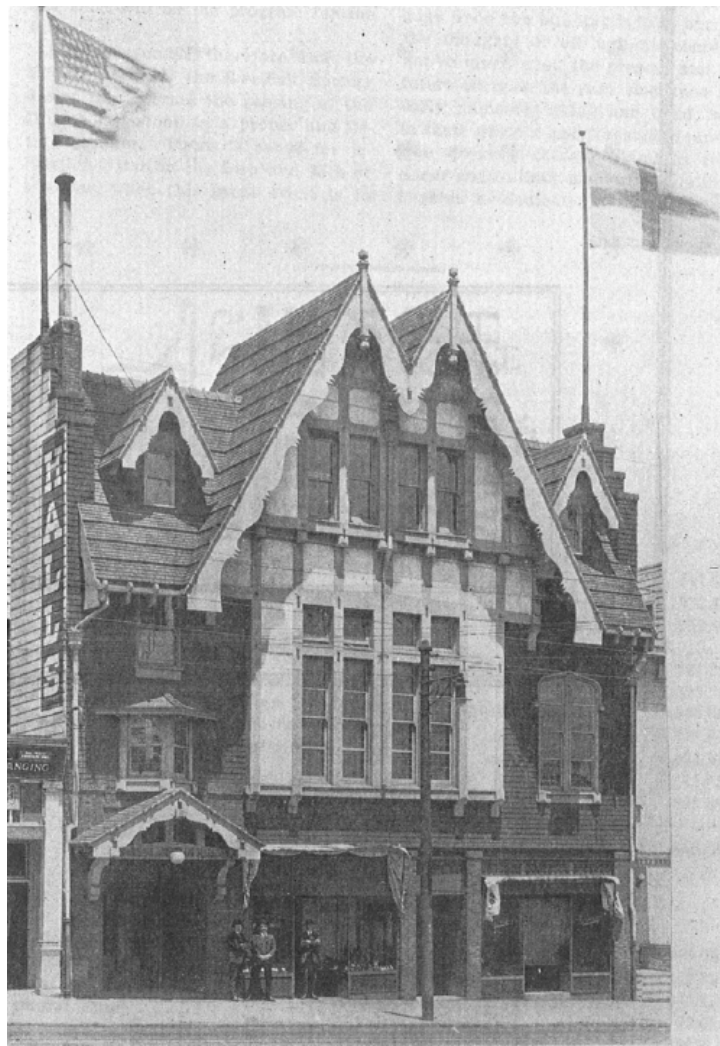
With few exceptions, the old Swedish organizations are passing from the scene. They are unable to secure new members; most of them are now either the children or grandchildren of the Swedish immigrants. It can be seen by the diminishing members and also difficulty in finding new leadership. The new immigrants from Sweden have formed their own societies as they have

<sup>79</sup> Muriel N. Beroza, "The Swedish American Hall in San Francisco," *The Swedish-American Historical Quarterly*, Vol. LVIII, No. 4, October 2007, 278.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*: 279.

different interests. Most of the new immigrants are fluent in English, are well educated and do not require a safety net or support from fellow countrymen to make it in the new world. It is sad and nostalgic to see the older clubs struggling to survive in this modern age with conflicting activities and many forms of entertainment and social contacts that are now available. Most of the club members belong out of a sense of loyalty to the past and a desire to perpetuate the organizations that were so much a part of their childhood and such important institutions in the lives of their parents and grandparents.<sup>81</sup>

For a more complete understanding of the evolution of Swedish organizations during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, please see *Golden Gate Swedes* by Muriel Nelson Beroza. The collections of the Swedish Society of San Francisco can also provide additional illumination of this subject.



*The Swedish American Hall ca. 1910  
(Reproduced from the Swedish Society's Golden Jubilee brochure)*

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<sup>81</sup> Muriel N. Beroza, *Golden Gate Swedes*, (Yosemite, CA: The Range of Light Works, 2000), 78.

## ARTICLE 10 LANDMARK DESIGNATION

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

### Criteria for Designation

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

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

### Statement of Significance

#### Characteristics of the Landmark that justify its designation:

Constructed in 1907, the Swedish American Hall is a combination commercial building and social hall associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. Specifically, the Swedish American Hall is the most significant extant building associated with San Francisco's Swedish community, serving as a physical manifestation of collective history, culture and identity. The building likewise has deep and significant associations with the San Francisco's Scandinavian community as a whole, serving for decades as a central meeting place for a variety of Scandinavian social and fraternal groups.

The building is also architecturally significant as an embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, and method of construction, as well as for being an architecturally significant work of master architect, August Nordin. As mentioned previously in the introduction to this report, the building's architectural finishes are unusually fine and demonstrate a superior level of craftsmanship that rank it among the finest expressions of the Arts & Crafts style in California. The building survives with relatively few alterations from its original design, and retains an outstanding level of architectural integrity.

#### Association with Significant Events

Swedish American Hall is significant for its association with San Francisco's Swedish and Scandinavian communities. Since its construction the building has served as the home of the Swedish Society of San Francisco, founded in 1875 and today the oldest Swedish organization west of Chicago, while also providing a meeting place for scores of Swedish and Scandinavian fraternal and social organizations. At the time the building was constructed, it represented the aspirations of pioneering Swedes who began arriving in San Francisco during the Gold Rush, and who continued to come to the city during successive waves of Swedish immigration during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Initially, the city's Swedish population—along with many other Scandinavian and European groups—was concentrated in the South of Market, then the city's densest residential neighborhood. But as the Swedes and other Scandinavian groups grew both in number and economic influence, a new Scandinavian enclave began to coalesce in the Mission Dolores and Upper Market area at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The turn of the century was also marked by an explosion of new social and fraternal organizations related to Swedish and Scandinavian identity. This in turn gave rise to the need for dedicated meeting space, and in 1898 a Swedish-American Hall Association was formed to construct a meeting hall. In May 1904 the Swedish-American Hall Association celebrated the opening of Scandia Hall in today's Civic Center area. Less than two years later, though, Scandia Hall was destroyed by one of the numerous fires that broke out following the 1906 Earthquake. Its destruction offered an opportunity for the Swedish Society of San Francisco—which previously had been only one of

several societies involved in the construction of Scandia Hall—to construct its own facility. Only two months after the fire, the Swedish Society appointed a new building committee to oversee the development of a new meeting hall.

Since its completion in 1907, the Swedish American Hall has served as the home of the Swedish Society of San Francisco and its library, while also providing a meeting place for scores of fraternal and social organizations related to San Francisco’s Swedish community. These have included the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F.) Odin Lodge No. 393, Freja Rebekah Lodge No. 284, Balder Lodge No. 393 of the Free and Accepted Masons, Vasa Fylgia Lodge No. 119, the Swedish-American Patriotic League, the Swedish Singing Society, as well as Swedish parlors of the Native Sons of the Golden West, Native Daughters of the Golden West, and the Ancient Order of Druids.

Though not a primary reason for its association with significant events, the building is also emblematic of the development of a larger Scandinavian enclave in the Mission Dolores, Duboce Triangle and Upper Market area at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Indeed, the building’s location was central to the area’s Swedish population, and for decades served as home for businesses serving the Swedish community. Of these, the Cafe Du Nord—opened in 1908—ranks as one of the city’s oldest saloons and restaurants continuously operating from the same location.

### Significant Architecture

The Swedish American Hall is also significant as the work of Swedish-born master architect, August Nordin, for being an outstanding example of a type and period, and for possessing high artistic values. As an example of a type and period, Swedish American Hall is part of a class of social halls that incorporated a ground-floor commercial use with the meeting rooms occupying the upper floors. Within this typology, however, the building’s design is unique among contemporary social halls in that its design was specifically emblematic of the community it served. Inspired by Swedish precedents, the building’s exterior employs a rich palate of materials and ornament which conveys an unusually strong street presence commensurate with its use as a public meeting hall.

On the interior, the truss work and finishes in Freja Hall, the building’s main assembly space, are an ornamental tour de force and place it among the city’s most significant expressions of the Arts & Crafts aesthetic. The smaller meeting rooms likewise feature superior detailing and are individualized such that each has its own distinctive identity, while remaining harmonious within the overall composition. Adding weight to its significance is the building’s outstanding level of preservation. Other than its storefronts and interior renovations to the Cafe Du Nord, the building has experienced relatively few alterations to its character-defining features and retains a high degree of physical integrity.

## Periods of Significance

The Swedish American Hall has two periods of significance. There is some difficulty in assigning a period of significance for its association with historic events, as the building’s use as a central gathering space for San Francisco’s Swedish community has never ceased. Indeed, the building remains the home of the Swedish Society of San Francisco, and continues to be used for events associated with Swedish organizations. However, in recognition that the building’s use by social and fraternal organizations has been in decline for some time, the period of significance assigned is 1907 to circa 1975. This period brackets the building’s original construction with its peak years of use by the Swedish Community.

Architecturally, the period of significance is assigned as 1907 to circa 1937. This period reflects the original construction of the building as designed by master architect, August Nordin, through the final year that the primary facade appears to have remained unaltered. In 1938 a large fire escape was installed on the primary facade, and the storefronts appear to have been altered for the first time in 1955. It is possible that some elements identified in this report as character-defining features of the property, such as the neon sign for the Cafe Du Nord, were installed after 1937.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Building permits indicate the neon sign may have been installed in 1933.

## Integrity

The seven aspects of integrity are location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, and association in relation to the period of significance established above. Cumulatively, the building at 2168-2174 Market Street retains outstanding integrity to convey its architectural significance, as well as its use by the Swedish Society and other Swedish organizations.

The Swedish American Hall retains integrity of association, as it has remained in continual use as a combination commercial building and social hall since its construction. It likewise retains integrity of design, materials, workmanship and feeling. Known exterior alterations are relatively limited in scope and include the addition of a fire escape on the primary facade, as well as alterations to the storefronts. At an unknown date, the stepped parapets at the east and west ends of the roofline were also replaced by a shed roofline. Many of these changes are among the most common alterations made to historic buildings of this type, and they remain subordinate to the building's overall design and ornamentation.

Similarly, while the interior commercial spaces of the building have been remodeled, all of the building's lodge rooms, as well as Freja Hall, have experienced few alterations and readily convey their association with the building's historic use. The building's integrity of setting has been moderately compromised owing to the redevelopment of several nearby buildings. However, the larger neighborhood, which was built out during the same general period as the Swedish American Hall was constructed, retains much of its historic fabric and feeling.



## ARTICLE 10 REQUIREMENTS SECTION 1004 (b)

### Boundaries of the Landmark Site

Encompassing all of, and limited to, Lots 17 and 62 in Assessor's Block 3542 on the north side of Market Street between Church and Sanchez streets.

### Character-Defining Features

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

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

- All exterior elevations, architectural ornament and rooflines

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

- Primary (south) facade
  - All exterior elevations, architectural ornament and rooflines (except the fire escape and altered portions of the storefronts)
  - Three story plus mezzanine and basement height and massing
  - Twin gables crowning the central bay
  - Cladding, including polychrome brick with clinker brick accents in a Flemish bond at the first story, and wood shingles and stucco cladding on the upper stories
  - Primary entry including a shallow brick arch flanked by large wooden brackets and crowned with truss work supporting a gable hood featuring notched rafter tails and scalloped barge boards. This also includes the wooden dimensional letters at the base of the truss reading "Swedish American Hall," as well as the colored terrazzo threshold paving
  - Cornerstone at left of the entry stating "Erected by the Swedish Society 1907"
  - Fenestration, including double-height, double-hung wood windows with leaded sixteen-over-sixteen light sashes and transoms in the central bay window; the small beveled bay window with double-hung, twelve-over-twelve light wood-sash windows located above the gable hood for the primary entry; the Tudor arch window at the east end of the second story featuring twin, double-height, double-hung wood sixteen-over-sixteen leaded glass lights with a molded drip surround; the double-hung, sixteen-over-sixteen leaded glass wood windows at the center of the third story; and the double-hung, leaded diamond light wood dormer windows at the third story
  - All wooden trim and ornament, including window surrounds, bargeboards with decorative scrollwork, brackets, nailhead trim blocks, exposed rafters, gable finials, and decorative half timbering
  - Recessed vestibule entry for the Cafe Du Nord which features a colored terrazzo threshold featuring a yellow field with green terrazzo letters reading "Cafe Du Nord"
  - Neon sign above the entry to Cafe Du Nord reading "Cafe Du Nord" and featuring a swooped arrow pointing to the entry
  - Storefront configurations comprised of bulkheads, display windows and transoms flanking a central entry to the Cafe Du Nord
  - Flagpoles topped by globes at the east and west ends of the roofline
  - Rain gutter downspouts at the east and west ends of the facade
- West Facade
  - Rustic channel wood cladding
  - The light well

- North (Rear) Facade
  - Rustic channel wood cladding
  - Tabbed parapet
  - Fenestration pattern including deeply recessed bands of windows on the upper facade

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

- General Interior Features
  - Board and batten wainscot with leather paper cladding and nailhead trim blocks
  - Art glass/leaded glass/textured glass windows
  - Paneled wood doors
- Main Staircase
  - Pierced wood railing with teardrop and floral motif; unpainted hand rails and newel posts
  - Board and batten wainscot with leather paper cladding
  - Leaded glass windows at stair landings between the second floor and mezzanine, and between the mezzanine and third floor
  - Skylight and light fixtures at third floor landing
- Odin Lodge Room
  - Stained wood boxed beam ceiling with decorative wood brackets and crown molding
  - Stained wood board and batten wainscot with nailhead trim blocks
  - Double-hung wood windows with textured glass glazing
  - Wood flooring
- Freja Hall
  - Stained wood ceiling trusses with knotted X-braces supported by stained wood piers with decorative brackets
  - Stained wood fretwork and molding along upper walls
  - Board and batten wainscot with nailhead trim blocks throughout
  - Raised wooden stage with proscenium featuring stained wood columns, oversized brackets and nailhead trim blocks
  - Balcony supported by metal rods and featuring stained wood beadboard along the interior of the railing and fretwork with a red background around the exterior perimeter of the railing
  - Staircase to balcony level featuring stained wood fretwork with a red background
  - Glazed skylights
  - Painted board ceiling with exposed rafters
  - Cast iron ornamental radiators
  - Wood flooring
- Balder Lodge Room
  - Wooden ceiling trusses with X braces and decorative brackets
  - Board and batten wainscot with leather paper cladding
  - Stained wood engaged columns with decorative capitals and mantle with scrolled brackets on the east wall
  - Wood mantle with scrolled brackets on the west wall
  - Ornamental cast iron radiators
  - Ante room with triangular window seat/nook and board and batten wainscot with leather paper cladding

- Valhalla Banquet Room
  - Board and batten wainscot featuring wide, horizontal boards separated by beadwork trim and nailhead trim blocks
  - Boxed beam ceiling (stained wood) with painted beadboard
  - Flat board molding along upper wall
  - Ribbon of six windows featuring textured amber glass glazing crowned with a stained glass transom featuring a shield motif (east wall)
  - Decorative vents beneath the ribbon of windows and decorative cast iron radiator
  
- Verdandi Club Room
  - Wood flooring
  - Stained wood boxed beam ceiling with decorative wood brackets
  - Stained wood trim throughout
  - Inglenook with brick fireplace, chimney and wood mantle, flanked by stained wood bookcases with multi-light glass doors and wood trim with a pierced heart detail. Also includes stained wood pediment above inglenook
  - Leaded green “bullseye” windows flanking fireplace chimney
  - Closets with paneled wood doors with leaded bullseye glazing flanking the inglenook
  - Leaded bullseye glazed windows with stained wood surrounds along north wall of room
  - Built-in stained wood bookcases with glass doors and paneled wood cabinets below along west wall of room
  
- Svea Lodge Room
  - Wood flooring presumed extant under carpet
  - Stained wood boxed beam ceiling with decorative wood brackets
  - Stained wood trim throughout
  - (East end of room) wood platform backed by engaged wood columns with decorative capitals and a mantle with scrolled brackets
  - Wood steps at northwest corner of the room
  - Stained wood built-in shelving along south wall of room beneath windows
  - Cast iron ornamental radiators
  
- Cafe Du Nord
  - Painted wood boxed beam ceiling
  - Square columns with paneled wood bases and bracketed crowns running north-south through the room
  - Stained wood paneled wainscot
  - Back bar featuring stained wood square columns with a triangle motif capped by an entablature with floral, echinus and astragal and leaf moldings. Also the decorative brackets above the back bar

## **PROPERTY INFORMATION**

**Historic Name:** Swedish American Hall

**Popular Name:** Swedish American Hall

**Address:** 2168-2174 Market Street

**Block and Lot:** 3542 017, 3542 062

**Owner:** Swedish Society of San Francisco

**Original Use:** Stores, saloon, entertainment venue and lodge halls

**Current Use:** Restaurant, saloon, entertainment venue and lodge halls

**Zoning:** Upper Market Neighborhood Commercial Transit District

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San Francisco city directories

U.S. Census records

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## APPENDIX A – LIST OF OCCUPANTS

Below is a list of the various occupants of the Swedish American Hall over time, organized by year and address. This should not be considered a definitive list, but rather is drawn from research using city directories and other sources. In particular, it is likely that other social and fraternal organizations, beyond those listed below, used the building at various times. This list also does not include the numerous concerts, dances and ethnic celebrations that took place in the building.

### 1909

2168 Market: Swedish-American Mercantile Company, wholesale liquor dealers  
2170 Market: Cafe Du Nord; Swedish-American Mercantile Company  
2172 Market: Charles Anderson shoes  
2174 Market: Swedish Society; Swedish Singing Society; Independent Order of Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F.) Odin Lodge No. 393; Freja Rebekah Lodge No. 284; Foresters of America Court El Dorado No. 31; Native Daughters of the Golden West (NDGW) Oro Fino Parlor No. 9, Buena Vista Parlor No. 68 and La Estrella Parlor No. 89; Native Sons of the Golden West (NSGW) Mission Parlor No. 38; Caledonian Club

### 1912

2168 Market: Swedish-American Mercantile Company, liquor dealers; Clarence Erickson, egg merchant<sup>83</sup>  
2170 Market: Cafe Du Nord  
2172 Market: Charles Anderson shoes  
2174 Market: Swedish Society of San Francisco; Swedish Singing Society; Balder Lodge No. 393 Masons; Freja Rebekah Lodge No. 284; Independent Order of Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F.) Odin Lodge No. 393; Native Sons of the Golden West (NSGW) Sequoia Parlor No. 160; Starr King Chapter No. 204; Castro Parlor No. 232; Court Eureka No. 6146; San Francisco Assembly No. 1; Mission Parlor No. 38

### 1914

2168 Market: Swedish American World's Fair League; Swedish Bachelor's Club  
2170 Market: Cafe Du Nord; Nils Cronfelt, liquors<sup>84</sup>; Swedish American Mercantile Co., liquors  
2172 Market: Svea Shoes (Charles Anderson)  
2174 Market: Swedish Society of San Francisco

### 1917

2168 Market: No listing  
2170 Market: Cafe Du Nord; Nils Cronfelt, liquors  
2172 Market: Svea Shoes (Charles Anderson)  
2174 Market: Swedish Society of San Francisco; Danish Society, Danmark Branch No. 2; Swedish Singing Society; Balder Lodge No. 393 Masons; Freja Rebekah Lodge No. 284; Independent Order of Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F.) Odin Lodge No. 393

### 1920

2168 Market: Hans P. Forsberg, tailor  
2170 Market: Cafe Du Nord; Nils Cronfelt, liquors  
2172 Market: Svea Shoes (Charles Anderson)  
2174 Market: Swedish Society of San Francisco; Danish Society; Swedish Singing Society, Balder Lodge No. 393 Masons; I.O.O.F. Odin Lodge No. 393; Thor Encampment No. 111; Freja Rebekah Lodge No. 284; Star of the West No. 120; Templar Grove No. 19

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<sup>83</sup> A February 29, 1912 advertisement in Vestkusten shows Clarence Erickson "Quality Egg Man," as operating in the 2168 Market Street storefront. The city directory, however, only shows the Swedish Mercantile Company.

<sup>84</sup> *The San Francisco Call* of July 29, 1904 shows Cronfelt acting as floor manager for a celebration held by the Swedish Ladies' Society

**1925**

2168 Market: Hans P. Forsberg, tailor  
2170 Market: Cafe Du Nord  
2172 Market: Charles Anderson, shoes  
2174 Market: Swedish Society of San Francisco; Norden Society; Scandinavian Society; Swedish American Patriotic League; Swedish Ladies Society; Swedish Singing Society; Balder Lodge No. 393 Masons; I.O.O.F. Lodge No. 393; Thor Encampment No. 111; Freja Rebekah Lodge No. 284; American L O L No. 127; Star of the West No. 120; Native Sons of the Golden West (NSGW) Sequoia Parlor No. 160; Native Daughters of the Golden West (NDGW) Linda Rosa Parlor No. 170; Ancient Order of Druids Templar Grove No. 19 and Reseda Circle No. 117

**1929**

2168 Market: Hans P. Forsberg, tailor  
2170 Market: Cafe Du Nord  
2172 Market: Svea Shoes (Charles Leandro)  
2174 Market: Swedish Society of San Francisco; Swedish Singing Society; Danish Brotherhood of America, Lodge No. 111; Balder Lodge No. 393 Masons; I.O.O.F. Odin Lodge No. 393; Freja Rebekah Lodge No. 284; Loyal Orange Institution, Star of the West, NSGW Sequoia Parlor No. 160; NDGW Linda Rosa Parlor No. 170; Ancient Order of Druids Templar Grove No. 19 and Reseda Circle No. 117

**1935**

2168 Market: Fred J. Stenberg, liquors  
2170 Market: Cafe Du Nord; Fred J. Stenberg, liquors  
2172 Market: Nordic Health Foods delicatessen (Axel Stenmark)  
2174 Market: Swedish Society of San Francisco  
2174 Market: Swedish Society of San Francisco; Scandinavian Society; Swedish Singing Society; Swedish American Patriotic League; Balder Lodge No. 393 Masons; I.O.O.F. Odin Lodge No. 393; NSGW Sequoia Parlor No. 160; NDGW Linda Rosa Parlor No. 170; Ancient Order of Druids Reseda Circle No. 117; Thor Encampment No. 111; Fylgia Lodge No. 119; Inter-Nos Circle No. 215; Precita Circle No. 1064; Templar Grove No. 19; Olands Klubben of San Francisco

**1940**

2168 Market: Bishop's A B C Guides "a handbook for the pacific coast shippers"  
2170 Market: Cafe Du Nord  
2172 Market: National Roof & Siding  
2174 Market: Swedish Society of San Francisco; Scandinavian Society; Swedish Singing Society; Swedish American Patriotic League; Swedish-American Society; Swedish Ladies Society; Balder Lodge No. 393 Masons; I.O.O.F. Odin Lodge No. 393; NSGW Sequoia Parlor No. 160; NDGW Linda Rosa Parlor No. 170; Ancient Order of Druids Reseda Circle No. 117; Thor Encampment No. 111; Order of Vasa Fylgia Lodge No. 119; Inter-Nos Circle No. 215; Precita Circle No. 1064; Templar Grove No. 19; Norrlands Klubben of San Francisco; Danish Relief Society; Bethel No. 107; Hesperian Parlor No. 137; Mission Court No. 8; Nawa Daha Council No. 132; Olands Klubben; Surf Fishing Club; Order of Railway Conductors Ladies Auxiliary Local No. 89; Bay City Parlor No. 104.

**1943**

2168 Market: Christina Richards, shipping guide  
2170 Market: Cafe Du Nord  
2172 Market: Earl H. De Roque, general contractor  
2174 Market: Swedish Society of San Francisco; Scandinavian Lutheran Society; Swedish Singing Society; Swedish American Patriotic League; Swedish Relief Society; Swedish Ladies Society; Balder Lodge No. 393 Masons; I.O.O.F. Odin Lodge No. 393; NSGW Sequoia Parlor No. 160 and Hesperian Parlor 137; NDGW Linda Rosa Parlor No. 170; Order of Vasa Fylgia Lodge No. 119; Precita Circle No. 1064; Job's Daughters Bethel No. 107; Masonic Order of Amaranth Mission Court No. 8; Calumet

Council; Order of Railway Conductors Ladies Auxiliary Local No. 89; Stoves Court No. 8; Star of the West, Pacifica Lodge

**1948**

2168 Market: Bishop's A B C Guides "a handbook for the pacific coast shippers"  
2170 Market: Cafe Du Nord  
2172 Market: National Roof & Siding  
2174 Market: Swedish Society of San Francisco; Swedish Relief Society, Swedish Singing Society, Balder Lodge No. 393 Masons; I.O.O.F. Odin Lodge No. 393; California Mutual Aid Association, Order of Vasa Fylgia Lodge No. 119; Masonic Order of Amaranth Mission Court No. 8; Ancient Order of Druids Reseda Circle No. 117; Olands Klubben, Norrlands Klubben, Inter-Nos Circle No. 215,

**1953**

2168 Market: vacant  
2170 Market: Cafe Du Nord  
2172 Market: Coast Construction Company, building contractors  
2174 Market: Swedish Society, Swedish Relief Society, Swedish Singing Society, Balder Lodge No. 393 Masons; I.O.O.F. Odin Lodge No. 393; California Mutual Aid Association, Order of Vasa Fylgia Lodge No. 119; Masonic Order of Amaranth Mission Court No. 8; Ancient Order of Druids Reseda Circle No. 117; Olands Klubben, Norrlands Klubben, Inter-Nos Circle No. 215, Rainbow Hobby Club

**1960**

2168 Market: Rem Realty  
2170 Market: Cafe Du Nord  
2172 Market: Charles D. Pooley accountants  
2174 Market: Swedish Society; Swedish Singing Society; Swedish Singing Society Ladies Auxiliary; Swedish Women's Singing Society, Swedish American Patriotic League; Swedish Relief Society; Swedish Ladies Society; Balder Lodge No. 393; I.O.O.F. Odin Lodge No. 393; NSGW Hesperian Parlor 137; NDGW Parlor No. 137; Order of Vasa Fylgia Lodge No. 119; Masonic Order of Amaranth Mission Court No. 8; Ancient Order of Druids Reseda Circle No. 117; Olands Klubben, Norrlands Klubben, Skanska Gillet, Tor Lodge, Utile Dulci Club, Young Scandinavian Club, Order of Ahepa,

**1968**

2168 Market: Allied Business General Contractors  
2170 Market: Cafe Du Nord  
2172 Market: Pooley & Rigas Accountants  
2174 Market: Swedish Society of San Francisco<sup>85</sup>

**1977**

2168 Market: Pearson Insurance Agency  
2170 Market: Cafe Du Nord  
2172 Market: Charles D. Pooley accountants  
2174 Market: Swedish Society of San Francisco

**1980**

2168 Market: Pearson Insurance Agency  
2170 Market: Cafe Du Nord  
2172 Market: Charles D. Pooley accountants  
2174 Market: Swedish Society of San Francisco

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<sup>85</sup> The lack of listings for organizations associations associated with the Swedish American Hall for this and later years is unclear. The city directory of 1968 includes a listing of benevolent and fraternal organizations, but none are shown as associated with the Hall.

## APPENDIX B – HISTORY OF ALTERATIONS

Prior to the extensive interior remodeling of 2013- 2014, known alterations to the Swedish American Hall are relatively few in number. The following is a list of building permit applications associated with the building, as well as a discussion of other evident alterations.

- 1907 Construct three-story frame building with mezzanine floor, concrete foundation, composition roof, brick chimneys (permit application #9876). Owner: Swedish Society. Architect: August Nordin, 563 Fillmore Street.
- 1933 Install sign at 2170 Market Street
- 1938 Furnish and install fire escape as required by S.F. Fire Prevention Bureau.
- 1954 Repair fire damage at 2168 Market Street resulting from fire burning between blind walls near foundation.
- 1955 Remove existing wood supporting the existing glass windows; provide for new metal supports for both storefronts and the Swedish American Society.
- 1958 Build one new toilet and remodel three toilets.
- 1967 Remove existing concrete curb and concrete wall at rear of building. Install new footing and concrete bulkhead.
- 1969 Install partitions in basement at 2170 Market Street; Install six-foot-wide stationary canopy awning of steel tubing and canvas for the Cafe Du Nord.
- 1970 Repair burglary damage.
- 1977 Install sign at 2168 Market Street.
- 1992 Replace door at 2170 Market Street with new one-hour fire rated door.
- 1999 Reroof building; Remove approximately 500 square feet of existing wood siding, install 15 pound felt and install new wood siding; Install wireless communication facility with five panel antennas.
- 2003 First floor remodel, new front door and new wood windows; new reception lobby and office; sprinkler the existing first floor corridor and install new fire alarm system for first floor.
- 2004 Install one automatic hood and duct fire suppression system; re-roofing
- 2005 Permit three existing rectangular signs on west side wall
- 2006 Construct five-stop elevator serving all floors. Work includes relocating restrooms in basement level night club.<sup>86</sup>
- 2008 Replace existing aluminum storefront to match storefront with transom with sliding glass and fixed window. Architect: Theodore Brown & Partners; alteration to existing ground floor space including new storefront and bathroom, and new small restaurant counter, preparation area and flooring at 2168 Market

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<sup>86</sup> Installation of the elevator was not completed until 2014.

Street; upgrade the automatic fire suppression system to new kitchen hood and duct, install new small restaurant counter and prep area with new service area flooring at 2170 Market Street.

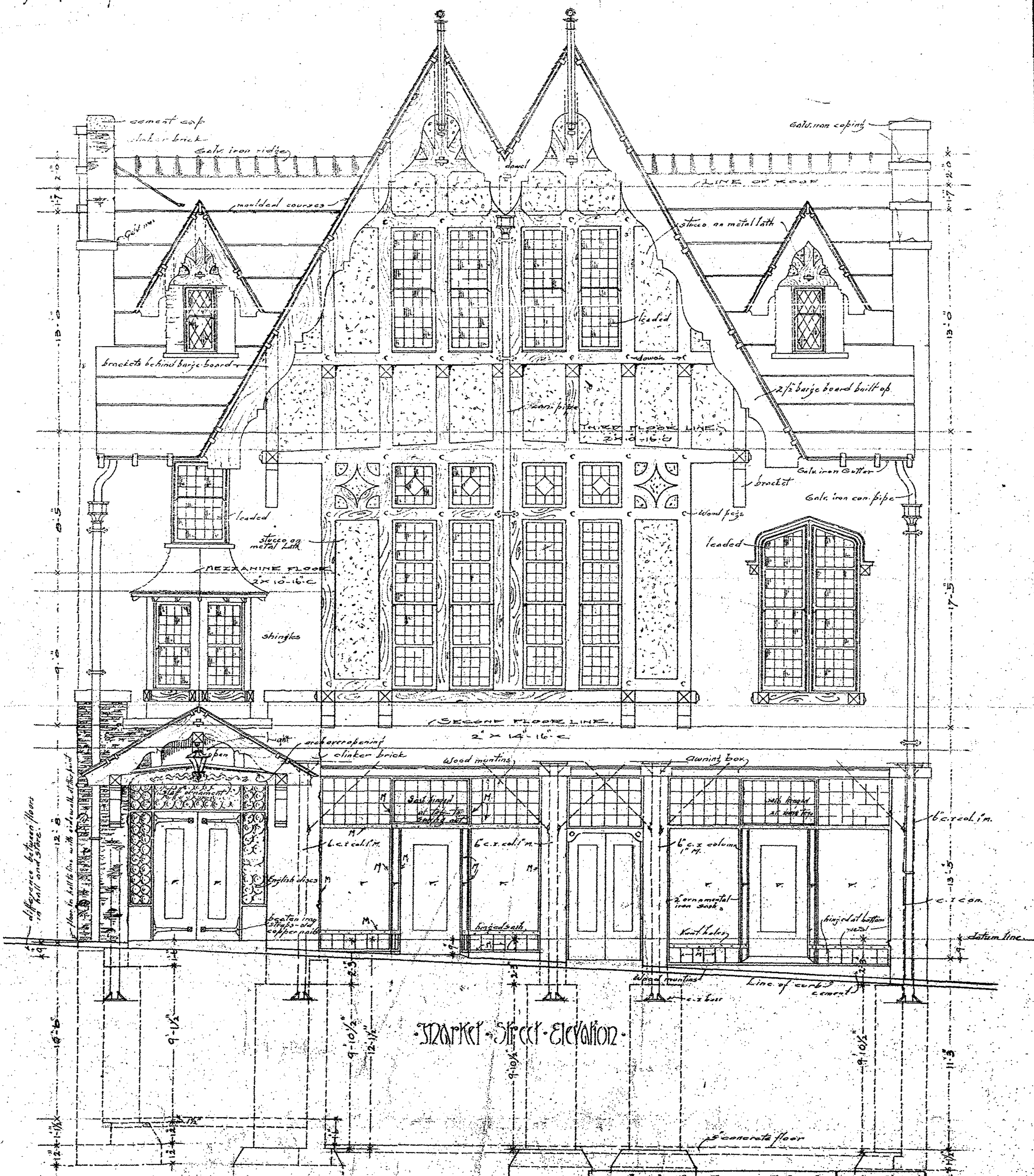
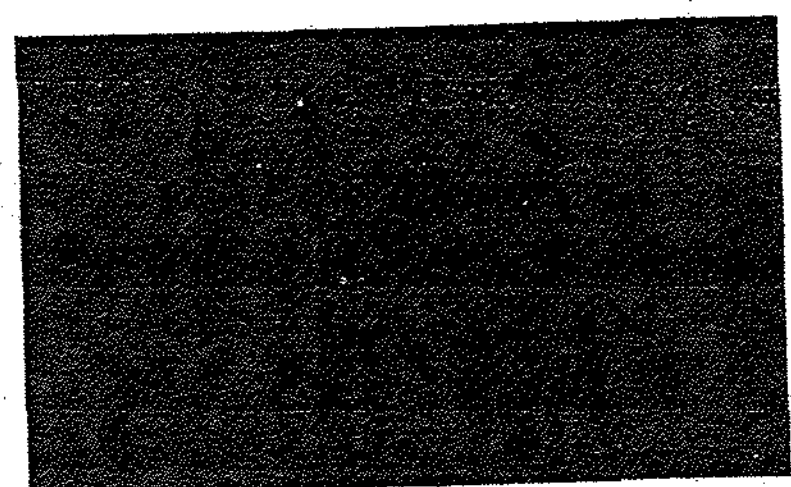
- 2009 Drop ceiling in conference room by 6 ½ inches with drywall, 30' x 30' area, some drywall repairs in café, lighting under separate permit; modifications to an existing unmanned telecommunication facility including new electronic equipment; expand the first floor fire sprinkler system with 33 new sprinklers
- 2010 Replace cracked and broken siding (approximately 400 square feet) on the west wall of the building; modification of existing unmanned telecommunication facility including adding new RBS cabinet, removing and replacing one antenna, and adding new runs of coaxial cable.
- 2012 Voluntary seismic upgrade of existing wood trusses in Freja Hall.
- 2013 Modify approval of non-ADA elevator to ADA elevator; modify entry and orientation of approved toilets and the addition of new toilet stalls; modifications to an existing unmanned telecommunication facility including antenna replacement
- 2014 Remodel existing restaurant and bar at basement level, refurbish equipment, upgrade finishes at kitchen area, bar and common area; exploratory demolition at ground floor restaurant and basement level bar; remodel existing restaurant spaces at ground floor level, removing common wall to combine spaces; remodel existing banquet events kitchen at second floor mezzanine level, remodel existing bar area at second floor, remodel existing office at second floor; add eight sprinklers at first floor; modify approved toilet plans at basement level; remodel toilets on first, second and third floors per plans; relocate equipment cabinets in equipment room; revision to approved permit with minor adjustments to first floor and basement restrooms, minor structural changes to elevator shaft; new 100 square foot shed at rear yard; provide exhaust for upgraded restrooms; fire alarm panel replacement and upgrade; install new mechanical and lighting for bar and restaurant areas on first floor and basement; install fire sprinkler head at basement level;

Based on historic photographs, other known alterations include the following:

- Alterations to the stepped parapets at the east and west ends of the roofline of the primary facade, such that this area now presents as a sloped roofline.
- Replacement of all exterior and interior lighting, save for two original combination gas and electric light fixtures located adjacent to the stair landing on the third floor
- Removal of the upper portion of the finials crowning the gable ends on the primary facade
- Replacement of all entry doors on the primary facade
- Interior renovations to the kitchens and pantries
- Interior renovations to the Cafe Du Nord

**APPENDIX C – ORIGINAL DRAWINGS OF THE SWEDISH AMERICAN HALL**

- Elgbor for chimney brace -



Market Street Elevation

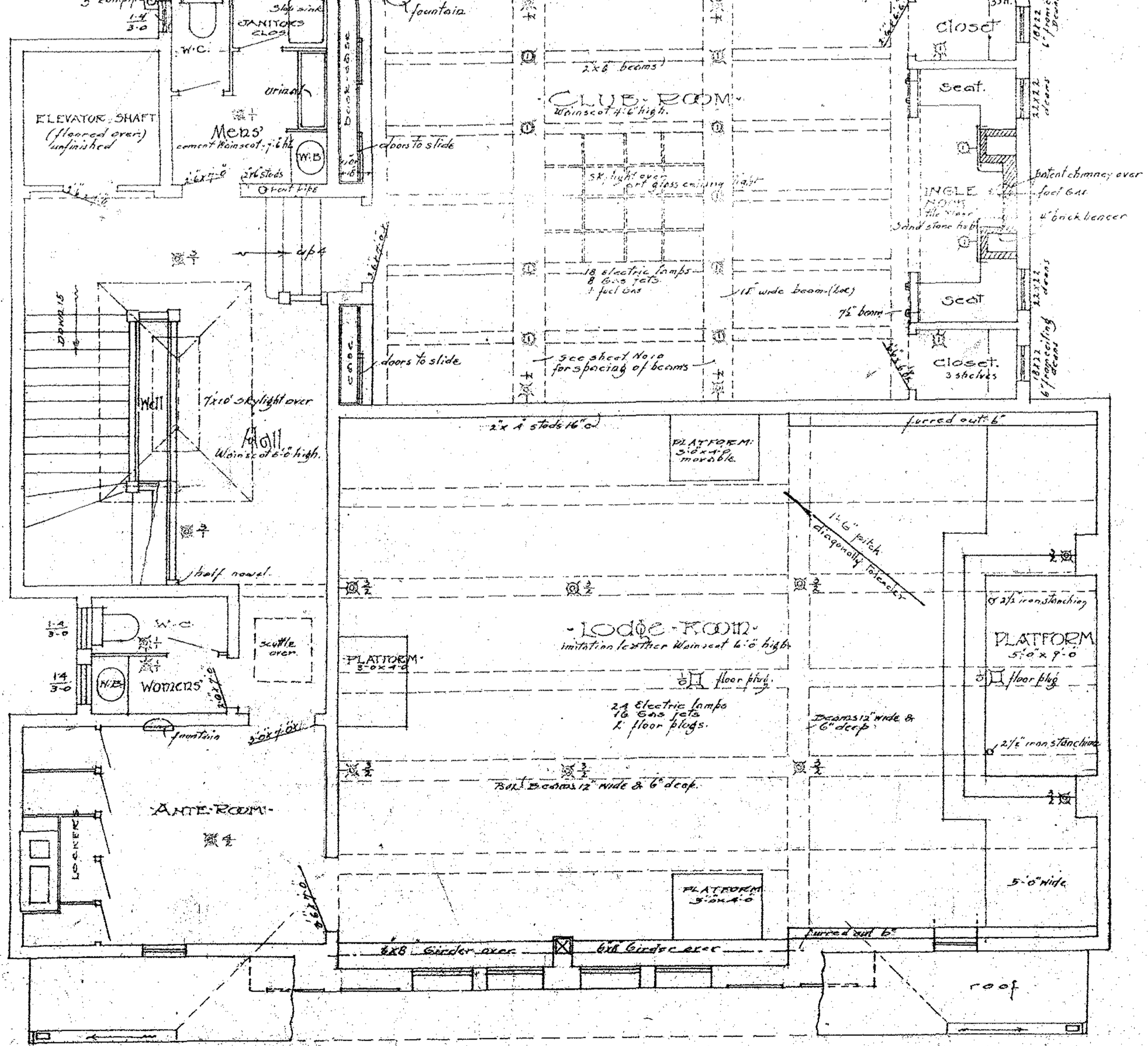
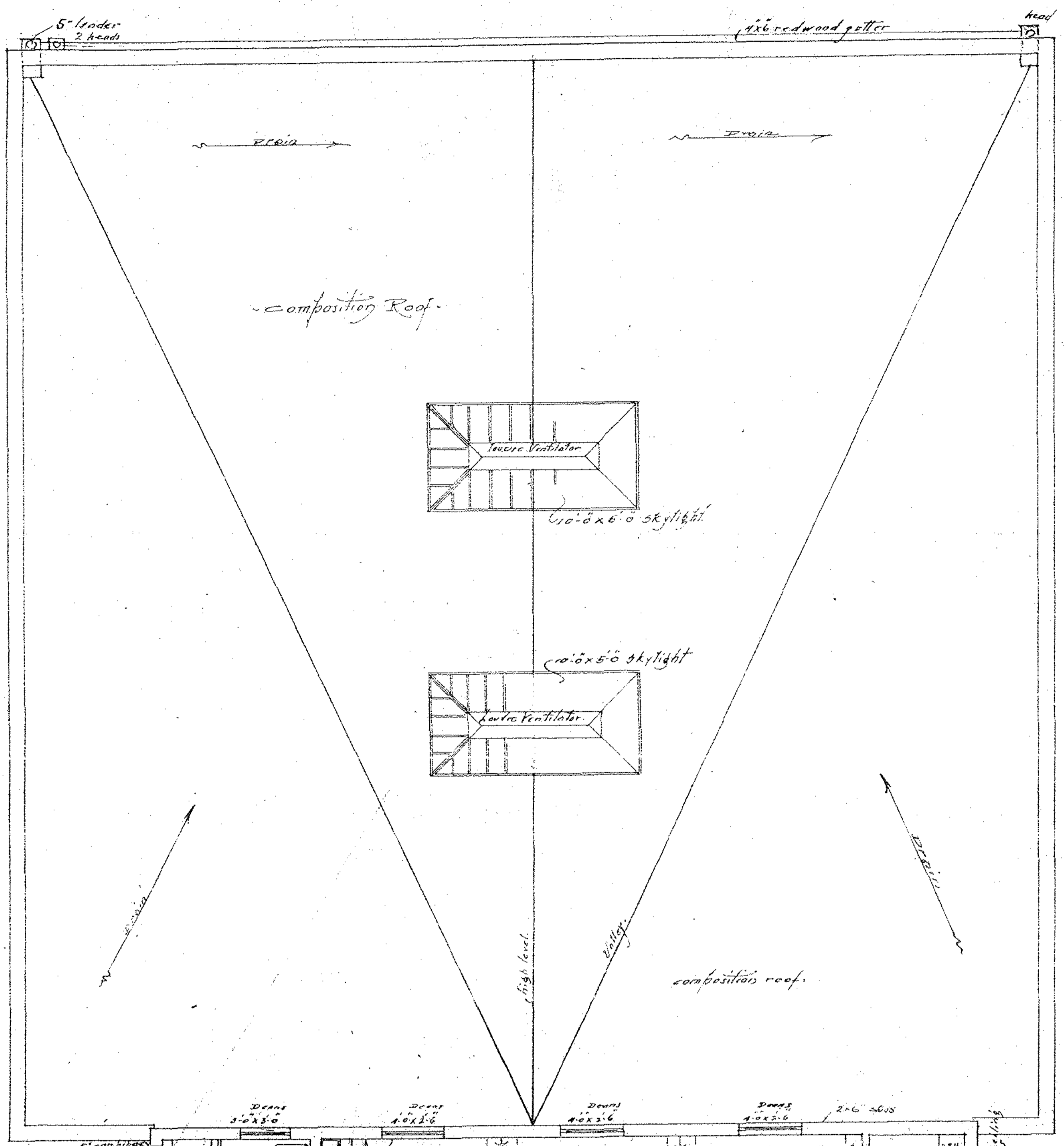
August Nord - Architect - 516 7th St. S. - St. Paul, Minn.  
 - chkd. by M. G. P. - 1/30/06 - Scale 1/4" = 1'-0"





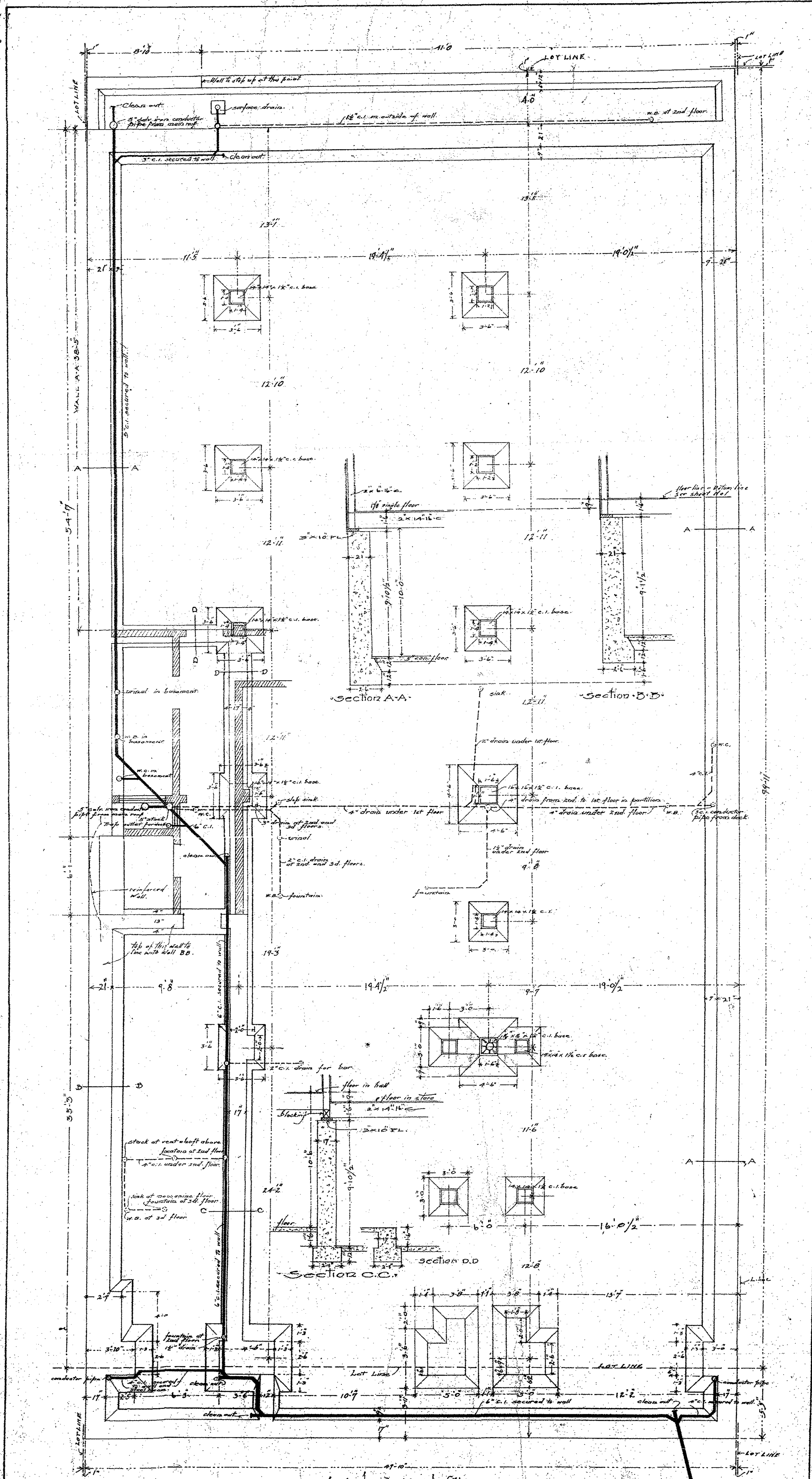






Third Floor Plan.

- CIVILS - NORRIS - ARCHITECTS -  
 212 1/2 - 11th Ave - New York - N.Y.  
 - DRAWN BY M. GARDNER - JUL 12/1917 -  
 - DICKINSON - No. 16 -  
 - SHEET No. 7 -  
 - SCALE 1/4" = 1' -



Footings & Drainage Plan

Gust-Nord-architect  
 115  
 2  
 165  
 11/12/10