


<b>State of California — The Resources Agency</b> <b>DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION</b> <b>PRIMARY RECORD</b>		Primary # _____ HRI # _____ Trinomial _____ NRHP Status Code _____			
Listings _____ Other _____		Review Code _____ Reviewer _____ Date _____			
Page 1 of 1		*Resource name(s) or number (assigned by recorder) 147 Natoma Street			
<b>P1. Other Identifier:</b> Underwriters Fire Patrol Building					
<b>*P2. Location:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Not for Publication <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted					
<b>*a. County:</b> San Francisco and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)					
<b>*b. USGS 7.5' Quad:</b> San Francisco North		<b>Date:</b> 1994			
<b>*c. Address:</b> 147 NATOMA ST		<b>City:</b> San Francisco <b>Zip:</b> 94105			
<b>d. UTM: Zone:</b> 10		<b>mE/</b> _____ <b>mN (G.P.S.)</b> _____			
<b>e. Other Locational Data:</b> Assessor's Parcel Number (Map, Block, Lot):		<b>Parcel #:</b> 3722013			
<b>*P3a. Description:</b> (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries.)					
<p>147 Natoma Street occupies a 40' x 80' lot on the south side of Natoma Street, between New Montgomery and 3rd streets. Built in 1909, the three-story, cast iron frame brick commercial building is designed in the Renaissance Baroque style. The rectangular-plan building, finished in face brick and copious amounts of terra cotta, is capped by a flat roof. The primary facade, which faces Natoma Street to the north, is three bays wide. At street level the primary facade consists of a historic arched entrance housed within a classically detailed and bracketed portico bearing a terra cotta panel with the word "headquarters." Located to either side of the main pedestrian entry are transom-capped vehicular entrances that have been infilled with compatible glazed wood doors. The upper two floors feature a grid of pairs (outer bays) and individual (center bay) window openings infilled with double-hung wood windows. A terra cotta panel below the second floor windows reads: "Underwriters Fire Patrol." The windows feature terra cotta hood moldings and corbelled sills. The facade terminates with an elaborate terra cotta cornice consisting of acanthus leaf brackets and bull's eye moldings. The building appears to be in good condition.</p>					
<b>*P3b. Resource Attributes:</b> (list attributes and codes)		HP6. 1-3 Story Commercial Building			
<b>P4. Resources Present:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Element of District <input type="checkbox"/> Other					
		<b>P5b. Photo:</b> (view and date) View toward south, 9.29.07, 100_4740.JPG			
		<b>*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historic <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric <input type="checkbox"/> Both 1909, Assessor's Office			
		<b>*P7. Owner and Address:</b> Praszker, Kenneth M. & Robert % Dowd Bros 1 Nob Hill Circle San Francisco, CA 94108			
		<b>*P8. Recorded by</b> Christopher VerPlanck Kelley & VerPlanck 2912 Diamond Street #330 San Francisco, CA 94131			
		<b>*P9. Date Recorded:</b> 11.02.07			
		<b>*P10. Survey Type:</b> Intensive: Transit Center District EIR			
		<b>*P11. Report Citation:</b> (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none")		None	
		<b>*Attachments:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Location Map <input type="checkbox"/> Sketch Map <input type="checkbox"/> Continuation Sheet <input type="checkbox"/> Building, Structure, and Object Record <input type="checkbox"/> Archaeological Record <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District Record <input type="checkbox"/> Linear Feature Record <input type="checkbox"/> Milling Station Record <input type="checkbox"/> Rock Art Record <input type="checkbox"/> Artifact Record <input type="checkbox"/> Photograph Record <input type="checkbox"/> Other (list)			

**BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD**

\*Resource Name or #: 147 Natoma Street

- B1. Historic Name: Underwriters Fire Patrol
- B2. Common Name:
- B3. Original Use: Office building and fire house
- \*B5. Architectural Style: Commercial
- \*B6. Construction History: Constructed in 1908.
- B4. Present Use: Commercial

- \*B7. Moved?  No  Yes  Unknown Date: Original Location:
- \*B8. Related Features: None

- B9a. Architect: Clinton Day
- b. Builder: unknown
- \*B10. Significance: Theme: Post-earthquake reconstruction Area: South of Market district, San Francisco, CA
- Period of Significance: 1908-1943 Property Type: commercial Applicable Criteria: A, C

**Summary Findings**

147 Natoma Street appears to be individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) under Criterion A/1, for its association with the reconstruction of SOMA following the earthquake and fires of 1906, as well as Criterion C/3, for its association with master architect Clinton Day and for exhibiting a high level of artistic value. Its period of significance dates from 1908 to 1943, from the date of construction until the Underwriters Fire Patrol was absorbed by the San Francisco Fire Department. The building also appears eligible as a contributor to the proposed New Montgomery, 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, and Mission Street Conservation District, both for its association with the earthquake and fires of 1906 as well as for its architecture.

See Continuation Sheet

B11. Additional Resource Attributes:

\*B12. References:

See continuation sheet.

B13. Remarks:

\*B14. Evaluator: Carey & Co., Inc.

\*Date of Evaluation: March 16, 2010



\*Recorded by: Carey & Co., Inc.

\*Date: March 16, 2010  Continuation

Update

**Continuation of B10. Significance:**

The Underwriters' Fire Patrol was founded in San Francisco 1875 as a private company of firemen to prevent as much damage as possible to insured property. Insurance companies funded the Underwriters' Fire Patrol. Duties included waterproofing areas of buildings and merchandise threatened by water damage; salvaging business records and merchandise; and monitoring potential fire hazards. Activities like these reduced the expenditures that insurance companies had to pay, which kept insurance rates down for customers. The Underwriters Fire Patrol was incorporated into the San Francisco Fire Department in 1943.

Early in the morning of April 18, 1906, a strong earthquake jolted San Franciscans out of their slumber. Catastrophic fires, assisted by a failed water system, rampaged through city over the next few days. When the smoke cleared, 497 blocks of San Francisco, including the South of Market district, was a decimated wasteland that had to be rebuilt from scratch. The headquarters of the Underwriters' Fire Patrol, which was constructed on Natoma Street in 1903, was among the debris. A flurry of construction followed. Within two years, the City of San Francisco issued over 14,000 building permits, 10,000 of which pertained to new buildings.

The Underwriters' fire patrol applied for a permit to construct a three-story brick building on Natoma Street in March 1908. They cited two primary reasons for the urgent necessity of a new building: Most of the post-earthquake fires continued to take place in the SOMA area, where many temporary wooden buildings had been constructed while insurance issues were settled and more permanent structures could be built. In addition, the rapid reconstruction of the downtown area rendered it "absolutely necessary that an additional fire patrol house be constructed soon" (*Call*, January 17, 1908).

Clinton Day designed the new headquarters. Day was born into an elite family in Brooklyn, New York, in 1847, and moved to California when he was eight years old. His father as the United States Surveyor-General for California and oversaw the construction of the first government highway to the Pacific Coast, and he was an early State Senator from San Francisco. Day graduated from the College of California in 1868, earned his Masters degree from that institution in 1874 (by then the college had relocated to Berkeley and was renamed the University of California), and received an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Berkeley in 1910. Clinton Day died in 1916, having practiced architecture in the San Francisco Bay Area for over forty years.

Davis' Commercial Encyclopedia summarized the significance of Day's oeuvre in 1912: "Viewing the many imposing edifices which are a physical expression of the art of Clinton Day, it is difficult to realize the obstacles to be overcome in making artistic a structure whose sole purpose is commercial. Yet he executed the City of Paris building, the Uino Trust building, the Wells Fargo Nevada National Bank building, the Spring Valley building, and the Mutual Life building. Perhaps the most noteworthy product of the genius of Mr. Day is the Stanford Chapel at Palo Alto. This building, known throughout the world as an architectural gem, is considered the crowning glory of the group which comprises the Leland Stanford Jr. University" (Mullgardt, 1916)

**Evaluation**

147 Natoma Street appears to be eligible for the NRHP/CRHR under Criterion A/1, for its association with the reconstruction of SOMA following the earthquake and fires of 1906. The earthquake and fires of 1906 resulted in a desolate landscape in SOMA, much of which was filled with temporary wooden structures that were prone to fire. In addition, the downtown area was being rebuilt rapidly. All of these activities necessitated a new headquarters building for the Underwriters Fire Patrol. The building also appears to be eligible as a contributor to the proposed New Montgomery, 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, and Mission Street Conservation District for its association with the natural disaster and subsequent rebuilding of SOMA.

The building does not appear to be eligible for the NRHP/CRHR under Criterion B/2, as it is not known to be associated with persons of historical significance. It does appear to be eligible for the NRHP/CRHR under Criterion C/3, for its association with master architect Clinton Day and as an excellent example of Italian Renaissance style commercial architecture. Although not nearly as impressive in scale as some of Day's other post-earthquake buildings, the Underwriters Fire Patrol building presents a modest-scale structure with high design qualities that characterize Day's buildings. The building is also one of the most ornate in the post-earthquake and fires landscape of SOMA, which was predominantly rebuilt with two-to-five-story brick or concrete

\*Recorded by: Carey & Co., Inc.

\*Date: March 16, 2010  Continuation

Update

**Continuation of B10. Significance:**

commercial warehouses and industrial lofts. The building's architecture also renders it eligible as a contributor to the proposed New Montgomery, 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, and Mission Street Conservation District.

147 Natoma retains a high level of integrity. It has not been moved and is still predominantly surrounded on Natoma Street by commercial warehouses and light industrial buildings that were constructed around the same time as this building. Therefore, it retains its integrity of location, setting, and association. The building has undergone few notable alterations and retains many of its Renaissance Revival details, such as the heavy cornice above the entrance, the ornate pediments above the third-story windows, and the embellished, heavy bracket cornice at the top of the building. The building also retains its original signage for the Underwriters Fire Patrol. Therefore, the building retains its integrity of design, materials, workmanship, and feeling.

*Previous Surveys*

According to San Francisco Planning Department records, 660 Howard Street has not been assigned a California Historical Resource Status Code. It received a rating of I in the City's Downtown Master Plan, a rating of 3 in the 1976 Citywide Survey, and a rating of B as part of the 1977 San Francisco Architectural Heritage survey. The building was also surveyed as part of the San Francisco Landmarks Board's 1990 Unreinforced Masonry Building Survey. In the 2008 Transit Center District Survey, Kelley & VerPlanck assigned the building California Historical Resource Status Codes 3S and 3CB, indicating it appears to be eligible for individual listing in the NRHP and CRHR as well as a contributor to a CRHR eligible district through a survey evaluation.

**Continuation of B12. References:**

"The Affiliated Colleges." *San Francisco Call*. February 6, 1896, p. 9.

Bloomfield, Anne. "A History of the California Historical Society's New Mission Street Neighborhood." *California History*, Vol. 74, no. 4 (Winter 1995/1996): 373-393.

Bloomfield, Anne. "Second and Howard Streets District: National Historic District Nomination." October 3, 1998.

"Building New Home for the Fire Patrol." *San Francisco Call*. April 14, 1903.

Building File for 147 Natoma Street. City and County of San Francisco Planning Department.

Building Permits for 657 Howard Street. City and County of San Francisco Department of Building and Inspection.

"Café Leases in Flood building." *San Francisco Chronicle*. January 26, 1909, p. 13.

"Fire Insurance Patrol to Stay." *San Francisco Chronicle*. November 23, 1893, p. 10.

"The Fire Patrol." *San Francisco Chronicle*. January 20, 1894, p. 13.

"The Fire Patrol." *San Francisco Chronicle*. Mary 22, 1895, p. 8.

"Fire Patrol in Danger." *San Francisco Call*. November 21, 1893.

"The Insurance War." *San Francisco Chronicle*. April 20, 1895, p. 16.

Kelley & VerPlanck. "Transit Center District Survey." Prepared for the San Francisco Planning Department. July 22, 2008.

\*Recorded by: Carey & Co., Inc.

\*Date: March 16, 2010  Continuation

Update

**Continuation of B12. References:**

"More Fire Patrol Service." *San Francisco Chronicle*. September 22, 1897, p. 12.

Mullgardt, L. C. "Death of Clinton Day, F.A.I.A." *Architect & Engineer* 44, no. 1 (January 1916): 87.

"Opens Quarters of Fire Patrol." *San Francisco Call*. Septmber 26, 1903, p. 14.

San Francisco City Directories.

San Francisco Fire Department Museum. "Underwriters Fire Patrol Companies." <http://guardiansofthecity.org> (accessed November 23, 2009).

San Francisco Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board. A Context Statement and Architectural/Historical Survey of Unreinforced Masonry Building (UMB) Construction in San Francisco from 1850 to 1940. San Francisco, Calif.: Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board, San Francisco Department of City Planning. November 1990.

"Seek Downtown Stores." *San Francisco Call*. July 11, p. 8.

"Tea Garden for Shoppers Will be Feature of the Greater City." *San Francisco Call*. September 17, 1906, p. 4.

"To Build Fire House." *San Francisco Call*. December 28, 1907, p 13.

"Underwriters to Have patrol Post Downtown." *San Francisco Call*. January 17, 1908.

"Union Trust Co. to Build New Home." *San Francisco Call*. July 1, 1908, p. 16.

United States Federal Census, 1860-1930, [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com), accessed January 14, 2010.