

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

DRAFT

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Swedish American Hall

Other names/site number: _____

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

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

2. Location

Street & number: 2168-2174 Market Street

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

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide ___ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___A ___B ___C ___D

<p>_____ Signature of certifying official/Title:</p> <p>_____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	<p>_____ Date</p>
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<p>In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>_____ Signature of commenting official:</p> <p>_____ Title :</p>	<p>_____ Date</p> <p>_____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

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

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL: meeting hall

RECREATION AND CULTURE: auditorium

COMMERCE/TRADE: restaurant

COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL: meeting hall

RECREATION AND CULTURE: auditorium

COMMERCE/TRADE: restaurant

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH & EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS:

Bungalow/Craftsman

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: wood, brick

Narrative Description

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

Summary Paragraph

The Swedish American Hall is located in San Francisco's Upper Market area on the north side of Market Street between Church Street and Sanchez Street. It is a three-story-over-basement (plus mezzanine), wood frame, combination social hall and commercial building constructed in 1907 for the Swedish Society of San Francisco. The building is rectangular in plan, clad with wood shingles and brick on its primary façade, and clad with wood rustic channel siding on its secondary facades. It was designed with a blend of Scandinavian and Arts and Crafts influences by the Swedish born master architect, August Nordin. The building is notable for its expressive woodwork, fine craftsmanship, and high artistic values. This is evident on the primary façade and also within its well-preserved interior lodge rooms. In particular, its largest public assembly space, Freja Hall, features highly ornamental woodwork and soaring trusses that rank it among the finest expressions of Arts and Crafts design in California. The basement is home to the Cafe Du Nord, in continuous operation since 1908. In 2014-2015, the building underwent a rehabilitation project reviewed by the San Francisco Planning Department for conformity to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The project inserted a new Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant elevator, and created a new restaurant space out of two, previously altered storefront spaces. Several other previously altered spaces, including kitchens, storage areas, and restrooms were also remodeled. All of the significant exterior and interior features of the

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building survive with relatively minor alterations from the original design, and the building retains an outstanding level of architectural integrity. It continues to be owned by the Swedish Society of San Francisco. In 2015, the Swedish American Hall was designated San Francisco Landmark No. 267.¹

Narrative Description

The Swedish American Hall is located on the 2100 block of Market Street approximately two miles southwest of downtown San Francisco. The immediate vicinity is characterized by two- to four-story mixed-use buildings constructed during the early twentieth century, as well as a few mixed-use infill properties constructed during the 2010s. The blocks to the north and south are generally characterized by wood frame single- and multi-family properties constructed during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, when the area developed as a streetcar suburb.

Exterior Description—Primary Facade

The primary façade of the Swedish American Hall faces southeast onto Market Street and is three bays wide (**Photos 1-4**). 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, addressed as 2174 Market Street, features a shallow brick arch flanked by large wooden brackets and truss work supporting a gable hood with notched rafter tails and scalloped bargeboards (**Photo 5**). 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.

The entry itself consists of a pair of fully glazed wood doors flanked by narrow sidelights and crowned with a tripartite wood-frame transom. The floor of the entry vestibule features polychrome terrazzo flooring consisting of 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. To the left of the entry is a pink-colored cornerstone stating: “Erected by the Swedish Society 1907,” while to the right is a circular plaque installed circa 2017 that identifies the building as San Francisco Landmark No. 267.

East of the main entry is a storefront divided into two halves that wrap the entry vestibule for the Café Du Nord. Originally, there were two storefronts; the storefront system installed in 2014-2015 consists of multi-light wood windows and black ceramic tile bulkheads (**Photo 6**). The storefront entry consists of a fully glazed wood door crowned with a transom and located toward the west end.

The entrance to the Cafe Du Nord is roughly centered on the ground floor façade and screened by a wrought iron security gate. It features a recessed entry vestibule with a terrazzo threshold. The terrazzo field is yellow, with green terrazzo letters reading “Cafe Du Nord.” Beyond are

¹ Much of the information in this registration form is drawn directly from the San Francisco Landmark Designation Report, prepared in 2014-2015 by Jonathan Lammers, formerly of the San Francisco Planning Department, and author of this nomination.

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wood double doors with diamond-light glazing leading to a stairway that runs down to access a bar and restaurant in the building's basement. The vestibule is flanked by polychrome brick piers and crowned with a transom featuring eight leaded lights with yellow-tinted glass at the center. These leaded lights are protected at the exterior by a frosted-glass screen. A historic, black and white porcelain neon "Cafe Du Nord" sign hangs above the entry.

The upper floors of the primary façade are dominated by a large bay window at the center of the second floor, rising to a pair of twin gables featuring broad scalloped bargeboards 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.

At the west end of the second story, 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 beam sill resting on nailhead blocks. At the center of these windows is a pilaster crowned with a lantern capital. Above is crossed and branching flat board trim that resembles half-timbering. 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 bargeboards. 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 that resembles half-timbering. Beneath these dormers is a side-gable roof element with rounded and notched rafter tails. The façade terminates in twin gables at the center featuring shaped bargeboards which partially conceal three notched wooden brackets. The east and west ends of the roofline are marked by tabbed parapets crowned by metal flagpoles.

Exterior Description—West and Rear Facades

The west facade of the Swedish American Hall faces Sanchez Street. Until 2016, the façade was visible from the public right-of-way. It has since been obscured by infill construction on the adjacent lot. Originally, the west façade included two light wells toward Market Street, one of which was removed in 2014 for the construction of an ADA-compliant elevator. 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.

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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 that provides egress from an interior kitchen area. A paneled wood door with two leaded glass lights is located at the second floor level and provides egress from Freja Hall to a metal fire escape. Visible fenestration includes a band of three single-light wood windows with flat board trim at both the east and west ends of the second floor. Within the interior of Freja Hall, these windows have been blocked off with removable panels. The rear façade terminates in a stepped parapet with center tab.

Interior Description—Entry Hall

The main entry hall is accessed from the exterior vestibule through a pair of fully glazed wooden doors (**Photo 7**). Immediately to the left in the entry hall is a carpeted wood stair featuring a board and batten wainscot on the exterior (west) wall, and a decorative wood screen railing on the interior side which features a pierced teardrop motif. The newel post features an incised floral motif. The newel post cap and the handrail topping the screen are both stained wood. The exterior walls on the staircase within the wainscot are covered with 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 19th century through the 1920s. These staircase details, including the pierced railing and board-and-batten/leather paper finishes are used on this staircase at all levels of the building.

The entry hall features laminate flooring in a dark wood tone that has been installed over older wood flooring. The walls include a non-original chair rail with a band of non-original molding above on the upper surface of the walls. Beyond the stair to the right is a vestibule created during the 2014-2015 rehabilitation project. It features interpretive materials related to the building’s history. These include historic photos of the building, as well as wood chairs with high pointed backs that are original furnishings of the hall (**Figures 11-12**). A glass display case houses historic ephemera of the Swedish Society.

Beyond the stair to the left is a vestibule featuring a board and batten wall clad with leather paper at the west end. The south wall of the vestibule includes a paneled wood door that provides access to a wooden staircase leading down to a basement mechanical room. Continuing down the hall toward the rear of the building is an elevator installed circa 2014 in the former location of a storage closet. Beyond that, a woman’s restroom is located along the west wall. Opposite the restroom is a hallway that provides access to two unisex bathrooms, as well as the Odin Lodge Room. Continuing down the main entry hall is a wooden staircase on the left (west) that 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 walls along the stair enclosure also feature board and batten panels with leather paper cladding like that used on the main stair.

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At the rear, northwest corner of the first floor—just beyond the stairway leading down to the Café Du Nord—is a kitchen storage area. The north wall of this room features non-historic paneled wood double doors that access a fire escape and a temporary garbage storage area. Above the doors is a large wood transom with a wire screen. Most finishes in this room are the result of the 2014-2015 rehabilitation project, and replaced non-historic features installed during a prior remodeling effort.

Odin Lodge Room (First Floor)

Opposite the stairs leading down to the Café Du Nord is 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 (**Photos 8-9**). 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 the adjacent kitchen storage area. Lighting is provided by non-original half-round hanging fixtures and sconces attached to the perimeter piers.

Of note, a large cased clock stands in one corner of the room. Based on historic photos, this clock has served as a furnishing within the hall since at least 1916, when it stood in the Verdandi club room. The Odin lodge room also includes a number of wood chairs with pointed backs, as well as wood pedestals that served as original furnishings in the building.

Freja Hall (Second Floor)

Occupying the entire 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 a soaring expression of the Arts and Crafts style in California. This double height space—originally used for celebrations by the Swedish Society of San Francisco—measures approximately 51 feet deep by 48 feet wide, and 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 ceiling consists of white-painted exposed rafters and diagonal board sheathing. Two pairs of steel-frame skylights are located near the center of the ceiling flanking the roof ridge. Mechanical lighting is provided by non-original pendant lights hanging from the trusses (**Photos 10-11**).

The lower portion of Freja Hall features a wooden floor 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

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features a pair of original, paneled wood doors and is accessed via a vestibule area at the southwest end of the hall. This vestibule features boxed beam ceilings and a small bar installed circa 2015, replacing a storage area. A second entry is located near the southeast end of the hall and includes a paneled wood door accessing the 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 vestibule bar area.

The focal point of the room is the stage along the north wall, which features a stepped platform stage and a proscenium framed by darkly stained wood posts, oversized brackets and nailhead trim (**Photo 12**). To the right (east) of the stage is a paneled wood door—partially glazed with two bullseye lights—that accesses a small room housing audio-visual equipment. 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 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. They are non-functional and have been retained as historical decorative elements.

The balcony of Freja Hall occupies a mezzanine level between the second and third floors (**Photo 13**). The balcony runs the full length along the back (south) wall, and partial width along the north and south walls. 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. The balcony floats above the main floor supported by six metal rods that run through, and are suspended from, the truss work at the ceiling. These bars connect to additional metal bars secured along the raised wooden interior edge of the balcony. The top edge of the balcony is enclosed by brass pipe railings. The walls of the balcony feature a paneled wainscot perimeter identical to that used on the main floor. The west wall of the balcony includes three paneled wood doors that 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. The door at the southwest end of the balcony accesses a hallway leading to the elevator and stair landings, as well as the main entrance to the Valhalla banquet room. The door at the southeast end of the balcony accesses the northeast corner of the Valhalla banquet room and is flanked on the outside edge by a small leaded glass window featuring green-tinted bullseye lights. An identical window located by the southwest door was removed during the 2014-2015 rehabilitation project to install an ADA-compliant elevator.

Balder Lodge Room (Second Floor)

The Balder lodge room is located at the southeast end of the second floor (**Photos 14-16**). The hall features two bracketed trusses that divide the ceiling into thirds. Nailhead trim blocks run along the lower face of the truss, and brass caps cover the truss rods. Three non-original pendant lights hang from the base of each truss. The walls are clad with a batten wainscot featuring leather paper wallcovering. The leather paper in the upper portion of the wainscot features two yellow-painted squares in each panel. Prior to the 2014-2015 rehabilitation, each panel included

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four yellow-painted squares. The upper portion of the panels were altered to install HVAC vents. The north, east, and south walls are crowned with a band of flat board trim. The flooring is wood.

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 non-original 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 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.

A doorway at the southwest corner of the Balder lodge room accesses an anteroom to the west (**Photo 17**). The south wall of the anteroom includes a stained batten wainscot with leather paper panels, as well as a small ceramic water fountain. In the southwest corner is a nook with a pointed bay window and interior seat. The double-hung wood windows feature twelve-over-twelve leaded glass lights, and the ceiling of the nook is clad with stained bead board. The west wall of the anteroom includes three paneled lockers with a stained wood finish. The flooring is stained wood. North of the anteroom is a short hallway.

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. It is used as an office space (**Photo 18**). The room is accessed from the stair landing via a pair of paneled wood double doors with flat board trim. At center above the door is a plaque reading "Valhalla," This plaque is flanked by nailhead trim blocks at the corner of the door framing.

The interior of 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.

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 leaded glass transom featuring a shield motif (**Photo 19**). 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 that features embossed floral embellishment.

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Besides the main entry, there are paneled wood doors at the northeast and northwest corners of the room that access the balcony aisle. In the interior of the room, the area at the north end above the main entry includes a boxed soffit featuring simple flat board panels and small nailhead trim blocks.

Verdandi Club Room (Third Floor)

The Verdandi club room has been used traditionally 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, while above are two light sconces. 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 is crowned by a stained triangular trim board and flanked by closets featuring paneled wood doors with bullseye-glazed lights (**Photos 20-21**).

Large, floor-to-ceiling built-in bookcases are located along the west wall of the room flanking the doorway (**Photo 22**). These feature cabinets with paneled doors at the base, and glass-fronted bookshelves at the top. A small ceramic drinking water fountain is located near the northwest corner. 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. A small ladder for emergency egress is affixed beneath the western-most window. Mechanical lighting in the room is provided by non-historic wall sconces, as well as two large non-historic pendant lights. 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 (**Photos 23-24**). 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 at the east end of the room is flanked in the rear by two battered engaged columns that are essentially identical to those found in the Balder lodge room. The columns are crowned with capitals featuring an "X" motif, and the upper each columns includes a painted linear reliefs, and a non-original lighting sconce.

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Members of the Swedish Society state that the bannister is not historic. It 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 wall side, and a decorative painted wood screen on the interior side featuring a pierced teardrop motif. The painted newel posts include an incised floral motif; the wood newel posts and handrails are stained. The hall landings at each floor level feature stained wood flooring and access a north-south hallway. Moving south down the hallway toward the front of the building, one turns right to access the continuation of the stairs up to the next level.

From the Swedish American Hall main entry, the stairs rise in a straight run to the second floor landing. To the right (east) of the second floor landing are paneled wood double doors that access the vestibule and bar area for Freja Hall. A hallway to the north accesses the elevator. A hallway to the south accesses a restroom and an anteroom for the Balder lodge room.

From the second floor to the mezzanine level, the stairs include a quarter turn. At this level, a double-hung, wood-sash leaded art glass window is located on the south wall. 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. At the mezzanine level landing are the doors to the Valhalla banquet room. To the north is a hallway which accesses the elevator and the door leading to the southwest end of the Freja Hall balcony. To the south is a hall accessing the door to a small kitchen. The kitchen was rehabilitated circa 2014-2015 and contains modern equipment and finishes.

From the mezzanine level to the third floor, the stairs include a quarter turn. At this landing, a single leaded art glass window is located on the south wall and cased by flat boards with nailhead trim blocks (**Photo 25**). The third floor landing is illuminated by a large, pyramidal multi-pane skylight with a paneled wood base (**Photo 26**). 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 gaslights and are presumed original to the building. At the north end of the landing is an elevator vestibule that replaced a closet area and restroom. On the north wall of the vestibule is a non-historic paneled storage cabinet, and above hangs an original, operative neon light for the Fylgia Lodge.

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 that accesses the paneled wood door to the Svea lodge room and library. Beyond the door to the Svea lodge room is an arched opening leading to a paneled wood door that accesses a mechanical room housing cellular phone equipment. The walls in this area consist of a board-and-batten wainscot with leather paper cladding.

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Interior (Basement): Cafe Du Nord

The Cafe Du Nord occupies the basement level of the Swedish American Hall. It is accessed from the Market Street sidewalk via paired wood doors with diamond lights. A straight-run staircase with a brass railing leads down into the main bar area. A single pendant light hangs above the stairs, and the ceiling within the stairwell features applied plaster floral moldings that may be original to the building.

The condition of the Cafe Du Nord is largely the result of a circa 2014-2015 rehabilitation project. Prior to this rehabilitation, the Cafe Du Nord appeared to retain relatively few original features, save for a stained wood, boxed beam ceiling, and what was presumed to be the original bar. Both of these features were retained during the rehabilitation project. The bar is located along the southeast wall of the space. The front of the bar features a polished wood top and a brass railing at the base (**Photo 27**).

The back bar is mirrored and includes a series of square, paneled columns. These columns support an entablature consisting of a paneled frieze with floral leaf elements, crowned by echinus and astragal molding, and a cornice with leaf molding. The base of the back bar, modified during the rehabilitation project, includes storage coolers and a few storage cabinets with metal hardware. The remainder of the bar area features a painted, paneled wood wainscot and linoleum style flooring.

A stage and dance floor are located toward at the north end of the café (**Photo 28**). This area is characterized by linoleum style flooring, a painted, paneled wood wainscot, and seating areas with tufted upholstery along the walls. This includes a seating alcove along the east wall, as well as an additional bar along the west wall. This bar, retained in the rehabilitation, features a paneled wood base with a brass railing. The stage is located along the north wall of the space. A passageway at the west end of the stage accesses a quarter-turn staircase rising to the first floor.

Other features of the Cafe Du Nord include a kitchen area at the northeast end that features tile flooring and stainless steel cooking equipment and shelving. In the northwest corner of the kitchen are double-doors that access an alcove with tiled walls, a small beverage bar, and wood cabinets.

The restrooms are located in an alcove beneath the stairs at the south end of the cafe. This alcove includes hexagonal ceramic tile flooring, a ceramic tile wainscot, and paneled wood doors accessing unisex restrooms. A porcelain sink is located at the west end of the room, with lighting provided by ceramic fixtures. Prior to the 2014-2015 rehabilitation project, this area was characterized by a passageway running east-west beneath the stairs connecting a seating alcove to a raised platform with pool tables.

Interior (First Floor): Non-Historic Restaurant Space

At the front (south) of the first floor facing Market Street is a restaurant space installed during a 2014-2015 rehabilitation project (**Photo 29**). The restaurant replaced two former commercial spaces (historically addressed as 2168 and 2172 Market Street). These two commercial spaces

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had been altered previously and neither retained any historic materials at the time of the 2014-2015 rehabilitation project.

The restaurant space is accessed from the entry lobby via a partially glazed door, as well as from the door facing the Market Street sidewalk. The interior of the western half of the restaurant is characterized by a long serving counter with a beadboard base and marble top. Behind is a service bar backed with shelving and clad with ceramic tiles. The west and north side of the room features a tiled wainscot, crowned by tinted mirrors at the north end. A hallway located near the northeast corner of the room runs past a coffee service bar and leads to a kitchen storage area and a vestibule for the restrooms.

The eastern half of the restaurant includes a food preparation area at the north end, and a seating area at the south end facing Market Street. The seating area includes a beadboard wainscot and exposed beams at the ceiling. The food preparation area includes a long marble service counter, which is overhung by a ventilation soffit clad with pressed metal tiles. To the north of the food preparation area is a storage kitchen characterized by stainless steel shelving and cooking equipment.

Summary of Alterations

The following is a selected list of building permit applications associated with alterations to the building, as well as a discussion of other evident alterations.

- 1938 Installation of a fire escape on the primary façade.
- 1955 Remodeling of both storefronts with an aluminum storefront system.
- 1958 Construction of one new toilet and remodeling of three toilets.
- 2003 First floor remodel, including a new front door and new wood windows, and a new reception lobby and office. Installation of sprinklers in the first floor corridor.
- 2008 Storefront replacement, and the installation of a new bathroom, flooring, and restaurant counter.
- 2010 Replacement of cracked and broken siding (approximately 400 square feet) on the west wall of the building.
- 2012 Voluntary seismic upgrade of existing wood trusses in Freja Hall.
- 2014 Insertion of a new ADA elevator, remodeling of Cafe Du Nord, remodeling of existing restaurant spaces at first floor level, including removing a common wall to combine spaces; remodeling existing banquet events kitchen at second floor mezzanine level; remodeling existing bar area at second floor; remodeling toilets on first, second and third floors per plans; relocating equipment cabinets in equipment room; providing exhaust for upgraded restrooms; fire alarm panel replacement and upgrade; installation of new mechanical and lighting for bar and restaurant areas on first floor and basement; installation of fire sprinkler head at basement level.

Based on historic photographs, other known changes to the building include the following undated alterations.

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Alterations to the stepped parapets at the east and west ends of the roofline of the primary façade.

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 at the gable ends on the primary façade.

Replacement of all entry doors on the primary façade.

Interior renovations to the kitchens and pantries.

Interior renovations to the Cafe Du Nord.

Integrity

Location: The Swedish American Hall retains integrity of location as it has never been moved.

Design: The Swedish American Hall retains integrity of design. All of the principal character-defining exterior and interior architectural features of the building survive with relatively minor alterations. In particular, all of the lodge rooms and Svea Hall are remarkably unchanged from their original design. These rooms are particularly significant as they embody the principal purpose for which the building was constructed: to provide meeting space for the Swedish Society and allied Scandinavian organizations. While the storefronts and Cafe Du Nord have been altered, such changes are typical as commercial spaces were adapted over time in accordance with evolving trends in windows displays, merchandising, and signage. The changes to these spaces do not overshadow or detract from the overall design aesthetic of the building.

Setting: The Swedish American Hall retains integrity of setting. The building is located in the locally eligible Upper Market Street Commercial Historic District. Most of the buildings on the north side of this block of Market Street were constructed prior to 1930 and remain extant. Similarly, the south side of Market Street includes several notable historic buildings, including the Freeborn Estate Commercial Building (1920) and New Era Hall (1907). The latter was also designed by August Nordin and is San Francisco Landmark No. 277. Two notable exceptions are post-2012 residential buildings to the west and south, both of which replaced gas stations constructed after 1970.

Materials: The Swedish American Hall retains integrity of materials. On the exterior, the building retains character-defining materials including clinker brick, wood shingles, scalloped barge boards and wood windows with leaded glass lights. The interior retains significant and character-defining materials, including the extensive woodwork in Freja Hall, box-beam ceilings and wood trusses, wood paneling and leather paper wainscoating, wooden nailhead trim blocks, wood floors, doors with original bullseye glazing, an original fireplace inglenook, and built-in bookcases.

Workmanship: The Swedish American Hall retains integrity of workmanship. This is best evidenced by the trusswork and carved decorative elements in Freja Hall, as well as the bracketed trusses, wood wall paneling, and nailhead trim blocks that are ubiquitous throughout

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the lodge rooms. The building's wooden staircases likewise retain carved decorative elements. On the exterior, original elements such as the scalloped barge boards in the gable ends and at the hood above the primary entry attest to the superior level of workmanship.

Feeling: The Swedish American Hall retains integrity of feeling. Through the retention of its original design, materials, and workmanship, the building continues to convey its historic character as an ethnic social hall constructed during the first decade of the twentieth century.

Association: The Swedish American Hall retains integrity of association. It has had only one owner since it was constructed, the Swedish Society of San Francisco. The hall continues to be used by the Swedish Society, and is the home of the Society's library and archives. The lodge rooms and Svea Hall continue to serve as public assembly spaces, hosting events such as community meetings, lectures, and concerts.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

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

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ETHNIC HERITAGE: Swedish

SOCIAL HISTORY

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1907-1980

Significant Dates

1907

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Nordin, August

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

The Swedish American Hall is eligible for the National Register at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the areas of Social History and Ethnic Heritage: Swedish as 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 also 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 Swedish and Scandinavian social and fraternal groups. Under Criterion A, the period of significance is 1907 to 1980. The beginning of the period of significance represents the year the building was completed. The close of the period of significance marks the beginning of a dramatic decline in both Swedish Society membership and use of the hall. This was due to a variety of factors, including the dwindling need to help new Swedish immigrants assimilate into U.S. society, as well as a general cultural shift away from membership in fraternal organizations. The hall is also eligible at the local level of significance under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as the work of master architect, August Nordin. The building's architectural finishes, particularly its interior ornamental woodwork, demonstrate a superior level of craftsmanship that rank it among the finest expressions of the Arts and Crafts style in California. Under Criterion C, the period of significance is 1907, the year of construction. The Swedish American Hall meets Criteria Consideration G for its exceptional significance as the foremost social and cultural institution for Swedish and Scandinavian organizations in San Francisco.

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

Criterion A: Ethnic History and Social Heritage

The Swedish American Hall is significantly associated with the history of Swedish and Scandinavian immigrants in San Francisco. Its construction in 1907 represented the culmination of decades of efforts to assist Swedish immigrants assimilate to new lives in the United States, as well as promote Swedish fellowship, culture, and identity in San Francisco. Following its completion, the hall served as the locus of Swedish culture in San Francisco, while also providing vital meeting space for allied Scandinavian organizations.

History of 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 1850.² The first great peak of Swedish immigration to the United States 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 330,000 Swedes left for America.³ By 1890, approximately 478,000 Swedes lived in the United States—although

² Muriel N. Beroza, *Golden Gate Swedes*, (Yosemite, CA: The Range of Light Works, 2000), 35

³ Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center, "Swedish Immigration to North America," accessed 26 October 2014, <http://www.augustana.edu/general-information/swenson-center-/swedish-american-immigration-history>.

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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 more than doubled over the following decade. By 1900, the Swedish population in California had grown to 14,500 persons.⁴

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.”⁵ The charter membership included forty-six Swedes, nineteen Norwegians, and twelve Danes, and all of these languages were spoken at the Scandinavian Society’s meetings.⁶

Along with fostering a communal social atmosphere, the expressed common goal was to provide a meeting place for Scandinavians living in the Bay Area. The group produced theatricals, hosted numerous picnic outings, and 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 \$30,000 in capital contributed by the members.⁷ 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. As described in 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

⁴ Allan Kastrup, *The Swedish Heritage in America*, (Minneapolis: Swedish Council of America, 1975), 481.

⁵ Muriel N. Beroza, *Golden Gate Swedes*, (Yosemite, CA: The Range of Light Works, 2000), 49.

⁶ Ibid: 50.

⁷ Ibid: 31.

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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.⁸

The 1876 San Francisco 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, 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."⁹

Nearly all of the early records of the Society were destroyed by the 1906 Earthquake and Fire. 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.¹⁰

This information is largely confirmed by a history of the Swedish Society that 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."¹¹

Numerous other Swedish organizations were formed in San Francisco during the late nineteenth 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).¹² A number of Swedish religious institutions were also

⁸ San Francisco Architectural Heritage, "Swedish Society Continues Proud Stewardship of its Historic Home," *Heritage News*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 3 (May/June 2000), 6-7.

⁹ "Objects of the Society are Explained," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 9, 1916, 19.

¹⁰ "Swedish Society is a Growing Organization – Big Fraternal Body Strongly Established Here," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 9, 1916, 19.

¹¹ Swedish Society of San Francisco, *The Swedish Society's Golden Jubilee 1875-1925*, (San Francisco, Swedish Society of San Francisco, October 1925, 15.

¹² Muriel N. Beroza, *Golden Gate Swedes*, (Yosemite, CA: The Range of Light Works, 2000), 62-64.

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established—all of them in the South of Market. In 1884, Swedish immigrants purchased a lot at Mission and 9th 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 10th Street in the South of Market.¹³

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 and goings, and kept his readers apprised of community events and celebrations.¹⁴ Olsson also served 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 a number of Swedish organizations formed a committee to organize festivities for "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.¹⁵ 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."¹⁶

An outgrowth of the organizing committee was the founding of the Swedish American Patriotic League—heavily promoted by Alexander Olsson in *Vestkusten*—that provided a central organization to promote similar events. Initially, the group consisted of twenty-six delegates from ten organizations, of which the Swedish Society was the oldest and largest.¹⁷ The League was also instrumental in forming the Swedish-American Hall Association, incorporated in 1898.¹⁸ 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

¹³ Ibid: 42-45.

¹⁴ Muriel N. Beroza, *Golden Gate Swedes*, (Yosemite, CA: The Range of Light Works, 2000), 45-46.

¹⁵ "For Old Sweden," *The Morning Call*, May 15, 1894, 4.

¹⁶ Swedish Society of San Francisco, *The Swedish Society's Golden Jubilee 1875-1925*, (San Francisco, Swedish Society of San Francisco, October 1925, 15.

¹⁷ Ted Olsson, "The Swedish American Patriotic League, A Historical Perspective on the 100th Anniversary," accessed November 7, 2014 from <http://www.sveadal.org/#!history/cee5>

¹⁸ *Sacramento Daily Union*, "Articles of Incorporation," June 10, 1898.

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Francisco.¹⁹ 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.”²⁰

In April 1904, the Swedish-American Hall Association celebrated the opening of a new building known as Scandia Hall, located at 161 City Hall Avenue near the intersection of Grove and Larkin Streets in San Francisco’s Civic Center area. Among the speakers was Alexander Olsson, editor of *Vestkusten*, and a program of songs was sung by the Swedish Singing Society.²¹ At the time of its construction, Scandia Hall served as headquarters for the Swedish Society, as well as the home for its library. Research did not reveal any photographs of Scandia Hall, but a 1905 Sanborn map shows it as a two-and-a-half story brick building with lodge rooms on the second floor. At the rear, the building was connected to another brick building facing Market Street that 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, Scandia Hall, on City Hall Avenue, fell to the flames on the first day of the fire that followed the great earthquake. With it, the 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.²²

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

¹⁹ Muriel N. Beroza, *Golden Gate Swedes*, (Yosemite, CA: The Range of Light Works, 2000), 64.

²⁰ *San Francisco Call*, “Swedish Societies Hold Bazaar,” October 7, 1902.

²¹ *San Francisco Call*, “Swedes Commemorate Opening of New Hall,” May 4, 1904.

²² San Francisco Architectural Heritage, “Swedish Society Continues Proud Stewardship of its Historic Home,” *Heritage News*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 3 (May/June 2000), 6-7.

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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.²³

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.²⁴ 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.²⁵

A Scandinavian Enclave in the Neighborhood

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were marked by large-scale immigration from other Scandinavian countries along with the Swedes. Initially, most Scandinavians settled in the

²³ "Members Give Aid to Brothers Sick or in Distress," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 9, 1916, 19.

²⁴ Swedish Society of San Francisco, *The Swedish Society's Golden Jubilee 1975-1925*, (San Francisco, Swedish Society of San Francisco, October 1925, 20.

²⁵ Muriel N. Beroza, *Golden Gate Swedes*, (Yosemite, CA: The Range of Light Works, 2000), 58-59.

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Midwest. Sizeable West Coast populations were also established in California and Washington. Between 1890 and 1910, it is estimated that 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.²⁶ In California, the Swedish population nearly doubled during the first decade of the twentieth century, rising from approximately 14,500 to 26,000 persons between 1900 and 1910.²⁷

When the Swedish American Hall was completed, it stood in the midst of an emerging Scandinavian enclave. A major impetus in the formation of this enclave 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 15th 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 that confined the conflagration to the blocks east of Dolores Street.²⁸ The *Vestkusten* newspaper likewise moved to the area shortly after the earthquake. Publisher Alexander Olsson purchased a house at 30 Sharon Street, converting the downstairs to house offices and the printing presses. The paper remained at this address until 1928, when new office space was acquired at 253 Church Street.²⁹ The house at 30 Sharon Street remains in the family, owned by Olsson’s grandson.

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, not extant)
- Swedish American Hall (2168-2174 Market Street)
- St. Ansgar Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church (152 Church Street, extant)
- Swedish Evangelical Mission Church / Mission Tabernacle (455 Dolores Street, extant)
- First Swedish Baptist Church (3459 17th Street, extant)
- First Swedish Methodist Episcopal Church (439 Guerrero Street, extant)

²⁶ Kay Melchisedech Olson, *Norwegian, Swedish and Danish Immigrants 1820-1920*, (Mankato, Minnesota: Capstone Press, 2002): 21-22.

²⁷ Allan Kastrup, *The Swedish Heritage in America*, (Minneapolis: Swedish Council of America, 1975), 503.

²⁸ 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).

²⁹ Muriel N. Beroza, “From Ebenezer to Vestkusten,” *Nordstjernen*, accessed November 7, 2014 from http://www.nordstjernen.com/news/pacific_states/1166/

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- Norwegian Lutheran Church (407 Dolores Street, not extant)
- Norwegian Singing Society (431 Duboce Avenue, extant)
- Swedish Home for Girls (3744 17th Street, not extant)
- Central Methodist (Norwegian & Danish) Church (750 14th Street, extant)
- *Vestkusten* Swedish newspaper (30 Sharon Street, extant)
- Finnilla's Finnish Baths (4032 17th Street, not extant)
- Swedish Athletic Club (3276 16th Street, not extant)

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.”³⁰ 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.

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. The Odin lodge room is named for the chief god in Norse mythology, and 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, and the Verdandi club room is named for one of the three *norns*, or female Fates. The Valhalla banquet room is named for a mythological hall of the afterlife. Svea is a Swedish female name that can be translated simply as Swede, or as the female personification of Sweden.³¹

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 entry to Cafe Du Nord at 2170 Market Street was between the storefronts, and the lodge rooms were accessed from the primary entrance at 2174 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. Pihlstrom was also a musical director for numerous Swedish singing groups during this period.

³⁰ Muriel N. Beroza, *Golden Gate Swedes*, (Yosemite, CA: The Range of Light Works, 2000), 59.

³¹ Muriel N. Beroza, “The Swedish American Hall in San Francisco,” *The Swedish-American Historical Quarterly*, Vol. LVIII, No. 4, October 2007, 276.

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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 1935.³²

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."³³

A September 3, 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 (**Figure 14**). By late November, 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."³⁴ Other advertisements in *Vestkusten* indicate that 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.

Another longstanding tenant during the early years of the Swedish American Hall was a shoe store at the 2172 Market Street storefront. Sometimes listed as Svea Shoes, the shop was operated by Charles Anderson 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.

Use by Fraternal Organizations and Singing Groups

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. In addition to association with figures in Norse mythology, room names also appear to have been specifically associated with some of the fraternal societies that used them. These included the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF) Odin Lodge No. 393, formed in 1904 from the Knights of the Golden Banner, as well as a women's auxiliary, 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.³⁵ 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 (**Figure 12**).

³² Muriel N. Beroza, *Golden Gate Swedes*, (Yosemite, CA: The Range of Light Works, 2000), 58-59.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Vestkusten*, November 26, 1908.

³⁵ Swedish Society of San Francisco, *The Swedish Society's Golden Jubilee 1975-1925*, (San Francisco, Swedish Society of San Francisco, October 1925), 23-24.

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Other longstanding tenants 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.³⁶ A historic neon sign relocated to the third floor elevator alcove appears associated with this group. 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.

Singing groups also made extensive use of the building. A Swedish singing group was at the heart of the formation of the Swedish Society, and singing remained a vital part of the Swedish ethnic identity well into the twentieth century. In 1892, the Swedish Singing Society was organized as a stand-alone singing society. As with other fraternal organizations, singing groups 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.... 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.³⁷

The Swedish Singing Society, along with other singing groups, regularly practiced and performed in the Swedish American Hall. From the turn of the century through 1933, the singing society was under the direction of Axel Pihlstrom, who also directed Danish and Norwegian male choruses in San Francisco.³⁸ These groups also formed a local federation, the United Scandinavian Singers, for pan-Scandinavian celebrations, such as Leif Ericson Day. In 1915, the Swedish American Hall hosted other west coast singing groups visiting San Francisco for the Panama-Pacific International Exposition (PPIE).

1915 Panama Pacific International Exposition (PPIE)

The Swedish American Hall served a vital role as the central meeting place for organizing the construction of a Swedish Pavilion at the 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 became the Marina District, featuring scores of halls showcasing technological achievements, as well as pavilions representing various U.S. states and nations around the globe. By the time the fair closed in December 1915, more than 15 million persons had attended.

³⁶ Muriel N. Beroza, *Golden Gate Swedes*, (Yosemite, CA: The Range of Light Works, 2000). 66-67.

³⁷ Irving Babow, "The Swedish Singing Society of San Francisco," *The Chronicle*, Vol. 1. No. 3 (Autumn 1954), 6.

³⁸ *Ibid*: 3-7.

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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.³⁹ Ferdinand Boberg of Stockholm, architect of the Malmo Exhibition of 1914, was engaged to design the building, with August Nordin—architect of the Swedish American Hall—serving as the supervising architect on site.

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.”⁴⁰ An important outgrowth of the fair was 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, California. Since its purchase in 1926 the land continues to be used as both a resort and the site for the Midsummer celebration, which includes raising a maypole and a parade celebrating the election of a queen and court drawn from various Swedish clubs.⁴¹

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 is an important source of historical documentation and includes a photograph of the interior library, later known as the Verdandi club room. The inglenook shown in the photo is virtually unchanged. The grandfather clock in the image was donated to the Swedish Society by Eric O. Lindblom and later moved to the Odin lodge room.⁴²

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.”⁴³ 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.

³⁹ 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.

⁴⁰ San Francisco Architectural Heritage, “Swedish Society Continues Proud Stewardship of its Historic Home,” *Heritage News*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 3 (May/June 2000), 6-7.

⁴¹ Muriel N. Beroza, *Golden Gate Swedes*, (Yosemite, CA: The Range of Light Works, 2000), 85.

⁴² Swedish Society of San Francisco, *The Swedish Society’s Golden Jubilee 1975-1925*, (San Francisco, Swedish Society of San Francisco, October 1925), 24.

⁴³ “Swedish Society is a Growing Organization Big Fraternal Body Strongly Established Here,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 9, 1916, 19.

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In October 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 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.⁴⁴ The progress of the Swedish Society's Oakland branch was also noted, including the construction of Jenny Lind Hall at 2267 Telegraph Avenue in 1915. This building remains extant as the headquarters for a Buddhist Association.

From the 1920s through the late twentieth century, the Swedish American Hall continued to serve as the central meeting place for Swedish social and fraternal organizations in San Francisco. It was the site of numerous concerts, dances, and social gatherings. 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, 1960, and 1971; Prime Minister Tage Erlander in 1961; Crown Prince Carl Gustav—later King Carl XVI Gustaf—in 1967; and Crown Princess Victoria in 2001.⁴⁵

There are no bound registers available for membership in the Swedish Society. Various documents, including meeting minutes, demonstrate that the organization remained quite popular well into the late twentieth century. In 1971, the Swedish Society counted 101 members, while the Swedish Ladies Society counted approximately 165 members. During this same period, a logbook for the hall from September 1971 shows it being used twenty-nine times that month by various organizations including Fylgia Lodge, the Odin Lodge, the Danish Brotherhood, and the Swedish American Patriotic League.

As late as 1980, membership in the Swedish Society and Swedish Ladies Society remained robust, with nearly 150 members (56 and 90 members, respectively). Over the following decade, however, these numbers fell by more than half. In 1990, there were only twenty members of the Swedish Society, while the Swedish Ladies counted forty-five members. Faced with declining membership, one of the namesake organizations associated with the Swedish American Hall, the Balder Masonic Lodge, merged with the non-Swedish Columbia Lodge in 1990.⁴⁶ The use of the hall dwindled along with the membership. The logbook for the hall from September 1993 shows only seven meetings that month—less than a quarter of the number only twenty years earlier. Beginning in 1991, the Cafe Du Nord was reinvigorated as a popular live music club, and continued to host a variety of shows until 2014.

In 1996, with only a few active 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

⁴⁴ Swedish Society of San Francisco, *The Swedish Society's Golden Jubilee 1875-1925*, (San Francisco, Swedish Society of San Francisco, October 1925), 26.

⁴⁵ Muriel N. Beroza, "The Swedish American Hall in San Francisco," *The Swedish-American Historical Quarterly*, Vol. LVIII, No. 4, October 2007, 278.

⁴⁶ Ibid: 67.

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reception area and management office at the 2172 Market Street storefront, as well as the installation of fire alarms and security features.

Some of the reasons for the decline in interest in Swedish organizations are observed in *Golden Gate Swedes*:

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 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.⁴⁷

To promote the rich history of the Swedish Society of San Francisco and the Swedish American Hall, the Swedish American Hall Archives Committee curates displays within the building drawn from the society's collection. The Archives Committee also spearheaded an effort to scan the local Swedish newspaper, *Vestkusten*. Containing more than a century of editions, *Vestkusten* was the first foreign language newspaper to have its entire publication made available online through the California Digital Newspaper Collection, administered at the University of California, Riverside.

Criterion C: Architecture

The Swedish American Hall is significant as an outstanding representative of its type and period. The building's exterior design combines Swedish and Arts and Crafts style influences, while the interior detailing and finishes, particularly the elaborate woodwork, demonstrate a superior level of craftsmanship. The building is also significant as one of the most notable works of master architect August Nordin, who was himself a member of the Swedish Society.

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 and Fire. The lot was previously occupied by a two-story flats building owned by Elise A. Drexler, widow of the millionaire Lomis P. Drexler, who had died in

⁴⁷ Muriel N. Beroza, *Golden Gate Swedes*, (Yosemite, CA: The Range of Light Works, 2000), 78.

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1899. Drexler was a noted developer in the city during the early twentieth century, while also using her fortune for a variety of philanthropic pursuits.

Drexler sold the parcel to the Swedish Society of San Francisco in September 1906.⁴⁸ 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.”⁴⁹ The building was sold and moved by its new owner to another location.⁵⁰ The Swedish Society formed a building committee, and “the results were quick and decisive. The well known [*sic*] architect, Mr. Aug. Nordin, engaged by the committee, soon had the plans and specifications ready, and these were accepted.”⁵¹

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 (**Figure 15**). 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.

Plans for the new hall were drawn by architect August Nordin (**Figures 16-21**). They show the building much as it still appears, including the unusual twin gables with oversized bargeboards. Among the various items specified for the primary façade are 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.

The original building permit application, number 9876, was filed in May 1907. That same month 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... \$35,204.⁵²

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.⁵³

⁴⁸ The *San Francisco Call*, “Real Estate Transactions,” September 12, 1906, 12.

⁴⁹ Swedish Society of San Francisco, *The Swedish Society’s Golden Jubilee 1975-1925*, (San Francisco, Swedish Society of San Francisco), October 1925, 21.

⁵⁰ San Francisco Architectural Heritage, “Swedish Society Continues Proud Stewardship of its Historic Home,” *Heritage News*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 3 (May/June 2000), 6-7.

⁵¹ Swedish Society of San Francisco, *The Swedish Society’s Golden Jubilee 1975-1925*, (San Francisco, Swedish Society of San Francisco), October 1925, 20.

⁵² *San Francisco Call*, May 4, 1907.

⁵³ Swedish Society of San Francisco, *The Swedish Society’s Golden Jubilee 1975-1925*, (San Francisco, Swedish Society of San Francisco), October 1925, 22-23.

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By June, the building was under construction. A notice in the San Francisco Swedish language newspaper, *Vestkusten*, describes the work:

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.⁵⁴

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.⁵⁵

The Swedish American Hall was formally dedicated on December 22, 1907. The *San Francisco Chronicle* mentions that the dedication for the new 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

⁵⁴ *Vestkusten*, June 27, 1907

⁵⁵ *San Francisco Chronicle*, "Corner Stone of Swedish Hall," July 28, 1907.

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society's honorary member Both the architect and builder were heartily congratulated for the successful termination of their plans.⁵⁶

One of the few early photographs known of the Swedish American Hall confirms many of the details in August Nordin's drawing. The storefronts originally featured recessed entry vestibules flanked by display windows, and were crowned by multi-light transoms (**Figures 9-10**). The piers 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 parapets at the east and west ends of the roof were stepped.

Architectural Influences

August 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. 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 stories, while the interior includes three stories and a mezzanine level.

The building's interior woodwork is 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 and 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 stained 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.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ *San Francisco Chronicle*, "Fraternal Hall is Dedicated," December 23, 1907.

⁵⁷ *San Francisco Chronicle*, "Swedish Society is a Growing Organization—Big Fraternal Body Strongly Established Here," July 9, 1916, 19.

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The Arts and Crafts style as practiced in America took root during the late nineteenth century and remained popular through the 1930s. The style emphasized simplicity of design, the use of unadorned natural materials, and handcrafted construction, and was applied to both architecture and the decorative arts. It was notably expressed in the San Francisco Bay Area by architects such as Bernard Maybeck and Julia Morgan. Their works are sometimes referred to as the First Bay Tradition style, and often demonstrate influences from Gothic design, as well as elements of the Shingle 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. 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 Craftsman style houses constructed in the San Francisco Bay Area during the early 1900s. 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 extant on the 2100 block of Market Street.

August Nordin, Architect

The 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.⁵⁸ 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.

U.S. Census and other historical records indicate that 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 (also known as Norden, Nordan, Nicolaus A. Nordin, and N. August Nordin) as a carpenter or contractor.⁵⁹ *The Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)* reports that Nordin had received “a thorough training in architecture” and opened an office in San Francisco in 1899. A newspaper real estate notice indicates that Nordin was building houses at least as early as 1896.⁶⁰

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, which remained the location for his offices until his death.

⁵⁸ August Nordin Obituary, *The Architect and Engineer*, January 1936.

⁵⁹ San Francisco Architectural Heritage, “Swedish Society Continues Proud Stewardship of its Historic Home,” *Heritage News*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 3 (May/June 2000), 7.

⁶⁰ “Builder’s Contracts,” *San Francisco Call*, July 3, 1896

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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.⁶¹ He oversaw the onsite construction of the Swedish building for the 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.”⁶²

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, 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 worked in the Mills building.⁶³ 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.⁶⁴

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. 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 (extant). 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.

Nordin’s designs most frequently display Classical Revival style ornament, dominant in San Francisco architecture from the turn of the century through the late 1920s. 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

⁶¹ *Vestkusten*, “Svenske arkitekten,” June 26, 1913.

⁶² *Vestkusten*, “Arkitekt August Nordin,” June 26, 1913.

⁶³ 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.

⁶⁴ *Vestkusten*, “San Francisco Personal News,” January 4, 1906.

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Lutheran Church at 722 South Van Ness Avenue (1905, extant), and the Ebenezer Swedish Lutheran Church at 15th and Dolores Streets (1903), 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 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 Cristobol Apartments at 750 O'Farrell Street (1913); and a mixed-use building at 295 Miramar Avenue (1917). All of these buildings remain extant.

Several of Nordin's San Francisco buildings, including 750 O'Farrell and 424 Ellis Street, are listed on the National Register as part of San Francisco's 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. Many other of his buildings are well represented on historic surveys conducted in San Francisco by the Junior League in the 1960s, as well as a Planning Department survey conducted 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.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ August Nordin Obituary, *The Architect and Engineer*, January 1936.

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PUBLIC RECORDS

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Sanborn Maps 1899, 1905, 1913, 1919, 1950

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San Francisco City Directories (various years)

San Francisco Land Use Maps (held by the San Francisco Planning Department)

San Francisco Public Library, Historical Photograph Collection

San Francisco Metropolitan Transportation Agency, SFMTA Photo Archive

U.S. Census records

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: San Francisco Planning Department

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property less than one acre

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 37. 766664

Longitude: -122. 430493

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

The Swedish American Hall is located on the north side of Market Street, approximately 189 feet east of Sanchez Street. The building occupies San Francisco lot 062 in block 3542. As recorded by the San Francisco Assessor-Recorder, this lot is generally rectangular in shape and includes 50 feet of frontage on Market Street. The east and west sides of the lot are approximately 100 feet in depth, although the rear (north) boundaries of the lot are irregular. According to the block map issued by the San Francisco Assessor-Recorder (**Figure 3**), these irregular boundaries include a 16-foot segment running north-south, an 18.72-foot segment running east-west, and a 36.25-foot segment running southwest to northeast.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The selected boundaries encompass the whole of the block and lot on which the building stands. The building occupies nearly the entirety of the lot, save for a small portion at the rear (north) side of the lot.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Jonathan Lammers
organization: _____
street & number: 3164 Lakeshore Drive
city or town: Tallahassee state: FL zip code: 32312
e-mail _____
telephone: 415-264-9332
date: June 2018; Revised August 2018

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo

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date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Swedish American Hall
City or Vicinity: San Francisco
County: San Francisco
State: California
Photographer: Jonathan Lammers
Date Photographed: June 2017

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

- 1 of 29 Primary facade, general view toward north from Market Street
- 2 of 29 Primary facade, general view toward north from Market Street
- 3 of 29 Primary facade, general view toward north from Market Street
- 4 of 29 Setting, view east along Market Street
- 5 of 29 Main entry
- 6 of 29 Storefronts, view east
- 7 of 29 View north along hall from primary entry on 1st floor
- 8 of 29 Odin Lodge Room, view northeast
- 9 of 29 Odin Lodge Room, view southeast
- 10 of 29 Freja Hall, view southeast
- 11 of 29 Freja Hall, view southwest
- 12 of 29 Freja Hall, view northeast to stage from balcony
- 13 of 29 Freja Hall, balcony view east
- 14 of 29 Balder Hall, view east
- 15 of 29 Balder Hall, view west

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- 16 of 29 Balder Hall, detail of entry at northeast corner and leather paper wainscot
- 17 of 29 Balder Hall ante room, view west
- 18 of 29 Valhalla Banquet Hall, view east
- 19 of 29 Valhalla Banquet Hall, detail of windows at light well on east side of room
- 20 of 29 Verdandi Club Room, view east to fireplace inglenook
- 21 of 29 Verdandi Club Room, detail of inglenook
- 22 of 29 Verdandi Club Room, view west to entry with built-in bookcases
- 23 of 29 Svea Lodge Room, view northeast
- 24 of 29 Svea Lodge Room, view west
- 25 of 29 Main Stairs, view south from 3rd floor landing toward mezzanine level
- 26 of 29 Skylight and light fixture adjacent to entrance for Verdandi Club Room
- 27 of 29 Cafe Du Nord, view north along bar
- 28 of 29 Cafe Du Nord, view south across dance floor/lounge area
- 29 of 29 Restaurant, 1st floor, view east from western half to eastern food prep area

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

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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Figure 1. Location Map (courtesy Bing.com)

Latitude: 37.766664

Longitude: -122.430493



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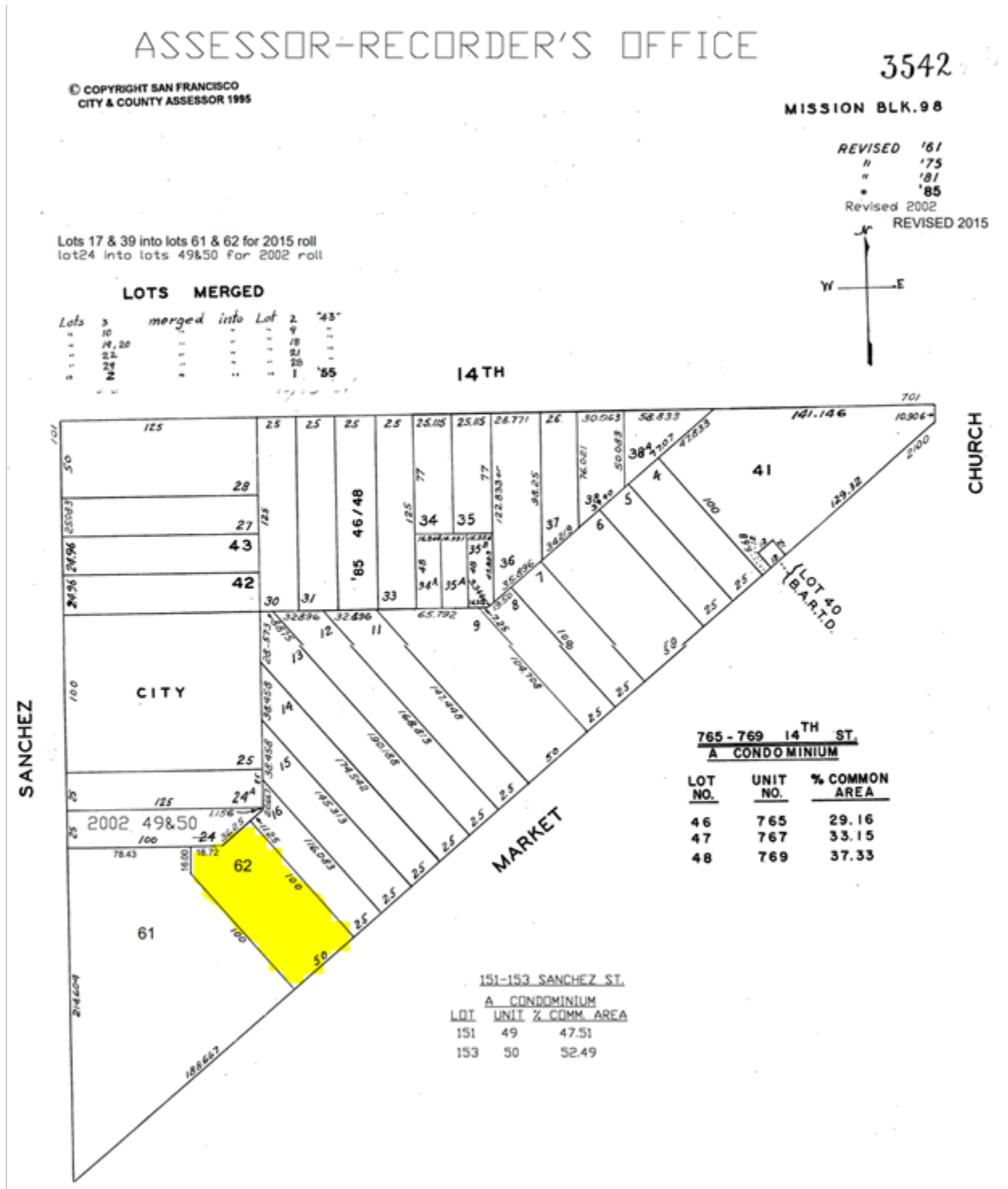
Figure 2. USGS Map (detail, annotated by author; heavy red diagonal line at head of arrow is Market Street)



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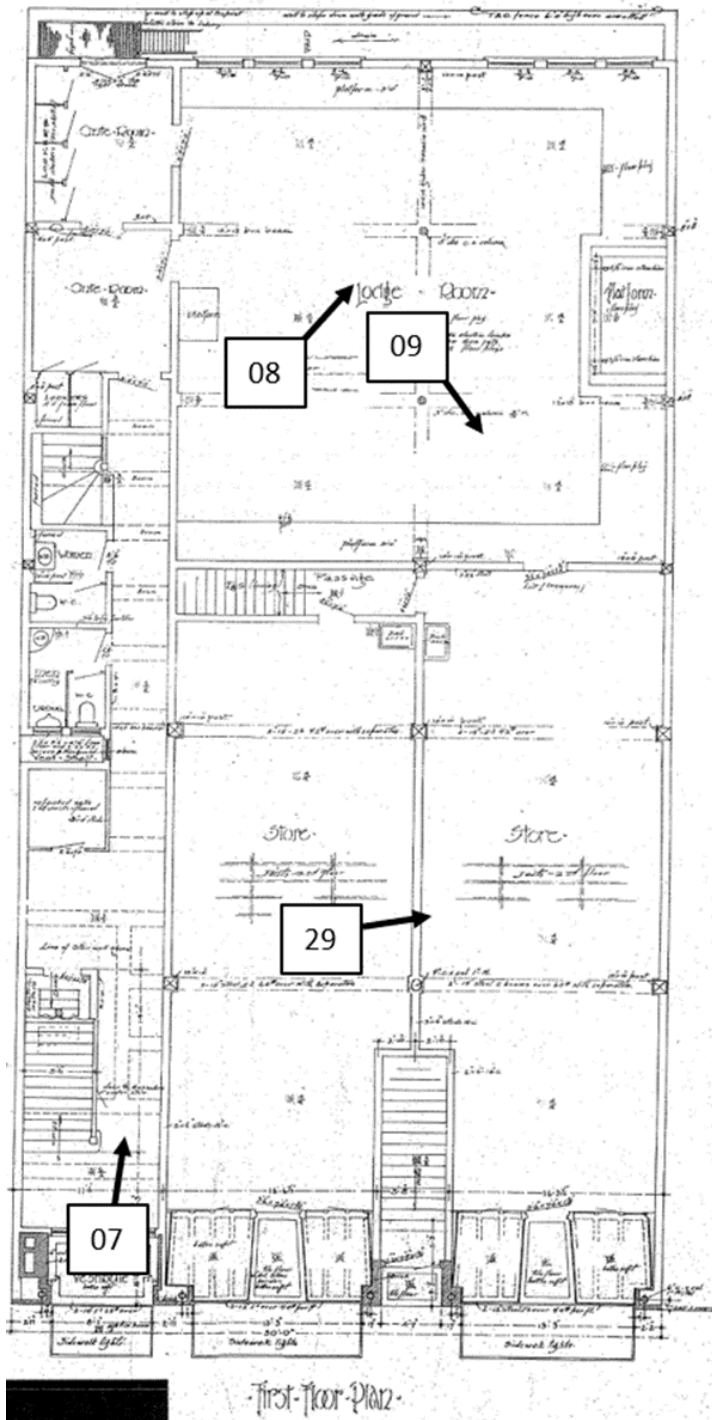
Figure 3. San Francisco Assessor-Recorder Block Map



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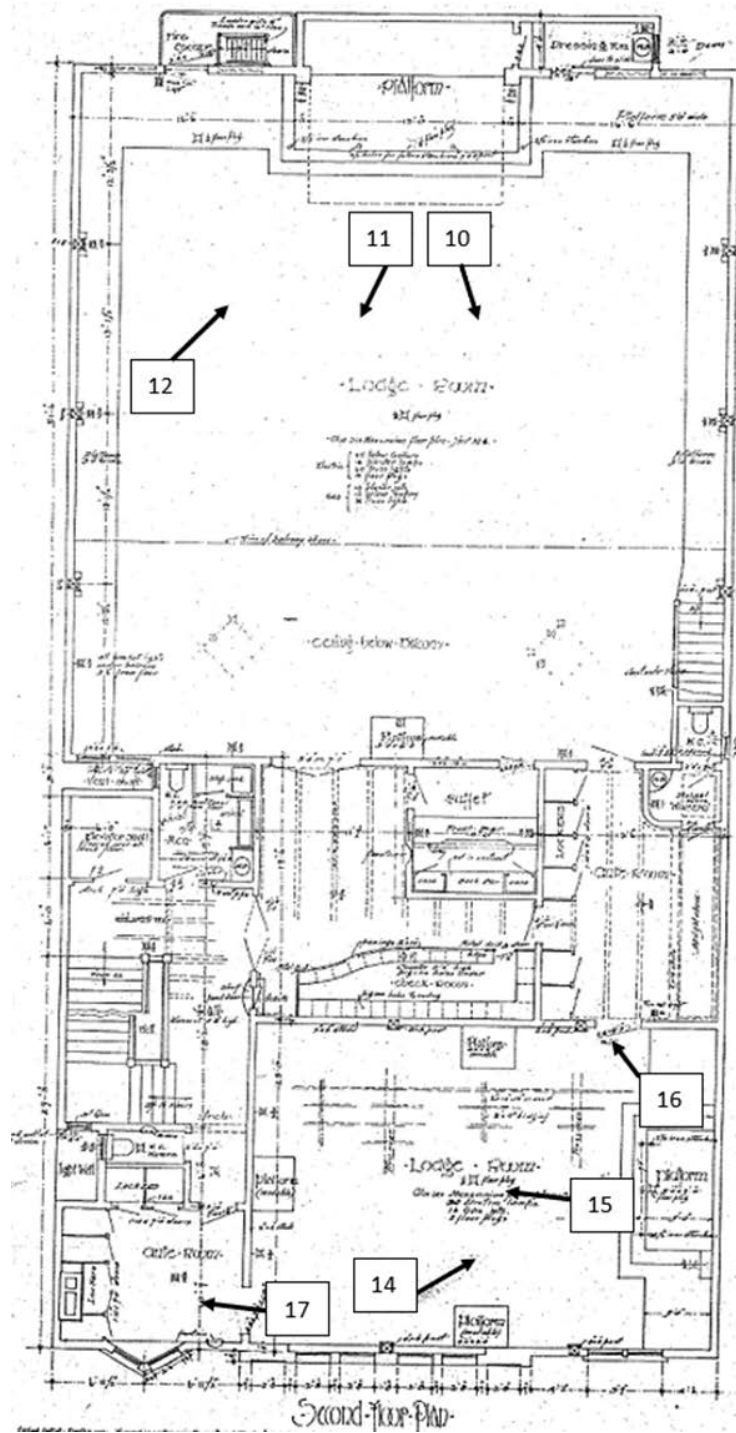
Figure 4. Sketch Map/Photo Key 1 of 5: First Floor Plan drawn by architect August Nordin (Collection of the Swedish Society of San Francisco)



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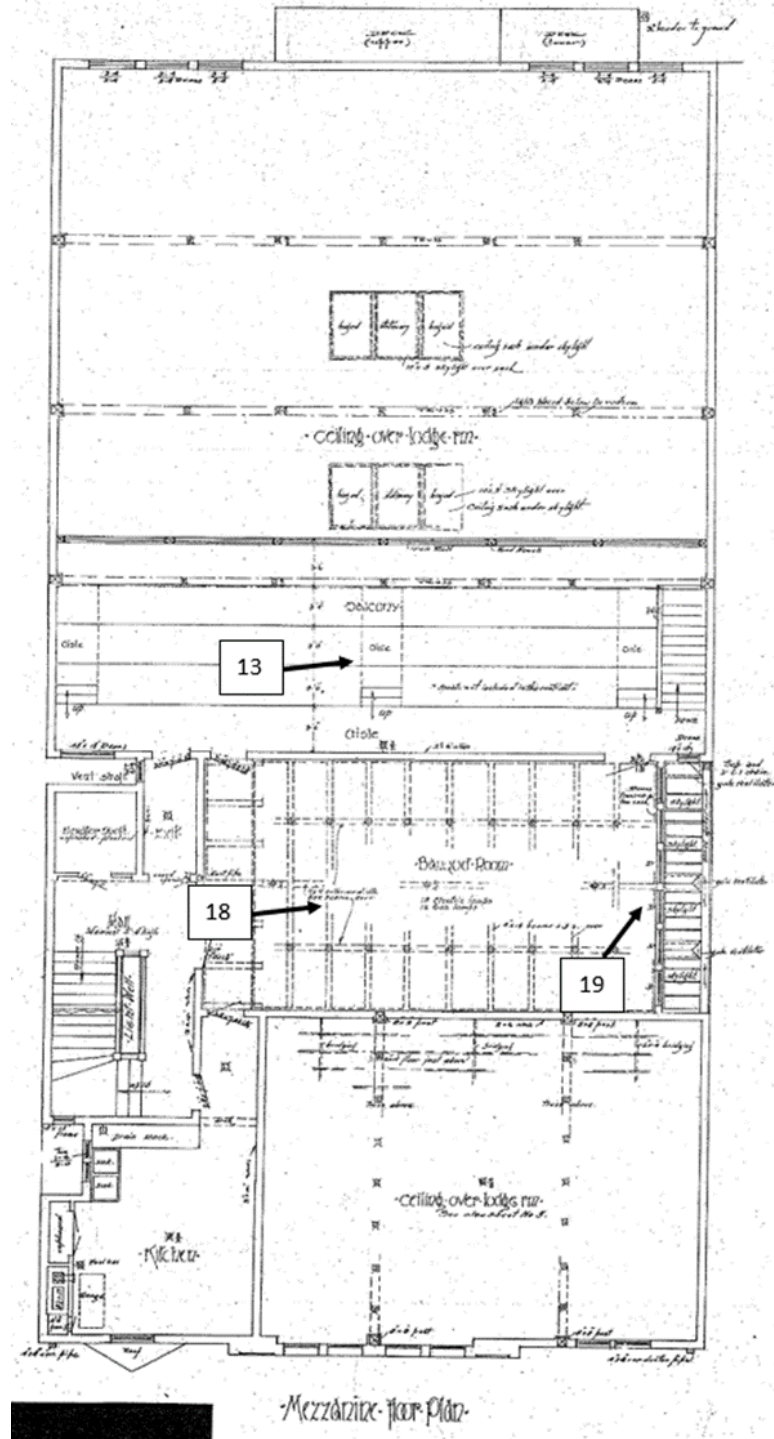
Figure 5. Sketch Map/Photo Key 2 of 5: Second Floor Plan drawn by architect August Nordin (Collection of the Swedish Society of San Francisco)



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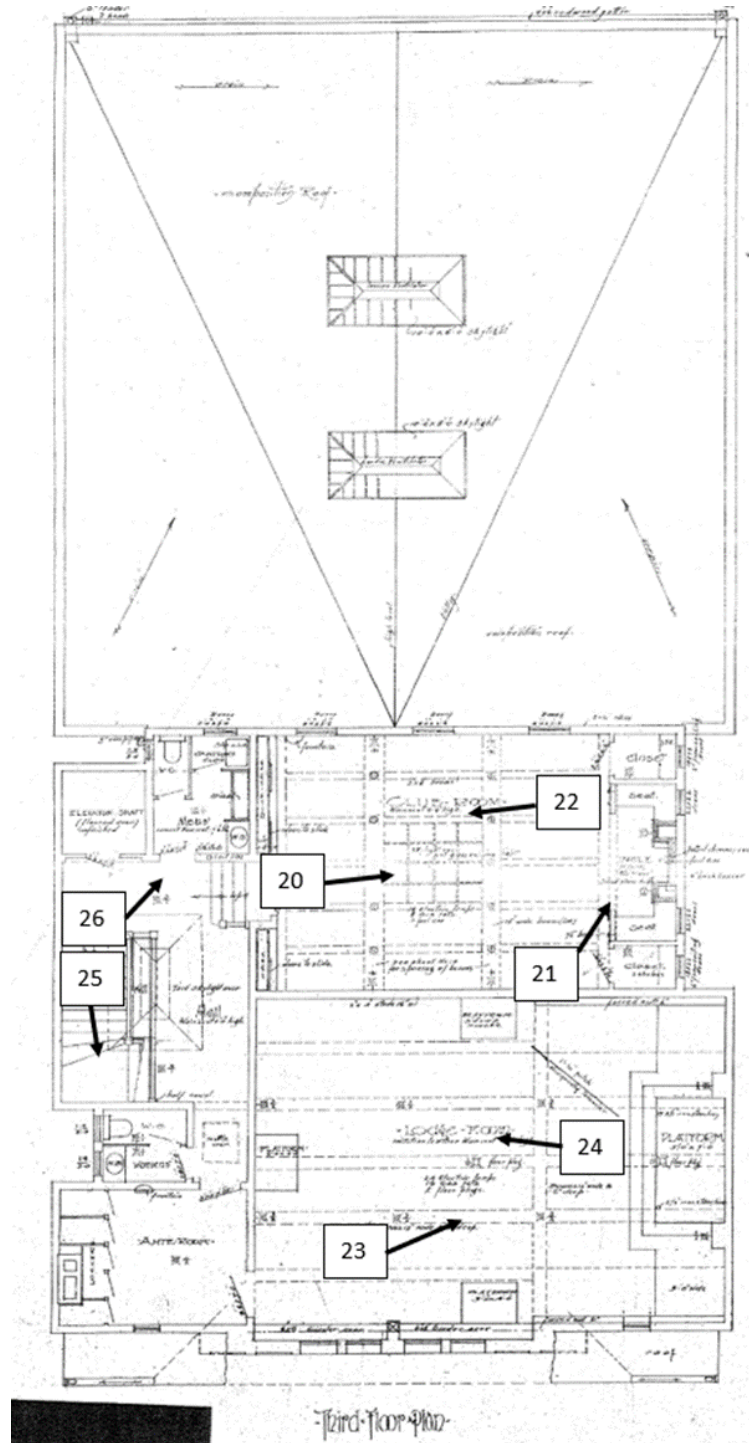
Figure 6. Sketch Map/Photo Key 3 of 5: Mezzanine Level Floor Plan drawn by architect August Nordin (Collection of the Swedish Society of San Francisco)



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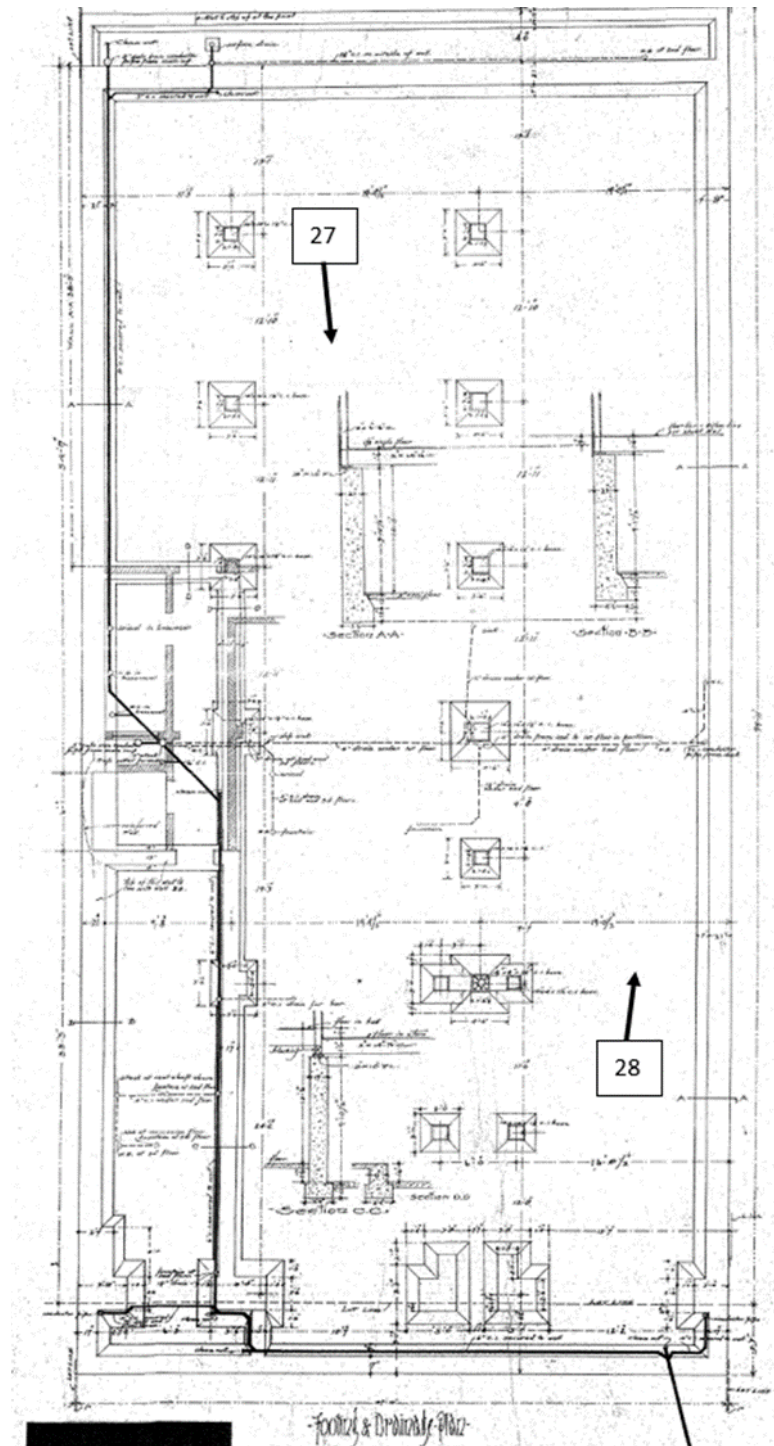
Figure 7. Sketch Map/Photo Key 4 of 5: Third Floor Plan drawn by architect August Nordin (Collection of the Swedish Society of San Francisco)



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Figure 8. Sketch Map/Photo Key 5 of 5: Basement Level/Cafe Du Nord shown on Footing and Drainage Plan drawn by architect August Nordin (Collection of the Swedish Society of San Francisco)



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Figure 9. Circa early 1908, with storefront at 2168 Market Street still under construction (Ted Olsson Collection)



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Figure 10. Circa 1910-1915, note sign for Cafe Du Nord (Ted Olsson Collection)



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Figure 11. Freja Hall, with Masonic symbols hanging from balcony, early twentieth century (Ted Olsson Collection)



Figure 12. Balder lodge room, early twentieth century (Ted Olsson Collection)



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Figure 13. Odin lodge room in the early twentieth century [original light fixtures, no longer extant] (Ted Olsson Collection)



Figure 14. September 3, 1908 advertisement in the *Vestkusten* newspaper indicating Cafe Du Nord and the Swedish-American Mercantile Company, “now open to the public. All welcome! All kinds of imported and domestic wines and liqueurs. Scandinavian and German delicacies served.”



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Figure 15. Circa 1910 photo collage (detail) including 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)



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Figure 16. Primary Façade Elevation drawn by architect August Nordin (Collection of the Swedish Society of San Francisco)

