

**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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Geneva Office Building and Power House

other names/site number Geneva Car Barn Complex / San Francisco & San Mateo Railroad Co. Office Bldg.

2. Location

street & number 2301 San Jose Avenue not for publication

city or town San Francisco vicinity

state California code CA county San Francisco code 075 zip code 94112

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

California Office of Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

<p>I hereby certify that this property is:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> other (explain): _____ _____ _____</p>	<p>Signature of the Keeper</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Date of Action</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
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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

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
2	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION: Rail-Related

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT / NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian: Romanesque
Late Victorian: Queen Anne

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE
roof METAL: Other (Corrugated Metal)
walls BRICK
CONCRETE
other WOOD



Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheet.

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.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheet.

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary Location of Additional Data

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

Name of repository:

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

SOCIAL HISTORY

TRANSPORTATION

Period of Significance

1901-1944

Significant Dates

1901

1903

1917

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Attributed to Reid, James

Attributed to Reid, Merrit

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre.

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	10	548843	4174969	3	_____	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____	_____

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

See continuation sheet.

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

See continuation sheet.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Bridget Maley and Sara Lardinois

organization Architectural Resources Group date 14 July 2009

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

city or town San Francisco state CA zip code 94111

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

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

name City and County of San Francisco, Recreation and Park Department, General Manager Philip A. Ginsburg

street & number 501 Stanyan Street telephone 415-831-2701

city or town San Francisco state CA zip code 94117

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. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

Geneva Office Building and Power House

Name of property

San Francisco, California

County and State

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Summary Description

Located at the intersection of Geneva and San Jose Avenues in the city of San Francisco's western residential neighborhoods, the Geneva Office Building and Power House were originally constructed as part of the larger Geneva Complex to serve the city's first electric railway system – The San Francisco and San Mateo Railroad Company. Although the original adjoining car barn and ancillary maintenance shops have been demolished, the area remains active with various transportation-related uses. The property consists of two adjoining buildings – the Office Building, constructed in 1901, and the Power House, constructed in 1903 and heavily rebuilt in 1910 following the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake. The Office Building is a two-story brick utilitarian structure with a rectangular plan and a corrugated metal hipped roof. Its Queen Anne Style turret and the partial-hipped bay windows along the western front façade, both crafted and detailed in wood, provide contrast to the Romanesque Style masonry wall construction. A series of brick pilasters, brick stringcourses, and a brick cornice unifies each of the façades; and, the fenestration pattern consists of double-hung wood windows, arranged singly, in pairs, or in groups of threes, with segmental, rowlock brick arches above. The original program for the building combined a number of elements, including the administrative offices of the railroad, a dispatch office for the carmen, a staff lounge, and a large assembly hall. The Power House is a one-and-a-half-story, long rectangular structure positioned directly to the south of the Office Building, sharing a common wall with the adjacent building. The original brick walls and pilasters remain at the first floor of the Power House, while the concrete wall and parapet construction at the upper mezzanine level dates to the 1910 reconstruction. Similar to the Office Building, the fenestration pattern consists of single and three-part double-hung wood windows. A large corrugated metal monitor straddles the gable roof, which is presently sheathed with a temporary membrane roof. The interior of the Power House consists of a large machine hall, with a small cast iron mezzanine along the west wall. While the exterior appearance of the Office Building remains relatively unchanged from its historical appearance, the Power House has been subject to more significant alterations. Due to a lack of maintenance, both buildings remain in fair to poor condition; however, they both retain sufficient integrity to convey their architectural significance and historical associations, evoking an earlier era of transportation technology.

Site

The Geneva Office Building and Power House are located at the southeast corner of Geneva and San Jose Avenues, on site that slopes downward to the northeast (Photograph 7). When the Geneva Complex was constructed in 1901, the surrounding area was relatively rural, and extensive urban development had not yet reached the far western edges of San Francisco (Photograph 1). Presently, the subject buildings sit within an array of modern transportation related uses. The surrounding Geneva Complex rail yard currently serves as the home of the San Francisco Municipal Railway (MUNI) historic and vintage streetcar fleet. Additional MUNI rail yards and maintenance shops are located across San Jose Avenue, as is the Balboa Park Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) station. Interstate 280 is located just beyond the west edges of the MUNI properties. A mix of low-scale commercial and residential uses is located along San Jose Avenue to the north and south of the subject property (Photograph 6). To the east of the property is a residential neighborhood, primarily consisting of single-family houses developed in the 1930s and 1940s.

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Geneva Office Building and Power House
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The site has been in continuous operation as a transportation center since its opening in 1901. The Office Building and Power House are the last remaining historic buildings from the once extensive Geneva Complex. This complex was originally comprised of a large enclosed brick car barn and maintenance shops, including a machine shop, carpenter shop, and storage facilities, which were sited to the east of the remaining two buildings (Photographs 2 and 5). The car barn and shops were demolished in the 1970s to accommodate the construction of new MUNI maintenance facilities and offices, as well as an open-air streetcar parking yard. MUNI continues to operate on the site; however, the Office Building and Power House have been unoccupied since sustaining damage during the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake. Ownership of the Office Building and Power House was transferred to the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department in 2004. A community organization, Friends of the Geneva Office Building, is working to secure funding for rehabilitation and reuse of the two structures.

Office Building

Exterior

The Geneva Office Building is a two-story, long rectangular structure positioned at the north end of the Geneva Complex site (Photographs 7 and 8). The 122' by 46' structure is divided into two wings, with the taller south wing projecting approximately 2'-6" beyond the west wall of the north wing. The exterior wall construction consists of concrete foundations and common (American) bond red brick bearing walls with wood details. Rectangular brick pilasters are used at each elevation to divide the façades into a series of vertically-proportioned bays, and a decorative band of projecting brick delineates the first and second floors. The building's decorative wood cornice sits on top of a projecting brick string course. Each wing has its own hipped roof, sheathed in corrugated metal. A decorative finial is placed at each end of the upper roof ridge line, as well as at the north end of the lower ridge line (above the north wing). The fenestration consists of double-hung wood windows, arranged singly, in pairs, or in groups of threes. The exterior appearance of the Office Building has changed relatively little in the last 108 years.

The west elevation is the principal elevation, with two primary building entrances positioned along it. The north wing is divided into three bays, with a two-story wood, Queen Anne Style turret dominating the northwest corner (Photograph 12). The engaged, circular turret has an exposed, poured-in-place concrete foundation; and, its bell-shaped roof is covered in concentric circles of wood panels and is capped with a finial, matching the design of those at the main roof. There are four single, double-hung windows at each story of the turret, and decorative wood spandrel panels are located beneath each window. The wood entablature at the top of the turret is presently unadorned; however, historic photographs show it adorned with wood decorative elements, including garland festoons and shields (Photograph 2). In a narrow bay immediately to the south of the turret, a rowlock brick arch marks the first building entry. The entry consists of a pair of paneled wood doors with a semi-circular transom window above, and it is accessed by a flight of five concrete stairs with low concrete walls at either side. Adjacent to this entrance are two identical bays, each with three-part, double-hung wood windows. The first floor windows have flat brick lintels, while the second floor windows have segmental brick rowlock arch lintels. Windows at both stories have projecting brick sills.

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Geneva Office Building and Power House
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The projecting south wing of the west elevation consists of five bays. The central bay contains a deeply recessed main entrance, accessed by a flight of concrete stairs similar in design to those at the entry in the north wing (Photograph 11). The entrance is marked by engaged, rectangular, Doric pilasters supporting a large brick rowlock arch. The entry consists of a pair of wood and glazed doors with a glazed rectangular transom window above. Directly above the main entrance arch is a masonry panel with corbelled brick brackets. Two identical bays flank either side of the entry bay. Each bay consists of an angled, three-sided bay window with a partial hipped roof at the first floor, and three-part, double-hung wood windows with segmental brick rowlock arches at the second floor. A single, double-hung wood window is located in each wall segment of the bay, and a decorative wood spandrel panel is located beneath each sash. Each bay roof is covered in horizontally lapped wood panels and capped with two finials, which match the upper roof finials.

The north elevation is comprised of two bays and the Queen Anne Style turret at the northwest corner. An entrance is located in the center of this elevation, in the western-most bay. The entry stair has been removed; however, historic photographs and shadow lines in the brickwork indicate that it consisted of a central landing with a flight of stairs at either side. The entrance is comprised of paired, wood paneled doors with a glazed transom and sidelights. Originally, the brick pilasters and wall construction extended to the second floor of the north elevation; however, the second story wall construction collapsed during the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake. After the earthquake, temporary repairs, consisting of tarpaper over wood framing, were made to the second floor wall.¹ The second story remains covered with building paper, recalling the 1906 Earthquake damage. A small double-hung wood window is located at the second floor, above the entry. The original projecting wood eaves at the roof remain in place.

The rear (east) elevation consists of three bays at the north wing and five bays at the south wing, all defined by masonry pilasters (Photograph 10). The three bays at the north wing are roughly equal in width; however, the upper story of the northern-most bay was also lost in the 1906 Earthquake. Similar to the north elevation, the post-earthquake repairs of wood framing and tarpaper remain in place. At the south wing, a narrow central bay is flanked by two wider bays at either side. The remains of the brick wall of the now-demolished car barn intersect with the southern-most pilaster of the south bay. All of the windows at the basement/subterranean level are double-hung, wood sash with exposed steel lintels. Three, flush single-leaf wood doors and one paired metal doorway provide access to the basement level. The first and second floor windows are a combination of single, paired, and three-part double-hung wood windows, all with rowlock, segmental masonry arches, with the exception of a pair of windows with flat brick lintels. A prominent feature on this elevation is the second-floor doorway at the south wing, which was cut out of an existing window to allow direct access to the car barn during the 1917 Carmen's Strike (Photograph 13).

The majority of the south elevation of the Office Building is not visible, as it is adjoined to the Power House. Portions of the brick wall and brick pilasters are visible at either end.

¹ Charles A. Smallwood, "Geneva Avenue Car Barn," unpublished, handwritten, 1980.

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Geneva Office Building and Power House
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In 2004, a mothballing and stabilization project was undertaken to protect the unoccupied building until funds could be raised for its rehabilitation and reuse. The exterior work carried out as part of the mothballing project consisted of the installation of protective plywood boards over the windows (Photograph 16); repair of deteriorated wood elements at the roof eaves; and in-kind replacement of the corrugated metal. The original window sashes remain behind the plywood boards but are in fair to poor condition with deteriorated wood elements and broken glazing.

Interior Description

Originally, the two wings of the Office Building had two distinct uses.² The north wing was used as the Carmen's Hall, while the south wing was used as Administrative Offices. A brick bearing wall with two interconnecting openings per floor separated the two wings. The remainder of the construction consisted of wood-framed floors and partitions. Original finishes included wood floors, wood baseboards and trim, tongue-and-groove wood wainscot, plaster walls and ceilings, and paneled wood doors with glazed transoms.

A small basement containing a restroom, six rooms, and a central hallway is located at the east side of the Administrative Office wing. The basement is only accessible from exterior doors at the east side of the building, as there is not an interior stairway communicating with the upper floor levels.

Historically, the first floor of the north wing consisted of a "Gilly Room" (a room for drivers), directly accessed from the north entry; a men's washroom and toilet in the southeast corner; and the office of the Dispatcher of Accounting along the west wall. A stair in the northeast corner of the building provided access to second floor rooms used for social events by the carmen. The first floor of the south wing, or Administrative Office wing, consisted of a double-loaded corridor with offices on either side. Along the west side of the corridor was an entrance hall and four offices, each with a bay window. The northwestern office was used by the Division Superintendent and included a 7' x 7' vault. The east side of the hall consisted of two offices, a women's restroom, and a smaller toilet room. At the second floor there was large multi-purpose room that was used as both an auditorium and a gymnasium, as well as various support spaces including a locker room.

The interior of the Office Building has undergone a number of significant alterations, including the reconfiguration of rooms by the removal of original walls or the installation of new partitions. The historic interior materials have been damaged or in some cases removed entirely, particularly at the second floor. The building underwent a significant alteration campaign in the 1940s and 1950s. As part of that work, the Gilly Room walls and hall walls at the first floor of the north wing were removed, and the northeast stair configuration was changed. At the second floor of the north wing, walls and additional doorways were added. The clubroom, which once spanned the entire west side of the second floor of the north wing, was divided into three separate offices. At the first floor of the south wing, additional partitions were added to all but one of first floor offices; a stairway was constructed in a former office space across from the entrance hall; and the restroom area was reorganized. At the second floor, partitions were added to the multi-purpose space to create a series of offices, and the stage was removed. Almost all historical materials at the second floor of both the north and

² Descriptions of the historic interior are based on the earliest known interior plans, which date from 1944.

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south wings, such as wood wainscoting, were removed at this time. Lighting throughout the building was upgraded; and as a result, no original light fixtures remain.

In 2004, as part of the mothballing effort, temporary steel frame supports were added at the masonry walls; floor-wall ties were installed; a plywood diaphragm was added at the second floor ceiling; the two interior, non-historic staircases were removed; vertical bracing was added at the stairwells, and temporary access stairs to the second floor were installed. Remaining historic fabric at the first floor, including wainscot and wood trim, was catalogued, salvaged, protected, and/or stored for future use (Photograph 14).

Integrity Evaluation

From the time of its construction in 1901 to the 1980s, the Geneva Office Building retained its original intended use in support of electric rail lines. Although presently unoccupied, the building remains in an area that is actively used as a municipal transportation center. As a result, it retains integrity of location and association. Integrity of setting has been diminished by the demolition of the original adjoining car barn and ancillary maintenance shops, as well as by the introduction of more contemporary transportation facilities in the surrounding vicinity. The building itself is in fair to poor condition, as a result of lack of maintenance and past alterations, primarily made to the building interior. Exterior alterations are more limited in nature and include the temporary repairs to the upper portions of the north elevation following the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and the loss of the north entry stair. These changes have not significantly diminished the integrity of workmanship and feeling at the Office Building; however, integrity of design and materials is more diminished, although not entirely lost. One the whole, the Geneva Office Building retains sufficient integrity to convey its architectural significance and historical associations, evoking an earlier era of transportation technology.

Power House

Exterior

The Geneva Power House is a one-and-a-half story, long rectangular structure positioned directly to the south of the Office Building, sharing a common wall with the adjacent building (Photograph 9). The 92' long by 37' wide Power House is skewed approximately 6 degrees to the southeast of the main façade of the Office Building; and the first floor of the Power House sits at grade, approximately 2 ½' lower than the raised first floor of the Office Building. The exterior wall construction consists of concrete foundations and common (American) bond red brick bearing walls at the first floor. The upper mezzanine story walls were reconstructed in concrete after the original brick walls collapsed in the 1906 Earthquake (Photographs 3 and 4). Similar to the Office Building, rectangular brick pilasters are used to divide each of the façades into a series of vertically-proportioned bays, and a decorative band of projecting brick delineates the first and mezzanine levels at the front (west) elevation. The building is capped with concrete parapet walls at each of the three elevations, and a single gable roof runs along the north/south axis. The west slope of the roof extends beyond the ridge, for a length of 30', to create a monitor with a series of east-facing windows. Originally sheathed in slate, a temporary membrane roof was installed over the main roof in 2004. Corrugated metal roofing is extant at the monitor extension. The fenestration consists of double-hung wood windows, arranged singly or in groups of three. The historical exterior

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Geneva Office Building and Power House
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appearance of the Power House changed significantly when the earthquake-damaged mezzanine floor was reconstructed in 1910.

The west elevation of the Power House is the principal elevation, with two grade-level entrances positioned at either end. The elevation was originally constructed entirely of brick, with rectangular brick pilasters dividing the façade into six equal bays and a continuous decorative stacked masonry cornice across the top. When the upper story of the building was reconstructed in concrete in 1910, several design modifications were made, many of which reflected the then-popular Mission Revival Style. Many of the Mission Revival Style details, such as the bracketed window hoods and diamond-shaped decorative pieces between the upper floor windows, have since been removed or covered by additional layers of concrete. The upper story concrete walls were rebuilt without pilasters and sit flush with the face of brick pilasters below. The two end bays project slightly from the four central bays and are accented by gabled parapet. The entire façade is united by a single 1'-2" high flat concrete trim band, situated approximately 2'-6" from the top of the parapet. Each end bay contains a pair of paneled wood doors with diagonal wood sheathing in the lower panel and an upper glazed light. Directly above each entrance, at the mezzanine level, are three rectangular, six-over-one, double-hung wood windows. Each of the four central bays consists of a first floor grouping of three six-over-six double-hung wood windows with segmental brick rowlock arches. A projecting brick string course, running between each pilaster, separates the first floor from the mezzanine floor. Similar three-part, one-over-one arched double-hung wood windows are also located at the mezzanine level of each bay; however, the height of the mezzanine level windows is reduced. A series of small circular holes, some fitted with porcelain insulators, and projecting wood and steel beam supports remain, indicating where sewer and power lines originally passed through the building walls.

The south elevation consists of a flush lower brick wall, dating to the original construction of the Power House. The upper mezzanine wall was also reconstructed in concrete in 1910. It projects slightly from the brick wall below and terminates in gabled concrete parapet. The concrete trim band extant at the west elevation continues along the south elevation. The grade changes significantly on this elevation, sloping down from the west to the east, and is noticeable in the window pattern on the first floor. The windows are identical in their grouping of three-part, double-hung, wood sash, with segmental brick rowlock arches; however, the eastern grouping has a lower sill to take advantage of the grade change. The second story has two identical groupings of three one-over-one, double-hung wood windows, resting on a projecting sill that extends across the entire façade.

The south (rear) elevation is composed of six brick bays, defined by rectangular brick pilasters (Photograph 10). In contrast to the other elevations, much of the original brick wall construction remains at the upper mezzanine level. Only the upper portions of the flat parapet walls have been reconstructed in concrete, although the amount of reconstruction varies by bay. No fenestration is present at this elevation. The remains of a brick wall from the now-demolished car barn intersect with the southern-most pilaster of the south bay of the Power House; and the lower portions of the south elevation retain vestiges of wall paint and roofing mastic where the car barn roof was once attached to the Power House walls.

The Power House cannot be said to have a proper north elevation, as it was constructed immediately adjacent to the south wall of the Office Building.

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Geneva Office Building and Power House
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In 2004 a mothballing and stabilization project was undertaken to protect the unoccupied building until funds could be raised to rehabilitate and reuse it. The exterior work carried out as part of the mothballing project consisted of the installation of protective plywood boards over the windows and installation of a new membrane roof. The original window sashes remain behind the plywood boards; but they are in poor condition, with deteriorated wood elements and broken glazing.

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Interior Description

The interior of the Power House retains its original configuration and massing. It consists of a large, full height machine hall, with concrete floors, exposed brick and concrete walls, and exposed metal roof trusses (Photograph 15). An iron-framed mezzanine platform, accessed by a single stair, runs along three central bays of the west wall. A single-leaf sliding door and non-original wood staircase provides an interior connection between the Power House and Office Building. A staircase in the southeast corner of the building provides access to a four-foot-high understory.³ The main space is naturally lit by windows on the two elevations and by the roof monitor, with industrial metal pendant light fixtures providing supplemental illumination.

Historically, three large turbines set on concrete pads occupied the central hall; however, both the machinery and pads have been removed. Additional electrical distributors were located in the mezzanine, but they too have been removed. The crane runway and related steel support columns remain. Vestiges of the porcelain conduit for the power supply running in and out of the building also remain.

Integrity Evaluation

From the time of its construction in 1903 to the 1980s, the Geneva Power House retained its original use in support of electric rail lines. Although presently unoccupied, the building remains in an area that is actively used as a municipal transportation center. As a result, it retains integrity of location and association. Integrity of setting has been diminished by the demolition of the original adjoining car barn and ancillary maintenance shops, as well as by the introduction of more contemporary transportation facilities in the surrounding vicinity. The building itself is in fair to poor condition, as a result of lack of maintenance and past alterations. Many of these alterations were carried out during the period of significance, when much of the building was reconstructed after sustaining heavy damage in the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake. As a result, integrity of design, materials, workmanship, and feeling has been diminished over time, but is not entirely lost. On the whole, the Geneva Power House retains sufficient integrity to convey its architectural significance and historical associations, evoking an earlier era of transportation technology.

³ Carey & Co., Inc. Architecture, "Conceptual Plan: Geneva Office Building and Power House," (San Francisco: n.p., May 2004 draft).

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NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary of Significance

The Geneva Office Building and Power House, also known as the Geneva Complex, possess both historical and architectural significance. The buildings are historically significant for their local association with the development of San Francisco's electrical railway system, as well as for their local association with labor history in San Francisco. Originally constructed for The San Francisco and San Mateo Railroad Company between 1901 and 1903, the two adjoining buildings served as the administrative center and as a source of power for the city's first electric railroad company and are the last remaining physical reminders of it. The development of San Francisco's street railway system opened San Francisco's outlying areas, such as the southwestern part of the city where the property is located, for development and connection to the established urban core to the northeast. Further, the Geneva Complex provided interurban transportation, running from its rail yard to the city of San Mateo to the south. The site is associated with a number of railroad companies serving San Francisco during the last century including the San Mateo and San Francisco Railway, the San Mateo and San Francisco Electric Railway, the United Railroads of San Francisco, the Market Street Railway, and the San Francisco Municipal Railway (MUNI). The Geneva Complex also played an important role in labor history as the site of the Carmen's Strike of 1917, the impact of which is still evident in exterior modifications to the Office Building. The Office Building and Power House are also architecturally significant, as they embody the characteristics of both the Romanesque and Queen Anne Styles in an eclectic blend that also incorporates industrial elements appropriate for a working rail yard. The brick masonry construction is representative of the pre-1906 Earthquake period in San Francisco. In a city where brick is no longer a predominant building material, the Geneva Complex is a good example of pre-Earthquake use of brick to convey architectural detailing.

The years 1901 through 1944 mark the period of significance for the Geneva Office Building and Power House. The year 1901 marks the original construction of the Office Building, and the year 1944 marks the date the Geneva Complex was taken over by the city-owned San Francisco Municipal Railway and underwent several subsequent changes in use and appearance. Although the complex has undergone several other alteration campaigns since that time, it primarily reflects the 1944 changes.

Criterion A: Association with the History of Public Transportation in San Francisco

San Francisco was a pioneer in public transit. The Gold Rush brought about such a significant increase in the City's population that by 1852 public transportation facilities had become both economically feasible and a public necessity. A variety of transportation methods, including the horse drawn omnibus, cable cars, and electric rail were developed to serve the growing population.

Omnibus

The first public transportation line in San Francisco was the "Yellow Line," a horse drawn omnibus line operated by the firm of Crimm and Bowman. The Yellow Line ran between the Post Office (then located at Kearny and Clay Streets) to

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Mission Dolores via Kearny, 3rd, and Mission Streets. This service was expanded in 1854, with the addition of a second route running to Mission Dolores via Folsom and 16th Streets. The following year a third route was added from 3rd and Townsend to Meiggs Wharf.¹ By 1857, a second horse-drawn line was added in San Francisco. Known as the "Red Line," this line was operated by the People's Omnibus Company.² The Red Line ran on many of the same routes as the Yellow Line, generating competition and spurring further growth of mass transit systems in San Francisco's growing urban environment.

By the 1850s, San Francisco had a population of approximately 50,000 people.³ A population of this size made the horse-drawn omnibus an obsolete mode of transportation for the ever-growing metropolis. In 1857, the California Legislature granted Thomas Hayes the first franchise for a steam-powered street railway in the city, called the San Francisco Market Street Railroad.⁴ This was the start of the Market Street Railway Company, which opened for service on July 4, 1860, making it the first street railway on the west coast.⁵ The line ran from California and Market Streets, out Market to Valencia Street, and terminated at 16th and Valencia Streets. Within three years the route was extended further out Valencia to 25th Street. This line was later converted to horse car operation and was subsequently acquired by the San Francisco and San Jose Railroad and renamed the Market Street Railway in the late 1860s.⁶ The line was later purchased by the Southern Pacific Railroad, and in 1892 it was renamed the Market Street Cable Railway, reflecting the change in the dominant mode of transportation.

Cable Cars

On August 1, 1873 Andrew S. Hallidie, a manufacturer of wire rope cables, introduced the nation's first cable railway in San Francisco. This initial cable car line ran along Clay Street from Kearny Street to Leavenworth Street. Drawing his inspiration from a similar system in England, Hallidie installed a steam engine which powered an endless cable that ran continuously, sliding over rollers in an underground trench. A grip attached to the underside of the cable car enabled the driver (or gripman) to release the moving cable, thereby controlling the car. The cable car was an instant success and horse car lines were replaced with this new mode of transportation between 1876 and 1889. Cities throughout the country raced to install cable lines in an effort to modernize and make their public transit systems more efficient.⁷

Electric Rail

By 1891 a new form of transit, the electric rail, had come to San Francisco, further transforming the city's transit system and connecting the city to the surrounding suburbs. On April 27, 1892, the first electric line in San Francisco opened for business – The San Francisco and San Mateo Railroad Company (SF & SMR), incorporated by brothers Isaac and Behrend Joost in 1891.⁸ The line ran from Second and Market Streets via Stewart, Harrison, Fourteenth Street, Guerrero,

¹ Charles A. Smallwood, *The White Front Cars of San Francisco* (South Gate, CA: Charles A. Smallwood, 1979) 9.

² Smallwood, *White Front* 9.

³ Smallwood, *White Front* 9.

⁴ Smallwood, *White Front* 9.

⁵ Smallwood, *White Front* 10.

⁶ Walter Vielbaum, et. al., *San Francisco's Market Street Railway* (San Francisco: Arcadia Publishing, 2004) 7.

⁷ Smallwood, *White Front* 9.

⁸ Gee Gee Bland Platt, "Historical and Architectural Analysis of the Geneva Office Building and Power House" (n.p.: n.p, 1987).

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San Jose Avenue, Thirtieth Street, Chenery, back to San Jose, and then to Daly Hill (now Daly City). An additional branch line running between 18th and Guerrero Streets and Golden Gate Park opened on November 25, 1894.⁹

Unable to meet expenses, bondholders of The San Francisco and San Mateo Railroad Company forced foreclosure. Reorganization of the company took place on April 11, 1896, under the name "San Francisco & San Mateo Electric Railroad Company" (SF & SM ER); and, it was administered by Adolph and John Spreckels, the sons of prominent California businessman John D. Spreckels.¹⁰ To meet the increasing demand for electric car service, the SF & SM ER purchased another 30 rail cars in 1900. The company was fast outgrowing its original car house and barn on Sunnyside Avenue (now Monterey Boulevard).¹¹

Under the ownership of the Spreckels, the SF & SM ER purchased the block of land, bounded by San Jose Avenue, Linadilla Avenue (now Niagra Avenue), Delano Street, and Geneva Avenue, for the construction of a new complex to replace the Sunnyside Avenue facilities. Construction of the Geneva Complex commenced on July 14, 1900. The new complex consisted of the main two-story Office Building, and the adjoining twenty-track, single-story car barn, as well as a series of small buildings (blacksmith shop, machine shop, paint shop, and storage facilities) constructed along the southern end of the property. The power station at the Sunnyside Avenue facility remained in operation until the Power House was built at the Geneva site in 1903. The entire complex was known as the Elkton Shops and Yard, or the Geneva Avenue Shops. These shops were used for the heavy overhauling and rehabilitation efforts performed on the equipment, as well as for the manufacturing of new equipment.¹² Additionally this complex provided power to the rail lines and housed administration facilities. Only the Office Building and the Power House remain of the SF & SM ER's original facilities on Geneva Avenue.

In 1897 a campaign had begun to create an interurban line, by extending San Francisco's original electric rail line southward along the peninsula to San Mateo. Surveys of the proposed route were conducted between 1899 and 1900.¹³ The final franchise for the extension was granted on May 12, 1900; and construction of the extension began on January 25, 1901.¹⁴

On May 13, 1901, the SF&SM ER was purchased for 1.6 million dollars by the Baltimore Syndicate, an East Coast railway company managed by Alexander Brown and Company.¹⁵ Upon purchasing the line, the Baltimore Syndicate bought five new cars and commenced with overall upgrades. The Baltimore Syndicate proceeded to merge with the Sutter Street Railway and the San Francisco and San Mateo Electric Railway to form United Railroads of San Francisco (URR), which

⁹ Platt.

¹⁰ Charles A. Smallwood, "Geneva Avenue Car Barn," unpublished, handwritten, 1980.

¹¹ Platt.

¹² M.M. O'Shaughnessy, "Report on the Street Railway Transportation Requirements of San Francisco with Special Considerations to Unification of Existing Facilities" (San Francisco: n.p., May 1929) 28.

¹³ Vielbaum, *Interurban* 11.

¹⁴ Vielbaum, *Interurban* 11.

¹⁵ Vielbaum, *Interurban* 7.

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was incorporated March 2, 1902.¹⁶ URR assumed control of all the city's independent street railway companies, with the exception of the California Street Cable, the Geary Street Cable Car, and the Presidio and Ferries Railway. This incorporation continued to operate as the United Railroads of San Francisco until April 9, 1921.

Soon after assuming control of the city's railway companies, URR began the work necessary to complete the San Mateo extension. The first car to arrive in San Mateo was line car number 0301 on December 26, 1902.¹⁷ The large interurban cars, which ran on this line, were built at the Laclede Plant in St. Louis. Twenty cars, measuring 45 feet and 9 inches in length were purchased to run on the interurban line. On August 1, 1903, the first through service on an interurban car traveled from Fifth and Market in San Francisco to San Mateo.¹⁸ This trip took approximately 75 minutes to complete. Sixteen classic interurban streetcars were later purchased and stationed at the Geneva Complex. These sixteen cars were the largest electric vehicles in the city, measuring over 52 feet in length and weighing 75,640 pounds. Due to their size, they became known as the "Big Subs." These streetcars had wood interiors with leather seats. The large interurbans served the San Mateo lines and remained in operation until 1923.¹⁹ After twelve years in storage, the last "Big Sub" was dismantled and burned in 1935.²⁰ The #40 interurban line would continue to run from Fifth and Mission Streets to San Mateo until 1948.²¹

Car lines which operated out of the Geneva Complex included:

- Route #10—Glen Park-Guerrero St.
- Route #12—Ingleside
- Route #18—Mission
- Route #26—Daly City via Guerrero St.
- Route #40—San Mateo Interurban
- Route—South San Francisco local line
- Route—Visitacion line

In addition to the standard car lines, there was a special funeral car service from the Geneva Complex to San Francisco's principal cemeteries in Colma, on a spur running off the San Mateo interurban line.²² This fleet consisted of three finely appointed electric cars built for the sole function of transporting funeral attendees to Colma. The front section of these cars had a compartment for transporting coffins, and chairs for mourners were located in the rear. The funeral car service ran out of the car barn located at the Geneva Complex until March 24, 1916.

¹⁶ O'Shaughnessy 5.

¹⁷ Vielbaum, *Interurban* 7.

¹⁸ Vielbaum, *Interurban* 7.

¹⁹ Vielbaum, *Interurban* 8.

²⁰ Vielbaum, *Interurban* 8.

²¹ Dick Bartel, *SF Market Street Railway: 40 Car Interurban Line* (Suisun City, CA: Bartel-Thompson Pictures, 1988).

²² Walter Vielbaum, et. al., *San Francisco's Interurban to San Mateo* (San Francisco: Arcadia Publishing, 2005) 8.

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Electric lines, as the most modern and efficient means of travel, had been the most desired means of transport in urban America from the early 1890s. San Francisco city leaders desired to have electric power for the city's lines to be distributed by means of underground conduit, in order to hide the unsightly electrical power lines. United Railroads refused to expend the funds necessary to lay underground lines and remained at odds with the city regarding this issue until the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake, when the extent of damage caused by the earthquake made it necessary to quickly remove damaged cable lines and install new rail systems and power lines.

The earthquake and subsequent fire of April 18, 1906 disrupted all street railway systems in the city for the following seven months. The Geneva Complex suffered some damage, as evident from a quote in the San Mateo Car House Day Book of April 18, 1906: "Geneva Avenue Substation walls were cracked from the roof to the foundation. Also offices and car sheds. Tracks in car sheds were spread causing about 20 cars to drop between tracks."²³ No cars ran from the Geneva Complex until one month later, when limited car service was reinstated on May 6, 1906. By May 10th, service had returned to an almost regular schedule.²⁴ The physical damage to the Geneva Complex took longer to address. The second story brick walls at the northeast corner of the Office Building sustained damage during the earthquake; and temporary repairs, in the form of wood framing and tarpaper, were soon carried out. These temporary repairs remain in place to this day. The Power House sustained more severe damage, which was not fully repaired until 1910. Additionally, a wood bracing system was installed at the windows along San Jose Avenue; and it was not removed until circa 1947.²⁵

It became apparent that public municipal transportation was a crucial component of the earthquake recovery effort. To expedite rail service, the city's Board of Supervisors passed an emergency measure giving URR a permit for the temporary installation of overhead wires on Market Street and permission to convert the Sutter Street and the 9th-Polk-Larkin lines to electric operation. Overhead wires remain as the primary source of power for the city's streetcar and bus lines to this day. Patrick Calhoun, the URR President, also took the opportunity to eliminate most of the unwanted cable car systems damaged in the 1906 disaster. With cable car use waning, electric streetcars became more popular and the infrastructure for these systems needed to be expanded.

In 1913, a proposition was passed to extend the city-owned and operated Municipal Railway.²⁶ The extension, in conjunction with the new form of transportation - the jitney bus - introduced in 1914, caused a decrease in ridership for the privately-owned URR and continued financial problems for the company.²⁷ By 1919, a Reorganization Committee composed of holders of the United Railroads securities formed and forced the foreclosure of URR. A new company, the Market Street Railway Company (MSR), was organized on February 16, 1921.²⁸ For the next twenty-four years, the MSR managed the electric rail lines, with the Geneva Complex serving as the central location for electric rail in San Francisco. The "Big Subs" were retired with this change in management. Other modifications included: lengthening the city

²³ Smallwood, "Car Barn" 2.

²⁴ Smallwood, "Car Barn" 2.

²⁵ Smallwood, "Car Barn" 2.

²⁶ Smallwood, *White Front* 16.

²⁷ Smallwood, *White Front* 16.

²⁸ Smallwood, *White Front* 16.

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streetcars to just over 48 feet; enclosing the platforms to allow “pay as you enter” fare collection; installing electric heaters, cushioned leather seats, and air gongs; and creating smoking sections.²⁹ Under the MSR’s ownership, the Geneva Complex housed the first bus fleet for the City of San Francisco. Bus service began in April 1926, with a fleet consisting of half a dozen buses.³⁰ With the closure of the 28th and Valencia Car Barn in 1939, the #14-Daly City line was relocated to the Geneva Complex. When the 24th Street Barn was converted to bus use, the operation of the #9 Valencia and #11-Mission-24th Street lines was also relocated to the Geneva Complex. With these changes, more cars were operated from the Geneva Complex than from any other car house in the history of the city’s electric car era.

On September 29, 1944, the MSR, including the San Mateo interurban line, was purchased by the City of San Francisco for 7.2 million dollars, and thus became part of the San Francisco’s Municipal Railway (MUNI) system.³¹ The Geneva Complex was included in this transfer to city ownership.³² Between 1945 and 1949, all MSR streetcar lines were replaced with motor or trolley coaches under MUNI’s modernization program.

The Geneva Office Building, the Power House, and the car barn – the last remaining car barn from which electric cars operated on the Pacific Coast – remained in use until their closure in 1982, housing all extant MUNI I street car lines (light rail vehicle lines J, K, L, M, and N), as well as all remaining rail service equipment. The car barn was demolished in the mid-1980s. On January 26, 1986, the Office Building was officially listed as City Landmark #180. The Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board’s final case report attributed the Office Building’s significance to its association with The San Francisco and San Mateo Railroad Company, which allowed for development of the city’s western neighborhoods, and its association with the 1917 Carmen’s Strike (described in the following paragraphs).

Ownership of the Office Building and Power House was transferred to the city’s Recreation and Park Department in 2004. The buildings are presently unoccupied, but remain as the last physical reminders of the San Francisco’s first electric railroad company.

Criterion A: Association with the History of Organized Labor in San Francisco

Organized Labor in San Francisco

A bloody labor strike in 1901 brought about the organization of the Union Labor Party (ULP), a political party representing the interests of the city’s working men.³³ The formation of this organization began what would prove to be a decade marked by the power and influence of organized labor in San Francisco. By 1904, more than one-third of San Francisco’s work force was unionized, and by 1905 the ULP was becoming increasingly more influential in San Francisco governmental affairs.³⁴

²⁹ Vielbaum, *Interurban* 9.

³⁰ Smallwood, *White Front* 395.

³¹ Vielbaum, *Interurban* 9.

³² Smallwood, *White Front* 397.

³³ Robert Emery Bionaz, *Death of a Union: The 1907 San Francisco Streetcar Strike* (accessed at <http://www.sfsu.edu>, 5/17/2006) 1.

³⁴ Bionaz 2.

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Along with the growth of the ULP, other labor organizations also expanded their membership. In 1901, the two largest union organizations in San Francisco, the San Francisco Labor Council (SFLC), and the Building Trades Council (BTC), split ranks when the BTC forbade its members to also hold membership in SFLC.³⁵ Neither the SFLC nor the BTC endorsed the ULP, but in 1905, they joined together in support of the ULP party against a Democratic-Republican "fusion" anti-labor ticket. Between 1901 and 1913, the number of unions affiliated with the SFLC increased from ninety-eight to one hundred and thirty. By 1903, labor union membership in San Francisco totaled over 50,000, including 15,000 workers directly affiliated with the BTC.³⁶

The Carmen's Union and the Carmen's Strikes

The Street Railway Strikes of 1905, 1907, and 1917 illustrate the extent to which the labor movement could demonstrate its power. During this expansion of San Francisco's labor unions, Local 205 of the Amalgamated Association of Street and Electric Railway Employees of America (the Carmen's Union) formed under the SFLC. Disputes between the Carmen's Union and URR regarding hours and wages occurred frequently between 1902 and 1907, and again in the mid-1910s.

When the Carmen organized their union, they demanded a wage increase and the payment of time-and-a-half for work in excess of ten hours a day.³⁷ In 1902 the standard rate of pay for the operating personnel of the electric railways was \$2.50 for a ten-hour workday.³⁸ The first organized strike occurred in August 1905, lasting ten days. The parties were able to reach a resolution to this first major Carmen's Strike with minimal struggle and no bloodshed.

The earthquake, having taken place on April 18, 1906, exacerbated the Carmen's frustration in regard to their wages and hours. The railroad refused to recognize the changed working conditions that resulted from the 1906 calamity. On Tuesday, May 7, 1907, the bloodiest strike in San Francisco Carmen history erupted when United Railroads of San Francisco attempted to run streetcars with strikebreakers, angering the striking union members.³⁹ The bloody revolt earned the name "Bloody Tuesday." The strike continued until November 5, 1907, at which time a resolution was reached.

In 1917, there was a third major Carmen's Strike, and this time the Geneva Complex was at the epicenter. Strikebreakers were housed in a dormitory set up in the rear of the Office Building, in the second-story social hall used for company-sponsored entertainment during normal working conditions. A window at the rear (east) elevation of the Office Building was converted to a door opening and a new exterior staircase installed so strikebreakers could directly access the car yard from the dormitory without encountering the strikers at the street. The converted door opening remains at the east façade.

³⁵ Bionaz 4.

³⁶ Bionaz 4.

³⁷ Roy Cameron, *A Transit History of San Francisco 1850-1948* (San Francisco: Administration Transportation Planning Council, 1948) 30.

³⁸ Bionaz 4.

³⁹ Bionaz 9.

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Criterion C: Local Example of Pre-Earthquake Brick Construction, Rendered in the Romanesque and Queen Anne Styles

Romanesque Style - Historic Context and Character-Defining Features

The Romanesque Style was one of a number of late Victorian styles based upon medieval prototypes. The Romanesque Revival Style was first used for religious, public, and commercial buildings in the United States in the mid-1800s; and in its earliest incarnations, it was a strict interpretation of European Romanesque styles. By the 1870s, the style was evolving, as designers began to more freely interpret the historical forms. The style evolved further under American architect Henry Hobson Richardson (1838-86), who borrowed from many sources, including the late Gothic Revival and Syrian styles, and infused his buildings with his own personal style. In addition to his use of the Romanesque style for public and religious buildings such as Trinity Church in Boston, Richardson also designed several residences in the style, helping to popularize it for residential construction in the 1890s. The style continued to be popular in the United States until circa 1900. Examples of Romanesque architecture are found across the United States and in California, but are most prevalent in the urban Northeast.⁴⁰

The Richardsonian Romanesque Style is characterized by a straightforward treatment of the wall plane, broad roof planes, and a select distribution of openings. Typical features include:

- masonry wall construction, either brick or stone, often with polychromatic stone details
- belt courses as prominent design features
- entries marked by round-arched openings, with arches springing from heavy, squat piers or the wall surface
- arched or rectangular windows, often in groupings of three or more and / or deeply recessed
- towers, typically round with conical roofs
- broad hip roofs, often with cross gables
- eaves close to wall
- parapeted and gabled wall dormers

Queen Anne Style - Historic Context and Character-Defining Features

The Queen Anne Style, another late Victorian style, was popularized in the 19th century by a group of British architects led by Richard Norman Shaw. The name of the style is deceptive, as it had little to do with Queen Anne of England or the architectural styles that were popular during her reign from 1702-14. Rather, it borrowed from late medieval models, and was initially characterized by half-timbered or masonry construction. The Queen Anne style was first used on the East Coast of United States in the 1870s. The style rapidly spread to other parts of the U.S. through pattern books and architectural publications, and it remained in use until circa 1910. The earliest American examples followed the British

⁴⁰ Information summarized from John J.G. Blumenson, *Identifying American Architecture* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1981) 43-47; and Virginia McAlester and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1984) 301-307.

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half-timbered subtype; however, American designers soon created their own interpretation of the style, with ornate wood spindlework.⁴¹

The Queen Anne Style in America is characterized by the use of wall surfaces as primary decorative elements. This was achieved either by avoiding plain flat walls through the use of decorative architectural elements such as bays, towers, overhangs, and wall projections; or by breaking up flat wall expanses with a variety of materials, textures, and colors. Typical features include:

- asymmetrical façade
- wood construction and detailing, such as carved panels, brackets, spindlework, pendants, finials, and roof cresting
- variation in cladding, including horizontal siding, board-and-batten, and patterned shingles
- partial or full-width porch
- bay windows
- upper window sashes with small square lights
- flared second story
- tower, often with conical roof
- steeply pitched roofs of irregular shape, usually with a dominant front-facing gable
- ornamented gables

The Architecture of the Geneva Office Building and Power House

Constructed in 1901, the Office Building is two-story brick utilitarian structure with a blend of Romanesque and Queen Anne Style detailing. The Power House, constructed in 1903 at the south side of the Office Building, originally employed a similar architectural vocabulary; however, after sustaining damage during the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake, its upper mezzanine walls were reconstructed with a stronger material – concrete. Both buildings still exhibit the physical damage from that great earthquake; and in a city where brick is not a predominant building material, they remain as good examples of the pre-earthquake use of brick to convey architectural detailing.

The design of both structures has been attributed to the Reid Brothers, a prominent architectural firm led by James W. Reid (1851-1943) and Merritt J. Reid (1855-1932) that was responsible for the design of many San Francisco buildings, including the Fairmont Hotel.⁴² To date, no original drawings have been found to corroborate their involvement in the design of the Geneva Complex; however, the architectural style of the complex and the Reid Brothers' personal associations certainly suggest that they may have been involved. The Reid Brothers' portfolio reflects a variety of architectural styles, including the Romanesque and Queen Anne, both of which were employed at the Geneva Office Building and Power House. The refined design of the Geneva Complex suggests the work of a master architect of the

⁴¹ Information summarized from Blumenson 63 and McAlester 263-287.

⁴² The Reid Brothers are listed as architects, "as attributed by California Architects and Builders," in the City of San Francisco Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board final case report for the San Francisco and San Mateo Railroad Company Office Building, dated May 6, 1985.

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caliber of the Reid Brothers. The Spreckels family, who owned the San Francisco and San Mateo Electric Railway when the Geneva lot was purchased in 1900, already had a long-established working relationship with the Reid Brothers. The Spreckels family commissioned no less than seven Reid Brothers buildings between 1895 and 1907, so it is possible that they may have also commissioned the firm to design the architectural symbol of their railroad endeavors in San Francisco.

The Office Building, constructed of red brick, wood trim, and corrugated iron roof, is a masterfully designed and detailed utilitarian structure that incorporates a number of architectural styles. The building exhibits many of the characteristics of the Romanesque Style, including brick masonry wall construction; round-arched openings at the entries, arched windows arranged in groupings of three; and a broad hip roof. The use of brick as a building material connotes strength and stability, which the railroad owners would have wanted to convey to their customers and competitors. Brick is also used decoratively, for pilasters; projecting sills, string courses, and cornices; rowlock arches; and decorative panels and brackets. The designer used the Queen Anne Style turret, bay windows, and cornice, all detailed in wood, to break up the main façade and provide contrast to the masonry. In addition to these late 19th century architectural styles, the designer also took advantage of new, turn-of-the-century building technologies. This is evident from both the width of the windows facing San Jose Avenue, and the broad, somewhat flattened arches of the second story windows, "all of which signal more contemporary technology and the coming stylistic changes."⁴³ The corrugated metal roof lends an industrial quality to the building.

The Power House, constructed of red brick, concrete, wood trim, and a membrane roof (originally slate tile), exhibits many of the same characteristics as the Office Building. The Power House uses a similar vocabulary of brick masonry construction and detailing, rendered in a modernized, late Romanesque style; but as a more utilitarian building, it does not employ the finer Queen Anne Style wood details. Industrial details include the large access doors at either end of the main façade, the exposed porcelain insulators for the electric lines, and the large corrugated metal roof monitor. When the upper story was reconstructed in concrete in 1910, several design modifications were made, many of which reflected the then-popular Mission Revival Style; however, the Mission Revival Style detailing has been removed or obscured by subsequent layers of concrete.

The architectural significance of the Geneva Complex was recognized in the Department of City Planning's 1976 Architectural Inventory, which was the result of a city-wide survey conducted between 1974 and 1976. The inventory assessed structures "from the standpoint of overall design and particular design features." Each building was rated numerically according to its overall significance, on a scale of "0" (low) to "5" (high). Some 10,000 buildings were listed, comprising approximately 10% of all buildings in San Francisco at the time. Buildings rated "3" or above are considered the finest in the city, and represent just 2% of the building stock. The Geneva Complex received an overall rating of "3", and was cited particularly for its overall architectural quality, as well as for having a unique visual feature of interest. However, it received a rating of "4" for being an example of a rare or unusual style or design. One of the architectural historians who evaluated the complex noted that the complex was "handsomely engineered...a definite asset".⁴⁴

⁴³ Platt.

⁴⁴ Platt.

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<http://www.classicsfproperties.com>

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the property being nominated correspond to the footprints of the Geneva Office Building and Power House, which occupy a 48 foot wide by 210 foot long piece of land at the northwest corner of Lot 036 in Block 6972 in the City and County of San Francisco, California.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the Office Building and Power House, located at the northwest corner of the original Geneva Complex lot. The northwest corner of the lot and the two buildings are presently owned by the City and County of San Francisco, Recreation and Park Department. The southern and eastern portions of the original Geneva Complex lot have been excluded because they are presently occupied by modern transportation structures and are under the separate jurisdiction of the San Francisco Municipal Railway (MUNI).

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Geneva Office Building and Power House
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PHOTOGRAPHY LABELS

GENEVA OFFICE BUILDING AND POWER HOUSE

San Francisco, CA

From the collection of the Friends of the Geneva Office Building, photographer unknown
circa 1905

Site – View of rural development (cabbage patches) surrounding the Geneva Office Building and Power House, with the northwest corner of the Office Building in the distance at the far right side of the photograph; looking southeast

Photograph 1

GENEVA OFFICE BUILDING AND POWER HOUSE

San Francisco, CA

From the collection of the S.F. Municipal Transportation Agency, Photography Dept., photographer unknown
1904

Exterior - Oblique view of west and north façades of the Office Building, with the now-demolished car barn to the left; looking southeast

Photograph 2

GENEVA OFFICE BUILDING AND POWER HOUSE

San Francisco, CA

From the collection of the Friends of the Geneva Office Building, photographer unknown
circa 1904

Exterior - Oblique view of west façade of the Office Building (left) and Power House (right), showing the original brick construction at the upper mezzanine story of the Power House; looking southeast

Photograph 3

GENEVA OFFICE BUILDING AND POWER HOUSE

San Francisco, CA

From the collection of the Friends of the Geneva Office Building, photographer unknown
December 1910

Exterior - Oblique view of west façade of the Power House, showing the post-earthquake concrete reconstruction at the upper mezzanine story; looking southeast

Photograph 4

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Geneva Office Building and Power House
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GENEVA OFFICE BUILDING AND POWER HOUSE

San Francisco, CA

From the collection of the S.F. Municipal Transportation Agency, Photography Dept., photographer unknown

April 1972

Exterior - Oblique view of west and north façades of the Office Building (left) and Power House (right), with the now-demolished car barn to the left and extensive urban development beyond; looking southeast

Photograph 5

GENEVA OFFICE BUILDING AND POWER HOUSE

San Francisco, CA

Sara Lardinois - Architectural Resources Group, photographer

September 2009

Site - View of residential development along San Jose Avenue, with the northwest corner of the Office Building in the distance at the far right side of the photograph; looking southeast

Photograph 6

GENEVA OFFICE BUILDING AND POWER HOUSE

San Francisco, CA

Sara Lardinois - Architectural Resources Group, photographer

September 2009

Exterior - Oblique view of north and west façades of the Office Building (left) and Power House (right); looking southeast

Photograph 7

GENEVA OFFICE BUILDING AND POWER HOUSE

San Francisco, CA

Sara Lardinois - Architectural Resources Group, photographer

September 2009

Exterior - Oblique view of west façade of the Office Building; looking northeast

Photograph 8

GENEVA OFFICE BUILDING AND POWER HOUSE

San Francisco, CA

Sara Lardinois - Architectural Resources Group, photographer

September 2009

Exterior - Oblique view of west and south façades of the Power House; looking northeast

Photograph 9

United States Department of the Interior
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GENEVA OFFICE BUILDING AND POWER HOUSE

San Francisco, CA
Lauren MacDonald - Architectural Resources Group, photographer
2006

Exterior - Oblique view of east façade of the Office Building (right) and Power House (left); looking northwest
Photograph 10

GENEVA OFFICE BUILDING AND POWER HOUSE

San Francisco, CA
Sara Lardinois - Architectural Resources Group, photographer
September 2009

Exterior – Oblique detail view of the main entrance at the west façade of the south wing of the Office Building; looking southeast
Photograph 11

GENEVA OFFICE BUILDING AND POWER HOUSE

San Francisco, CA
Sara Lardinois - Architectural Resources Group, photographer
September 2009

Exterior – Axial detail view of the turret at the northwest corner of the Office Building; looking southeast
Photograph 12

GENEVA OFFICE BUILDING AND POWER HOUSE

San Francisco, CA
Nicole Avril – Geneva Car Barn and Power House, photographer
January 2009

Exterior – Axial detail view of window opening at east façade of the Office Building that was modified during the 1917 Carmen's Strike; looking west
Photograph 13

GENEVA OFFICE BUILDING AND POWER HOUSE

San Francisco, CA
Nicole Avril – Geneva Car Barn and Power House, photographer
January 2009

Interior – Axial view of the first floor corridor at the Office Building, showing original wood wainscot and trim; looking north
Photograph 14

United States Department of the Interior
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GENEVA OFFICE BUILDING AND POWER HOUSE

San Francisco, CA

Nicole Avril – Geneva Car Barn and Power House, photographer

January 2009

Interior – Axial view of the Power House machine hall; looking south

Photograph 15

GENEVA OFFICE BUILDING AND POWER HOUSE

San Francisco, CA

Nicole Avril – Geneva Car Barn and Power House, photographer

January 2009

Interior – Axial detail view of the Office Building original wood windows, extant behind protective plywood panels installed in 2004; looking east

Photograph 16