

**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 One Lombard Street

other names/site number Merchants Ice & Cold Storage/ Union Can Company

2. Location

street & number 1 Lombard Street not for publication N/A

city or town San Francisco vicinity N/A

state California code CA county San Francisco code 075 zip code 94111

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

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the
National Register
 See continuation sheet.

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

Number of Resources within Property

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
0		objects
1		Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade:

Warehouse, commercial storage

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade:

Business

Professional

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Early 20th Century Industrial

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

roof asphalt

walls brick

other METAL: steel; GLASS; WOOD; STONE: granite; TERRA COTTA

Narrative Description

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

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.)

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 #

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1900-1901

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Architect: Willis Polk

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government - planning department, assessor
 University
 Other

Name of repository:

History Center, San Francisco Public Library; Online Archive of California; San Francisco Architectural Heritage

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	—	_____	_____	3	—	_____	_____
2	—	_____	_____	4	—	_____	_____

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Karen McNeill, Ph.D., Historian/Architectural Historian; Nancy Goldenberg, Architectural Historian

organization Carey & Co., Inc. date August 14, 2009

street & number 460 Bush Street telephone (415) 773-0773

city or town San Francisco state CA zip code 94108

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 One Lombard Associates % Ron Kaufman

street & number One Lombard Street, # 201 telephone (415) 982-5702

city or town San Francisco state CA zip code 94111

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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NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Exterior

This three-story-plus partial attic, load-bearing brick building with concrete foundation stands on landfill at the southwest corner of Battery and Lombard Streets. It has two exposed and two partially exposed, brick elevations. The primary, north elevation, faces Lombard Street and the east, Battery Street. The building is rectangular in plan with a flat roof. Square-plan attic masses project above the north-and-southeast corners, and a stepped parapet terminates the west elevation.

The north and east elevations divide vertically into three parts. The first floor forms a base containing segmentally-arched window openings, below a projecting brick belt course. Above, the walls are detailed in an alternating composition of projecting pilasters and arched window recesses. The pilasters rise above brick plinths, which rest upon the belt course, and terminate with simple capitals at the third story midline. Corbelled arches spring from the pilaster capitals to frame recessed window openings. An elaborate brick and terra cotta cornice tops the third story. A brick dogtooth course set at 45 degrees runs below a brick dentil course, with corbelled brick modillions above. Molded terra cotta units top the cornice.

A low parapet with terra cotta coping connects attic masses that top the building's northeast and southeast corners. The south elevation of the southeastern attic space is plain brick with no fenestration, while the north and east elevations of both attics are highly articulated. These elevations feature six arched window openings linked by a projecting string course near the arches' spring line, echoing the arch and pilaster detailing of the main building mass. The entablature consists of a brick dentil course topped by a molded terra cotta projection. A low parapet with terra cotta coping completes the attic elevations.

Nine window bays pierce the primary elevation, while the east has eight. All windows are recessed, six-lite metal sash; a central fixed window flanked by casements comprises the bottom three lites, with a tripartite fixed transom above. First-story windows are segmentally arched, those on the second story are rectangular, while those on the third are topped by semi-circular arches. West and south elevations feature segmentally arched windows. The attics retain original wood, double hung, two-over-two round-arched sash.

The plain masonry west elevation is partially exposed. It has five bays of windows (three to the north of the entry and two to the south) in segmentally arched openings beneath with a stepped parapet. Two additions extend west from the elevation. One is a two-wythe thick one story brick arch leading to an open-air courtyard. The second, housing the building entry, covers the fourth bay of windows. It is a three-story, brick clad structure with segmentally-arched, multi-lite aluminum sash windows, connecting One Lombard and the building immediately to the west. An anchor chain from a Gold Rush ship buried beneath that building is exposed near the west elevation of One Lombard.

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Only the third floor of the south elevation is exposed. It reveals segmentally arched windows with the same multi-lite aluminum sash as the rest of the building.

Interior

Original interior features include the exposed brick exterior walls, steel columns, and heavy timber framing consisting of wood columns, beams, and joists. The first floor remains mostly open, with steel columns supporting the ceiling. Original cast iron brackets top the timber columns of the second story. The third story also remains mostly open, with partial-height partitions forming office spaces and cubicles.

While original floor plans do not survive, the original plan is assumed to be mostly open, as was typical of a building of this function.

ALTERATIONS

The interior framing of heavy wooden posts and beams remains essentially intact, while the plan has been changed to adapt to modern uses.¹ Permit records from 1975 through the present list periodic upgrades to the electrical, lighting, plumbing, ventilation, and heating systems, usually coinciding with a change in tenancy. Similarly, partitions, doors, and interior windows were first introduced in 1978 and have been changed over the years as new tenants have adapted the space to new uses. The building has also been seismically upgraded. Overall, the interior character-defining features remain intact.

One bay of windows on the west elevation has been modified to create the connector structure linking One Lombard to the building to the west. While the window openings were extended to the floor, the segmental arches and masonry walls are intact.

The exterior has undergone few alterations. All of the windows were bricked over in 1924, though none of the openings, including the corbelled segmental and rounded arches, were otherwise changed. Most of the windows were reopened in 1976, at which time the original wood sash, double hung windows of the attic areas were revealed to remain intact. A combination of casement and fixed aluminum sash windows were installed in the rest of the window openings. Historic photographs reveal that the six-lite configuration sensitively follows the original window configuration and therefore complies with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. New masonry or concrete rises to the sill of some of the windows on the east and north elevations, reflecting a change in use; these openings originally opened to the ground to accommodate loading platforms. Overall, the exterior retains a high level of integrity.

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all alterations are recorded in permit records for One Lombard Street from San Francisco's Department of Building Inspections.

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One Lombard Street is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C at the local level in the area of architecture as an excellent example of industrial architecture in the early twentieth century; and for its association with master architect Willis Polk (1867-1924), one of San Francisco's most influential architects from the 1890s through the 1920s. Designed in 1900 and built the following year, One Lombard Street came at a critical moment in Polk's career: Until this point, domestic architecture dominated Polk's San Francisco oeuvre. One Lombard, which was designed during Polk's brief association with another renowned architect, George Washington Percy, marks Polk's foray into large-scale commercial buildings. This building was also the first warehouse that Polk designed. It illustrates several principles of Polk's architectural approach, including his devotion to Classical architecture and his belief in decorative restraint to achieve lasting beauty, and established some principles of design that Polk employed for other industrial buildings. Finally, as an architectural type, the building illustrates a transitional period in industrial design, from one that abandoned pure function to one that sought balance between function and beauty. The building's period of significance is 1900-1901, the years of its design and construction.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Background

San Francisco's Northeast Waterfront

In 1848, just before gold seekers from around the world descended upon the tiny settlement of San Francisco, the site where One Lombard Street now stands was beneath the San Francisco Bay. That year, William Squire Clark arrived in the newly annexed territory to pursue business ventures, but noticed an absence of wharves where cargo could be unloaded and warehouses where supplies could be stored. Thus, Clark built a small redwood warehouse and a stone pier from rocks he quarried from Telegraph Hill. Clark located his warehouse and pier just to the east of Telegraph Hill, where he could take advantage of the bay's deep waters and the protection that Telegraph Hill provided from westerly winds. After building his own warehouse and pier, Clark set about promoting the Northern Waterfront's warehousing facilities, thereby creating San Francisco's first warehouse district. The world soon rushed in and followed Clark's lead. By 1851, quarried rock from Telegraph Hill, undoubtedly combined with abandoned ships, had filled the bay nearly to today's Front Street, resulting in flat lands - including the land where One Lombard Street stands - for building and development. Warehouses dominated the new landscape.¹

Many of San Francisco's prominent shipping, packing, and light industrial warehouses stood along the northeast waterfront. They included warehouses built by Scotsman Daniel Gibb during the 1850s for his clipper ships during the

¹ Robert Courland, *the Old North Waterfront: The History and Rebirth of a San Francisco Neighborhood* (San Francisco, 2004), 1, 11-12.

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1850s. The Bay Sugar Refinery was built at the southwest corner of Union and Battery Streets in 1860, which Claus Spreckels, the sugar magnate, used later in the decade. American Biscuit Company, Cowell's Lime and Cement Co., W. P. Fuller Co. (a glassworks), Petri Italian-American Cigar Co., the California Fruit Packing Co, and Bemis Bag Co. all located their warehouse, shipping, and packing facilities in the northeast waterfront area.²

Greenwich Dock and One Lombard

During the nineteenth century, one of the largest waterfront enterprises, Greenwich Dock, stood at the site of One Lombard Street (see Section AD, pages 7-8). During the early 1850s, it included little more than a wooden dock that stretched along Battery Street from Greenwich to Lombard Street, where ships could drop anchor in the deep bay waters and load or unload goods. By the 1860s, the massive Greenwich Dock warehouse occupied the western half of the block bounded by Sansome, Lombard, Battery, and Greenwich, but the One Lombard site remained a general docking area. As late as 1899, the site served as the wood yard for the Greenwich Dock Bonded Warehouse and/or the Gulf Bag Co. It hosted several open sheds - for charcoal, wood shavings, and a wood pile - a rail spur from the Embarcadero (then East Street), and two small buildings.³

In 1900 the City Warehouse Company, which occupied the lot at the southeast corner of Lombard and Sansome, purchased the subject site and commissioned well-known architect George W. Percy to design a three-story warehouse with partial attic for the site. The Union Can Company, the largest producer of fruit and salmon cans on the Pacific Coast, became the first occupants of the building in 1901. While the building survived the earthquake and fires of 1906, that event marked the end of the Union Can Company's association with the building. By December of that year, the company had filed a permit application to erect a wood frame and corrugated steel clad building at 7th and Townsend Streets, in the South of Market area.⁴

For nearly seventy years, the Merchants Ice & Cold Storage Company occupied One Lombard Street. Founded in 1891 by former oyster dealer, Charles Swanberg, Merchants Ice & Cold Storage grew to become one of the largest such companies in San Francisco. In 1900 the company bought a parcel of land at the southwest corner of Lombard and Sansome Streets, then built a six-story cold storage plant. They also constructed a building at the northwest corner of Montgomery and Lombard in the 1920s. The six-story building at 101 Lombard was two-stories tall and contained the ice tanks. Behind the tanks in a rooftop penthouse was a

² David F. Myrick, *San Francisco's Telegraph Hill*, reprinted edition (San Francisco, 2001), 93-97; "northeast Waterfront Historic District," 3-5.

³ Lithograph of Lombard, North Point, and Greenwich Docks, by Harrison Eastman and Hugo Wilhelm Arthur Nahl, 1860s, Robert B. Honeyman, Jr. Collection of Early Californian and Western American Pictorial Material, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley; photograph by Behram of Greenwich Dock Warehouse, 1864, San Francisco Maritime National Historic Park; Sanborn Fire Insurance Co., "San Francisco," (1887), sheet 2 and (1899), sheet 3.

⁴ "Can Company Will Erect Large Warehouse Building," *San Francisco Call*, December 9, 1906, One Lombard File, San Francisco Architectural Heritage.

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condenser. The engine was located at the base of the building, with boilers placed in an adjacent two-story building. Over the next several years, Merchants Ice & Cold Storage bought and developed more land along Lombard Street, culminating with the purchase of One Lombard in 1908. A long pipe connected One Lombard to the condensers at 101 Lombard.⁵

Merchants Ice & Cold Storage occupied One Lombard until 1975. The company's heyday was before World War II, when it provided ice for shipping produce and fish, for household ice boxes, and to restaurants and markets. The business survived the advent of modern refrigeration technology and even demanded the construction of new facilities in 1950. By the late 1960s, however, this type of business was all but obsolete and Merchants Ice & Cold Storage began to downsize and sell its assets.⁶ Since the 1970s, One Lombard has housed a variety of business and professional enterprises, including the San Francisco Bay Club, a prize-winning health and fitness center.

CONTEXT FOR CRITERION C

Willis Polk designed One Lombard Street while he worked in the office of George Washington Percy, then considered one of San Francisco's preeminent architects. The warehouse is one of approximately seventeen buildings on which the architects collaborated during their brief partnership, but one of few to survive and the only warehouse to emerge from Percy & Polk.

George W. Percy (1847-1900)

George W. Percy was one of the San Francisco Bay Areas most prominent architects during the late nineteenth century. He was an avid practitioner of the Richardsonian Romanesque style and also helped pioneer reinforced concrete construction technology in the United States. Along with his partner, Francis F. Hamilton, Percy designed such famous landmarks as the Sharon building in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park, several of the original buildings at Stanford University, and the Christian Brothers Winery, now the Culinary Institute of America's campus in St. Helena, Napa Valley.

Born in 1847, to Beulah and Isaiah Percy, a master joiner, George Washington Percy grew up in the rural area of Bath, Maine. He showed an early aptitude for mechanical and mathematical pursuits while a student at Kent's Hill Academy, one of the oldest coeducational private institutions in the county. During the Civil War, Percy joined the mercantile marines and traveled to Europe. It was during this time, he decided upon architecture as his life profession. Like most nineteenth-century American architects, Percy received his training through apprenticeships rather than formal schooling. He first trained under Francis H. Fassett in Portland, Maine, and subsequently found employment with Bradley & Winslow, of Boston. He relocated to Stockton, California between 1869 and 1871, but a catastrophic fire in Chicago in 1871 prompted Percy to travel to the Midwestern city, where he oversaw the construction of several buildings.

⁵ Anne Bloomfield, untitled manuscript, in One Lombard File, San Francisco Architectural Heritage.

⁶ Ibid.

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Two years later he returned to Bradley & Winslow, in Boston, but California beckoned again. In 1876 Percy finally settled permanently in San Francisco where he established an architectural practice that soon thrived.⁷

Percy joined forces with Francis F. Hamilton, a Beaux-Arts trained architect, in 1879. Over the next twenty years, these men built one of the most prestigious architectural practices in the city. Their commissions extended throughout the city and state; they included everything from domestic architecture to public and industrial buildings. Several of their prominent buildings survive, including the Sharon building and adjacent Children's playground and carousel at Golden Gate Park (1887), First Unitarian Church at Franklin and Geary Streets (1887), and the Seventh Day Adventist Church and California and Broderick (1892). These buildings, along with such commissions as the Stockton Insane Asylum (1869-1870, demolished), and several buildings at the newly established Stanford University, including the library, assembly hall, a girls' dormitory, and the Leland Stanford, Jr., museum (1890s, destroyed) demonstrate the firm's strong penchant for the Richardsonian Romanesque style, emphasizing "bold forms and primitive power."⁸ Architectural historians consider this style a forerunner to modernism, underscoring Percy & Hamilton's interest in innovation.

George W. Percy was also a leading advocate for reinforced concrete technology. He formed a friendship and working relationship with longtime Oakland resident Ernest Ransome, the single most influential practitioner and innovator of reinforced concrete technology in the United States. Together, the two men collaborated on some of the first reinforced concrete buildings in the country. For instance, Abraham D. Starr commissioned Percy & Hamilton to design Wheatport, the largest flour mill on the Pacific Coast, in 1884. In turn, Percy & Hamilton hired Ransome to design the foundations for the mill - concrete arches set in bedrock of the Carquinez Straits - which marked "the first time a concrete foundation was significantly placed [in] under water construction."⁹ Also in 1884, Percy became a charter member of the Technical Society of the Pacific Coast, for which he later served as treasurer and president.¹⁰

⁷ George Alexander Wright, "Obituary: George W. Percy," *Journal of the Association of Engineering Societies*, 26 (June 1901), 60-61; "G. W. Percy, A.A.I.A.," *Proceedings of the Thirty-Fourth Annual Convention of the American Institute of Architects*, (Washington, D.C., 1900); David Parry, "Percy & Hamilton," <http://www.sfhistoryencyclopedia.com/articles/p/Percy-Hamilton.html>, accessed March 9, 2009; Mary N. Woods, *From Craft to Profession: The Practice of Architecture in Nineteenth-Century America* (Berkeley, 1999).

⁸ Mark Gelernter, *A History of American Architecture: Buildings in their Cultural and Technological Context* (Hanover, 1999), 183.

⁹ Michael R. Corbett, "George Washington Percy," in Adolf K. Placzek, ed., *MacMillan Encyclopedia of Architects*, Vol. 3 (London, 1982), 389-390; Walter A. Starr, "Abraham Dubois Starr: Pioneer California Miller and Wheat Exporter," *California Historical Society Quarterly*, 27 (September 1948), 197; Peter Collins, *Concrete: The Vision of a New Architecture* (Montreal, 2004), 61-64.

¹⁰ "G. W. Percy, A.A.I.A."

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At the time of George W. Percy's death in 1900, one colleague in the Technical Society of the Pacific Coast declared, "It may justly be said of [Percy] that he was at the very zenith of a successful career."¹¹ He was a charter member of the San Francisco Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), and the national organization of the AIA elected him an Associated member in 1899. By 1900, longtime business partner Francis Hamilton had died, but Percy's new partnership with a young architect name Willis Polk continued to produce significant commissions, including the de Fremery building in Oakland, the Alvinza Hayward Building (now the Kohl Building) at the northeast corner of Montgomery and California Streets in San Francisco, the Alexander Young building in Honolulu, and One Lombard Street.¹²

Willis Jefferson Polk (1867-1924)

Willis Jefferson Polk (1867-1924) was the primary designer of One Lombard Street. He was a rising star at the time of the building's design and construction and, particularly following the earthquake and fires of 1906, was arguably the most influential architect in the San Francisco Bay Area through the 1920s. At the core of Polk's architectural philosophy was a belief in the universal principles of Classical architecture, a disdain for the rigidity of Beaux-Arts academicism, and the modernist viewpoint that decorative restraint results in enduring architectural beauty. He applied these principles to domestic, commercial, and industrial architecture, including One Lombard.

Born in 1867 in Jackson, Illinois, to William Webb Polk, an itinerant carpenter who eventually established a prosperous business in St. Louis, Missouri, Willis Polk's architectural training began in a local contractor's office when he was just eight years old. He then graduated to work in his father's office as a teenager. In 1887, Polk joined the prominent Boston firm of Van Brunt & Howe as an employee in their new office in Kansas City, Missouri. Under their tutelage, Polk began to understand architecture as an art rather than a trade and was introduced to academic eclecticism. Within years, the budding architect moved on to New York City, where he audited courses taught by William Robert Ware at Columbia University and worked in the office of A. Page Brown. Though he did not work with them, Polk also came to know preeminent architects McKim, Mead & White as well as many of the young protégées working in their office. The most influential idea that Polk took away from his association with this famous firm was that an architect should aspire to create beautiful buildings. When A. Page Brown relocated to San Francisco, Polk followed and took his aspirations for beauty with him.¹³

¹¹ Wright, "George W. Percy," 60.

¹² *Ibid.*, 60-61; "G. W. Percy, A.A.I.A.;" Parry, "Percy & Hamilton."

¹³ It should be noted that nearly all of Willis Polk's archival record has been destroyed. Although the architect or his descendants donated all of his records to the University of California, Berkeley, they languished in the campanile for years, only to be remembered and retrieved after water damage had almost completely destroyed them. Richard Longstreth, *On the Edge of the World: Four Architects in San Francisco at the Turn of the Century* (Berkeley, 1983), 51-56.

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During the 1890s the young Willis Polk established himself as a vocal critic of reigning Bay Area architectural styles and developed a following for innovative domestic designs. For smaller commissions, Polk drew upon northern European - mostly English - precedents to create an informal, rusticated urban aesthetic. Classical architecture guided his larger commissions. In both cases, Polk earned a reputation for academic expression of historic forms and restrained use of ornament, which allowed him to achieve architectural interest through structural elements. His architecture departed radically from the predominant Queen Anne Style, which was characterized by irregular and complex plans and elevations, as well as profuse use of applied ornament. Innovations like these have long placed Polk in the pantheon of the San Francisco Bay Area's most influential architects of the turn of the century, along with Coxhead and Coxhead, Bernard Maybeck, and A. C. Schweinfurth.¹⁴

Polk's rising popularity and association with San Francisco's elite did not translate into personal fortune or large commissions. By 1897 he was in financial straits and had to declare bankruptcy. Domestic work, meanwhile, continued to dominate his oeuvre and frustrated Polk's ambitions to transform the region's architecture. A new opportunity presented itself late in 1899. Francis Hamilton, of the architectural firm Percy and Hamilton, died. His business partner, George W. Percy invited Willis Polk to be his new partner. More on Percy & Polk's brief but important partnership will follow below.¹⁵

After a European tour and a brief sojourn in Chicago between 1901 and 1903, where he worked for preeminent American architect, Daniel Burnham, Willis Polk returned to San Francisco and became a leader in the City Beautiful movement. He worked for about ten years as the West Coast representative of Burnham's firm, during which time he oversaw the design and construction of such landmarks as the thirteen-story Merchants Exchange Building (1903), which was the tallest building in San Francisco at the time of its construction and served as the center of commerce on the Pacific Coast for years. Polk, working for Burnham, also designed the First National Bank (1908), a neo-classical commercial building at the corner of Post and Montgomery Street that was the first building in the world to encapsulate steel columns with hollow granite shafts.¹⁶ The City of San Francisco also commissioned Daniel Burnham to devise a city plan, now famous for its series of Parisian-style roundabouts and radial streets as well as the extension of Golden Gate Park's panhandle to Van Ness Avenue. Polk served as Burnham's local advocate of the plan. He also oversaw the reconstruction of and later alterations to the Mills Building, one of Burnham's most significant buildings in San Francisco. More generally, the

¹⁴ Ibid., 189-220107-141; Richard Longstreth, ed., *A Matter of Taste: Willis Polk's Writings on Architecture in the Wave* (San Francisco, 1979); "Passing of Willis Polk, Architect and Master Builder," *Architect and Engineer* (September 1924), 108-109; Arthur Brown, Jr., "Willis Polk," in *ibid.*, 109.

¹⁵ Richard Longstreth, *On the Edge of the World: Four Architects in San Francisco at the Turn of the Century* (Berkeley, 1983), 289-299.

¹⁶ "Huge Granite Shafts are Fitted Over Steel," *San Francisco Call*, January 27, 1908, p. 4.

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earthquake and fires of 1906 opened the landscape to academic eclecticism of the American Beaux-Arts style that Burnham had popularized, and Polk found a high-profile niche as the head of a new San Francisco Burnham office. By 1900 Willis Polk had established himself as a society man and society architect; by 1910 he was San Francisco's most important and influential voice in local architecture and urban planning.¹⁷

Willis Polk's reputation as a master architect and irascible public figure grew over the next decade. He played the protagonist in two highly publicized conflicts with Mayor James Rolph, one over plans for an opera house in 1913 and one over building codes in 1914, and chaired the architectural planning committee for the Panama Pacific International Exposition of 1915. Following the exposition, Polk led a movement to save Bernard Maybeck's masterpiece, the Palace of Fine Arts.¹⁸

Meanwhile, Polk and his architectural firm continued to design several important buildings during the 1910s. Commercial structures included the Hobart Building, which at twenty stories was the tallest building to date in San Francisco. The footprint of the building site dictated the structure's asymmetric form, while the curved sides of the tower and Baroque detailing still lend it a distinctive presence along San Francisco's Market Street. Another of Polk's commercial masterpieces dates to this period as well: in 1916 the University of California Regents hired Polk to design the Hallidie building, named after UC Regent and inventor of the cable car, Andrew Hallidie. This building's glass curtain façade anticipated by decades the primary method of construction for high-rise buildings and skyscrapers in the United States and elsewhere. According to Randolph Delahanty, it stands as "the single most important building in San Francisco."¹⁹

Though his productivity declined significantly after World War I, Polk remained a highly esteemed architect. At the time of his death, Polk was part of the team designing San Francisco's War Memorial Opera House and Veterans Building. Fellow architect Bernard Maybeck memorialized Polk, writing, "We who loved the man for his very high and noble ideals, feel there can be no tribute to his genius in words that could do him justice."²⁰

¹⁷ Richard Longstreth, "The Bay Region Styles: 1890-1930," November 1973, pp. 2-3, in Willis Polk biographical file, San Francisco Architectural Heritage; "Willis Polk," in *San Francisco: Its Builders Past and Present*, Vol. 2 (San Francisco, 1913), 275-276.

¹⁸ Lawrence Estavan, ed., *The History of the Opera in San Francisco*, Part II, Vol. 8 (San Francisco, 1939), 75; "Polk Buries Hatchet," *Oakland Tribune*, May 28, 1914, p. 23; Willis Polk Scrapbooks, California Historical Society, San Francisco; David Parry, "Polk, Willis Jefferson," *Encyclopedia of San Francisco*, <http://www.sfhistoryencyclopedia.com/articles/p/polkWillis.html>, accessed October 29, 2007.

¹⁹ Randolph Delehanty, *San Francisco: The Ultimate Guide* (San Francisco, 1989), 74).

²⁰ Bernard Maybeck, "Willis Polk, 1865-1924: A Letter Appreciative of Willis Polk, his life and work, from Bernard R. Maybeck," *The American Architect and the Architectural Review*, November 5, 1924, p. 126.

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Percy & Polk

George Washington Percy and Willis Jefferson Polk united briefly to form the architectural firm Percy & Polk in 1900. According to architectural historian Richard Longstreth, Percy managed the firm and attended to technical matters, while Polk took charge of design and managed employees. The partnership came at a particularly pivotal time in Polk's career. It finally relieved him from debt and gave him access to the type of high profile and large-scale commercial and industrial buildings that he had long desired.²¹ Percy & Polk secured and at least commenced approximately seventeen commissions together. Of these, nine have been demolished, destroyed by fire, or extensively altered. Three others were never built. Only five remain standing, and One Lombard is the only industrial building that this partnership produced.²²

Because few of Percy & Polk's buildings remain and archival documentation of them is scant, it is difficult to assess the aesthetic qualities of their work. Limited evidence suggests that the pair was more likely to draw upon Classical architecture, rather than the medieval architecture from which Percy & Hamilton often found their inspiration. The now demolished Alexander Young Building in Honolulu (see section AD, page 9), for instance, divided into three parts: an austere, four-story central section featuring expansive storefront windows at the ground floor and almost no decoration above. Two six-story wings flanked the building. They featured arcaded ground floors, a pair of three-story tall Corinthian pilasters flanked at the base by windows with rounded or angled pediments, and rusticated stone work. Percy & Polk also employed the most modern technology in their designs, exemplified by the Alvinza Hayward Building (now the Kohl Building - see Section AD, page 10), located at the corner of California and Montgomery Streets in San Francisco. Celebrated as a model for the "correct" use of Baroque and Romanesque ornamentation when it was built, the Hayward Building gained fame as a "fireproof" steel frame skyscraper when the fires following the earthquake of 1906 damaged only the first four floors of the building.²³

One Lombard

As noted, the City Warehouse Company commissioned Percy & Polk to design a three-story plus partial attic warehouse at the southwest corner of Battery and Lombard in the fall of 1900. The resulting building at One Lombard was the only warehouse that Percy and Polk designed together. Percy died just two months after receiving the commission, making this building one of his last, if not the last project of his career, and suggesting that he played a limited role in

²¹ Richard Longstreth, *On the Edge of the World: Four Architects in San Francisco at the Turn of the Century* (Berkeley, 1981): 298-299.

²² *Ibid.*, 432-433.

²³ "A Magnificent New Building for the Capitol of Hawaii," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 30, 1900, p. 9; photograph of the Alexander Young Building, Henry Meyers Papers, Environmental Design Archives, University of California, Berkeley; Michael R. Corbett, *Splendid Survivors: San Francisco's Downtown Architectural Heritage* (San Francisco, 1979), 207-208.

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the project. It also appears to be the first warehouse that Polk designed. The building particularly illustrates Polk's engagement with contemporary debates about beauty, architecture, and industrial design. It set precedents for Polk's future industrial work, particularly his most celebrated industrial building, the Jessie Street Power Station.

Industrial architecture captured the attention of architects during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Engineers dominated industrial architectural design during the nineteenth century. They cared less about style than about experimenting with materials, building techniques, and forms that best suited the function of a building. Architectural details like a tower with a mansard roof, an elaborate cupola, or Grecian temple-like entrance often adorned engineer-designed buildings as afterthoughts; for the most part, however, engineers eschewed ornamental details. In contrast, architects, increasingly trained in Classical architecture, art and architectural history, defined themselves as artists and considered the pursuit of beauty as paramount in architectural design. They frowned upon engineers as amateurs and their austere factories as eyesores. As the nineteenth century drew to a close, architects in San Francisco and across the nation cringed at what they perceived as a cacophony of cheap, overly decorated, and/or poorly designed buildings covering the landscape. In their quest for solutions to this nightmare, architects looked, in part, to industrial architecture both as an inspiration for restraint in modern design and as a type of architecture that could be infused with beauty.²⁴

One Lombard exemplifies Willis Polk's inclination towards modern trends in industrial architecture. In some ways, the design is functional. Brick, because of its fireproof nature, was the favored construction material for warehouses at the time. The wide openings at the ground level were practical for loading and unloading, while the arch form transferred the weight of the wall to the spaces between the windows, eliminating the need for flammable wooden headers or corrosive steel, and thereby saving money in construction and potential damages.²⁵ Polk was also able to maximize window space, providing natural light and fresh air into the industrial space. For the mostly open interior, timber framing was cheap and, therefore, practical. Polk did not design a purely functional building, however. He corbelled the arches, which relieved the walls of their relentless rectilinear quality and added structural strength to the openings to allow for deeper set windows. Polk also included pilasters, an intricately embellished cornice, a higher base, and a higher window-to-void ratio. The partial attic undoubtedly served a purpose, but it also breaks down the box form and makes One Lombard stand out among all the brick warehouses along the northeast waterfront. All of these details showcase Polk's artistic strength and attention to proportion. He approached this industrial warehouse as he would any other building: as a work of art.

²⁴ Bradley, *The Works*, esp. 201-223; Mary N. Woods, *From Craft to Profession: The Practice of Architecture in Nineteenth-Century America* (Berkeley, 1999); Longstreth, *On the Edge of the World*, 9-106.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 233-234.

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In addition to illustrating contemporary trends in industrial architecture, One Lombard conveys Willis Polk's particular approach to architectural design. The warehouse bears some resemblance to an administration building that Percy & Hamilton designed for the United Iron Works in 1896, underscoring some measure of Percy's influence (now Building 104 at Pier 70 - see Section AD, page 11). Like One Lombard, the administration building is a red brick Renaissance Revival style building with a series of rounded arch windows dominating the exposed elevations and accentuating the building's height. The building includes a rusticated base, keystones, quoins, and a wide eave overhang with an embellished sheet metal cornice that creates increasingly visual contrast from the red brick as it ages. The entrance, with its coffered ceiling, marble walls, and Ionic pilasters, signals the prestigious status of the occupants at this otherwise industrial site for working-class laborers. In designing One Lombard, however, Polk abandoned several decorative elements, including the rusticated base, quoins, copper sheet metal cornice, and keystones. As with the rusticated urban houses of the 1890s, Polk thus exercised decorative restraint and thereby achieved a much lighter and more modern building. Apart from three terra cotta courses that blend into the brickwork, all of the decorative elements of One Lombard are composed entirely of brick. Again, this streamlines the design in a modern fashion, but it also achieves a level of honesty or transparency in design that Polk and his generation of Bay Area architects espoused. The cornice best illustrates this principle. While it would be difficult to achieve, underscoring the craftsmanship that went into building the cornice, one can see how the bricks are piled on top of one another - a row of bricks set at a forty-five degree angle topped by a string of bricks laid horizontally, topped by two rows of bricks set perpendicular to the string and spaced evenly apart to create a dentil course effect, followed by another string laid horizontally, etc. At the time, a writer for the *San Francisco Chronicle* referred specifically to this brick cornice work as a "novelty."²⁶

One Lombard established principles of industrial design that Willis Polk applied to future projects. For example, in 1904 he received a commission to design a five-story-plus-basement warehouse that fronted Davis Street between Pacific and Clark. Like One Lombard, this warehouse was composed of solid brick piers over a heavy foundation, and Polk made extensive use of glass. Unfortunately, the building has been demolished and historic photos are not available, but one newspaper account described the building as "handsome" and "equal in every respect to the high class modern business structures now being built in the East."²⁷ This choice of words suggests that Polk designed an elegant warehouse, likely Classical or Renaissance in style, much like One Lombard. Polk has become more well known for the power substations he designed for the Pacific Gas & Electric Company, particularly the Jessie Street Station, or Power Station C. Percy & Hamilton had designed the original building in

²⁶ "City Warehouse Company Building," *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 4, 1901, p.

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²⁷ "Construction of City Home Insures Advance," *San Francisco Call*, March 27, 1904, p. 26.

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1888 (the second of two buildings that made up the substation). It was a Renaissance Revival brick building with a heavily arcaded facade and a towering smokestack (see Section AD, page 12). Polk first remodeled the building in 1905, after fire caused damage, then again in 1907, after the earthquake caused the smokestack to topple and crash into the building. He expanded it in 1909. Like One Lombard to the administration building at Union Iron Works, Polk drastically simplified and refined the original Percy & Hamilton design for this utilitarian building (see Section AD, page 13). Changes in technology in the production of electricity allowed Polk to remove the smokestack entirely. Other changes speak more to Polk's aesthetic, as established with One Lombard. He retained just one archway, instead of the nine that Percy & Hamilton included in the main part of the building and the more than twenty arches above the dentil or modillion course. Just as the windows and pilasters of One Lombard emphasize and even exaggerate the verticality of the warehouse, the simply embellished cornice, subtly rusticated base, and expansive use of uninterrupted brickwork emphasize the horizontality of the power station. Like One Lombard, Polk treated the power station as a work of art and achieve aesthetic beauty through minimal use of decoration. Fittingly, it now houses the Contemporary Jewish Museum of San Francisco.

CONCLUSION

One Lombard Street is one of five known extant buildings designed by Willis Polk during his brief partnership with George Percy in 1900. This union gave Polk access to large-scale public and commercial commissions that allowed him to play a leading role in the transformation San Francisco's landscape over the next two decades. One Lombard is also the first warehouse that Polk designed during his career. It showcases his modern approach to architecture, including his advocacy of decorative restraint and transparency in design, and the building embodies principles of industrial designed that Polk later employed in warehouses and power houses. Finally, One Lombard stands as an excellent example of a new type of industrial architecture in the early twentieth century, one that balanced function and beauty. For these reasons, One Lombard Street is eligible for the National Register under Criterion C.

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

One Lombard Street stands at the southwest corner of Battery and Lombard Streets. The square lot measures 137'5" on all sides, for a total area of 18,905 square feet.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

These boundaries have been determined for the nominated property because they correspond to the Assessor's parcel on which One Lombard Street stands. This parcel is known as Lot 001 in Assessor's Block 0081.