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*NRHP Status Code 5S3

*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) _____
Bluxome and Townsend Warehouse Historic District

D1. Historic Name _____ D2. Common Name: _____

***D3. Detailed Description** (Discuss overall coherence of the district, its setting, visual characteristics, and minor features. List all elements of district.):

The Bluxome and Townsend Warehouse Historic District (Historic District) is located in the southeastern part of the South of Market (SoMa) Area Plan Historic Resource Survey area in San Francisco's South of Market neighborhood. The Historic District includes nine buildings on eight parcels, and generally conforms to the block bounded by 5th Street to the east, Townsend Street to the south, 6th Street to the west, and Bluxome Street to the north. It is situated just north of the Caltrain tracks, which run parallel to Townsend Street from 6th Street to the station at 4th Street. (See Continuation Sheet, p. 2)

***D4. Boundary Description** (Describe limits of district and attach map showing boundary and district elements.):

The boundaries for the Bluxome and Townsend Warehouse Historic District commence at the south corner of 5th and Bluxome streets. The boundary runs southeast along 5th Street for half a block, turning southwest at the east corner of parcel 3785-002. It follows the lot line to the south corner of the parcel, and then turns southeast along the northeast lot line of parcel 3785-002A to the east corner of the parcel on Townsend Street. Next, the boundary runs southwest along Townsend Street to the corner of Townsend and 6th streets. At the corner, the boundary turns northwest and runs half a block to the northwest corner of parcel 3785-005. It then runs northeast along the rear lot line to the northeast corner of the parcel. It turns northwest and runs along the southwest lot line of parcel 3785-024 to the northwest corner of the parcel on Bluxome Street. From there, the boundary turns northeast along Bluxome Street to the point of beginning at Bluxome and 5th streets. (See Continuation Sheet, p. 5)

***D5. Boundary Justification:**

The boundaries for the Bluxome and Townsend Warehouse Historic District are defined by the densest area of significant and intact large-scale warehouse buildings located outside the locally-listed industrial district, the South End Historic District. They represent the height of industrial development in the South of Market area (roughly 1906 through ca. 1936¹), especially the third building boom in the early- to mid-1920s. The issue of age determined the placement of boundary lines. For example, parcel 3785-003 at the southeast corner of the block, and parcel 3785-131 at the northwest corner of the block, were constructed in 1983 and 1998, respectively. Therefore, they were excluded from the Historic District.

D6. **Significance: Theme** Industrial Development **Area** South of Market, San Francisco, CA
Period of Significance 1912 - 1936 **Applicable Criteria** A, C (NR Criteria adopted by local jurisdiction)

(Discuss district's importance in terms of its historical context as defined by theme, period of significance, and geographic scope. Also address the integrity of the district as a whole.)

The Bluxome and Townsend Warehouse Historic District developed between the years 1912 and 1936, and consists of a group of resources that are cohesive in regard to scale, building typology, materials, architectural style, and relationship to the street. Contributors to the Bluxome and Townsend Warehouse Historic District are all industrial warehouse buildings that were constructed in brick masonry or reinforced concrete. Within the established period of significance, the most pronounced periods of construction occurred from 1915 to 1916 and 1920 to 1924. The Historic District contains nine contributing buildings and one non-contributing lot which is used as a driveway between two buildings. (See Continuation Sheet, p.6)

***D7. References** (Give full citations including the names and addresses of any informants, where possible.):
(See Continuation Sheet, p. 9)

***D8. Evaluator:** Christina Dikas **Date:** June 2009

Affiliation and Address Page & Turnbull, Inc., 724 Pine Street, San Francisco CA 94108

¹ Page & Turnbull, Inc. Western SoMa Light Industrial and Residential District DPR 523 D-form (11 June 2008).
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Streets within the Historic District are paved, lined by sidewalks, and conform to the city grid of larger (100 vara²) blocks that are found south of Market Street. The grid is oriented diagonally in relation to the cardinal directions. The primary northwest-southeast streets are numbered, while the secondary northwest-southeast streets and the northeast-southwest streets are named. The terrain of the area is level, and vegetation consists of small street trees along 5th and 6th streets.

The district is entirely industrial in character, consisting of nine buildings constructed within a period of significance spanning from 1912 to 1936. One narrow parcel, 3785-004B, contains a driveway (formerly a railroad spur track) between two buildings. The buildings feature brick or concrete construction, most with minimal Classical Revival ornament, are one to five stories in height, and are 10,000 to 37,000 square feet in size. All nine buildings were constructed as warehouses. 650 5th Street was also originally used as a factory. Seven buildings continue to be used as warehouses; 650 5th Street is now used as offices, and 472 Townsend Street is now occupied by Academy of Art University.

According to Page & Turnbull's *Historic Context Statement, South of Market Area* (2007), warehouses are storage buildings that involve the storage, processing, and distribution of goods, as well as occasional light manufacturing. Warehouses in the South of Market area were built of brick masonry or concrete, which, in addition to being relatively fireproof, allowed for large, open interior spaces for storing goods. In addition to open interiors, warehouses typically feature large steel-sash industrial windows and roll-up metal garage doors located on the primary or secondary façades.

The warehouses in the Bluxome and Townsend Warehouse Historic District are rectangular in plan, and nearly all of them fill their entire parcels with their primary facades facing the street. Edwardian-era (ca. 1901 – 1910)³ warehouses in San Francisco can usually be categorized as belonging to the Commercial Style of American architecture. Buildings designed in this utilitarian style can usually be identified by their load-bearing masonry walls with minimal corbelled detailing, flat roofs and flat or stepped parapets, regular fenestration with jack-arch window and door openings, and slow-burning heavy timber framing. The use of load-bearing masonry construction techniques (usually brick) meant that openings were usually deeply set and quite small. Due to the use of load-bearing masonry, these early warehouses were rarely constructed higher than three stories. With the exception of the structural system and a handful of partitions, warehouse interiors were usually unobstructed in order to allow for maximum storage capabilities.⁴ Examples of brick masonry warehouses in the Historic District include:

- 410 Townsend Street (1912), rear façade facing Bluxome Street is faced in brick, while the front and side façades are clad in gunnite reinforcement.
- 149 Bluxome Street (1916)
- 157 Bluxome Street (1916)

Seven of the warehouse buildings in the Bluxome and Townsend Warehouse Historic District were constructed during the mid-1910s and early 1920s, which defined the second and third building booms in the South of Market area. Ornamentation on many of the early twentieth-century warehouse buildings in the South of Market area is minimal and most often rendered in the Classical Revival, Spanish Colonial Revival, or Art Deco styles. Examples of warehouses with revival style influences in the Historic District include:

² A *vara* is an old Spanish and Portuguese unit of length. *Varas* are a surveying unit that appears in many deeds in the southern United States and many parts of Latin America. It varied in size at various times and places, but the value of 33 inches (838.2 mm) per *vara* was adopted in California ca. 1851. “98 U.S. 428 25 L.Ed.251 United States V. Perot.” Website accessed on 9 June, 2008 from:

<http://bulk.resource.org/courts.gov/c/US/98/98.US.428.html>

³ City and County of San Francisco Planning Department. *San Francisco Preservation Bulletin No. 18: Residential and Commercial Architectural Periods and Styles in San Francisco*. Website accessed on 26 August 2008 from:

<http://www.sfgov.org/site/uploadedfiles/planning/preservation/PresBulletin18ARCHSTYLES.pdf>

⁴ Page & Turnbull, Inc. *Historic Context Statement, South of Market Area*. San Francisco, 2007: 68.

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- 460 Townsend Street (1915), Classical Revival influences including a cornice.
- 472 Townsend Street (1920), Classical Revival influences including simple pilasters, cornice, and tower.
- 444 Townsend Street (1923), Classical Revival influences including medallions and a simple cornice.
- 450 Townsend Street (1923), Classical Revival influences including Tuscan pilasters, medallions, and a cornice.
- 650 5th Street (1924), Renaissance Revival influences including a window with scrolling and a triangular pediment, and a corner tower with corbelling and a clay tile roof.

Regarding interior layout, anything that consumed valuable space, such as columns or partition walls, limited the potential profitability of the building. Warehouses typically consisted of two major spaces: the warehouse floor and an office mezzanine. The warehouse floor could be any number of floors and it occupied the bulk of the building's footprint. It contained the physical processing, packaging, storing, and movement of goods. Few partitions broke up the space so as to avoid taking up valuable storage space or blocking natural light sources. The other major space within a typical Commercial Style warehouse was the office mezzanine. Usually located at one end of the building, the office mezzanine was usually built at a convenient vantage point, thereby allowing management to observe activities on the work floor.

Although concrete and brick Commercial Style warehouses continued to be erected concurrently after the 1906 Earthquake and Fire, the use of reinforced-concrete surged as a result of its greater fire and earthquake resistant capabilities and larger spans. By the 1920s, concrete construction had overtaken brick for the construction of warehouses. The use of concrete, combined with the adoption of the mechanized elevator, allowed warehouse buildings in San Francisco to be built higher and take advantage of larger window openings. Concrete warehouses had thinner walls and fewer interior columns, freeing up more floor area. Larger floor areas made the use of mechanized machinery feasible as well as providing more room for storage. Multi-story concrete warehouses continued to be constructed in San Francisco until the 1950s when changes in the shipping industry, such as containerized shipping and trucking, reduced the need for inner city warehouses.⁵ Reinforced concrete warehouses in the Bluxome and Townsend Industrial Historic District include:

- 472 Townsend Street (1921)
- 424 Townsend Street (1936)

In addition, 410 Townsend Street (1912), which features a brick rear façade on Bluxome Street, was largely remodeled with concrete.

Of the nine buildings, eight were previously surveyed for their individual significance. The following properties were designated an NRHP Status Code of 6Y2 (determined ineligible for National Register by consensus, no potential National Register listing, not evaluated for local listing):

- 410 Townsend Street
- 424 Townsend Street
- 444 Townsend Street
- 450 Townsend Street
- 460 Townsend Street

One property was designated an NRHP Status Code of 2S2 (determined eligible for listing as a contributor by consensus determination):

- 472 Townsend Street

One property was designated an NRHP Status Code of 5S (eligible for local listing only) by Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board members in the Unreinforced Masonry Building (UMB) Survey of 1990. The equivalent designation today would be a CHRSC of

⁵ Page & Turnbull, Inc. *Historic Context Statement, South of Market Area*. San Francisco, 2007: 68.

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- 157 Bluxome Street

Lastly, one property was designated an NRHP Status Code of 5S3 by Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board members in the Unreinforced Masonry Building (UMB) Survey of 1990. At the time, the National Register code of 5S3 was used to identify properties that were not eligible for the California Register, National Register, or local listing but warranted special consideration in local planning (now converted to a CHRSC of 6L⁷):

- 149 Bluxome Street

The following list shows all resources within the Bluxome and Townsend Industrial Historic District:

APN	From St. #	To St. #	Street Name	Year Built	Previous NRHP Code	New CHRS Code
3785002	650	650	5TH	1924	N/A	3CS, 5D3
3785022	149	149	BLUXOME	1916	5S3	5D3
3785024	157	157	BLUXOME	1916	5S	5D3
3785002A	410	418	TOWNSEND	1912	6Y2	5D3
3785004	424	424	TOWNSEND	1936	6Y2	5B
3785004B				N/A	N/A	6Z
3785004A	444	444	TOWNSEND	1923	6Y2	5B
378504A_000 1	450	450	TOWNSEND	1923	6Y2	5D3
3785023	460	460	TOWNSEND	1915	6Y2	5D3
3785005	472	472	TOWNSEND	1921	2S2	5D3

D4. Boundary Description (Continued)

Bluxome and Townsend Warehouse Historic District boundary map:

⁶ California State Office of Historic Preservation Department of Parks & Recreation, *Technical Assistance Bulletin #8: User's Guide to the California Historical Resource Status Codes & Historic Resources Inventory Directory* (November 2004), accessed from <http://ohp.parks.ca.gov/pages/1069/files/tab8.pdf> on 18 August 2008.

⁷ Ibid.

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Primary# _____
 HRI # _____
 Trinomial _____

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The Bluxome and Townsend Warehouse Historic District is significant under National Register Criterion A (Events) as a representation of an important trend in development patterns in San Francisco, and Criterion C (Design/Construction) as a representation of a group of properties that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction.

In 2000, the San Francisco Landmarks Board adopted the National Register Criteria for evaluating properties. San Francisco has various levels of recognition: Landmarks, Landmark Districts, Structures of Merit, Conservation Districts, Residential Character Districts, and adopted surveys. Properties evaluated for local significance, such as the Bluxome and Townsend Warehouse Historic District, are considered eligible for at least one category of recognition.

The significance of the Bluxome and Townsend Warehouse Historic District is rooted in the cohesiveness of the type and period of construction, which in turn is indicative of important historical patterns that shaped the neighborhood, such as post-quake reconstruction, industrial development, labor, and working-class culture. Outside the South End Historic District, the industrial buildings on Bluxome and Townsend between 5th and 6th streets appear to be the most cohesive cluster of large, extant industrial buildings in the South of Market area. However, this block is unusual because several buildings were developed by only a small handful of property owners (six of ten parcels were owned by Moody Estate Co. after the 1906 Earthquake), which likely contributed to the continuity of type and style.

Historic Context*Pre-1906 Earthquake*

Prior to the 1906 Earthquake and Fire, the South of Market area was already industrial in character, though the streets were lined with significantly more residential buildings. Important for the South of Market area's industrial future were the large 100-*Vara* Survey blocks laid out by Jasper O'Farrell in 1847. The grid was extended west from 5th Street to 9th Street in 1850. The streets were flatter and wider (30 *varas* wide) than those found north of Market Street (where they were 25 *varas* wide), making the transportation of goods via wagon and eventually train and truck much easier.⁸ Before the disaster, the location of the Historic District was occupied by similar large warehouses. Most related to the animal product industry. According to the 1899 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, businesses on the block included McLennan's San Francisco Wool Sorting & Scouring Co. Warehouse, I. Harris & Co. Wool and Hide Warehouse, F.B. Grace Pork Packing, F.S. Moody- California Wool Depot Warehouse Nos. 1 and 2, Catton Bell & Co.'s Wool Warehouse and Scouring Rooms, Pacific Dried Vegetable Provision Co., Watson & Mark Wool Warehouse No. 2, Mt. Shasta Spring Co. Bottling Works, and the Byron Jackson Foundry & Machine Shop.

On April 18, 1906, San Francisco was devastated by the Great Earthquake and Fire. The South of Market Area was especially hard hit by both the temblor and the eleven fires that were started in the area due to broken gas mains. The fires quickly grew out of control as they ignited the densely packed wood-frame boarding houses, hotels, and rows of aging houses. The water mains were mostly broken and fire fighters were powerless to stop the flames from rapidly consuming virtually the entire neighborhood within six hours of the actual earthquake. The death toll in the South of Market Area was much higher than the rest of the city. The numbers were greatly undercounted because hotels and boarding houses collapsed on their inhabitants, who were never recovered. Additionally, many of these residents were lone immigrants or single male transients without local ties. A good number of these people on the margins of mainstream society were never reported as missing.⁹

Recovery

Unlike certain parts of the city, such as North Beach, which were reconstructed quite rapidly after the 1906 Earthquake, the South of Market area took two decades to fully recover. In 1907, a booster organization published a map showing which areas of the city had been rebuilt. The map, which highlighted all parcels with new construction, temporary buildings, or wrecked buildings scheduled to be repaired, indicated that most of the South of Market remained vacant. The process of recovery for the entire city was a lengthy

⁸ Page & Turnbull, Inc. *Historic Context Statement, South of Market Area*. San Francisco, 2007: 21.

⁹ Ibid: 43.

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process, necessitating not only the demolition of ruined buildings and removal of debris, but also the settlement of insurance claims, resolution of any outstanding title concerns, acquisition of building permits, and, most importantly, the will to commit financial resources to a city so clearly in potential danger of future obliteration. In many ways, the South of Market area was uniquely affected by the earthquake, and lingering uncertainty over its historical patterns of development delayed reconstruction longer than many other areas.

One factor in the slow pace of recovery in the South of Market was the controversial debate over extending the city's fire limits. The fire limits outlined the area in which safety requirements were mandated. The fire limits attempted to prevent the possibility of conflagration in the densest or most important parts of the City by determining the construction materials that could be used within the fire district. For most of San Francisco's history, wood frame buildings had been forbidden in the downtown business district. All downtown buildings had to be constructed of brick or stone. Buildings were ranked by their fire-resistant features. Before the disaster in 1906, Class A buildings were regarded as fireproof iron- or steel-frame construction, in which the frame structure bore the entire weight of the building. They contained metal lath and plaster partitions and nonflammable exterior cladding. Class B buildings had exterior walls that carried their own weight, but had an interior skeleton of iron, steel, or fireproof wood. They also had metal lath and plaster partitions and nonflammable exterior surfaces. Class C buildings were brick with fire-resistant roofs, but the interior had wood or iron frames without fire-resistant wall materials.¹⁰

Despite the fire codes and construction rankings for buildings within the fire district, the only part of the South of Market area traditionally included within the fire limit was a narrow strip along the south side of Market Street and a small section corresponding to the southward extension of the financial and retail district along 2nd, New Montgomery, 3rd, 4th, and 5th streets, extending as far south as Howard Street. Otherwise, property owners in the South of Market had been free to build as they saw fit, resulting in the mixture of masonry and wood-frame buildings that acted as fuel for the fires that immediately followed the earthquake.¹¹

After the disaster, city officials convened to determine the lines of a new fire district. Acting Fire Chief Shaughnessy wanted the City to extend the fire limits to the west and especially into the South of Market area, which was a high risk area due to its industrial functions so close to downtown San Francisco.¹² Industrialists did not favor the continued proximity of frame dwellings to their industrial plants. Some decided that it would not be prudent to rebuild in the South of Market, relocating their businesses either to the unburned Potrero or Bayview districts or moving outside the city altogether. Other businesses hoped to discourage the reconstruction of frame dwellings in the South of Market as a means to secure its future as an exclusively industrial district. Residents opposed the extension of the fire limits because they were working class people who were already struggling financially and could not afford expensive fireproof construction, yet they felt strongly attached to their neighborhood with its churches and ethnic institutions. In the summer of 1906, the Board of Supervisors heard testimony in support of and opposed to the extension of the fire limits to the South of Market area, which would have effectively prevented wood frame dwellings from being rebuilt within the area bounded by Mission Street, the San Francisco Bay, Mission Creek, and Division and 13th streets. The Board of Supervisors eventually voted in favor of faster recovery over recovery slowed by safety requirements. It relinquished the idea of extending the downtown fire limits into the South of Market, settling instead for a blanket prohibition on flammable roofing materials. Roofs could theretofore only be clad in materials including asphalt, tile, slate, asbestos, terra-cotta, or metal.¹³

According to the 1913 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, the fire limit in the South of Market area extended along Howard Street between 5th to 6th streets, five large blocks north of Bluxome Street.¹⁴ Aside from possibly adding to the delay in rebuilding, the ruling did not much affect the Bluxome and Townsend area, however. The Historic District primarily contained masonry industrial buildings before the 1906 Earthquake, and was rebuilt in a similar fashion in the following years.

Construction

¹⁰ Stephen Tobriner, *Bracing for Disaster: Earthquake-Resistant Architecture and Engineering in San Francisco, 1838-1933*: 140.

¹¹ Page & Turnbull, Inc. *Historic Context Statement, South of Market Area*. San Francisco, 2 June 2008: 44.

¹² Stephen Tobriner, *Bracing for Disaster: Earthquake-Resistant Architecture and Engineering in San Francisco, 1838-1933*: 200.

¹³ Stephen Tobriner, *Bracing for Disaster: Earthquake-Resistant Architecture and Engineering in San Francisco, 1838-1933*: 203.

¹⁴ *Ibid*: 44.

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All of the buildings on the block bounded by Bluxome, 5th, Townsend, and 6th streets were destroyed in the 1906 Earthquake and Fire. However, over the next three decades, the block was rebuilt with a continued focus on warehousing. It is likely that land owners and developers were encouraged by the close proximity of the site to the Southern Pacific Railroad on the south side of Townsend Street. To facilitate the expansion of rail service in the area after the earthquake, the Board of Supervisors liberally granted franchises to the railroads. The extensive network of tracks served as a powerful inducement to local industries to relocate to this area, which was not only close to the South End warehouse district and piers to the east, but also the newly developing wholesale district at Showplace Square to the southwest. The proximity to the rail lines ensured that manufacturers and distributors could efficiently transport raw materials and finished products between the plant and the waterfront or the railroad freight terminal.¹⁵ An article in the January 12, 1916 edition of the *San Francisco Chronicle* discussed the value of rail access during the reconstruction period and the concurrent explosion of industrial development in the area:

Extension of the spur-track privileges has been continuous and yet there is a strong demand for greater liberality on the part of the municipal authorities in regard to tapping various regions with tracks for spurs to warehouses and factories. Practically all the extensive concerns that moved during the year have placed their plants or business places on spur tracks, and thereby the Potrero and territory lying near the railway lines have materially improved.¹⁶

One Southern Pacific Railroad spur led to the F.S. Moody California Wool Depot at 416 - 432 Townsend Street before the disaster. Following the 1906 Earthquake and expansion of rail service, Southern Pacific Railroad spurs ran along both Townsend and Bluxome streets to service the new warehouses.

An initial flurry of construction commenced in the South of Market area immediately after the earthquake, and lasted from 1906 to about 1913. Yet, seven years after the quake, in 1913, the block was only partially developed. Moody Estate Co. had owned a large warehouse (the F.S. Moody- California Wool Co. Depot) near the center of the block prior to the 1906 Earthquake, and it retained ownership of the property. However, the company did not begin to develop the land until 1915. The company owned parcels 3785-004, 004A, 004B, 022, 023, and 024. Western Meat Co. Hide & Pelt Warehouse was constructed on parcel 3785-003, at the corner of 5th and Townsend streets, in 1913 (not included in the Historic District because the site was redeveloped in 1983). At the southwestern end of the block, Holbrook, Merrill & Stetson Wholesale Hardware & Plumbers Supplies constructed four adjacent warehouse buildings on what are now parcels 3785-005 and 3785-131. The southern two buildings were torn down and replaced with 472 Townsend Street in 1921, while the northern two buildings were replaced by condominiums in 1998.

After the 1906 Earthquake, the block was no longer unified by one overriding industry, as it was with wool processing before the disaster. The nine contributing resources are significant for their typological similarities, rather than through a functional relationship. None of the pre-1906 industries rebuilt for the same uses. For instance, though Moody Estate Co. constructed several of the buildings, they were leased to other companies in diverse fields of industry, including plumbing, shipping, garden supply, hardware, furniture, and tire manufacturing. However, they were constructed within a time period defined by the highest concentration of post-quake construction in the South of Market area.

The first boom of post-quake construction was followed by a brief recession, which coincided with the First World War. Most of the South of Market area engaged in relatively little construction from about 1914 to 1919. However, beginning in 1915, development expanded to the construction of warehouses and large industrial complexes and away from the construction of smaller light industrial buildings like those built immediately after the 1906 Earthquake and Fire.¹⁷ The block that makes up the Bluxome and Townsend Warehouse Historic District experienced its first influx of development during this time. Three buildings were constructed by Moody Estate Co. in 1915 and 1916. Brick masonry was the predominant construction method at this time.

By the end of the First World War, construction picked up again in the South of Market and other areas of San Francisco. The trend

¹⁵ Kelley & VerPlanck, *Showplace Square Survey: Historic Context Statement*, (20 October 2008) 37.

¹⁶ "San Francisco Realty in Sound Condition," *San Francisco Chronicle* (12 January 1916) 33.

¹⁷ Page & Turnbull, Western SoMa Light Industrial and Residential District 523D Form, Draft Version. San Francisco, 2008: 40.

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of this building boom, which lasted from about 1920 to 1926, was to transform lots that had remained vacant since the 1906 Earthquake into light industrial and warehouse facilities. By the 1920s, concrete had become the principal building material due to its strength and durability, resistance to earthquake damage, and ability to provide large and unobstructed workspaces within structures.¹⁸ In 1921, the first zoning ordinance in San Francisco designated this block as "heavy industrial." Four buildings were constructed between 1921 and 1924 in the Historic District. They feature both brick and concrete construction methods.

Following the 1929 Stock Market Crash, the nation entered into the Great Depression and most construction in the South of Market area came to a halt. Construction costs were down in the 1930s, and investors attempted to renew interest in industrial real estate developments. They encouraged construction by saying that the low maintenance costs and economical movement of goods characteristic of the modern industrial buildings would benefit the occupant and eventually result in reducing the number of obsolete buildings.¹⁹ Boosters highlighted the fact that South of Market District industries were in close proximity to three transcontinental railroads, two street car systems, and modern highways, which provided short delivery routes for goods. Though relatively few buildings were constructed during the 1930s, some of the most interesting in architectural style came out of this period. These include many Art Deco and Art Moderne buildings. 424 Townsend Street, which was constructed in 1936, features elements of this trend in design.

Though the Historic District's contributing resources warehoused the goods of diverse industries, the limited time period in which they were built lends cohesiveness to their architectural designs. In addition, the buildings are unified within the historical context of post-quake industrial development in the southern South of Market area that was served by Southern Pacific Railroad rail spurs.

Contributing Resources*410 Townsend Street (1912)*

Nathan, Dohrmann & Co. Wholesale Crockery & Household Goods constructed a warehouse on the through-lot at 410 Townsend Street (also 133 Bluxome Street) in 1912. This is the only building represented in the 1913 Sanborn Map that survives. The building was designed by San Francisco architect Frederick H. Meyer, and appears to have been serviced by a Southern Pacific Railroad rail spur at its rear façade on Bluxome Street. At the time of development, the property owner was Dr. Kaspar Pischel, an Eye Specialist who married into the Dohrmann family.²⁰ Nathan, Dohrmann & Co. sold china, glassware, lamps and art goods in downtown San Francisco. The business opened in 1850 by Mr. Blumenthal. After passing to H. Hersch in 1858, Bernard Nathan bought the company in 1862. Frederick Dohrmann joined the company in 1868.²¹ The men became partners and the name changed to Nathan, Dohrmann & Co. in 1887. The Dohrmann Commercial Company, with Mr. Dohrman as president, appears to be contemporaneous with Nathan, Dohrmann & Co.²² By 1950, Dohrmann Commercial Co. owned and occupied the building. 410 Townsend Street was vacant in 1963. According to the 1998 Sanborn Map, the building was later used as a bag warehouse; however, the 1982 San Francisco City Directory reveals that the building was divided into multiple warehouse spaces and offices that were occupied by several graphics design companies.

650 5th Street (1924)

Dohrmann Commercial Co. also owned and developed 650 5th Street in 1924. Designed by the architecture firm of Ashley and Evers and built by J.S. Sampson, the building may have been serviced by a Southern Pacific Railroad spur on Bluxome Street. The building was first occupied by M. Seller Co., a wholesale hardware company. In 1953, Sutliff Tobacco occupied the building, and in 1958, Western Machinery Co. leased the space. Arthur G. McKee & Co. (construction engineers), WemCo. (a machinery manufacturing

¹⁸ Anne Bloomfield, New Montgomery and Mission Historic District 523D Form. San Francisco, 2008: 7.

¹⁹ "San Francisco Growth Adding to Land Values" (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 7 June 1930): 6.

²⁰ The Foundation for San Francisco's Architectural Heritage, Field Survey Form-Buildings (1983)

²¹ "The Bay of San Francisco," Vol. 2 (Lewis Publishing Co, 1892: 650-651). Accessed from <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nrmelton/sfbdohrm.htm> on 20 August 2008.

²² Biography, Frederick W. Dohrmann. Accessed from the Online Archive of California at <http://content.cdlib.org/view?docId=tf100001g2&chunk.id=bioghist-1.3.4&brand=oac> on 20 August 2008.

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division of Arthur G. McKee & Co.), and Western Knapp Engineering Co. occupied 650 5th Street from ca. 1968 to ca. 1973. By 1978, the building was divided into offices, and nine companies were listed at the address.



410 Townsend Street



650 5th Street

149 Bluxome Street and 157 Bluxome Street (1916)

149 and 157 Bluxome Street were the first buildings constructed on the land owned by Moody Estate Co., which was affiliated with F.S. Moody- California Wool Depot at the same location prior to the 1906 Earthquake and Fire. Joseph L. Moody, who was related to Frederick S. Moody, came to California in 1849 to try his hand at mining, and then became a permit clerk at the San Francisco Customs House. He was later involved with coal mining in Washington State, wool warehousing in the South of Market, and “the improvement of lands he had acquired in San Francisco’s wholesale district.”²³ Frederick S. Moody managed Moody Estate Co. by 1923. Designed in 1914 and constructed of brick masonry in 1916, both 149 and 157 Bluxome Street are two stories in height and contain four structural bays with multi-light double-hung windows and garage openings. They appear to have been serviced by the Southern Pacific Railroad spurs that ran down Bluxome Street. They were designed for the Moody Estate Co. by J.R. Torrance of New York City, and were built by H.H. Larsen and Brothers, Contractors. No information was found on Torrance at the City of San Francisco, the San Francisco Public Library, or SF Architectural Heritage. Information was lacking on the early occupants of 149 Bluxome Street. From ca. 1958 to ca. 1973, Landau Merchandising Co. used the building as a warehouse. It was used by Paul Laboratories, electronics design, in 1978, and by Art X Corp., Plant Design, and Contract Art Services in 1982. 157 Bluxome Street was first occupied by the National Biscuit Co., which used the building as an office, stock and canning warehouse, and stable. Grabler Manufacturing Co., a plumbing supplies manufacturer, used the building from ca. 1940 to ca. 1958. Durkee Haas Co. occupied the warehouse in 1973, and Andrew Co., a shipping company, used the space ca. 1978 to ca. 1982.



149 Bluxome Street and 157 Bluxome Street

²³ San Francisco Architectural Heritage file on 157 Bluxome Street. California Historical Society “Letter of a Forty-Niner in Which Joseph Ledlie Moody Tells of His Arrival in Sacramento with the K Company” (reprinted 1941).

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460 Townsend Street (1915)

460 Townsend Street was constructed at approximately the same time behind 157 Bluxome Street on Moody Estate Co.'s property. Also built by H.H. Larsen & Co. and constructed of brick masonry with a heavy timber frame, the primary façade features four structural bays with a stuccoed exterior. A rail spur was located next to the building on the west side and on Townsend Street to the south. It was occupied by several companies over time, including Marketers Associated (household appliances), Schmiedell & Co. (insect powder), Central Garden Supply (wholesale garden supply), Pacific Electrical Supply Inc. (electrical equipment manufacturers), and Lighting Systems Inc.



460 Townsend Street

444 Townsend Street and 450 Townsend Street (1923)

444 Townsend Street (also 135 – 145 Bluxome Street) and 450 Townsend Street were constructed in 1923 on Moody Estate Co.'s property. Both were designed by Pierre Zucco & Co. and constructed by L.P. De Martini of concrete and clad in stucco. No information was found on either at the San Francisco Public Library, City of San Francisco, or SF Architectural Heritage. 444 Townsend Street was constructed on a through-lot. A rail spur off Bluxome Street separated the two buildings, and another spur ran by their primary facades on Townsend Street. From ca. 1928 to ca. 1933, the 444 Townsend Street was occupied by Boldemann Chocolate Co. and 135 Bluxome Street contained C.B. Babcock Co., gas appliances. Union Furniture Warehouse occupied 444 Townsend Street in 1953. By 1963, Carl's Litho-Plate Service, Sulasur Equipment Inc. (tire manufacturers), Halo Candles Inc. (importers), and Halo Sales Corp. (merchandise brokers) shared the building. In 1973, Aviva Enterprises, Inc., a jewelry manufacturer, occupied 444 Townsend Street while Red & White Van Lines, a furniture moving van company, occupied 135 Bluxome Street. By 1982, the building had been divided into numerous sections and at least eleven companies leased space in the building. Meanwhile, 450 Townsend Street was occupied by a branch of Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. of California from ca. 1923 to ca. 1933. General Tire & Rubber Co. occupied the building during the 1940s. Garehime Corp., a wholesale hardware company, used the building as a warehouse from ca. 1953 to ca. 1968. Packaging Materials Corp. was listed at the address in 1973 and Darcoid Rubber Co., Western Sponge Products, and A Small Business Accounting Service shared the space from ca. 1978 to ca. 1982.

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444 Townsend Street



450 Townsend Street

472 Townsend Street (1921)

472 Townsend Street (also addressed at 685 6th Street) was built in 1921 as a large warehouse at the corner of Townsend and 6th streets. A rail spur that ran very close to the buildings on Townsend Street also serviced several loading entrances at 472 Townsend Street. Information is limited for the early years of its existence, but United Grocers Ltd., a wholesale grocer, occupied the building from ca. 1945 to ca. 1958. It was vacant in 1963. In 1968, Ellery of California (house furnishing manufacturer), Jencraft Manufacturing Co. (house furnishings importers), and Western Curtain Manufacturing Co. Inc. shared the space. From ca. 1978 to ca. 1982, Gordon Chick and Bon Motif Company, Inc., a rug importer, occupied the building.

424 Townsend Street (1936)

The last building constructed on the block was 424 Townsend Street, which was built in 1936 by architect John H. Ahnden. The building contains loading entrances on both the Townsend and Bluxome Street facades, which were likely originally serviced by Southern Pacific Railroad spurs up and down both streets. Magic Chef Gas Stove & Co. and American Stove Co. occupied the building in 1940. Thomson Diggs Co. used it as a warehouse in 1953, and F.K. Pinney Inc. in 1963. Casa Moda Spanish & Mexican Imports occupied the building from ca. 1963 to ca. 1968. Zel R. Kahn & Sons, salvage adjusters, were listed at the address from ca. 1973 to ca. 1982.

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472 Townsend Street



424 Townsend Street

Architects

The Bluxome and Townsend Warehouse Historic District is associated with the following architects and builders, whose biographical information was obtained from San Francisco Architecture Heritage files, San Francisco Public Library newspaper sources, City of San Francisco records, and internet sources. Aside from 650 5th Street, the buildings do not appear to be significant at a local, state, or national level for their individual designs, and none represent the most distinctive work of as master designer.

Frederick H. Meyer

Frederick H. Meyer (1876 – 1961) designed 410 Townsend Street in 1912. Meyer partnered with architect Smith O'Brien from ca. 1902 to 1909. On his own, he designed many buildings from about 1907 into the 1920s, before teaming with Albin R. Johnson in the 1920s and Albert Evers ca. 1946 - 1961. Some notable Meyer works include the Humboldt Building at 783 – 785 Market Street (1906), the Banker's Investment Building at 722 – 742 Market Street (1912), the Union Trust Building at 744 Market Street, the Chinese Y.M.C.A. at 855 Sacramento Street, and the Beverly-Plaza Hotel at 334 – 352 Grant Street (1912), in addition to many other commercial and apartment buildings. In all, he designed more than fifteen large office and commercial buildings, ten industrial plants (including three breweries), eight hospitals, three schools, eight City of San Francisco projects (including fire houses, branch libraries, De Young art galleries in Golden Gate Park), and five major club and association buildings. He was also on the San Francisco Board of Consulting Architects in 1912, the force behind the creation of the Civic Center. Though 410 Townsend Street was designed by Meyer, it is not one of the many well-known of his projects.²⁴

H. H. Larsen & Co.

H. H. Larsen & Co. built several of the Moody Estate Co. buildings, including 149 and 157 Bluxome Street (both 1916), and 460 Townsend Street (1915). Hanz H. Larsen was a local San Francisco carpenter-turned-building contractor. In the 1920s, the company was called H.H. Larsen & Bro. Larsen built several residences in the Richmond District, including 211 2nd Avenue in 1896 and 101-105 8th Avenue in 1921. The warehouses on Bluxome and Townsend streets appear to be representative examples of H.H. Larsen & Co.'s projects of this type.²⁵

Ashley & Evers

650 5th Street (1924) was designed by the architecture firm Ashley & Evers. George F. Ashley (1886 – 1962) was born in California and received his degree in architecture at the UC Berkeley, in 1908. He traveled to Paris to study design from 1908 to 1909. Ashley

²⁴ San Francisco Architectural Heritage architect biography files.

²⁵ Ibid.

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died in Alameda County at the age of 75. Albert J. Evers (1888 – 1977) was born in Iowa and attended UC Berkeley. He was student president of the Architectural Association of the University of California in 1911. Later in his career, he held the position of chief architectural supervisor for the Northern California Federal Housing Administration, and was appointed to the board of the 1939 - 1940 Golden Gate International Exposition in San Francisco. Evers died in San Francisco at the age of 89. The firm of Ashley & Evers designed Mandarin Café Building (1926) and the Scovill Manufacturing Company Building at 434 Brannan Street (1929), both in the Art Deco style.²⁶ It appears that 650 5th Street is a representative example of the earlier work of Ashley & Evers.

John H. Ahnden

John H. Ahnden (? - 1945) designed the Art Deco-style warehouse at 424 Townsend Street (1936). Ahnden, a local San Francisco architect, worked with Henry Schulze in his early years. He also worked for many months on plans for the San Francisco City Hall while working with Bakewell & Brown.²⁷ In association with John H. Powers and Bernard Maybeck, Ahnden helped design the Packard Automobile Showrooms on Van Ness Avenue in San Francisco (1926) and Oakland (1928) in the Classical Revival style. He later designed the Presidio Theatre (1937), located in the Marina District, in the Art Moderne style. 424 Townsend Street appears to be a representative example of Ahnden's industrial and Art Deco design.

Integrity

All nine contributing buildings have experienced some modifications. 650 5th Street and 424 Townsend Street appear to only contain replacement doors. The other buildings also have had their windows replaced. However, all retain their original massing, fenestration patterns, and subtle detail and ornament. 650 5th Street is now used as offices and 472 Townsend Street is used as the Motion Pictures and Television building for Academy of Art University. However, according to the 1998 Sanborn Map, the other seven buildings continue to be used as warehouses. The loading entrances that were once serviced by railroad spurs are now used by trucks. Therefore, overall, the district retains integrity of location, design, workmanship, feeling, and association. The surrounding area has experienced redevelopment, including the construction of mixed-use and loft/condominium buildings. Sometime between 1996 and 2009, the railroad spurs were paved over. In addition, the elevated 6th Street off-ramp of the Interstate 280 Extension was constructed ca. 1968 just to the southwest of the Bluxome and Townsend Warehouse Historic District block, severing the buildings from their neighbors on the other side of 6th Street. These factors somewhat compromise the integrity of setting. Nevertheless, the enduring existence of surrounding industrial buildings and train tracks opposite Townsend Street, in addition to compatible infill of contemporary construction immediately adjacent to the Bluxome and Townsend Warehouse Historic District, provide for a continuing sense of the industrial nature of the setting. Though the replacement of doors and windows on the buildings has diminished integrity of materials, the district retains historic integrity.

Significance

The Bluxome and Townsend Warehouse Historic District appears to be associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history such that it would be eligible under National Register Criterion A (California Register Criterion 1). The block was developed as part of the industrial rebuilding effort in the South of Market area. Though the broader neighborhood includes commercial, residential, and light industrial properties, this group of buildings between Bluxome and Townsend represents what was once a solid block of industrial warehouses that were serviced by Southern Pacific rail spurs. Five of the buildings were developed by Moody Estate Co., which was involved with warehousing at the same location before and after the 1906 Earthquake and Fire. In addition, 410 Townsend Street and 650 5th Street were owned by Nathan, Dohrmann & Co., a Gold Rush-era business that occupied the warehouse at 410 Townsend Street for at least fifty years. The Bluxome and Townsend Warehouse Historic District simultaneously represents the thirty-year height of redevelopment following the 1906 Earthquake and the enduring existence of industrial warehousing near the train tracks in the South of Market neighborhood.

The Bluxome and Townsend Warehouse Historic District is associated with Frederick S. Moody, owner of the F.S. Moody-California Wool Co. before the 1906 Earthquake. He also operated Moody Estate Co., which owned a large swath of property at the center of

²⁶ "George F. Ashley" and "Albert J. Evers," Architectural DB, accessed from: <https://digital.lib.washington.edu/php/architect/> on 26 August 2008.

²⁷ "John H. Ahnden," *Architect and Engineer* (162:3, Sept. 1945): 44.

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this block at the time of the 1906 Earthquake, and built 149 Bluxome Street, 157 Bluxome Street, 444 Townsend Street, 450 Townsend Street, and 460 Townsend Street between 1916 and 1923. Based upon limited research, Moody does not appear significant enough to local, state, or national history to be eligible under National Register Criterion B (California Register Criterion 2). Further research may determine otherwise, though.

The Bluxome and Townsend Warehouse Historic District appears eligible for local designation under National Register Criterion C (California Register Criterion 3) because it is an intact example of a brick and reinforced concrete warehouse district that was constructed in the South of Market area following the 1906 Earthquake. According to Page & Turnbull's *Historic Context Statement, South of Market Area*:

Warehouses are storage buildings that involve the storage, processing, and distribution of goods, as well as occasional light manufacturing. Warehouses in the South of Market area were built of brick masonry or concrete, which, in addition to being relatively fireproof, allowed for large, open interior spaces for storing goods... Warehouses in San Francisco can usually be categorized as belonging to the Commercial Style of American architecture. Buildings designed in this utilitarian style can usually be identified by their load-bearing masonry walls with minimal corbelled detailing, flat roofs and flat or stepped parapets, regular fenestration with jack-arch window and door openings, and slow-burning heavy timber framing... By the 1920s, concrete construction had overtaken brick for the construction of warehouses. The use of concrete, combined with the adoption of the mechanized elevator, allowed warehouse buildings in San Francisco to be built higher and take advantage of larger window openings... Multi-story concrete warehouses continued to be constructed in San Francisco until the 1950s when changes in the shipping industry, such as containerized shipping and trucking, reduced the need for inner city warehouses.²⁸

Therefore, the buildings in the Historic District embody the distinctive characteristics of a type and period of construction.

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²⁸ Page & Turnbull, Inc. *Historic Context Statement, South of Market Area*. San Francisco, 2007: 68.

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650 5th Street, Western Machinery Building, 8 August 1956.
Source: San Francisco Public Library Historic Photograph Collection, AAC-7602.

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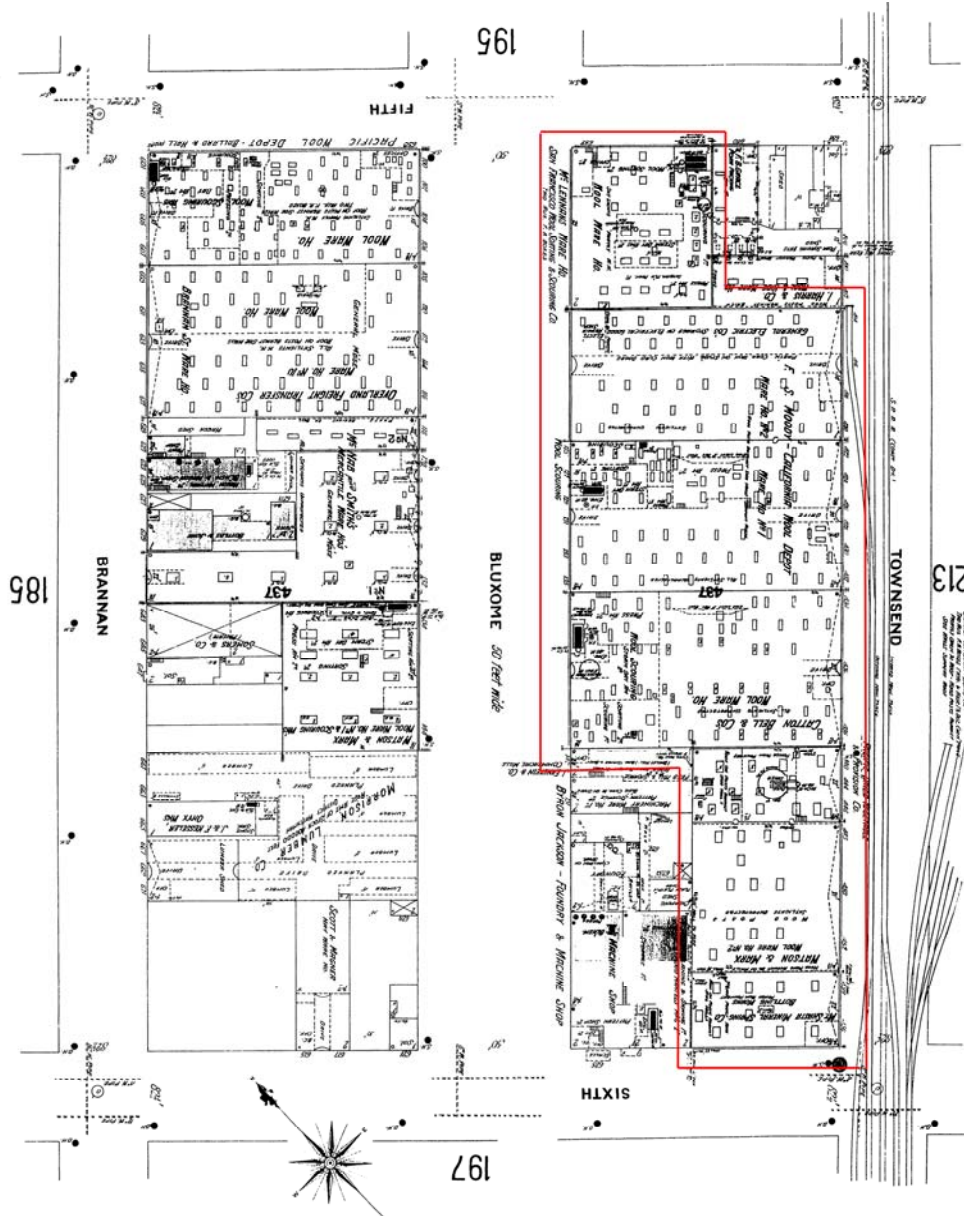
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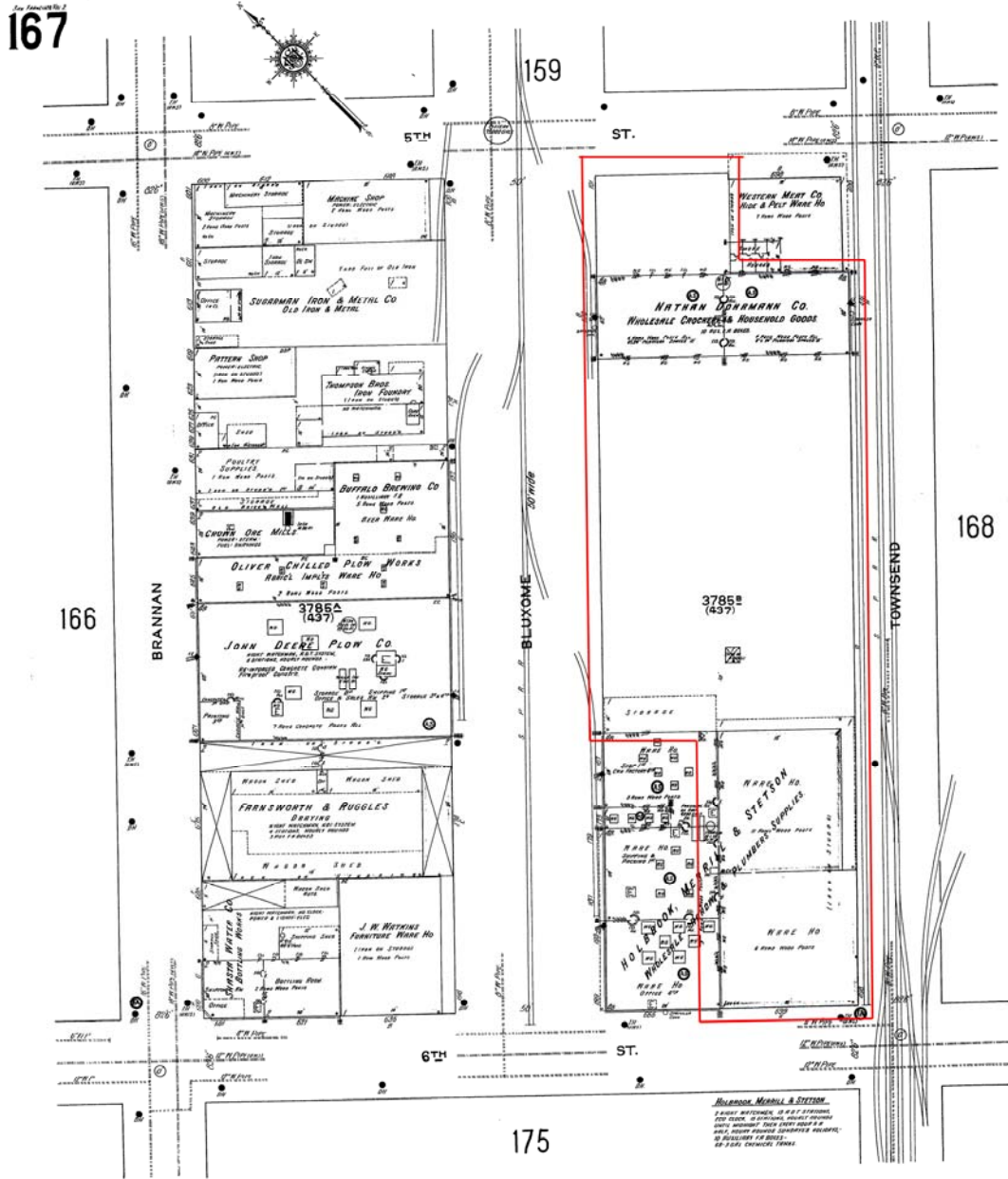
*Date June 2009

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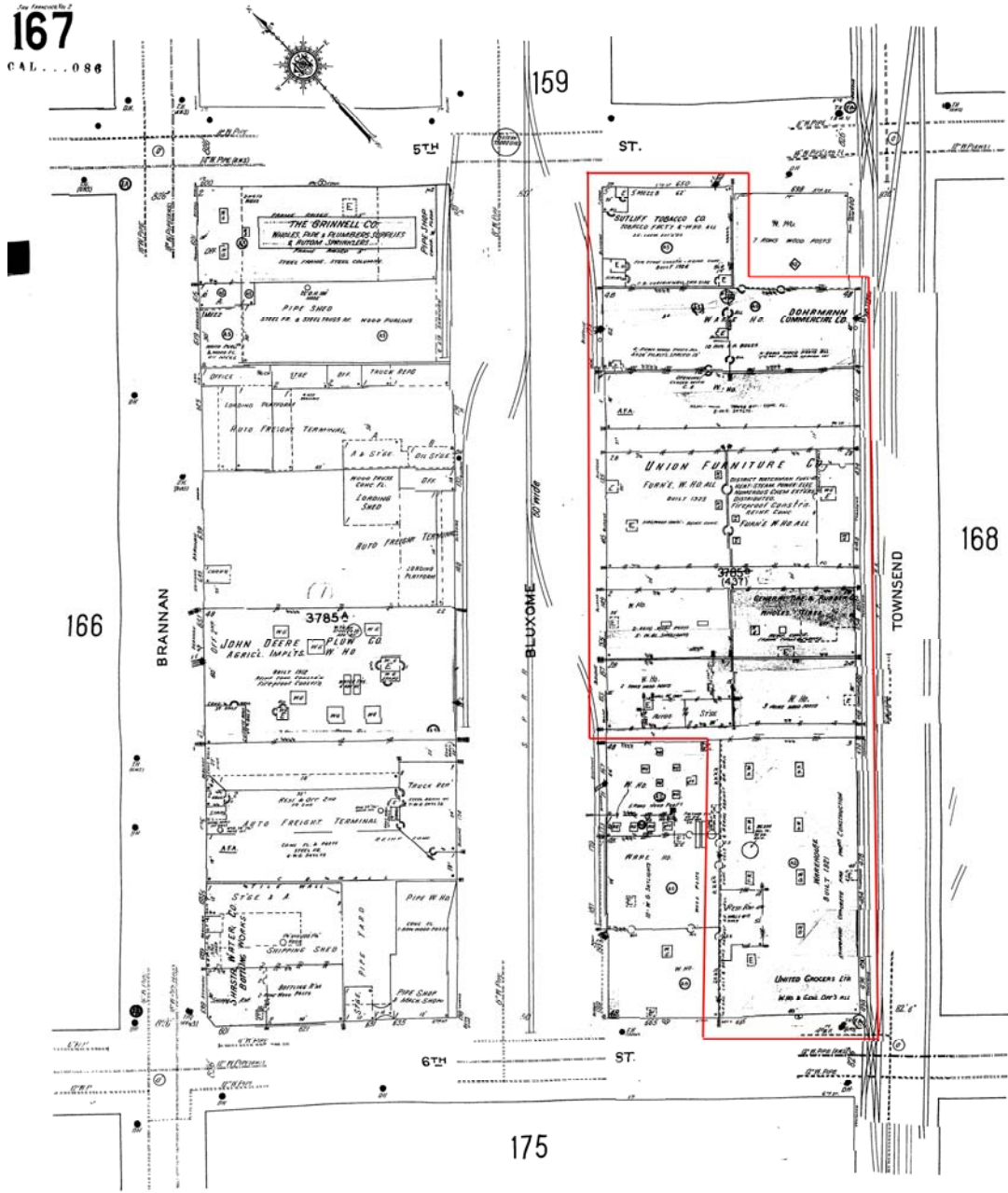
Update



1889 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.



1913 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.



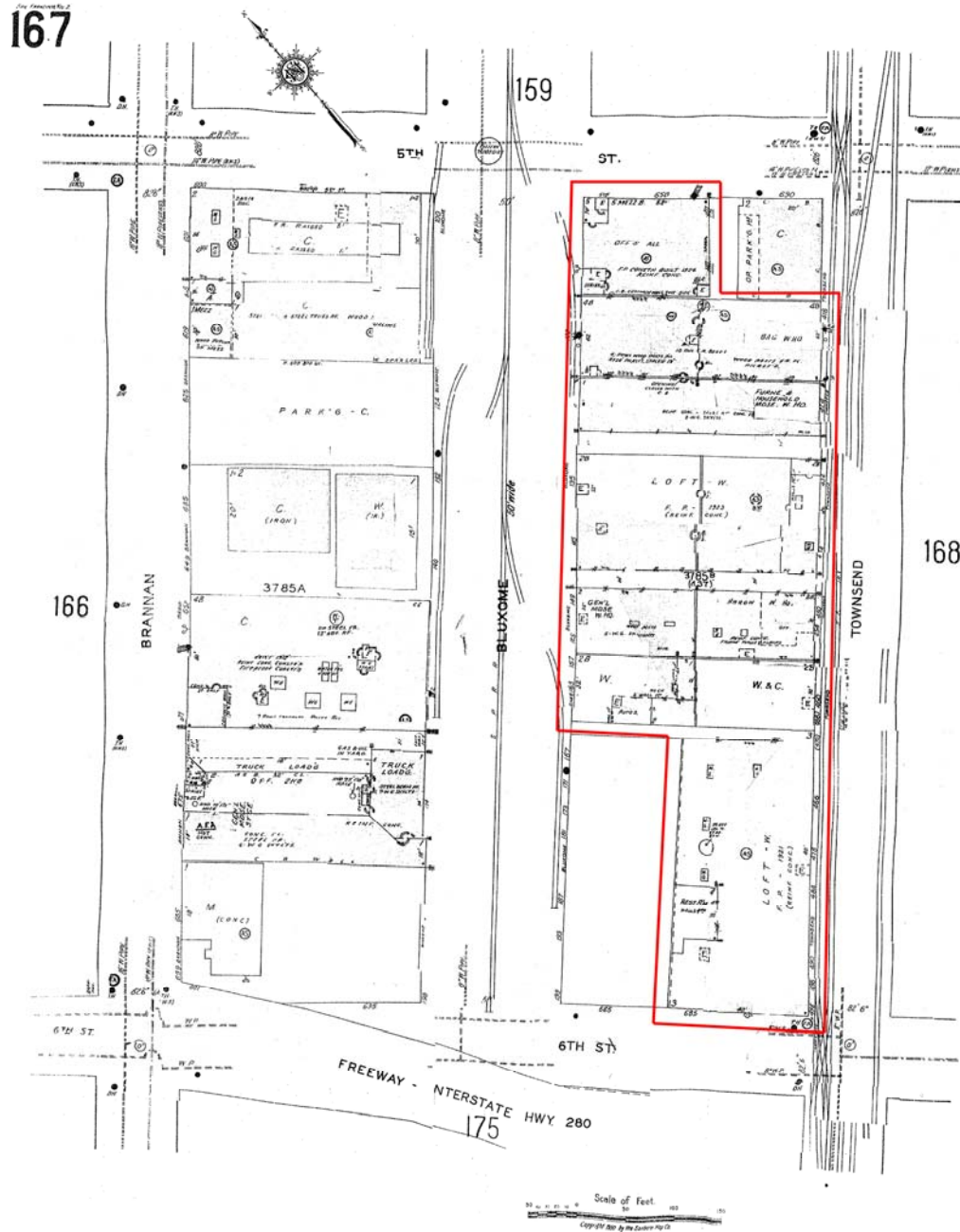
1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.

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1998 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.