

From: [Naomi Schiff](#)
To: [Vince Sugrue \(vincexsugrue@gmail.com\)](#); [Marcus Johnson](#); [Nenna08@gmail.com](#); [chrisandrews@sbcglobal.net](#); [Klara Komorous](#); [Tim Mollette-Parks](#); [benfu.oakland@yahoo.com](#)
Cc: [Vollmann, Peterson](#); [Marvin, Betty](#); [Gilchrist, William](#); [Payne, Catherine](#)
Subject: Oakland Waterfront District Ballpark ER18-016; State Clearinghouse No. 2018112070
Date: Sunday, March 21, 2021 10:59:54 PM
Attachments: [Howard Terminal-LPAB-March 21-2021.pdf](#)

[EXTERNAL] This email originated outside of the City of Oakland. Please do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and expect the message.

Dear Landmarks Board members and staff,

Attached are some preliminary comments from Oakland Heritage Alliance about the impacts to cultural resources of the proposed project. We are continuing to review the many sections of the DEIR, so we may submit additional comments.

Thank you!

Naomi Schiff
For Oakland Heritage Alliance

Naomi Schiff
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510-910-3764 (cell)
238 Oakland Ave.
Oakland, CA 94611
naomi@17th.com



March 21, 2021

By electronic transmission

Members of the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board
Peterson Vollmann, Betty Marvin

Subject: Oakland Waterfront District Ballpark ER18-016; State Clearinghouse No. 2018112070

Dear Landmarks Advisory Board members and staff,

These comments are preliminary responses to the DEIR regarding Howard Terminal. We will submit a more detailed comment once we have reviewed more of the document. We note that the comment deadline has been extended; therefore, if the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board would like to continue its discussion or get further information, it could be continued to the April 12 meeting.

1. WE GENERALLY AGREE WITH THE ANALYSIS REGARDING THE PEAKER PLANT. We understand the developer's desire to truncate the historic building, and the mitigations that relate to that, and to requiring review of design for replacement walls. The mitigations for partial demolition, however, seem weak. We suggest that an additional mitigation be added, requiring a contribution to the Facade Improvement fund in an amount proportional to the parts of the building being removed. These funds could be used to assist buildings in the impacted areas of the West Waterfront ASI. In addition, the design of the new stadium and related facilities should be required to be compatible with that of the historic building, under the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. (Please see our letter of January 7, 2019, attached.)

2. DO NOT BUILD A GONDOLA OVER OLD OAKLAND.

We are extremely concerned about the gondola variants and proposals. These would have an irreversible impact on an irreplaceable API which contains a concentration of many landmark buildings. The CEQA document analyzes the issues under the environmental regulatory framework. But what we would like to emphasize is that these are crucial cultural resources that must be treated with the utmost care. Routing a new shiny thing right along and over Washington Street is completely unacceptable. It is not a positive thing to suggest that it would be an entertainment ride such as at the zoo. This is how an authentic historic district is turned into something that feels fake. Unaddressed is the fact that while the gondola would serve to move a modest percentage of people on game days, the intrusion into Old Oakland and the West Waterfront ASI would be 365 days per year for as long as it remained standing, whether in use or not.

Much of Oakland's 19th century downtown was demolished during the redevelopment era, and the results were only partially successful, having taken more than 50 years to execute, so far. Old Oakland and the West Waterfront ASI and historic train station on Third St. are what survived an era of wholesale destruction. In hindsight, urban planners have commented on the failures of City Center. Let us not now compound them by subjecting our historic districts to ungainly intrusion. We strongly oppose the gondola; but should such a structure be contemplated, its design should be required to be compatible with that of the historic district, under the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. It should be visually subordinate, and a preservation architect should be included in the team to assist in designing a compatible facility. (Again, please see our letter of January 7, 2019, attached.)

3. CRANES

Oakland Heritage Alliance believes that it is a good idea to maintain some connection with the idea, uses, and feel of a historic waterfront, even though much of it has been changed radically. We understood a year or more ago that the proponents were thinking of keeping all the cranes. In the light of this CEQA document, we have questions: is the intention to only retain the oldest one? For many people in Oakland, regardless of construction date the newer cranes are perhaps thought of as the more iconic. We accept the analysis as presented, and would like to understand more about what is intended. How can Oakland keep some of the flavor of its working waterfront?

4. HISTORIC USES

We note the discussion of the turning basin and future maritime uses of the Port and the area. Oakland was founded in 1852 as a port city, though of course navigation had begun long before that. It would be wise to accommodate future maritime uses as much as possible. Just as people in the 19th century could not foresee container shipping, we do not know what the future will hold, other than sea-level rise.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mary Harper".

Mary Harper
President

cc: Oakland Planning Commission
Attachment: OHA letter, 1-7-2019



January 7, 2019
(By electronic transmission)
Peterson Vollmann
City of Oakland
Bureau of Planning/Zoning Division
250 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, 2nd Floor
Oakland, California 94612

Subject: Notice Of Preparation (NOP) Of A Draft Environmental Impact Report For The Oakland Waterfront Ballpark District Project

Dear Mr. Vollmann,

Following are potential significant project impacts on historic resources that should be addressed in the EIR, along with possible mitigation measures and project alternatives to minimize or avoid these impacts.

1. **IMPACT:** Demolition and/or adverse alteration of all or a portion of Pacific Gas and Electric Company Station C:

Mitigation Measures:

- a. Design the project to preserve all of the historically /architecturally contributing elements within the Station C complex. Note: Although the Notice of Preparation's Project Description suggests that the "existing power plant" will not be included among the buildings to be demolished on the project site, various renderings and other materials presented by the applicant omit at least portions of Station C, notably the Jefferson Street wing. At a meeting with OHA, the applicant appeared unaware that the Jefferson Street portion was a contributing element of Station C.
- b. Require that any modifications to the Station C buildings conform with the Secretary of The Interior Standards for the Treatment Of Historic Properties. Consider restoration of altered portions of the Station C exteriors as part of any adaptive reuse of the Station C buildings.
- c. Require that the design of the new stadium and other buildings are compatible with the Station C architecture, according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.
- d. Require that a preservation architect with demonstrated successful experience working with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and the California Historical Building Code be included in the project design team.

Include the attached California Historic Resources Inventory Form for Station C in the EIR.

2. **IMPACT:** Possible adverse effects of the gondola component on the Old Oakland National Register District.

Project Alternatives: Instead of the gondola, provide alternative transportation improvements to facilitate stadium access from BART, including a dedicated light rail, bus or shuttle connecting the stadium to the West Oakland BART station along Third Street.

Mitigation Measures:

- a. Locate the gondola's 10th Street Station within the Convention Center/Hotel to minimize the station structure within the Washington Street and 10th Street rights of way and to retain the openness of the air space within these rights of way to the greatest extent possible.
- b. As an alternative to Measure (a):
 - i. Position as much of the station structure as possible outside the Washington Street right of way alignment to minimize its visual prominence when looking north within the National Register District's important Washington Street visual corridor. This measure would result in most or all of the station structure to be positioned within the 10th Street right of way outside of the Washington Street right away alignment; and
 - ii. Design the station to minimize its architectural prominence and to be as visually subordinate as possible to the District's contributing buildings. Minimize the height of the station structures and use materials and design treatments that maximize transparency. Refer to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. Include a preservation architect on the station design team with demonstrated experience successfully working with the Standards. Note: preliminary station renderings presented to OHA by the applicant showed a very modernistic design that contrasted excessively with Old Oakland's contributing buildings with the station positioned at an extremely prominent location relative to the District at the north end of Washington Street in front of the convention center.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please contact Christopher Buckley at (510) 523-0411 or cbuckleyaicp@att.net or Naomi Schiff at (510) 835-1819 or Naomi@17th.com if you would like to discuss these comments.

Sincerely,



Tom Debley, President

By electronic transmission:

cc: William Gilchrist, Ed Manasse, Robert Merkamp, Catherine Payne, Betty Marvin, Bureau of Planning/Zoning
City of Oakland Planning Commission
City of Oakland Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board
Neil Rosen
Mayor Libby Schaaf
Members of the Oakland City Council

Attached:

PG&E Station C SHRI Form

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

Ser. No. _____
HABS _____ HAER _____ NR 3 SHL _____ Loc _____
UTM: A 10/563330/4183260 B 10/563400/4183400
C 10/563460/4183320 D 10/563440/4183250

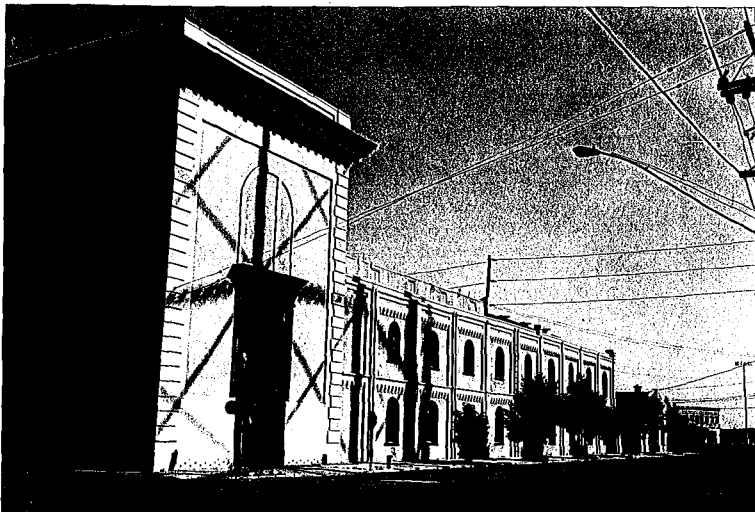
IDENTIFICATION

1. Common name: Pacific Gas and Electric Company Station C
2. Historic name: Same
3. Street or rural address: Multiple, see Continuation page 3
City _____ Zip _____ County _____
4. Parcel number: 0-410-7 and 1-125-5 (portion)
5. Present Owner: P.G. & E. Co. Address: 1919 Webster St.
City Oakland Zip 94612 Ownership is: Public _____ Private X
6. Present Use: Electric Power Plant Original use: Same

DESCRIPTION

- 7a. Architectural style: Beaux Arts derivative power station
- 7b. Briefly describe the present *physical description* of the site or structure and describe any major alterations from its original condition:

P.G. & E. Co. Station C consists of three buildings of related uses and appearance, constructed in several sections at various periods from 1888 through 1938. Beaux Arts stylistic elements unify the exterior of the whole complex through monumental scale, generously quoined piers, round-headed windows set each in its own panel, and a Classically derived cornice. The thrust of the complex is horizontal because of the large land area (more than a square block) and because most segments are articulated as if they were one story tall under the horizontal of the overhanging cornice. Sanborn maps describe this appearance as "1 (story) = 4," "1 = 2" and "3 = 4," and by heights respectively of 60 ft., 32 ft. and 42 ft. Access to the complex is through a gate in the fence between 50 and 64 Grove Street. The complex's unity has recently been enhanced by painting all the elements in a single color scheme of cream on quoins, piers and simple horizontal elements; tan on panels; and dark brown on cornices and openings. Street trees have also been planted along Grove and the south side of Embarcadero West.



(see continuation page 5)

8. Construction date:
Estimated _____ Factual 1888-1938
9. Architect See Continuation
Page 3
10. Builder See Continuation
Page 3
11. Approx. property size (in feet)
Frontage _____ Depth _____
or approx. acreage 2.10
12. Date(s) of enclosed photograph(s)

219-10 Pacific Gas & Electric Co.
Station C (Grove St. south from
Embarcadero) 5/82

13. Condition: Excellent X Good _____ Fair _____ Deteriorated _____ No longer in existence _____

14. Alterations: Various interior removals; large windows on Embarcadero façade infilled; most surfaces painted.

15. Surroundings: (Check more than one if necessary) Open land _____ Scattered buildings _____ Densely built-up _____
Residential _____ Industrial ☒ Commercial ☒ Other: _____

16. Threats to site: None known X Private development _____ Zoning _____ Vandalism _____
Public Works project _____ Other: _____

17. Is the structure: On its original site? X Moved? _____ Unknown? _____

18. Related features: None

SIGNIFICANCE

19. Briefly state historical and/or architectural importance (include dates, events, and persons associated with the site.)

P.G. & E. Co. Station C is important as a monumental Beaux-Arts-ornamented industrial complex constantly devoted to a single use--the production of electricity--ever since about 1889. Designers involved have included architect Walter J. Mathews, engineer Henry C. Vensano and architect Ivan C. Frickstad. The complex includes the second electrical generating plant ever built in Oakland. Today, according to the Montclarion of 12 Oct. 1982, p.9, it "is capable of producing 165,000 kilowatts of electricity, enough to supply about 40% of Oakland's electric needs." Although the price of such consistent use has been a continual restructuring and updating of technology, the utility company has added to the original structures with only partial demolitions, has kept the same buildings since 1938, and in its most recent reworking--1979 according to the Montclarion--has sensitively refurbished the street facades while removing interior court-side parts of the structures and installing new equipment.

The company began locally as the Oakland Gas Light Company, which according to the Tribune
(see continuation page 10)

20. Main theme of the historic resource: (If more than one is checked, number in order of importance.)

Architecture 2 Arts & Leisure _____

Economic/Industrial 1 Exploration/Settlement _____

Government _____ Military _____

Religion _____ Social/Education _____

21. Sources (List books, documents, surveys, personal interviews and their dates). P.G. & E., Properties Owned & Operated, 1911: 168-69.

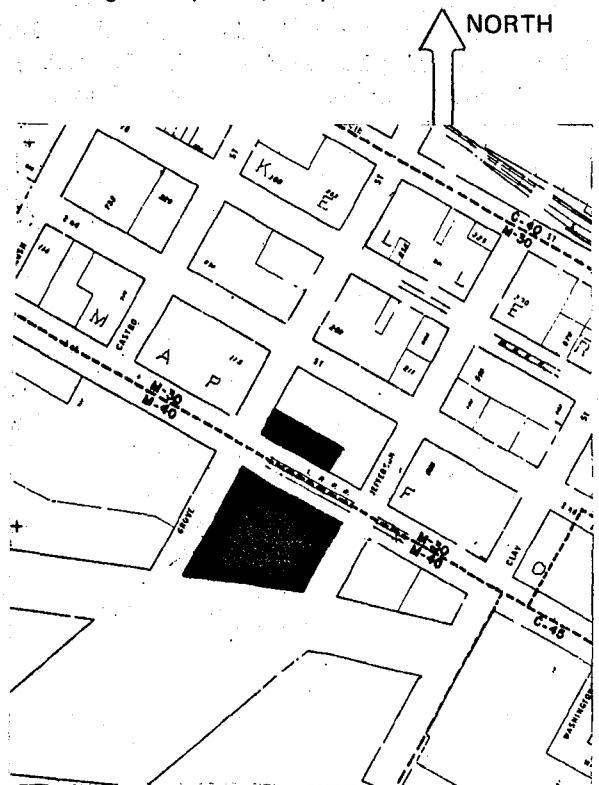
Pacific Service Magazine, May 1914: 404.

Tribune Yearbook, 1939: 56-57

(see continuation page 13)

22. Date form prepared January 31, 1985
By (name) Staff
Organization Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey
Address: One City Hall Plaza, 6th Floor
City Oakland Zip 94612
Phone: (415) 273-3941

Locational sketch map (draw and label site and surrounding streets, roads, and prominent landmarks):





HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

CP

Street or rural address: Pacific Gas & Electric Co. Station C

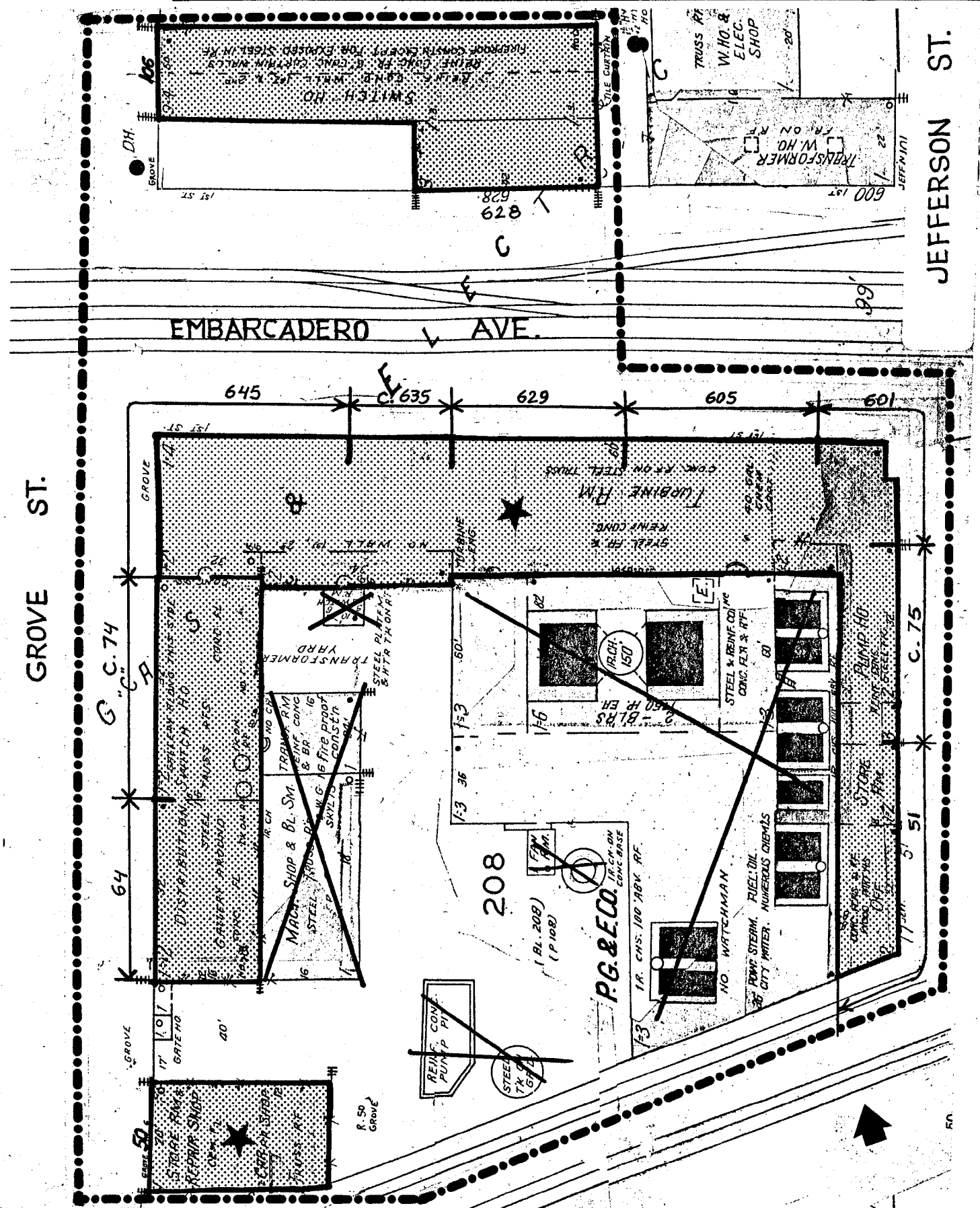
Address Historic Name	Date Cost	Architect Builder	Source
601-45 Embarcadero/51 Jefferson St./64 Grove St. Pacific Gas & Electric Co. Station "C" constructed as:	1888-1938 See below	Multiple, see nine components below	Multiple, see nine components below
601 Embarcadero	1928 \$150,000	Ivan C. Frickstad P.G. & E.	Permit #A30632 (includes c.635 Embarcadero & 51 Jefferson)
605 Embarcadero	1920 \$27,000	Henry C. Vensano (E) (attrib.) Cahill & Vensano	Permit #58348
629 Embarcadero	1908 \$35,000	Henry C. Vensano (E) Unknown	Permit #13399
c.635 Embarcadero	1928	See 601 Embarcadero	See 601 Embarcadero
645 Embarcadero	1937-38 \$100,000	Ivan C. Frickstad P.G. & E.	Permit #70575
64 Grove St. *	1889-90	Unknown Unknown	Sanborn map 1889
c.74 Grove St.*	1888-89 \$40,000	Unknown Unknown	<u>Oakland Enquirer</u> , 25 July 1888
51 Jefferson St.	1928	See 601 Embarcadero	See 601 Embarcadero
c.75 Jefferson St.	c.1912-14 Unknown	Unknown Unknown	Hegemann, <u>Report...</u> , 1915: 39
628 Embarcadero/106 Grove St. P.G. & E. Station "C" Switch & Control House	1937 \$80,000	Ivan C. Frickstad (A) A.H. Markwart (E) P.G. & E. (B)	Permit #A67752
50 Grove St. Standard Electric Co. Substation DEM	1899-1900 \$2,544	Walter J. Mathews Unknown	<u>California Architect & Building News</u> , 9-1899: vi

*Historic name: Oakland Gas, Light and Heat Company Electric Light Works.



CP

Pacific Gas & Electric Co. Station C





HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

CP

Street or rural address: Pacific Gas and Electric Company Station C

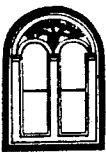
7b. Description (continued from page 1)

601-45 Embarcadero/51 Jefferson Street/64 Grove Street is a C-plan with each facade a composite of three or four major construction projects. The Grove Street facade is a painted brick structure, the others steel frame reinforced concrete with stucco veneer. The main facade, 601-45 Embarcadero, occupies the whole city blockfront 300 feet long. Monumental in scale and 60 feet high, it is divided into 15 vertical panels each containing a single tall, narrow, round-headed window most of which has recently been stuccoed over, leaving a slit in the center. Panels are paired between quoined piers, except for the single easternmost panel, at Jefferson, which has a rectangular window. Except for this single panel, there are no differences between the five sections constructed in four building campaigns over a 30-year period (see continuation pages 3 and 4). Each successive designer respected and continued the design of his predecessor(s) to create the rhythmically decorated monumental block we see today. The panels rest on an unadorned base into which piers extend. Over all is a boxed cornice of galvanized metal on consoles, surmounted by a paneled parapet that conceals the flat roof. This principal block extends in harmonious returns along the first portion of each cross street. Each return features a Classical bracketed entablature over a giant-scale equipment-and-truck door of metal.

The main building's Grove Street facade begins at the Embarcadero corner with a return of the principal facade and continues with the two oldest sections, c. 74 and 64 Grove Street, which are matched, two-story, 32'-high, gable-ended brick structures with quoins, piers, a corbeled cornice and a corbeled belt course of brick. Quoined piers are at the corners and at the meeting of the two buildings, five bays from the southern end. Each facade is divided into nearly square panels defined by piers, the belt course and the cornice. Within each panel is a pair of round-headed windows, sometimes (originally always) with pairs of arches as the transom tracery. Downstairs windows have deeper reveals than upstairs ones, reflecting the decreasing thickness of the structural brick walls. The gable is decorated with stepped projecting bricks imitating barge boards. The corner piers terminate with a crenelated box above the roof line. The corbeling of cornice and belt course is incised into small segments rather like consoles. This segmented effect, the panels, the quoins and the round-headed windows became themes for the monumental facade on Embarcadero. A photograph published by the Oakland Tribune in 1898 shows these sections going all the way up to Embarcadero, with seven bays north of the joint between 64 and c.74 Grove instead of the present four bays. This original seven-bay building was four bays wide on Embarcadero instead of the present two bays, and the Oakland Tribune Annual of 1890 announced its dimensions as 80' (on Embarcadero) x 120'. Apart from the partial demolitions and changed chimneys, 64 and c.74 Grove retain their original appearance, though the interior is now open from ground to roof.

The Jefferson Street facade is basically a lower structure than the monumental facade on Embarcadero and its return at the corner. Though 32' high, c.75 Jefferson Street appears as a single story, with cornice, parapet and quoined piers matching those on the monumental facade. The center section has three bays with simple panels adjoining the corner bay, then three similar-sized bays with small-paned metal windows in triple banks topped by a single wire glass panel and triple transoms. All are now painted over except the clear transoms. Plain panels, quoins and windows were all rebuilt in 1928, but apparently with little change. 51 Jefferson Street, the 1928 addition to the south, is about half the length of the center section; it has a more complicated rhythm. Most of it extends slightly from the facade plane as a pavilion; its fenestration is more vertical as the mullions separating wider banks of windows extend through the horizontal panel, and there are side lights.

(see continuation page 6)



HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

CP

Street or rural address: Pacific Gas and Electric Company Station C

7b. Description (continued from page 1)

628 Embarcadero/106 Grove St. is a L-plan monumental structure surrounding but not touching the northeast corner of Embarcadero and Grove Street. Flat-roofed, it is constructed of reinforced concrete with form marks visible on the exterior. Nevertheless its ornamentation echoes that of the main block across the street: quoins at all corners, piers separating its sides into vertical panels, substantial but simple base and a Classical entablature emphasizing horizontality. About 42' high, the L-plan's foot is a little less tall than its stem, but the cornice is repeated. The building presents great blank walls, broken by the quoins and paneling, by 2 or 3 tiny square windows and by a small door.

50 Grove Street is a small, 1½-story, gable-ended rectangular brick structure. Like the other buildings of the P.G. & E. complex, it is divided by piers and corner quoins into bays: 2 on the end facing Grove, 4 on the north facade. An incised and corbeled belt course matching those on 64 and c.74 Grove Street divides each bay into an attic section and an almost square, panel-like section containing a round-headed double-casement window rather similar to those at 64 Grove Street. One bay on Grove contains, instead, a large equipment-and-truck entrance with unadorned metal doors. Other differences from 64 and c.74 Grove Street are that the piers are clusters of 3, and the corner piers terminate without crenelated boxes.



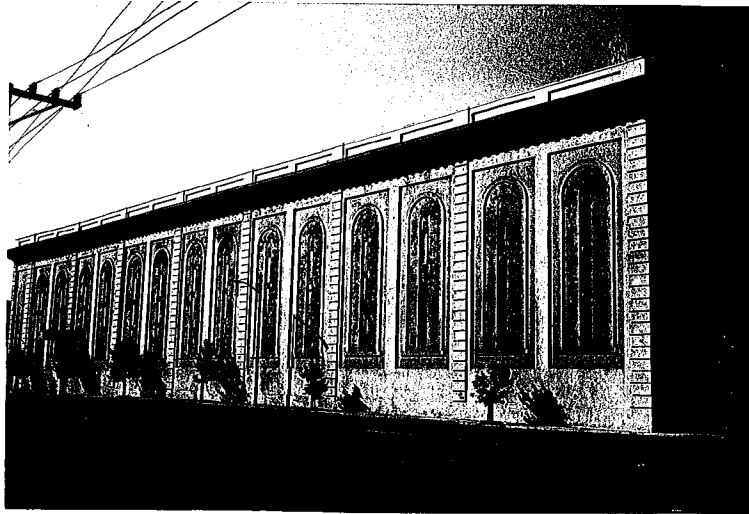
217-23 Jefferson St. elevation
P.G. & E. Station C 5/82



HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

CP

Street or rural address: Pacific Gas and Electric Company Station C



217-15 601-45 Embarcadero
(P.G. & E. Station C) 5/82



217-24 601 & 605 Embarcadero
(P.G. & E. Station C) 5/82



217-27 Detail, Jefferson at
Embarcadero 5/82



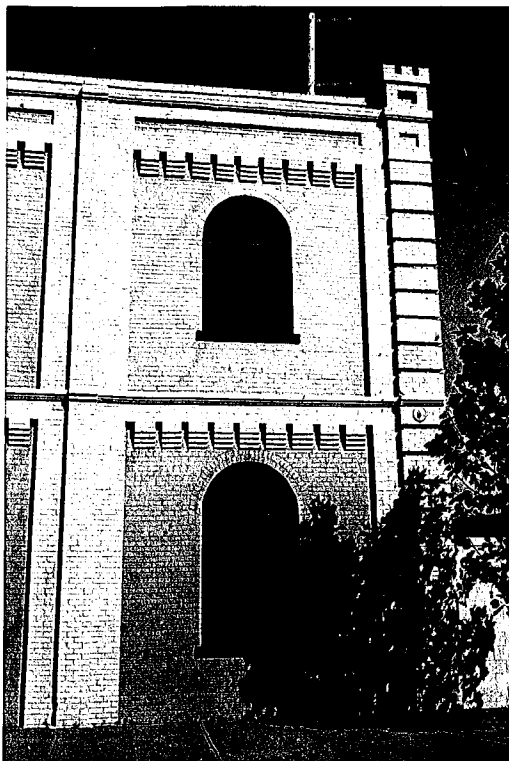
HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

CP

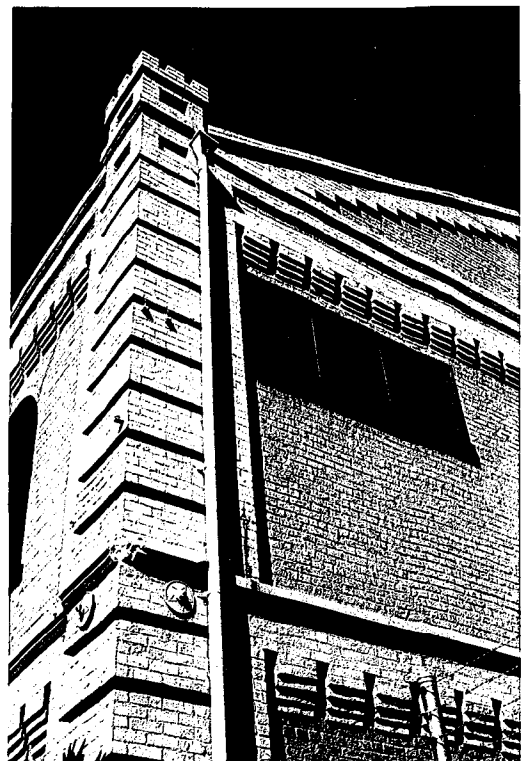
Street or rural address: Pacific Gas and Electric Company Station C



219-13 64 & c.74 Grove St.
(P.G. & E. Station C) 5/82



219-17 Bay detail, 64 Grove St.
5/82



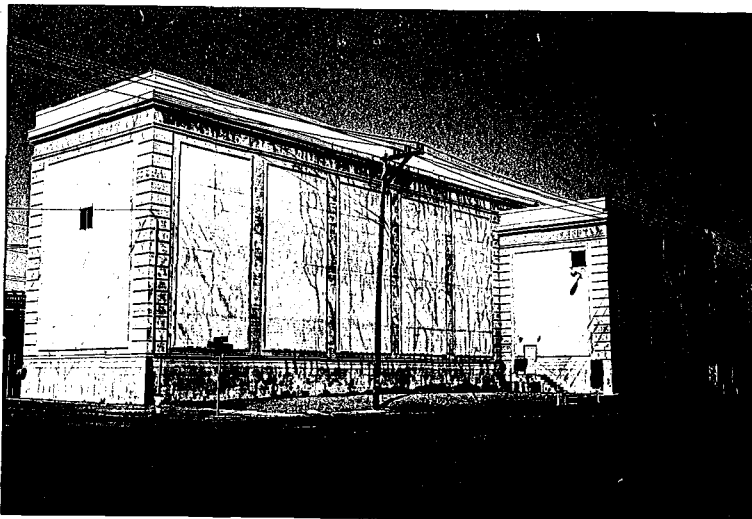
219-15 Corner detail, 64 Grove St.
5/82



HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

CP

Street or rural address: Pacific Gas and Electric Company Station C



219-22 628 Embarcadero/106 Grove St.
(P.G. & E. Station C) 5/82



219-12 50 Grove St.
(P.G. & E. Station C) 5/82



HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

CP

Street or rural address: Pacific Gas and Electric Company Station C

19. Historical and/or Architectural Importance (continued from page 2)

Annual of 1890, p.20, was incorporated in 1866 by Anthony Chabot, James Freeborn, H.H. Haight and Joseph G. Eastland. In 1870 it acquired the waterfront marsh land between Castro and Clay Streets, and began the process of reclamation and construction. When electric lighting began to appear in competition with gas light, the company decided to produce both, the first company on the West Coast to do so. Coleman in P.G.& E., p.41, reports that it reincorporated in 1884 as the Oakland Gas Light & Heat Co., which built its first electric plant in 1885. This plant proving inadequate to projected needs, on 25 July 1888 the Oakland Enquirer, p.2, noted commencement of a new electric power plant, four bays of whose original 7-bay length exists today as c.74 Grove Street. With a salt-water supplied Hamilton-Corliss steam engine and dynamos costing \$60,000, the new plant was expected to quintuple the company's electric production capacity. The article estimated \$40,000 for building construction.

The 1889 Sanborn map and a photograph published in the Tribune Annual of 1898 together indicate that shortly after completion of c.74 Grove Street the Oakland Gas Light & Heat Co. constructed the matching 5-bayed power plant addition known as 64 Grove Street.

The man whom the Enquirer noticed in 1888 as the company's secretary was a Bostonian named John A. Britton, who began working for Oakland Gas Light about 1875 (Coleman, p.155-56). Through hard work, night school and marrying boss Van Leer Eastland's step-daughter, he became president of the company in 1900, at the age of 45. Britton played a role in the successive mergers of local and generating enterprises that resulted finally in the Pacific Gas & Electric Company. He was director and vice-president of the closely held California Central Gas & Electric, then general manager of P.G.& E. for its first 20 years.

Meanwhile the small building at 50 Grove Street had been erected in 1899-1900 for the Standard Electric Co., which Coleman (p.147) indicates was mostly a transmission company, though it was also building the Electra hydroelectric power plant on the Mokelumne River. In the Grove Street building it handled power from the Bay Counties Company's Colgate hydroelectric plant via the first high-power cables ever to cross the Carquinez Strait. This power Standard Electric delivered to Oakland Gas Light & Heat's system just a few feet away at 64 Grove Street. No wonder mergers produced the unified P.G.& E.

The California Architect & Building News for September 1899, p. xiii, stated this "Building, Grove near First" (Embarcadero) for Standard Electric Company, projected to cost \$2544, was by Walter J. Mathews, architect. Mathews (1850-1947) maintained one of the Bay Area's longest-lived architectural practices, beginning in 1874 as junior partner of his father Julius C. Mathews, suspending in 1883 for a year's educational travel in England, Germany and France, and continuing thenceforth on his own well into old age. He built residences, business buildings, government buildings, banks, and department stores--4 miles worth by 1911. He designed structures in San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Luis Obispo, Redondo Beach and on Angel Island, but especially in his home city of Oakland. Here he built the First Unitarian Church (681-85 14th Street, 1890), the Easton or Union Savings Bank Building (1300 Broadway, 1904), the Will Rogers Hotel (371-75 13th Street, 1906), the Metcalf House (1909), and the Central Bank Building (1400-16 Broadway, 1926, in association with George Kelham) (see SHRI forms). He was consulting architect for the Hotel Oakland and the Oakland Auditorium. The Standard Electric plant is one of his very few known industrial buildings.

(see continuation page 11)



HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

CP

Street or rural address: Pacific Gas and Electric Company Station C

19. Historical and/or Architectural Importance (continued from page 10)

The next addition to the P.G. & E. complex, 629 Embarcadero, is the subject of Oakland building permit #13399, issued Aug. 1908, for a \$35,000 "one-story steel and corrugated iron power station" designed by Henry C. Vensano, engineer. A photograph published in 1911 by P.G. & E. in Properties Owned & Operated shows this building as the earliest section of the present Embarcadero facade. Four bays wide, it has all the design elements characteristic of the whole facade: tall and narrow round-headed windows set in panels, piers with rusticated quoins marking each pair of panels, box cornice with consoles, paneled parapet masking the roof, and the plain base. The permit's "corrugated iron" probably was the side surface material.

Henry Vensano (1881-1960), therefore, created the design of the Embarcadero facade, which his successors copied and expanded. Born in San Francisco of an Italian father and a California-born mother of Maine parentage, he earned a degree in civil engineering from the University of California in 1903 and worked briefly for the Minneapolis Steel & Machinery Company. By the 1908 San Francisco Directory he was civil engineer for the San Francisco Gas & Electric Co., which soon merged into the P.G. & E. In nearly 10 years with the Company he supervised several large power developments, including Oakland's Substation C. Next he went into a partnership with Edward G. Cahill, a business that later developed into the giant Cahill Construction Company, but without Vensano. With Cahill or later alone, Vensano is credited in his obituary (S.F. Examiner, 9 Oct. 1960, p. 15/1) with "numerous industrial buildings, 17 dams and three Sacramento River pumping stations." In 1936 he joined the Golden Gate International Exposition (Treasure Island Fair of 1939-40) as chief of construction and assistant works director, becoming director of works in 1940. He was Director of San Francisco's Department of Public Works 1942 to 1950.

Vensano seems also to have designed the second matching section of the Substation's Embarcadero frontage, 605 Embarcadero. Building permit #58348, issued 30 Oct. 1920, calls for a \$27,000 building by Cahill & Vensano. Plans for the 1927 permit (see below) show 8 bays of the facade as pre-existing. So in 1920-21 Cahill & Vensano must have put up a 4-bay addition to the east of Vensano's original 4-bay building of 1908. They matched perfectly.

Before the expansion on Embarcadero, a free-standing P.G. & E. building had been erected at c.75 Jefferson Street. This building appears exactly as at present (though now with some windows painted over) both as pre-existing on the 1927 plans and in a photograph published in 1915 in the Hegemann Report, p.39. No building permit exists; construction must have occurred between the 1911 Sanborn map, where the space is vacant, and the 1915 photo.

On 18 Nov. 1927 building permit #A30632 was approved for \$150,000 for three additions to Station C by I.C. Frickstad. Plans exist, which show the intended work as one bay at the southeast corner of Embarcadero and Jefferson (601 Embarcadero), two bays on Embarcadero west of the previously built 8 bays (c.635 Embarcadero), and the southern section of the Jefferson Street facade (51 Jefferson). Frickstad carefully showed the precise relationships between old and new, with instructions such as "Present quoins to be cut off and rebuilt," or "Dotted lines show existing work (in cornice & parapet)." From these elevations the windows could be restored.

Ivan C. Frickstad appears in San Francisco Directories as a draftsman, independent in 1902, working for Newsom & Newsom in 1903 and for Albert Farr in 1905. He lived

(see continuation page 12)



HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

CP

Street or rural address: Pacific Gas and Electric Company Station C

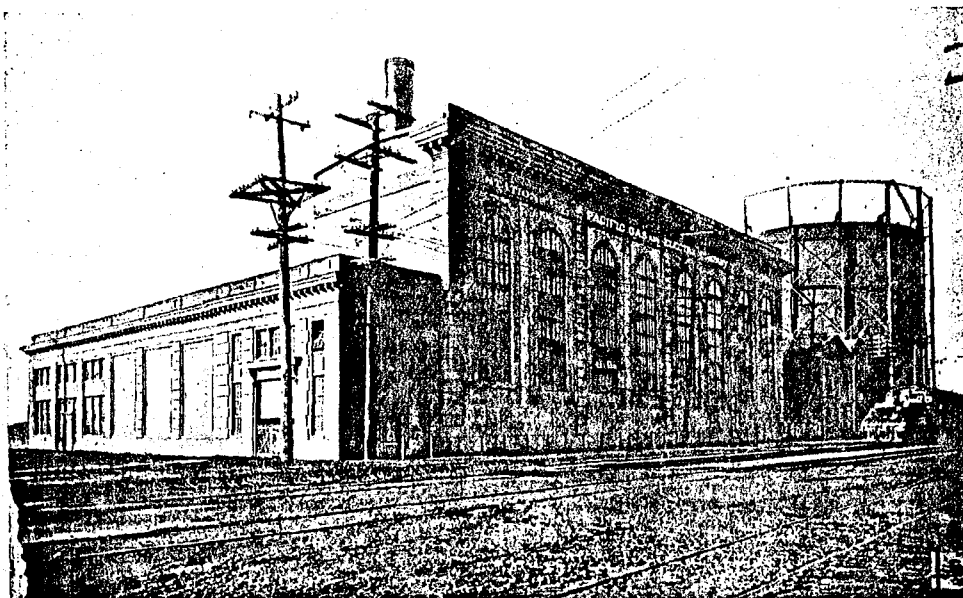
19. Historical and/or Architectural Importance (continued from page 11)

in Oakland and later practiced architecture here. Splendid Survivors, p.176, identifies him as a P.G. & E. "company architect who did a number of substations and office buildings based on prototypes by Willis Polk and Frederick Meyer." Indeed, the bracketed entablature over the Jefferson Street truck entry seems derived from Polk's Jessie Street Substation in San Francisco. However Frickstad's own P.G. & E. buildings are highly rated, and his expansion here of the already extant Embarcadero frontage shows an unusual sensitivity in continuing a good design rather than attempting to supersede it.

Frickstad is due even more credit for continuing his sensitive copying as late as 1937-38 in the four-bay section completing the full block facade, 645 Embarcadero. His name appears as the designer of the \$100,000 addition on permit #A70575, approved 1 Dec. 1937. The plans include a detailed profile of the Polk-type bracketed entablature above the truck entry on Grove.

A few months earlier, on 12 May 1937, the City had approved permit #A67752 for an \$80,000 3-story concrete Substation across the street at 628 Embarcadero/106 Grove, also by Frickstad. Here, since he was not continuing an extant facade, he interpreted more freely: without the round-headed windows, the consoles or the stucco veneer. However the monumentality and the rhythm, quoins and cornice all carry over from the Vensano-Frickstad facade of 601-45 Embarcadero.

The complex as a whole and two of its three component buildings as individual structures appear eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. When it is 50 years old, 628 Embarcadero/106 Grove Street should also become eligible for listing.



P.G. & E. Station C, 1916 view;
Source: Pacific Service Magazine



HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

CP

Street or rural address: Pacific Gas and Electric Company Station C

21. Sources (continued from page 2)

Oakland Enquirer, 25 July 1888: 211.

Montclarion, 12 Oct. 1982: 9.

Illus. Ed. Oak. Trib., 1890: 20.

Hegemann, Werner, Report on a City Plan for the Municipalities of Oakland & Berkeley, 1915: 39-51.

Building Permits & (*)Plans

1908 - #13399, 19 Aug., 1-st. steel & corrug. iron
\$35,000, H.C. Vensano eng'r.

1920 - #58348, 30 Oct., NW Water & Jefferson
\$27,000, Cahill & Vensano

1927*- #A30632, 18 Nov., SW Jefferson & 1st (Embarcadero)
\$150,000, -----

1937/38*- #A70575, finalized 23 Nov. 38, SE 1st & Grove
\$100,000, -----

1937 - #A67752, 12 May, Switch & Control House,
\$80,000, Ivan C. Frickstad

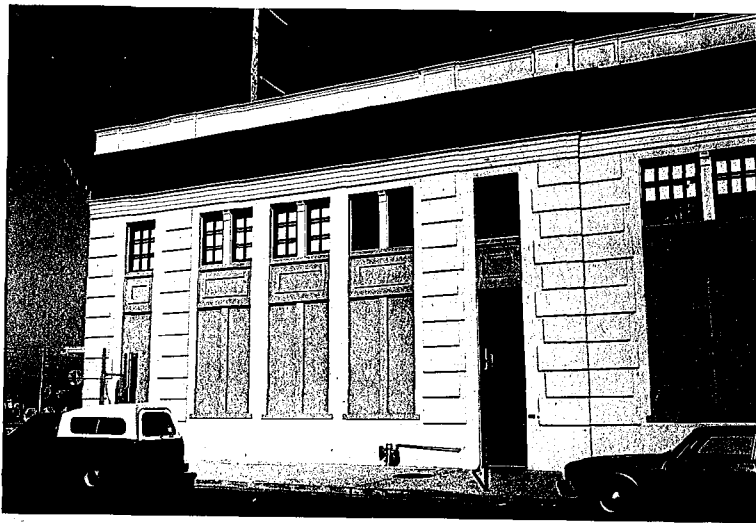
CA & BN XX #9 (20 Sept 1899): xiii .

Coleman, Chas. M., P.G. & E. of Calif., NY 1952, McGraw Hill

Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey, "Walter J. Mathews" file
"Henry C. Vensano" file
"Ivan C. Frickstad" file

Sanborn Maps 1889-1901, 1902-1911, 1912-1935, 1912-1947

Pacific Service Magazine, July 1916: 51



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(P.G. & E. Station C) 5/82