OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

KI 1062

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 **Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, Seattle Branch**

Other names/site number Seattle Building, Seattle Federal Reserve Bank

2. Location

street & number 1015 Second Avenue n/a not for publication

city or town Seattle n/a vicinity

State Washington code WA county King code 033 zip code 98104

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X locally. (_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title — Date 4.30.12

WASHINGTON STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
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 certifying official/Title — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is: — Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

___ 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:) _____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

___ private
___ public-local
___ public-State
X public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box

X building(s)
___ district
___ site
___ structure
___ object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not incl. previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Non-Contributing	
1	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Functions or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/Financial Institution

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT/

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE
walls STONE, CONCRETE
roof
other

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property.) SEE 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.)

- X **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.
- X **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** owed by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ___ **B** removed from its original location.
- ___ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ___ **D** a cemetery.
- ___ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ___ **F** a commemorative property.
- ___ **G** less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)
ARCHITECTURE
ECONOMICS

Period of Significance
1950-1961

Significant Dates
1950

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder
Naramore, Bain, Brady & Johanson (Architect)
Kuney Johnson Co. (Builder)

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property.) SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.) SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

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 Engineering Record#_____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References
(Place additional UTM References on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	10	05 50 013	52 72 714
2			
3			
4			

Verbal Boundary Description
The nominated property is located in Section 31 of Township 25, Range 04, SE Quarter in Seattle, Washington. It is otherwise known as Tax Parcel 0939000520.

Boundary Justification
Boundaries are based on the extent of the current tax parcel lot. See attached parcel map.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susan Johnson, Associate and Michael Sullivan, Principal (edited by DAHP Staff - Aug 2011)
organization Artifacts Consulting, Inc. date July 2011
street & number 201 N. Yakima Avenue telephone (253) 572-4599
city or town Tacoma state WA zip code 98403

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 General Services Administration – Office of the Chief Architect
street & number 1800 F Street NW, Rm 3341 telephone (202) 208-1936
city or town Washington state DC zip code 20405

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION:

Setting

Completed in 1950, the Seattle Branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco building is a good example of post-World War II architecture in Seattle. Located at 1015 2nd Avenue in the city's downtown financial district, the bank is prominently situated on the west side of 2nd Avenue, occupying an entire half-block between Spring Street on the north and Madison Street on the south. The financial district is comprised of commercial and government buildings executed in a variety of styles and scale across a range of time periods.

Nearby buildings which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places include the Holyoke Building (1890) at 1018-1022 First Avenue (1890), the National Building (1904) at 1006-1024 Western Avenue, the Federal Office Building (1933) at 909 1st Avenue, and the U. S. Courthouse (1940) at 1010 Fifth Avenue. The first two represent historic commercial buildings, whereas the latter two examples represent government building projects.

The building's main (east) facade fronts 2nd Avenue while the rear (west) facade faces the paved alley between Madison and Spring Streets. The latter two corridors run essentially east-west while 2nd Avenue runs essentially north-south. The street grid in this part of Seattle is oriented to the waterfront, thus slightly tilting the street grid away from the true cardinal axis. The nearly rectangular building footprint stands on a severely sloped site, allowing for an entire floor exposure difference between 2nd Avenue and the alley. The grade change is approximately 18' - 20' along Madison and Spring Streets. Sidewalks are present along the three public sides (north, east, south) of the building. This six-story building includes a basement below grade. A ground floor is at grade with the alley and partially exposed on the north and south facades. The main (east) entrance on 2nd Avenue is at the first floor level, and there are three additional floors above. Thus, four stories are visible on the main facade. A loading dock, a security door and two vehicle entrances to the interior of the building occupy the northwest corner, along the alley (west) facade.

First floor terraces provide a setback from the sidewalk along the north, east and south facades. The terraces at the north and south ends of the building wrap around to the east side. Paved with square (2' by 2') concrete pavers which echo the cladding pattern on the building, the terraces are outlined with polished Dakota Mahogany granite clad planters except on the northeast side, where short flights of steps lead up from the sidewalk. Individual granite clad boxes separate these flights, whereas the planter boxes are continuous surfaces along the building's perimeter and most of the terrace spaces. The southern portion of the east terrace terminates just before the main entryway. The northern portion of the east terrace continues to the main entryway, with a flight of three steps down to the north of the main entryway. Round metal pipe handrails line these steps as well as the few steps which lead up from the sidewalk to the north end of the east terrace. Landscaping consists of two small trees at the northeast corner along with small vegetation in continuous granite-clad planters along the terraces. Security gates have been added to the north and south ends.[1]

Building Exterior

The Seattle Branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, generally rectangular in shape, measures approximately 198' by 90' at the first floor level. A rectangular service core projects out from the main building along the alley (west) facade. The exterior is in excellent condition. The south, east and north facades are primary with the east side serving as the front of the building. The north and south facades are both divided into three bays. The east facade consists of twelve or eight bays (depending on floor level), with an entryway filling the central bays. The flat roof is surrounded by the original parapet on all sides. A penthouse rises from the center of the roof but is only slightly visible from the street.

The stand-alone steel structure is clad primarily with Indiana limestone veneer, which is applied in flush, ashlar-cut square blocks. Joints in the masonry are nearly invisible except at close range, giving the impression that the walls are smooth and continuous. Indiana limestone covers the first floor and upward on the south, east, and north facades and wraps around one bay onto the west facade at the north and south ends of the building. Buff colored brick cladding begins

[1] There is also a tree planted along the sidewalk at the south end of the building, but this is not considered integral with the building's terrace landscaping.

where the limestone ends on the upper portion of the west facade, except for the service projection. The same brick also clads the roof penthouse on all sides. Polished Dakota Mahogany granite veneer, cut to the same dimensions as the square limestone blocks, clads the exposed ground floor walls on the north and south facades. All of the stone veneer is supported by the steel frame and a poured concrete shell. A damp-proof layer separates the concrete from the exterior limestone and granite veneer. On the lower portion of the west facade and the service projection, cast in place concrete is detailed with a recessed grid pattern to emulate the size and pattern of the limestone and granite cladding on the other facades. The color of the cast concrete also mimics the Indiana limestone cladding on the main building facades.

Openings

There are limited door openings in the building's exterior, located in the east and west facades only. Window openings are located on all four facades, and all are metal framed and square or rectangular in shape. The glazing and frames vary by location. Polished, projecting Dakota Mahogany granite surrounds frame the first floor east windows and main (east) entryway, contrasting with the original tan color of the limestone cladding. The granite treatments at the windows and entryway also feature the only non-geometric aspect of the building's exterior, with rounded and beveled profiles. Metal louvers cover ventilation openings located along the rear (west) facade.

The main (east) facade has a single entrance, comprised of four glass doors within a projecting Dakota Mahogany granite surround. Five overhead recessed square light fixtures illuminate this sheltered entryway. Two single doors flank a set of double doors at the main entryway. All of the main entryway doors consist of a single piece of glass framed with bronze. Each door has three hinges and the original bronze hardware. A massive transom window, divided in half by a central vertical muntin, caps the entire width of the doorway. Each half of this transom window displays the numerical address of the building, executed with gold leaf paint. The northernmost door has been retrofitted with an automatic opening mechanism for universal access. The metal lettering signage over this entryway, which read "Seattle Branch Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco," has been removed since the building was vacated in 2008.

At the north end of the rear (west) facade, a recessed service area contains two vehicle entryways, a single-leaf security door, and a loading dock. The two vehicle entryways and loading dock all have steel roll-up doors. Ramps lead from the alley to all the doors in this area except the loading door. Three windows and a surveillance camera overlook this area.

Polished Dakota Mahogany granite encircles the first floor windows along the east facade. These windows are further emphasized with deep recesses, whereas most other windows on the building are flush with the wall surface or a recessed wall panel. The first floor windows of the main (east) facade retain the original fixed single pane, plate glass glazing and steel frames. The upper three floors of the entire building originally had steel framed, six-part plate glass windows, with a square central fixed pane flanked by rectangular casement panes, all above three small panes. The lower panes provided a visual reverse in miniature of the upper panes, with a rectangular central lite flanked by squares. The lower central lite was also operable. These have all been replaced with three-part, anodized aluminum framed windows which echo the overall profile and composition of the originals. First floor windows on the north and south facades had similar plate glass original windows, except there were small square-rectangular-square lites above the principle lites, identical to the lowermost lites, and all sections were fixed except the lower center. These windows have also been replaced with the same anodized aluminum frame windows as aforementioned. Metal security grilles on the north and south first floor windows were called for in the original construction drawings but were added after the building opened for business, according to historic photos.

Original steel window frames contain original glass block at the ground floor level on the south, west and north facades. On the north and south, these openings are smaller than on the west, where the openings are located higher in the wall according due to the sloping site. There are two such windows in the north ground floor wall and nine in the south ground floor wall. One of the two north facade glass block security windows at this level is boarded over.

Interior

The interior floor plan and spatial arrangement are asymmetrical, contrasting with the symmetrical exterior composition of the primary (south, east, north) facades. The sub-basement plan in the original construction drawings shows minimal excavation for foundation (poured concrete footings under structural columns) work and limited mechanical space. The basement level, situated below grade, contains the lower portion of the two-story vault, a smaller auxiliary vault, work space, a dedicated elevator for currency (labeled as the "coin lift"), an elevator lobby with two planned passenger elevators, an internal garage, and multiple rooms dedicated to maintenance and building systems. The coin lift, passenger elevators and elevator lobby are repeated on the upper floors. The basement floor had a non-public role.

The ground floor, at grade with the alley on the west facade, also contained non-public spaces. These include the upper portion of the two-story vault, the truck lobby, restricted work spaces, more mechanical spaces and a "clearing house" room, gender specific locker and toilet rooms, and a special guards' locker room which connected to a narrow pistol range at the east end of the floor. A service lobby and a guard station are located just inside the northwest truck entrance. The two-story vault is located in the southernmost third of the floor plan. Both vault stories feature reinforced concrete floors, walls, and ceilings and are interconnected by an internal steel staircase. Each vault floor has its own massive steel door. The vaults together total 5,000 square feet and are constructed of "steelcrete," a system of steel mesh gridwork infilled with poured concrete. The steelcrete vaults were built to be impenetrable to any natural or human threat, including robbery, riot, fire and explosion, earthquakes, and more.

The first floor, at grade with 2nd Avenue, originally had public spaces. Among these, the Entrance Lobby and the teller lobby (labeled as "Banking Lobby" in original drawings) served the public. These spaces were designed with a high degree of finish, as demonstrated by the terrazzo floors and marble-clad walls. This floor also has office spaces for bank personnel, additional women's lockers and large work areas. The second and third floors originally contained, in addition

to the vertical elevator shafts and stairwells, more men's locker and toilet rooms and work space. The vast majority of these floors were devoted to open work space. The fourth floor originally contained gender specific lounges, a shared cafeteria, kitchen, and more work space.

Original construction records, including architectural drawings by NBBJ, called for metal subflooring covered with poured concrete slabs in much of the interior. Ceilings over areas such as the garage and mechanical rooms called for vermiculite plaster, as a fireproofing material. Most interior work spaces were to feature asphalt tile floors, metal bases, painted gypsum plaster walls, and acoustic ceiling tiles. Structural columns were finished with gypsum plaster. Bathrooms and locker rooms featured ceramic tile flooring and wainscoting, with Keenes cement plaster on the upper walls and ceilings. The former public areas had the highest levels of finish including marble, bronze and walnut veneer. The first floor entrance lobby plans called for Tennessee Pink marble floors, two types of marble on the walls (Tennessee Pink and St. Clair Golden Vein), and bronze elevator doors. The security booth also features bronze paneling, similar to the elevators. In the teller (or banking) lobby, Tennessee Pink marble flooring is repeated, with the St. Clair Golden Vein marble used on countertops, window stools, and portions of the walls. A third type of marble (Laredo Chiaro) and walnut veneer paneling were also called out for some wall sections in the original drawings for the public spaces. Teller stations and small wall openings featured bronze grille work. The entrance vestibule was to have marble flooring and granite walls.[2]

Alterations

Most of the exterior alterations over time relate to increasing security for the building. Windows on the upper three floors and the first floor north and south have been replaced with anodized aluminum framed glazing. The profile and composition are comparable to original windows. At the main (east) entryway, one of the four doors received an automatic opening mechanism to be compliant with universal access codes. A seismic upgrade in circa 1991 provided

[2] Archives, Seattle Branch Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, original architectural drawings by NBBJ, 1949.

concrete reinforcement to areas of the exterior walls.[3] Since 2008, the metal lettering signage over this entryway has been removed.

Tall metal gates have been added to the north and south terraces, limiting pedestrian access to areas of the building which have limited visibility from the street. Security lights have been added to the exterior of the building; specifically, one each on the north and south facades and two on the east facade just above the street level. Exterior light fixtures look down and illuminate the exterior walls from the parapet at the northeast, southeast, and southwest corners of the roof.

The interior has been minimally updated over time. According to a 2008 Seattle landmark nomination prepared by BOLA Architecture and Planning, these changes relate to shifts in function and system updates. When the public function of the first floor teller lobby ceased, the space was repurposed as office space in 1977. At that time, the teller lobby received a partition wall which created a new vestibule. The decorative bronze grille work at the teller windows was relocated above the new partition wall. Some spaces received dropped ceilings to accommodate new HVAC ducts and electric wiring upgrades. On the fourth floor, the cafeteria expanded to include the northernmost portion of the floor while the southern portion of the floor received a new office suite. These fourth floor alterations date to circa 1998.[4]

---

[3] BOLA Architecture & Planning, *City of Seattle Landmark Nomination: The Federal Reserve Bank* (revised April 14, 2008), 17.

[4] BOLA, 17-18.

Narrative Statement of Significance:

The Seattle Branch building of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco (FRBSF) is eligible for individual listing to the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criteria A and C. The period of significance begins in 1950, the year the building was completed, and ends in 1961, the 50 year cut-off date. Economics is the area of significance which demonstrates the building's eligibility under Criterion A, for its association with the first permanent home of the Seattle Branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco and the role the Seattle Branch played post World War II in the growing regional economy. The building is also eligible in the area of architecture under Criterion C as an outstanding example of post-World War II architecture in downtown Seattle and as a design by the firm of Naramore, Bain, Brady and Johanson (NBBJ). William J. Bain, Sr., one of the founding partners of NBBJ, served as the lead architect for this project. The firm of is one of the world's leading architectural firms today, and this building represents one of their earliest surviving works and one of the earliest buildings erected in downtown Seattle following the end of World War II.

Federal Reserve Branch in Seattle

The Seattle Branch of the FRBSF represents the city's status as a major financial center for the largest geographic district of the Federal Reserve System, or the country's central banking system. Of the twelve Federal Reserve Districts, Seattle is part of the Twelfth District, based in San Francisco (also known as the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, or FRBSF). The Seattle Branch began in 1917 but only had temporary leased facilities until the nominated building was constructed in 1950. The building is associated with the growth of banking activity not only in Seattle but in the region. From 1917 through 1949, the Seattle branch operated out of multiple rented office locations spread throughout the city without a main central building. The Seattle Branch is one of only four branch

banks for the FRBSF and is also the oldest FRBSF branch office, which further highlights the significance of the building.

Branch bank cities, such as Seattle, are chosen based on local and regional economies, population, and connections to larger markets. Geographically, the Twelfth District is the largest of the Federal Reserve's twelve districts. In 1950, the Twelfth District included all of the states of California, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and most of Arizona, totaling about 23 percent of the country's land area. Since 1950, the district has expanded to also include Alaska, Hawaii, Guam, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands. In terms of monetary value, the FRBSF was the third largest of the twelve Reserve banks at the end of 1950, with $4.9 billion in resources. Today, the Twelfth District/Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco retains branch banks in Seattle, Portland, Salt Lake City and Los Angeles, with a cash processing center in Phoenix. This limited number of branch banks is not unique to the Twelfth District of the Federal Reserve. Relatively few U.S. cities have merited Federal Reserve branch banks.[1]

The Federal Reserve System is the central banking system of the United States. Created in 1913 with the passing of the Federal Reserve Act, the Federal Reserve System ("The Fed") began operating in 1914.[2] The Fed is a hybrid of public and private entities, with multiple roles and responsibilities in the national fiscal environment. The Fed was founded to provide greater stability and flexibility to the commercial banking system. Since 1914, Federal Reserve Banks have supplied almost all the circulating currency, acted as nationwide clearing agents for the collection of checks, and accepted and paid checks drawn by government departments and agencies. The four main roles of The Fed have been to guide the nation's monetary policy, supervise and regulate commercial banks, provide payment services, and support national financial stability. The Fed has also assisted with the administration of other

[1] At the end of 1950, there were 12 Federal Reserve Banks and 24 branch banks across the country, all serving approximately 6,800 member banks. Seattle Branch Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, brochure, 1951.

[2] The Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco opened for business on November 16, 1914.

governmental and semi-governmental agencies, such as the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. Clarence R. Shaw became the first manager for this corporation in Seattle, while he was serving as the managing director of the Seattle Branch of the FRBSF.[3]

In 1950, the Seattle Branch served all of Washington State except for select counties bordering Oregon, which were affiliated with the Portland Branch. The Seattle Branch employed a staff of about 200 employees in 1950. At the time the Seattle Branch opened, about 85 percent of the currency in circulation consisted of Federal Reserve Notes, of which more than $2.3 billion was outstanding in the Twelfth Federal Reserve District. The U.S. mints and the Treasury Department provided new coins and currency to the Federal Reserve System, which in turn filled orders from member banks. During 1950, the Seattle Branch received and counted 89 million coins, with a total value of over $9 million; the total value of paper currency sorted by the Seattle Branch that year totaled $243 million.[4] (All these figures are in 1950 dollar values).

As part of the Federal Reserve System, the Seattle Branch issued, distributed, and redeemed government bills, certificates, notes and bonds. This role has been pronounced during times of war.[5] In fact, the first branches of the FRBSF were established in response to growing demands on the Federal Reserve Banks, demands which grew out of the increased industrial and commercial activities from the outbreak of World War I in Europe.[6] The FRBSF established its first branch in Spokane on July 26, 1917, followed by the Seattle branch on September 19 and Portland in October, all in the same year. The Salt Lake City Branch of the FRBSF opened on April 1, 1918. The last branch of the FRBSF, Los Angeles, opened on January 2, 1920. The Spokane office was subsequently divided and

---

[3] Howard H. Preston, "A Milestone in Washington State Federal Reserve Banking," *Pacific Northwest Industry* (January, 1951), 95.

[4] Seattle Branch Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, brochure, 1951.

[5] Preston, 95.

[6] Preston, 95.

transferred to Seattle and Portland in 1947.[7] With the closing of Spokane, the Seattle Branch became the oldest of the Twelfth District branch offices.

Receiving a Federal Reserve branch bank in 1917 testifies to Seattle's status as an important commercial and financial center at that time, and the operations of the Seattle Branch continued to grow. Under the Defense Production Act of 1950, Federal Reserve banks also acted as fiscal agents of numerous federal agencies, including Departments of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Commerce, Interior and others. As such, the Federal Reserve guaranteed loans to finance production of materials for national defense.[8] According to Howard Preston, a former Professor of Money and Banking at the University of Washington,

> *"During World War II years, many Washington State firms engaged in war production were enabled to secure partially guaranteed loans under the provisions [of the Defense Production Act] Regulation V, through the cooperation of the discount department of the Seattle branch [of the FRBSF] which processed the loans for the government agency that guaranteed the lending bank".*[9]

By the end of World War II, the Seattle Branch's operations had outgrown their temporary leased facilities. Preston further states, *"Consolidation of all of its services in one well-located building should make easier the administration of the branch and provide more convenient facilities for its patrons."*[10] As such, the Federal Reserve Bank purchased the current Seattle Branch's parcel, which at the time included the former Rialto Building (subsequently demolished), in 1945 at a publicized cost of $250,000.[11] According to correspondence between the San Francisco and Seattle offices, a short list of local architectural firms to be considered for the new building

---

[7] BOLA Architecture & Planning, *City of Seattle Landmark Nomination: The Federal Reserve Bank* (revised April 14, 2008), 8. Also, interest in dividing the Spokane branch between Seattle and Portland began in 1936, as stated in Howard H. Preston, "A Milestone in Washington State Federal Reserve Banking," *Pacific Northwest Industry* (January, 1951), 95. The Spokane Branch officially closed in 1947. Spokane Daily Chronicle – Oct 31, 1947.

[8] Seattle Branch Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, brochure, 1951.

[9] Howard H. Preston, "A Milestone in Washington State Federal Reserve Banking," *Pacific Northwest Industry* (January, 1951), 92.

[10] Preston, 92.

[11] "Site Bought by Federal Bank," *Daily Journal of Commerce*, 3 March 1945.

included: John Graham; Bebb & Jones; Young & Richardson; McClelland & Jones; Naramore, Bain, Brady & Johanson, and others.[12] (See the NBBJ subsection for more information on the firm's selection.)

For reasons unknown, the firm of Naramore, Bain, Brady & Johanson (NBBJ) was awarded the contract and they provided early design drawings for the bank by the end of July 1947, with refinements and communication relative to the design occurring throughout the rest of the year and continuing in 1948.[13] The *Seattle Times* published a sketch of the approved design for the new branch bank, as seen from the exterior, in early September, 1948.[14] Floor plans were signed and approved by the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco in 1949.[15]

A FRBSF press release from January, 1949 described the proposed building's design and called the impending construction *"another step in the growth and development of Seattle and the Pacific Northwest."*[16] In March of 1949, the FRBSF reviewed construction bids and selected the Kuney Johnson Company as the contractors.[17] The Mosler Safe Company of Hamilton, Ohio provided the two large vault doors. According to the manager of the Seattle branch and vice president of the San Francisco Federal Reserve district bank, Clarence R. Shaw, *"A Federal Reserve bank building long has been needed in Seattle to house its important operations... It will be a distinct and outstanding addition to the financial section and a building of which Seattle and the Northwest... should well be proud."*[18] The FRBSF and Seattle Branch directors and officers held a cornerstone dedication ceremony in April, 1950.[19]

---

[12] Archives, Seattle Branch of Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, correspondence dated 10 November 1945.

[13] Archives, Seattle Branch of Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, correspondence dated 31 July 1947, 31 December 1947, 9 February 1948, and 13 February 1948.

[14] "Reserve Bank to Have Building," *Seattle Times*, 5 September 1948.

[15] Archives, Seattle Branch of Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, original architectural drawings by NBBJ, 1949.

[16] Archives, Seattle Branch of Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, press release dated 27 January 1949.

[17] Archives, Seattle Branch of Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, correspondence dated 1 March and 11 March 1949.

[18] "Reserve Bank to Have Building," *Seattle Times*, 5 September 1948.

[19] "Reserve Bank Officials to Lay Cornerstone," *Seattle Times*, 19 April 1950, 13.

Federal Reserve Banks as a Property Type

Federal Reserve Banks, including the branch banks, are generally reminiscent of classically-inspired bunkers. They have been designed to safeguard large amounts of currency as well as embody a sense of stability and continuity. In other words, the Federal Reserve System's responsibilities are embodied in its buildings. The Seattle Branch of the FRBSF is no exception, with exterior symmetry on the three primary facades, masonry cladding, limited access points to the interior, regular fenestration, and heavy, horizontal massing. The Seattle Branch building's design and materials demonstrate the balance of durability and frugality valued by the FRBSF in the mid-1940s.

Through at least the late 1950s, most if not all Federal Reserve Banks and their respective branch buildings have been masonry structures or steel frame structures clad with masonry. Given that these buildings act as repositories for enormous amounts of currency, it logically follows that they have been designed for the utmost security, including vaults and limited numbers of entryways. Windows are usually rectangular with simple, unadorned frames spaced and set individually in the exterior masonry walls. Furthermore, windows generally occur in regular patterns, with window bands denoting interior floor levels and often protected by security grilles at lower floors.

Correspondence between the FRBSF office in San Francisco and the Seattle branch office during the design phase expresses the desire to erect a building that would be attractive yet efficient in terms of operational cost. C. E. Earhart, President of the FRBSF, wrote: *"As you know, we like to stress our business rather than our governmental connection, and we take pride in conducting our bank on a businesslike basis."*[20] The overall cost of the building was also limited by the passage in July, 1947 of an amendment to Section 10 of the Federal Reserve Act, which further restricted the construction costs of Federal Reserve branch banks. As such, the building's design took into

[20] Archives, Seattle Branch of Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, correspondence dated 31 July 1947.

account the FRBSF's plan to develop the 2nd Avenue frontage so as to create profitable spaces for rent on or above the first floor.[21] The FRBSF also carefully considered building materials, weighing costs and benefits so as to create a durable yet attractive building with few extraneous frills. For example, the bank leadership debated the potential costs of employing various cladding materials (including granite, marble, and terra cotta) for the exterior walls. A letter from December, 1947 states, *"Mr. Bain... favors a granite base facing and limestone facing for upper structure..."*[22] Limestone also proved to be the most economical cladding choice. Bronze, rather than aluminum, was selected for the main (east) entry doorframes because, although the more expensive option, bronze matched the bank screen(s) and did not significantly alter the final cost. The clients decided to use a steel frame, rather than the cheaper option of a reinforced concrete structure (which was in fact recommended by Bain), in order to allow for possible future expansion of the building.[23]

The building was to have state-of-the-art lighting, ventilation, and office equipment. At the rear of the building, armored cars would enter via a secure, protected access door to pick-up or deliver money and securities. All floors, including the basement, called for an automated sprinkler system. All work areas were to have recessed fluorescent lighting, acoustic tile ceilings, and asphalt tile flooring. The latest in security systems, including modern vaults, were integral with the overall design.[24] The safety vault alone incorporated 335 tons of "steelcrete," or concrete reinforced with a steel meshwork. One of the strongest possible building materials available then, used especially in vault construction, the use of "steelcrete" underscored the prominence of the Seattle Branch bank and

---

[21] Archives, Seattle Branch of Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, correspondence dated 31 July 1947.

[22] Archives, Seattle Branch of Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, correspondence dated 31 December 1947.

[23] Archives, Seattle Branch of Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, correspondence dated 31 July 1947, 31 December 1947, 9 February 1948, 13 February 1948, and 1 March 1949.

[24] "Reserve Bank to Have Building," *Seattle Times*, 5 September 1948.

the emphasis placed on protecting the valuables stored onsite. The vault in the nominated building was to have 5,000 square feet of storage area on two floors, making it the largest vault on the West Coast at the time.[25]

At the basement level, original plans called for a large internal garage, multiple rooms dedicated to building maintenance and mechanical aspects, the lower vault with a steel circular stair, an auxiliary vault, and a dedicated elevator for currency, also labeled as the "coin lift." An elevator lobby accessed three regular elevators to the side of the coin lift. An L-shaped work area stretched along two sides of the lower vault. The ground floor, which is at grade with the alley to the west, contained more staff-only spaces. These included the cash sorting and counting space, the cash lobby, Government Bond Department, truck lobby (which could accommodate up to six armored vehicles at once), and gender specific locker rooms. There was also a special locker room for guards, which connects to a narrow pistol range under 2nd Avenue.[26]

The first floor, at grade with 2nd Avenue, originally had some public and semi-public spaces. Public spaces consisted of the central entrance lobby and the teller (or banking) lobby immediately to the south. The semi-public Discount Department, which oversaw the processing of "V" loans, had space at the south end of the floor. On the west side of the first floor were offices for accounting, bookkeeping, and personnel. Check Collections, Mail, and the File Department held offices on the second floor. The third floor, and portions of the second and fourth floors, had an open floor plan with rentable tenant spaces. The fourth floor had gender specific lounges and a shared cafeteria.

Architectural Style

The Seattle Branch Bank building of the FRBSF is an example of the 20th Century Modern Movement of the post-WW II era. It is one of the earliest known surviving examples of post-war new construction in downtown

---

25 "Try Cracking This One," *Seattle Times*, 10 July 1949.

26 Archives, Seattle Branch of Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, press release dated 27 January 1949. Also, original architectural drawings by NBBJ, 1949.

Seattle.[27] During the transitional years 1945-1950, architects grappled with how to design Modern buildings. The buildings of the mid-1950s are more typically recognized by glass curtain walls, but in the early post-war years, Seattle architects tried to adopt Modern architecture with few existing models. The Seattle Branch bank is an excellent local example of this transitional Modern style as it links pre-war, classically-inspired composition with post-war drastically stripped ornamentation and form, befitting the emphasis on efficiency during and following the war years.

The exterior lacks embellishment, in keeping with the functional emphasis of design in the post-World War II era. As described in a 1949 article, *"The exterior is without ornamentation, depending upon the vertical structural lines and openings of windows and doors for its architectural style."*[28] The building is distinguished by the symmetrical composition, solid horizontal massing, and smooth wall expanses only interrupted by regular window bands. The long (approximately 198') footprint from north to south combined with a relatively low rise of four stories above the 2nd Avenue grade anchors the main (east) facade to the ground. The regular and modest fenestration and lack of ornamentation further the sense of gravitas and permanence. On the east facade, windows in the top three stories are set in separate recessed, vertically continuous panels. Between each panel, the tall, slender remaining strips of wall add texture to otherwise smooth expanses and allude to the colonnades of classical architecture.

Drawing on Classical design in the symmetry and central entrance, the architects also disregarded the Classical language in favor of simple expressionism. According to architectural historian Jeffrey Karl Ochsner, *"Many of the leading Modern architects [of the mid-century] were fascinated by Classicism and classical themes are sometimes found in their work,"* including Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe. Ochsner continues, *"Most of Mies*

---

[27] Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation's online searchable database for surveyed historic properties has few records of new construction in the downtown area of Seattle in the years 1945-1950. Some residential and commercial construction occurred during this period in the northern and southern neighborhoods, as well as east of Lake Union.

[28] Robert Polison, "Bids Called on Federal Bank Building Here," *Daily Journal of Commerce*, 27 January 1949, 1,3. As cited in Jeffrey Karl Ochsner, Comments Regarding the "Draft Environmental Impact Statement – 1015 Second Avenue, Seattle, Washington," August 2011, 9.

van der Rohe's major buildings of the mid 1950s, notably Crown Hall at Illinois Institute of Technology (Chicago) and the Seagram Building (New York City), were symmetrical with centrally placed entrances. These buildings are considered canonical Modern masterpieces." Thus, the inclusion of Classical composition elements does not preclude Modern style classification.[29]

At the time when the Seattle Branch of the FRBSF was in the design stage, however, there were few examples of Modernism applied to large urban buildings.[30] However, there is one possible Modern example with which NBBJ, and Bain in particular, appear to have been familiar. The Philadelphia Savings Fund Society Building (PSFS Building) in Philadelphia, completed in 1932, definitely predates the Seattle Branch of the FRBSF. The PSFS Building received national attention for being a large urban example of the Modern style as imported from Europe. It was published in *Architectural Forum* (December 1932), *Architectural Review* (March 1933), and *Fortune* (December 1932), as well as included in the 1932 Museum of Modern Art exhibition on International Style Modern architecture. Bain may also have been familiar with the building through his alumni connections to Philadelphia. According to Ochsner, *"A very conspicuous feature of the PSFS design is the narrow projecting vertical columns in the outside walls of the office tower."* The inclusion of projecting columns on at least three of NBBJ's works (the Public Safety Building, 1951, the Seattle Branch of the FRBSF, and the UW Medical Center hospital tower, 1961) may have been influenced by the PSFS Building precedent.[31]

The minimalistic style of the exterior also holds true on the interior. The stated wish by the clients to have a building which was attractive yet efficient is reflected in the open, simple spaces of the upper floors with their recessed fluorescent lighting and asphalt tile floors. The former public spaces on the first floor (2nd Avenue level),

---

[29] Ochsner, August 2011, 32.

[30] One of the first curtain wall buildings to be completed and published, the Equitable Building (Portland, Oregon, by Belluschi), appeared in the *Architectural Forum* pages in September, 1948, the same month the Seattle Branch of the FRBSF's accepted design was published in the *Seattle Times*.

[31] Ochsner, August 2011, 23-24.

such as the teller lobby, were described in a FRBSF press release of 1949 as showcasing *"quiet dignity... by the modest use of marble, bronze, and walnut. Extraneous decorations and non-essentials have been eliminated, and dependence placed upon the utility of the materials to provide real beauty."*[32]

Architectural Comparisons

The Seattle Branch building of the FRBSF is one of few known Federal Reserve buildings dating from the decade immediately following WW II. In order to understand the architectural significance, several other Federal Reserve buildings (banks and branch banks) will be discussed as comparisons. The Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia is a useful comparison because it was designed by the mentor of one of the Seattle building's architects and also because it predates the Seattle example. The former Helena Branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis slightly predates the Seattle example but has many similarities. The former Portland Branch of the FRBSF is contemporary with the Seattle Branch building and was designed by Pietro Belluschi, a renowned Pacific Northwest architect. Finally, the Salt Lake City Branch post-dates the Seattle Branch and may have been influenced by the latter's design. All five buildings originally had similar functions but exhibit different styles and design elements. When compared to these four Federal Reserve properties, the Seattle Branch is consistent with the composition and materials typical of all Federal Reserve properties but features a rare application of early post-war Modernism.

The Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia (921-939 Chestnut Street, main building erected 1931-1935) differs from the Seattle Branch building in several ways, but they share similarities of function, design genesis and materials. Being of a slightly earlier time, the former follows a more traditional design aesthetic than the Seattle Branch building. Architect Paul Cret's classical architectural training is evident in his design for the Federal Reserve

[32] Archives, Seattle Branch of Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, press release dated 27 January 1949.

Bank of Philadelphia. It retains some Classical Revival features, such as the Doric colonnade at street level, whereas the Seattle Branch building gives only the slightest nod to a classical colonnade where the recessed window panels reveal tall, slender wall segments on the upper stories. There is some exterior ornamentation on the Philadelphia bank, although it is limited to the lower story and the decorative window grilles. A higher proportion of glazing gives a stronger sense of connection to the interior with the public on the street, whereas the Seattle example emphasizes security and limits the visual connection to the interior. However, the Seattle Branch building continues the trend that Cret began with his stripped classicism, by maintaining a regular, rational, symmetrical design. The Philadelphia bank's upper floors are similar to the Seattle Branch building, with nearly smooth wall surfaces, flush windows, and a strong geometric organization. Both are steel frame structures clad in ashlar stone.[33]

The Helena Branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis building (corner of Lawrence and Park Avenues) also demonstrates the evolution of Federal Reserve Bank design.[34] Built in 1938 (1946 2nd floor addition), the Helena Branch building is newer than the Philadelphia bank, about ten years older than the Seattle bank, and yet has almost no ornamentation. The Helena Branch bank building, designed by Great Falls, MT architect George H. Stanley, has nearly smooth exterior wall surfaces, a flat roof, symmetrical composition and heavy, horizontal massing. The pilasters are plain but conjure the essence of a classical colonnade. As such, the Helena Branch bank serves as another example of stripped classicism as applied to a Federal Reserve Bank. The Helena Branch also displays the solidity and imperviousness typical of other historic Federal Reserve Banks, with masonry walls only minimally interrupted by windows, window grilles at the main floor level, and a single central entrance in the main facade. The architectural characteristics of the Helena Branch bank building place it between the Philadelphia and Seattle bank buildings on the classical – modern spectrum. Being the latest of the three and a post-World War II

---

[33] The Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia building has been documented through the Historic American Building Survey. Images and information available through the Library of Congress, recorded under HABS PA,51- PHIL,301-

[34] The former Helena Branch building is now used for private offices.

project, the Seattle Branch building naturally exhibits the least amount of classicism, at least in the sense of ornamentation. The tenets of symmetry and permanence remain, exhibited in a stripped, function-focused design.[35]

Designed by Portland-based, nationally renowned Modern architect Pietro Belluschi (1899-1994), the Portland Branch of the FRBSF has been referred to as a late, refined response to the Streamlined Moderne style.[36] Regardless of stylistic category, it is one of the post-war examples of the Federal Reserve Bank property type. Furthermore, correspondence between the San Francisco and Seattle bank offices indicate the former Portland Branch building was designed simultaneously with the Seattle building, with similar discussions of costs and materials.[37] Built in 1949-1950 (per assessor records), the Portland Branch building was also erected contemporary with the Seattle Branch.

The former Portland Branch building, like many of Belluschi's works, refers to classical design in its composition but withholds ornamentation. The building remains true to the Federal Reserve form type by utilizing masonry walls, regular fenestration, and a relatively low, anchored massing. This building stands apart with its bold rounded corner, which is cut away at the first floor, and a less weighty upper portion than its peers. The rounded corner may in fact be a utilitarian solution to an irregular parcel, rather than an intentional departure from this property type's normal cubic massing.[38] The first floor is further emphasized through the polished dark granite cladding. Above the first floor, the smooth wall surface changes to a white marble, only interrupted by flush, thin framed, regular fenestration. Except for the rounded corner, the Portland and Seattle branches share strong

---

[35] The former Helena Branch building of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis has been documented through the Historic American Building Survey. Images and information available through the Library of Congress, recorded under HABS Mont,25-Hel,12-.

[36] Gideon Bosker and Lena Lencek, *Frozen Music: A History of Portland Architecture* (Portland, OR: Press of the Oregon Historical Society, 1985), 109, as cited in Jeffrey Karl Ochsner, Comments Regarding the "Draft Environmental Impact Statement – 1015 Second Avenue, Seattle, Washington," August 2011, 34-35.

[37] Archives, Seattle Branch of Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, correspondence dated 31 July 1947, 31 December 1947, 9 February 1948, and 13 February 1948.

[38] The trapezoidal parcel features a less than 90 degree angle at the corner. The building is reminiscent of other flat iron type buildings, where a narrow corner is rounded to allow for maximum usable floor space.

resemblances. Most windows in the primary facades are of the same size, are generally flush with the wall surface, and are regularly placed, giving a sense of unity and solidity. Both are limited in height to only four stories (above grade, on the main facade).

Another branch bank of the FRBSF was constructed in Salt Lake City, completed in 1958. There are strong parallels with regard to massing, fenestration, materials, and exterior symmetry between the Salt Lake City and Seattle branch banks, but the Salt Lake City example is more colorful, due to the pinkish-hued stone cladding atop polished red granite at the first floor. The first floor window treatments are almost identical to the Seattle bank, with polished projecting red granite encircling recessed, metal-framed windows. The red granite exterior of the first floor emphasizes the base similar to the ground floor and terraces of the Seattle building. Given the slightly later completion year, the Salt Lake City Branch bank appears to have been modeled on the Seattle design.

Architect William J. Bain, Sr.

The lead architect for the design of the Seattle Branch of the FRBSF is credited to William J. Bain, Sr., one of the four founding partners of Naramore, Bain, Brady and Johanson (NBBJ). Bain is a prominent figure in 20th century Pacific Northwest architecture individually as well as a partner with other architects, including J. Lister Holmes and NBBJ.

Born near Vancouver, British Columbia and raised in Seattle, William J. Bain, Sr. (1896-1985) graduated from the University of Pennsylvania's architecture program in 1921. While studying architecture at the University of Pennsylvania, Bain studied under prominent French architect Paul Philippe Cret.[39] Cret developed a trademark style of stripped classicism that was based on his formal, rational architectural training but which relinquished adherence

[39] Duane A. Dietz, in Jeffrey Karl Ochsner, editor, *Shaping Seattle Architecture* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994), 216.

to historic accuracy. This is seen in the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, for which Cret designed the main building (built 1931-1935) and the east addition and formal garden (built 1940-1942).[40]

Bain briefly worked with Seattle architects W. R. B. Wilcox and Arthur Loveless before moving to Los Angeles in 1922, where he worked for the firm of Johnson, Kaufman & Coate.[41] In 1924, Bain returned to Seattle and started his own practice.[42] His early work is known for being mostly historical revival style schools and residences.

In his early career, Bain designed richly detailed, hand-crafted buildings. Residences comprised much of his work prior to the formation of NBBJ. In fact, one of those residences may have helped NBBJ win the commission for the Seattle Branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco (FRBSF). In 1927, Bain designed the residence of Clarence Shaw, manager of the Seattle Branch of the FRBSF by the late 1940's.[43]

In the early 1940s, Bain worked with noted Seattle architect and fellow University of Pennsylvania graduate J. Lister Holmes on at least two projects, Yesler Terrace and the Rainier Vista Elementary School. Holmes' career, like Bain's, also shows a predilection for historical styles before transitioning into the International Style. Bain, along with many other Seattle architects, experimented with the popular streamlined and simplified aesthetics of the 1930s, but even in the 1930s some of his designs retained ties to the past. Yesler Terrace (1940-43) is a relatively early example of Bain's shift into the Modern Movement. The project was a defense housing complex, aimed at being affordable, energy efficient and attractive.[44] During World War II, Bain also partnered with Floyd Naramore,

---

[40] Paul Philippe Cret, himself a product of the renowned Ecole des Beaux-Arts, accepted a Professor of Design position at the University of Pennsylvania in 1903. After a hiatus to concentrate on his professional practice, Cret returned to teaching at the university after World War I. Penn Biographies, Paul Philippe Cret, Penn University Archives and Records Center, http://www.archives.upenn.edu/people/1800s/cret_paul.html.

[41] Duane A. Dietz, in Jeffrey Karl Ochsner, editor, *Shaping Seattle Architecture* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994), 216.

[42] Anthony Dodoye-Alali, "William Bain: A Half Century of Seattle Architecture," *Daily Journal of Commerce*, 3 December 1980, 7.

[43] *Daily Journal of Commerce*, June 3, 1927, 3.

[44] Duane A. Dietz, in Jeffrey Karl Ochsner, editor, *Shaping Seattle Architecture* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994), 204-208.

Clifton Brady and Perry Johanson to pursue large military projects. The temporary joint venture cemented into a successful firm, officially coalescing as NBBJ in 1943.[45]

Governor Arthur Langlie named Bain to the State Board of Architectural Examiners in July, 1953. At that time, Bain was already a former president of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) board.[46] By 1956, he held the position of chairman of the State Board of Architectural Examiners.[47] As part of NBBJ, Bain worked on the Kingdome (demolished), Rainier Tower, and several Battelle Northwest buildings. For the Seattle-First National Bank Building, Bain did some preliminary design work and research.[48]

These projects stand in stark contrast to his early career. His early works of the 1920s and 1930s show an evolution from historical to popular styles. By the 1940s, mid-career projects such as Yesler Terrace and the FRBSF Seattle Branch Bank building show a more refined and personal approach to blending the past and the present in restrained, efficient, and function-focused designs. Towards the end of his life, he reflected on his career and on Seattle architecture in particular, which he characterized as solid and permanent. "We design our buildings to last for a long time," Bain told a reporter a few years before his death in 1985.[49] This is evident in the design for the Federal Reserve branch in Seattle.

NBBJ

Formed in 1943, Naramore, Bain, Brady & Johanson (NBBJ) quickly became one of the city's leading design firms after the end of World War II. According to Ochsner, *"Although just a few years old, [NBBJ] emerged as one of the dominant architectural practices in Seattle in the years after 1945,"* as evidenced by their participation

---

[45] Bain also continued to accept commissions on his own, separate from NBBJ.
[46] "Bain Named to Architect Board," *Seattle Times*, 8 July 1953.
[47] Anthony Dodoye-Alali, "William Bain: A Half Century of Seattle Architecture," *Daily Journal of Commerce*, 3 December 1980, 7
[48] Anthony Dodoye-Alali, "William Bain: A Half Century of Seattle Architecture," *Daily Journal of Commerce*, 3 December 1980, 7.
[49] Anthony Dodoye-Alali, "William Bain: A Half Century of Seattle Architecture," *Daily Journal of Commerce*, 3 December 1980, 7.

with four large public commissions and numerous smaller projects in that period.[50] The FRBSF Seattle Branch Bank building is one of the earliest surviving works by the then newly formed firm of NBBJ. Today, the firm has offices around the world and is ranked as one of the largest architectural firms globally.

The oldest of the four, Floyd Naramore (1879-1970) studied engineering at the University of Wisconsin followed by architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), graduating from the latter in 1907. He served as architect for two different school districts, starting with Portland in 1912 and later Seattle as of 1919. Over the twelve years that he worked for the Seattle School District, he designed and supervised construction of an estimated twenty schools.[51]

Clifton Brady (1894-1963) graduated from Iowa State College in 1917 with an architecture degree and arrived in Seattle in 1927. Except for the lean years of the Great Depression, Brady worked for Floyd Naramore, eventually becoming a partner in Naramore's firm in 1941. Perry B. Johanson (1910-1981), the youngest of the four, received his architecture degree from the University of Washington in 1934 and won the AIA Medal as the top student in his graduating class.[52]

Each of the four partners of NBBJ brought valuable talents and skills, enabling the firm to pursue projects that they would not have been able to acquire individually. Naramore and Brady both had extensive school construction portfolios. Bain and Johanson had strong academic foundations in design, and Bain in particular was known for excellent client management as well as having won numerous design awards. Johanson, as the youngest and locally trained, contributed a unique perspective to the partnership, eventually taking the lead on many medical projects for the firm.[53]

---

[50] Ochsner, August 2011, 20.
[51] Ochsner, August 2011, 15-16.
[52] Ochsner, August 2011, 16.
[53] Ochsner, August 2011, 16-17.

From 1945 to 1947, NBBJ won four major public building commissions. In 1945, the firm was selected for the city's new Public Safety Building (opened January of 1951, demolished). In 1946, they were chosen to design the Health Sciences complex (completed 1949) and later the Medical Center at the University of Washington. NBBJ also won the 1946 commission for the Veterans Hospital on Beacon Hill (completed 1950).[54] By 1947, the firm was a rising talent in Seattle. The *Daily Journal of Commerce* announced the selection in early April, 1947 of NBBJ as the architects for the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, Seattle Branch.[55] The design phase lasted through the rest of the year and into 1948.[56] In early September, 1948, local papers published sketched renderings of the building, with little discernible changes from the final execution.[57]

The Public Safety Building and the Seattle Branch of the FRBSF were of particular importance to Seattle for several reasons. They were both highly visible, large-scale properties. Prior to the Public Safety and Federal Reserve buildings, downtown Seattle had had little substantial construction since the early 1930s, with the exceptions of the 1933 Federal Office Building and the 1940 Federal Courthouse. Both were designed by non-local firms and architects. According to Ochsner,

> *"The last substantial downtown building by a Seattle-based architect was the Exchange Building, by John Graham, completed in 1931. Thus, the Public Safety Building and the Federal Reserve Branch Bank were the only two substantial new buildings constructed in downtown between 1940 and the early 1950s, and the only sizable completely new downtown buildings by a Seattle-based firm in over fifteen years."* [58]

Each of the four partners was a respected architect in their own right. They served nearly in succession as president of the Washington State Chapter of the AIA, as follows: Floyd Naramore 1939-40; William Bain, Sr. 1941-

---

[54] *Daily Journal of Commerce* announcements, as cited in Ochsner, August 2011, 19.

[55] "Federal Reserve Bank Building Architects Are Announced Here," *Daily Journal of Commerce*, 5 April 1947, 1.

[56] Archives, Seattle Branch of Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, correspondence dated 31 July 1947, 31 December 1947, 9 February 1948, and 13 February 1948.

[57] "Reserve Bank to Have Building," *Seattle Times*, 5 September 1948.

[58] Ochsner, August 2011, 20.

43; Clifton Brady 1947-48; and, Perry Johanson 1950-51. All but Brady were also elected as Fellows in the AIA.[59] In 1960, the firm added three more partners (firm name did not change), a business manager, nine new senior associates and seven new [junior] associates, all joining at least five existing staff.[60] By 1963, NBBJ was listed as one of two Seattle-based architectural firms that were among the top 100 largest firms in the country.[61]

Summary

The Federal Reserve Bank system plays a unique role, supporting the continued existence of commercial banks as well as the regular functioning of the U.S. economy. Located in the heart of the city's financial district, the Seattle Branch building of the FRBSF contributed to the broad patterns of history as it represents the first permanent, function-designed home of that institution in Seattle, as necessitated by the growth of branch operations between 1917 and circa 1945.

The design of Federal Reserve banks over time demonstrates a continuation of certain values alongside the evolution of popular architectural trends. As financial institutions with ties to the federal government, these buildings portray strength, frugality and reliability through their building materials and composition. As the backbone of the national banking industry, they are repositories for enormous amounts of cash. The Seattle Branch of the FRBSF is an excellent and highly intact example of a Federal Reserve Branch Bank building, as well as a rare example of early post-war Modernism as applied to this conservative property type. The Seattle Branch building of the FRBSF is locally significant as the work of master architects William J. Bain, Sr. and his partners at NBBJ.

---

59 Ochsner, August 2011, 17.

60 "Architectural Firm Adds Three Partners," *Seattle Times*, 4 December 1960.

61 John Graham & Co. was the other Seattle-based firm listed, with 33 architects and 31 engineers. NBBJ had 16 architects and two engineers. "Architect Firms Here In Top 100," *Seattle Times*, 29 September 1963.

Bibliography

BOLA Architecture and Planning. *City of Seattle Landmark Nomination: The Federal Reserve Bank* (revised April 14, 2008).

Bosker, Gideon and Lena Lencek. *Frozen Music: A History of Portland Architecture* (Portland, OR: Press of the Oregon Historical Society, 1985).

Daily Journal of Commerce (Seattle). 3 June 1927.

Daily Journal of Commerce (Seattle). "Federal Reserve Bank Building Architects Are Announced Here." 5 April 1947.

Daily Journal of Commerce (Seattle). "Site Bought by Federal Bank." 3 March 1945.

Dodoye-Alali, Anthony. "William Bain: A Half Century of Seattle Architecture," *Daily Journal of Commerce*. 3 December 1980, 7.

Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, Seattle Branch. Archives, including construction records, correspondence, photos and architectural drawings.

Historic American Building Survey. Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, Helena Branch. HABS Mont,25-Hel,12-.

Historic American Building Survey. Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia. HABS PA,51- PHIL,301-.

Historical Research Associates, Inc. *Historical Resource Technical Report, Former Federal Reserve Branch of San Francisco, Seattle Branch* (April 2011). Erica Kachmarsky, preparer.

Naramore, Bain, Brady and Johanson, Architects. Original architectural drawings, 1949.

Ochsner, Jeffrey Karl. Comments Regarding the "Draft Environmental Impact Statement – 1015 Second Avenue, Seattle, Washington." (August 2011).

Ochsner, Jeffrey Karl, ed. *Shaping Seattle Architecture* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994).

Penn Biographies, Paul Philippe Cret, Penn University Archives and Records Center, http://www.archives.upenn.edu/people/1800s/cret_paul.html.

Polison, Robert. "Bids Called on Federal Bank Building Here," *Daily Journal of Commerce.* 27 January 1949.

Preston, Howard H. "A Milestone in Washington State Federal Reserve Banking." *Pacific Northwest Industry* (January, 1951).

Roth, Leland M. *American Architecture: A History* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2001).

Seattle Branch Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco. Brochure (1951).

Seattle Times. "Architects Grow Quietly." 15 June 1969.

Seattle Times. "Architectural Firm Adds Three Partners." 4 December 1960.

Seattle Times. "Bain Named to Architect Board." 8 July 1953.

Seattle Times. "Floyd A. Naramore, Architect, Dies at 91." 30 October 1978.

Seattle Times. "Reserve Bank Officials to Lay Cornerstone." 19 April 1950.

Seattle Times. "Reserve Bank to Have Building." 5 September 1948.

Seattle Times. "Seattle Firm Honored for Hospital Design." 15 January 1961.

Seattle Times. "Seattle Firm Wins Award in Design." 15 November 1959.

Seattle Times. "Try Cracking This One." 10 July 1949.

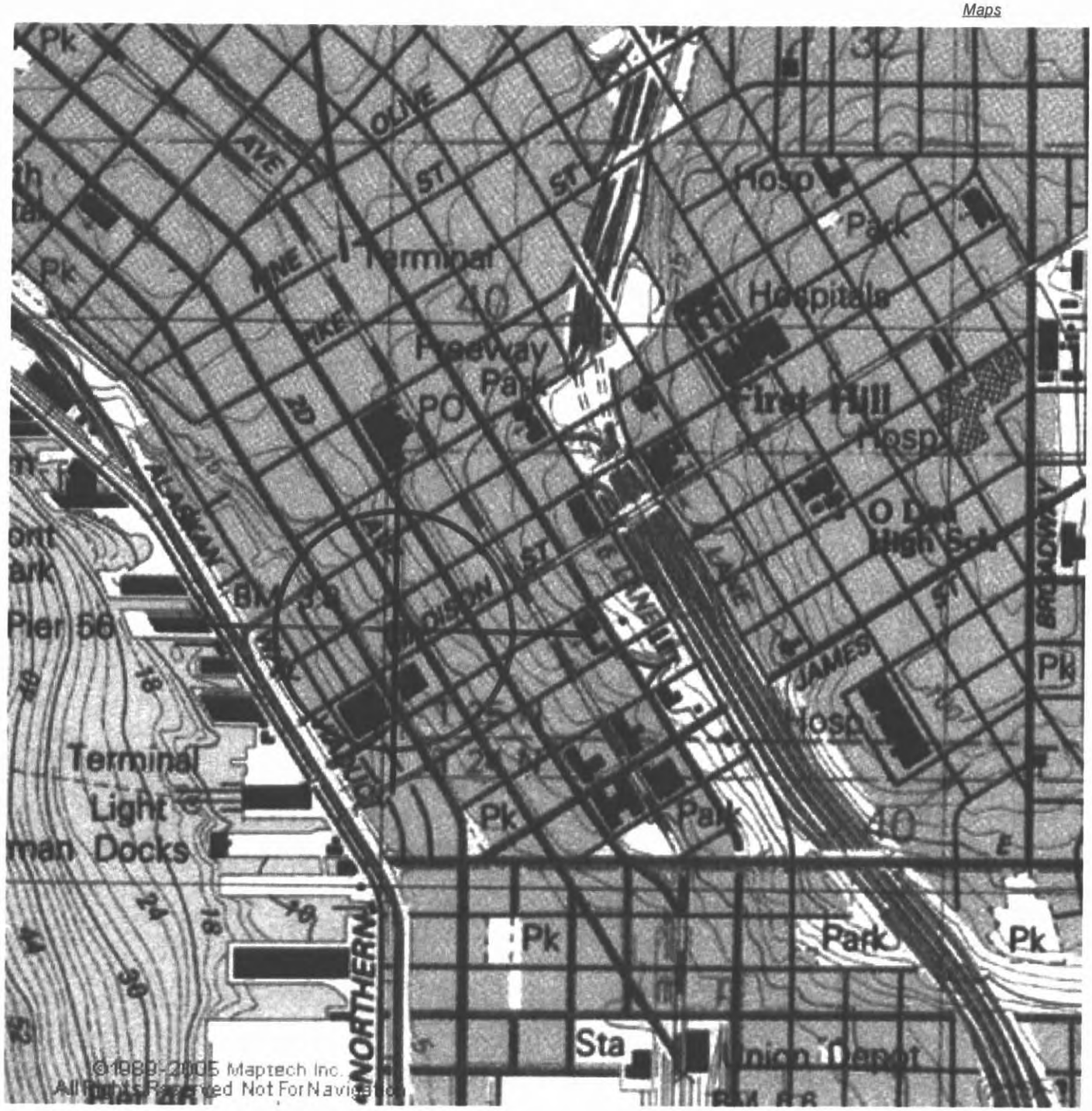
According to the King County Assessor, the building owner is as follows:

Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, Seattle Branch
2700 Naches Avenue SW
Renton, WA 98057
(425) 203-0800

However, for notification purposes, please also include the following contact:

Robert Kellar
Group Vice President
Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco
101 Market Street, Mail Stop 590
San Francisco, CA 94105
(415) 974-2655

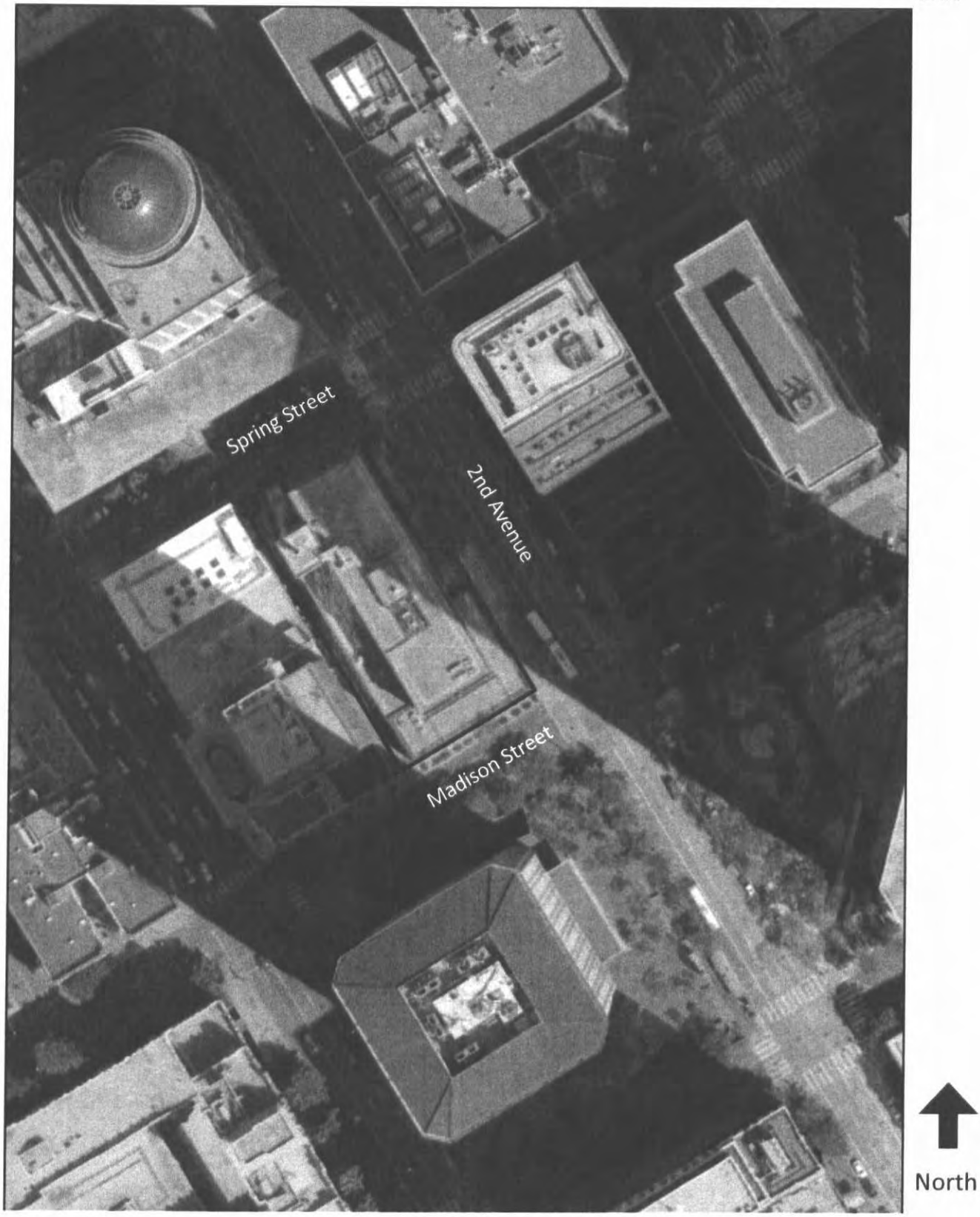
Maps



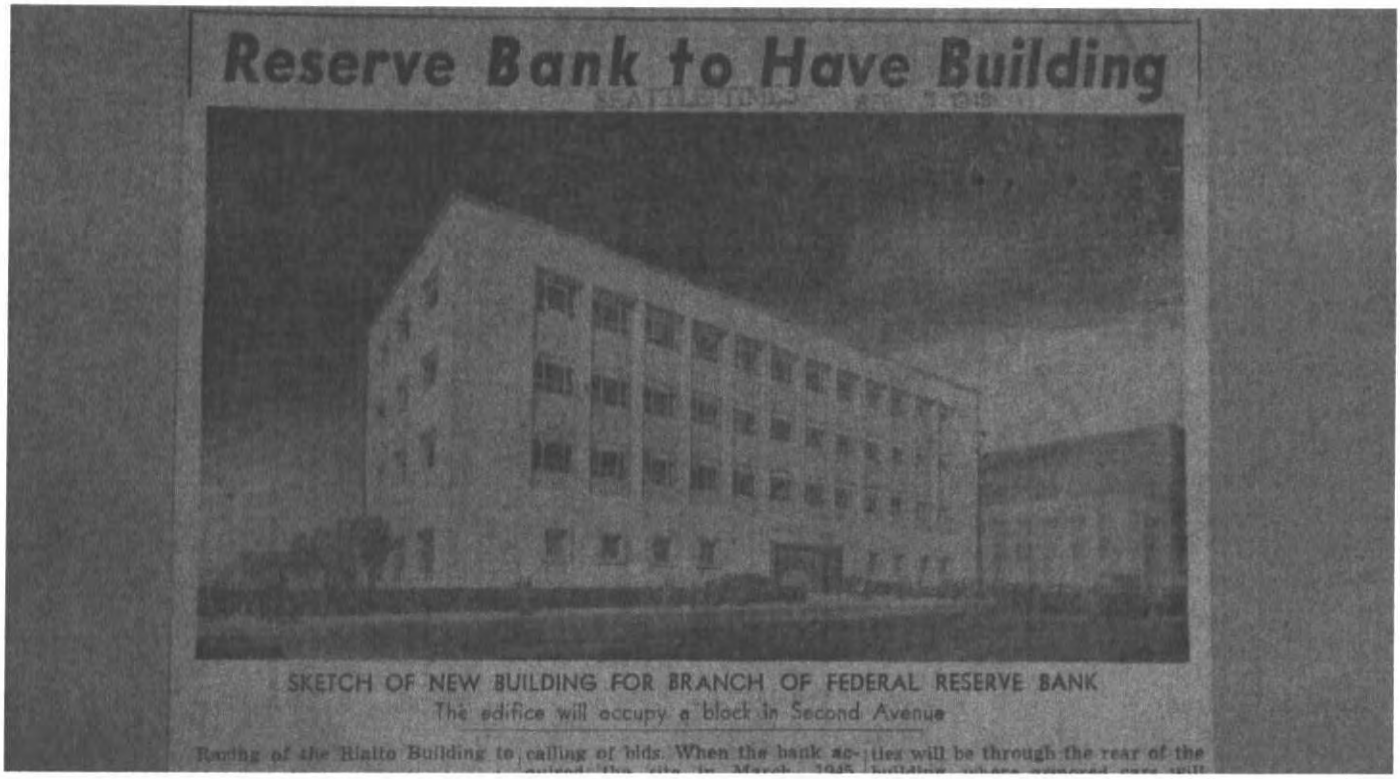
North

USGS map detail showing the location of the Seattle Branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, 1015 2nd Avenue, Seattle, WA. UTM Reference: Zone 10, E 0550013/ N 5272714

Maps

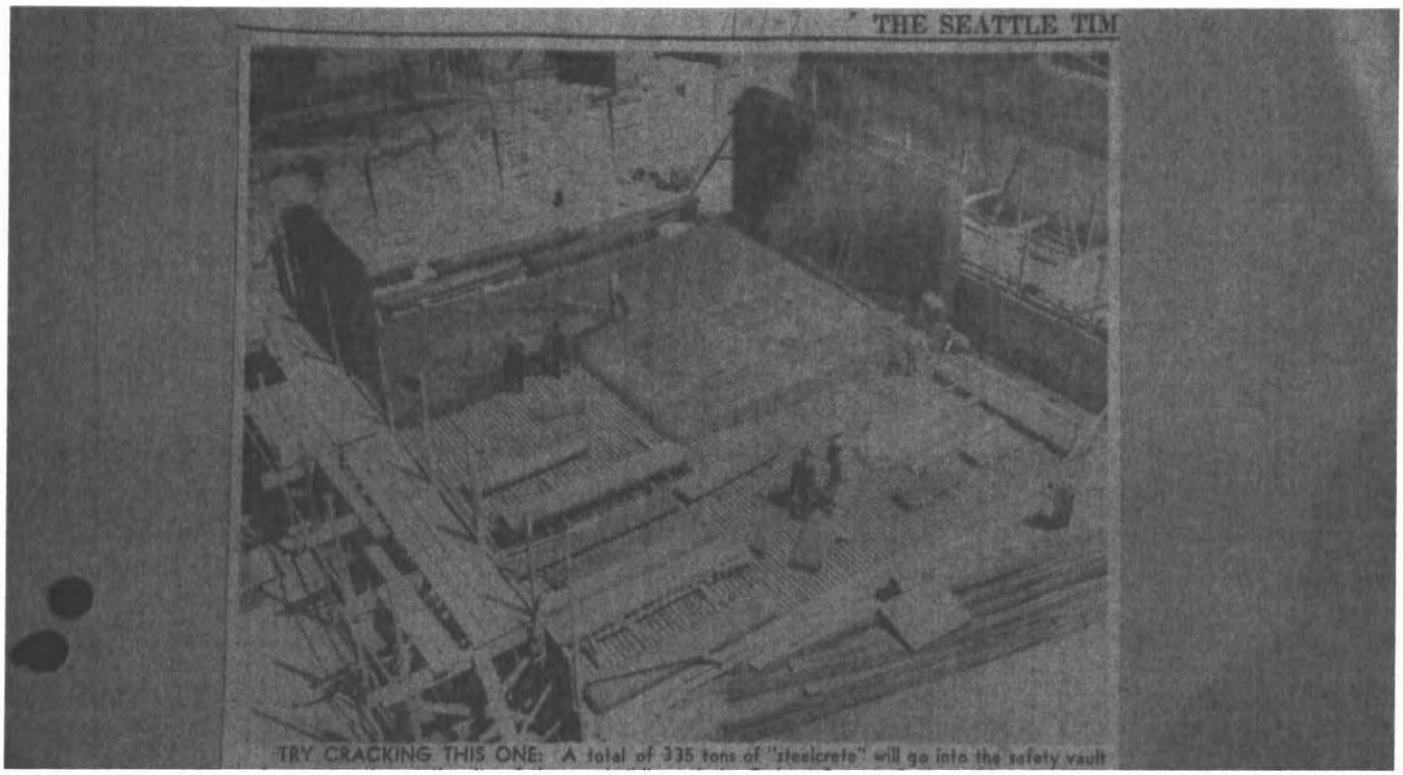


Site map showing the location of the nominated property, outlined in red.


Reserve Bank to Have Building

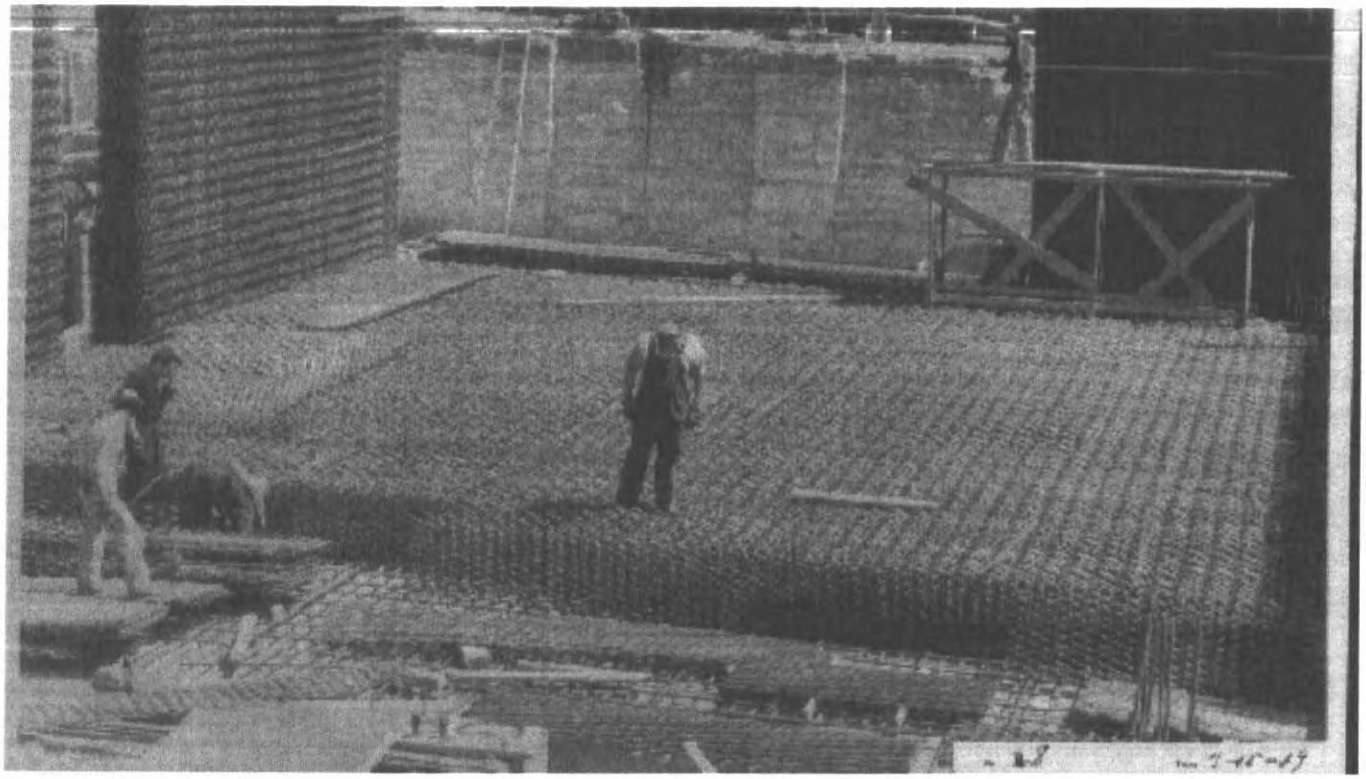
SKETCH OF NEW BUILDING FOR BRANCH OF FEDERAL RESERVE BANK
The edifice will occupy a block in Second Avenue

First published sketch of the new building, as seen in the September 5, 1948 *Seattle Times*.

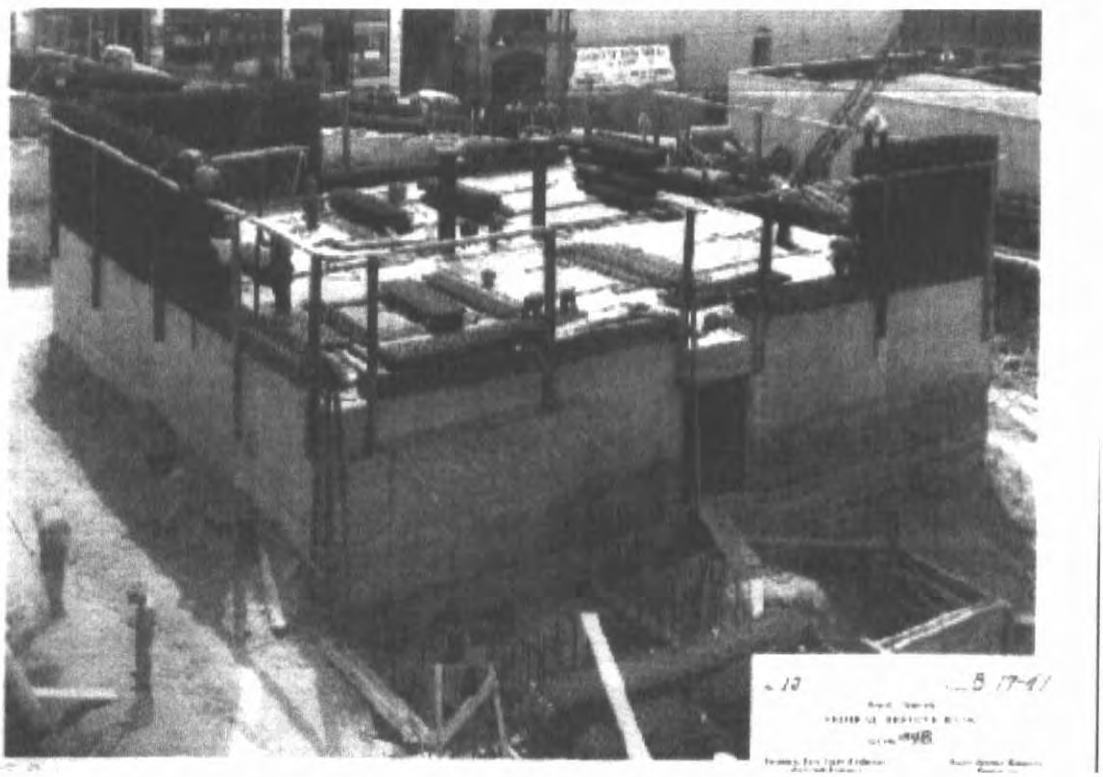

THE SEATTLE TIM

TRY CRACKING THIS ONE: A total of 335 tons of "steelcrete" will go into the safety vault

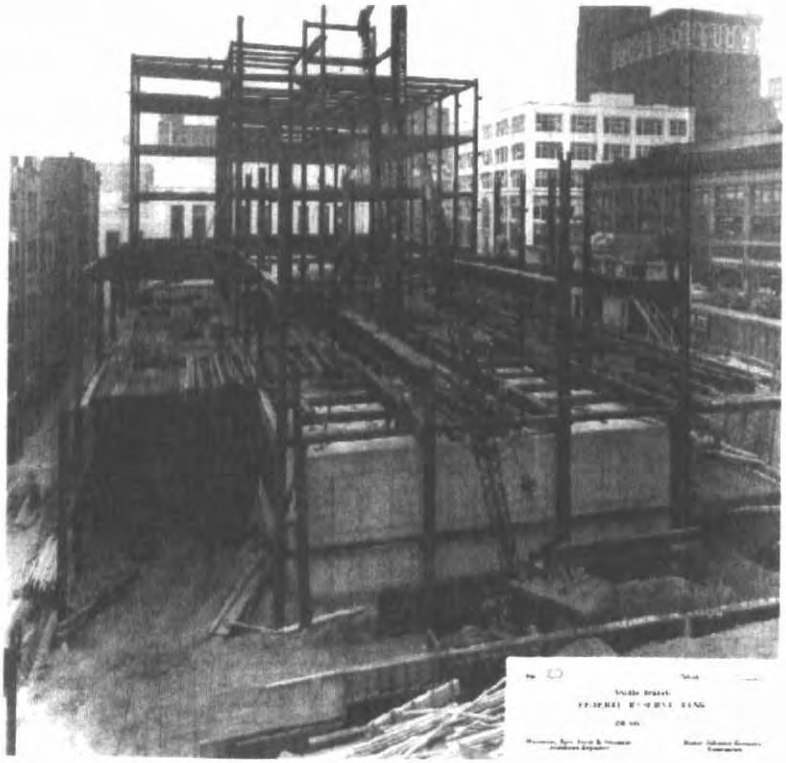
Vault construction in progress, as seen in the July 10, 1949 *Seattle Times*.



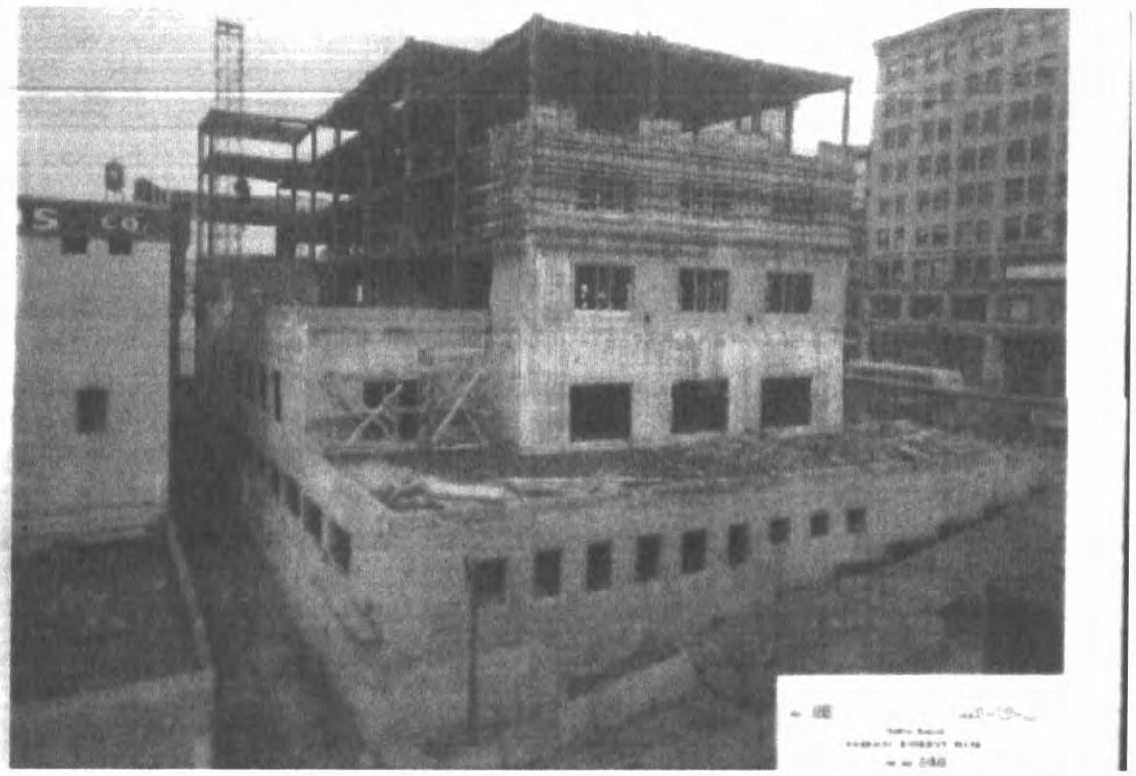
1949 view of lower vault construction. Source: Federal Reserve Bank Archives.



1949 view of upper vault construction. Source: Federal Reserve Bank Archives.

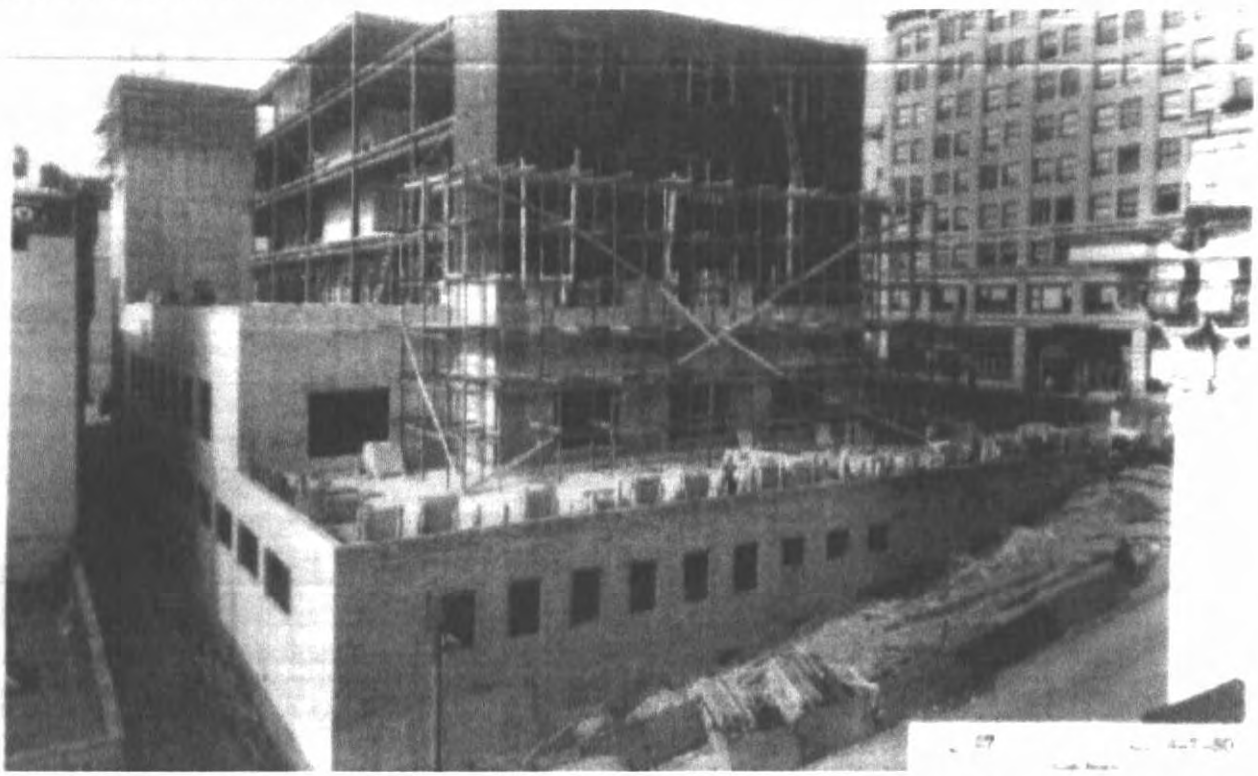


1949 view of steel frame going up, looking north. Note 2-story vault at south end. Source: Federal Reserve Bank Archives.

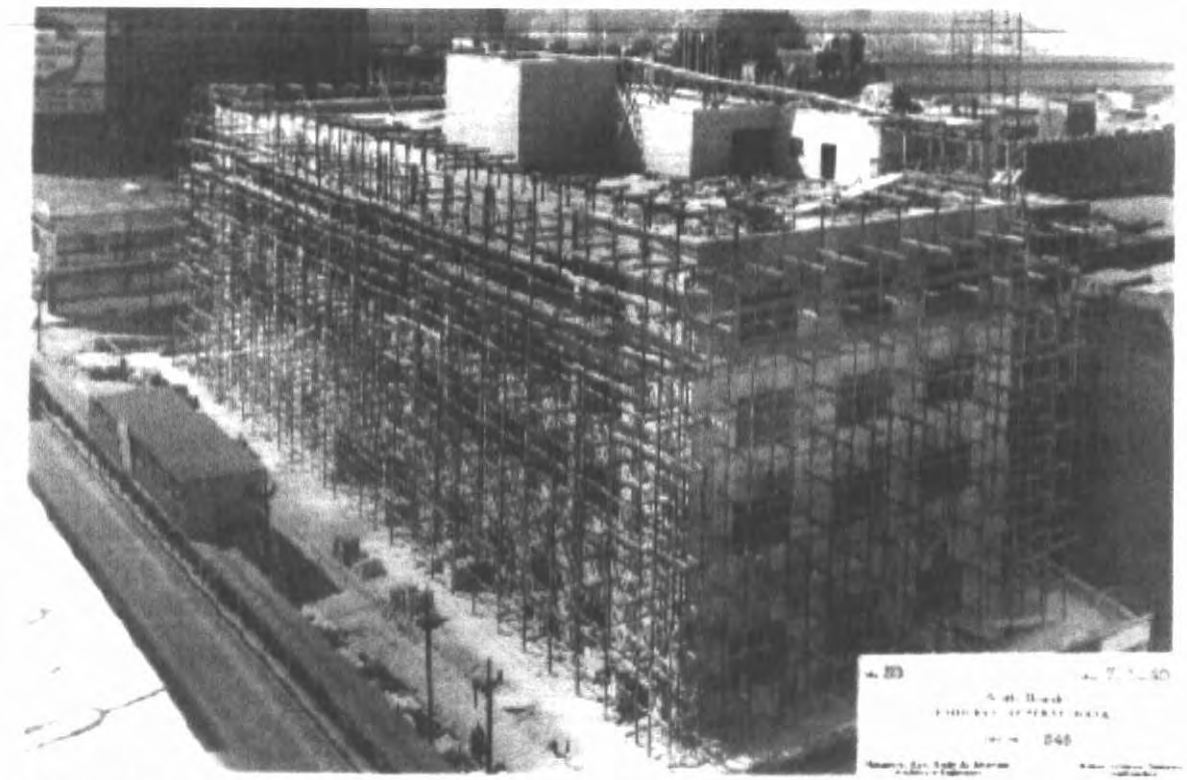


1950 view of exterior concrete form work, looking northeast. Source: Federal Reserve Bank Archives.

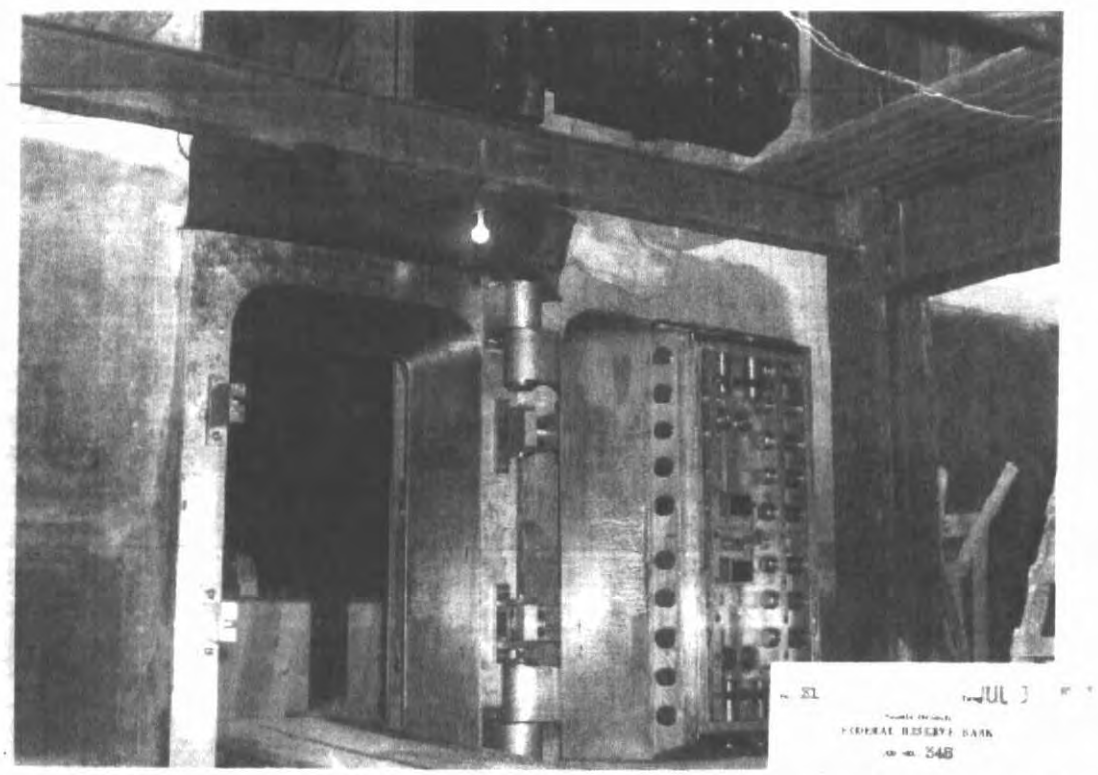
1950 view looking south across 2nd floor roof. Note start of brick courses and window framing. Source: Federal Reserve Bank Archives.



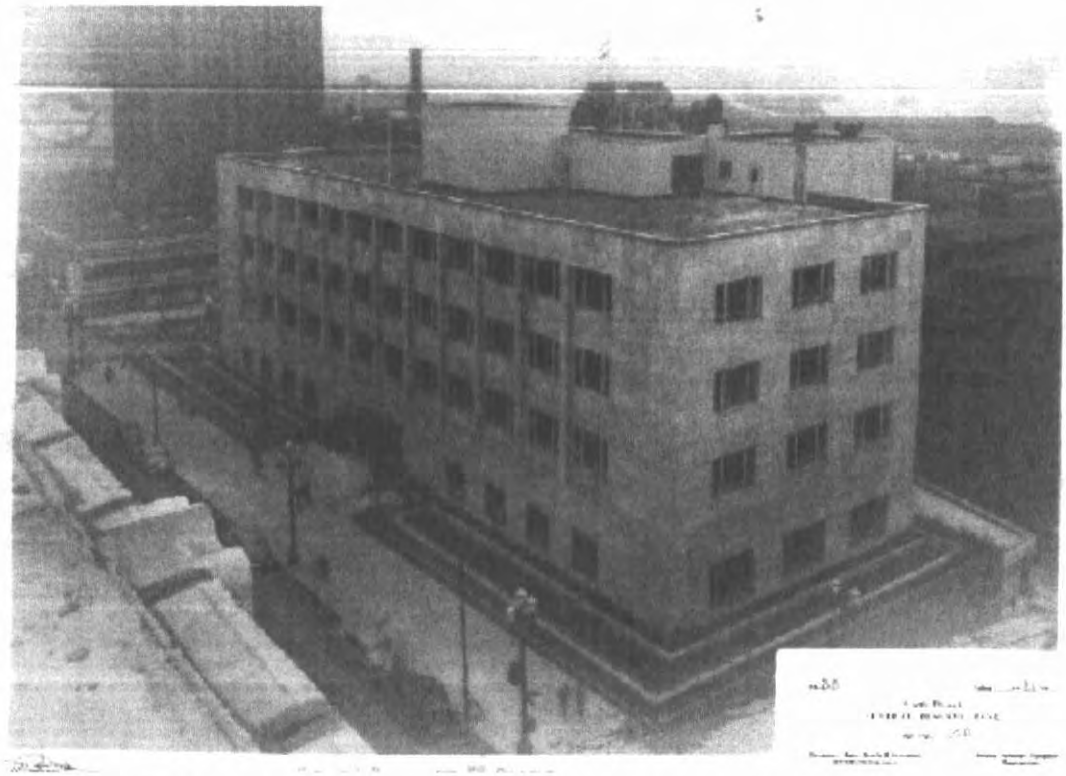
1950 view of limestone cladding being set, looking northeast. Source: Federal Reserve Bank Archives.



1950 construction view, looking southwest. Source: Federal Reserve Bank Archives.



1950 view of newly installed upper and lower vault doors. Source: Federal Reserve Bank Archives.



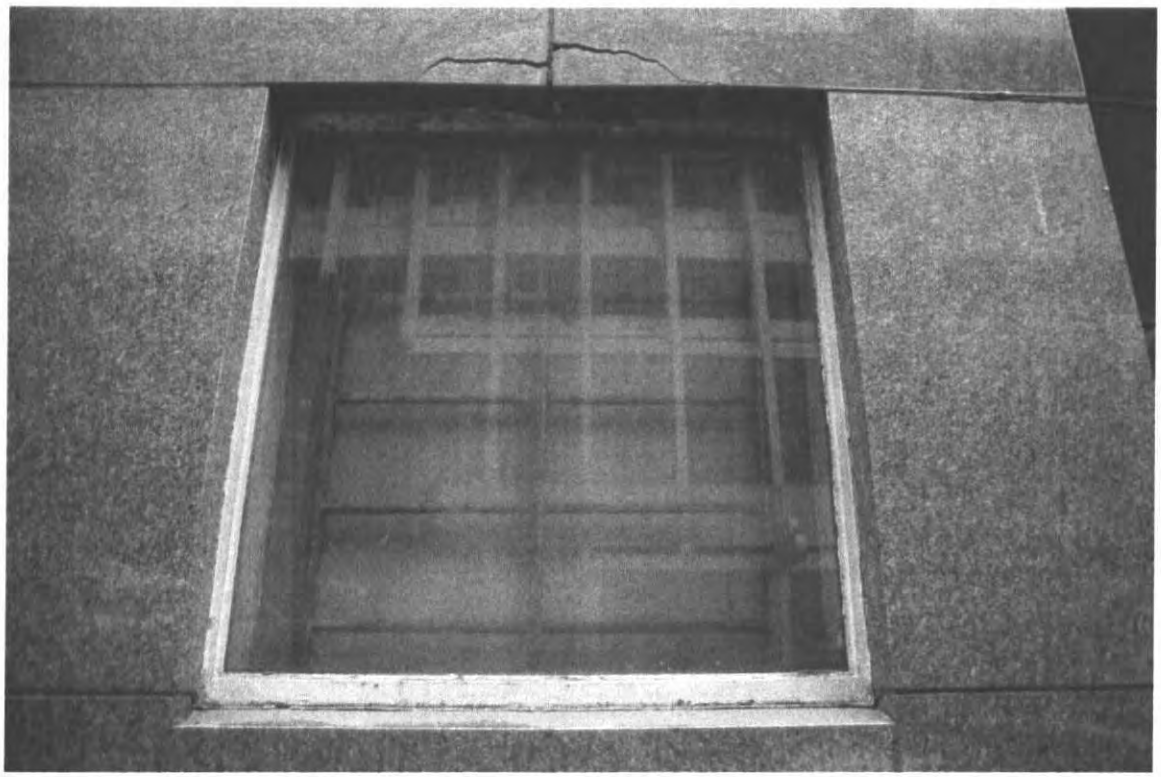
1950 view, looking southwest. Source: Federal Reserve Bank Archives.

November 29, 1950 view of south and east facades. Source: Puget Sound Regional Archives.

1 of 22: 2011 view of south and east facades. Source: Artifacts Consulting, Inc.

2 of 22: 2011 view of east and north facades. Source: Artifacts Consulting, Inc.

3 of 22: 2011 view of north facade. Source: Artifacts Consulting, Inc.

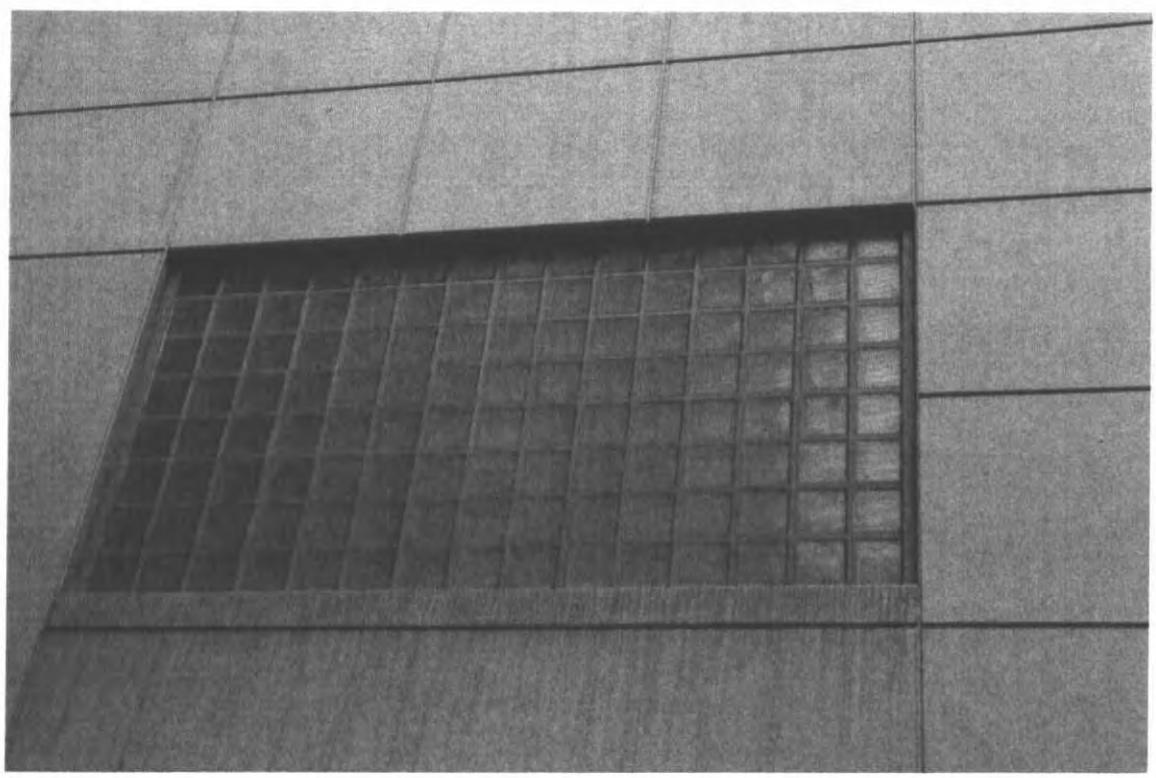


4 of 22: 2011 detail of westernmost window in the north ground floor wall, along sidewalk grade. Source: Artifacts Consulting, Inc.

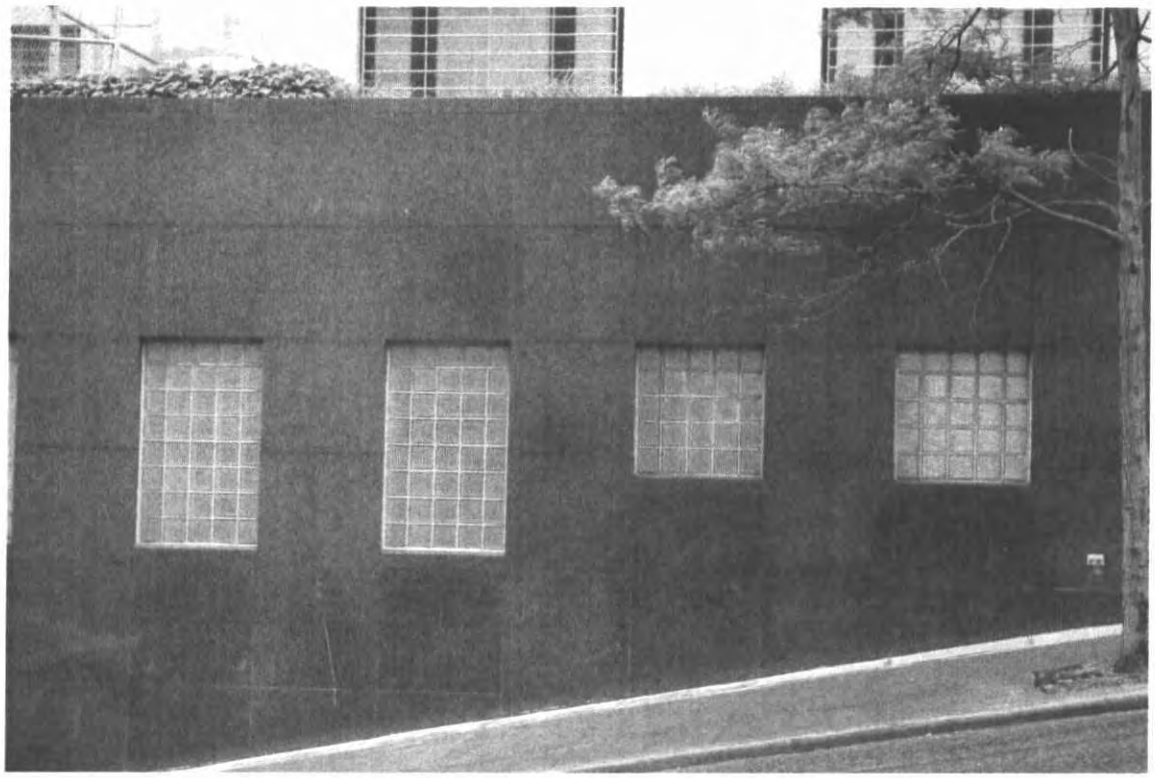
5 of 22: 2011 view of north and west facades. Source: Artifacts Consulting, Inc.

6 of 22: 2011 view of northwest loading dock and truck bay, looking south. Source: Artifacts Consulting, Inc.

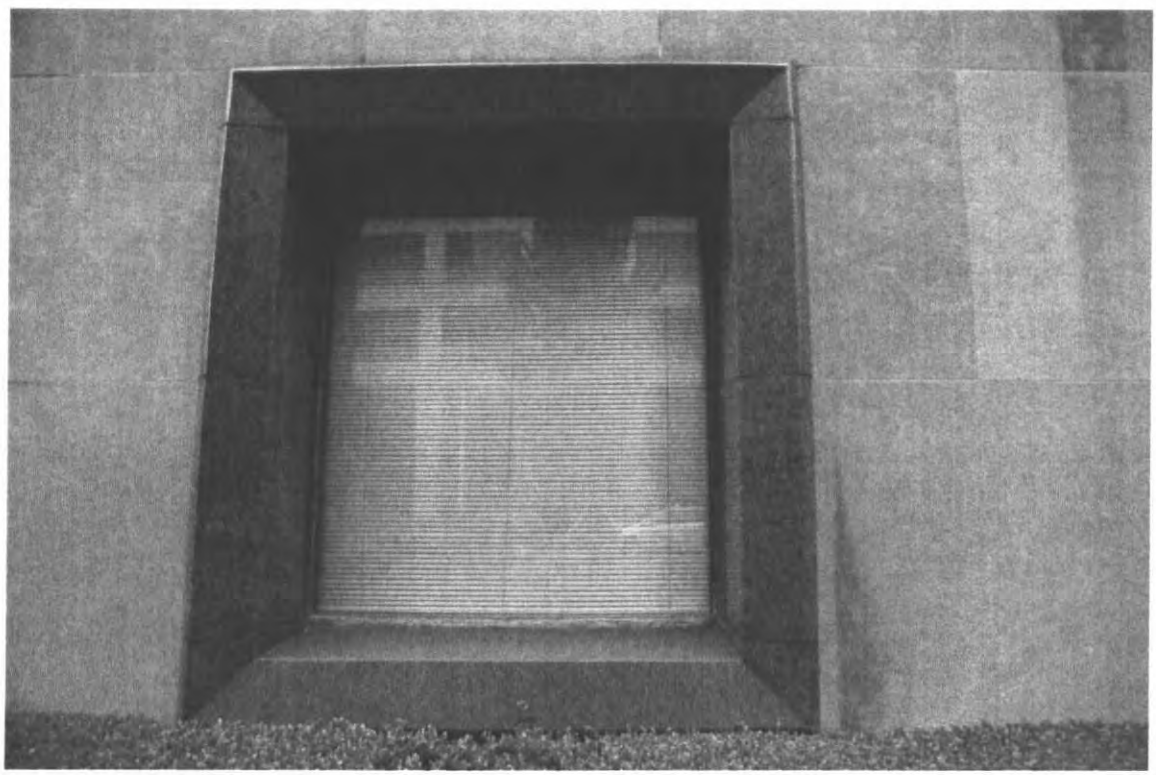
7 of 22: 2011 view of southwest corner. Source: Artifacts Consulting, Inc.



8 of 22: 2011 detail of original glass block window in west facade. Source: Artifacts Consulting, Inc.



9 of 22: 2011 detail of original glass block windows in south facade. Source: Artifacts Consulting, Inc.

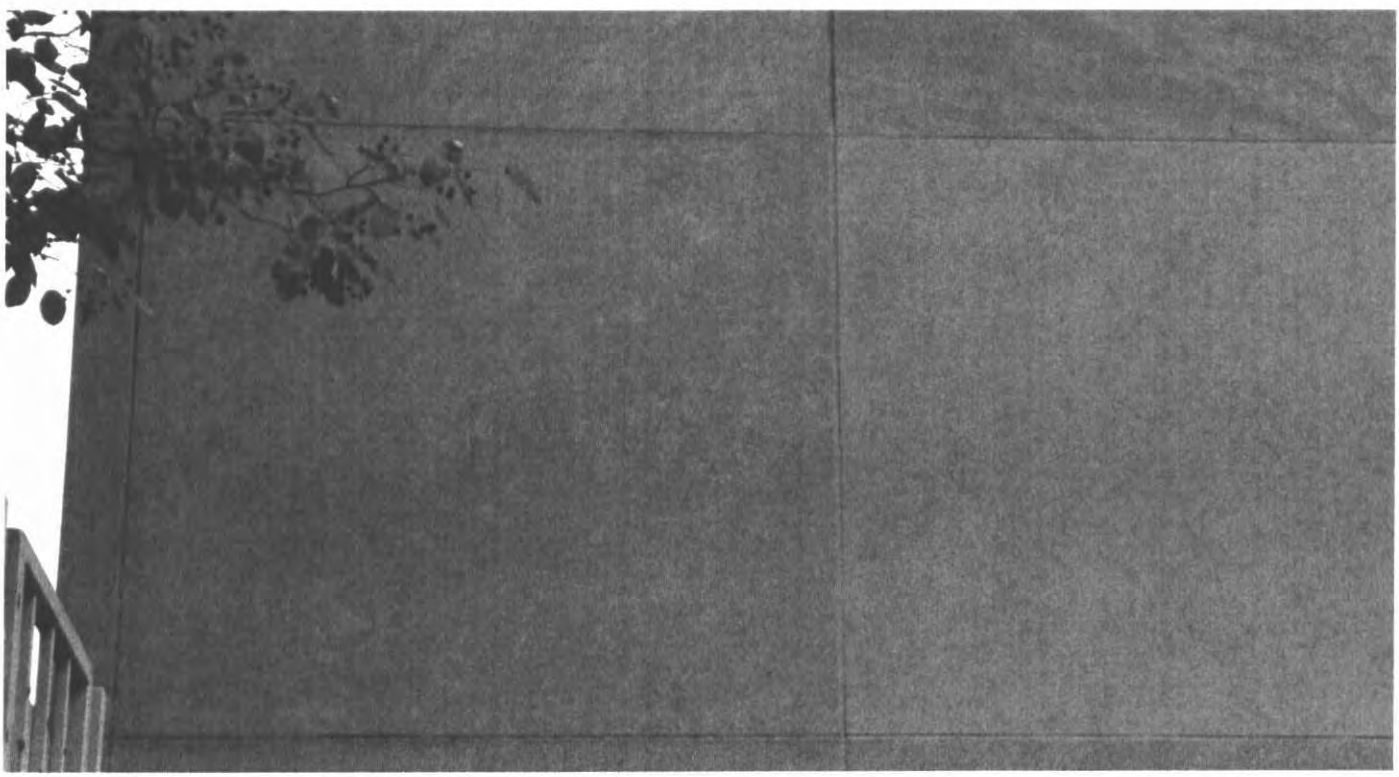


10 of 22: 2011 detail of original first floor window in east facade. Source: Artifacts Consulting, Inc.

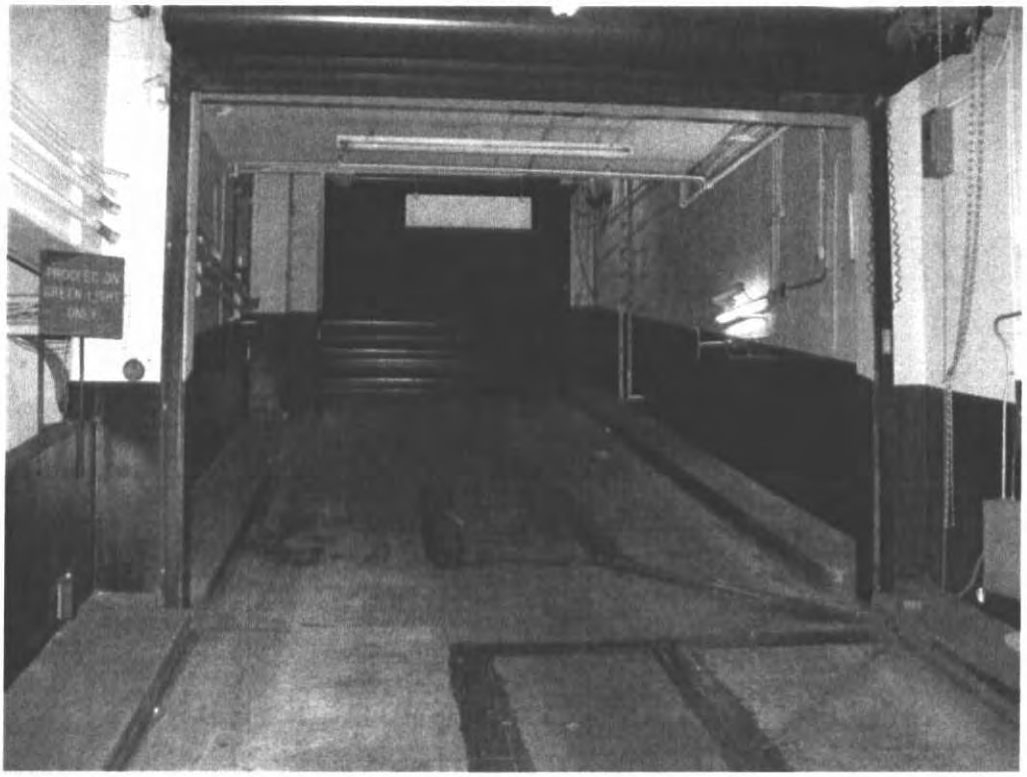
11 of 22: 2011 detail of main (east) entry. Source: Artifacts Consulting, Inc.

12 of 22: 2011 view, looking north along the east facade. Note granite clad planters. Source: Artifacts Consulting, Inc.

13 of 22: 2011 view of south terrace. Source: Artifacts Consulting, Inc.

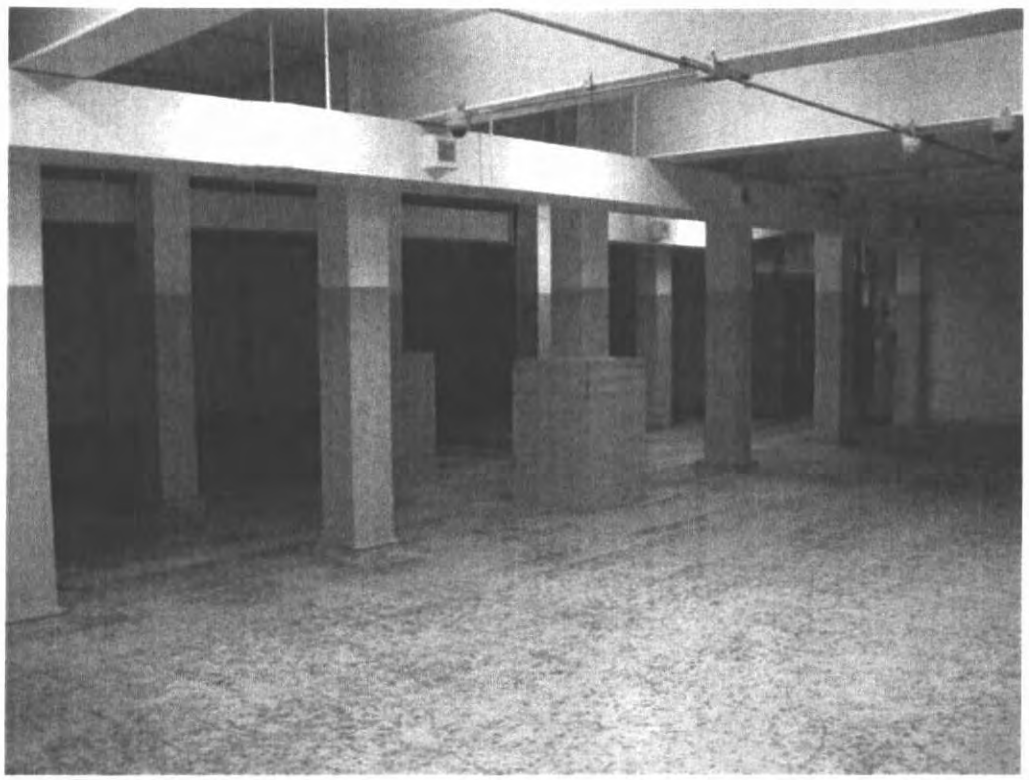


14 of 22: 2011 detail of limestone cladding. Source: Artifacts Consulting, Inc.



15 of 22: 2008 interior view of ground floor truck entrance. Photo by Art Skolnik.

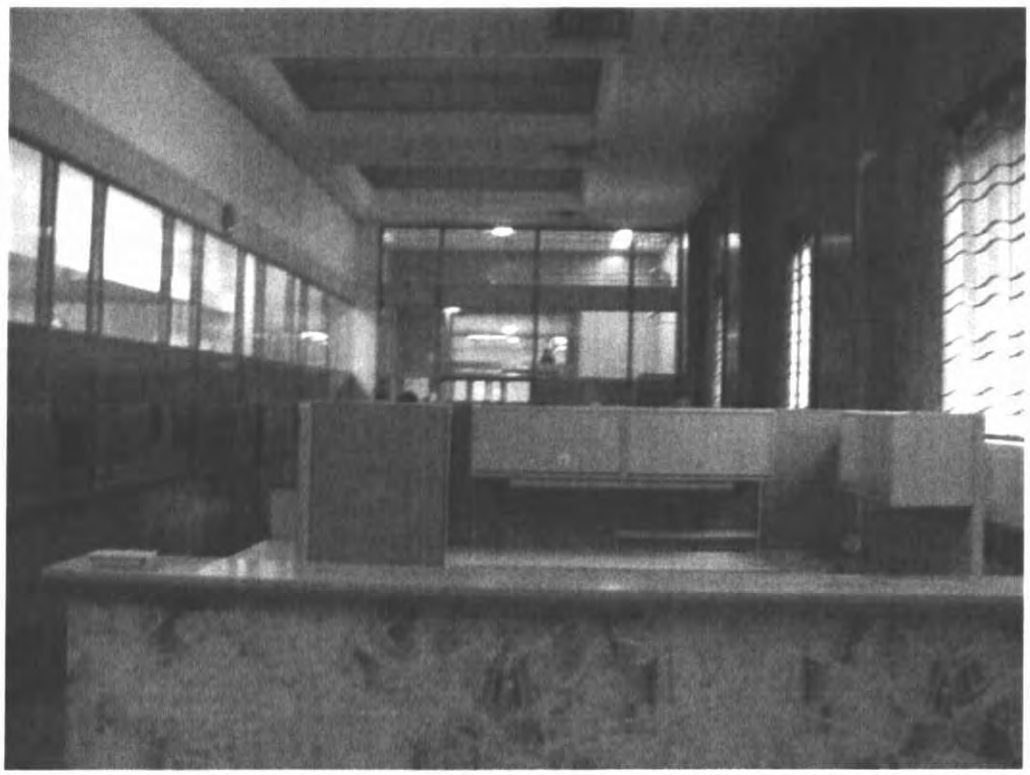
16 of 22: 2008 view of lower (right) and auxiliary (left) vault doors. Photo by Art Skolnik.



17 of 22: 2008 interior view of lower vault. Photo by Art Skolnik.

18 of 22: 2008 view of upper vault door. Photo by Art Skolnik.

19 of 22: 2008 view of first floor elevator lobby. Photo by Art Skolnik.

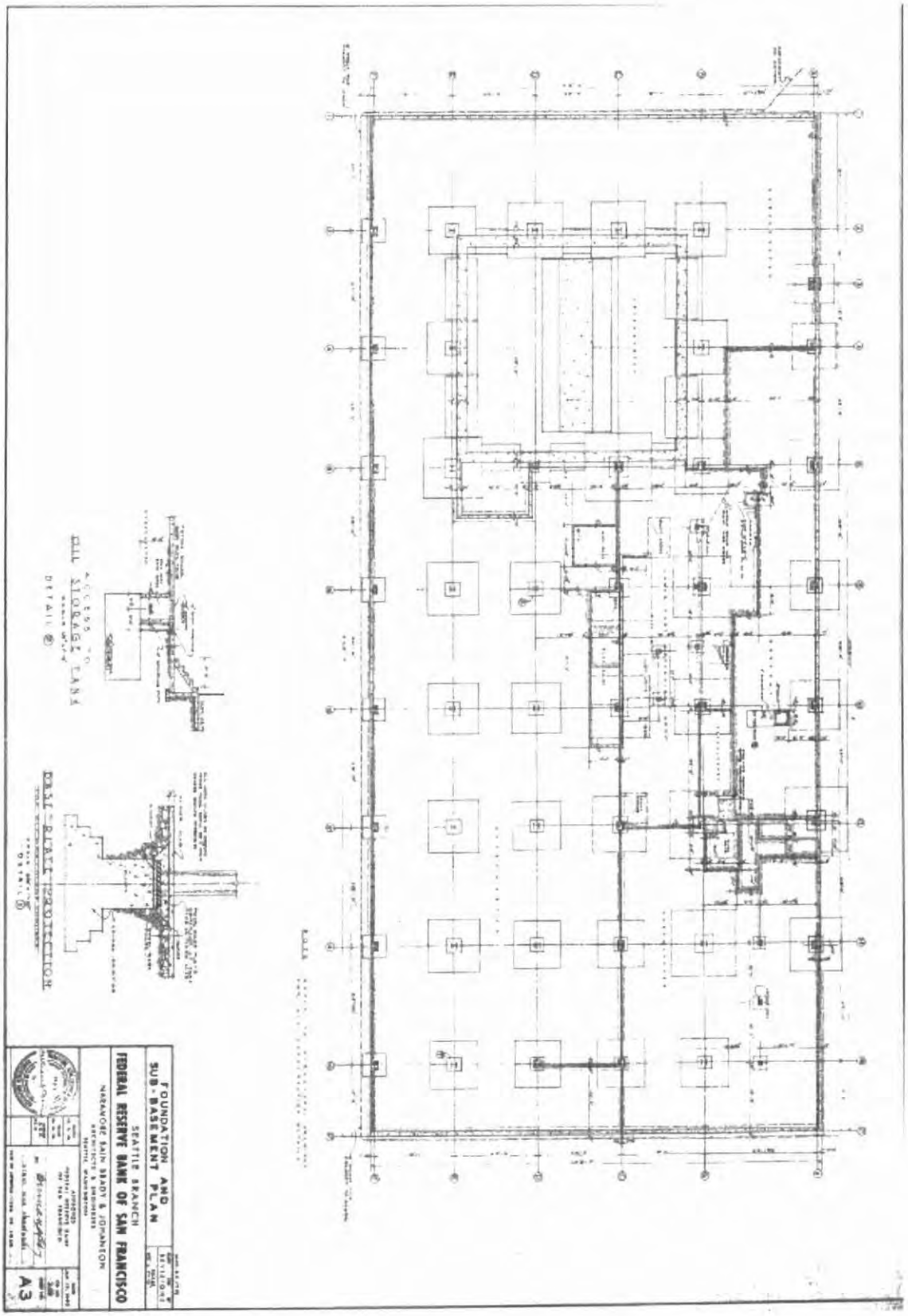


20 of 22: 2008 view of first floor teller lobby. Photo by Art Skolnik.

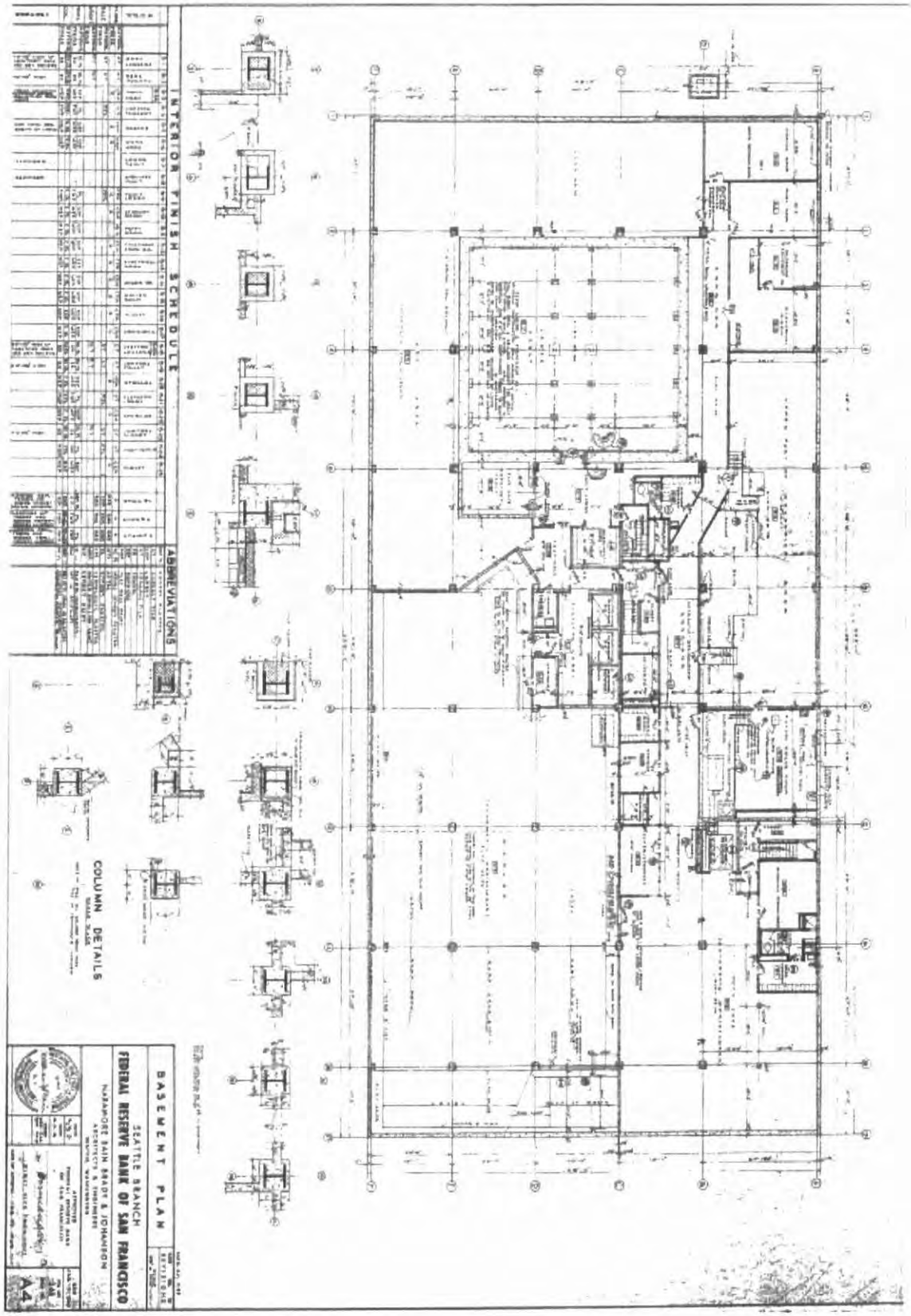
21 of 22: 2008 view of first floor bronze grille work. Photo by Art Skolnik.

22 of 22: 2008 view of typical upper floor space. Photo by Art Skolnik.

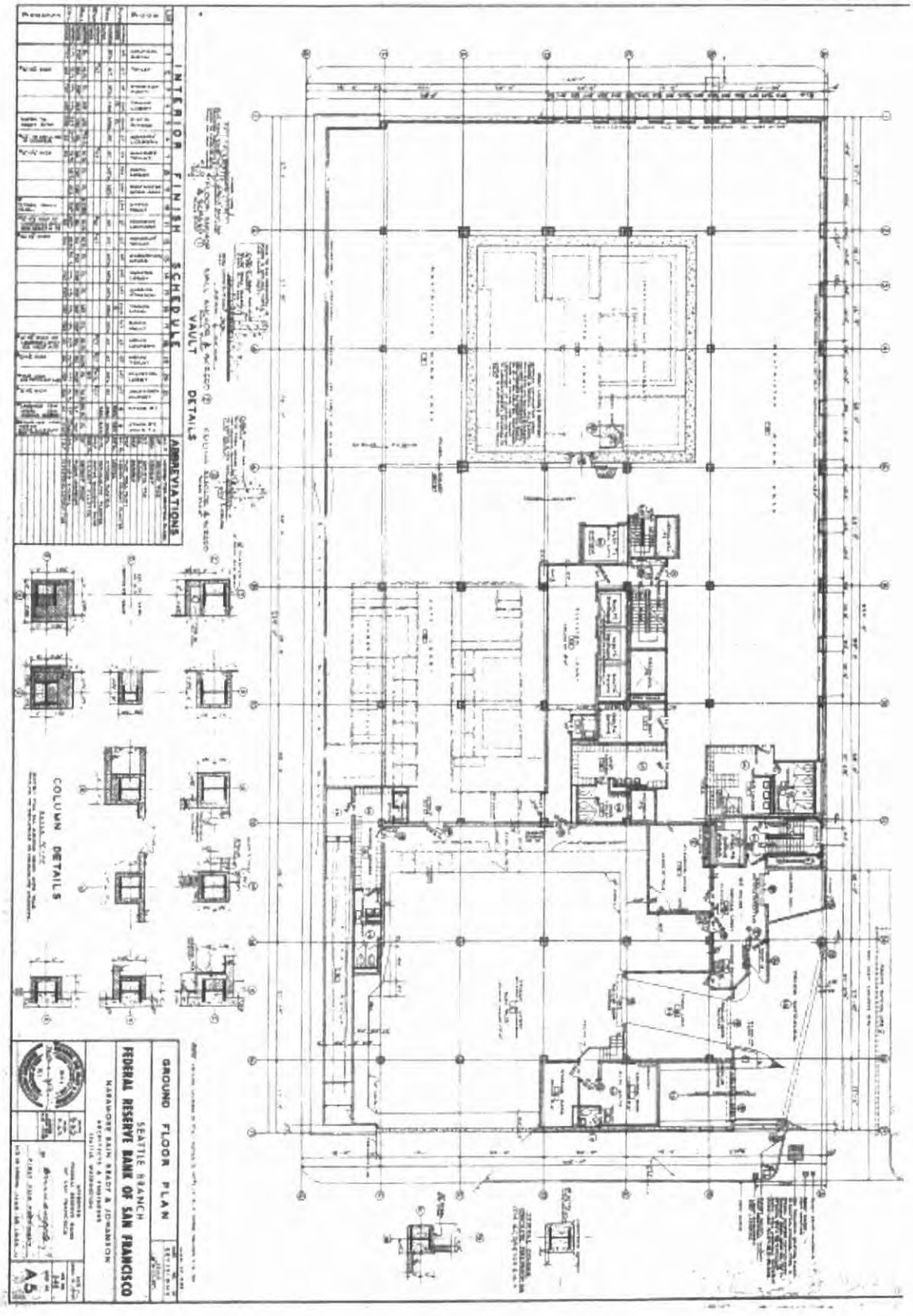
Sub-Basement Floor Plan, 1949, by Naramore, Bain, Brady & Johanson



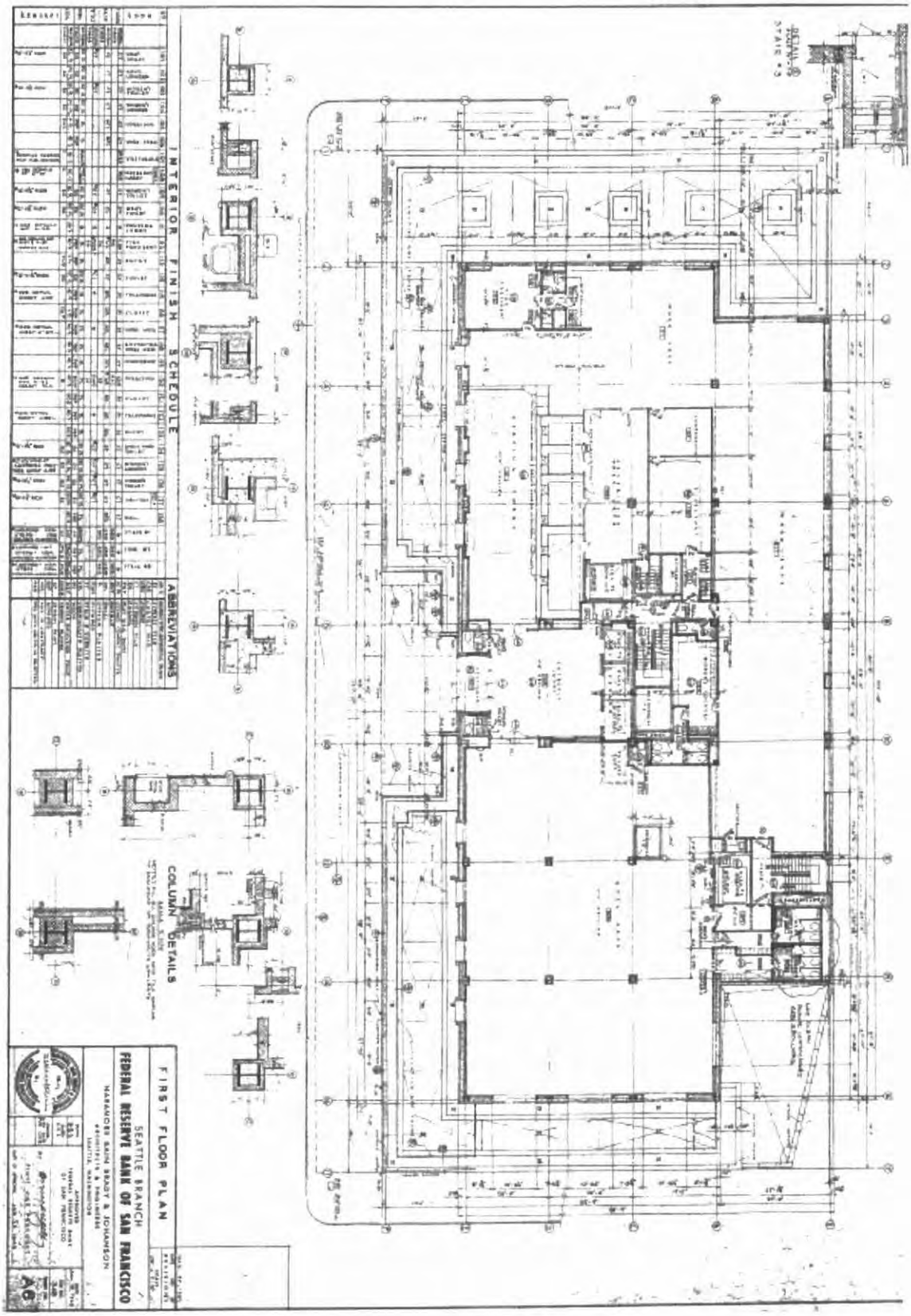
Basement Floor Plan, 1949, by Naramore, Bain, Brady & Johanson



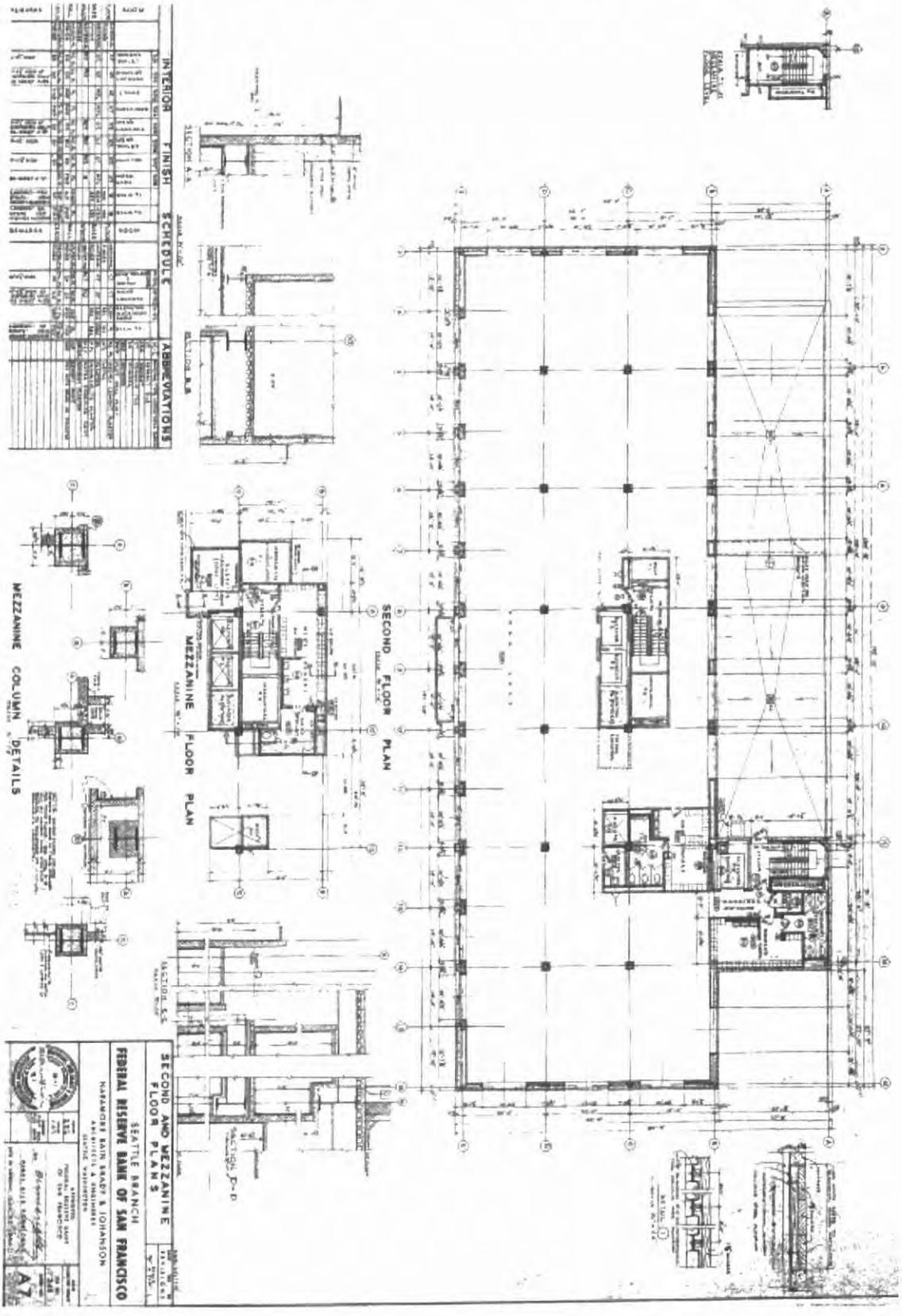
Ground Floor Plan, 1949, by Naramore, Bain, Brady & Johanson



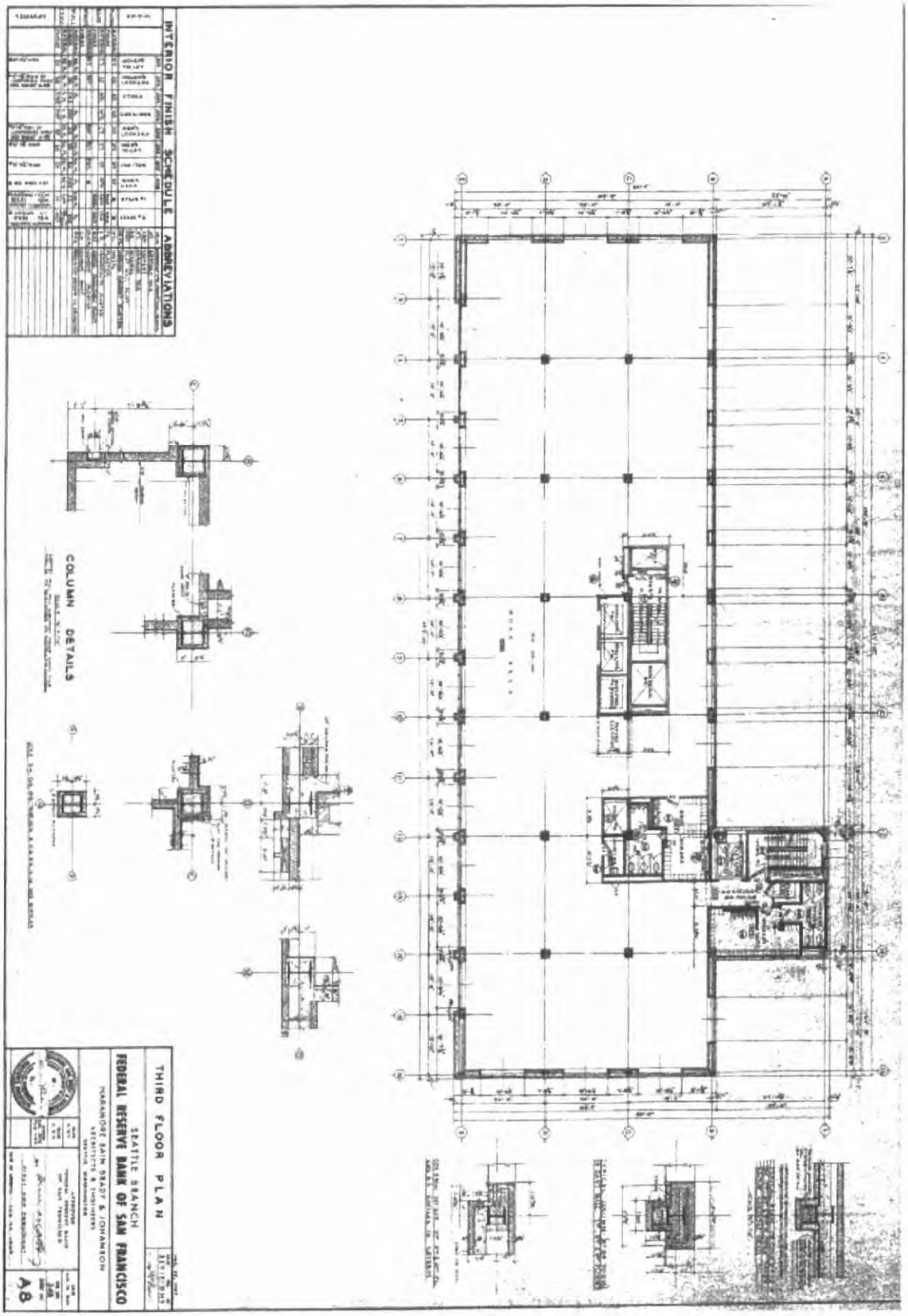
First Floor Plan, 1949, by Naramore, Bain, Brady & Johanson



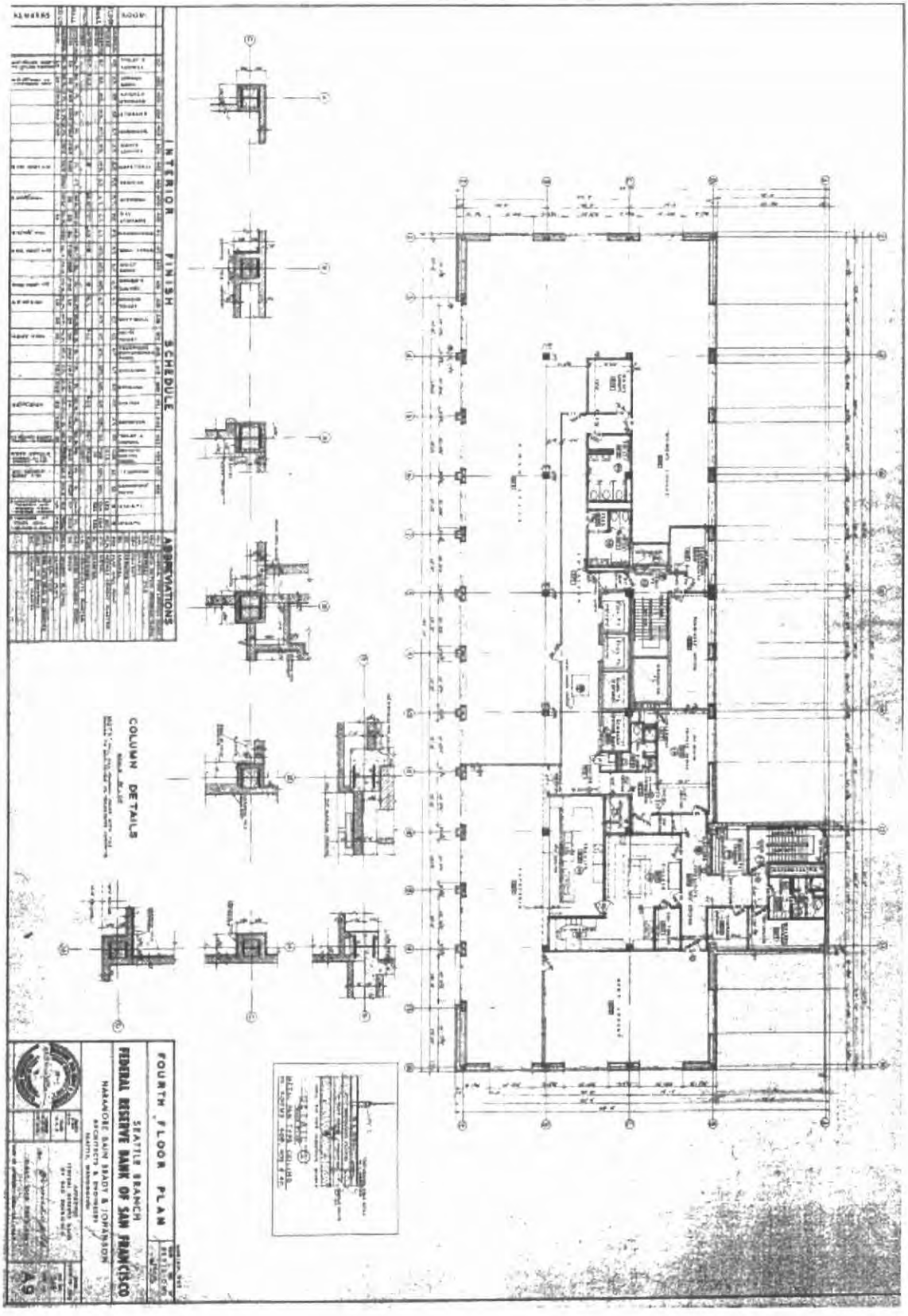
Second Floor Plan, 1949, by Naramore, Bain, Brady & Johanson



Third Floor Plan, 1949, by Naramore, Bain, Brady & Johanson



Fourth Floor Plan, 1949, by Naramore, Bain, Brady & Johanson



Roof Plan, 1949, by Naramore, Bain, Brady & Johanson