

Stulsaft Building  
1517-1519 Clay Street  
Oakland  
Alameda County  
California

HABS No. CA-2644

HABS  
CAL  
1-OAK,  
25-

**PHOTOGRAPHS**

**WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA**

**Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Western Region  
Department of the Interior  
San Francisco, California 94107**

# HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

## STULSAFT BUILDING

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CAL  
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25-

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**Location:** 1517-1519 Clay St., Oakland, Alameda Co., CA 94612. Parcel No. 3-69-7.

**Significance:** This building is a contributing structure to the Oakland Downtown district. The Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey describes the district as, "...an architecturally, historically, and functionally distinct area within central Oakland. It contains the City Hall and a strong concentration of well-preserved commercial buildings from about 1900 to 1929, spanning two boom periods for Oakland, the East Bay response to the San Francisco earthquake and fire of 1906, and the intense real estate and financial growth of the 1920s. These urbane, mostly Beaux-Arts inspired buildings display a general unity of style and scale, and represent many of the better-known Bay Area commercial architects of the period. In their siting and relation to each other, with 17-21-story "skyscrapers" punctuating lower construction, they represent an urban design termed "ideal" by City Beautiful planner Werner Hegemann in 1915, and gave Oakland a distinctive and much-photographed skyline. Downtown's development was one of a series of distinct stages whereby Oakland's commercial center moved north along Broadway from its original waterfront location in the 1850s, to Uptown (around 20th) in the 1930s. The economics of the era in which the 14th and Broadway district developed made it Oakland's office and financial center, in contrast to the Old Oakland district alterations and demolitions, in their historic relationships to one another, skyscrapers spaced among lower buildings creating a still-distinctive downtown Oakland skyline."

According to the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey: "This building is typical of the pattern of small-scale speculative development in downtown Oakland in the 1920s, and part of an unbroken group of 1913-24 buildings along the west side of Clay between 15th and 17th Streets. It is a good example of 1920s glass and terra cotta store design..."

**Description:** The Stulsافت Building is a rectangular, (100'x50'), two-story, concrete-frame structure infilled with structural clay tile. The California Department of Parks and Recreation Office of Historic Preservation "Primary Record," prepared by Bruno Giberti states, "The site is an inside lot, the plan is rectangular, and the building was designed to be attached. The street facade is two bays wide, paneled piers at the ends and a thin paneled pier at the center. These support a fine decorated entablature. Both storefronts are extensively altered. Details include painted brick bases; inexpensive aluminum doors and windows with fixed glass; stucco-and plywood-clad walls; a Thai-style wood roof; contemporary signage. Traces of a mid-20th century storefront remain at the northern bay. Details include aluminum

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display windows; black marble bases; a heavy wood door with a glass light and sidelights; dentilated trim. The glazing in the transom over the door has been replaced by plywood and a metal vent."

The building is divided into two completely separate units. Each unit is one bay wide at the street facade. The south unit is substantially larger as it extends two bays beyond and around the rear of the north unit.

The north portion of the building is entered through a recessed door along the east facade. Floor to ceiling windows surround the entry door and attached columns divide the space into three bays, front to back. A former opening (approximately 10'x18') at the center of the ceiling is now covered with acoustical ceiling panels. Wood trim surrounds this opening. A wood-trimmed soffit at the entry with electric light sockets suggests that there may once have been electric lights surrounding the store windows and entry. At the rear, a hatch opening provides basement access and a staircase with paneled newel posts and square balusters leads to the second level.

The second level originally consisted of a single open mezzanine space surrounding a central floor opening, with a small toilet room at the northwest corner. The original floor opening is now infilled with plywood, and plywood partitions divide the once open space into three sections.

The second level of the south unit is accessible directly from the street through a separate entry door and a long, narrow stairway. The second level is composed of four small rooms: a main space that runs the length of the building, a bath and toilet room, and a kitchen. All of the partition walls are plywood except for that at the front stairway, suggesting that this second level, like that on the north side, was originally one large open space.

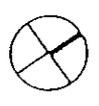
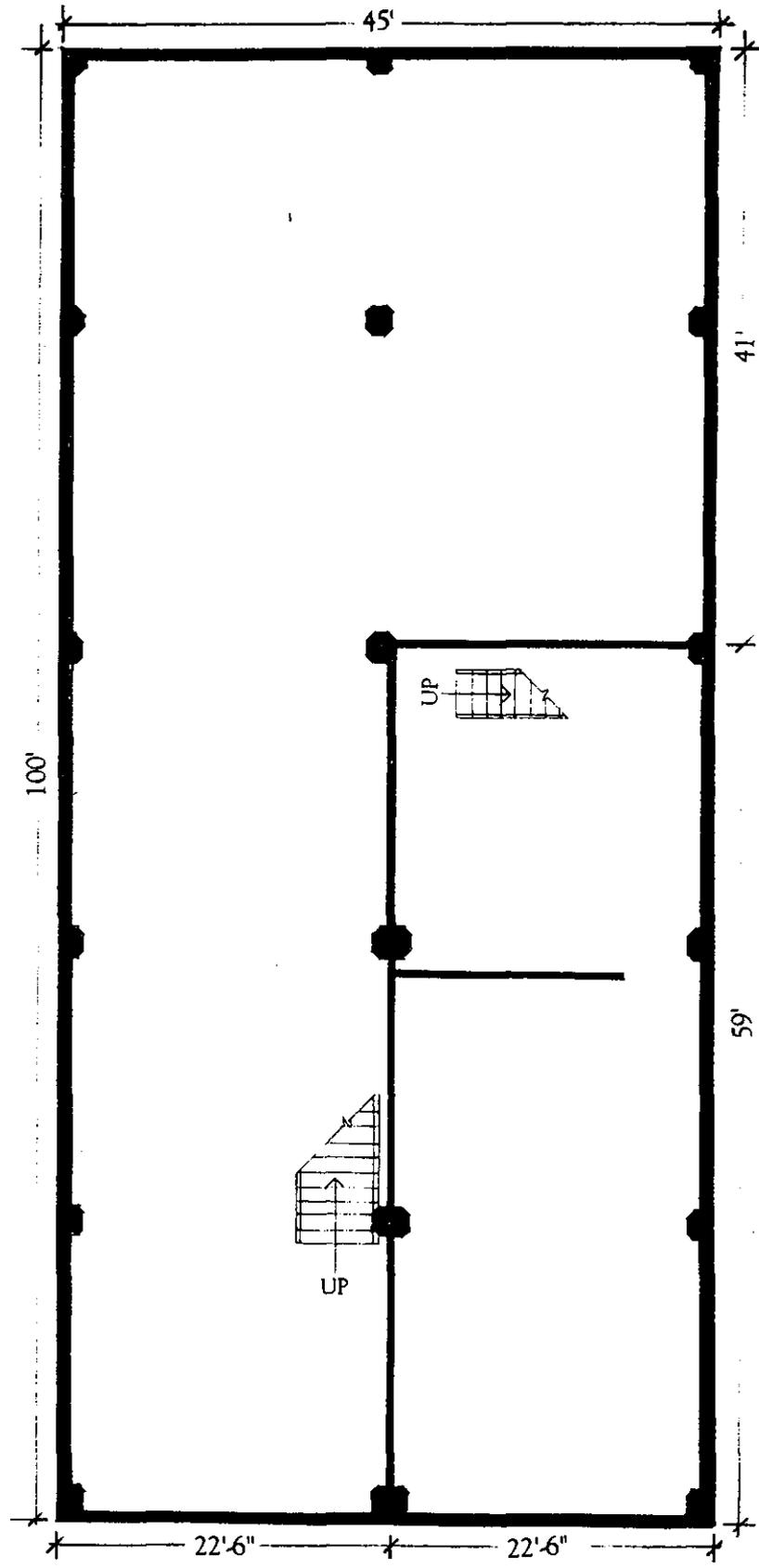
**Historical Context:** According to the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey: "Permit #88100 was issued February 13, 1924 for this structure at a projected cost of \$23,000. The owner was listed as the M. Stulsaft Company, and the builder and architect as H.P. Hoyt. According to the city directories, the M. Stulsaft Company was a wholesaler of plumbers supplies at 270 11th Street and a retailer of gas appliances, water heaters and ranges in the subject building. Morris Stulsaft was also a "millionaire land developer" (San Francisco Chronicle, 2/28/68) who left an \$11 million estate when he died at the age of 82 in 1965. Hiram P. Hoyt was an engineer who served elective office in Albany 1918-22 and was appointed to its park commission in 1927 (Meritt, 1:676-7)."

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**Sources:** Bruno Giberti, Archaeological/Historical Consultants, California  
Department of Parks and Recreation, Office of Historic Preservation,  
"Primary Record", 1994.

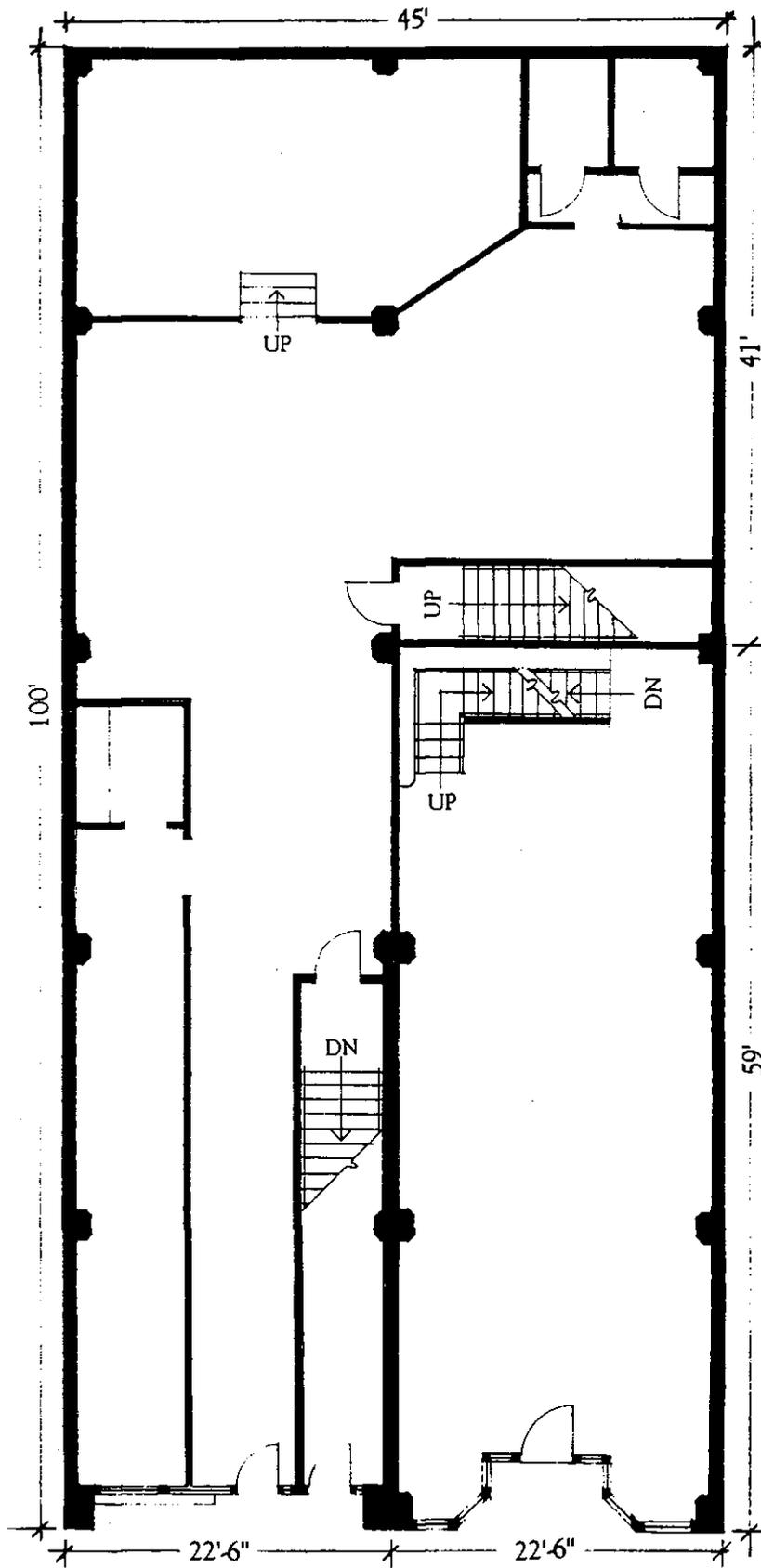
City of Oakland Office of Planning and Building. Oakland Cultural  
Heritage Survey. "Historic Resources Inventory." 1985.

**Project Information:** Carey & Co. Inc., Architecture, prepared this survey for EIP Associates.  
The structure is scheduled to be demolished for the construction of the  
Elihu M. Harris State Office Building on its site. Nancy Goldenberg,  
Architectural Historian, was project manager for Carey & Co. and Elizabeth  
Roberts was primary author of this document. The report was prepared in  
August, 1995.

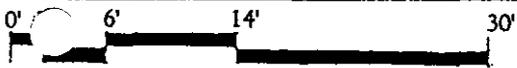


BASEMENT LEVEL

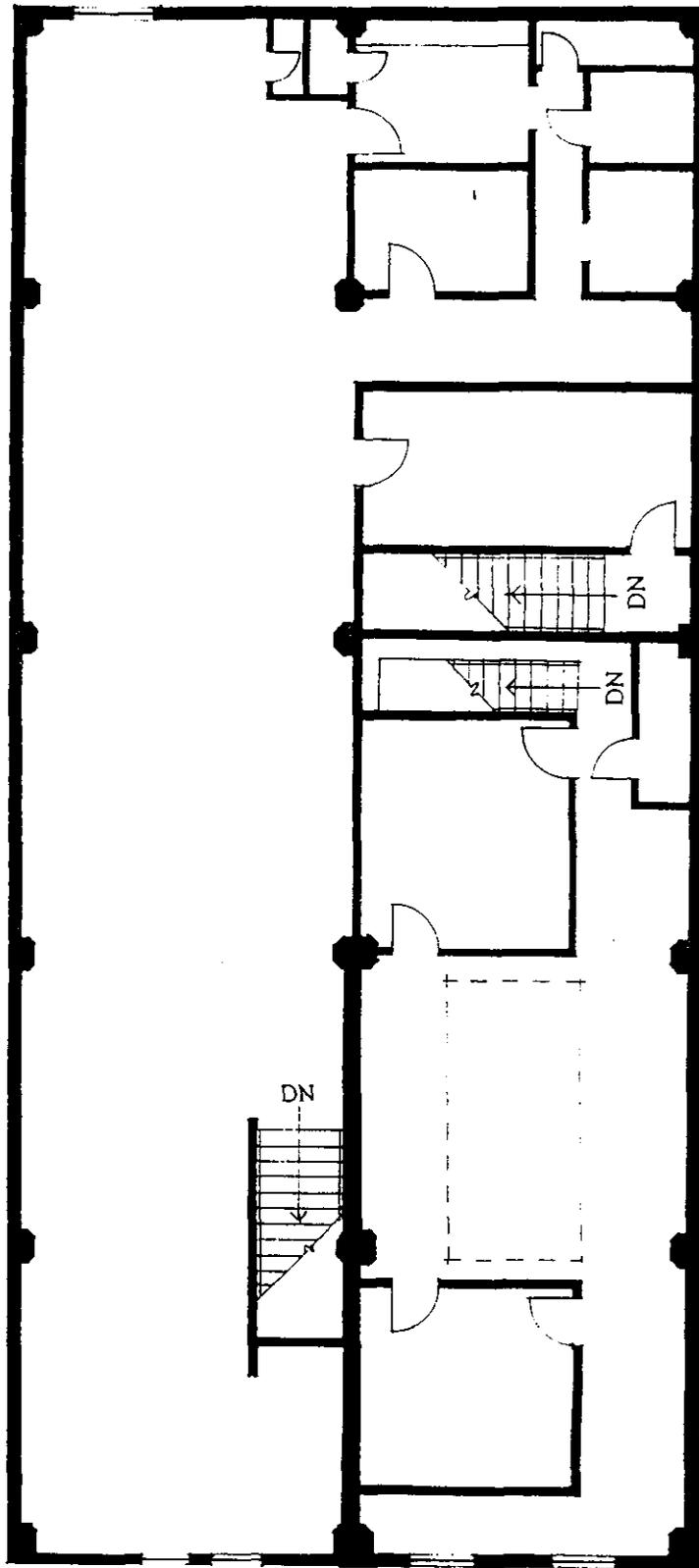




FIRST FLOOR



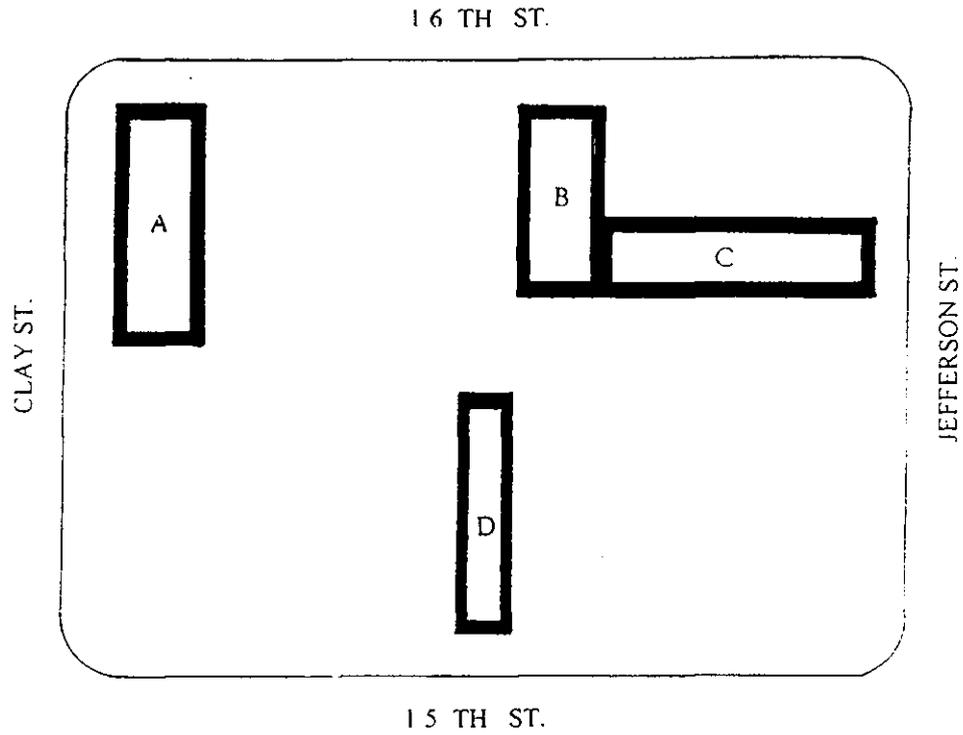
CAREY & CO. INC.  
ARCHITECTURE



SECOND FLOOR



CAREY & CO. INC.  
ARCHITECTURE



- A. TUCKER BUILDING
- B. ALAMEDA COUNTY LOAN ASSOCIATION BUILDING ANNEX
- C. STULSAFT BUILDING
- D. COAKLEY BUILDING



SITE PLAN



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