

Backesto Block  
N.W. Corner of 5th Ave. and Market Sts  
San Diego, San Diego County  
California

HABS No. CAL-427

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
Western Office, Division of Design and Construction  
1000 Geary Street  
San Francisco, California

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PHOTOGRAPH-DATA BOOK REPORT  
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

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BACKESTO BLOCK

San Diego, San Diego County, California

ADDRESS: Northwest corner of Fifth Avenue & Market Streets.  
OWNER: Sam Ellis, 2464 Marilouise Way, San Diego, California.  
OCCUPANT: Bank of America (Fifth Avenue Branch), and four shops  
on ground floor. Saratoga Hotel at 614 Fifth Avenue,  
on second floor.  
USE: Commercial.

BRIEF STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE.

Two-story commercial building constructed in classical revival style, ca. 1880, featuring chimneys above parapet walls serving heating facilities in individual rooms.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

During the years 1878 to 1886, the ground floor and basement of this building were occupied by the well known firm of Klauber and Levi (now Klauber and Wagenheim Company) which originated in 1869 at Seventh and Island Streets, San Diego, as Steiner and Klauber (Abraham Klauber). Two additions were made to the building: one on Market Street of about twenty feet to a small alley bordering on the west; the other on Fifth Avenue of about eighty four and one half feet, which extends between existing building walls (not including them). The first addition seems to have been put up between 1878 and 1886, the latter addition after 1870.

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

### EXTERIOR

The first story wall on Market Street was constructed of continuous brick with pilasters, a glazed doorway at the south west corner and only one moderate sized window adjacent to the southeast corner. There were entrances, display windows and brick piers on Fifth Avenue. Also, there was a continuous wide canopy sloping down from about the second floor level to cover the sidewalk on both streets.

The second story treatment consists of a continuing brick exterior on Market Street with four pedimented windows each side of a central pedimented window, framed with pilasters supporting an ornamental arch and pediment above, which breaks up from the sheet metal cornice, and is surmounted by an architectural ornament. The addition on Market Street adds three similar window openings accented by pilasters accusing a pavilion. A pilaster at the corner carries above the cornice (as a break) and is surmounted by a finial. The parapet treatment on Market Street incorporates three chimneys toward the corner and four toward the alley with three more at the addition. On Fifth Avenue the treatment of the elevation is similar with seven chimneys each side of the central pediment over the stairway.

The cornice is supported by bracketed modillions and intervening dental course. The pediments and moulded trim around windows on Fifth Avenue are more elaborately ornamented than are the windows on Market Street.

Overall Dimensions: The structure has an overall width on Market Street of about ninety and one half feet, which includes a twenty foot addition at the southwest corner to the small alley and along the alley sixty feet. On Fifth Avenue, it has a length of about two hundred twenty four feet which includes an addition to the north of eighty four and one half feet. Along the alley is a one story structure continuing north the remaining distance to the end of the original building.

Foundation: Foundation walls are reported to be of brick.

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Openings: Doorways and doors (on the first floor) seem to have been much modified with the possible exception of the pair of glazed wood doors with a glazed wood transom at the stairway to the second floor.

Windows appear in an early photograph to have been fixed, two lights high (first floor) with the vertical muntin somewhat heavier than the horizontal muntin. The second floor windows remain unchanged and are tall double-hung sash two lights high with a slightly curved head.

Roof: The roof is composition on wood sheathing carried on 2" x 6" rafters at about 17" o.c.; every second rafter is trussed to 2" x 6" bottom chord with 2" x 8" diagonal. Two ridges with two valleys slope toward Fifth Avenue.

#### INTERIOR

Floor Plan: The first floor plan (from a photograph) indicates that the several shops were all entered from Fifth Avenue, which is the same today. The second floor plan consists of the hall from the front to the rear of the building including the stairway and centered on the Fifth Avenue side of the original building. A second wide hall intersects the first one and runs from end to end of the building and is centered on the pedimented window on Market Street side, of the original building. The rooms are grouped each side of this hall for its full length.

Stairway: Six feet wide and from a vestibule at the bottom it rises ten risers to a landing, then an additional sixteen risers bring it to the second floor, about fifteen feet and one inch above. The risers, treads and landings are standard wood construction and there is a simple wood wainscot and handrail.

Flooring: First and second floors seem to be typical wood floor construction of the day.

#### REFERENCES

Allen Klauber - Klauber and Wangenheim Company, San Diego, California.

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