

Hart and Thrift Building
Stockton
San Joaquin County
California

HABS No. CA-1600

HABS
CAL,
39 - STOCK,
14 -

PHOTOGRAPH

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS

Addendum To:
Hart & Thrift Building
401-407 East Weber Avenue
Stockton
San Joaquin County
California

HABS No. CA-1600

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14-

**PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA**

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Oakland, California

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
ADDENDUM TO: HART & THRIFT BUILDING

HABS No. CA-1600

HABS
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39-STOCK
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- Location:** 401–407 East Weber Avenue, (102–114 North Sutter Street), Stockton, San Joaquin County, California. Resource is located in downtown Stockton on the northeast corner of Weber Avenue and Sutter Street. The main architectural façade of the resource faces south onto Weber Avenue.
- UTMS:** USGS Stockton West Quadrangle (7.5'), Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 650.60km E 4202.05km N
- Present Owner and Occupant:** The building is owned by the San Joaquin Regional Transit District. It is presently vacant.
- Present Use:** None.
- Significance:** The Hart & Thrift Building, designed in a vernacular interpretation of the Renaissance Revival style, was built in 1869 and is one of the oldest buildings in Stockton. Although the building has undergone substantial alterations, the building remains significant because of its extreme age and association with the early development of commerce in Stockton. The building's original owners, John Hart and E.E. Thrift, were two of Stockton's commercial pioneers and regarded as highly respected gentleman. Their grocery store carried a "choice lot of groceries and provisions." (Source: Bank of Stockton Archives. Historic background on Hart & Thrift Building compiled by Leslie Crow, archivist; document attached.)

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. **Date of erection:** Built in 1869.
2. **Architect:** B. Mackay, a local architect who designed other buildings in downtown Stockton during the same period.
3. **Original and subsequent owners, occupants, uses:** Originally owned by Mr. John W. Hart and Mr. E. E. Thrift. The building was used as a grocery store on the ground floor, and there were 16 sleeping rooms on the second floor. Subsequently, the building was used for commercial stores. There is no listing for this building in City Directories until 1930, when a Mark Curtis was listed here. By 1935, the building was occupied by the Morthrift Company & Finance, and A. G. Girder Electrician. The Morthrift Co. remained at the location through 1950. By 1940, the electrician's space was listed as vacant, but by 1945, it was listed as A. G. Henry Real Estate. By 1950, it had become Davis & Eakes Real Estate & Insurance. The Building was last occupied by Dickerson's Religious Gifts and Downtown Optometry, and has been vacant since 2004.
4. **Builder, contractor, suppliers:** Unknown.
5. **Original plans and construction:** Original plans were not found. The construction is of un-reinforced brick masonry.
6. **Alterations and additions:** This structure has undergone substantial alterations from its original exterior appearance. The Weber Avenue elevation storefronts have been altered. The bases have been covered with form stone that has been painted; the display windows, doors, and transoms have aluminum frames; the entry is recessed; and the exterior brick surface has been stuccoed. The dates of these changes are unknown, building permits were not available for review.

The original parapet, signage, and cast iron canopy along the Sutter Street and Weber Avenue elevations have been removed.

The Sutter Street elevation originally was only 5 bays deep but was extended to the present 9-bay depth sometime before 1917.

An interior inspection of the building was undertaken on August 4, 1998, revealing that the first-floor interior had been remodeled. The building has lost a substantial amount of integrity due to alterations.

The second-floor window openings have been reconfigured and all other features removed. The original window openings were arched and vertically elongated, but these have been partially bricked in and reconfigured to rectangular openings. The window sash was replaced in the 1910s.

The second story has been gutted, although some later framing is still in place near the southern end of the building.

B. Historical Context:

The Founding of Stockton and the Gold Rush

The development of Stockton can largely be attributed to the energy and perseverance of Captain Charles M. Weber. Born in Hamburg, Germany, in 1814, Weber came to America in 1836. By 1841, Weber had relocated to California and had obtained employment at Sutter's Fort. Soon after his arrival in California, Weber acquired 55 square kilometers on the east side of the San Joaquin River, near present-day Stockton. Weber utilized this land and developed a small settlement that he named after the American naval officer Commodore Robert R. Stockton, who had been responsible for driving the last Mexican forces out of California in the late 1840s.¹

The Mexican-American War began in April 1846 over territorial disputes in both Mexico and California. In July of that year, American forces, commander by John Drake Sloat, peacefully took Monterey and raised the American flag. When the war ended in February of 1848, Alta California officially became part of the United States. Unbeknownst to the Mexican government, gold was discovered near Sacramento only 9 days before the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo was signed. Soon, California, under American rule, would see an incredible influx of gold seekers from around the world, including many Americans migrating from the East Coast.

The growth of Weber's town, Stockton, increased following James Marshall's discovery of gold at nearby Coloma. As a result, the Stockton Channel became a port of call for sailing vessels and steamers delivering thousands of gold seekers and supplies to this new mining area. Weber's investment offered him a rich return. On July 23, 1850, the City of Stockton was officially incorporated and began to assume a cosmopolitan appearance. With the city becoming the supply center for the nearby mining establishment, the refinement of the city's infrastructure became necessary. Public and private buildings, streets, and public parks were constructed to accommodate the increased population. The city limits extended to the current city streets of Flora, Aurora, Edison, and Anderson.

¹ Olive Davis, *Stockton – Sunrise Port on the San Joaquin* (Sun Valley, American Historical Press, 1998), 21.

Stockton's role as the county seat for San Joaquin County also influenced development. The county courthouse was constructed in 1854 and was offered for use as the state capitol; however, the state declined the city's proposal.

Eager to profit from the gold discovery, Weber and a group of settlers form the Stockton Mining Company, selling supplies for considerable profit to miners near the future site of Placerville. In September 1848, Weber returned to Stockton and set up his own mercantile store. As the Gold Rush attracted ever-increasing numbers of prospectors to California, Stockton became the gateway to, and major supply post for, California's southern mining areas. By the fall of 1849, it was estimated that Stockton had approximately 1,000 residents.² In five years, the city's population expanded to 7,000.³

The Remainder of the Nineteenth Century

Railroad and deep-water channel access made Stockton a major transportation center and led to dramatic population growth—up to 23,000 residents by the 1890s.⁴ During the second half of the 19th century, agriculture took the place of gold mining in Stockton's economic development. Wheat and other grains were the most abundant local crops. Stockton claimed the largest grain warehousing facilities outside San Francisco, and local milling companies eliminated the need to import flour. The largest single milling organization was Sperry & Company, whose 1888 brick headquarters building at Weber Avenue and Madison Street still stands today.

The remainder of the 19th century saw the completion of new projects throughout the community, including a new courthouse constructed in 1890. In 1893, a new redbrick jail was finished in the medieval revival style at San Joaquin and Channel Streets. A new grammar school, as well as many commercial buildings, was also constructed of locally made red brick during this period. In fact, brick was such a common building material that during the substantial growth of the 1880s and 1890s, Stockton became known as the "Brick City."⁵

The manufacture of agricultural tools also became a major industry in Stockton by the end of the 19th century. Several new inventions that revolutionized farming techniques were developed within the community. The Stockton Gang Plow improved on previous small plows operated by one man and a horse, as it was larger, pulled by a horse team, and capable of tilling several rows simultaneously. The Marvin Combined Harvester, commonly known as the combine, a machine that could harvest and thresh fields of grain, saving time and labor, resulted in a

² Bayard Taylor, as recorded in Davis, *Stockton, Sunrise Port on the San*, 27.

³ Raymond Hillman, *Stockton Through the Decades* (Union Safe Deposit Bank and Vanguard Press, Inc., 1981), 2.

⁴ Hillman, 14.

⁵ Hillman, 11.

more efficient harvest. Numerous iron works and manufacturing companies were sustained by the farm machine industry. The Stockton Wheel Company, later the Holt Manufacturing Company, was founded by the Holt brothers in Stockton in 1883 and supported the thriving local transportation, agriculture, and commerce industries. The community showed pride in the surrounding thriving agricultural industry in 1888 when the San Joaquin Valley Agricultural Association built an agricultural pavilion in Stockton's Washington Square. The pavilion was thought to be one of the most beautiful buildings in the city, housing exhibits and displays, as well as hosting numerous concerts and festivals.⁶ A grand structure of wood and glass, it was the largest building in Stockton until it burned in 1902.

Hart & Thrift Building

One of the oldest extant buildings in Stockton, it was built for the Hart & Thrift grocery store in 1869. Despite substantial alterations, the building remains significant because of its relatively extreme age. It appears eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with the early development of commerce in Stockton and under Criterion B for its association with two of Stockton's commercial pioneers, John Hart and E.E. Thrift. While under construction, the *Stockton Independent* wrote that the building would have "handsome fronts, and ... two commodious stores and sixteen rooms." Later it was described as "one of the most thoroughly constructed and substantial edifices in the city." The structure was designed by B. Mackay, a local architect who designed other downtown buildings during the same period. The building's owners, Mr. John W. Hart and Mr. E. E. Thrift, were regarded as highly respected gentleman. Hart was a former blacksmith who owned his own business for many years, and Thrift was a businessman. Their grocery store carried a "choice lot of groceries and provisions." (Source: Bank of Stockton Archives. Historic background on Hart & Thrift Building, compiled by Leslie Crow, archivist; document attached.)

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

- A. **General Statement:** One of the oldest extant buildings in Stockton, it was built for John Hart and E. E. Thrift, two of Stockton's commercial pioneers.
1. **Architectural character:** Two-story brick building with a rectangular plan. The style is a vernacular interpretation of the Renaissance Revival style; originally, Italianate.
 2. **Condition of fabric:** Building is in fair condition but has undergone many alterations. Brick mortar is deteriorating and breaking away from brick joints.

⁶ Davis, 53.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. **Overall dimensions:** The general layout is rectangular measuring approximately 50' x 100'. The building has six bays across Weber Avenue, and nine bays across Sutter Street. The building has two stories, with a basement height of 5'6", and the main sections of the building facing south, along Weber Avenue, and west, along Sutter Street.
2. **Foundations:** Brick.
3. **Walls:** Brick with stucco over exterior surface.
4. **Structural system, framing:** Double brick load-bearing walls, with a base course about eight courses high. The floor system is a wood joist system with wood flooring. The roof system is a low-pitched wood truss system.
5. **Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads:** None.
6. **Chimneys:** None.
7. **Openings:**
 - a. **Doorways and doors:** There are two street level storefronts entries located on Weber Avenue, and Sutter Street. Along the storefront entrances are covered formstone bases that are painted. The display windows, doors, and transoms are aluminum frame; the brick has been stuccoed, and the door entries are recessed.
 - b. **Windows and shutters:** The windows, located on the first-story street level, are aluminum frame display windows. The second story windows are 1 over 1 wood frame double-hung windows set in rectangular openings (arched prior to 1910s) with flat wood architraves and narrow, shallow, projecting lintels. There are large flared canvas awnings that cover the second-story windows and shade the street front store windows.
8. **Roof:**
 - a. **Shape, covering:** The roof is generally a flat composition roof. It is slightly pitched towards the center and drains towards the west and east ends of the building. A parameter parapet obscures the top of the roof.

- b. **Cornice, eaves:** Wood cornice with dentils at the upper wall below a brick parapet that extends around the corner and along the Sutter Street elevation. The cornice along the Sutter Street elevation has been altered.
- c. **Dormers, cupolas, towers:** None.

C. **Description of Interior:**

1. **Floor plans:** The “As Built” or building plan drawings are not available. The general layout of the building’s first floor is 50’ wide along Weber Avenue, and 100’ back along Sutter Street. Two commercial stores, along Weber Avenue, measure approximately 25’ wide and 75’ back to the northern end. The remaining 25’, of the north end along Sutter Street, contains a street-front stair entrance to the second story, and one commercial store measuring approximately 25’ wide by 50’ depth. The second story has been gutted, although some later framing is still in place near the southern end (see Sketch Plan provided on page 11).
2. **Stairways:** A street-front stairway is located along Sutter Street, and one stairway located on the north side of the building. Both stair entries are recessed, have plaster steps, and have plan railings.
3. **Flooring:** The first-floor commercial stores are covered with carpet and linoleum, with wood underneath. The second floor has wood flooring, approximately 4" wide, in poor condition. The original finishes of the flooring are not known.
4. **Wall and ceiling finish:** In the basement, the 1868 brick wall surfaces and first-floor joists are still exposed. The first floor interior wall surface has re-surfaced with wallpaper for commercial office use, and does not exhibit the brick wall material. The second floor interior wall surface retains the brick wall structural material.
5. **Openings:**
 - a. **Doorways and doors:** A pair of narrow tunnels, lined with brick, provide access up to Sutter Avenue opposite the west side of the building and up to the former alley that was along the east side of the building. Both tunnels have been closed off; however, the stairs are still in place in the eastern tunnel. The previous occupants of the building reported that these tunnels provided discreet access for next-door patrons who, it is rumored, would visit a brothel within the building, probably around the turn of the century. Other doors and doorways, located on the first floor, have been replaced with aluminum doors and storefront windows.

There is no original hardware or decorative details on any of the storefront doorways or doors. The second floor has been gutted out, and there are no decorative details or hardware evident.

- b. Windows:** The original window openings were arched and vertically elongated but have been partially bricked in and reconfigured into rectangular openings. The sash was replaced somewhere in the 1910s.
 - 6. Decorative features and trim:** Almost all of the original ornamentation was removed, with the exception of a simple dentil course. The original ornamentation consisted of a perimeter balustrade between the first and second story, and semi-circular windows with decorative hood moldings. The interior decorative features and trim are not known.
 - 7. Hardware:** Hardware has been remodeled for commercial usage.
 - 8. Mechanical equipment:**
 - a. Heating, air-conditioning, ventilation:** Present in vacant first-floor commercial spaces.
 - b. Lighting:** The commercial stores, located on the street level, have florescent light fixtures. The second floor has been gutted out and no light fixtures exist. The original light fixtures are unknown.
 - c. Plumbing:** The plumbing now consists of cast iron, galvanized, and PVC piping. The original layout and construction materials are unknown.
 - 9. Original furnishings:** Have been removed.
- D. Site:**
- 1. General setting and orientation:** Located in Downtown Stockton, in a commercial building district setting. The orientation of the building is at the corner of Weber Avenue and Sutter Street.
 - 2. Historic landscape design:** None.
 - 3. Outbuildings:** None.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. **Original Architectural Drawings:** Not available.
- B. **Historic Views:** Four 8 x 10 black & white prints dating from ca. 1870's to n.d. late 1950's, courtesy of the Bank of Stockton Archives Photo Collection. Hart & Thrift, California and Sutter Streets, ca. 1870's (BS/CC-1-1-1-6848.) Weber Avenue, looking NE from San Joaquin St., ca. 1900 (BS/CC-1-1-1-4001.) Sutter and Weber Avenue, n.d. late 1950's (SFO-2-1-2-96.) Weber Avenue, 400 block, north side, n.d. late 1950's (SFD-2-1-2-277.)
- C. **Interviews:** On March 25, 2004, Architectural Historian David Greenwood of Myra L. Frank/Jones & Stokes interviewed Wendell Krell, facilities superintendent of the San Joaquin Regional Transit District.
- D. **Bibliography:**
- Myra L. Frank & Associates, Inc. *Request for Determination of Eligibility for the Downtown Stockton Transit Center*. Prepared for Federal Transit Administration; San Joaquin Regional Transit District; Parsons, Brinckerhoff, Quade & Douglas. Los Angeles, CA. 1998.
- Architectural Resources Group Architects, Planners, and Conservators, Inc. 1999. *Downtown Stockton Historic Resources Survey, Volume I, Methodology and Context for the City of Stockton*. Prepared for the City of Stockton Community Development Department. San Francisco, CA. December 1999.
- E. **Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated:** None.
- F. **Supplemental Material:** None.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The proposed Downtown Transit Center Project, along East Weber Avenue between Sutter, California and Channel Streets in Downtown Stockton, will "effect" historic properties as defined at 36 CFR §800.16(i). A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) states that this undertaking must be implemented in a manner consistent with the *Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment for the Downtown Stockton Transit Center* project. Part of stipulation (B.) in the MOA, states HABS recordation, at level III, will take place prior to any undertaking that may effect these properties. The three properties are as follows: (1) the Hart & Thrift Building, located at 401-407 East Weber Avenue; (2) the Bower Building, located at 409-413 East Weber Avenue; and (3) the Douglass-Wilhoit Building, located at 425-437 East Weber Avenue. The three

buildings will be rehabilitated for adaptive use, and their facades restored to their original design and condition.

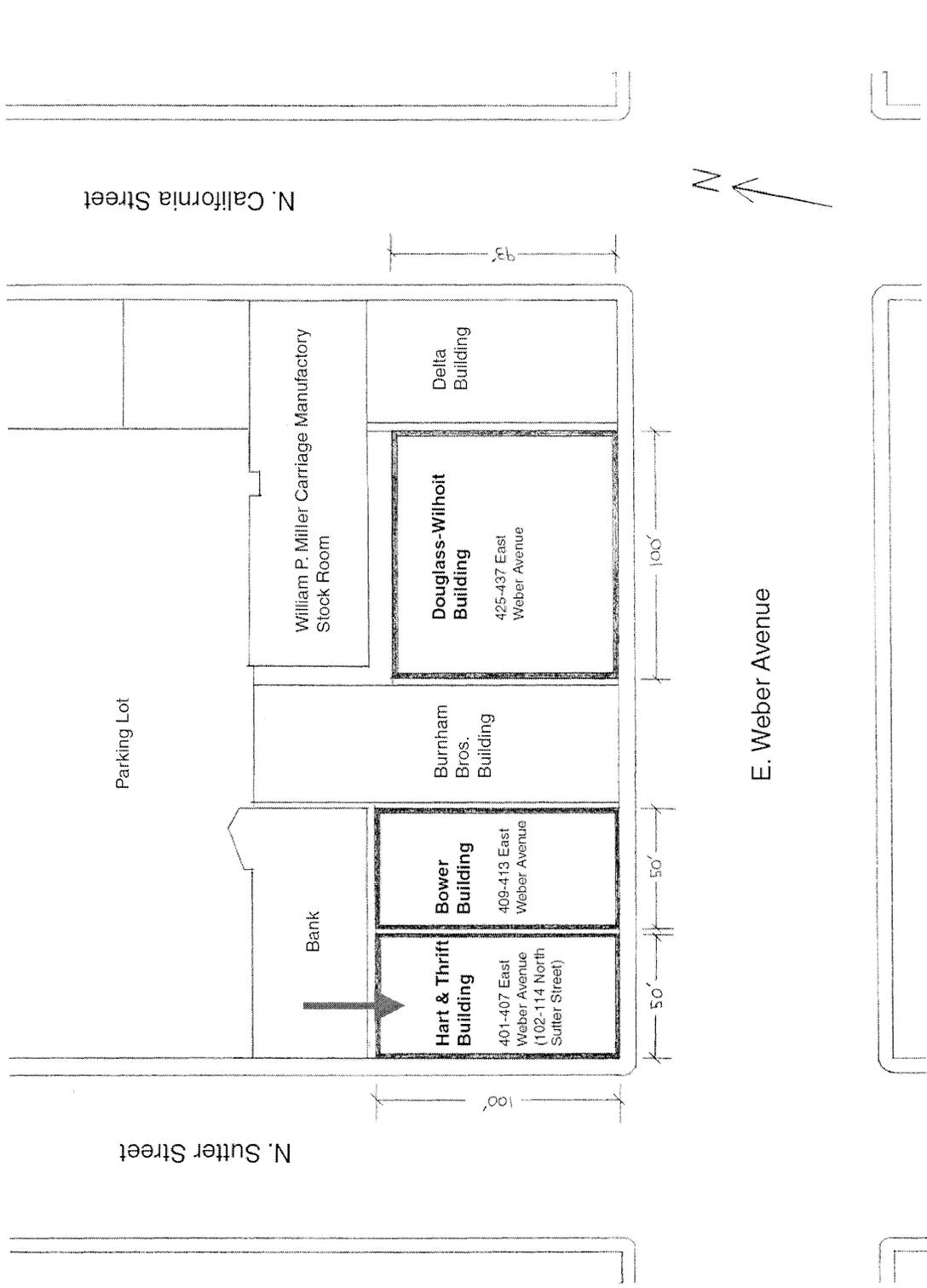
Parties to the Agreement:

Federal Transit Administration
San Joaquin Regional Transit District
California State Historic Preservation Officer
Parsons Brinckerhoff

Written Documentation prepared by:

David Greenwood, Myra L. Frank/Jones & Stokes

ADDENDUM TO:
HART & THRIFT BUILDING
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SCALE: 3/16" = 10'-0"