

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Woolworth Building DRAFT

Other names/site number: _____

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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

2. Location

Street & number: 1400 19th Street

City or town: Bakersfield State: CA County: Kern

Not For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

___national ___statewide ___local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___A ___B ___C ___D

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau
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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ removed from the National Register
☐ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private: ☒
- Public – Local ☐
- Public – State ☐
- Public – Federal ☐

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s) ☒
- District ☐
- Site ☐
- Structure ☐
- Object ☐

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE: department store

COMMERCE/TRADE: warehouse

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE: restaurant

COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store

COMMERCE/TRADE: business

RECREATION AND CULTURE: music facility

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT: Moderne

OTHER: Late Moderne

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: foundation: CONCRETE; walls: CONCRETE,
TERRA COTTA

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Woolworth Building at 1400 19th Street is a three-story commercial building with a below-grade basement. The building is located on a 10,562-square-foot rectangular parcel at the intersection of 19th Street and K Street in downtown Bakersfield, California. The building was constructed in 1950 and designed by M.G. Strohmeier, the Superintendent of Construction at the F.W. Woolworth Company. The Woolworth Building was rehabilitated under the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program from 2022 to 2025 into a mixed-use building with a live music venue and variety of commercial and office tenant uses. Certified by the National Park Service, the project met the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, and the building remains an excellent example of a purpose-built Woolworth retail building with a rare intact lunch counter. It is also a good local example of a Late Moderne style commercial building in downtown Bakersfield, California.

Narrative Description

Overview and Setting

The Woolworth Building at 1400 19th Street is a three-story commercial building with a below-grade basement. The building is located on a rectangular parcel in downtown Bakersfield that is bounded by 19th Street at its south side, K Street at its east side, Service Street at its north side, and abuts an adjacent three-story building (1420 19th Street) at its west side. The building is constructed of reinforced concrete with a flat roof hidden by a stepped parapet. All facades are clad in a painted smooth concrete finish. Due to its downtown corner location, the building was designed with a curved corner facing the intersection of 19th and K streets, and both its south

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(facing 19th Street) and east (facing K Street) façades were designed as primary façades.

Constructed as a purpose-built Woolworth building, the original programming of the building included retail sales floors in the basement and first floor, including a first-floor lunch counter that remains extant, with offices on the second floor, and stock rooms on the third floor.

Exterior

Primary (South and East) Façades

At the primary façades of the Woolworth Building, the ground floor is characterized by glazed storefront systems with black glazed terra cotta tile surrounds, large storefront windows with aluminum mullions, and paired fully glazed double leaf aluminum frame entrance doors that are recessed from the exterior of the building. The glazed storefronts are replacements installed during the 2022-2025 rehabilitation with slightly narrower widths than the original storefront windows. Flooring at the retail entrances consists of three colors of terrazzo flooring with geometric patterning and lettering that spells “WOOLWORTH’S” at all entrances. Retractable fabric awnings are mounted over the storefront windows and beneath a curved metal signboard with raised lettering that spells out “F.W. WOOLWORTH CO.” and “WOOLWORTH’S,” and has decorative banded metal trim and horizontal striping.

The ground floor of the south façade contains a single storefront system that is the length of the building and wraps the southeast corner. Storefront entrances at the south façade are located at the west end and the east end where an angled entrance is oriented towards the intersection of 19th and K streets. Both entrances consist of two sets of double leaf entrance doors beneath a plastic illuminated transom with branded signage, installed in 1960, which encourages patrons to “Visit Woolworth’s Luncheonette.” A metal exit door, added during the 2022-2025 rehabilitation, is located at the far west end of the façade.

The east façade contains three additional entries. The north end of the façade features a smaller original retail entrance with paired recessed entrance doors set between two glazed storefront windows. The transom over the paired entrance doors has a blank plastic panel at the exterior that has either replaced or covered an original Woolworth-branded transom panel. Two contemporary glazed aluminum storefront entries were added to the south of the original entry during the 2022-2025 rehabilitation.

The corner at 19th and K streets anchors the building and is distinguished by its curved form. The curved corner section steps up at the roofline parapet and is very slightly recessed from the planar surfaces of the south and east façades. The second and third floors each have five steel sash windows at the curved corner with glazing arranged in a horizontal pattern. These windows feature a larger fixed center light with shorter operable transom and hopper sashes at both top and bottom of the fixed light. This window arrangement is standard for all windows on the second and third floors of the primary façades and are referred to henceforth as “typical windows” for both the south and east façades. Fluted concrete panels that are painted with an accent color are located below, above, and between the second and third floor windows. Narrow concrete piers with a smooth finish flank the windows and span from the top of the ground floor to the top of the parapet.

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Along the south façade (facing 19th Street), the second and third floors each feature a long horizontal section of grouped windows with a cantilevered concrete canopy and a projecting concrete sill. Each window grouping contains eight typical windows separated by piers of smooth painted concrete.

The arrangement of grouped windows on the south façade is repeated on the east façade. As the east façade is longer in length than the south façade, its north end contains an additional section that is similar in design to the arrangement of the windows along the building's rounded corner. Here, three typical windows are located on the second and third floor with fluted concrete panels below, above, and between the second- and third-floor windows. Narrow concrete piers with a smooth finish flank the windows and span from the top of the ground floor to the top of the parapet.

West Façade

The west façade of the Woolworth Building is only partially visible over the adjacent building to the west at 1420 19th Street. The visible portion of the west façade consists of the upper portion of the third floor and the parapet. This façade has a smooth finish with no ornamentation

North (Rear) Façade

The north (rear) façade of the building faces a service alley named Service Street. This façade has no ornamentation other than windows and doors. At the first floor, openings consists of an original vertical sliding freight elevator door located to the east of the centerline of the façade and two contemporary metal exit doors, which were added during the 2022-2025 rehabilitation.

Typical windows along the second and third floor of the rear façade consist of steel sash windows with a two-lite awning sash over a fixed single lite sash in a horizontal pattern to match the windows of the primary façade. These windows are present in both a narrow version and a wide version, which is approximately twice the width of the narrow version. Three larger new metal framed storefront windows were added to the west half of the façade during the 2022-2025 rehabilitation.

An elevator penthouse rises along the roof in line with the rear façade and features a smooth concrete stucco wall with no openings at its north-, east-, and west-facing walls. Along its south-facing wall, which is only visible from the roof of the subject building, the elevator penthouse has a metal door; a metal vent is located to the east. A small stair penthouse located along the east wall of the elevator penthouse is not visible from the public right-of-way and provides access to the roof with a metal single-leaf door. Four domed skylights were added to the roof during the 2022-2025 rehabilitation.

Interior

Basement

The basement originally contained an open retail sales floor. In 2025, the basement was rehabilitated for use as a live performance venue, sound recording studio, artist practice rooms,

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and restrooms. The floor features nine evenly spaced original square columns. The painted plaster perimeter walls generally have non-historic fluted wood trim; the south perimeter wall has original sections of paired vertical fluting.

The performance venue, recording studios, practice rooms, restrooms, and other supporting spaces are divided by metal stud walls. The performance venue occupies most of the south half of the floor and has an open plan with an elevated stage with wood flooring. The performance area has a raised exposed concrete ceiling with integrated acoustical tile panels and a lower perimeter soffit. A bar with built-in booth and bar-style seating is located to the north of the performance area. The sound recording studio, artist practice rooms, and other spaces at the north half of the floor have gypsum board, acoustical tile, or lay-in tile ceilings. Restrooms have contemporary tile floors.

Two original stairways lead from the first floor to the basement at the west and northeast sides of the building. The stair at the west side of the building has a double-width L-shaped configuration with a standalone railing installed down the center. The stair has terrazzo treads and marble risers. The wall on the west side of the stair is finished in wood paneling with regular openings containing rose-tinted mirrors above the railing. An aluminum railing that runs along the outer edge of the stair curves at each corner to provide a continuous run. It is comprised of evenly spaced vertical posts with a handrail at the top and a grouping of three horizontal rails spaced closer together under the handrail with smaller vertical posts at central points between each larger vertical post. Railings running down the center and along the wall for this stair have a simple, minimalist design.

The northeast corner stair has an L-shaped configuration. The stair is similar to the west stair with regard to tread materials, railing design, and wall paneling materials.

First Floor

The first floor was historically used as the main sales floor of the Woolworth Building. Originally open in plan, the floor was rehabilitated from 2022 to 2025 to accommodate a variety of commercial and office spaces, including a main lobby, public dining area which features the building's original luncheonette, a contemporary bar, and seating area at the floor's west side; retail spaces at the south and east sides of the floor; an office lobby at the northeast corner; and updated back-of-house facilities at the center and north ends of the floor. The spaces are divided by painted metal stud walls, which were installed during the 2022-2025 rehabilitation.

Nine original square columns are evenly spaced throughout the floor. Floors in all spaces are original sealed terrazzo and concrete, except at the bar and some back-of-house spaces, which have contemporary tile floors. The luncheonette, main lobby, and front retail spaces have raised painted plaster ceilings with applied acoustical tile panels. Lower plaster soffits surround the perimeter at the floor's original ceiling height. The luncheonette has an original L-shaped stainless steel counter with stained wood veneer siding and black Formica base and features a row of original and salvaged metal stools with vinyl upholstery. The luncheonette's food preparation area has original rose colored mirrors and an original stainless steel backsplash and cornice. Walls running the span of the luncheonette are clad in original light yellow ceramic tile

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with decorative black tile bands. Painted plaster walls above feature originally regularly spaced decorative vertical wood fluting. The retail unit and office lobby at the east side of the floor have exposed concrete ceilings, while back of house spaces have lowered acoustical tile ceilings.

There are three stairways at the first floor. In addition to the main stairs at the northeast corner and west side, described in the previous basement description, exit stairs, installed during the 2022-2025 rehabilitation are located at the southwest corner of the floor and connect the first, second, and third floors. The stairs are utilitarian and have metal treads and landings, simple metal railings, and painted plaster walls.

Second Floor

The second floor was originally used as a stock room, with an open space at the center and small storage and utility rooms along the south, east, and north walls, and offices and support facilities (locker room, rest rooms, etc.) for Woolworth employees along the west wall. During the 2022-2025 rehabilitation, the floor was converted to office use. It contains an elevator lobby at the north end that is naturally lit by a light well and contemporary rooftop skylights. The elevator lobby connects to two conference rooms and a corridor with a rectangular plan that provides access to office and conference room spaces, which are clustered at the center and perimeter of the floor. A break room, formerly a women's restroom, is located at the southeast corner of the floor and has a rounded southeast corner and original pendent light fixtures and circular metal ceiling diffusers.

Unless otherwise noted, existing finishes are contemporary and were installed during the 2022-2025 rehabilitation. Walls are generally finished with painted gypsum board, though original concrete perimeter walls are exposed in some locations. The lobby, corridor, offices, conference rooms, and other spaces are divided by contemporary painted metal stud demising walls with periodic niches or cutaways that reveal underlying historic yellow and red hollow clay tiles at original walls locations. The elevator lobby and corridors have luxury vinyl flooring and painted gypsum board and acoustical tile ceilings. The conference rooms have glazed partition walls, facing the elevator lobby. Offices at the south end of the floor, which originally contained finished spaces, have soffited gypsum board ceilings with original circular metal diffusers, while offices in the former stockroom area have exposed concrete ceilings. All offices have carpet tile floors, glazed doors, and a mix of original exposed concrete perimeter walls and contemporary painted gypsum board or acoustic panel wall finishes.

Third Floor

The third floor was originally a large, unfinished open space. During the 2022-2025 rehabilitation, it was renovated as warm shell space. The floor features nine evenly spaced exposed square concrete columns and has original exposed concrete ceilings and exposed concrete walls and floors. The floor receives natural lighting from the historic perimeter windows, as well as contemporary skylights added at the north end of the floor during the 2022-2025 rehabilitation. Light from these skylights penetrates to the offices on the second floor through a light well at the north end of the floor. Two contemporary restrooms with tiled walls and floors and painted gypsum board ceilings are located at the north perimeter wall at the west side of the elevator.

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Alterations

Known alterations that occurred shortly after the store opened were detailed in architectural plan drawings for the building. They were largely limited to minor alterations for electrical and signage needs.¹ Other minor interior alterations included the installation of a children's "rocket ride" just within the corner entrance to the retail space in 1953, and the installation of a "candy kitchen" at the candy counter on the first floor.²

In 1960, several alterations to the storefronts and interior were undertaken. These alterations included the installation of an additional stairway along the interior of the east wall between the first floor and basement, the replacement of the glass transoms over the retail entrances with illuminated plastic transoms with signage, the removal of the wood backboards and wood doors that originally lined the interior wall of the storefront systems, and the installation of new fluorescent lamp fixtures within the storefronts.³ An initial plan to install a large plastic blade sign at the south façade is shown on elevation drawings from 1960, but the proposed blade sign does not appear to have ever been installed.⁴ It is unclear whether the raised floors of the storefront windows were lowered in 1960, or were lowered in subsequent decades, but only some sections of the original raised storefront floors remain at the bays near each entrance.

Minor alterations to the exterior identified through visual observation during site visits in 2022, which were completed at an unknown date, include the removal of the door hardware on some of the retail entrance doors, removal of the branded plastic transom over the storefront entrance at the north end of the east façade, removal of lighting beneath the projecting signboard over the first-floor storefronts, and installation of a non-historic lamp with exposed metal conduit at the primary corner entrance. The storefront glazing and some of the metal frames were altered at various times over the years as the original plate glass panes broke and new horizontal and vertical aluminum mullions were added in order to install smaller window panes in their place. A painted mural was added to the east wall of the first floor at an unknown date between 1995 and 2006. Solar panels were installed on the roof in 2012, and a metal plaque from the Kern County Historical Society at the south end of the east façade was installed circa 2015.

Interior alterations prior to 2022, identified from a review of the historic drawings and visual observations of the building, included the removal of some of the decorative mirrors, erection of perforated metal paneling either over or in the place of the wood wall paneling, installation of carpet flooring, and installation of a non-historic low metal railing that delineated the area of the luncheonette.

Between 2022 and 2025, the Woolworth Building was rehabilitated in compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation under the Federal Historic Tax Credit program as a mixed-use building, containing an live performance venue, recordings studios,

¹ F.W. Woolworth Company. "1400 19th Street, Bakersfield," drawings, 1948-1960.

² Drawing set, alterations labeled 1953 and 1956.

³ Drawing set, alterations labeled March 17, 1960.; Building permit dated May 10, 1960 with a scope of "new stairs on K Street side and remodel of store front" is on file at the Bakersfield Building Department. Permit number B-2183. Engineers listed on the permit are Gould & Degenkolb.

⁴ Drawing set, alterations labeled March 17, 1960.

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artist practice rooms, and various back-of-house and support spaces at the basement level; the original Woolworth luncheonette, dining areas, retail tenant spaces, and an office lobby at the first floor; offices on the second floor; and unoccupied warm shell space on the third floor.

Building-wide exterior alterations completed during the rehabilitation included repairing and restoring the original metal marquee and signboards, reading "F.W. Woolworth Co." and "Woolworth's," as well as the "Visit Woolworth's Luncheonette" transom signs; repairing the original metal storefront doors and installing new accessible pull bars; patching and repairing the original black tile and terra cotta tiles along the base and surrounds of the storefronts; repairing the retractable awnings and replacing the fabric coverings; replacing the damaged and previously modified storefront glazing with a new aluminum framed storefront system; replacing original reeded translucent glazed at upper-story windows with clear glazing in the original metal window frames; replacing the roofing; repainting the exterior of the building with a new white and charcoal color scheme; and installing four skylights on the roof. A new metal exit door was added at the west end of the south façade, requiring the removal of a small portion of the original storefront, and two new storefront entries with glazed aluminum storefront systems and black tile bases were added to the center of the east façade. Two new exit door openings were also added to the north façade, and louvers in second and third floor openings were modified with glazing to create new windows.

Inside the building, non-historic interior finishes, light fixtures, and furnishings were removed, including the stairs between the first floor and basement that had been installed in 1960, perforated metal coverings covering original wood wall paneling, carpet flooring, and a low metal railing surrounding the luncheonette. Painted metal stud partition walls were added throughout the building to subdivide the original open plans of each floor into smaller spaces for new commercial and office tenants. The original exit stair at the southwest corner was replaced with a new code compliant metal exit stair with concrete treads in the same location. New plumbing, electrical, and HVAC systems were also installed throughout the building.

At the basement level, an live performance venue with an elevated stage, removable chairs, perimeter booth seating, and a built-in bar was added at the south side of the floor. With the exception of a finished perimeter soffit, plaster ceiling finishes over the performance area and bar were removed, exposing the concrete structure above, and acoustical panels were installed between the concrete joists. Recording studios, artist practice rooms, green room, restrooms, and other back-of-house rooms at the north half of the floor were finished with gypsum board, acoustical tile, or lay-in tile ceilings. Carpet tile flooring was installed in the recording studios, while tile flooring was installed in the restrooms.

The main sales floor on the first floor was subdivided to include a variety of commercial, office, and back-of-house spaces. Two inches of shotcrete were added to the interior face of the east wall, and a plaster finish was installed over it. The original luncheonette was preserved and restored in its original location, and an open seating area, built-in bar, and retail unit were added to the south and southeast. Plaster ceiling finishes over the luncheonette, bar, seating area, and front retail space were removed, raising the ceiling height, and covered with acoustic panels. A perimeter soffit was added around these spaces at the level of the original ceiling height. An

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office lobby, second retail unit, and back-of-house spaces were added to the northeast and central portions of the floor. Ceiling finishes were removed from the office lobby and second retail unit, leaving the underlying concrete structure exposed. Decorative concrete wall finishes were installed inside the office lobby. Dropped gypsum board or acoustical tile ceilings were installed in the back-of-house spaces.

The second floor was rehabilitated for office use with small individual offices surrounding an elevator lobby, conference rooms, and rectangular corridor. The original office and support spaces, including most of the hollow clay tile demising walls, were demolished to accommodate the new use. Some hollow clay tile demising walls were preserved and integrated into new metal stud partition walls. A rectangular hole was cut through the concrete slab floorplate between the second and third floors to create a double-height lobby on the second floor that is naturally lit by four new skylights in the roof. The lobby resulting has exposed concrete ceilings, luxury vinyl plank flooring, and painted gypsum board partition walls. New finished installed in the corridor consisted of luxury vinyl plank flooring and painted gypsum board ceilings with salvaged original circular metal ceiling diffusers. Offices were finished with painted metal stud and glazed partition walls, painted gypsum board walls acoustical tile ceilings, carpet tile floors, glazed doors.

The third floor was modified as a warm shell space for flexible tenant use. Hollow clay tile walls at the southeast corner were demolished, as were restrooms and mechanical rooms at the north side of the floor. A rectangular portion of the concrete slab roof was removed to create a lightwell surrounded by low walls that opened to the second floor. Mechanical and storage rooms received luxury vinyl plank flooring. New restrooms with tiled floors and walls were added at the north side of the floor.

Integrity

In order to qualify for listing in the local, state or national historic registers, a property must possess significance under one or more of the criteria for significance and have historic integrity.

The Woolworth Building retains all seven aspects of integrity. It retains integrity of location and setting, as it has never been moved from its original location in downtown Bakersfield and remains located within a commercial downtown that is characterized by one- to four-story buildings that were primarily built in the middle of the twentieth century.

While the building was rehabilitated as a mixed-use building from 2022-2025, it retains overall integrity of design, workmanship, and materials. The materials, features, and design elements that are characteristic of its Late Moderne design have been preserved, including its horizontal groupings of windows; stepped parapet; curved form; the use of smooth and fluted concrete cladding, black terra cotta tile base and storefront surrounds; upper-story aluminum window frames and storefront doors; interior stairs with wood veneer siding and horizontal aluminum handrails; and decorative wood fluting on the sales floor walls. The design features that mark the building as a branch of the Woolworth Company are also extant, including its original signboards, terrazzo entries and flooring, luncheonette, and other interior and exterior finishes that were standard features of the national chain retail company.

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Alterations to the exterior are limited to the replacement of damaged and previously modified storefront glazing, the addition of code-required exit stair doors in visually discrete façade locations, the addition of two new storefront entries at the east façade, reroofing, repainting, and the replacement of original translucent reeded glazing in upper-story windows with clear glass. Although the replacement of upper-story window glazing altered an original historic feature of the building, the window openings and original metal frames remain, resulting in minimal change to the overall appearance of the building. The new storefront glazing systems and entries are compatible with the materials, scale, and design of the historic storefronts while having subtly differentiated detailing.

Interior alterations primarily consist of the removal of original Woolworth Company display cases and furnishings, prior to the 2022-2025 rehabilitation, and the removal of non-historic features, finishes, and furnishings, as well as a limited amount of original but undistinctive features and materials. Although the previously open floor plans of the building have been partially subdivided to accommodate new commercial and office uses, the historic open character of the primary sales floor and luncheonette on the first floor remains visually apparent through long unimpeded views along the south and west sides of the floor and visual treatment of new retail spaces to appear as boxes within the larger volume of the sales floor. While the second was also subdivided, it was historically utilitarian in nature and were not publicly accessible, and therefore, are of less importance to the overall historic character of the building. The third floor, originally an unfinished stockroom, has been minimally altered from its original appearance.

Overall, the building continues to convey its Late Moderne style and mid-20th century construction as a retail branch of the F.W. Woolworth Company and therefore retains its integrity of feeling and association. Thus, the building retains all seven aspects of integrity.

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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.)

- ☐ 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.
- ☒ 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.)

- ☐ A. Owned 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

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1950

Significant Dates

1950

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Strohmeier, M.G.

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Woolworth Building is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C (Design/Construction) at the local level of significance as a good local example of a Late Moderne style commercial building in downtown Bakersfield and as an excellent example of a purpose-built Woolworth retail building that demonstrates the typical branding and organization of the national bargain chain with its lunch counter and basement and first-floor retail spaces. The period of significance is 1950, the year the building was originally constructed and opened to the public.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion C (Architecture)

History of Downtown Bakersfield

The San Joaquin Valley, located in the southern portion of California's Central Valley, was historically the homeland of the Penutian-speaking Southern Valley Yokuts. The Yokuts established permanent villages full of single-family dwellings, communal residences, granaries, and sweathouses and lived on a mixed economy based on fishing, hunting small game, and collecting mussels, seeds, roots, and other plant materials.⁵ Tule was integral to the Yokuts' livelihood and was used both as a dietary staple, as well as a raw material for making baskets, cradles, boats, housing, and other items.⁶ One Yokut village, Woilu, was located at the present-day site of Bakersfield.⁷

In 1542, Spanish explorer Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo led the first European expedition to southern California. Although various other European expeditions explored the San Joaquin Valley through the late 18th century, they did not establish any permanent settlements in the area. California became part of Mexico after Mexico won its independence from Spain in 1822. The Mexican government subsequently conferred much of the land formerly controlled by the Spanish missions and presidios to private citizens in the form of land grants, or ranchos; however, none were established in the Bakersfield area.⁸

In 1848, California was ceded to the United States as part of the terms of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended the Mexican-American War. California achieved statehood two years later in 1850. In 1857, the California State Legislature offered a contract to reclaim swamplands in the Southern San Joaquin Valley in order to spur development of land in the area. In 1863, Colonel Thomas Baker was granted the rights to the contract. Baker hired a group of Native Americans and constructed a system of irrigation ditches that dammed Buena Vista Lake

⁵ Rincon Consultants, Inc. "Making Downtown Bakersfield Project," Draft Environmental Impact Report, January 2018, 104-105.

⁶ Rincon Consultants, Inc., 104-105.

⁷ Sian L. Winship, "Woman's Club of Bakersfield," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, November 2021, 8.15.

⁸ Rincon Consultants, Inc., 105-106.

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and drained much of the present-day area of Bakersfield for use as grazing land and residential settlement. Near the present-day site of 19th and N streets he constructed a house for himself. Between roughly the location of M, P, 14th, and 17th streets, he planted alfalfa fields for the use of passing travelers. Baker's homestead, known as "Baker's Field," became a well-known stopping place between Los Angeles and Visalia.⁹

When Kern County was created in 1866, Baker was elected the county's first surveyor and given the responsibility of helping set up the county and establish township boundaries. In 1870, the first survey of Baker's settlement, which became known as "Bakersfield," was completed. The survey resulted in a gridiron street pattern that originally stretched from California Avenue to the south, 22th street to the north, F Street to the west, and S Street to the east. The town center was located at the intersection of Chester Avenue and Railroad Avenue (now Truxtun Avenue).¹⁰ Institutional buildings, including a public school and county courthouse, were constructed near the intersection by the 1880s.¹¹

As the century progressed, commercial and residential development began to fill in the surrounding blocks. One of the first commercial stores was an adobe store owned by Julius and George Chester (namesake for Chester Avenue) at the intersection of 19th Street and Chester Avenue, one block to the east of the subject site.¹² By 1885, the first fire insurance maps for Bakersfield showed that the intersections where Chester Avenue and K Street crossed 19th Street had developed into the town's main commercial section (Figure 5).¹³ By 1888, the town's economic center expanded to an area centered around 17th, 20th, M, and I streets, with 19th Street to the east of Chester Avenue serving as the main commercial street. Dense commercial development, consisting mostly of narrow one-story wood-framed buildings and some larger masonry buildings, filled the blocks. Drug stores, saloons, general stores, a hotel, plumbing company, furniture stores, liverys, carriage shops, and other small stores occupied the intersection of K and 19th streets where the subject building is now located (Figure 6).¹⁴

In 1889, the worst fire in Bakersfield's history destroyed much of Bakersfield's commercial center. To avoid a similar disaster in the future, much of the town's urban core was rebuilt primarily in brick.¹⁵ The four square blocks between I, K, 18th, and 20th streets, including buildings at the subject site, appear to have been almost entirely destroyed by the fire. Within a year, Sanborn fire insurance maps showed that several new two-story masonry buildings – including a new hotel, general store, saloons, drug stores, and grocery stores – were under construction on the site. The east side of K street, meanwhile, appears to have been spared from the fire and continued to contain a row of small wood-framed buildings (Figure 7).¹⁶

⁹ Richard C. Bailey, *Heart of the Golden Empire: An Illustrated History of Bakersfield* (Woodland Hills, CA: Windsor Publishing, Inc., 1984), 36.

¹⁰ Rincon Consulting, Inc., 106.

¹¹ Sanborn Map and Publishing Company, Bakersfield, Cal., Sheet 2, 1888, Library of Congress.

¹² Bailey, 39.

¹³ Sanborn Map and Publishing Company, Bakersfield, Cal., 1885, Library of Congress.

¹⁴ Sanborn Map and Publishing Company, Bakersfield, Cal., Sheet 1, 1888, Library of Congress.

¹⁵ Bailey, 62-62.

¹⁶ Sanborn Map and Publishing Company, Bakersfield, Cal., Sheet 2, 1890, Library of Congress.

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In 1899, another major event reshaped the development of Bakersfield when the Kern River Oilfield was discovered. Oil production subsequently emerged as one of the pillars of Bakersfield's economy. A "great oil rush" ensued that boosted the city's economy and resulted in a population increase from just under 5,000 in 1900 to approximately 12,700 in 1910.¹⁷

Bakersfield expanded rapidly outward in the early 20th century. The introduction of electric streetcar service in 1901 opened areas outside the city center to development.¹⁸ In spite of this growth, the intersection of Chester Avenue and 19th Street remained the city's commercial center, filled with multi-use buildings with commercial shops on the ground floor and residences or offices on the upper floors. In addition to the grocery stores, saloons, and other businesses that had been present in the area in the 19th century, jewelry shops, cobblers, barbers, a bank, and an Odd Fellows meeting hall also occupied the area.¹⁹ In 1911, the F.W. Woolworth Company opened a branch of its chain of five-and-dime stores in a narrow two-story commercial building at 1408 19th Street, near the intersection of 19th and K streets.²⁰

In the 1920s, cotton emerged as the most valuable agricultural crop in the San Joaquin Valley as a result of work completed at the Cotton Experiment Station at Shafter, approximately 15 miles to the northwest of Bakersfield, which developed high-quality cotton varieties to aid the establishment of California's cotton industry. As a result, Kern County emerged as the largest one-variety cotton region in the world. The success of this "white gold" further diversified Bakersfield's economy and pumped more wealth into the city. Many new buildings were constructed in the downtown area during the resulting building boom.²¹ The city's population, meanwhile, jumped again, rising from 18,600 in 1920 to 29,200 in 1930.²²

The growth and success of agriculture in California during the early 20th century attracted thousands of new residents from the Plains States that were impacted by the Dust Bowl. Between 1931 and 1939, approximately 300,000 people from Oklahoma, Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, and Texas came to California. Many of these migrants were farmers and chose to settle in areas that offered opportunities for agricultural work. As a result, approximately 70,000 migrants from Dust Bowl states arrived in the San Joaquin Valley, and the population of Kern County increased by 64 percent over the course of the 1930s.²³ In spite of this overall regional population growth, the population of Bakersfield appears to have increased at a slower rate than previous decades, growing by only 3,000 residents between 1930 and 1940, possibly due to the dampening effects of the Great Depression.²⁴ Bakersfield's diversified economy and New Deal programs, which funneled federal funding into numerous local public works projects, helped the city weather the economic downturn better than many cities across the country.²⁵

¹⁷ Winship, 8.15.

¹⁸ Bailey, 76.

¹⁹ Sanborn Map and Publishing Company, Bakersfield, Cal., Sheet 2, 1905, Library of Congress.

²⁰ Employment advertisement, *Bakersfield Morning Echo*, 15 August 1915: 6.

²¹ Bailey, 87.

²² U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Census of Population: 1950, Volume II Characteristics of the Population, Part 5, California* (Washington, D.C.: United States Printing Office, 1952).

²³ "The Dust Bowl, California, and the Politics of Hard Times," State of California Capitol Museum, 2022, accessed September 23, 2024, <https://capitolmuseum.ca.gov/exhibits/the-dust-bowl-california-and-the-politics-of-hard-times/>.

²⁴ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Census of Population: 1950*.

²⁵ Bailey, 91.

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World War II pulled Bakersfield out of the Great Depression. The importance of Bakersfield's oil production facilities to the war effort prompted the United States military to identify the city as one of the major areas in California that needed to be defended. Numerous military bases and facilities – including Minter Field near Shafter, Edwards Air Force Base (formerly Muroc Army Airfield), Gardner Army Airfield in Taft, the Naval Ordnance Test Station in China Lake, and Marine Corps Auxiliary Air Station in Mojave – were either built or expanded in communities surrounding Bakersfield during the 1940s as part of the national war response. These military bases and the arrival of other major military-related industries, such as the Lockheed Aircraft Corporation's warplane assembly facility in Oildale, provided job opportunities for many Bakersfield residents.²⁶

As in many states across, California, the postwar period was a time of economic growth and prosperity. In 1945, the total number of building permits issued in Bakersfield ranked fourth among 104 California cities, behind only Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Long Beach.²⁷ Retail sales in the 800-square-mile area around Bakersfield increased more than 150 percent between the 1940s and 1950s, leading some major national retail corporations to invest money into replacing their aging commercial stores in Bakersfield's downtown center with large modern stores, often designed in contemporary architectural styles that reflected the sense of modernity, efficiency, and progress.²⁸ Among these were the new J.C. Penny store constructed in 1949 at the corner of 19th Street and Chester Avenue and the subject building, the F.W. Woolworth Company building, completed one block to the east in 1950, both of which were constructed in the Late Moderne style.²⁹

In 1952, a magnitude 7.3 earthquake struck Bakersfield, damaging or destroying nearly every building in the downtown area. The earthquake spurred a major construction boom in which more than 300 buildings in downtown Bakersfield were either extensively remodeled or newly constructed. Modern, contemporary styles of architecture that had been introduced prior to the earthquake flourished during this period of rebuilding.³⁰ One such example was the Brock's department store, which was expanded and remodeled in the Late Moderne style.³¹ Backed by the strength of the rebuilding effort, the local Chamber of Commerce began to tout Bakersfield as "America's newest city."³²

Bakersfield's diversified economy based on oil, agriculture, and mining, as well as its desirable climate and convenient location as a distribution center for much of the state contributed to the city's growth in the 1950s. During the postwar years, oil fields in Kern County produced a quarter of California's total oil output. As a result, the yearly income per family in Bakersfield was \$2,000 higher than the national average and \$1,700 higher than the state average, making

²⁶ Bailey, 92-93.

²⁷ "Bakersfield Fourth in Building Permits," *Bakersfield Californian*, 29 January 1945: 9.

²⁸ Greater Bakersfield Chamber of Commerce, *Bakersfield, Kern County, California: America's Newest City* (Bakersfield: CA, Greater Bakersfield Chamber of Commerce, 1964).

²⁹ "Five-and-Ten Store Will Erect \$500,000 Building," *Bakersfield Californian*, 12 March 1949.

³⁰ Greater Bakersfield Chamber of Commerce, *Bakersfield, Kern County, California: America's Newest City*.

³¹ Bailey, 128-129.

³² Greater Bakersfield Chamber of Commerce, *Bakersfield, Kern County, California: America's Newest City*.

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Bakersfield an attractive place to live for many families and individuals.³³ Between 1953 and 1975, the city tripled in size, adding 15,400 acres to its boundaries.

As in many cities across the country, the development of new subdivisions shifted the commercial and retail heart of the city away from the downtown area to dispersed new shopping centers located in newly developed subdivisions at the outskirts of the city. Once-busy downtown corridors that had been the center of Bakersfield's commercial life since the 19th century, such as 19th Street, fell into decline as large retailers and businesses moved out.³⁴ By the 1970s, the downtown area was considered blighted. The Downtown Redevelopment Area was established in 1972 and expanded in 1974, 1976, and 1979 in order to revitalize and rehabilitate 73 square blocks of the city's central business district.³⁵

F.W. Woolworth Company

The F.W. Woolworth Company, commonly known as Woolworth's, was founded by Frank Winfield Woolworth in the late 19th century. The first Woolworth's store opened in Utica, New York in 1879 but closed shortly afterward. Within a few months, Woolworth opened a new store in Lancaster, Pennsylvania based around a novel new business model that changed the American retail landscape.³⁶ Prior to Woolworth's, most customers bought goods from catalogs or at local general stores, where attendants brought items to customers from shelves located behind the front counter. Woolworth's introduced the innovative new concept in which customers picked up their own items from the salesfloor without having to ask for the assistance of a salesperson. Marketing itself as "Everybody's Store," Woolworth's business model was based around the idea that profits could be made by selling a wide variety of inexpensive items that were accessible to Americans of all economic means. As such, all items in the store were rigidly priced at either five or ten cents, giving rise to the term "five-and-dime" store. In order to maximize its exposure and accessibility to customers, Woolworth's adopted a policy of locating its stores along downtown Main Streets, which were the center of commercial life in the early to mid-20th century. Recognizing the success of the Woolworth's model, several other franchises of five-and-dime chain stores opened during the same period, including Kress, Kresge, and McCarty's.³⁷

The Woolworth's business model proved to be enormously successful and sparked the creation of one of the largest retail chains in the world. By 1904, six chains of affiliated Woolworth's stores were in operation in the United States and Canada. In 1912, all 596 of the syndicated Woolworth's stores then in operation incorporated and merged into one company under the "F.W. Woolworth Company" name. The merger brought a windfall of profits to the company, most clearly embodied in the company's construction of the first modern skyscraper in the world, the Woolworth Building, in New York City in 1913. F. W. Woolworth remained president of the company until his death in 1919. At the time, Woolworth's stores were located

³³ Greater Bakersfield Chamber of Commerce, *Bakersfield, Kern County, California: America's Newest City*.

³⁴ RBF Consulting, "Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan Update, Program Environmental Impact Report," June 2002, 4.1-2.

³⁵ RBF Consulting, 4.1-14.

³⁶ Kingstree Studios, "F.W. Woolworth Co. Store – Renton," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 2015, 9.

³⁷ Cynthia Johnson, "F.W. Woolworth Building," Lexington, Kentucky, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 2002, 8.1.

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in every state of the United States, as well as Canada, resulting in a total of more than 1,000 Woolworth's stores worldwide. Annual sales were approximately \$119 million.³⁸

Thanks to its policy of selling inexpensive goods that anyone with modest means could afford, Woolworth's continued to expand during the Great Depression, adding 500 more stores between 1929 and 1939. In 1935, the company discontinued its five- and ten-cent price limit. This further increased the company's profits, allowing it to shift from its original policy of opening stores in pre-existing buildings to constructing new buildings exclusively for its stores for the first time. Hoping to attract more customers by presenting an image of a progress, efficiency, and faith in the future, Woolworth's new custom-built stores were designed in modern architectural styles, such as the Art Deco and Streamline Moderne styles, and in the 1940s and 1950s, an offshoot of Streamline Moderne known as the Late Moderne style.³⁹

Like many American retail companies, Woolworth's experienced a period of unprecedented growth after World War II. Woolworth's enjoyed a record-breaking year for sales in 1950 during which it earned more than \$61 million in profits. While the company's stores remained a fixture of downtown city centers, by 1954, the company began to construct stores in new shopping centers in subdivisions outside the city center. This reflected a nationwide shift of commercial and retail activity away from downtown main streets to suburban areas.⁴⁰

In the 1960s, five-and-dime stores evolved into the modern discount department store. In 1962, Woolworth's added a chain of large single-floor discount stores called Woolco. The same year, its competitor Kresge opened K-Mart, Dayton opened Target, and Sam Walton opened his first Wal-Mart store. Despite this shift in focus, Woolworth's earnings began to decline in the 1970s as a result of an economic recession and increasing prices. The Woolco chain closed in the United States in 1983 but continued in Canada until 1994, when all of the stores were either sold to competitors or closed. In 1993, the F.W. Woolworth Company closed half of its stores in the United States as part of a corporate restructuring. The remainder of Woolworth's chain of stores closed in 1997, when the company changed its name to Venator.⁴¹

Development of the F.W. Woolworth Building in Bakersfield, California

The following narrative provides a brief timeline of known construction activity at the Woolworth Building based on original architectural drawings, building permits on file with the City of Bakersfield Building Department, historic photographs, and observations made during 2022 site visits.

Prior to the construction of the Woolworth Building, an older two-story brick building with multiple commercial units was located on the site. It contained an earlier Woolworth store in addition to a branch of the Owl Drug Company and a Sayer's Linen Store.⁴² Plans for the existing Woolworth Building were designed by M.G. Strohmeier, the superintendent of construction of the F.W. Woolworth Company, as early as 1948. In March 1949, the company

³⁸ Kingstree Studios, 9.

³⁹ Johnson, 8.3-8.4.

⁴⁰ Kingstree Studios, 9.

⁴¹ Kingstree Studios, 10.

⁴² Sanborn Map Company, vol. 1, 1912, 15.

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publicly announced its plans to construct a new three-story building at its existing location for an estimated cost of \$500,000. The new building was planned to include a sales department on the basement and first floor, offices on the second floor, and stock rooms on the third floor. The additional space was intended to accommodate a larger assortment of merchandise, including horticultural foods, glassware, and an electrical department.⁴³

In June 1949, the City of Bakersfield approved the permit for the new building.⁴⁴ To enable construction to begin, the Woolworth's store relocated its operations to a temporary location at 2018 Chester Street, and the existing building on the site was razed.⁴⁵ Jackson Brothers, a construction company based in Los Angeles, was hired as the contractor for the Woolworth Building.⁴⁶ The building was completed and opened to the public in May 1950.⁴⁷ At the time, newspapers described the new Woolworth's store as "the most modernly equipped F.W. Woolworth store on the Pacific coast."⁴⁸ The fully air conditioned building was nearly four times larger than the previous Woolworth's store on the site. Reflecting the increasing size, the store's work force also multiplied, employing five times the number of staff as the previous store. The interior featured fluorescent lighting, terrazzo floors, and walnut-covered counters. Pastries and baked goods were prepared daily in a bakery at the rear of the store and served at a 74-foot lunch counter with the capacity to seat 36 customers on the first floor.⁴⁹

Advertisements at the store's opening proclaimed:

Everything's growing in Bakersfield...Privileged are you folks who live in this golden city where opportunity beckons at every corner in the streamlined oilfields of Elk Hill, the fertile fields of fabulous San Joaquin Valley, in your modern industrial plants ... Thanks to your patronage we've outgrown our old store and just as you did when your growing family needed more space, we've moved to larger quarters.⁵⁰

Research did not indicate that 1952 earthquake affected the Woolworth building. After 44 years in the building and more than 90 years at the site, F.W. Woolworth's Company closed its Bakersfield store in 1994 due to competition from other retailers. The building was subsequently used as an antique mall until 2021.⁵¹ The property transferred to new owners and Bakersfield natives Sherod and Emily Waite and Dave Anderson in 2021. Between 2022 and 2025, the new ownership group rehabilitated the building, based on architectural designs by Cater Design Group, Inc., into a mixed-use building. The rehabilitated building contains an event venue, green room, recording studios, artist practice rooms, storage rooms, restrooms, and additional support spaces at the basement level; the original Woolworth luncheonette, commercial retail spaces,

⁴³ "Five-and-Ten Store Will Erect \$500,000 Building," *The Bakersfield Californian*, March 12, 1949.

⁴⁴ F.W. Woolworth Company. "1400 19th Street, Bakersfield," drawings, 1948-1960; "Five-and-Ten Store Will Erect \$500,000 Building," *The Bakersfield Californian*, March 12, 1949; "Woolworth Given Building Permit," *The Bakersfield Californian*, June 22, 1949.

⁴⁵ "Woolworth Given Building Permit," *The Bakersfield Californian*, June 22, 1949.

⁴⁶ "Woolworth Given Building Permit."

⁴⁷ "Modern Woolworth Store Will Open Doors Thursday Morning," *The Bakersfield Californian*, May 10, 1950.

⁴⁸ "Modern Woolworth Store Will Open Doors Thursday Morning."

⁴⁹ "Modern Woolworth Store Will Open Doors Thursday Morning."

⁵⁰ Advertisement, *Bakersfield Californian*, 5 May 1950.

⁵¹ Andrew Pridgen, "The Last Woolworth's lunch counter in the US is in this Central California Town," SFGate, September 23, 2024, accessed May 16, 2022, <https://www.sfgate.com/centralcoast/article/Last-Woolworth-lunch-counter-gets-renovation-16983453.php>.

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additional artist practice rooms, and an office lobby at the first floor; offices at the second floor; and an unoccupied warm shell space at the third floor. The rehabilitated building reopened to the public in October 2025.

Late Moderne Style

In the years during and after World War II, the exuberance of the Streamline Moderne gave way to the more restrained Late Moderne style, at the same time that the International Style and Modern Movement was gaining traction. Derived from Streamline Moderne but with an emphasis on sharp angularity rather than curves, Late Moderne was prominent from the mid-1940s until the late 1950s. The style was often used for commercial buildings, hospitals, fire stations, and other civic and institutional buildings.⁵² Characteristics of the style include strong horizontal elements, use of spare surfaces, and intersecting volumes that reinforced the style's angularity. A signature feature is the beveled window or horizontal window groupings surrounded with a projecting flange or frame.

Conclusion:

As an excellent example of a mid-century purpose-built Woolworth Company retail building, the Woolworth Building in downtown Bakersfield demonstrates the organization and design of the five-and-dime bargain retail store that was popularized by the Woolworth Company and became a common building type that was found throughout the United States. The use of branding throughout the building, including Woolworth's-branded signboards and terrazzo flooring on the exterior, and decorative interior finishes, including wood paneling, decorative plaster, mirrored surfaces, and curved aluminum handrails, illustrated the success of the bargain retail industry and provided a comfortable and attractive shopping experience for Woolworth's customers, building brand loyalty and recognition. The inclusion of a lunch counter, or luncheonette, was also a common feature of Woolworth's stores in the mid-twentieth century but is a rare surviving element today.

Furthermore, the Woolworth Building demonstrates the features of the Late Moderne style through its limited window openings, its horizontally grouped windows with projecting sills and canopies at the second and third floors, the use of strong façade planes that intersect with geometric treatments, and the use of spare decorative elements that emphasize the planar surfaces of the building's skin. The use of the curved corner with expressive vertical elements illustrates the continued influence of the Streamline Moderne style, as curved elements are generally not typical of the Late Moderne style.

Overall, the Woolworth Building in downtown Bakersfield is a good example of a commercial building designed in the Late Moderne style and an excellent surviving example of the bargain retail typology that was popularized by the Woolworth Company and brought to national prominence in the mid-twentieth century. The building retains all aspects of historic integrity.

⁵² Paul Gleye, *The Architecture of Los Angeles*, (Los Angeles: Rosebud Books, 1981), p. 149-52.

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<https://www.sfgate.com/centralcoast/article/Last-Woolworth-lunch-counter-gets-renovation-16983453.php>.

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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 Buildings Survey # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

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Primary location of additional data:

☐ State Historic Preservation Office

☐ Other State agency

☐ Federal agency

☒ Local government

☐ University

☐ Other

Name of repository: Kern County Assessor-Recorder's Office, City of Bakersfield
Building Department _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 35.376294

Longitude: -119.016664

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The property is located at 1400 19th Street, Bakersfield, Kern County, California. The boundary corresponds to the legal property boundary recorded with the Kern County Assessor Recorder for Assessor Parcel Number 005-481-05.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary corresponds with the legal and historic boundary on which the building has been located since its construction in 1950.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Clare Flynn & Jen Hembree

organization: Page & Turnbull

street & number: 170 Maiden Lane, 5th Floor

city or town: San Francisco state: CA zip code: 94108

e-mail: flynn@page-turnbull.com

telephone: 916-715-9647

date: April 2026

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Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Woolworth Building

City or Vicinity: Bakersfield

County: Kern

State: CA

Photographer: Page & Turnbull

Date Photographed: September-October 2025

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 21. CA_Kern County_WoolworthBuilding_001.jpg.

View of the Woolworth Building showing curved corner and both south and east primary façades. Looking northwest.

2 of 21. CA_Kern County_WoolworthBuilding_002.jpg.

Woolworth Building, primary (east) façade, looking northwest.

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3 of 21. CA_Kern County_WoolworthBuilding_003.jpg.

Woolworth Building, primary (south) façade, looking slightly northwest.

4 of 21. CA_Kern County_WoolworthBuilding_004.jpg.

Woolworth Building, oblique view of rear (north) façade, looking southeast.

5 of 21. CA_Kern County_WoolworthBuilding_005.jpg.

Woolworth Building, detail of corner entrance, looking northwest.

6 of 21. CA_Kern County_WoolworthBuilding_006.jpg.

Woolworth Building, detail of storefront windows and entrance at north end of east façade, looking west.

7 of 21. CA_Kern County_WoolworthBuilding_007.jpg.

Woolworth Building, Basement Level. View of Stair 1 (along west wall), looking southwest.

8 of 21. CA_Kern County_WoolworthBuilding_008.jpg.

Woolworth Building, Basement Level. Detail of Stair 2, looking east.

9 of 21. CA_Kern County_WoolworthBuilding_009.jpg.

Woolworth Building, Basement Level. Event venue and bar, view southeast.

10 of 21. CA_Kern County_WoolworthBuilding_010.jpg.

Woolworth Building, Basement Level. Event space, view east.

11 of 21. CA_Kern County_WoolworthBuilding_011.jpg.

Woolworth Building, First Floor. Main Lobby, view northwest toward Bar and Woolworth Lunch Counter.

12 of 21. CA_Kern County_WoolworthBuilding_012.jpg.

Woolworth Building, First Floor, view north towards Stair 1 (foreground) and Woolworth Lunch Counter (background).

13 of 21. CA_Kern County_WoolworthBuilding_013.jpg.

Woolworth Building, First Floor, view northeast toward bar (right) and Woolworth Lunch Counter (back left).

14 of 21. CA_Kern County_WoolworthBuilding_014.jpg.

Woolworth Building, First Floor. South end of Woolworth Lunch Counter, view north.

15 of 21. CA_Kern County_WoolworthBuilding_015.jpg.

Woolworth Building, First Floor. Woolworth Lunch Counter, view southwest.

16 of 21. CA_Kern County_WoolworthBuilding_016.jpg.

Woolworth Building, First Floor. Elevator lobby, view northwest.

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17 of 21. CA_Kern County_WoolworthBuilding_017.jpg.
Woolworth Building, Second Floor. Light Court and Elevator Lobby. view northeast.

18 of 21. CA_Kern County_WoolworthBuilding_018.jpg.
Woolworth Building, Second Floor. Break Room, view south.

19 of 21. CA_Kern County_WoolworthBuilding_019.jpg.
Woolworth Building, Second Floor. Typical office with exposed hollow clay tile.

20 of 21. CA_Kern County_WoolworthBuilding_020.jpg.
Woolworth Building, Second Floor. Typical office with exposed hollow clay tile.

21 of 21. CA_Kern County_WoolworthBuilding_021.jpg.
Woolworth Building, Third Floor, view northeast.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
Tier 2 – 120 hours
Tier 3 – 230 hours
Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

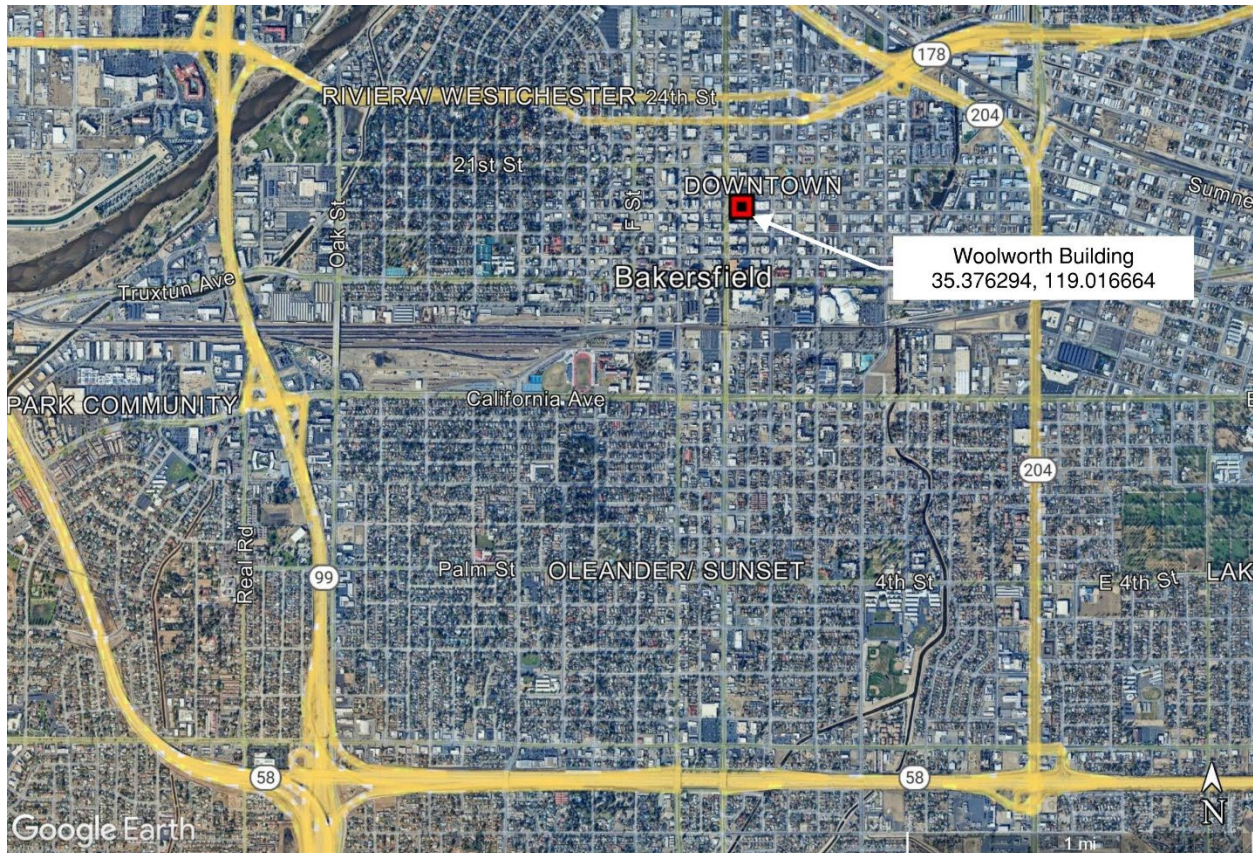
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MAPS. Location Map. Source: Google Earth Pro, 2026. Edited by Page & Turnbull, 2026.

Latitude: 35.376294

Longitude: -119.016664



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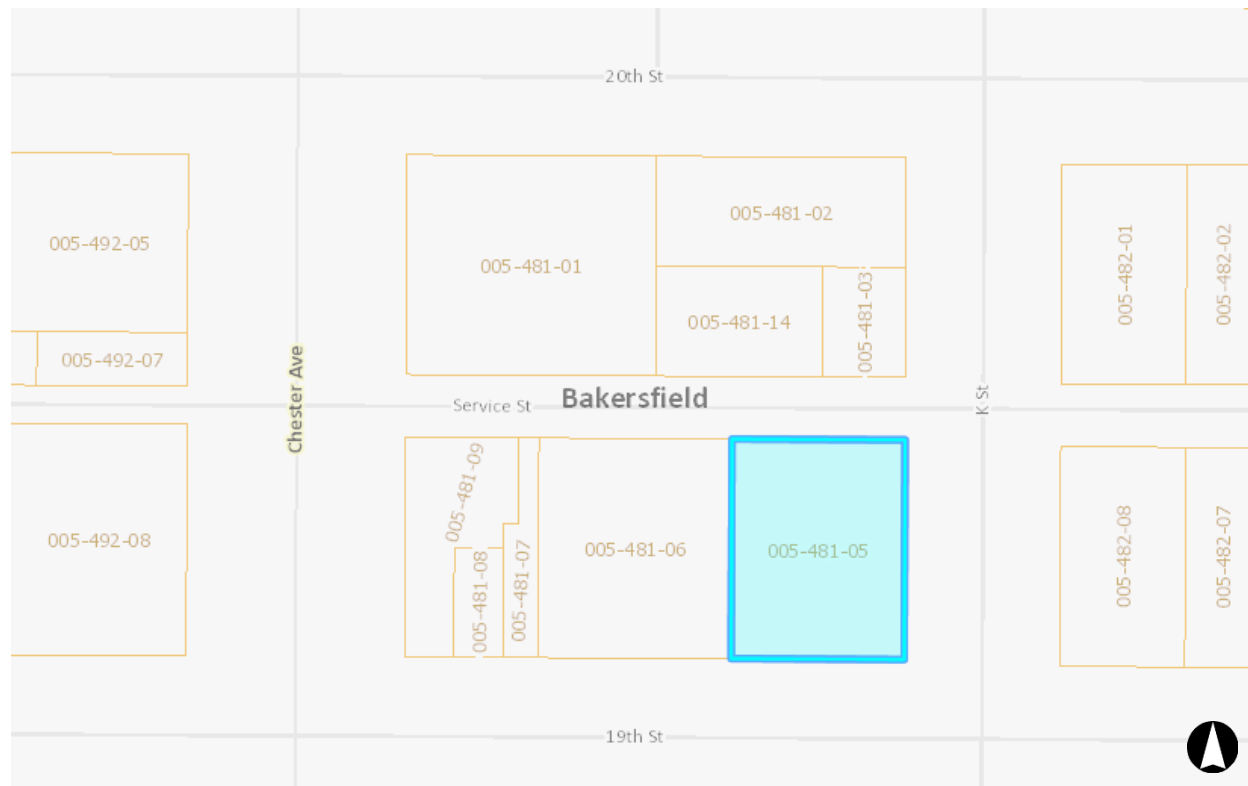
MAPS. Site Map. Subject property outlined in red. Google Earth, 2026. Edited by Page & Turnbull, 2026.



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MAPS. Property Boundary Map. Woolworth Building outlined in blue. Source: Kern County Assessor-Recorder's Office, 2026. Edited by Page & Turnbull, 2026.



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Additional Items: Historic Map.



Figure 1. 1885 Sanborn Map and Publishing Company fire insurance map, showing commercial development near the site of the subject building at the intersection of 19th and K streets (outlined in red). Source: Library of Congress. Edited by Page & Turnbull.

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Additional Items: Historic Map



Figure 2. 1888 Sanborn-Perris Map Company fire insurance map, showing commercial development near the site of the subject building at the intersection of 19th and K streets (outlined in red). Source: Library of Congress. Edited by Page & Turnbull.

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Additional Items: Historic Map



Figure 3. 1890 Sanborn-Perris Map Company fire insurance map, showing the construction of new masonry buildings (shaded pink) near the site of the subject building at the intersection of 19th and K streets (outlined in red) after the 1889 fire. Source: Library of Congress. Edited by Page & Turnbull.

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Additional Items: Historic Map

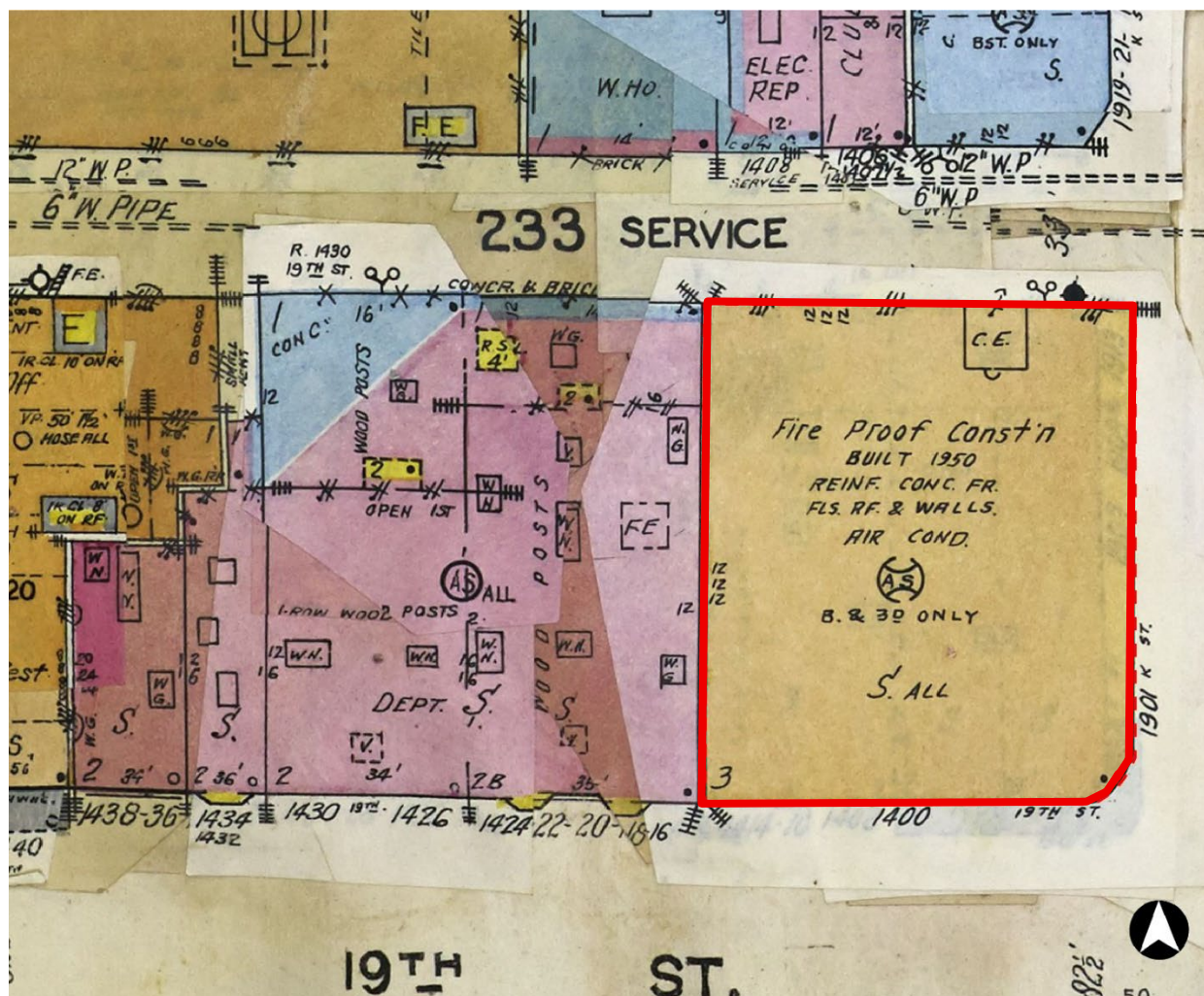


Figure 4. 1951 Sanborn Map Company fire insurance map, showing the Woolworth Building outlined with a red line. Source: Library of Congress.

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Additional Items: Historic Image

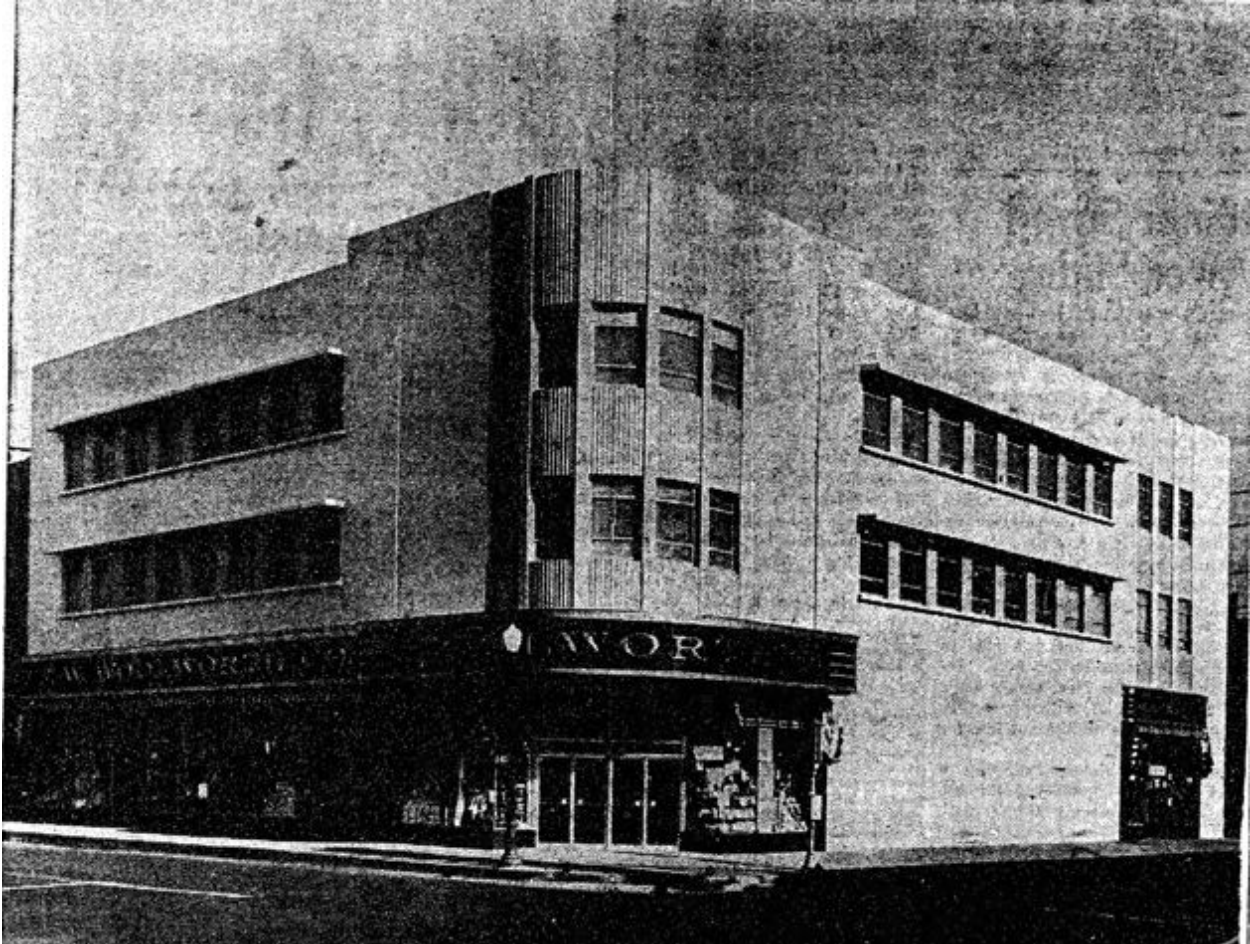


Figure 5. The Woolworth Building just prior to opening in May 1950. Source: *The Bakersfield Californian*.

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Figure 6. View looking west along 19th Street with the Woolworth Building at right. Photograph taken ca. 1950. Source: Kern County Museum, Photograph Collection.

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Additional Items: Historic Image



Figure 7. View west along 19th Street, with the Woolworth Building at the right. Photograph is undated but taken prior to 1960 alterations. Source: Flickr.com, user: Patrice Roe. Photograph reproduced in Lunch Counter space on ground floor.

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Additional Items: Historic Image



Figure 8. Woolworth Building in 1995. Looking northwest from the southeast corner of 19th and K streets. Source: San Joaquin Valley Library System, Digital Photograph Collection

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Additional Items: Historic Image



Figure 9. Woolworth Building, photograph taken ca. 1995-2006. Source: Flickr.com, user: David Valenzuela.

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Additional Items: Photo Key 1 of 6, Exterior Views.



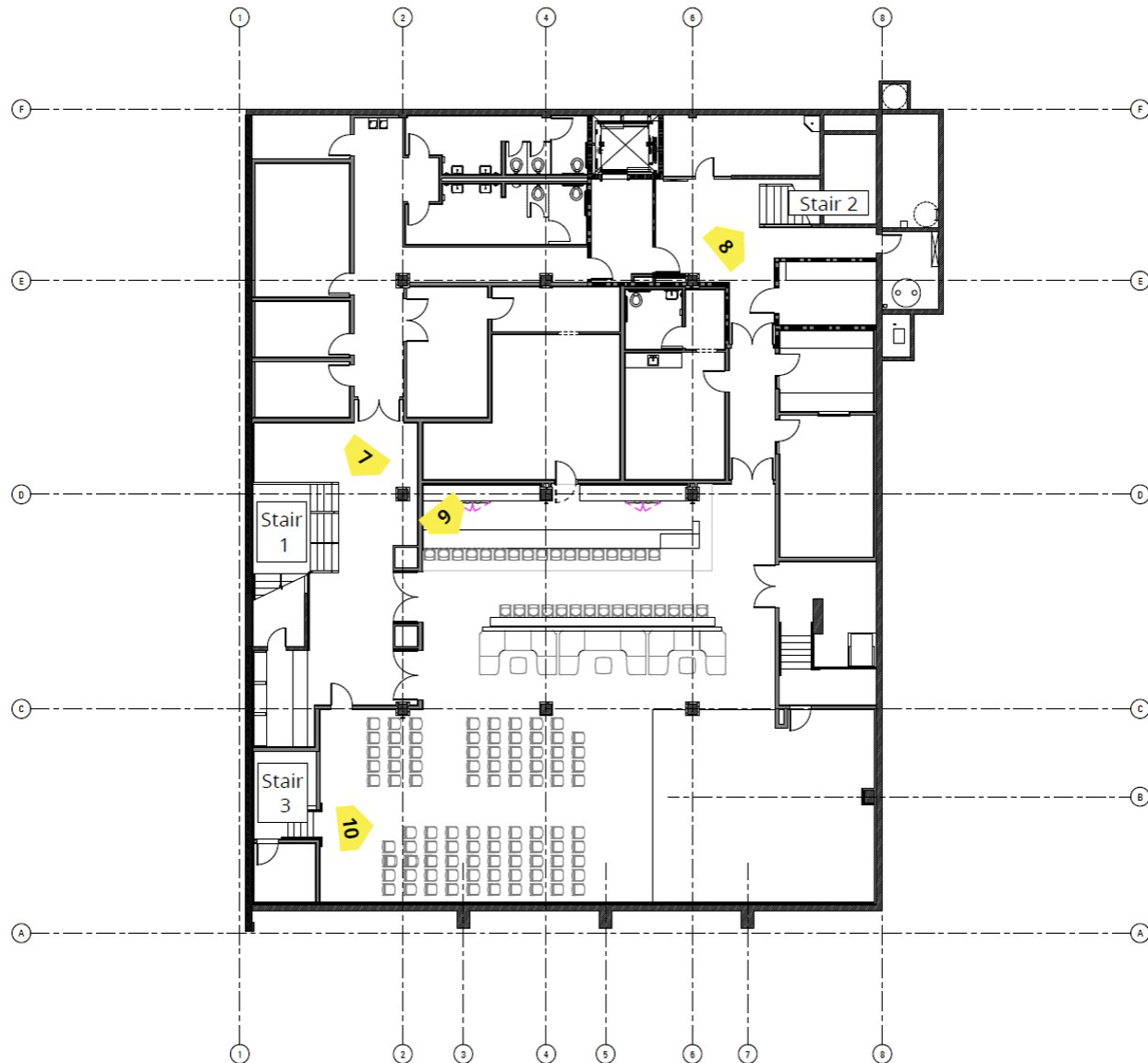
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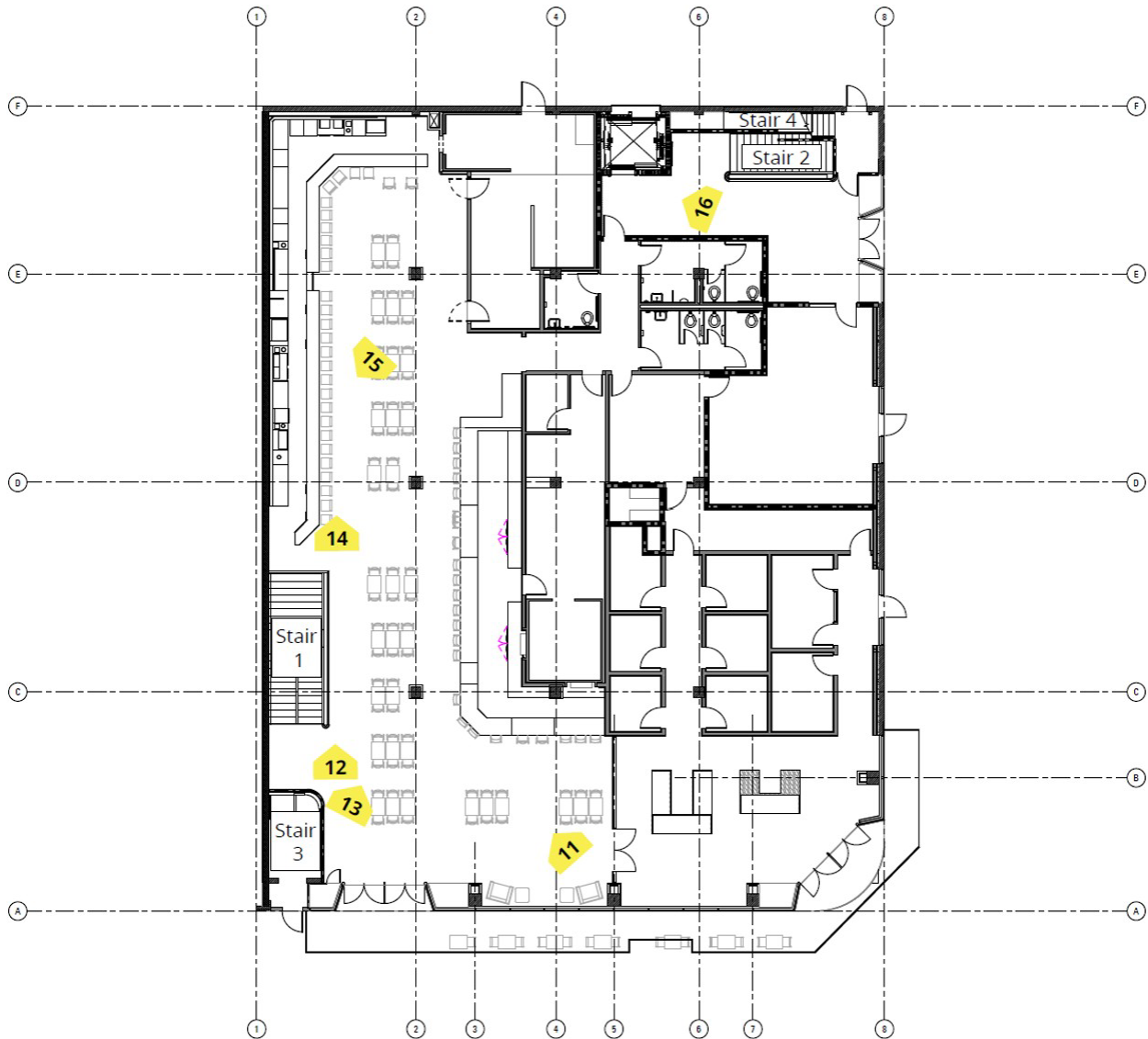
Additional Items: Photo Key 2 of 6, Basement Level.



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Additional Items: Photo Key 3 of 6, First Floor.



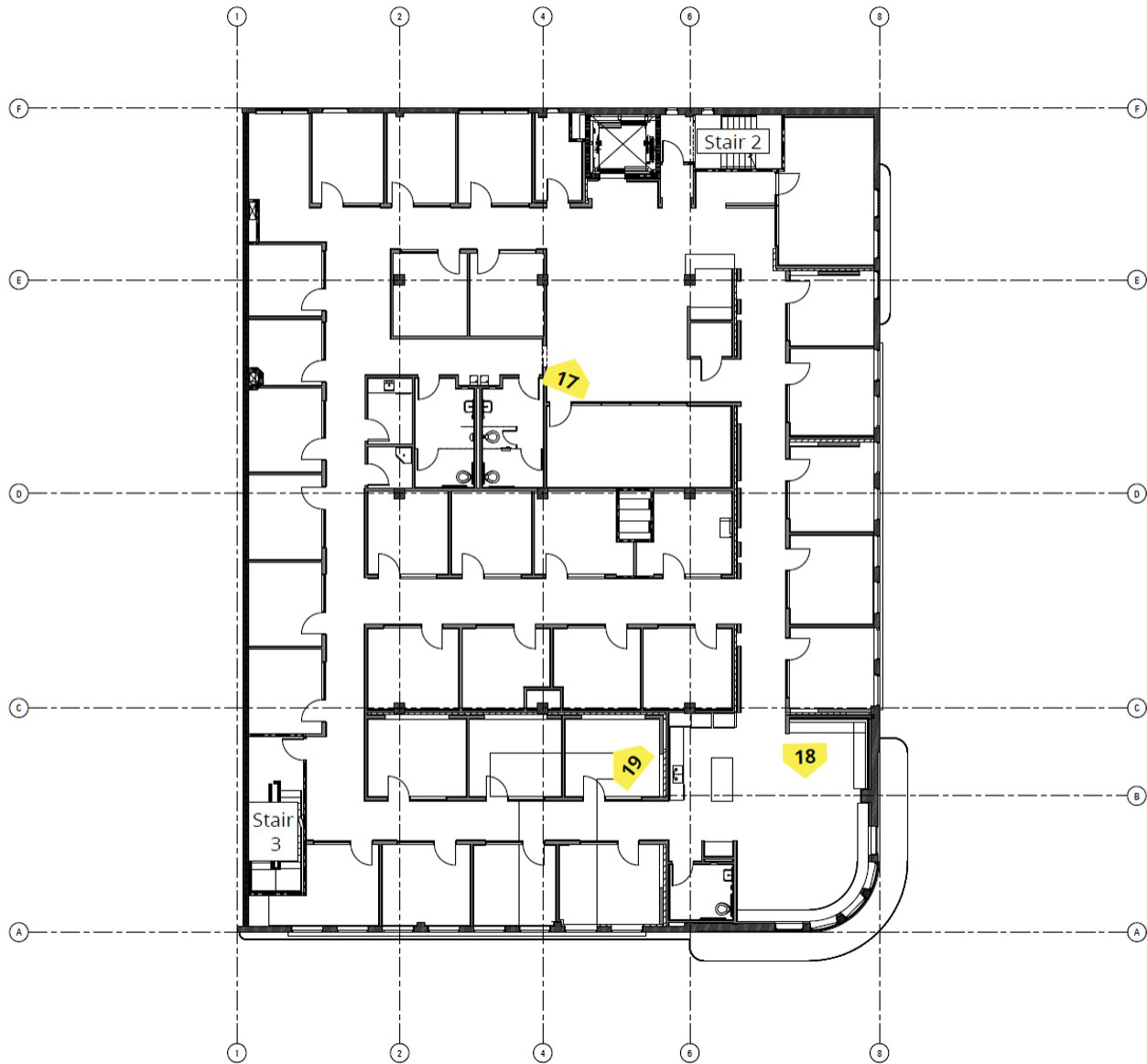
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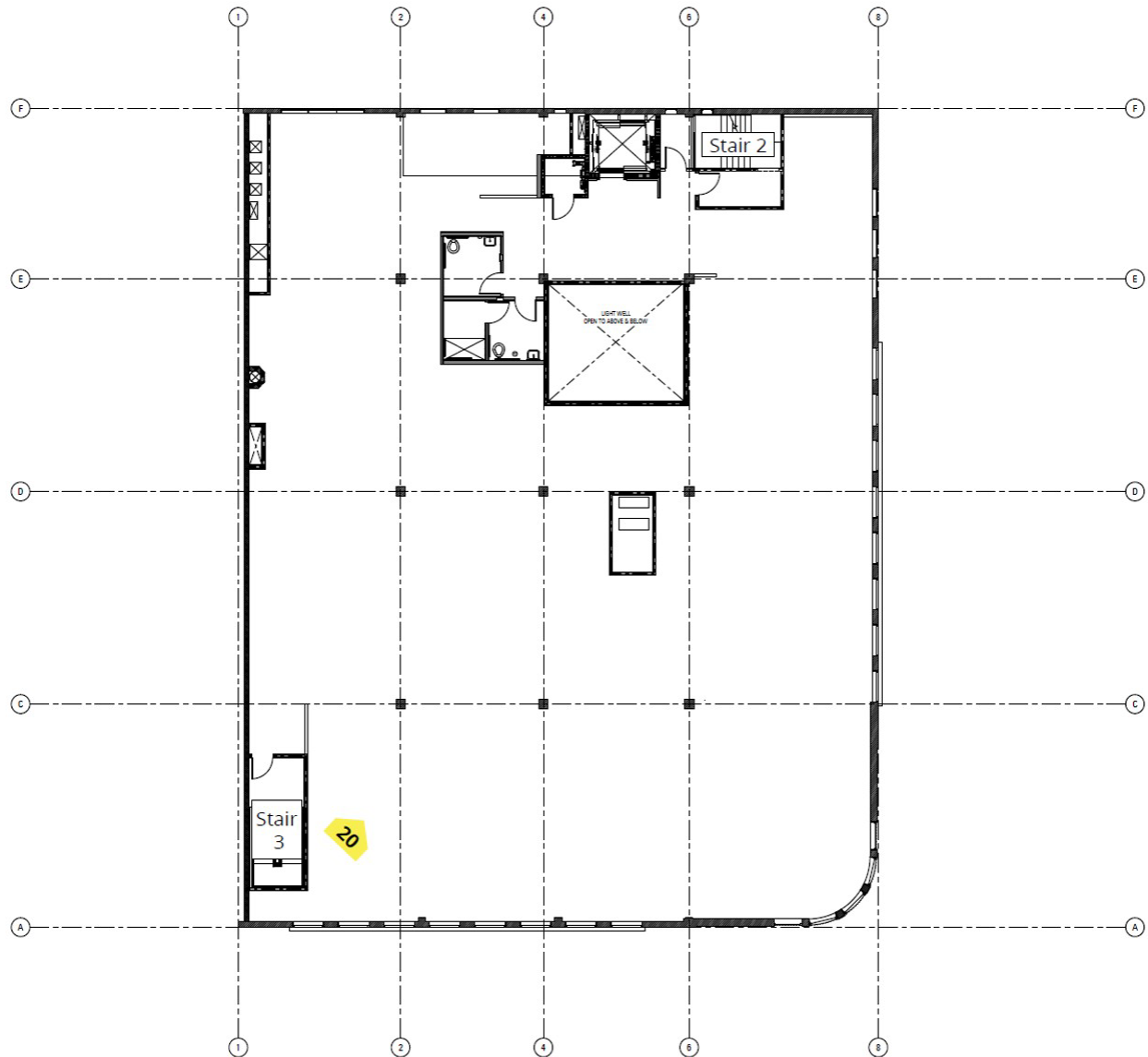
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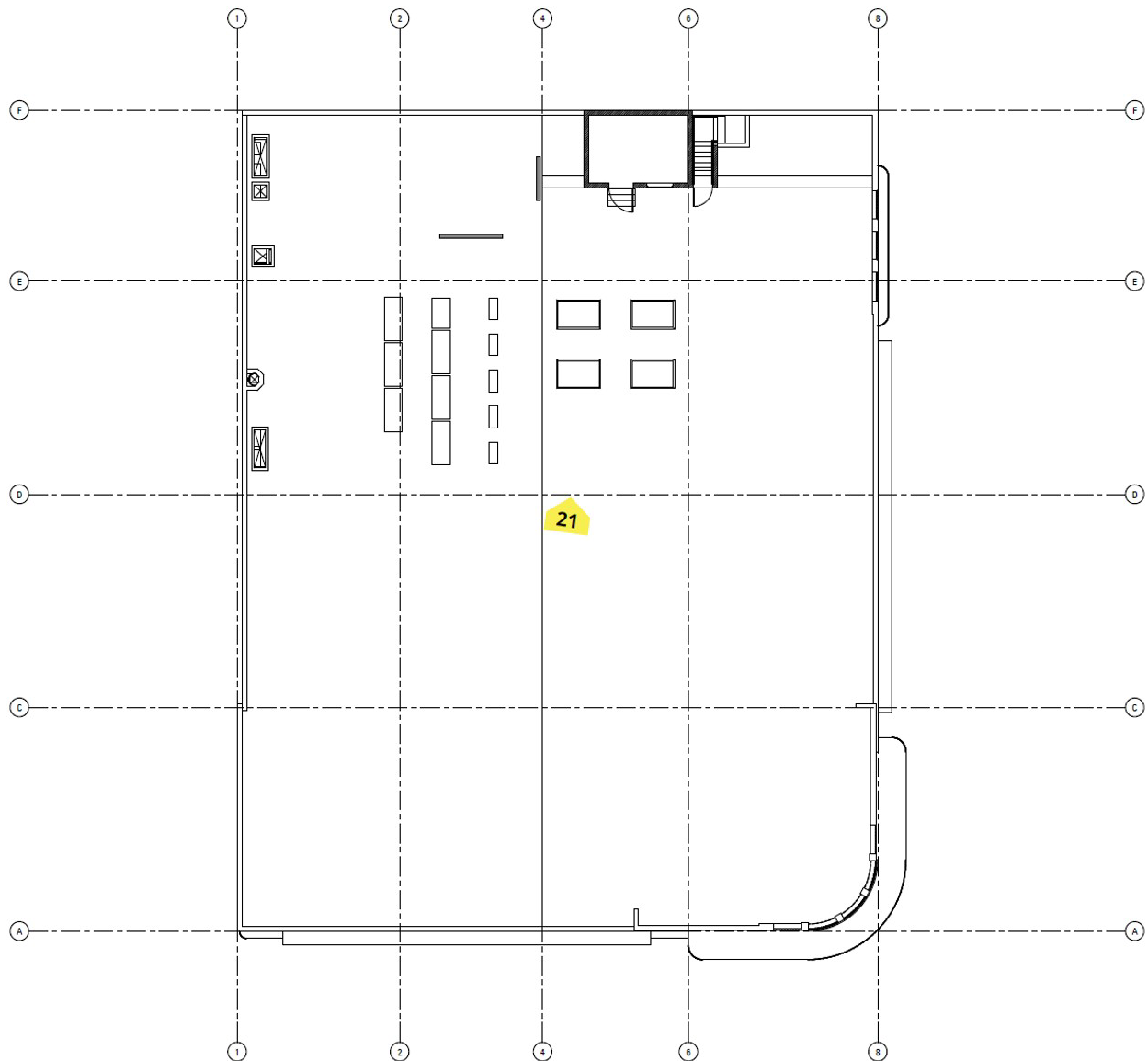
Additional Items: Photo Key 5 of 6, Third Floor.



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Additional Items: Photo Key 6 of 6, Roof Level.



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Photograph 1 View of the Woolworth Building showing curved corner and both south and east primary façades. Looking northwest.



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Photograph 2 Woolworth Building, primary (east) façade, looking northwest.



Woolworth Building
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Photograph 3 Woolworth Building, primary (south) façade, looking slightly northwest.



Woolworth Building
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Photograph 4 Woolworth Building, oblique view of rear (north) façade, looking southeast.



Woolworth Building
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Photograph 5 Woolworth Building, detail of corner entrance, looking northwest.



Woolworth Building
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Photograph 6

Woolworth Building, detail of storefront windows and entrance at north end of east façade, looking west.



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Photograph 7 Woolworth Building, Basement Level. View of Stair 1 (along west wall), looking southwest.



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Photograph 8 Woolworth Building, Basement Level. Detail of Stair 2, looking east.



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Photograph 9 Woolworth Building, Basement Level. Event venue and bar, view southeast.



Woolworth Building

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Photograph 10

Woolworth Building, Basement Level. Event space, view east.



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Photograph 11 Woolworth Building, First Floor. Main Lobby, view northwest toward Bar and Woolworth Lunch Counter.



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Photograph 12 Woolworth Building, First Floor, view north towards Stair 1 (foreground) and Woolworth Lunch Counter (background).



Woolworth Building
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Photograph 13 Woolworth Building, First Floor, view northeast toward bar (right) and Woolworth Lunch Counter (back left).



Woolworth Building
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Photograph 14 Woolworth Building, First Floor. South end of Woolworth Lunch Counter, view north.



Woolworth Building
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Photograph 15 Woolworth Building, First Floor. Woolworth Lunch Counter, view southwest.



Woolworth Building

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Photograph 16

Woolworth Building, First Floor. Elevator lobby, view northwest.



Woolworth Building

Name of Property

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Photograph 17

Woolworth Building, Second Floor. Light Court and Elevator Lobby. view northeast.



Woolworth Building
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Photograph 18 Woolworth Building, Second Floor. Break Room, view south.



Woolworth Building

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Photograph 19

Woolworth Building, Second Floor. Typical office with exposed hollow clay tile.



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Photograph 20 Woolworth Building, Third Floor, view northeast.



Woolworth Building
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Photograph 21 Woolworth Building, Roof. New skylights and exit stair penthouse, view northeast.



Woolworth Building
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Photograph 3 Woolworth Building, primary (south) façade, looking slightly northwest.



Woolworth Building
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Woolworth Building

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Kern, CA

County and State

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Woolworth Building
Name of Property

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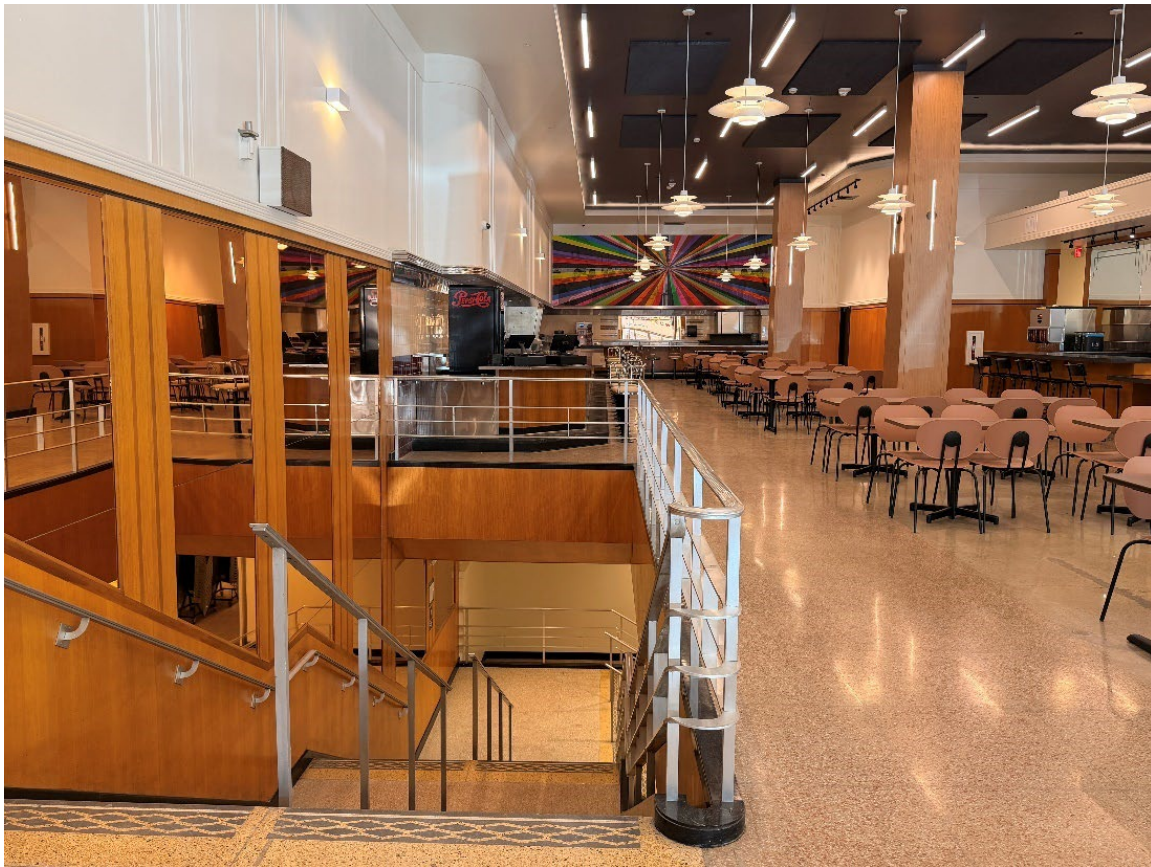
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Woolworth Building

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Kern, CA

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Woolworth Building

Name of Property

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Woolworth Building, Second Floor. Light Court and Elevator Lobby. view northeast.



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Photograph 21 Woolworth Building, Roof. New skylights and exit stair penthouse, view northeast.

