

skin_graft

185 post building

Liliane Wong

Like the phoenix, 185 Post Building, situated at a corner of San Francisco's Union Square, was reborn from its 1908 structure with new bones, new skin and new life. Built shortly after the earthquake of 1906, which leveled parts of the city, this building and its many twentieth century iterations (Fig. 1 & 2) hold a special place in the history of daily life in the heart of San Francisco's historic shopping district. This unique location falls within the 'conservation district' and is under the jurisdiction of the San Francisco Downtown Plan. With all the elements of high drama, the quest to rejuvenate this site

within these guidelines has a long and controversial history involving an Italian fashion house, two architectural firms, high finance and international status. In the end, the firm of Brand + Allen Architects has given this building, and this Union Square site, a new lease on life through an alternate approach to conservation and rehabilitation that embraces history, the city and the environment.

The saga had its beginnings in the late twentieth century with the 'dot-com' era. In this climate of economic exuberance, built upon speculative investments, venture capital and initial public

