

## The 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and Fire Online Exhibit



View from Ferry Tower looking west. Market Street, Sacramento Street. Every building seen in this view has been built since the conflagration. ca. 1909  
BANC PIC 1933.007:1—ALB

### Room Five: Reconstructing a New City

#### New Building Codes for New Buildings

In the rush to rebuild after the disaster, San Francisco acted before it thought. The urgency to rebuild expressed by business interests prevented the city from implementing fire-preventative measures. In fact, the building code changed very little in the aftermath of the earthquake and fire. The city, however, did adopt a few measures to prevent a future conflagration such as banning wood-framed buildings from the fire limits zone. City officials balked at making the core of the city truly fire proof when they refused to require all buildings in the fire limit zone to be constructed of incombustible materials. A few years later, in 1909, city officials took another important step when they adopted a measure that required building inspections of all newly constructed buildings.

In subsequent years, it has become increasingly evident that San Francisco remains a city vulnerable to a major conflagration. Tightly packed blocks of wood homes have seen major fires a number of times like the one in 1959 that destroyed 36 buildings in the Western Addition.