717 Market Street is an ordinary building
But even ordinary buildings on Market Street have cool stories

Built in 1905 by Mr. Kamm from Portland, OR, it could have survived the earthquake. The front looks okay, right? But the back was wrecked because the basement had a huge stock of wallpaper, which was on fire for a whole month. It got rebuilt.

What happened next? [Flip over to read more]

717 Market (the Kamm Building) reflects the history of SF…

1900s: Before the building got built in 1905, the site had a shoe retailer.

1910s-20s: It was a merchant building, with wholesalers dealing in school books, jewelry, adding machines, etc. Also the office of the Avicultural Society of California.

1930s: The Federal Writers’ Project (part of the WPA) had an office here during the Depression! They published a “Guide to the Golden State” - a cool travel book.

1940s: During WWII, it had the Twelfth Naval District Intelligence Office, “engaged in extensive counterintelligence operations against the Japanese community on the west coast…” (According to a book called Day Of Deceit.)

1940s-60s: More offices, including the California Grape and Tree Fruit League. They were anti-union and anti-boycott; Cesar Chavez sent a letter to this address in 1969.

1960s-1990s: I couldn’t find much online for this era.

2000s-10s: Might have developed into condos, then bought in 2007 and switched plans to “creative” office space. The market crashed in 2008, but it found tech office tenants.

2012: Bought by a Japanese VC firm - now tech office space and coworking/event space.
https://localwiki.org/sf/717_Market_Street