

DEPARTMENT OF  
CITY PLANNING  
OFFICE OF HISTORIC RESOURCES  
200 N. SPRING STREET, ROOM 620  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012-4801  
(213) 978-1200

CULTURAL HERITAGE

COMMISSION

RICHARD BARRON  
PRESIDENT  
ROELLA H. LOUIE  
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GLEN C. DAKE  
MIA M. LEHRER  
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FELY C. PINGOL  
COMMISSION EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT  
(213) 978-1294

CITY OF LOS ANGELES  
CALIFORNIA



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INFORMATION  
(213) 978-1270

[www.planning.lacity.org](http://www.planning.lacity.org)

Date AUG 04 2009

Los Angeles City Council  
Room 395, City Hall  
200 North Spring Street  
Los Angeles, California 90012

ATTENTION: Barbara Greaves, Legislative Assistant  
Planning and Land Use Management Committee

CASE NUMBER: **CHC-2009-1908-CR**  
**Columbia Savings Building**  
**5220 Wilshire Boulevard**

At the Cultural Heritage Commission meeting of July 16, 2009, the Commission moved to approve a resolution providing GENERAL COMMENTS to the California State Office of Historic Preservation regarding listing of 5220 Wilshire Boulevard to the California Register of Historical Resources. This resolution is subject to final adoption by the City Council and concurrence by the Mayor's Office.

The California State Office of Historic Preservation allows for 90 days to receive comments from a city regarding a proposed listing of a property to the California Register.

The above Cultural Heritage Commission action was taken by the following vote:

Moved: Commissioner Barron  
Seconded: Commissioner Louie  
Ayes: Commissioner Lehrer, Dake  
Nays: Commissioner Scott

**Vote: 4-1**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Fely C. Pingol, Commission Executive Assistant  
Cultural Heritage Commission

/fcp

Attachment: Staff Report with Findings

c: Councilmember Tom LaBonge, CD 4  
BRE Properties, Inc.  
Los Angeles Conservancy

**TRANSMITTAL TO CITY COUNCIL**

<b>Case No.</b> CHC-2009-1908-CR	<b>Planning Staff Name(s) and Contact No.</b> Edgar Garcia (213) 978-1189	<b>C.D. No.</b> 4
<b>Related Case No(s).</b> None	<b>Last Day to Appeal</b>	

**Location of Project (Include project titles, if any.)**

**COLUMBIA SAVINGS BUILDING  
5220 WILSHIRE BOULEVARD**

**Applicant(s) and Representative(s) Name(s) and Contact Information, if available.**

Los Angeles Conservancy  
523 West Sixth Street, Suite 826  
Los Angeles, CA 94105

**Appellant(s) and Representative(s) Name(s) and Contact Information, including phone numbers, if available.**

**Not Applicable**

**Final Project Description (Description is for consideration by Committee/Council, and for use on agendas and official public notices. If a General Plan Amendment and/or Zone Change case, include the prior land use designation and zone, as well as the proposed land use designation and zone change (i.e. "from Very Low Density Residential land use designation to Low Density land use designation and concurrent zone change from RA-1-K to (T)(Q)R1-1-K). In addition, for all cases appealed in the Council, please include in the description only those items which are appealable to Council.)**

Adoption of resolution providing **GENERAL COMMENTS** to the California State Office of Historic Preservation regarding Listing of 5220 Wilshire Boulevard to the California Register of Historic Resources.

**Items Appealable to Council**

<b>Fiscal Impact Statement</b> <small>*If determination states administrative costs are recovered through fees, indicate "Yes."</small> <b>Yes</b>	<b>Env. No.:</b> <b>Not Applicable</b>	<b>Commission Vote:</b> <b>4-1</b>
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- In addition to this transmittal sheet, City Clerk needs:
- (1) One original & two copies of the Commission, Zoning Administrator or Director of Planning Determination
  - (2) Staff recommendation report
  - (3) Appeal, if applicable;
  - (4) Environmental document used to approve the project, if applicable;
  - (5) Public hearing notice;
  - (6) Commission determination mailing labels
  - (7) *Condo projects only: 2 copies of Commission Determination mailing labels (includes project's tenants) and 500 foot radius mailing list*

 Felicia C. Pingol, Commission Executive Assistant Cultural Heritage Commission	DATE: <b>AUG 04 2009</b>
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—  
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Date AUG 04 2009

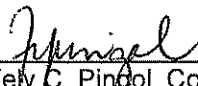
BRE Properties, Inc.  
525 Market Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 94105

**CERTIFIED MAIL**  
**RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED**

CASE NUMBER: **CHC-2009-1908-CR**  
**Columbia Savings Building**  
**5220 Wilshire Boulevard**

As you will note from the attached copy of our communication to the Los Angeles City Council, the Cultural Heritage Commission has moved to approve a resolution providing GENERAL COMMENTS to the California State Office of Historic Preservation regarding listing of 5220 Wilshire Boulevard to the California Register of Historical Resources. This resolution is subject to final adoption by the City Council and concurrence by the Mayor's Office.

In due course, our transmittal will be given a council file number and will be referred to the Council's Planning and Land Use Management Committee for review and recommendation. If you are interested in attending the Council Committee meeting, you should call Barbara Greaves at (213) 978-1068 for information as to the time and place of the Committee and City Council meetings regarding this matter. Please give Ms. Greaves at least one week from the date of this letter to schedule this item on the Committee Agenda before you call her.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Fely C. Pingol, Commission Executive Assistant  
Cultural Heritage Commission

/fcp

Attachment: CHC Letter to Council and Staff Report with Findings

C: Notification List  
Los Angeles Conservancy

# Los Angeles Department of City Planning RECOMMENDATION REPORT

CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

CASE NO.: CHC-2009-1908-CR

**HEARING DATE:** July 16, 2009  
**TIME:** 10:00 AM  
**PLACE:** City Hall, Room 1010  
200 N. Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA  
90012

Location: 5220 Wilshire Boulevard  
Council District: 4  
Community Plan Area: Wilshire  
Area Planning Commission: Central  
Neighborhood Council: Greater Wilshire

**REQUEST:** Comments to State of California Office of Historic Preservation on proposed listing of Columbia Savings Building to the California Register of Historical Resources

**APPLICANT:** Los Angeles Conservancy  
523 West Sixth Street, Suite 826  
Los Angeles, CA 90014

**OWNER:** BRE Properties, Inc.  
525 Market Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94105

**RECOMMENDATION** That the Cultural Heritage Commission:

**Adopt the proposed resolution.**

S. GAIL GOLDBERG, AICP  
Director of Planning



Ken Bernstein, Manager, AICP  
Office of Historic Resources

Prepared by:



Edgar Garcia, Preservation Planner  
Office of Historic Resources

Attachments: A) Resolution

## **FINDINGS**

See Resolution in Attachment A.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In 2007, the State Office of Historic Preservation and the National Park Service approved the City of Los Angeles' application to become a "Certified Local Government" (CLG) for historic preservation under the National Historic Preservation Act. This action provided official recognition to the City of Los Angeles for its new comprehensive historic preservation program with the establishment of the Office of Historic Resources. CLG status gives the City of Los Angeles formal authority to comment on nominations of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects to the National Register of Historic Places and California Register of Historical Resources. Both National Register and California Register nominations are ultimately reviewed by the State Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) and presented for approval before the State Historical Resources Commission (SHRC).

With input from the Rules and Government Committee and the City Council, the Office of Historic Resources developed a procedure to provide comments from the City of Los Angeles to the SHRC while conforming to the City's Intergovernmental Relations process. Approved in December 2008, this process calls for preparation of a proposed resolution (Support/Opposition/General Comments), for approval by the Cultural Heritage Commission, City Council, and concurrence by the Mayor.

## **CA REGISTER CRITERIA**

Criterion 1: Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.

Criterion 2: Associated with the lives of persons important to local, California or national history.

Criterion 3: Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values.

Criterion 4: Has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California or the nation.

## **DISCUSSION**

The written nomination contends that the Columbia Savings Building meets Criteria 1 and 3 for the California Register of Historical Resources "for its association with the transformation of American bank design following World War II in response to dramatic changes in the banking industry" and as "an outstanding example of postwar American bank architecture in Los Angeles."

In the years following World War II, bank design began to respond to the growing middle class consumer culture, turning away from a Classical architectural vocabulary towards Modernism in order to emphasize the adaptability of the banking industry. The application argues that the Columbia Savings Building, erected in 1965, represents an evolution of the original postwar mindset through architect Irving D. Shapiro's decision to infuse Modernism with references to Classical elements, identifying the combination as "New Formalism." Staff analysis of the subject property questions the assignment of this terminology as the subject building may be more accurately defined as an amalgamation of the International Style and Brutalism. The

discrepancy in its classification casts doubt upon the building's ability to embody the distinct characteristics of an architectural style.

A noteworthy aspect of the subject property is the integrated art program, which includes a 40-foot-long brass screen waterfall sculptural fountain and a 1,300 square foot dalle de verre (faceted glass) skylight. The application maintains that Modernist art frequently played a role in postwar bank design and that Shapiro understood both works to be vital to his overall plan. The application, however, does not expand upon the significance of the artwork as examples of innovative designs in the context of postwar architecture or as individual pieces. It is not clear, as stated, if they constitute a considerable advance in technique or style.

While the Columbia Savings Building demonstrates the transition in bank design popularized in the postwar era in Los Angeles, it is unclear whether the property drastically transformed the cultural landscape along Wilshire Boulevard, given its later construction date and ambiguous architectural style. Furthermore, the application should have provided additional justification for the argument that the subject property was a pioneer in postwar bank design, given the presence of other similar institutions that predate it.

According to the Special Considerations in the *California Office of Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Series #6* concerning historic resources built in the last fifty years, "sufficient time must have passed to obtain a scholarly perspective on the events or individuals associated with the resource. A resource less than fifty years old may be considered for listing in the California Register if it can be demonstrated that sufficient time has passed to understand its historical importance." Based on the citations provided in the application, the application did attempt to provide some scholarly research to determine the subject building's significance in the context of 1960s bank design and Modernism. Because the building was built less than fifty years ago, the application should have provided a greater range of academic perspectives on the architectural and cultural context of the building in order to advance the argument that the Columbia Savings Building is a unique example of postwar bank architecture.

## **BACKGROUND**

The California Register application was received by the Los Angeles Office of the City Clerk on June 4, 2009. Armbruster Goldsmith & Delvac LLP submitted an analysis of the nomination on June 23, 2009, in addition to providing the Cultural Resources Section of the Draft EIR (Section IV.C), the Cultural Resources Study Technical Report (Draft EIR Appendix IV.C), and EIR Comments and Responses – Comment Letter 10 from the Los Angeles Conservancy. Chattel Architecture, Planning & Preservation, Inc. submitted a review of the Columbia Savings Building on June 26, 2009. Project approvals for a proposed mixed-use development on the subject property were scheduled for consideration by the City Planning Commission on July 9, 2009.

**ATTACHMENT A: Proposed Resolution**

WHEREAS, any official position of the City of Los Angeles with respect to legislation, regulations or policies proposed to or pending before a local, state or federal governmental body or agency must have first been adopted in the form of a Resolution by the City Council with the concurrence of the Mayor; and

WHEREAS, the City of Los Angeles through the Cultural Heritage Commission and its duties as a Certified Local Government has reviewed the California Register of Historical Resources nomination for the Columbia Savings Building located at 5220 Wilshire Boulevard; and

WHEREAS, the City of Los Angeles deems that the applicant (Los Angeles Conservancy) submitted a complete application and followed proper notification procedures for California Register of Historical Resources nominations; and

WHEREAS, the City of Los Angeles believes that the application thoroughly photo-documents the subject building, provides an exhaustive architectural description, and amassed relevant primary material; and


WHEREAS, the City of Los Angeles believes that the application provides a thorough assessment of the cultural importance of New Formalism in postwar bank design (Criterion 1); and

WHEREAS, the City of Los Angeles believes that the building's art program, both as integrated components of the building and as independent pieces of art (Criterion 3), is significant in its contribution to the building's design as a fully-realized example of postwar American bank architecture representative of national trends during that era; and

WHEREAS, the City of Los Angeles believes that the application assesses the importance of the shift from the Classical style to Modernism in postwar bank design (Criterion 3), but should have provided further evidence of the building's pioneering contribution to this transformation along the Miracle Mile section of Wilshire Boulevard; and

WHEREAS, the City of Los Angeles believes that the application presents a general analysis of the cultural implications of postwar bank design and of Modernism, but should have provided additional and specific scholarly perspectives on the events and styles associated with this particular building (Criteria 1 and 3); and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, with the concurrence of the Mayor, that by adoption of this Resolution, the City of Los Angeles PROVIDES GENERAL COMMENTS to the proposed listing of the Columbia Savings Building in the California Register of Historical Resources.

**Los Angeles Department of City Planning  
RECOMMENDATION REPORT****CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION****CASE NO.: CHC-2009-1908-CR****HEARING DATE:** July 16, 2009  
**TIME:** 10:00 AM  
**PLACE:** City Hall, Room 1010  
200 N. Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA  
90012Location: 5220 Wilshire Boulevard  
Council District: 4  
Community Plan Area: Wilshire  
Area Planning Commission: Central  
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523 West Sixth Street, Suite 826  
Los Angeles, CA 90014**OWNER:** BRE Properties, Inc.  
525 Market Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94105**RECOMMENDATION** That the Cultural Heritage Commission:**Adopt the proposed resolution.**S. GAIL GOLDBERG, AICP  
Director of PlanningKen Bernstein, Manager, AICP  
Office of Historic Resources

Prepared by:

Edgar Garcia, Preservation Planner  
Office of Historic Resources

Attachments: A) Resolution



## FINDINGS

See Resolution in Attachment A.

## INTRODUCTION

In 2007, the State Office of Historic Preservation and the National Park Service approved the City of Los Angeles' application to become a "Certified Local Government" (CLG) for historic preservation under the National Historic Preservation Act. This action provided official recognition to the City of Los Angeles for its new comprehensive historic preservation program with the establishment of the Office of Historic Resources. CLG status gives the City of Los Angeles formal authority to comment on nominations of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects to the National Register of Historic Places and California Register of Historical Resources. Both National Register and California Register nominations are ultimately reviewed by the State Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) and presented for approval before the State Historical Resources Commission (SHRC).

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## DISCUSSION

The written nomination contends that the Columbia Savings Building meets Criteria 1 and 3 for the California Register of Historical Resources "for its association with the transformation of American bank design following World War II in response to dramatic changes in the banking industry" and as "an outstanding example of postwar American bank architecture in Los Angeles."

In the years following World War II, bank design began to respond to the growing middle class consumer culture, turning away from a Classical architectural vocabulary towards Modernism in order to emphasize the adaptability of the banking industry. The application argues that the Columbia Savings Building, erected in 1965, represents an evolution of the original postwar mindset through architect Irving D. Shapiro's decision to infuse Modernism with references to Classical elements, identifying the combination as "New Formalism." Staff analysis of the subject property questions the assignment of this terminology as the subject building may be more accurately defined as an amalgamation of the International Style and Brutalism. The

discrepancy in its classification casts doubt upon the building's ability to embody the distinct characteristics of an architectural style.

A noteworthy aspect of the subject property is the integrated art program, which includes a 40-foot-long brass screen waterfall sculptural fountain and a 1,300 square foot dalle de verre (faceted glass) skylight. The application maintains that Modernist art frequently played a role in postwar bank design and that Shapiro understood both works to be vital to his overall plan. The application, however, does not expand upon the significance of the artwork as examples of innovative designs in the context of postwar architecture or as individual pieces. It is not clear, as stated, if they constitute a considerable advance in technique or style.

While the Columbia Savings Building demonstrates the transition in bank design popularized in the postwar era in Los Angeles, it is unclear whether the property drastically transformed the cultural landscape along Wilshire Boulevard, given its later construction date and ambiguous architectural style. Furthermore, the application should have provided additional justification for the argument that the subject property was a pioneer in postwar bank design, given the presence of other similar institutions that predate it.

According to the Special Considerations in the *California Office of Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Series #6* concerning historic resources built in the last fifty years, "sufficient time must have passed to obtain a scholarly perspective on the events or individuals associated with the resource. A resource less than fifty years old may be considered for listing in the California Register if it can be demonstrated that sufficient time has passed to understand its historical importance." Based on the citations provided in the application, the application did attempt to provide some scholarly research to determine the subject building's significance in the context of 1960s bank design and Modernism. Because the building was built less than fifty years ago, the application should have provided a greater range of academic perspectives on the architectural and cultural context of the building in order to advance the argument that the Columbia Savings Building is a unique example of postwar bank architecture.

## **BACKGROUND**

The California Register application was received by the Los Angeles Office of the City Clerk on June 4, 2009. Armbruster Goldsmith & Delvac LLP submitted an analysis of the nomination on June 23, 2009, in addition to providing the Cultural Resources Section of the Draft EIR (Section IV.C), the Cultural Resources Study Technical Report (Draft EIR Appendix IV.C), and EIR Comments and Responses – Comment Letter 10 from the Los Angeles Conservancy. Chattel Architecture, Planning & Preservation, Inc. submitted a review of the Columbia Savings Building on June 26, 2009. Project approvals for a proposed mixed-use development on the subject property were scheduled for consideration by the City Planning Commission on July 9, 2009.

**ATTACHMENT A: Proposed Resolution**

WHEREAS, any official position of the City of Los Angeles with respect to legislation, regulations or policies proposed to or pending before a local, state or federal governmental body or agency must have first been adopted in the form of a Resolution by the City Council with the concurrence of the Mayor; and

WHEREAS, the City of Los Angeles through the Cultural Heritage Commission and its duties as a Certified Local Government has reviewed the California Register of Historical Resources nomination for the Columbia Savings Building located at 5220 Wilshire Boulevard; and

WHEREAS, the City of Los Angeles deems that the applicant (Los Angeles Conservancy) submitted a complete application and followed proper notification procedures for California Register of Historical Resources nominations; and

WHEREAS, the City of Los Angeles believes that the application thoroughly photo-documents the subject building, provides an exhaustive architectural description, and amassed relevant primary material; and

WHEREAS, the City of Los Angeles believes that the application provides a thorough assessment of the cultural importance of New Formalism in postwar bank design (Criterion 1), but should have provided a more comprehensive discussion of the building's possible significance in the integration of the International style and Brutalist style (Criterion 3); and

WHEREAS, the City of Los Angeles believes that the application provides a detailed evaluation of the building's art program, but should have expressed explicitly the significance of the works both as integrated components of the building and as independent pieces of art (Criterion 3); and

WHEREAS, the City of Los Angeles believes that the application assesses the importance of the shift from the Classical style to Modernism in postwar bank design (Criterion 3), but should have provided further evidence of the building's pioneering contribution to this transformation along the Miracle Mile section of Wilshire Boulevard; and

WHEREAS, the City of Los Angeles believes that the application presents a general analysis of the cultural implications of postwar bank design and of Modernism, but should have provided additional and specific scholarly perspectives on the events and styles associated with this particular building (Criteria 1 and 3); and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, with the concurrence of the Mayor, that by adoption of this Resolution, the City of Los Angeles PROVIDES GENERAL COMMENTS to the proposed listing of the Columbia Savings Building in the California Register of Historical Resources.



June 4, 2009

Conrad Carter, Chief, Council and Public Services  
Los Angeles Office of the City Clerk  
200 N. Spring Street, Room 395  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: California Register of Historical Resources Nomination  
Columbia Savings Building

Dear Mr. Conrad:

Enclosed please find a California Register of Historical Resources ("California Register") nomination for the Columbia Savings Building. We have sent you a copy of the nomination, pursuant to the nomination requirements established by the State Office of Historic Preservation. We have also sent a copy of the nomination to the Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources. The City of Los Angeles has 90 days to review and comment on the nomination. The comments, if any, should be sent to the Los Angeles Conservancy. We will forward the City's comments to the State Office of Historic Preservation along with the nomination.

In 1992, Governor Wilson signed AB 2881 into law establishing the California Register. The California Register is an authoritative guide used by state and local agencies, private groups and citizens to identify historic resources and to indicate what properties are to be protected, to the extent prudent and feasible. Properties listed in the California Register are considered historic resources subject to the California Environmental Quality Act.

We believe the Columbia Savings Building is eligible for listing in the California Register because it masterfully expresses the shift in national banking trends and design in the postwar era. The building's expansive use of glass dramatically opens up the interior to the street. An integrated art program includes a 45-foot-long brass sculptural fountain by local artist Taki and a 1,300-square-foot *dalle-de-verre* (faceted glass) skylight by acclaimed French artist Roger Darricarrere. Exceptional signage includes two eighty-five-foot-tall sign pylons that reflect a design response to Los Angeles' auto-oriented society. The integrity of the building's exterior and interior, the skylight and sculptural fountain, and both sign pylons is high with no significant alterations to historic fabric.

If you have any questions regarding the nomination, please do not hesitate to contact me at (213) 430-4203.

Sincerely,

Mike Buhler  
Director of Advocacy

cc: Ken Bernstein, Manager, Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources

# PRIMARY RECORD

Other Listings

Review Code \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Page 1 of 25

Resource Name or #: Columbia Savings Building

- P1. Other Identifier: Columbia Savings & Loan Association; Wilshire Grace Church
- P2. Location:  Not for Publication  Unrestricted a. County Los Angeles  
and (P2b and P2C or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)
- b. USGS 7.5' Quad Date T; R; 1/4 of 1/4 of Sec; B.M.
- c. Address 5220 WILSHIRE BLVD City Los Angeles Zip 90036
- d. UTM: Zone ; mE/ mN
- e. Other Locational Data: Assessor Parcel Number: 5507-024-009

### P3a. Description:

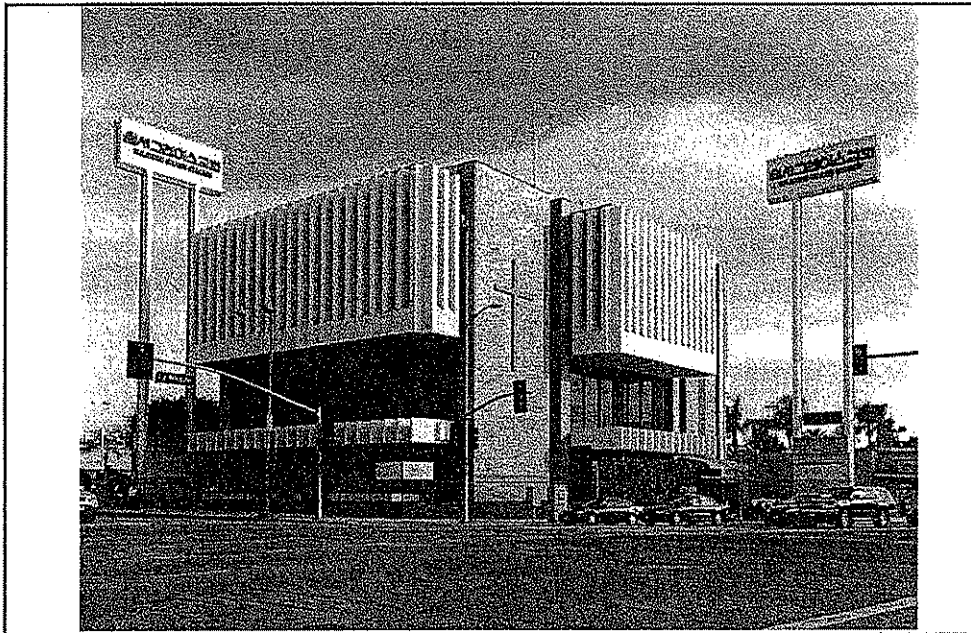
#### Overview

The Columbia Savings Building is located at 5220 Wilshire Boulevard in the Miracle Mile area of Los Angeles, California. It occupies a 108-by-135 foot parallelogram-shaped parcel at the southeast corner of Wilshire Boulevard and La Brea Avenue. Designed in the Corporate Modern style, with elements of the International Style and New Formalism, the building has a symmetrically-balanced rectangular plan and substantially fills the site on which it is constructed. It is set on a podium, reminiscent of classically-inspired banks. The podium's horizontal surfaces are clad with aggregate pavers, while the vertical surfaces are clad in slate. This podium reveals the downward slope of the site as La Brea Avenue proceeds south from Wilshire Boulevard; the height from the ground to the top of the podium increases to its greatest point at the southwest corner of the parcel.

(See Continuation Sheet).

P3b. Resources Attributes: 06 Commercial Building, 1-3 stories

P4. Resources Present:  Building  Structure  Object  Site  District  Element of District  Other



### P5b. Description of Photo:

Southeast view (Underhill 2008)

P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources:  Historic  Both  
 Prehistoric

1965 (F) Building Permit

### P7. Owner and Address:

Dave Powers, BRE Properties, Inc.  
5141 California Avenue, Suite. 250,  
Irvine CA 92617

### P8. Recorded by:

Historic Resources Group, 1728 N.  
Whitley Avenue, Hollywood, CA  
90028

### P9. Date Recorded:

May 2009

### P10. Survey Type:

(None)

P11. Report Citation: None.

Attachments:  NONE  Location Map  Sketch Map  Continuation Sheet  Building, Structure, and Object Record  
 Archaeological Record  District Record  Linear Feature Record  Milling Station Record  Rock Art Record  
 Artifact Record  Photograph Record  Other:

# BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

Page 2 of 25

NRHP Status Code

Resource Name or #: Columbia Savings Building

- B1. Historic Name:** Columbia Savings & Loan Association  
**B2. Common Name:** Columbia Savings Building; Wilshire Grace Church  
**B3. Original Use:** Bank and office building      **B4. Present Use:** Unoccupied  
**B5. Architectural Style:** Corporate Modern (with elements of the International Style and New Formalism)  
**B6. Construction History:** 1964-1965, constructed; 1994 interior alterations for new use as a church

**B7. Moved?**  No    Yes    Unknown      **Date:**   **Original Location:**

**B8. Related Features:**

**B9a. Architect:** Irving D. Shapiro

**b. Builder:** (Unknown)

**B10. Significance:** Theme Postwar American Bank Architecture      Area Miracle Mile area of Los Angeles  
**Period of Significance** 1965   **Property Type** Commercial building   **Applicable Criteria** 1, 3

## Overview

The Columbia Savings Building is eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources under Criterion 1 for its association with the transformation of American bank design following World War II in response to dramatic changes in the banking industry, and under Criterion 3 as an outstanding example of postwar American bank architecture in Los Angeles. Designed by architect Irving Shapiro and completed in 1965, the Columbia Savings Building represents a reinterpretation of the classical bank form, a national trend as financial institutions embraced more progressive banking methods in order to meet the changing needs of a postwar society.

(See Continuation Sheet).

**B11. Additional Resource Attributes:** 06 Commercial Building, 1-3 stories

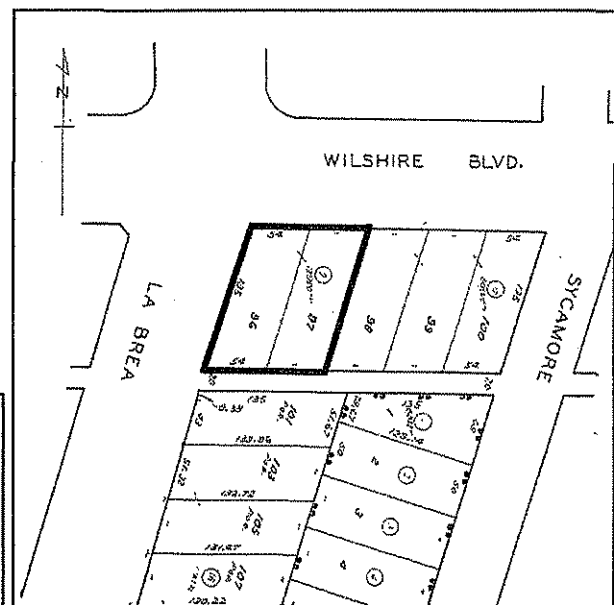
**B12. References:** (See Continuation Sheet).

**B13. Remarks:**

**B14. Evaluator:** Historic Resources Group, 1728 N. Whitley Avenue, Hollywood, CA

**Date of Evaluation:** May 2009

(This space reserved for official comments.)



# CONTINUATION SHEET

Recorded by: Historic Resources Group

Date: May 2009

Continuation  Update

## P3a. DESCRIPTION, continued.

The perimeter of the podium on the Wilshire Boulevard (north), La Brea Avenue (west) and rear (south) sides is lined with a simple, wrought-iron railing, originally painted white. The centrally-placed Wilshire entrance is accessed by a low stair connecting the podium level with the sidewalk. The wrought-iron railing originally contained two small portions that continued alongside this stair, which have since been removed. While the rest of the original railing remains intact, a small upper section resting above the original portion has been added. A non-original wrought-iron gate has been placed in front of the entrance stair. Flanking the front entrance is a pair of rectangular marble reflecting pools that originally featured fountain sprays. While these pool structures remain, the marble has been painted white and they are currently filled with plantings. An identical set of reflecting pools originally flanked the rear entrance, but have since been removed.

The building itself is three stories plus a basement. Measuring approximately 62 feet in height, it is composed of a double-height ground floor with two additional floors above. The basement level contains additional rooms and also houses the building's service areas as well as its mechanical and electrical equipment. The building's construction utilizes four massive, reinforced concrete piers located at each corner. Each weighing 375 tons, the piers extend from the base of the podium to the top of the building and are oriented parallel to the building's side elevations. They are clad entirely in greenish-gray colored, split-faced marble tile and form a significant feature of the building's exterior. It is also from these piers that the building's interior floors are suspended.

Originally constructed as the home office of Columbia Savings & Loan Association, the Columbia Savings Building was subsequently occupied by two successive financial institutions, and then by two separate religious organizations. These last tenants adapted portions of the building's interior to accommodate religious services through the addition of primarily reversible alterations. The main alterations on the building's first floor are the addition of a stage along the north wall and a mezzanine along the south wall. The main alterations to the second and third floors are the addition of tinted glass walls that form a floor-to-ceiling barrier encircling the wood balustrades at the lightwell. The building's exterior remains highly intact. Exterior alterations consist of signage reflecting the tenancy of the Wilshire Grace Church, along with large crosses that are affixed to the northwest and southeast concrete piers.

### Exterior

All elevations of the double-height first floor, with the exception of those portions occupied by the concrete support piers, are characterized by transparent walls of solar-bronze tinted glass. The north (front), south (rear), and east elevations each feature two contiguous pairs of centrally placed doors containing the same solar-bronze tinted glass.

The dominant feature of each elevation is the projecting, cantilevered volume containing the upper two floors. These cantilevered volumes, which are clad in white-painted plaster over metal lath, rise from the base of the second floor to just below the building's roofline. They are characterized by a repetition of narrow, vertical piers that rise flush from the solid, horizontal base and terminate in exposed, flat-topped ends. Located between these piers are recessed, vertical bands of solar-bronze tinted glazing of equal width. The undersides of each of these cantilevered volumes contain a series of rectangular coffers, originally illuminated with lighting within translucent plastic covers. These translucent plastic light covers remain in place on the south and west elevations. Forming the top of each of these cantilevered volumes is a horizontal, contrasting element which is clad in gold-toned mosaic tiles and set back from the vertical piers. These contrasting elements feature a convex curve that slopes from a vertical plane to a horizontal plane that joins the tops of the recessed, vertical bands of glazing. Sculptured trellises of metal lath and plaster are located on each elevation, attached below the cantilevered upper floors.

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### P3a. DESCRIPTION, continued.

Two monumental sign pylons, rising from the base of the podium to a height of 85 feet, are integral to the design of the Columbia Savings Building. Each of the sign pylons -- located at the southwest portion of the podium along La Brea Avenue and at the northeast portion of the podium along Wilshire Boulevard, respectively -- is characterized by a pair of slender sculptured piers that terminate in an integrated, rectangular panel. The piers and rectangular panels are divided into two symmetrical halves by a channeled recess. Originally each side of the panel contained the words "COLUMBIA SAVINGS" in rear-lit red acrylic lettering. These signs now read "WILSHIRE GRACE CHURCH" in both English and Korean.

A significant feature of the La Brea (west) elevation is a decorative, freestanding screen-waterfall, created by the Los Angeles-based sculptor Taki. The cellular screen - measuring 45 feet in length, 10 feet in height, and 18 inches in depth - is composed of thousands of interconnected brass pieces. The sculpture originally featured small panes of glass or acrylic in shades of blue, gold, green, amber and red that were inserted into portions of the brass. Today, only a few panes of clear acrylic remain. The sculpture is set in a rectangular recess that served as a reflecting pool from which water cycled up through pipes within the screen and cascaded through and over the art piece. Concealed bells that were a feature of the screen-waterfall's original design chimed as they were activated by the cascading water.

### Interior

The double-height first floor measures 99 feet long by 71 feet wide in area. It originally served the savings account and branch office activities of Columbia Savings & Loan and was last used as a sanctuary for religious gatherings. This interior space is characterized by a 1,600-square-foot lightwell rising 62 feet upwards that is capped by a 36-foot-square dalle de verre skylight. The four support piers at each corner of the building each contain a portion that is exposed to the building's interior, which is clad in the same greenish-gray split-faced marble tile as on the exterior. Interior walls, including those surrounding the elevator and stair shafts, are clad in rectangular tiles of beige Roman Travertine.

The first floor features a coffered ceiling, with integrated fluorescent lighting and a translucent plastic cover within each coffer. (These coffers are repeated on the exterior, in the soffits of the cantilevered upper floors.) Oak balustrades topped by natural teak handrails encircle the lightwell on the second and third floors. The interior walls on the upper floors are clad in a combination of walnut paneling and plastered surfaces. A series of office spaces on the second and third floors are arranged on all four sides of the building and are accessed from the corridor that encircles the lightwell. These corridors contain carpeting and suspended ceilings. Upper floor office spaces are illuminated with both fixed and double-hung sash windows.

A significant interior feature is the 1,300-square-foot dalle de verre (faceted glass) skylight that crowns the 62-foot tall lightwell. Designed and handmade by noted French artist and sculptor Roger Darricarrere, the 36-foot-square skylight weighs 18,000 pounds and is comprised of thousands of separate pieces of thick slab glass sculptured into concrete-and-steel reinforced panels. The swirling abstract design features vivid shades of orange, yellow, deep amber, turquoise and violet.

### B10. SIGNIFICANCE continued.

The Columbia Savings Building is an excellent example of postwar American bank design. It masterfully blends the geometry and transparency of Modernism with the formality and proportions that characterized Classically-inspired American banks of the 19th and early-20th centuries. The building's innovative use of building materials, large expanses of glass, high level of craftsmanship, monumental signage, and integrated art components all contribute to a cohesive design that would make the Columbia Savings Building an icon for the institution it was designed to serve. Its period of significance is 1965, the date of its completion.

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### B10. SIGNIFICANCE continued.

#### The Miracle Mile

The Columbia Savings Building is located at 5220 Wilshire Boulevard, in the Miracle Mile section of Los Angeles. The Miracle Mile is a segment of the Wilshire Boulevard corridor spanning 17 blocks between La Brea Avenue on the east and Fairfax Avenue on the west. Located five miles west of downtown Los Angeles, the Miracle Mile played a critical role in accelerating the westward expansion and decentralization of the city during the peak of the automobile age. Serving as a premiere commercial corridor for several decades, the Miracle Mile attracted some of the city's top retailers and financial institutions, many of which selected from the region's most talented architectural firms to design their new and architecturally distinguished buildings.

Notable architects with representative work along the Miracle Mile include Gilbert Stanley Underwood (Wilshire Tower, 1928); Stiles Clements, (Coulter's, 1938-demolished; Citizen's National Bank, 1948-demolished); Albert C. Martin (The May Company, 1939); Wurdeman & Becket (Prudential Insurance Building, 1948-altered); Armet & Davis (Romeo's Times Square Coffee Shop, 1955-altered); William L. Pereira & Associates (Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1965-altered); and Charles Luckman Associates (California Federal Plaza Building, 1965).

The dramatic changes that would earn Wilshire Boulevard the nickname "Fifth Avenue of the West" began with developer A.W. Ross' purchase of 18 acres along a remote and undeveloped stretch of Wilshire Boulevard in 1923. From the outset, Ross perceived the project in terms of the automobile, whose popularity had grown greatly during the late teens. He selected the area between La Brea and Fairfax because it was within a four-mile radius of Los Angeles' wealthiest residential districts: Westlake, Hollywood and Beverly Hills. Ross' plan to develop a suburban shopping district prompted friend and investor Foster Stewart in 1928 to dub the strip "the Miracle Mile."<sup>1</sup>

Development of Ross' assembled acreage on Wilshire Boulevard was slow at first, but "the situation began to change in 1928 when he persuaded Desmond's, a prominent clothing store, with three locations downtown, to establish a branch on the Miracle Mile instead of in Hollywood."<sup>2</sup> Desmond's Miracle Mile store was opened in the new Wilshire Tower, an Art Deco office tower with flanking two-story retail wings completed in 1928 that became an instant landmark for both Desmond's and the Miracle Mile. The move of downtown department stores to Wilshire Boulevard was a statement, and prominent architects were commissioned to articulate that statement in architecture.

Two additional department stores, Coulter's and The May Company, erected their own iconic buildings on the Miracle Mile in 1938 and 1939, respectively. Like the Wilshire Tower, their new structures each included rear surface parking lots. From its earliest Art Deco Towers, the success of the Miracle Mile was predicated upon "buildings that attracted attention, that lured drivers to alter their way."<sup>3</sup> The Miracle Mile soon became a successful middle-class shopping district containing several of Los Angeles' most successful retailers. It also offered an alternative to "the congestion and lack of parking space downtown."<sup>4</sup> Other notable retailers that secured a Miracle Mile presence included Silverwood's, Myer Siegel, C. H. Baker, Mullen & Bluett, Kress and Orbach's.

Though predominantly populated by retailers in the early years, the Miracle Mile was also home to several large financial institutions, including the Bank of Italy and Security Pacific National Bank. During the postwar-era, Citizen's National Bank, California Federal Savings & Loan Association and Columbia Savings & Loan Association continued that trend. A prominent location on the Miracle Mile was fitting for financial institution seeking to impart an image of strength and stability. For similar reasons, insurance companies were also attracted to the Miracle Mile, including Mutual Benefit Life Assurance and Prudential Insurance.

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### B10. SIGNIFICANCE continued.

During the 1960s, new commercial office structures characterized the last major phase of 20th-century development on the Miracle Mile. In 1961, the 22-story Lee Tower became one of the first structures in Los Angeles to surpass the city's former height limit that had been rescinded four years earlier. In 1965, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art opened its new William Pereira-designed museum complex along the Miracle Mile, illustrating the prestige that was associated with a location in the district. That same year, both California Federal Savings & Loan Association and Columbia Savings & Loan Association erected their headquarters on the Miracle Mile. By this time, postwar prosperity had forever changed the banking industry as "the middle class and its spending power were finally recognized."<sup>5</sup> Financial institutions and their architects were responding accordingly.

#### The Banking Industry

##### *Savings & Loans*

Columbia Savings & Loan Association was part of a national trend in the postwar years that saw the rise of savings and loans and consumer banking as an alternative to traditional banks. Banks emphasized short-term commercial lending, such as checking accounts, construction loans, and credit cards. Theirs was a business client base located downtown. In contrast, the savings and loans specialized in long-term personal lending, including savings accounts, certificates of deposit, and home mortgages. The savings and loan client base was the middle-class consumer living in the suburbs. Columbia Savings' slogan, "Committed to residential real estate lending and you," summarized the institution's focus during this era of unprecedented suburban growth.<sup>6</sup> Describing this phenomenal growth in a 1960 article, the *Los Angeles Times* stated: "in slightly more than ten years, the [San Fernando] valley has surrendered its farmlands to the homes of almost 900,000 people – a population roughly equal to two Tulsas and two Salt Lake Cities."<sup>7</sup>

The services offered by savings & loans were in high demand in the postwar years, as a massive residential building boom generated a "home loan demand for many more billions than had ever before been needed."<sup>8</sup> Following World War II, the "combined assets of all savings and loan institutions expanded more than six-fold between the end of 1946 and the end of 1960; the rise was from \$10 billion to \$72 billion in those 14 years."<sup>9</sup>

The incredible growth of the savings and loan industry during the postwar era also created the need for increased office space for these financial institutions. Savings and loan associations responded by building new home offices and branch locations throughout the region. Major savings and loans in Los Angeles included Home, California Federal, Great Western, Imperial, and Lytton. Savings and loans continued to be a dominant presence in the financial industry until the "S&L Crisis" of the 1980s.

##### *Columbia Savings & Loan Association*

Columbia Savings & Loan Association was part of this national postwar trend in the banking industry. The company was founded in 1959 in Los Angeles. In 1962, Columbia Savings was merged with two other financial organizations, Pyramid Savings & Loan Association (est. 1954) and Superior Savings & Loan Association (est. 1951). This new entity retained the name "Columbia Savings & Loan Association."<sup>10</sup>

For its first three years, Columbia Savings leased office space in the Wilshire-Dominguez building at 5420 Wilshire Boulevard on the Miracle Mile. In 1962, the three-part merger provided Columbia Savings with two branch offices in the San Fernando Valley in addition to its Miracle Mile corporate office: the San Fernando office at 301 South Maclay Avenue (formerly Superior Savings) and the Sun Valley office at 8111 San Fernando Road (formerly Pyramid Savings).<sup>11</sup>

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### B10. SIGNIFICANCE continued.

The 1965 opening of Columbia Savings' new home office, located prominently at the intersection of Wilshire Boulevard and La Brea Avenue, was symbolic of the financial strength and vitality the institution had developed over the previous decade and a half. A Columbia Savings brochure from 1965 noted that the institution had grown to be in the top 3% of all savings and loan associations in the nation with respect to total resources.

#### American Bank Design

Banks as a building type underwent an incredible transformation following the Second World War. As financial institutions nationwide analyzed the need for progressive banking methods, architects responded by radically reinventing the bank's form. The magnitude of this trend for American society, and for banking and architecture specifically, prompted the journal *Architectural Record* to publish a set of articles on the subject in 1945, noting that "perhaps in no field of activity have changed methods of work caused such a striking change in building needs as in the old conservative field of banking."<sup>12</sup>

#### Early-20th Century Bank Design

Throughout the 19th and early-20th centuries, Classically-inspired architecture was the style of choice in American bank design. Seeking to convey an image of permanence and stability appropriate for a sound financial institution, banks utilized architectural forms inspired by the temples of ancient Greece and Rome. Classically-inspired architecture was commonly used throughout the nation in bank design. This included the use of Greek Revival style during the early and mid-19th century, followed by the Classical Revival and Beaux Arts styles in the late-19th and early-20th centuries.<sup>13</sup> During the Great Depression, banks still favored the Classical idiom but in a stripped interpretation, such as the Classical Moderne style.

However, inside these temples of commerce bank design did not specifically cater to the individual as a consumer. As the middle class began to expand during World War II, and the market for consumer banking services grew, the banking industry saw the need to respond. In 1945, a panel of bankers expressed their unanimous opinion that "the bank building as well as the banker, must get rid of the 'stiff collar and fishy eye' and meet the customer at least as engagingly as a first-rate retail store."<sup>14</sup>

#### Postwar Bank Design

When wartime building restrictions were lifted in 1947, Modernism was quickly embraced by banking institutions that were overhauling their corporate identities in order to convey a bright new future as well as meet the changing needs of postwar society. Several design features became commonplace, including facades with large expanses of glass to allow passersby to admire spacious interior bank lobbies and open teller counters.<sup>15</sup> *Architectural Forum* summarized the reasons behind the new look of American bank buildings in a 1953 article:

*Banks used to sell security. But now, with their deposits federally insured, they are selling service. Today's bankers are an aggressive new breed of financial merchandisers, replacing the stiff old banking types of yesteryear, and they are out to lure ever passing pedestrian into opening a special checking account.*<sup>16</sup>

As architect and architectural historian Charles Belfoure notes in his seminal guide to American bank architecture, *Monuments to Money*, "by the late 1950s and early 1960s, bank design seemed to go in two distinct directions: rectangular glass boxes such as those of Mies van der Rohe, or more plastic forms executed in poured concrete and favored by the other modern master of the period, Le Corbusier."<sup>17</sup> However, by the early 1960s, "architects began to merge the two aesthetics of glass and concrete."<sup>18</sup>

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### B10. SIGNIFICANCE continued.

Belfoure cites the Great Western Savings & Loan Association building at 2501 W. Rosecrans Avenue in the Los Angeles suburb of Gardena (Skidmore Owings & Merrill and Robert E. Alexander Associates, 1961), as "probably the most influential hybrid bank design of the early 1960s."<sup>19</sup> Designed as the prototype for all structures in the firm's program of expansion and branch relocation, the bank was described in a 1963 issue of *Architectural Forum* as "Miesian in elevation and Corbusian in profile."<sup>20</sup> Belfoure describes the building's innovative design:

*...an 80-foot-square glass-walled pavilion [set] within a 112-foot-square concrete, egg crate roof, which was supported by eight fin-like concrete piers. The 20-foot-high banking room was protected from the sun by the wide overhang, and at night the eight-foot-deep coffers of the roof structure were lit, giving the impression that the roof was floating above the glass box. The entire building sat on a podium of red quarry tile, giving it the dignity and grace of an ancient temple.*<sup>21</sup>

The Great Western Savings prototype represented a shift in American bank design in the 1960s in which references to Classical composition and proportions once again entered the design vocabulary. Belfoure notes that the stunning beauty of the Great Western Savings prototype "gave credence to the claims that a modernist building could have the impact of a classical structure by using proportion and structural expression."<sup>22</sup>

Representative of this latest trend in American bank design, the Columbia Savings Building melds the two divergent design aesthetics of transparency and sculptural forms through the use of expansive walls of glass on the ground floor and the pronounced geometric forms of the cantilevered upper floors. The Columbia Savings Building presents a massive and solid presence to the street, primarily from its uniform volume and use of masonry cladding. However, apart from the four concrete piers which are clad in marble tile, all exterior walls are solar-bronze tinted glass. The effective design creates the illusion that the upper floors are floating above the expanses of glass below. This effect is particularly striking when the building is illuminated at night.<sup>23</sup> Belfoure describes the Columbia Savings Building as "a modernist way of interpreting a classical bank's composition." Speaking on the bank's massing, he notes that it has "a more substantial quality – almost fortress-like quality to it; a very Beaux Arts compositional effect in a modern way."<sup>24</sup>

Architecturally, this combination of the clean lines of Modernism and the symmetry and sculptural forms of Classical styles has been termed "the New Formalism". The style is characterized by symmetrical plans, heavy projecting roof slabs, colonnades of stylized columnar supports, large screens of perforated cast stone or concrete or metal grilles, and on-grade open plazas and water features.<sup>25</sup> Popular in large-scale commercial and civic designs from the late 1950s through the 1970s, the New Formalism was widely seen as a rejection of the sparse steel and glass aesthetic of the period. In opposition to the minimalist approach of the International Style, the New Formalists eagerly referenced and abstracted the classical forms and applied ornamentation of historical styles.

In Southern California, the style was widely used in the design of office buildings, auditoriums, churches and banks. Architects who worked locally in the style include Philip Johnson, William Pereira, Welton Becket, the firm of Skidmore Owings & Merrill, and perhaps the style's greatest proponent, Edward Durell Stone.<sup>26</sup> Notable examples of the New Formalism in the Los Angeles region include the Beckman Auditorium at the California Institute of Technology, Pasadena (Edward Durell Stone, 1963), Ahmanson Center, 3701 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles (Edward Durell Stone, 1972), The Forum, 3900 W. Manchester Boulevard, Inglewood, (Charles Luckman Associates, 1967), and the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 135 N. Grand Avenue, Los Angeles (Welton Becket & Associates, 1964).

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### B10. SIGNIFICANCE continued.

In addition to the Great Western Savings prototype bank in Gardena and the subsequent branches modeled after it, several other local banks were designed in the New Formalist style which showcase the flexibility in design that could be achieved while referencing Classical forms and proportions. The Belmont Savings & Loan, Glendale branch (Ladd & Kelsey, 1965) at 500 N. Glendale Avenue, Glendale, features a design similar to the Great Western Savings prototype, but with a greatly expanded concrete slab roof that cantilevers 20 feet beyond the glass walls of the bank. The Perpetual Savings & Loan, Westwood Village branch at 10866 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles (Edward Durell Stone, 1962-demolished), was a circular, glass-walled pavilion embellished by a thin, perforated soffit at the roofline. The Civic National Bank Building at 4519 Admiralty Way, Marina del Rey (Cejay Parsons, 1965), features a series of columnar supports encircling the entire structure, which was designed to "create the feeling of stability desired in a financial institution."<sup>27</sup>

The Columbia Savings Building displays the influence of the New Formalism in its symmetrical composition, placement on a podium, and the inclusion of a pair of reflecting pools flanking the front entrance. The angular, geometric forms of the building's cantilevered upper floors anticipate the more monumental forms that would become a hallmark of Brutalism in the following years.

### The Columbia Savings Building

#### *Design & Construction*

The Columbia Savings Building masterfully expresses the transformative changes in American bank architecture during the postwar era. The result of a design competition held by Columbia Savings & Loan Association for their new home office, architect Irving D. Shapiro's winning entry was selected over competing designs by Charles Luckman Associates and the Bank Building & Equipment Corporation of America. Reflecting on the competition, the architect noted that "both Charles Luckman Associates and Bank Building & Equipment Corporation of America were very large, international organizations while Irving D. Shapiro & Associates was local only and minuscule in size by comparison -- maybe ten employees at the time compared with hundreds or maybe thousands for each of the other two. Beating them out for the job was kind of a modern day version of David and Goliath."<sup>28</sup> Shapiro regards the Columbia Savings commission as the most significant of his career.

Constructed on a slate-clad podium, the entire building is suspended from four massive reinforced concrete piers that are clad in split-faced marble tile. Shapiro's expansive use of glass dramatically opens up the building's interior to the street, while sculptured trellises of metal lath and plaster shield the windows from the sun's heat and glare. The cantilevered upper floors are bold in their geometric massing, featuring a series of vertical piers that alternate with recessed slots of windows. Appearing massive and solid during the day, the building reveals its striking transparency at night when illuminated from within. The bank's design also integrates significant art pieces, including a 40-foot-long brass screen-waterfall sculptural fountain by local sculptor Taki and a 1,300-square-foot dalle de verre skylight by artist Roger Darricarrere that crowns the interior lightwell.

The quality of the Columbia Savings Building's design is particularly expressed in the number of innovative design solutions that were achieved at the site. Several elements of the building's design serve to provide natural solar shading, particularly to the glass-in ground level banking floor. The sculptural trellises of metal lath and plaster attached to each elevation shield the first floor from the sun's heat and glare, as does the careful placement of the screen-waterfall outside the west-facing wall of windows. The banking floor receives additional shading from the projecting volumes of the cantilevered upper floors. The recessed windows of the upper floors are screened by the projecting white plaster-clad vertical piers which extend from the base of the second floor the just below the building's roofline. The building's podium also served as an efficient and elegant design solution to conceal the more practical operations of the financial institution, including records and storage, a mail room, space for the building superintendent and janitorial staff, and the building's electrical and mechanical equipment.<sup>29</sup>

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### B10. SIGNIFICANCE continued.

On the interior, the bank's third floor was originally designed as an open balcony and functioned as gallery space. This was done in anticipation of the bank's future growth and physical expansion needs. In a *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner* article from 1963, Shapiro states that "it is essential that bankers anticipate the need for functional planning and physical expansion in advance, and make provisions for them since that is the most practical and economical time to do so."<sup>30</sup>

The monumental signage Shapiro designed for the building is composed of two 85-foot tall sign pylons, one aligned with Wilshire Boulevard and one on La Brea Avenue. These signs are of an exceptional height for a bank, extending well above the building's roofline. Their size and location are highly responsive to the building's location at the intersection of two well-traveled auto corridors. The La Brea Avenue sign tower in particular is situated to take advantage of the angled property line created by the south-southwest alignment of La Brea south of Wilshire. Motorists traveling southbound on La Brea toward the Columbia Savings Building see the signage rising centered above the street from some distance. Belfoure identifies the signage as an important component of the building's overall design, particularly for the region and the time period: "I do find them very exceptional. It's not just a little sign on the door. It reflects the response of architecture for the automobile."<sup>31</sup>

Martin Treu, architectural historian, architect, and author of the forthcoming book *Signs, Streets, & Storefronts: The History and Value of Signs and Architecture on America's Commercial Corridors* (Johns Hopkins University Press), notes that "the signs rise to a height of 85 feet, higher than most signs that advertised businesses along the growing interstate system of the 1960s."<sup>32</sup> Treu further elaborates on the significance of the signage, adding that they are "relatively unique as an example of a freestanding business sign that is visually coordinated with the architecture of the building that it advertises. The signs...are physically disengaged; but unlike most signs of the period, they are designed in the same language and materials of the architecture of the building."<sup>33</sup> Analyzing the coordination of design between the signage and the building, Treu observes:

*The simple, rectangular sign panels for business identification are held aloft on vertical elements of the same slender form as these verticals on the building. Each post is detailed so that it appears as a pair of these slender elements, providing an even stronger visual link with the architecture. The bases of the signs are aligned with the trellises over the entrances -- yet another subtle visual link.<sup>34</sup>*

Other examples of local banks from this period that featured large-scaled signage included Security First National Bank, International Airport Branch at Century and Sepulveda Boulevards in Los Angeles (Welton Becket & Associates, 1963-demolished); and Santa Monica Bank, Pico Branch at 3304 Pico Boulevard in Santa Monica (Weldon J. Fulton, 1956-signage since removed).<sup>35</sup> However, by comparison both of these examples were approximately 20 feet shorter than the signage designed by Shapiro for Columbia Savings. Current research has not uncovered any other local banks that contained signage of the colossal scale as those of the Columbia Savings Building.

Soon after its completion, the Columbia Savings Building was recognized for the quality of its design and construction. Its innovative concrete engineering was noted as far away as Europe, where the French architecture journal *L'architecture d'au jour d'hui* remarked that the entire building is suspended from four massive reinforced concrete piers, each weighing 375 tons.<sup>36</sup> Additionally, the Columbia Savings Building was the recipient of several awards, including the Ceramic Tile Institute architectural design award for the best commercial building in the city (1965),<sup>37</sup> and the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power's award for building of the month.<sup>38</sup> These remarkable qualities remain evident today. Belfoure concludes that the Columbia Savings Building's combination of quality design, artwork and monumental signage make it "a really excellent example of this time period . . . a complete package."<sup>39</sup>

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### B10. SIGNIFICANCE continued.

#### *Architect Irving Shapiro*

Architect, planner and urban land economist Irving D. Shapiro (1923-), AIA established his Los Angeles-based architecture and urban planning firm, Irving D. Shapiro & Associates, AIA in 1959. At the time, Shapiro was one of the few architects in the country to hold a doctorate in Urban Land Economics, and his firm provided land use consulting for several civic and private organizations.<sup>40</sup> Shapiro also served as Adjunct Professor of Real Estate and Urban Land Economics at the University of Southern California in the 1960s and taught courses in both the Planning and Finance Departments.<sup>41</sup>

When Shapiro took a Veteran Affairs vocational test to better determine what type of career to pursue in college, he posted the highest score recorded to date in spatial relationships at that time and was advised to go into architecture. He attended the University of California, Berkley and received BA and MA degrees in architecture in 1949 and 1950 and won two medals for design excellence. Shapiro later attended Columbia University, where he received an MBA in real estate and urban land economics in 1956 and a Ph.D. in urban land economics in 1961. Before starting his own architectural practice in 1959, Shapiro worked with several architecture firms, including a position as a design assistant to Eric Mendelsohn, under whom he studied graduate design.<sup>42</sup>

While his firm was active for just ten years, it was responsible for the design of a wide variety of projects throughout southern California, including office buildings, banks and a prototype hospital. Others of Shapiro's completed/built projects in California include the 20th Century-Fox Relocation Project (Los Angeles, 1960); the Plaza Building (National City, 1962); MacArthur-Broadway Center (Oakland, 1965); Bank of California Building (San Bernardino, 1967); and the Leisure World Convalescent Hospital (Seal Beach, 1968).

#### *Integrated Art Components*

A significant feature of the Columbia Savings Building is the integrated art program which includes a 1,300 square foot dalle de verre (faceted glass) skylight capping the interior lightwell, and a 40-foot-long brass screen-waterfall sculptural fountain located outside the west-facing ground level windows. The integration of art pieces into the design of bank buildings reflects a national trend in postwar bank design that emerged by the 1960s, of which Belfoure notes "this building [Columbia Savings] is a very good example."<sup>43</sup>

Art forms commonly utilized in bank design included sculpture, stained glass, murals, and sculptural water fountains. Belfoure observes that "after the second World War, the late 1940s and 50s, you'd find some banks incorporating art. The bank that really set the precedent for incorporating art inside and out was Chase."<sup>44</sup> One Chase Plaza (Skidmore Owings & Merrill, 1960) in New York City was notable for its pioneering art program, which "grew out of the need to provide warmth and life to a modernist interior that lacked details such as moldings."<sup>45</sup>

In the Los Angeles region, one of the first financial institutions to adopt the practice of incorporating an integrated art program was Home Savings & Loan Association. The organization commissioned architect Millard Sheets to design its new executive office at 9245 Wilshire Boulevard in Beverly Hills. Completed in 1956, the building contains an expansive glass mosaic mural over the main entrance while an immense stained glass window, located at the rear of the building, casts a warm glow on the interior. The main entrance is flanked by outdoor sculptures; fountain figures are located at the parking lot entry.<sup>46</sup> The organization's founder, Howard Ahmanson, felt that "it was a company's responsibility to add to the beauty of a city."<sup>47</sup> While artistically stylized, the integrated art at this and other locations of Home Savings is characterized by representational images.

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In the early 1960s, integrated art transitioned from representational to very abstract.<sup>48</sup> In 1960, when Lytton Savings & Loan Association unveiled its new home office at 8150 Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood (Kurt W. Meyer, 1960), the new building was praised for its inclusion of abstract art in the bank's design. Sculptor and artist Roger Darricarrere had been commissioned by Lytton president Bart Lytton to create a 50-foot-long, three-dimensional faceted glass and concrete screen.<sup>49</sup> Like Home Savings, Lytton Savings continued this practice of integrated art at subsequent branches.

Water sculptures were one of the most dramatic forms of art that could be incorporated into a bank's exterior setting. A notable example was *Sculptured Water* (since removed), which noted local sculptor Claire Falkenstein designed for California Federal Savings & Loan Association's new 28-story corporate headquarters at 5670 Wilshire Boulevard on the Miracle Mile (Charles Luckman Associates, 1965). Sited prominently at the intersection of Hauser Avenue and measuring 45 feet in length, Falkenstein's *Sculptured Water* was an imposing abstract design recalling a crashing wave that was crafted from copper tubing and Venetian glass with integrated jets of water.<sup>50</sup>

#### *Darricarrere and the Dalle de Verre Skylight*

Capping the Columbia Savings Building's three-story lightwell is a monumental dalle de verre stained glass skylight. Measuring 36 square feet and weighing 18,000 pounds, the skylight includes thousands of separate pieces of thick stained glass -- orange, yellow, deep amber, turquoise and violet in color -- sculptured into concrete-and-steel reinforced panels.

Dalle de verre, also known as "slab glass" or "faceted glass", is a modern form of stained glass developed in Europe in the 1930s. Inch-thick chunks of colored slab glass are set in a reinforced concrete matrix, as opposed to traditional stained glass where quarter-inch thin glass is held in place with lead armature. A thoroughly modern material, dalle de verre is distinguished by bold, vibrant colors and robust designs and was used to great effect and prominence in Wallace K. Harrison's First Presbyterian Church in Stamford, Connecticut in 1958.

The skylight at the Columbia Savings Building was designed and handmade by noted French sculptor and glass muralist Roger Darricarrere (1912-1983). A graduate of the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, Darricarrere was one of the first practitioners of the dalle de verre technique in the United States. A 1965 article in *Stained Glass Journal* described him as "[a] pioneer to develop the technique of using thick colored chunk glass set in concrete."<sup>51</sup> Darricarrere had a productive and influential career working primarily in Southern California. He also produced a number of metal sculptures, though "... it is his work with leaded and slab glass, for which he is best known."<sup>52</sup>

In 1954, Darricarrere joined the Cummings Stained Glass Studio in San Francisco -- the first American studio to design, fabricate, and install faceted glass -- for the studio's first dalle de verre installation at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Belvedere, California. That his first commission was for a Modern church building is not surprising, as "the thick chunks of glass set in reinforced structural concrete were especially complementary to modern architecture."<sup>53</sup> The following year he opened his own studio in Los Angeles where he not only designed and constructed his art pieces, but fabricated the glass itself: "Until 1959 he was the only craftsman working with slab glass in the United States, who also *made his own glass*."<sup>54</sup>

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Over the course of his career, Darricarrere produced more than 65 stained glass and faceted glass installations for ecclesiastical buildings throughout California, over 40 of which were in Los Angeles County. Local examples include St. Luke's Methodist Church in Santa Ana, Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Church in Sun Valley, and Wesley Methodist Church in Bakersfield. Among his most celebrated pieces is a stained glass window entitled "Christ, the Light of the World," located at St. Stephen's Lutheran Church in Granada Hills neighborhood of Los Angeles. The commission resulted from a design competition to produce a work of art in glass for the Protestant Center at the 1964 New York World's Fair, after which it was installed at St. Stephen's in 1966. Measuring 42 feet by 10 ½ feet and composed of 14,000 pieces of glass set in lead, the window features several trademarks of Darricarrere's designs, including the use of bold colors and sweeping gestural lines.

Darricarrere also received numerous commercial commissions for glass murals and metal sculptures throughout the state, at least 13 of which were designed for commercial buildings in Los Angeles County. Local installations included Lytton Savings & Loan at 8150 W. Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood (1960); Lytton Center for the Visual Arts in Hollywood; the Automobile Club of Southern California at 10940 Victory Boulevard in North Hollywood; the Minskoff Building at 132 S. Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills; and the Sunset International Petroleum Building at 400 S. Beverly Drive in Beverly Hills.

Soon after its completion, Darricarrere's design for the stained glass skylight in the Columbia Savings Building garnered attention. The piece and its creator were both praised in a 1967 article in *American Artist*: "Darricarrere's designs are often bold and broad in concept, but sometimes one finds an amazing feeling of delicacy in his designs made from slab glass and concrete. An outstanding example in this vein is seen in the skylight of the Columbia Savings and Loan building, Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles."<sup>55</sup> At nearly 1,300 square feet, this installation is also among Darricarrere's largest projects.

#### *Taki and the Screen-Waterfall Sculptural Fountain*

The screen-waterfall, designed by local artist Taki, represents the exterior art component of the Columbia Savings Building. Prominently located along the west side of the building facing La Brea Avenue, the fountain is "visible to thousands of motorists and passers-by [*sic*] at this busy intersection of Los Angeles' 'Miracle Mile' area."<sup>56</sup>

The screen-waterfall rises from a long, rectangular recess in the building podium that served as a floodlit reflecting pool and water source for the fountain. The screen-waterfall measures 45 feet long, 10 feet high, and 18 inches wide, and is composed of 22,000 individual pieces of brass that are welded into an abstract design.<sup>57</sup> The fountain's brass pieces were originally color-patterned through a heat treating process, but exposure to the elements has oxidized the brass, which now has a patina.

Architect Shapiro provided the following description of this sculptural fountain: "The screen-waterfall will mirror the architecture of the new head office building as well as depict the dynamic growth in the state of California, where one out of every five homes in the United States is now being constructed. The intricate pattern of brass and glass planes visually represents the tremendous urbanization of the Southland. In silhouette form, the screen-waterfall will resemble the up-thrust of the dozens of new skyscrapers recently erected in this area."<sup>58</sup>

The screen-waterfall is notable not just for its monumental scale and intricate design, but for the design solution it achieved. Positioned outside the ground level's west-facing wall of windows, the screen-waterfall shielded the banking floor from the intensity of the midday sun. In a 1964 *Citizen-News* article, architect Shapiro noted the piece's dual purpose: "It expresses the beauty and growth of California, while acting as a functional screen for the west sun."<sup>59</sup>

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### B10. SIGNIFICANCE continued.

The screen-waterfall originally functioned by channeling water up through a series of internal water conduits within the sculpture which then cascaded over and through the intricate planes of brass and back to the reflecting pool. The cascading water activated concealed bells to produce a chime effect. The intricate design features a series of carefully placed troughs with spouts through which water cascaded downward in intervals until reaching the reflecting pool. Several of the brass compartments were designed to hold inserted panes of glass or acrylic in shades including blues, golds, greens, ambers and reds.<sup>60</sup> Today only a few panes of clear acrylic remain.

Taki Camille (1919-1981),<sup>61\*</sup> who practiced under the name Taki, was a noted Los Angeles-based sculpture artist whose primary work was figurative sculpture crafted from metal. Her artistic career spanned three decades, from the 1950s to the time of her death. Her work resides in several private collections and museums, including the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City.<sup>62</sup>

Born in New York City, Taki exhibited an early aptitude for the craft of sculpting, carving sculptures from soap as a child. Encouraged to follow her innate creativity, Taki continued to hone her sculpting skills while growing up, though she never received any formal training. Her early career was based in New York and she supported herself through the sales of her sculptures, a practice that would continue throughout her entire life.<sup>63</sup>

An important early commission came from the French design house Schiaparelli in Paris, for which she created a sculpture for the store's interior. Another notable commercial commission came from Lever Brothers, a manufacturer of soaps and detergents with corporate headquarters based in New York City.<sup>64</sup> Despite these significant commercial commissions, and others including her screen-waterfall at the Columbia Savings building, commercial commissions represent a disproportionately small percent of her career's work, which was dominated by figurative sculpture which she produced for private commissions and sold through gallery exhibits.<sup>65</sup>

Taki relocated to the bohemian Venice neighborhood of Los Angeles in 1960, where she met and married photographer Leland Auslander. Auslander provided financial backing for her creative pursuits, which at the time was characterized by utilizing found material. Her career blossomed as expensive materials and techniques such as lost wax became attainable.<sup>66</sup> Taki's Los Angeles-based career was soon filled with exhibitions of her work at many of the region's top art galleries, including the Parsons Gallery, the Carter Gallery and Galerie de Ville.<sup>67</sup>

Much of Taki's work was inspired by such subject matter as Greek mythology and themes of spirituality. She often worked in brass and bronze, and commonly employed techniques of heat treating and chemical treating to impart the metals with an intrinsic, color-patterned effect. Her work in bronze was often coated with silver or nickel. Taki also used experimental techniques, such as her novel use of a metallic spray gun to create a sculpture from the highly unusual medium of liquid metal.<sup>68</sup>

One of Taki's best clients in Los Angeles was architect Irving Shapiro, who had purchased over fourteen of her sculptures. When he conceived of the idea for the screen-waterfall at the Columbia Savings Building he was designing, he commissioned her to create it.<sup>69</sup> The screen-waterfall took nearly two years to complete. Taki began by creating a six foot model of the fountain. Huge rolls of natural sheet brass were delivered to her West Los Angeles studio, which she then cut into various sizes and shapes with an acetylene torch. The screen-waterfall was constructed in 7-foot-wide segments, which were then trucked to the site to be welded together as the building neared completion.<sup>70</sup> Though no longer in operation, Taki's screen-waterfall sculptural fountain remains one of the Columbia Savings Building's most striking exterior elements.

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#### Integrity

The Columbia Savings Building retains a high level of integrity. It has undergone minimal alteration, consisting mainly of interior tenant improvements. The exterior of the building is essentially unchanged from its appearance when originally constructed in 1965. Following the reorganization of Columbia Savings in 1970, the building was occupied successively by two financial institutions, U.S. Life Savings & Loan and Southwest Savings. The only known alteration from this period is the replacement of signage lettering to reflect the current tenant.

In 1994, the building was leased to the Los Angeles Immanuel Mission Church, which later changed its name to Wilshire Grace Church. At this time, the ground floor was remodeled to accommodate the building's new use. According to building permits, a mezzanine was added, as was a new suspended ceiling, fixed seating and a stage. Since that time, the interior seating has been removed. On the exterior, a large cross was affixed to both the northwest and southeast concrete piers, an alteration that appears to be reversible.

The church occupied the building until 2005, after which it was leased to another religious group, Iglesia De Jesucristo Ministerios Miel, which remained in the building through 2007. In 2007, the property was acquired by the current owners, BRE Properties, Inc.<sup>71</sup> At the present time, the building is unoccupied. The entire block bounded by Wilshire Boulevard, Eighth Street, and La Brea and Sycamore Avenues is slated for redevelopment.

#### Conclusion

The Columbia Savings Building is an outstanding example of postwar American bank design in Los Angeles. Its incorporation of both Modern and Classical design elements represents a transformation in bank architecture in the years following World War II, as financial institutions sought to overhaul their image and meet the changing needs of a postwar society. The building's innovative use of building materials, monumental signage, and integrated art components combines to create the architectural statement that the Columbia Savings & Loan Association was seeking for its new corporate headquarters. For these reasons, the Columbia Savings Building is eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources under Criteria 1 and 3.

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- <sup>19</sup> Belfoure, 259.
- <sup>20</sup> Belfoure, 259.
- <sup>21</sup> Belfoure, 259.
- <sup>22</sup> Belfoure, 259.
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- <sup>55</sup> Lovoos, 72.
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(See Continuation Sheet).

## CONTINUATION SHEET

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Resource Name or #: Columbia Savings Building

Recorded by: Historic Resources Group

Date: May 2009

Continuation  Update

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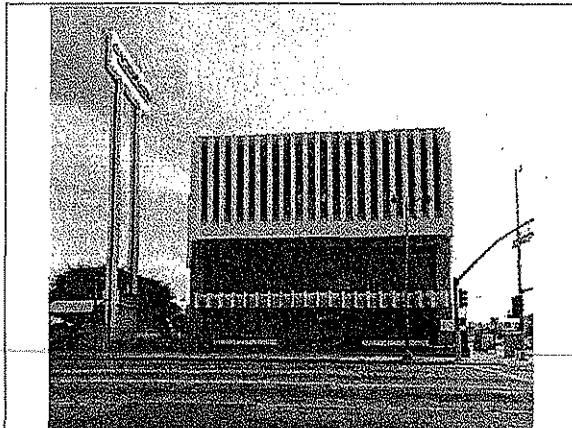
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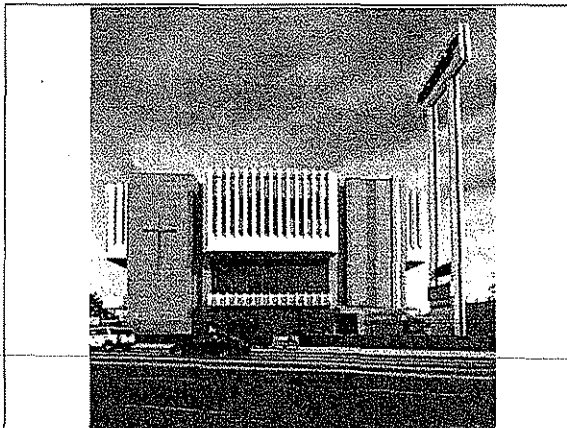
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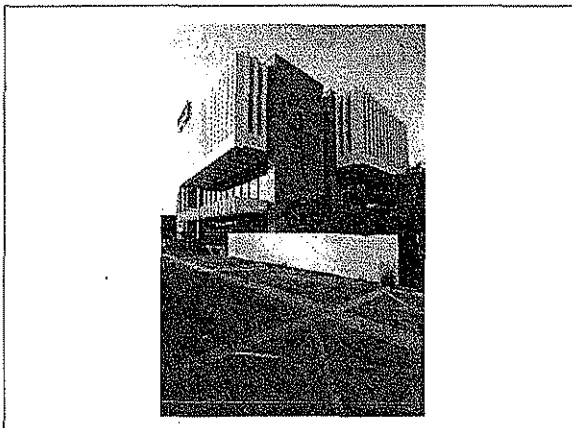
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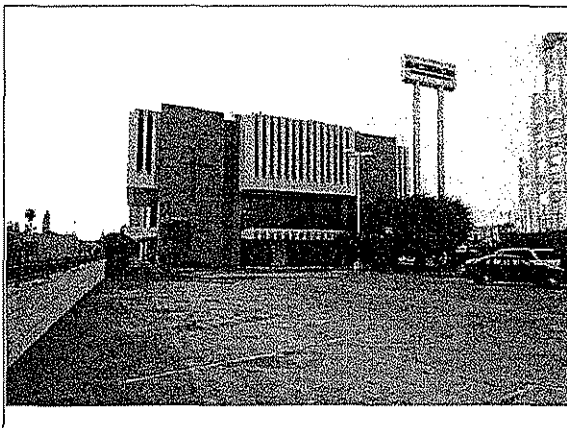
Wilshire (north) elevation, south view, 2008. (Underhill)



La Brea (west) elevation, east view, 2008. (Underhill)



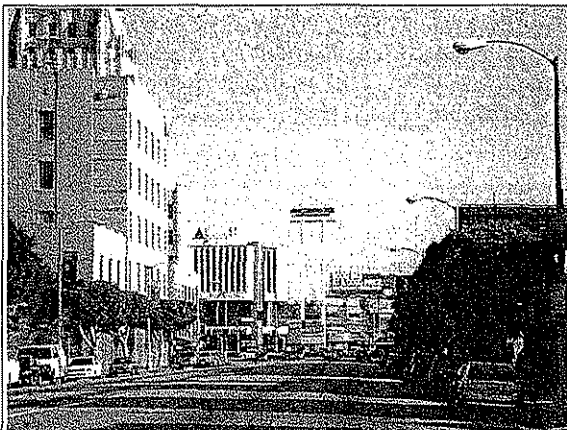
Northwest view, 2008. (Underhill)



East elevation, west view, 2008. (Underhill)



East view on Wilshire, 2008. (Underhill)



South view on La Brea, 2008. (Vavala)

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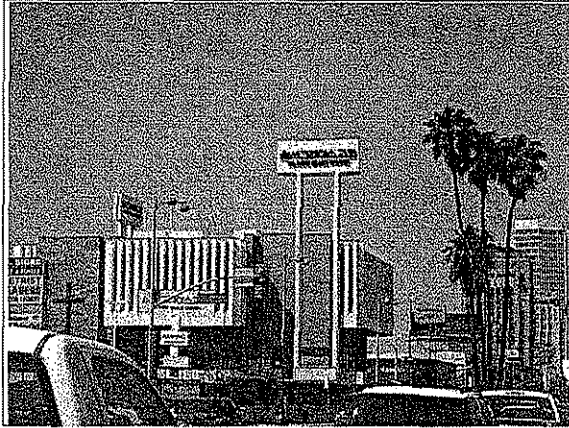
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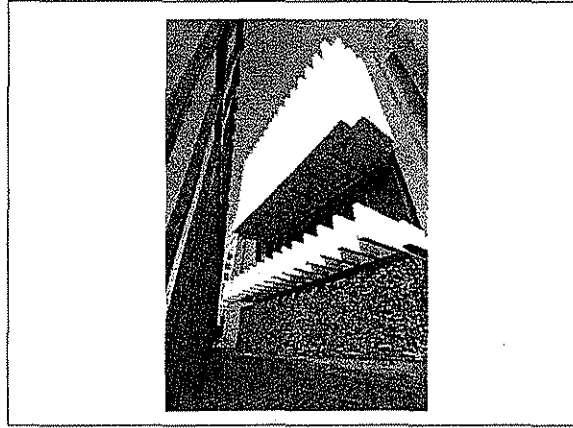
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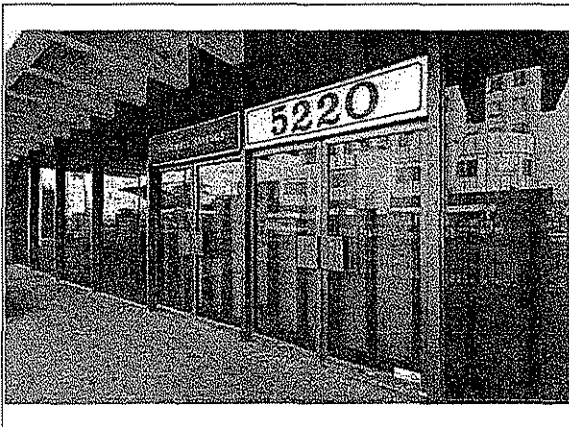
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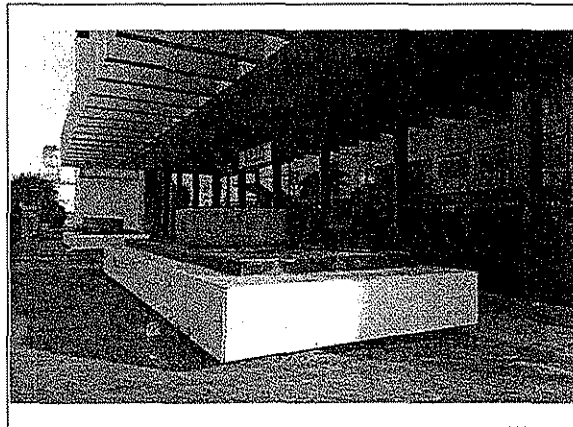
West view on Wilshire, 2006. (Monroy)



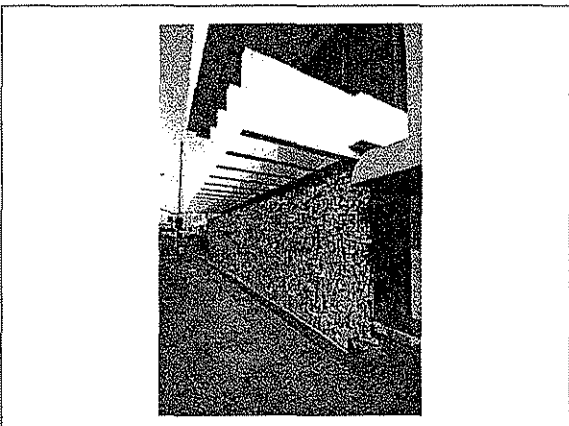
La Brea (west) elevation, detail, 2008. (Underhill)



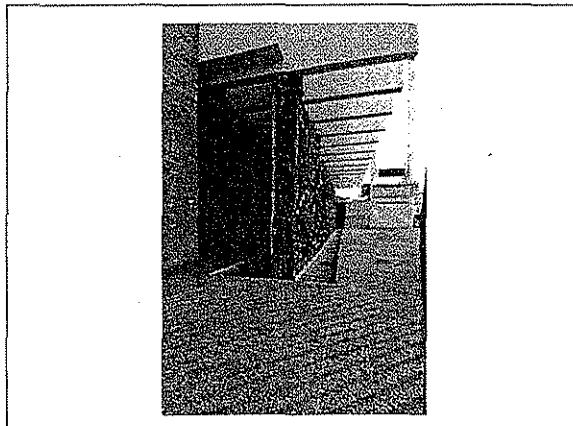
Wilshire entrance, 2008. (Underhill)



Wilshire entrance, reflecting pool, 2008. (Underhill)



Screen-waterfall and trellis, 2008. (Underhill)



Screen-waterfall and trellis, 2008. (Underhill)

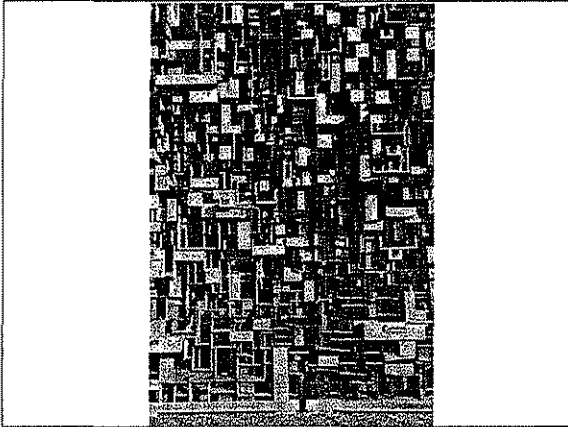
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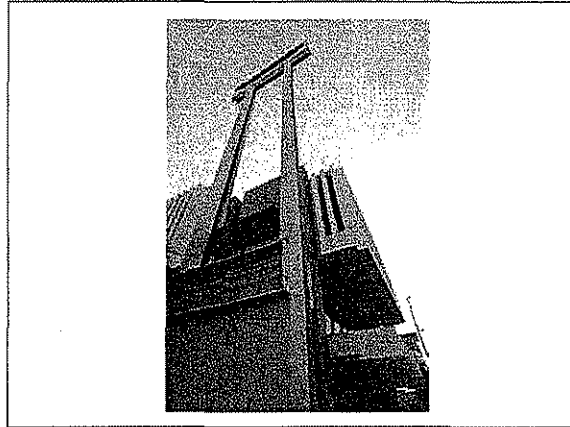
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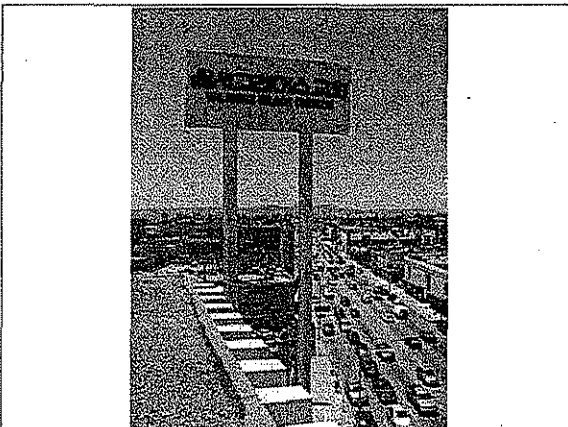
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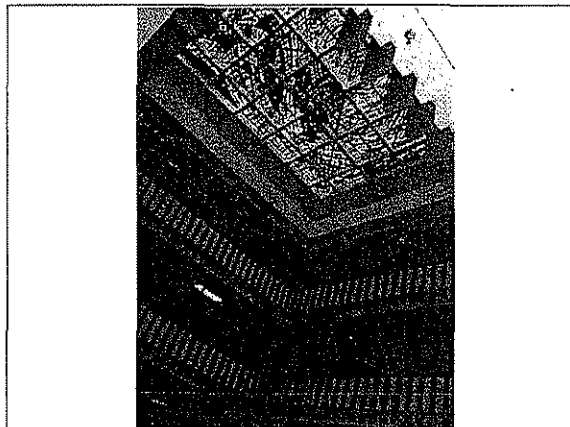
Screen-waterfall, detail, 2008. (Underhill)



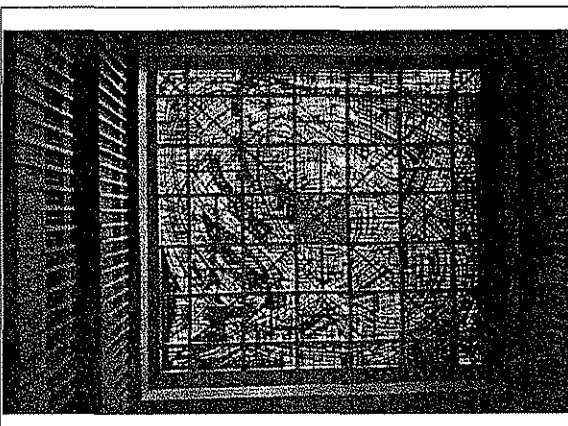
Sign pylon on Wilshire, 2008. (Underhill)



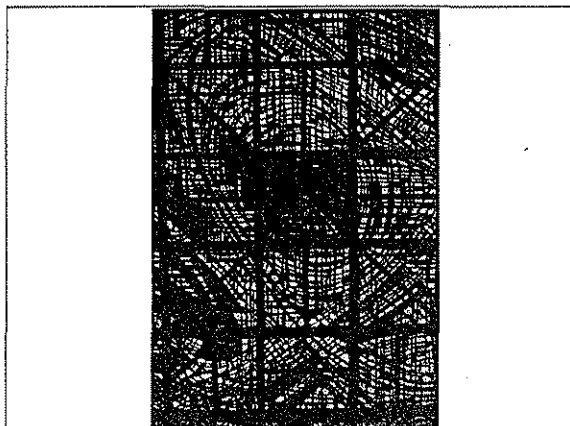
Sign on La Brea, detail, south view, 2006. (Monroy)



Lightwell, northeast view, 2007. (Chattel)



Dalle de verre skylight, 1978. (Ruth)



Dalle de verre skylight, detail, 1978. (Ruth)

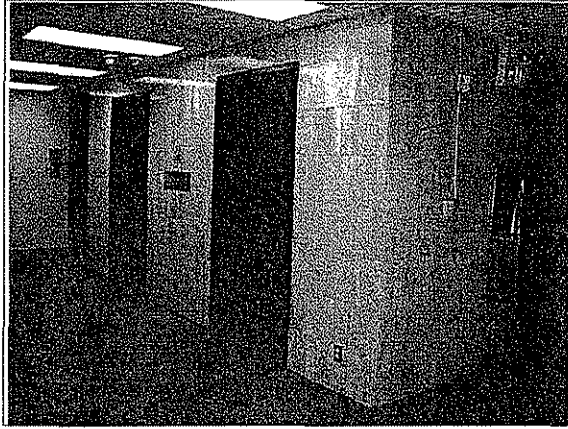
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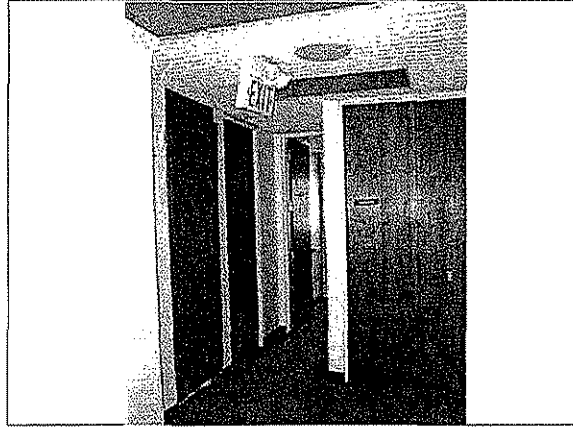
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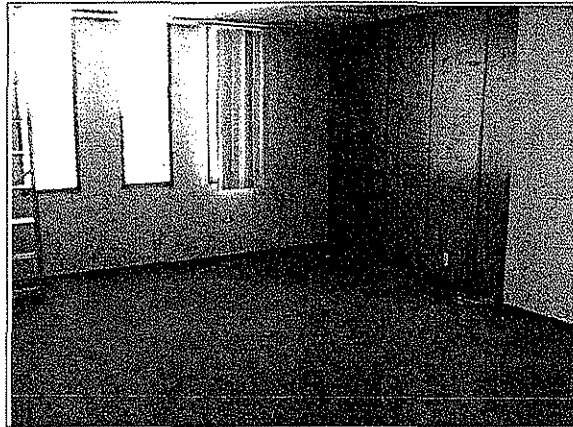
Elevator bank, southwest view, 2007. (Chattel)



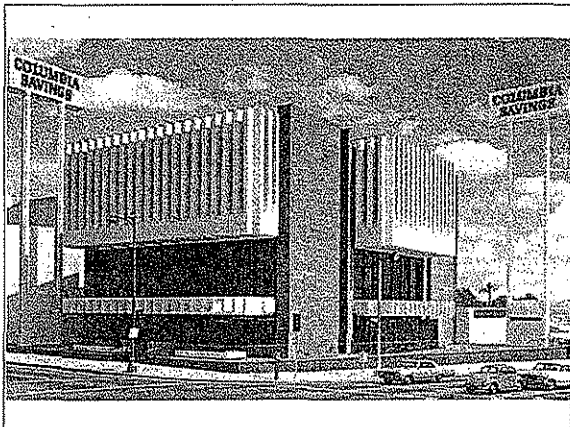
Interior corridor, north view, 2007. (Chattel)



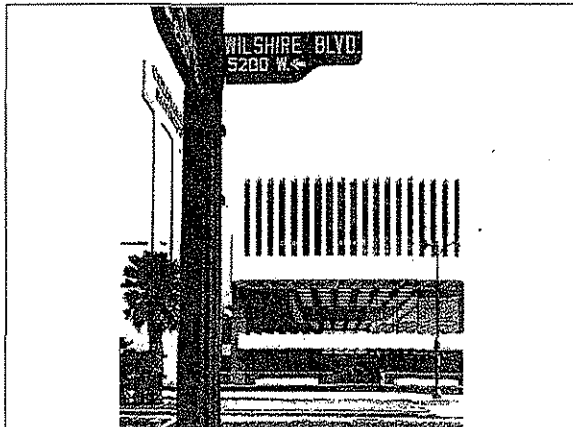
Upper floor corridor, walnut paneling, 2006. (Monroy)



Upper floor office space, 2006. (Monroy)



Columbia Savings postcard, 1965.



*L'architecture d'au jour d'hui, 1966.*

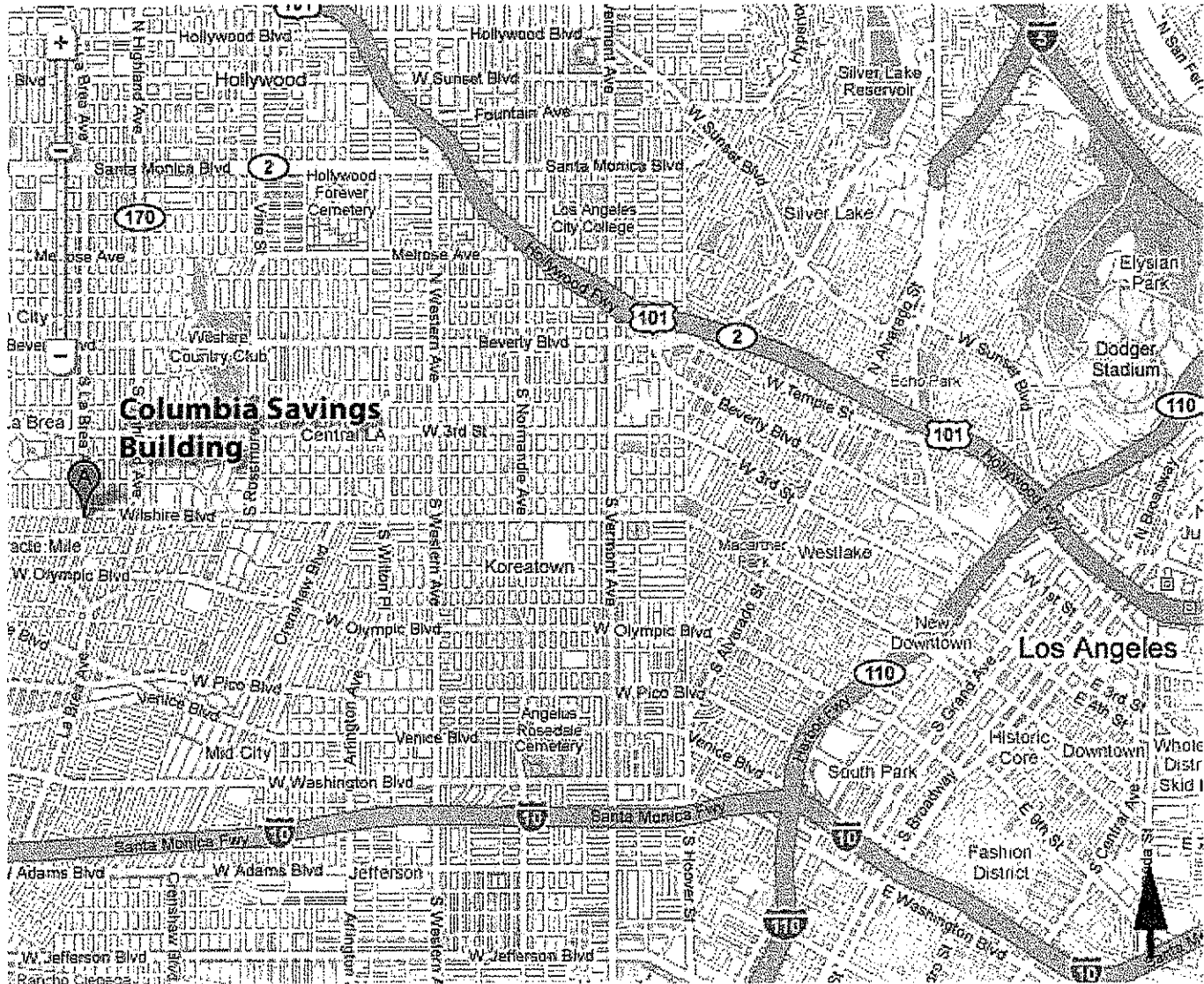
# LOCATION MAP

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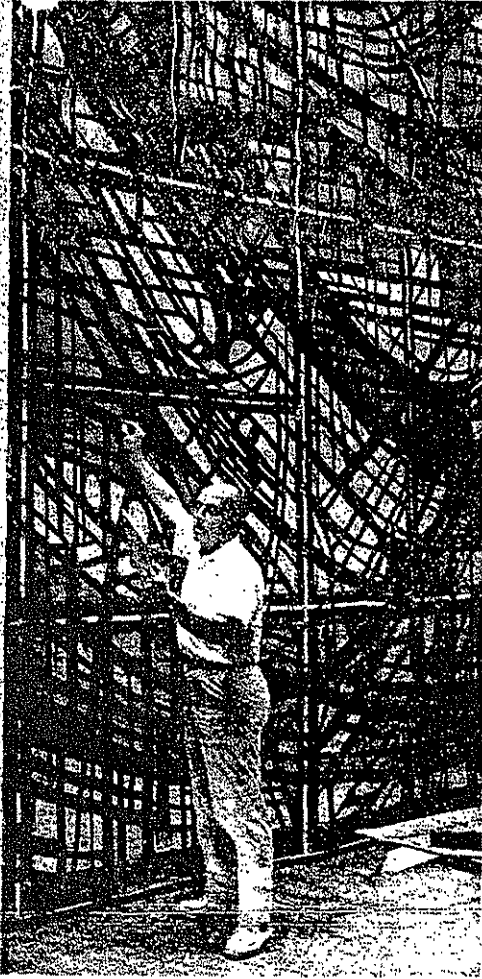
Date: May 2009

Continuation  Update

Map Showing Location of the Subject Property:



Base map: Google, 2009.



**ARTIST**—Roger Darricarrere works on master pattern for the 1,300 sq. ft. mosaic skylight for Columbia Savings and Loan Assn.'s Wilshire Office.

## Stained Glass Skylight Feature of New Office

The biggest, most colorful color, quality, amount of and probably the only bubble, and thickness. A diamond-edged saw cuts stained glass skylight in a commercial building in the glass slabs into pieces Southern California is being corresponding to the pattern's design. These pieces made for the new home of tern's design. These pieces office building of Columbia are then hand-sculptured by Savings and Loan Assn. hammer and placed on the under construction on Wil-pattern. Special concrete, Shire Blvd.'s "Miracle Mile" reinforced by welded steel skeletons, is meticulously packed between the glass area.

This unusual, multi-colored skylight, which will cap a three-story-high light-well centered in the savings and loan office, will comprise more than 10,000 separate pieces of thick stained glass covering an area of almost 1,300 sq. ft.

Cost at \$40,000

Designed by Roger Darricarrere, French artist and sculptor, the 36-ft.-square skylight will cost approximately \$40,000.

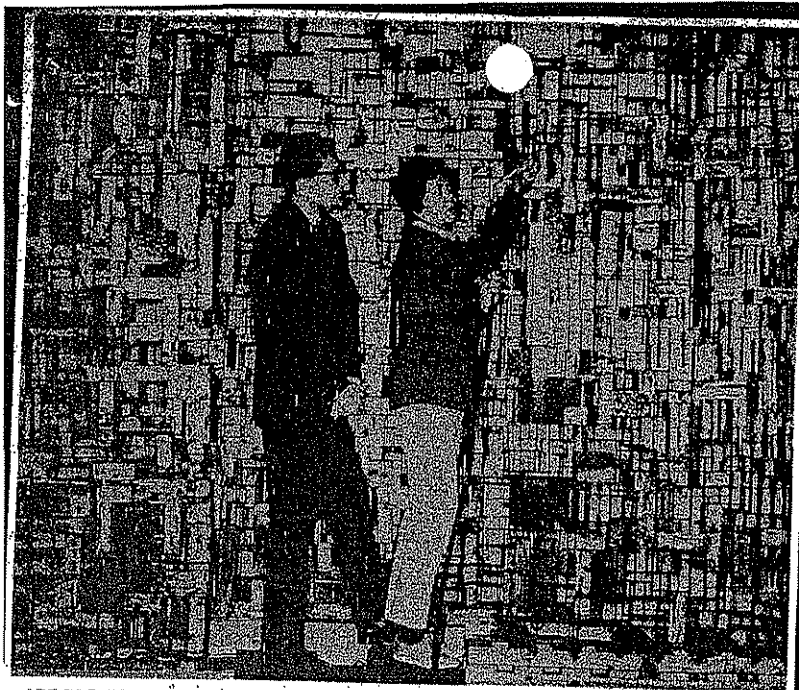
Darricarrere is composing the skylight in his studio on San Fernando Rd., using 78 different glass pieces from the 78 panels. Each panel is designed from a paper pattern that outlines hundreds of different glass pieces from the 78 panels will be trucked one to seven inches in size. From specially-designed kilns, he makes his own dramatic ceiling of light and stained glass to control its color.

### All Different

The complexity of construction is shown by the fact that no two of the pieces of stained glass are the same in size or shape. Five craftsmen and shopworkers finish only 18 sq. ft. of each panel a day, with a total of 66 days necessary to complete the skylight.

Although the massive skylight will weigh 18,000 lb., the unusual construction technique being used has proven to be six times stronger than the standard building code safety requirements.

When dried and polished, the building code safety requirements. When dried and polished, the building code safety requirements.



ART IN BUSINESS—Dr. Irving D. Shapiro, architect of Columbia Savings' new home office building, watches sculptress Taki assemble novel screen-

waterfall made of 22,000 individual pieces of brass strips, for the new structure.

## 22,000 PIECES

# Color-Effect Brass Marks Waterfall

Monday, Nov. 30, 1964 Citizen-News

LOS ANGELES — Twenty-two thousand individual pieces of color-patterned brass interspersed with segments of glass are being formed into a freestanding screen-waterfall as an integral part of the new \$1.5 million head office building of Columbia Savings & Loan Assn., designed by Irving D. Shapiro & Assoc., A.L.A.

Now under construction at the corner of Wilshire Blvd. and La Brea Ave., the three-story structure will feature the large, unique decorative piece of artwork designed for both function and beauty as a fountain.

As described by the building's architect, Dr. Irving D. Shapiro, "The screen-waterfall will mirror the architecture of the new head office building as well as depict the dynamic building growth in the state of California; where one out of every five homes in the United States is now being constructed. The intricate pattern of brass and glass planes visually represents the tremendous urbanization of the Southland. In silhouette form, the screen-waterfall will resemble the up-thrust of the dozens of new skyscrapers recently erected in this area."

This novel fountain is another "first" in architecture by Dr. Shapiro. "It expresses the beauty and growth of California, while acting as a functional screen for the west sun. Angular in the extreme, it follows the new building's rectilinear design which emphasizes the vertical and horizontal elements rather than the diagonal or curvilinear."

Designed and created by the eminent local sculptress, Taki, the screen-waterfall will weigh 2,000 pounds; measure 45 feet long, 10 feet high and 18 inches deep; and will cost \$15,000. It

will rise from a floodlighted reflecting pool that runs along the new building's west side, paralleling La Brea Ave.

When completed early next year, the screen-waterfall will be heard as well as seen. For as colored water is channeled from atop the fountain through the honeycomb of brass planes, concealed bells will be activated, yielding a pleasant chime effect. And as the water flows through the screen, a moving rainbow impression will be created as the water passes behind and over interspaced segments of glass panels of blues, golds, greens, ambers and reds.

Taki, whose works are owned by Helena Rubinstein, Madame Schiaparelli, Lever Bros. and others, is creating the entire screen piece by piece, all 22,000 of them. The three-dimensional composition takes form as she welds each individual brass plane to the preceding piece, using her artistic imagination as her only pattern.

As huge rolls of natural sheet brass are delivered to her West Los Angeles studio, she cuts the 12-inch wide sheets into various sizes and shapes with an acetylene torch. Each piece is then individually heated to a different temperature, which adds color, thereby creating different color patterns. In her unusual welding technique, she must also consider the placements of internal water conduits, chime bells, glass planes among the brass and steel columns for lateral support.

Taki is constructing the screen-waterfall in 8-foot-wide segments. When the building nears completion, these segments will be trucked to the site, welded together and embedded in the outdoor 45-foot-long pool. Sheltered by the building's cantilevered trellis located between two of the building's four massive supporting piers, the pool and its screen-waterfall will be visible to thousands of motorists and passers-by at this busy intersection of Los Angeles' "Miracle Mile" area.

# Building News

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## CTI Announces 1965 Tile Award Winners

Installations of marble tile on the Union Bank operations building and Columbia Savings and Loan Association building, both located in Los Angeles, have been judged as outstanding tile jobs for 1965, according to officials of the Ceramic Tile Institute.

A prominent feature of these buildings was the extensive use of split-faced marble tile, supplied by Walker & Zanger Inc. (West Coast, Ltd.), Glendale.

Columbia Savings and Loan, judged as the best commercial installation, earned coveted CTI awards for architect Irving D. Shapiro, AIA, builder Ruane Corp., and tile contractor Selectile Co.

### Ground To Roof

Dark green split-faced marble tile, which has a rugged unpolished stone appearance, was installed from ground to roof level on both exterior and interior surfaces at the new headquarters of the institution.

These tiles are two inches by six inches known as "Marspac."

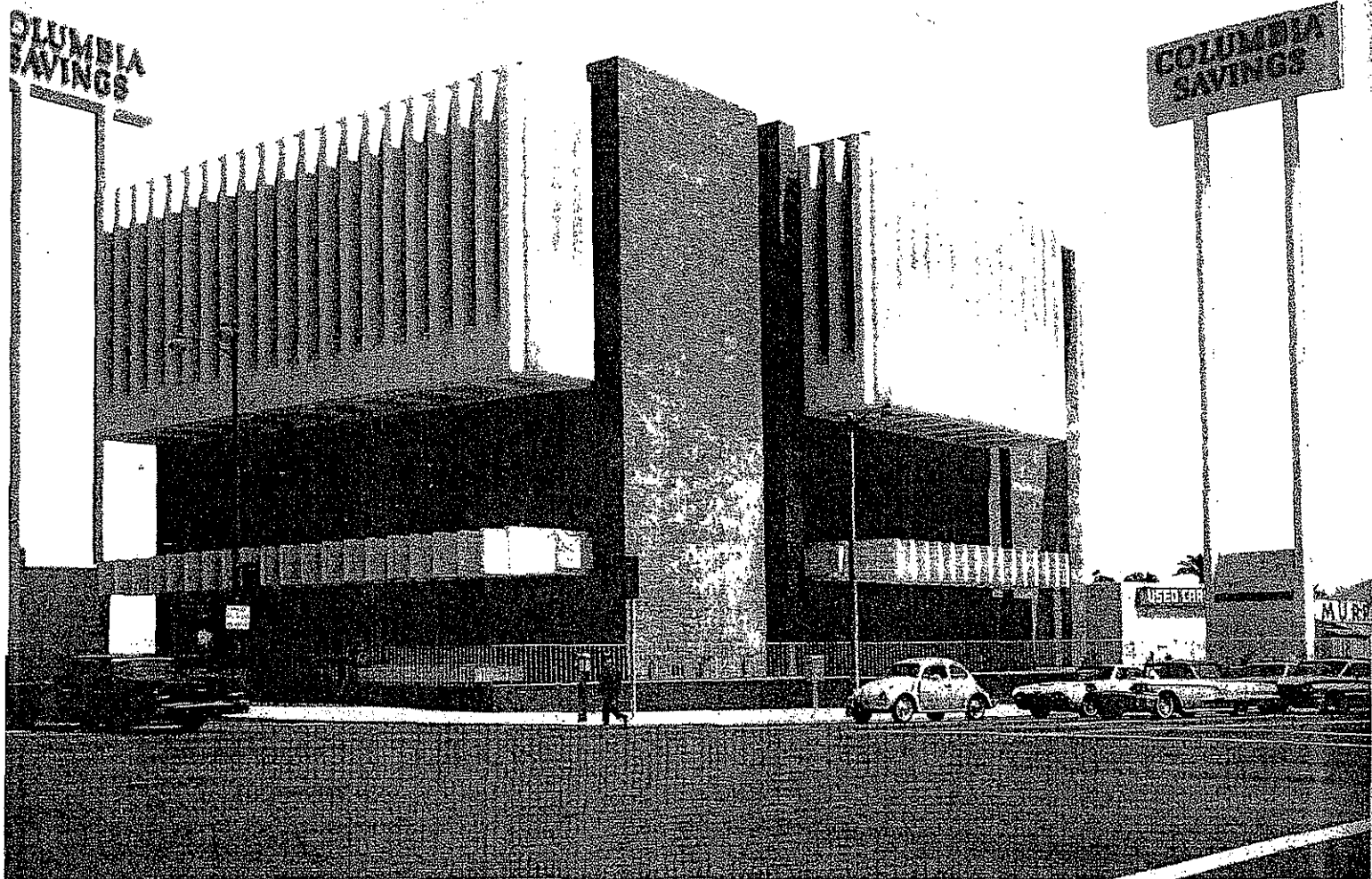
Walker & Zanger also supplied a six-inch by 12-inch light colored polished and filled Travertine marble tile which was installed on interior surfaces from floor-to-ceiling and a six-inch by 12-inch green-veined marble tile which was installed on walls in the executive restrooms.

### Froehlich Architect

Arthur Froehlich & Associates, AIA, earned the CTI architectural award for the Union Bank structure. Also honored were builders Chotiner & Gumbiner and Morley Constuction Co., and Selectile Co.

The outstanding ceramic tile exterior featured a combination use of Cipollino-green split-faced marble tile ("Marspac") running from ground level to rooftop on sections forming a right angle at Olympic Blvd. and Hope St., and sage-colored 12-inch by 12-inch Franciscan Contours CV set on a diagonal on large curtainwall sections running the length and width of the building.





## caisse d'épargne, los angeles

irving d. shapiro et associés architectes

Le siège de la « Columbia Savings and Loan Association » occupe un bâtiment de trois niveaux sur sous-sol, situé à l'angle de deux voies importantes de Los Angeles.

Le bâtiment est suspendu aux 4 piles en béton armé d'un poids respectif de 375 tonnes. A l'exception de ces éléments massifs, l'ensemble des façades est traité en pans de verre protégés par des brise-soleil dont les formes et la matière caractérisent cette architecture.

En bordure de la façade donnant sur la grande avenue, un mur-écran a été exécuté par le sculpteur Taki. Cette composition comprend 20 000 éléments de verre et de cuivre teinté, soudés entre eux et créant un motif abstrait.

En sous-sol ont été répartis les divers locaux du personnel : restaurant des cadres et cafeteria, service du courrier, chaufferie, réserves, service d'entretien, etc.

Le rez-de-chaussée est entièrement occupé par le vaste hall dont la partie centrale se développe sur toute la hauteur du bâtiment. Ce hall est éclairé par un lanterneau d'une surface inusitée (147 m<sup>2</sup>) étudié par un artiste français, le sculpteur Roger Darricarrere à partir d'éléments en verre coloré, orange, jaune, ambre, turquoise, blanc et violet. Ce lanterneau dont le poids est d'environ 2,5 kg/m<sup>2</sup> est le plus grand qui ait été réalisé aux Etats-Unis pour un bâtiment privé.

Le deuxième et le troisième étages se développent en mezzanine autour du hall. C'est à ces niveaux qu'ont été aménagés les bureaux de direction et les services de prêts et dépôts, etc.

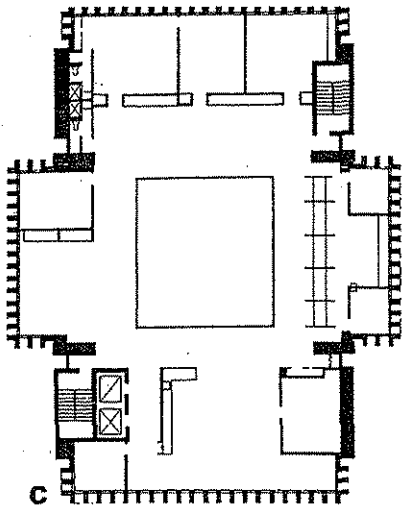
Le troisième niveau, également en mezzanine est actuellement réservé à des expositions, mais il sera utilisé dans l'avenir pour l'expansion des locaux.

Des problèmes de circulation on été posés par la différenciation des circuits du public et du personnel et par le transport automatique des documents au moyen d'un système complexe de gaines et monte-charges.

Il a été prévu en outre l'installation de caméras de télévision et de système d'alarme, des locaux pour les installations techniques : air conditionné, contrôle du degré hygrométrique, mécanographie, reproduction des documents, etc., et un parking extérieur de 185 places.

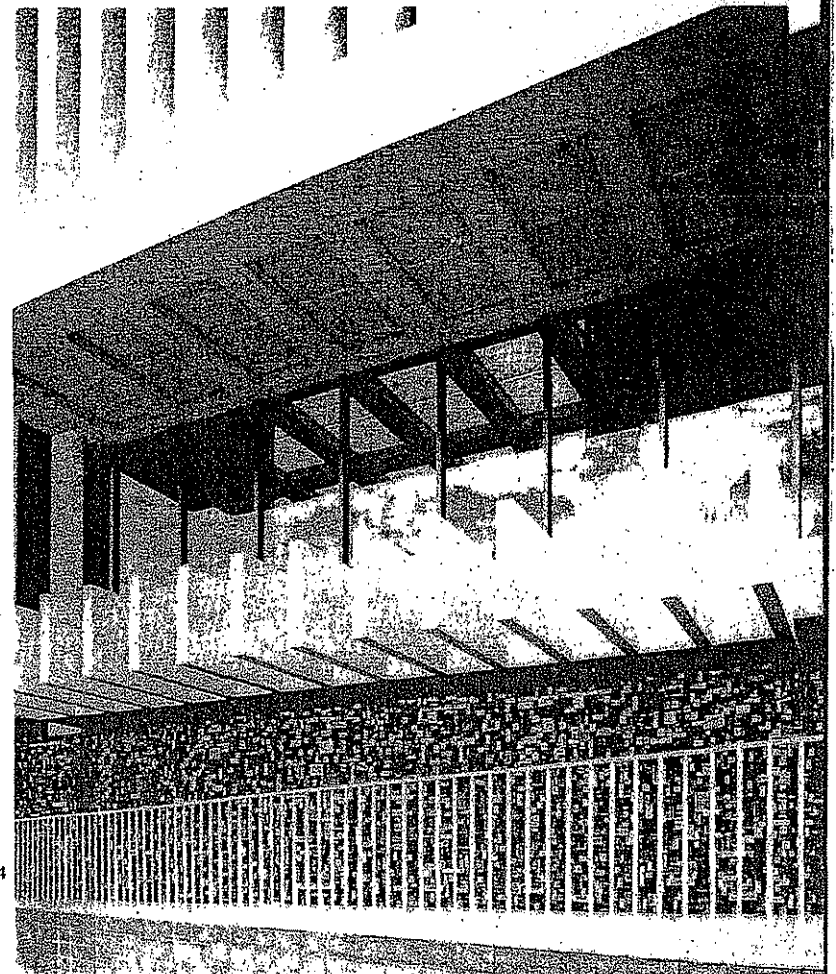
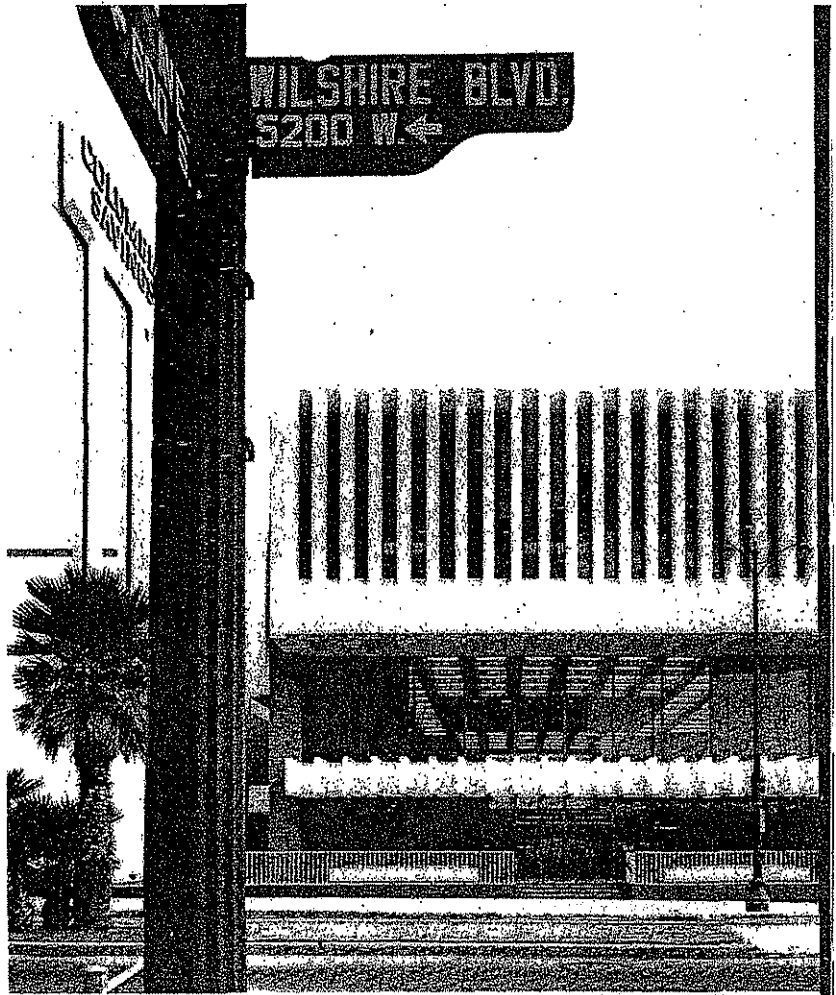
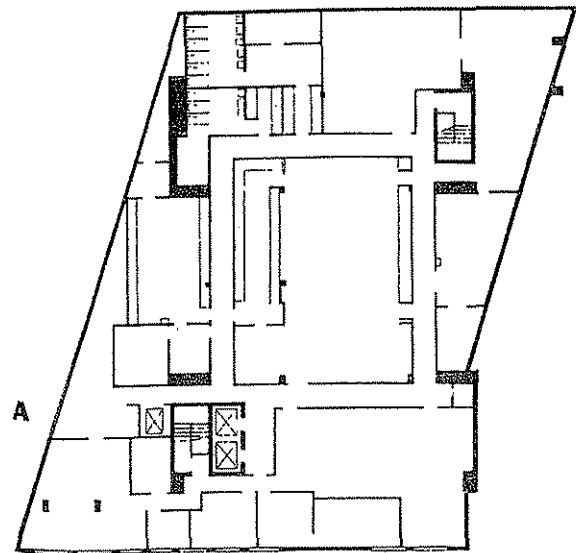
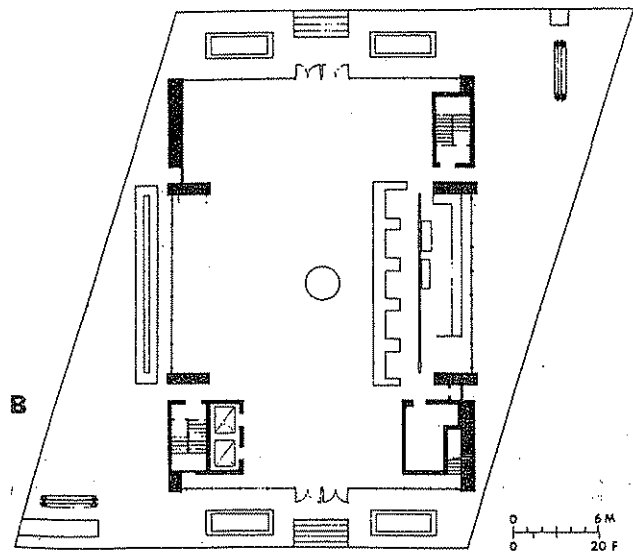
Le bâtiment a été réalisé avec le concours de Richard R. Bradshaw pour les aménagements et de Ralph E. Phillips pour les installations mécaniques.





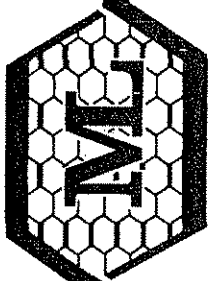
1. Vue d'ensemble du bâtiment suspendu à 4 piles en béton armé dont l'une d'elles est visible au centre de la photographie; on remarquera les brise-soleil qui se développent devant les pans de verre des façades. 2. Effet de perspective, vue prise en cours de chantier. 3. Façade entrée. 4. Détail montrant la composition murale du sculpteur Taki.

- A. Niveau inférieur occupant toute la surface du terrain.
- B. Rez-de-chaussée : la dénivellation entre les avenues et la configuration du terrain ont conduit l'architecte à placer le bâtiment sur une base animée par des fontaines et miroirs d'eau.
- C. Etage courant : au centre, vide du hall occupant toute la hauteur du bâtiment; sur le pourtour : bureaux.



Vol. 30 No. 1  
WINTER 1966

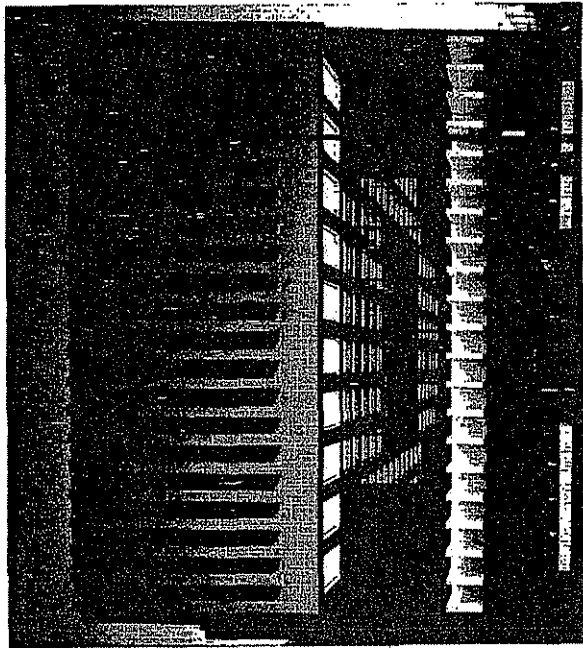
# Metal Lath NEWS



## COLUMBIA SAVINGS AND LOAN ASSOCIATION Los Angeles, California

architect  
lathing and  
plastering contractor  
general contractor

Irving D. Shapiro  
Carroll Duncan Co.  
Ruane Corp.



Interior suspended ceiling and walls are plastered metal lath. Architect Shapiro noted that the use of metal lath reduced plaster cracking, made expansion and contraction separation control easier.

Cantilevered sculptured trellises of metal lath and plaster suspended between the support piers function as shading for the second and third floor glass walls. Promoting a new role for banks, the third floor, designed as a balcony, is called "La Galeria," presenting local art work. Cost: approx. \$1 million. Area: 38,000 sq. ft.

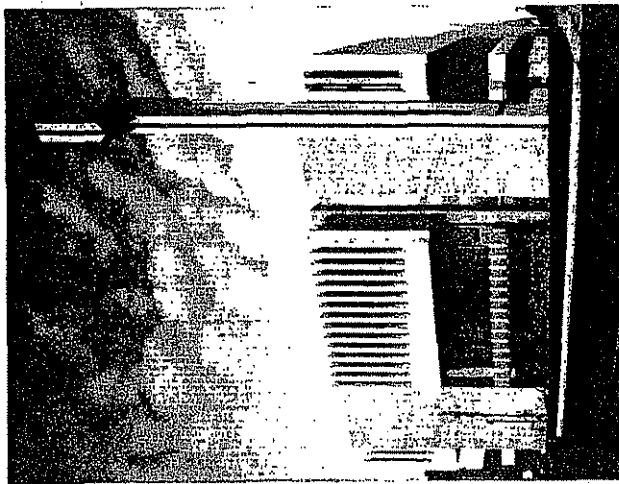
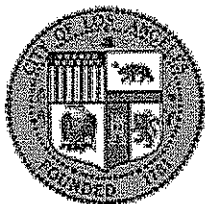


PHOTO: HARVIN BAND



City of Los Angeles  
Department of City Planning

07/07/2009

PARCEL PROFILE REPORT

**PROPERTY ADDRESSES**

5220 W WILSHIRE BLVD  
5224 W WILSHIRE BLVD  
5222 W WILSHIRE BLVD  
700 S LA BREA AVE  
702 S LA BREA AVE  
704 S LA BREA AVE  
706 S LA BREA AVE  
708 S LA BREA AVE  
700 1/2 S LA BREA AVE

**ZIP CODES**

90036

**RECENT ACTIVITY**

VTT-68945

**CASE NUMBERS**

CPC-2008-9909-GPA-CUB-HD-B  
BL-SPR-ZAD-CDO  
CPC-2003-1779-CDO-ZC  
CPC-1986-823-GPC  
ORD-80695  
ORD-59577  
ORD-176332  
ORD-176331  
ORD-165331-SA2114  
ZA-1996-523-CUZ  
ZA-1996-26-CUZ  
ZA-16866  
VTT-68945-CN  
ENV-2003-1780-ND  
ENV-2002-6078-CE  
AFF-15861

**Address/Legal Information**

PIN Number: 132B181 26  
Lot Area (Calculated): 6,978.6 (sq ft)  
Thomas Brothers Grid: PAGE 633 - GRID D2  
PAGE 633 - GRID D3  
Assessor Parcel No. (APN): 5507024009  
Tract: TR 4642  
Map Reference: M B 50-42/43  
Block: None  
Lot: 96  
Arb (Lot Cut Reference): None  
Map Sheet: 132B181

**Jurisdictional Information**

Community Plan Area: Wilshire  
Area Planning Commission: Central  
Neighborhood Council: Greater Wilshire  
Council District: CD 4 - Tom LaBonge  
Census Tract #: 2110.00  
LADBS District Office: Los Angeles Metro

**Planning and Zoning Information**

Special Notes: None  
Zoning: [Q]C4-2-CDO  
Zoning Information (ZI): ZI-2336 Miracle Mile  
General Plan Land Use: Regional Center Commercial  
Plan Footnote - Site Req.: See Plan Footnotes  
Additional Plan Footnotes: Wilshire  
Specific Plan Area: None  
Design Review Board: No  
Historic Preservation Review: No  
Historic Preservation Overlay Zone: None  
Other Historic Designations: None  
Other Historic Survey Information: None  
Mills Act Contract: None  
POD - Pedestrian Oriented Districts: None  
CDO - Community Design Overlay: Miracle Mile  
NSO - Neighborhood Stabilization Overlay: No  
Streetscape: No  
Sign District: No  
Adaptive Reuse Incentive Area: None  
CRA - Community Redevelopment Agency: None  
Central City Parking: No  
Downtown Parking: No  
Building Line: 5  
500 Ft School Zone: Active: GLASS Day School  
500 Ft Park Zone: No

**Assessor Information**

Assessor Parcel No. (APN): 5507024009  
Ownership (Assessor): BRE PROPERTIES INC  
525 MARKET ST 4TH FL  
SAN FRANCISCO CA 94105  
Ownership (City Clerk): BRE PROPERTIES, INC.  
525 MARKET ST. 4TH FLR  
SAN FRANCISCO CA 94105  
APN Area (Co. Public Works)\*: 0.322 (ac)  
Use Code: 2300 - Bank / Savings and Loan  
Assessed Land Val.: \$6,898,892  
Assessed Improvement Val.: \$1,040

Last Owner Change:	01/09/07
Last Sale Amount:	\$66,500,665
Tax Rate Area:	67
Deed Ref No. (City Clerk):	9-768
	722530
	42291
	2452898
	199122-25
	1487828
	1250473S
	1250473
	1186568S
	1154094
<b>Building 1:</b>	
1. Year Built:	1964
1. Building Class:	BXB
1. Number of Units:	0
1. Number of Bedrooms:	0
1. Number of Bathrooms:	0
1. Building Square Footage:	35,413.0 (sq ft)
<b>Building 2:</b>	
2. Year Built:	Not Available
2. Building Class:	Not Available
2. Number of Units:	0
2. Number of Bedrooms:	0
2. Number of Bathrooms:	0
2. Building Square Footage:	0.0 (sq ft)
<b>Building 3:</b>	
3. Year Built:	Not Available
3. Building Class:	Not Available
3. Number of Units:	0
3. Number of Bedrooms:	0
3. Number of Bathrooms:	0
3. Building Square Footage:	0.0 (sq ft)
<b>Building 4:</b>	
4. Year Built:	Not Available
4. Building Class:	Not Available
4. Number of Units:	0
4. Number of Bedrooms:	0
4. Number of Bathrooms:	0
4. Building Square Footage:	None
<b>Building 5:</b>	
5. Year Built:	Not Available
5. Building Class:	Not Available
5. Number of Units:	0
5. Number of Bedrooms:	0
5. Number of Bathrooms:	0
5. Building Square Footage:	0.0 (sq ft)

**Additional Information**

Airport Hazard:	None
Coastal Zone:	None
Farmland:	Area not Mapped
Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone:	No
Fire District No. 1:	Fire District No. 1 (100ft. Strip)
Fire District No. 2:	Yes
Flood Zone:	None
Hazardous Waste / Border Zone Properties:	No
Methane Hazard Site:	Methane Zone
High Wind Velocity Areas:	No
Hillside Grading:	No
Oil Wells:	None
Alquist-Priolo Fault Zone:	No
Distance to Nearest Fault:	4.01650 (km)
Landslide:	No
Liquefaction:	No

**Economic Development Areas**

Business Improvement District:	None
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Federal Empowerment Zone:	None
Renewal Community:	No
Revitalization Zone:	None
State Enterprise Zone:	None
Targeted Neighborhood Initiative:	None

**Public Safety**

Police Information:	
Bureau:	West
Division / Station:	Wilshire
Report District:	724
Fire Information:	
District / Fire Station:	61
Batallion:	18
Division:	2
Red Flag Restricted Parking:	No

## CASE SUMMARIES

Note: Information for Case Summaries is Retrieved from the Planning Department's Plan Case Tracking System (PCTS) Database.

<b>Case Number:</b>	VTT-68945
<b>Required Action(s):</b>	Data Not Available
<b>Project Description(s):</b>	GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT, VESTING CHANGE OF ZONE & HEIGHT DISTRICT, REMOVAL OF BUILDING LINE, CONDITIONAL USE FOR FULL-LINE ALCOHOL, SITE PLAN REVIEW, ZONING ADMINISTRATOR'S ADJUSTMENT, AND DESIGN OVERLAY PLAN APPROVAL TO PERMIT CONSTRUCTION OF A MIXED-USE PROJECT CONTAINING 562 RESIDENTIAL UNITS AND ...
<b>Case Number:</b>	CPC-2008-9909-GPA-CUB-HD-BL-SPR-ZAD-GDO
<b>Required Action(s):</b>	BL-BUILDING LINE CDO-COMMUNITY DESIGN OVERLAY DISTRICT CUB-CONDITIONAL USE BEVERAGE (ALCOHOL) GPA-GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT HD-HEIGHT DISTRICT SPR-SITE PLAN REVIEW ZAD-ZA DETERMINATION PER LAMC 12.27
<b>Project Description(s):</b>	GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT, VESTING CHANGE OF ZONE & HEIGHT DISTRICT, REMOVAL OF BUILDING LINE, CONDITIONAL USE FOR FULL-LINE ALCOHOL, SITE PLAN REVIEW, ZONING ADMINISTRATOR'S ADJUSTMENT, AND DESIGN OVERLAY PLAN APPROVAL TO PERMIT CONSTRUCTION OF A MIXED-USE PROJECT CONTAINING 562 RESIDENTIAL UNITS AND ...
<b>Case Number:</b>	CPC-2003-1779-GDO-ZC
<b>Required Action(s):</b>	CDO-COMMUNITY DESIGN OVERLAY DISTRICT ZC-ZONE CHANGE
<b>Project Description(s):</b>	ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMUNITY DESIGN OVERLAY (CDO) ZONE THAT REQUIRES NEW DEVELOPMENT OR ALTERATIONS OF EXISTING DEVELOPMENT CONFORM TO DESIGN GUIDELINES OR STANDARDS. THE CDO INCLUDES ZONE CHANGES THAT WOULD PROHIBIT CERTAIN TYPES OF ACTIVITIES ALLOWED BY THE UNDERLYING ZONE AND RESTRICT THE DESIGN ...
<b>Case Number:</b>	CPC-1986-823-GPC
<b>Required Action(s):</b>	GPC-GENERAL PLAN/ZONING CONSISTENCY (AB283)
<b>Project Description(s):</b>	AB-283 PROGRAM - GENERAL PLAN/ZONE CONSISTENCY - WILSHIRE AREA-COMMUNITY WIDE ZONE CHANGES AND COMMUNITY PLAN CHANGES TO BRING THE ZONING INTO CONSISTENCY WITH THE COMMUNITY PLAN. INCLUDES CHANGES OF HEIGHT AS NEEDED. REQUIRED BY COURT AS PART OF SETTLEMENT IN THE HILLSIDE FEDERATION LAWSUIT
<b>Case Number:</b>	ZA-1996-523-CUZ
<b>Required Action(s):</b>	CUZ-ALL OTHER CONDITIONAL USE CASES
<b>Project Description(s):</b>	REQUEST FOR AN UNMANNED WIRELESS TELECOMMUNICATIONS FACILITY IN THE A, R, OR C ZONES.
<b>Case Number:</b>	ZA-1996-26-CUZ
<b>Required Action(s):</b>	CUZ-ALL OTHER CONDITIONAL USE CASES
<b>Project Description(s):</b>	A PERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES (PCS) WIRELESS TELECOMMUNICATIONS FACILITY IN THE C4-2 ZONE.
<b>Case Number:</b>	VTT-68945-CN
<b>Required Action(s):</b>	CN-NEW CONDOMINIUMS
<b>Project Description(s):</b>	GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT, VESTING CHANGE OF ZONE & HEIGHT DISTRICT, REMOVAL OF BUILDING LINE, CONDITIONAL USE FOR FULL-LINE ALCOHOL, SITE PLAN REVIEW, ZONING ADMINISTRATOR'S ADJUSTMENT, AND DESIGN OVERLAY PLAN APPROVAL TO PERMIT CONSTRUCTION OF A MIXED-USE PROJECT CONTAINING 562 RESIDENTIAL UNITS AND ...

**Case Number:** ENV-2003-1780-ND

**Required Action(s):** ND-NEGATIVE DECLARATION

**Project Description(s):** ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMUNITY DESIGN OVERLAY (CDO) ZONE THAT REQUIRES NEW DEVELOPMENT OR ALTERATIONS OF EXISTING DEVELOPMENT CONFORM TO DESIGN GUIDELINES OR STANDARDS. THE CDO INCLUDES ZONE CHANGES THAT WOULD PROHIBIT CERTAIN TYPES OF ACTIVITIES ALLOWED BY THE UNDERLYING ZONE AND RESTRICT THE DESIGN ...

**Case Number:** ENV-2002-6078-CE

**Required Action(s):** CE-CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION

**Project Description(s):** A PERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES (PCS) WIRELESS TELECOMMUNICATIONS FACILITY IN THE C4-2 ZONE.

## DATA NOT AVAILABLE

ORD-80695  
ORD-59577  
ORD-176332  
ORD-176331  
ORD-165331-SA2114  
ZA-16866  
AFF-15861



Case Number:  
**CHC-2009-1908-CR**  
Resolution Letter Mailing List  
MAILING DATE: **Aug. 04, 2009**

GIS/Fae Tsukamoto  
City Hall, Room 825  
**Mail Stop 395**

Council District 4  
City Hall, Room 480  
**Mail Stop 206**

CRA/LA  
Attn: Cynthia Foronda  
354 S. Spring St., Ste. 800  
**Mail Stop 182**

CRA/LA  
Attn: Cynthia Foronda  
[cforonda@cra.lacity.org](mailto:cforonda@cra.lacity.org)

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525 Market St., 4<sup>th</sup> Fl.  
San Francisco, CA 94105

Los Angeles Conservancy  
523 W. 6<sup>th</sup> St., Ste. 826  
Los Angeles, CA 90014

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Historic Resources Group  
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Los Angeles, CA 90028

Alan Hess  
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Irvine, CA 92612

Robert Chattel  
Chattel Architecture  
13417 Ventura Blvd.  
Sherman Oaks, CA 91423

BRE Properties, Inc  
5141 California, #250  
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LA Conservancy  
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Charles J. Fisher  
140 S. Ave. 57  
Highland Park, CA 90042