

**APPENDIX C1:**

**CULTURAL RESOURCES**

Historic Preservation Consulting,  
Historic Resource Assessment,  
1159-1165 Main Street,  
May 2019.

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Historic Resource Assessment

1159-1165 Main Street



May 2019

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Introduction and Executive Summary	1
II.	Qualifications	2
III.	Regulatory Setting	3
	National Register of Historic Places	3
	California Register of Historical Resources	3
	City of Los Angeles	4
IV.	Property Description	6
	Physical Description	6
	Property History	8
V.	Historic Context	12
	Central City Community Plan Area	12
	Commercial Development and the Automobile	16
VI.	Historic Resource Assessment	22
IX.	Adjacent and Nearby Historical Resources	24
X.	Conclusion	24
XI.	Bibliography	25
	Attachments	
	Attachment A: Current Maps and Aerials	
	Attachment B: Historic Maps and Aerials	
	Attachment C: Contemporary Photographs of Subject Property	
	Attachment D: Historic Photographs	
	Attachment E: Table of Permits	
	Attachment F: Table of Tenants	

## INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an historic resource assessment of the property located at 1159-1165 South Main Street in Downtown Los Angeles California (Assessor Parcel Number 5139-017-015, hereinafter referred to as “subject property”). The property is currently developed with one commercial/industrial building. Constructed circa 1921, according to the Los Angeles County Assessor, the subject property was historically used as an auto-related business.

The City of Los Angeles’ Office of Historic Resources recently completed a citywide historic resource survey known as SurveyLA. As part of the survey, historic context statements and survey reports relevant to study of the subject property were prepared, including for industrial development in the City of Los Angeles,<sup>1</sup> and for the Central City Community Plan Area.<sup>2</sup> The subject property was not identified as a potential historical resource in either SurveyLA document.<sup>3</sup> In addition, the subject property has not ever been previously surveyed for historic or architectural significance; this historic resource assessment is the first known assessment of the subject property.

A project is proposed for the subject property that includes its demolition, as well as demolition of the three buildings adjacent to the northwest. With addresses 1147-1155 South Main Street, all three buildings were constructed circa 1986 of concrete block. National Register guidance requires that properties less than 50 years of age convey “exceptional importance.”<sup>4</sup> While guidance for the California Register does not have the same age requirement, there is a requirement that sufficient time has passed to provide adequate perspective.<sup>5</sup> Given their recent dates of construction, complete lack of architectural distinction and use as retail stores and warehouses, none of the three buildings meet the threshold required for National and California eligibility for buildings of the recent past. Therefore, no further evaluation of these three properties will be provided in this report.

This report evaluates the subject property for historic and architectural significance for eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register), California Register of Historical Resources (California Register), and for local designation, both individually as a Historic Cultural Monument (HCM), and as part of a potential historic district or Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ). The report concludes that the subject property does not appear eligible for designation either individually or as part of any existing or potential historic district. The report also identifies any adjacent and nearby identified historical resources.

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<sup>1</sup> LSA Associates, Inc., “Draft Historic Context Statement; SurveyLA Industrial Development,” prepared for the City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning, Office of Historic Resources, August 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Architectural Resources Group, “SurveyLA; Historic Resources Survey Report; Central City Community Plan Area,” prepared for the City of Los Angeles Department of Planning Office of Historic Preservation, September 2016.

<sup>3</sup> While the subject property is located within the boundaries of the Central City Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) project area, these properties were resurveyed as part of SurveyLA. Historic resource surveys completed for the CRA were determined outdated for SurveyLA. (Architectural Resources Group, “SurveyLA; Historic Resources Survey Report; Central City Community Plan Area,” prepared for the City of Los Angeles Department of Planning Office of Historic Preservation, September 2016, 35).

<sup>4</sup> Marcella Sherfy and W. Ray Luce, National Park Service, “National Register Bulletin 22: Guidelines for Evaluating and Nominating Properties that Have Achieved Significance Within the Past Fifty Years,” revised 1998, [https://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb22/nrb22\\_I.htm](https://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb22/nrb22_I.htm).

<sup>5</sup> State of California, Department of Parks and Recreation, Office of Historic Preservation, “Technical Assistance Series #7: How to Nominate a Resource to the California Register of Historical Resources,” September 4, 2001.

## QUALIFICATIONS

This report was prepared by Jenna Snow with editorial assistance provided by Kathryn McGee. Ms. Snow visited and photographed the site on February 20, 2019.

In January 2015, Jenna Snow launched an independent historic preservation consulting practice with an office in Los Angeles. With over fifteen years of professional experience, Ms. Snow has a strong and broad understanding of best historic preservation practice, including federal, state, and local regulations. She has worked on a wide range of projects on both the east and west coasts, as well as internationally. Ms. Snow holds a M.S. in Historic Preservation from Columbia University and a B.A. in Fine Arts focusing on architectural history from Brandeis University. She meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards in Architectural History. Throughout her career, Ms. Snow has authored, co-authored, and/or served as project manager for nearly 100 historic preservation projects, including a wide variety of historic resource assessments, National Register nominations, and historic resources surveys. She regularly contributes to environmental impact reports, historic preservation certification applications, Section 106 reviews and other work associated with historic building rehabilitation and preservation planning. Ms. Snow has prepared multiple National Register nominations, including the Twohy Building in San José, CA; the Beverly Hills Women's Club in Beverly Hills, CA; the Sam and Alfreda Maloof Compound in Rancho Cucamonga, CA; the Boyle Hotel/Cummings Block in Los Angeles, CA; the West Los Angeles Veterans Affairs Historic District in Los Angeles, CA, and Temple Ohave Israel in Brownsville, PA. She has completed historic resources surveys, including coauthoring historic context statements in Hollywood, Whittier, CA, and South Los Angeles. Prior to her consulting work, Ms. Snow worked for the New York City Department of Design and Construction in New York, NY, the Freedom Trail Foundation in Boston, MA, and the Neighborhood Preservation Center in New York, NY.

### *Kathryn McGee*

Ms. McGee is an architectural historian and historic preservation planner based in Los Angeles. She meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards in Architectural History and has over ten years of experience in the field of historic preservation consulting. She previously worked at historic preservation consulting firm Chattel, Inc. for nearly seven years and launched an independent practice in 2015. Her educational background includes a Bachelor of Arts degree in architectural history from the University of California, Santa Barbara and a Master of Urban and Regional Planning degree from the University of California, Irvine. She has also completed the Summer Program in Historic Preservation at the University of Southern California and is a LEED Accredited Professional with specialty in Neighborhood Development. Her consulting work entails writing reports for purposes of environmental and local project review; preparation of historic resource assessments and surveys; preparation of technical reports for General Plan Updates; evaluation of properties seeking or complying with Mills Act Contracts; and consultation on adaptive reuse and federal Investment Tax Credit projects.

## REGULATORY SETTING

### National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is “an authoritative guide to be used by federal, state, and local governments, private groups, and citizens to identify the nation’s cultural resources and indicate what properties should be considered for protection from destruction or impairment,”<sup>6</sup> Administered by the National Park Service, the National Register is the nation’s official list of historic and cultural resources worthy of preservation. Properties listed in the National Register include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture. Resources are eligible for the National Register if they meet one or more of the following criteria for significance:

- A) are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B) are associated with the lives of significant persons in our past; or
- C) embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D) have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.<sup>7</sup>

Once a resource has been determined to satisfy one of the above criteria, then it must be assessed for “integrity.”<sup>8</sup> Integrity refers to the ability of a property to convey its significance. Evaluation of integrity is based on “an understanding of a property’s physical features and how they relate to its significance.” The National Register recognizes seven aspects or qualities of integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. To retain integrity, a property must possess several, and usually most, of these aspects.

#### *Relationship to Project*

The subject property is not listed in the National Register, and for the reasons stated in this report, does not appear to meet National Register eligibility requirements.

### California Register of Historical Resources

Based substantially on the National Register, the California Register is “an authoritative guide... used by state and local agencies, private groups, and citizens to identify the state’s historical resources and to indicate what properties are to be protected.”<sup>9</sup> For a property to be eligible for listing in the California Register, it must be found by the State Historical Resources Commission to be significant under at least one of the following four criteria:

- 1) is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California’s history and cultural heritage; or
- 2) is associated with the lives of persons important in our past; or

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<sup>6</sup> National Register Bulletin #16A: *How to Complete the National Register Registration Form* (National Park Service, 1997).

<sup>7</sup> National Register Bulletin #15, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (National Park Service, 1990, revised 2002).

<sup>8</sup> National Register Bulletin #15, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (National Park Service, 1990, revised 2002).

<sup>9</sup> California Public Resources Code §5024.1(a), <<http://codes.lp.findlaw.com/cacode/PRC/1/d5/1/2/s5024.1>>.

- 3) embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual or possesses high artistic values; or
- 4) has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Also included in the California Register are properties which have been formally determined eligible for listing in, or are listed in the National Register; are registered State Historical Landmark Number 770, and all consecutively numbered landmarks above Number 770; and Points of Historical Interest, which have been reviewed and recommended to the State Historical Resources Commission for listing.

The primary difference between eligibility for listing in the National and California Registers is integrity. Properties eligible for listing in the National Register generally have a higher degree of integrity than those only eligible for listing in the California Register. There is, however, no difference with regard to significance.

#### *Relationship to Project*

The subject property is not listed in the California Register, and for the reasons stated in this report, does not appear to meet California Register eligibility requirements for individual listing.

#### **City of Los Angeles**

§22.171.7 of the Los Angeles Administrative Code defines criteria for designation of a Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM). For ease in applying local eligibility, the following numbers are assigned to the criteria, which align, to a large degree, with National and California Register criteria. Resources eligible for HCM designation are:

- 1) Historic structures or sites in which the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state or community is reflected and exemplified; identified with important events in the main currents of national, state, or local history; or
- 2) Historic structures or sites identified with personages in the main currents of national, state or local history; or
- 3) Historic structures or sites which embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period style or method of construction or a notable work of a master builder, designer, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age.

An HPOZ is defined as:

a planning tool which recognizes the special qualities of areas of historic, cultural, or architectural significance. An HPOZ does not change the underlying zoning, rather it lays an added level of protection over a zone through local board oversight.<sup>10</sup>

The HPOZ criteria for evaluation state that structures, natural features, or sites within the involved area, or the area as a whole, shall meet one or more of the following:

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<sup>10</sup> City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department, *Cultural Heritage Masterplan*, adopted 2000: 44. [preservation.lacity.org](http://preservation.lacity.org).

- A. Adds to the historic architectural qualities or historic associations for which a property is significant because it was present during the period of significance, and possess historic integrity reflecting its character at that time.
- B. Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristics, represents an established feature of the neighborhood, community, or City.
- C. Retaining the structure would help preserve and protect an historic place or area of historic interest in the City.<sup>11</sup>

*Relationship to Project*

The subject property is not individually listed as an HCM and, for reasons stated in this report, does not appear to meet criteria for designation as an HCM. Furthermore, the subject property is not located within an existing or potential HPOZ.

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<sup>11</sup> City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department, *Cultural Heritage Masterplan*, adopted 2000: 44. [preservation.lacity.org](http://preservation.lacity.org).

## PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

### Physical Description

Current maps and aerials are included in Attachment A, current photographs are included in Attachment C.

#### Site

The subject property is located at the northwest corner of South Main Street and West 12<sup>th</sup> Street.<sup>12</sup> It is located in an urban area with buildings of a variety of heights. There is no vegetation surrounding the subject property except for a small tree planted along the sidewalk on Twelfth Street. An alley runs behind the property to the west and there is a surface parking lot further to the west on a separate parcel. The subject property contains one commercial building that encompasses the entire parcel, built to the sidewalk line along the east elevation facing Main Street and the south elevation facing Twelfth Street.

#### Exterior

The commercial building is one story high with a parapet and a modified hipped roof that features sloping ends and sides angled up to a flat portion, resulting in a tall volume. The parapet steps up slightly at the primary, southeast corner of the building. Through bolt anchors are visible along the cornice line. The building is rectangular in plan and is finished in smooth stucco along the east and south elevations facing the street and brick along the west and north elevations. The building is three bays wide along Main Street and six bays wide along Twelfth Street with three retail spaces along Main Street and an additional retail space along Twelfth Street. The building has no architectural style, although there are a few vestiges of architectural flourishes surrounding the south two bays on the east elevation and the east two bays on the south elevation. The architectural detail consists of a slightly projecting, Classically-inspired architrave, or enframement, around the storefront windows, incorporating paired pilasters with simplified Corinthian capitols with oval rosettes, and urns above.

The east elevation, facing Main Street, consists of three bays containing one retail storefront each. Each of the three storefronts contains contemporary aluminum and glass double doors with fixed glass sidelights and transom set within an aluminum frame. Each storefront is protected by a contemporary metal, roll-up door and topped by a contemporary canvas awning.

On the south elevation, facing Twelfth Street, a storefront window is located in the first bay to the east. The storefront window has four, large, fixed panes of glass divided by a contemporary aluminum frame. The window is topped by a contemporary canvas awning. The second bay from the east contains a blank wall, which appears to have been infilled. A contemporary canvas awning spans from the west side of the elevation across to the third bay from the east. Inset storefront opening are located in the third bay from the east, as well as the first three bays from the west. The paired contemporary glass and aluminum doors are sided on either side by fixed windows. A metal roll-up door obscured the aluminum storefront in the first bay from the west at the time of the site visit.

The west elevation is secondary and is finished in brick. The elevation is five bays wide. The first three bays from the south consist of infilled windows, recognizable from their slightly projecting

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<sup>12</sup> For purposes of this report, it is assumed Main Street runs north-south. In reality, it runs southwest to northeast.

brick sills and top arch. A tall, roll-up metal door is located in the second bay from the north while an unadorned pedestrian door is located in the first bay at the north. The pedestrian door is fronted by a contemporary metal security door.

Only a small portion of the north elevation is visible as the remainder is obscured by the adjoining building to the north.

### Interior

The interior of the building consists of three commercial spaces along Main Street and a single commercial space along Twelfth Street. Little historic fabric is evident in the commercial spaces. All three commercial spaces along Main Street consist of a tall main space on the first floor and a partial mezzanine level reached by a short flight of wood steps toward the west side of the space. The ceiling in the mezzanine is generally low. The commercial space furthest north along Main Street features a metal moment frame and a tall shaft in the mezzanine extends to a small skylight. The stair to the mezzanine in the center commercial space along Main Street features a square, wood paneled newel post. Wood floors are visible on that mezzanine, along with a vault. All four commercial spaces are generally devoid of any historic fabric. The Twelfth Street commercial space is the largest in the building and consists of several rooms with high ceilings. No mezzanine space was evident. The majority of rooms are dedicated to warehousing materials.

### Alterations

Historic maps and aerial photographs are included in Attachment B. A few historic photographs of the interior are included in Attachment D.

Although no historic photographs of the exterior of the building at the subject property could be located,<sup>13</sup> based on visual inspection and review of building and alteration permits, the building has been substantially altered since it was constructed in 1921.<sup>14</sup> Specifically, all storefront systems, including doors, windows, metal roll-up doors, and canvas awnings appear to be contemporary. A window opening in the second bay from the east along the south elevation appears to have been infilled, in addition to all window openings along the rear, west elevation. In addition, all interior finishes appear to be contemporary and very little historic fabric is evident.

A table of all building and alteration permits is included in Attachment E. The original building permit describes the building as 72'-4" wide by 119'-8" long, the size of the entire lot. Constructed as an "Auto Sales Bldg" for a cost of \$20,000, the one-story building was built 21' to the highest point.<sup>15</sup> Substantial alterations since that time include replacing storefront windows in 1928 (though

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<sup>13</sup> Sources consulted include Los Angeles Public Library Photo Collection, University of Southern California Digital Archives, Huntington Library Digital Collections, Online Archive of California, University of California Los Angeles Air Photo Archives, University of Santa Barbara aerial photographs, and historic *Los Angeles Times*. While the building is visible on historic aerial photographs, none provide sufficient detail to discern the appearance at an earlier time.

<sup>14</sup> City of Los Angeles, Department of Buildings, "Application for the Erection of Buildings," Permit #13845, June 18, 1921.

<sup>15</sup> City of Los Angeles, Department of Buildings, "Application for the Erection of Buildings," Permit #13845, June 18, 1921.

they were also changed again later),<sup>16</sup> and removing the parapet in 1953.<sup>17</sup> Seismic retrofit was completed in 1986<sup>18</sup> and new partition walls were added at the same time for a cost of \$12,000.<sup>19</sup> Interior partition walls were changed again only seven months later.<sup>20</sup> Additional interior work was permitted in 2000, although it is unclear how much was completed.<sup>21</sup> Storefronts, including doors, fixed windows, roll-up security doors, and canvas awnings appear contemporary, although it is not known the exact date when they were installed. The subject property initially contained two retail spaces and it is not known when it was divided into four retail spaces.

### Property History

As noted above, few historic photos of the subject property were identified, with none that clearly show the exterior. Historic photos are included in Attachment D. A table of tenants is included in Attachment F.

Prior to construction of the existing building, the subject property was occupied by a brick building that served as an electric substation for Pacific Light and Power Company,<sup>22</sup> owned by Henry E. Huntington. That early building was subsequently demolished and the existing building was constructed in 1921 as an “auto sales building.” Designed by John Montgomery Cooper, the building contained two retail spaces, the larger of which was initially used by Spencer Kennelly, Inc., who sold used cars, specifically Chevrolets (see biography below for Spencer Kennelly). The property was owned at the time by the Huntington Land and Improvement Company, a different company than that which owned the prior building.

The Huntington Land and Improvement Company was established by Henry E. Huntington, who is known as “the foremost developer of the Los Angeles metropolitan area.”<sup>23</sup> “More than any single figure, Henry E. Huntington was responsible for Los Angeles’ dynamic growth between 1900 and 1920.”<sup>24</sup> The nephew of railroad developer Collis Huntington, Henry Huntington inherited a fortune of \$15 million, which allowed him to self-finance his business ventures. Henry Huntington focused on three, interdependent development areas: trolleys, electric power generation and distribution, and real estate development. The Pacific Electric linked many of the region’s smaller communities with downtown Los Angeles. “It was not a profitable transit system, but it served Huntington’s larger

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<sup>16</sup> City of Los Angeles, Department of Buildings, “Application to Alter, Repair, or Demolish,” Permit #12943, May 4, 1928.

<sup>17</sup> City of Los Angeles, Department of Buildings, “Application to Alter, Repair, or Demolish,” Permit #LA77004, December 29, 1953.

<sup>18</sup> City of Los Angeles, Department of Buildings, “Application to Add-Alter-Repair-Demolish,” Permit #46567, September 23, 1986.

<sup>19</sup> City of Los Angeles, Department of Buildings, “Application to Add-Alter-Repair-Demolish,” Permit #50693, November 14, 1986.

<sup>20</sup> City of Los Angeles, Department of Buildings, “Application to Add-Alter-Repair-Demolish,” Permit #68340, June 18, 1987.

<sup>21</sup> City of Los Angeles, Department of Building and Safety, “Application for Building Permit,” Permit #00VN72177, May 11, 2000; City of Los Angeles, Department of Building and Safety, “Application for Building Permit,” Permit #00VN74012, June 13, 2000; City of Los Angeles, Department of Building and Safety, “Application for Building Permit,” Permit #00LA01403, July 13, 2000.

<sup>22</sup> City of Los Angeles, Department of Building, “Application for the Erection of Building,” Permit #10264, August 4, 1913.

<sup>23</sup> William B. Fredricks, “Henry E. Huntington and Metropolitan Entrepreneurship in Southern California, 1898-1917,” *Business and Economic History*, Second Series, Vol. 16, 1987.

<sup>24</sup> Robert Phelps, “The Manufacturing Suburb of Los Angeles,” Henry Huntington, Alfred Dolge, and the Building of Dolgeville, California, 1903-1910,” *Southern California Quarterly*, Vol. 80, No. 2 (Summer 1998), 147.

purpose of working with his many land companies and promoting the sale of real estate.”<sup>25</sup> While Huntington Land and Improvement Company held property from Orange County to the San Fernando Valley, most of the real estate was located in the San Gabriel Valley. Historic record books show that the Huntington Land and Improvement Company owned several properties in the same block as the subject property, including the two adjacent properties to the north..<sup>26</sup>

The property transferred to Henry and Esther Novisoff in 1946 (see biography below for Henry Novisoff), who held the property until the mid-1970s.<sup>27</sup>

The Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, updated to 1951, shows two retail spaces, 1165 Main Street and 1159 Main Street. *Los Angeles City Directories* indicate a variety of tenants for 1159 Main Street, none of whom stayed for any length of time, except for Andrew F. Limper, who ran a restaurant from around 1934 through around 1941.<sup>28</sup> Born in Germany in 1876, Andrew Limper moved to Kansas around 1893, where he worked as a baker.<sup>29</sup> He moved to Los Angeles in 1902 and opened his own bakery.<sup>30</sup> By 1906, he owned two bakeries and was “doing unusually well... [with] two of the largest bakeries in Los Angeles.”<sup>31</sup> Neither of these bakeries were located at the subject property; *Los Angeles City Directories* indicate Andrew Limper ran a restaurant at the subject property. Other tenants include a furniture manufacturing or sales business (late 1920s), and Crest Embroidery Company (1950s).

### John Montgomery Cooper

The building at the subject property was designed by John Montgomery Cooper. Born in Ohio, John Montgomery Cooper (1884-1950) graduated from Yale University and worked on the Panama Canal as an engineer. He arrived in Los Angeles in 1910.<sup>32</sup> John Montgomery Cooper became a noted southern California architect who was responsible for the design of the Hollywood Knickerbocker Hotel (1714 Ivar Avenue, 1929, contributing resource to a National Register-listed historic district), Grether & Grether Building (730 South Los Angeles Street, 1924, listed in the National Register), Roxie Theater (815 South Broadway, 1931, listed in the National Register), and NuWilshire Theater (1314 Wilshire Boulevard, Santa Monica, 1931, Santa Monica Landmark). Cooper was specifically known for his industrial designs.<sup>33</sup> In addition to the subject property, he was responsible for several other industrial buildings nearby including a garage at the northwest corner of Los Angeles and Twelfth streets,<sup>34</sup> a brick factory on Main Street between Pico Boulevard

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<sup>25</sup> William B. Fredricks, “Henry E. Huntington and Metropolitan Entrepreneurship in Southern California, 1898-1917,” *Business and Economic History*, Second Series, Vol. 16, 1987.

<sup>26</sup> While the subject property and adjacent properties were purchased by the Huntington Land and Improvement Company in 1914, the nearby ones were purchased in 1921. (Los Angeles County, Assessor Books.)

<sup>27</sup> County of Los Angeles, Assessor Records, Books.; City of Los Angeles, Department of Building and Safety, Permits.

<sup>28</sup> *Los Angeles City Directory*, (Los Angeles Directory Company, 1934-1941).

<sup>29</sup> 1900 United States Federal Census, Salina Ward 2, Salina, Kansas; Page: 12; Enumeration District: 0121.

<sup>30</sup> “Local News Briefs,” *The Salina Daily Union* (Salina, Kansas), April 19, 1904, 4; 1910 United States Federal Census, Los Angeles Assembly District 73, Los Angeles, California; Roll: T624\_82; Page: 7B; Enumeration District: 0134.

<sup>31</sup> “Owns Two Large Bakeries,” *The Salina Daily Union* (Salina, Kansas), August 2, 1906, 2.

<sup>32</sup> “John M. Cooper, Noted Southland Architect, Dies,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 29, 1950, 20.

<sup>33</sup> Robert Chattel, “Grether and Grether Building,” National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, 2016.

<sup>34</sup> “Will Build Garage,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 29, 1919, 88.

and Fourteenth Street,<sup>35</sup> and a factory for Angeles Furniture Company between Stanford and Paloma streets.<sup>36</sup>

### Spencer Kennelly

Automobile dealer Spencer North M Kennelly (1885-1936)<sup>37</sup> was born in Montana and moved to Santa Monica with his parents and three siblings by the time he was six years old in 1891,<sup>38</sup> when Santa Monica was still a relatively new city.<sup>39</sup> Spencer Kennelly married Margret Gunn in 1910.<sup>40</sup> By the time of his early death at the age of 51, Kennelly was considered “one of the most important dealers in Southern California and a leader in the trade.”<sup>41</sup>

Prior to selling cars, Kennelly tried his hand in real estate when he was just 20 years old.<sup>42</sup> His interest in cars started early, prior to widespread use of the personal automobile, and even before the Model T became available in 1908 (see historic context below). While he was involved in a somewhat serious car accident in 1906, one in which his sister “sustained a broken arm as well as numerous bruises,”<sup>43</sup> by 1919, an article appearing in the “Society” column of the *Los Angeles Times* described him as a “villainous genius at driving cars that he loves to pretend he is about to make them climb telephone poles to the terror of the nervous.”<sup>44</sup>

Spencer Kennelly started in the used car business by 1914<sup>45</sup> and opened a Ford showroom at 3548 South Vermont Avenue.<sup>46</sup> During World War I, he enlisted in the Motor Transport Branch and was sent to Siberia.<sup>47</sup> He didn’t spend very long in Siberia; by 1919, a notice in the *Los Angeles Times* describes his intention to construct a new “California Show Room” that takes advantage of the climate with a “showroom al fresco.”<sup>48</sup> A later advertisement indicates that his new showroom was located at 1151 Main Street, a few parcels north of the subject property.<sup>49</sup> At the time, this was considered the “center of ‘automobile row.’”<sup>50</sup> By 1922, the company had moved into the building at the subject property and changed its name from Southwestern Motor Company to Spencer Kennelly, Inc.<sup>51</sup> By 1925, Spencer Kennelly, Inc. had a branch at 961 South Olive Street,<sup>52</sup> with two

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<sup>35</sup> “Two New Stores,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 11, 1919, 11.

<sup>36</sup> “Furniture Factory,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 5, 1922, 87.

<sup>37</sup> United States, Selective Service System. *World War I Selective Service System Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration; *Find A Grave*. Find A Grave. <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi>.

<sup>38</sup> “Spencer Kennelly,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 13, 1936, 40.

<sup>39</sup> Santa Monica was established in 1875.

<sup>40</sup> “Santa Monica,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 9, 1910, 45.

<sup>41</sup> “Kennelly, Auto Dealer, Dies,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 11, 1936, 22.

<sup>42</sup> “For Sale,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 8, 1905, 55.

<sup>43</sup> “Hurt at Santa Monica,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 7, 1906, 8.

<sup>44</sup> “Society,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 7, 1917, 37.

<sup>45</sup> “For Sale,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 21, 1917, 59.

<sup>46</sup> “Removal Notice,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 6, 1918, 74.

<sup>47</sup> “Society,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 6, 1918, 32; “Motor Dealer Joins Transport Service,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 13, 1918, 68.

<sup>48</sup> “A California Show Room,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 25, 1919, 114.

<sup>49</sup> “Classified Liners,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 21, 1919, 13.

<sup>50</sup> “Automobile Agency Occupies New Home,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 5, 1936, 79.

<sup>51</sup> “Seeks New Name,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 7, 1922, 37.

<sup>52</sup> *Los Angeles City Directory*, (Los Angeles Directory Company, 1925).

additional branches in Long Beach and 3707 West Pico Boulevard.<sup>53</sup> The company moved out of the subject property by 1930.<sup>54</sup> By 1936, the company had moved into new headquarters at Vermont and Santa Barbara. Spencer Kennelly, Inc. advertised widely, including in the 1924 yearbook for the Manuel Arts High School.<sup>55</sup>

### Henry Novisoff

Although Perfect Made Tire Co., owned by Henry Novisoff, moved into the subject property by 1930,<sup>56</sup> Henry Novisoff did not purchase the property until 1946.<sup>57</sup> Henry Jake Novisoff (1886-1968)<sup>58</sup> was born in Russia and moved to the United States in 1908.<sup>59</sup> He spent a few years in San Francisco before moving to Los Angeles in 1917. He worked for a time in a tire shop and opened his own business in 1923.<sup>60</sup> In 1930, there were two other branches of Perfect Made Tire Co., 908 South Central Avenue and 965 South Main Street. It appears Henry Novisoff consolidated his business into one location at the subject property by 1935.<sup>61</sup>

Henry Novisoff married Esther Brody and the couple had two sons, Thomas and Eugene Novisoff.<sup>62</sup> Thomas went into business with his father by 1940 and, when Eugene joined the family business by the mid-1950s, the name changed to Novisoff & Sons Tire Company.<sup>63</sup> Thomas served as sales manager and Eugene as Production Manager. In the 1950s, Novisoff & Sons was awarded the contract to recap all tires for State-owned vehicles.<sup>64</sup> “The organization is now one of the largest of its type in Southern California and its recapping plant is regarded as one of the best in the nation.”<sup>65</sup> After Henry’s death in 1968, his sons continued the business at the subject property until the 1970s.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> “Branch Opened by Kennelly Third of Chain,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 12, 1927, 114; “Automobile Agency Occupies New Home,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 5, 1936, 79.

<sup>54</sup> *Los Angeles City Directory*, (Los Angeles Directory Company, 1930).

<sup>55</sup> Manuel Arts High School, *The Artisan*, (Los Angeles, 1935).

<sup>56</sup> *Los Angeles City Directory*, (Los Angeles Directory Company, 1930).

<sup>57</sup> County of Los Angeles, Assessor Records, Books.

<sup>58</sup> Social Security Administration. *Social Security Death Index, Master File*. Social Security Administration.

<sup>59</sup> 1930 United States Federal Census, *Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California*, Page: 9B; Enumeration District: 0392.

<sup>60</sup> “Tire Company Celebrates 30<sup>th</sup> Birthday,” *Los Angeles Times*, September 17, 1953, 29.

<sup>61</sup> *Los Angeles City Directory*, (Los Angeles Directory Company, 1935).

<sup>62</sup> *Los Angeles City Directory*, (Los Angeles Directory Company, 1940).

<sup>63</sup> *Los Angeles City Directory*, (Los Angeles Directory Company, 1956).

<sup>64</sup> “No Title,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 22, 1953, 63.

<sup>65</sup> “Tire Company Celebrates 30<sup>th</sup> Birthday,” *Los Angeles Times*, September 17, 1953, 29.

<sup>66</sup> *Los Angeles City Directory*, (Los Angeles Directory Company, 1973 and 1987).

## HISTORIC CONTEXT

Located in the Central City Community Plan Area (CPA), the subject property was considered under the relevant historic contexts established by SurveyLA, including development of the Central City Community Plan Area and properties relating to Commercial Development and the Automobile.

### Central City Community Plan Area

The subject property is located in the South Park neighborhood of the Central City CPA, a few blocks southwest of Main Street's intersection with Broadway. This area was originally developed with single- and multi-family homes. Beginning in the late 1910s and 1920, the area rapidly changed with construction of commercial and industrial properties. As described below, many automobile manufacturers constructed showrooms and repair shops in the South Park neighborhood and the area became known as "auto row." Construction of the freeways, specifically the I-10 (Santa Monica) Freeway in the 1960s, a short distance to the south of the subject property, and the SR-110 (Harbor) Freeway in the early 1950s, a few blocks west of the subject property, significantly changed the character of the area. The Los Angeles Convention Center was built northeast of the nexus of these freeways, opening in 1971 and expanding in the 1990s. The Staples Center and L.A. Live development projects further changed the character of the area. The character of the area has recently transformed with rapid replacement of early buildings with new contemporary buildings.

The SurveyLA report for the Central City CPA contains an historical overview for development of the CPA; excerpts most relevant to the subject property are included here:<sup>67</sup>

#### *Early Twentieth Century Growth: Rise of the Central Business District*

By the turn of the twentieth century, Los Angeles had unequivocally shed its small town roots and had matured into "a populous, commercialized city with increasing regional importance." Its population had nearly doubled between 1890 and 1900, from roughly 50,000 to more than 102,000. As the city grew in population and stature, its business district was pulled to the south and west, eventually supplanting older commercial nodes and giving rise to a thriving central business district that is known today as the Historic Core. By 1900, several prominent commercial buildings had been constructed in the area including the Bradbury Building at Second and Broadway (1893, City HCM #6) and the Douglas Building at Third and Spring (1898, City HCM #966). As more and more development occurred and the central business district began to firmly take shape, the term "Downtown" was used to describe it and became a part of the local lexicon. The first official reference to the Downtown area appeared in the Los Angeles Herald in 1906, and in the Los Angeles Times in 1909...

...[City officials concerned about Manhattanization with too many tall, dense buildings] advocated for a more horizontal pattern of development since at the time, Los Angeles had what seemed to be unlimited space in which to expand. In response, the Los Angeles City Council enacted an ordinance in 1905 that restricted the height of new buildings to 150 feet, or roughly 13 stories. The height ordinance thwarted the vertical growth of Downtown and created a nearly-uniform skyline that lasted until the restrictions were repealed in the mid-1950s.

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<sup>67</sup> Architectural Resources Group, "SurveyLA; Historic Resources Survey Report; Central City Community Plan Area," prepared for the City of Los Angeles Department of Planning Office of Historic Preservation, September 2016.

As the central business district was pulled to the south, new commercial and institutional buildings were swiftly constructed until nearly every parcel in the Historic Core was developed. Between the turn of the twentieth century and the late 1920s, the central business district took shape and matured into a quintessential American downtown. Scores of new height-limit buildings were erected to house the entire gamut of commercial uses including banks and financial institutions, hotels, offices, department stores and smaller retail outlets, theaters and concert halls, and restaurants and taverns. Many of these buildings featured some combination of commercial uses, typically with retail on the ground story and offices up above. Reflecting the prevailing sense of prosperity, almost all were intended to be bold architectural statements that showcased an architect's mastery of the Beaux Arts tradition or other, similar architectural styles that exuded formality and were predicated on the Classical orders. Buildings constructed at the end of the 1920s and into the early 1930s often exhibited characteristics of styles that were considered to be more "modern," including Art Deco and Streamline Moderne...

Amid Los Angeles' rapid growth, local leaders deemed it a priority to modernize and expand municipal services and initiated plans to develop a new civic center complex at the north end of the central business district...

While new commercial and institutional development gave rise to the central business district, industrial development was swiftly transforming the blocks east of Main Street. This area had historically been occupied by a mix of agricultural land and working-class neighborhoods, but the presence of railroad depots, warehouses, and yards along Alameda Street had paved the way for industrial development nearby in the early twentieth century. Some of the area's earliest industrial properties arose adjacent to the railroad depots and consisted of buildings that supported agriculture and food processing, both early linchpins of the Southern California economy...

Population growth in the 1910s and 1920s sustained additional economic development and introduced many other industrial uses to the blocks east of the central business district. The area's identity as an industrial center was solidified by a sweeping zone change in 1922, which eliminated new residential uses from Downtown. Though the area clung onto some of its historical uses such as Single-Room Occupancy (SRO) hotels, it took on a much more industrial character by the 1920s as factories, printing and publishing plants, machine shops, and various other industries encroached onto blocks that had once been predominantly residential. "Stimulated in part by the arrival of runaway shops evading unionization drives in New York," a concentration of garment factories were erected in the area to the southeast of the central business district beginning in the 1920s, sowing the seeds for a robust wholesale garment trade that today is the second largest in the nation outside of New York. Warehouses and other more utilitarian industrial uses generally clustered in areas further south and east.

The remarkable growth of the central business district in the early twentieth century was accompanied by an equally remarkable problem—traffic congestion. Traffic jams and snarled streets quickly became issues of epic proportions due to the brisk

development of the central business district and a steady increase in the number of automobiles. Further complicating the situation were the hills and buttes flanking the west end of Downtown, which limited the options into and out of the city. The city initiated a number of infrastructure projects in an attempt to improve accessibility and mitigate the worst effects of congestion...

In addition to new transportation infrastructure, proliferation of the automobile in the 1910s and 1920s also spawned a commercial enclave to the south and west of the central business district that was oriented around the sale, repair, and maintenance of cars. Capitalizing on the enhanced role that auto travel played, particularly in Southern California, several automobile manufacturers erected large, new showrooms and repair facilities along Figueroa and Flower Streets in what is now known as the South Park neighborhood. By the 1910s, the term "auto row" appeared in local newspapers and was used to describe the cluster of showrooms and associated businesses in the area. Throughout Downtown, multi-story "auto parks" were weaved into the central business district as early as the 1920s, providing patrons of department stores and other businesses with a convenient place to park their car while shopping. To entice motorists, many of these garages offered on-site services in addition to parking stalls. Some touted a rather robust menu of amenities including "a repair department manned by experts, a lubrication department, and a washing and polishing department ... a complete accessory and tire department with direct factory representation ... [and] a finely appointed ladies' lounge."

#### *Great Depression and World War II*

Downtown Los Angeles had matured into a vibrant district that acted as the commercial, institutional, and industrial hub of the Southern California region by the 1920s. However, it was also around this time that some neighborhoods around Downtown experienced decline as new development in more peripheral areas of the city slowly began to pull people away from the urban core. This trend was particularly evident in Bunker Hill. Beginning in the early twentieth century, the neighborhood lost its luster as affluent residents incrementally moved away to new residential districts in other parts of the city and, one by one, their stately mansions were carved into smaller, multi-family units, "most of which were occupied by single boarders in single rooms." Apartments and rooming houses that were erected nearby crowded out the mansions, and by about 1920 new construction in the neighborhood had ceased. The condition of buildings deteriorated as they aged and maintenance was deferred. By 1930, local officials were flirting with the possibility of razing the buildings and leveling the hill, likening the area to a "rotten apple in the barrel" that presented "a problem of concern to the entire city."

The area around the plaza had also languished by the 1920s as the locus of development had shifted southward. Buildings had fallen into various states of disrepair, and since the area was inhabited mostly by poor, disenfranchised immigrant families it did not receive much public investment...

Development activity throughout Downtown was stymied as the economic effects of the Great Depression reverberated. Compared to the prosperous 1910s and 1920s, in which buildings were erected en masse in the central business district and in adjacent

areas, the 1930s were characterized by a relative lull in new construction as consumers spent less and local real estate became less lucrative. The development of new, upscale commercial nodes like Miracle Mile and a theater district in Hollywood also began to slowly siphon patrons away from Downtown businesses, shifting the city's center of gravity away from the central business district and into more suburban settings. However, in spite of these factors Downtown did not cease to be a focal point of commercial and civic life. Angelenos continued to travel Downtown to shop, and attendance at many of the theaters on and around Broadway remained strong. In 1939, a new passenger rail terminal, Los Angeles Union Station, opened to the east of the historic plaza and consolidated the numerous rail depots that had historically been located further to the south...

#### *Post-World War II Era: Decline and Redevelopment*

After World War II, Downtown experienced a period of precipitous decline as middle and upper-income Angelenos vacated urban neighborhoods in favor of suburban environments. As more and more people left the central city for the suburbs, many businesses and institutions followed suit. Downtown's identity as a preeminent shopping and entertainment district was diminished as department stores, theaters, and other businesses that had long been occupants of the area relocated to locations nearer their customer base. Suburban migration was hastened by the construction of a vast network of freeways across Southern California, which rendered these outlying areas more accessible and allowed motorists to circumvent the central business district entirely. Four freeways were constructed near Downtown at this time: the Hollywood (US 101), Harbor (SR-110), and Santa Ana (I-5) Freeways were completed in the early 1950s, and the Santa Monica Freeway (I-10) opened nearly a decade later. Where the 110 and 101 Freeways converged was a remarkable feat of civil engineering known as the Four Level Interchange, which was the first stack interchange in the world when it opened in 1949. These freeways and their infrastructure forged boundaries around Downtown and effectively walled it in from adjacent communities. The 101 Freeway yielded a particularly profound effect in this regard by severing the connection between the Civic Center and the historic plaza...

#### *Contemporary Development and Revitalization*

...To the south and west of the Historic Core, the South Park neighborhood has also experienced a significant wave of new development since the early 2000s. "Dismissed for decades as an asphalt-laden wasteland" composed of small warehouses, apartment houses, and parking lots, South Park experienced a boon in 1999 when the Staples Center, a new multi-purpose sports arena, opened adjacent to the Los Angeles Convention Center and helped to cement the area's identity as a dynamic entertainment district. Since the early 2000s, many mid and high-rise apartment, condominium, and hotel projects have been completed and have transformed the area's once-moribund blocks into a vibrant, mixed-use urban community. In 2007, the area made headlines as the site of the first new full-service grocery store to open in Downtown in several decades. L.A. Live, a contemporary entertainment and retail complex complete with restaurants, shops, theaters, museums, and associated commercial uses, opened between 2007 and 2009 and instantly became a destination and prominent anchor of South Park. The

neighborhood, like many other areas in Downtown, is poised to evolve even more in coming years as many new development projects are either under construction or in the pipeline.

### Commercial Development and the Automobile

As noted above, 1159-1165 Main Street was constructed in 1921 for Spencer Kennelly, Inc., who sold used Chevrolet cars. It was later used for car tire sales. In order to provide relevant background, the historic context related to the development of early car showrooms is excerpted from the Citywide Historic Context Statement and referenced below. This section includes relevant excerpts from the context for Commercial Development 1859-1983, under the theme, Commercial Development and the Automobile, 1910-1980.<sup>68</sup>

#### *Historical Overview*

Reyner Banham noted in *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies* that, “like earlier generations of English intellectuals who taught themselves Italian in order to read Dante in the original, I learned to drive in order to read Los Angeles in the original.” It is impossible to understand Angelino architecture of the twentieth century without considering the impact of the automobile. This impact can best be seen in those structures created to provide for the needs of the car. Beginning in the early 1900s, there emerged new building types – from gas stations to drive-in restaurants – which served the motorist.

These new building types led to new relationships with the street and surrounding structures. Earlier urban buildings had been part of a greater whole. Set adjacent or close to each other, they formed a visually solid streetwall. Only the occasional monumental structure, such as a library or a church, broke with the streetwall and stood apart. But the automobile produced buildings that all stood alone, each surrounded by its own driveway and parking lot. The idea of a wall of unified background buildings, broken in places by a foreground building sitting in isolated splendor, no longer fit the increasingly auto-oriented city. In its place came a line of separate buildings, each putting itself forward as a monument.

#### *The Passenger Car, 1900-1930*

The sprawling nature of greater Los Angeles was actually the product of an earlier system of transportation, the interurban railroad. The development of the interurban [railroad], beginning in the late 1800s and reaching its peak with the Pacific Electric network in the early 1900s, allowed the residents of the city and its surrounding suburbs to spread out over the flatlands. Yet this was still a settlement pattern of clusters around interurban stops. Large expanses of vacant land sat between these settlements. It was the automobile that allowed Angelinos to fill in the expanses.

The widespread use of the automobile came in the years just before the United States entered the First World War in 1917. Up until that time the passenger car was a luxury item. In 1906, Woodrow Wilson, then president of Princeton University,

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<sup>68</sup> SurveyLA: Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement, “Context: Commercial Development 1859-1980. Theme: Commercial Development and the Automobile: 1910-1970,” prepared for the City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning, Office of Historic Resources, August 2016, 3-11, and 35-39.

maintained that “possession of a motor car was such an ostentatious display of wealth that it would stimulate socialism by inciting envy of the rich.” The Automobile Club of Southern California, organized in 1900, at first represented this well-off class of motorists, and by 1910 had a membership of 2500.

Ten years later, in 1920, Automobile Club membership had risen to 30,320, a twelve-fold increase that reflected the changing nature of auto ownership during that decade. Overall, auto registration in Los Angeles County, less than 20,000 in 1910, exceeded 100,000 by 1920. The increase in popular ownership came about through the development of an affordable car, specifically the Ford Model T. There were other manufacturers of cars intended for the masses, but none could come close to challenging Henry Ford. Built using assembly-line techniques, the Model T, commonly known as the Tin Lizzie, was durable, easy to operate, economical to maintain and simple to repair.

The Model T was first introduced in 1908. A year later Ford stopped manufacturing all other models and concentrated on it alone, and by 1911 Ford had become the largest single automobile manufacturer in the country. In the process of increasing volume he continually lowered the price. In 1908 the touring car cost \$850 and less than six thousand were made. By 1912 the price had fallen to \$600 and over seventy-eight thousand were produced. By 1916 a new touring car could be had for \$360 and well over half a million were built. By the end of the First World War, in 1918, Ford had half the market for automobiles in the United States, and by 1920 every other motor car in the world was a Model T.

In great part because of the Model T, the 1920s were the years during which the motor car became the dominant mode of transportation in Southern California. Registration of passenger cars in Los Angeles County went from a bit more than 100,000 in 1920 to almost 800,000 by 1930. This growth was aided by the fact that prices for new cars continued to fall during that decade. The average price of all passenger cars in 1919 was \$1157. By 1929 it was \$818. A new Model T could be bought in 1926 for \$290, seventy dollars less than what it cost ten years earlier. Also there had developed by the early 1920s a used-car market, which provided the less well off with an even cheaper car. Finally, adding to the affordability of autos was the emergence of buying on credit. By 1925 three-quarters of all sales, new and used, were made with some form of a time-payment plan.

By the mid-1920s the dominance of the Model-T began to fade. The growing popularity of the self-starter, and the shift in preference from open to closed cars, made the cloth-topped Ford, with its crank-dependent engine, increasingly unattractive. General Motors introduced the Chevrolet as a slightly more costly but much more stylish alternative, and devised the annual model change as a means to stimulate the market. Henry Ford's concept of a durable car built for long use became unfashionable. Ford responded in the late 1920s with the Model A as an updated substitute for the Model T. By the end of the decade the Tin Lizzie may have vanished as a new product, but it had accomplished its purpose of making the car an affordable element of everyday life.

*The City Street, 1900-1930*

The increasing presence of the car after the First World War caused Los Angeles to rethink the nature of its street system. There were some major early thoroughfares laid out by both the city and the county, particularly after the Board of Supervisors issued \$3.5 million in bonds for road construction in 1909. But typically streets had been created by subdividers, with the higher-priced developments having some kind of hard surface provided. Otherwise, property owners created improvement districts of their own to finance the grading and surfacing of their streets.

Yet in spite of this generally haphazard system, Los Angeles was able between 1904 and 1914 to improve nearly 500 miles of streets. These included hundreds of residential lanes and such north-south and east-west arteries as Central Avenue, Vermont Avenue, Adams Boulevard and Pico Boulevard. These routes were generally thirty to fifty feet wide and topped by a firm surface. By 1915 all of the main thoroughfares had paving of some sort.

But these improvements were soon overwhelmed by the increase in car ownership during the early 1920s. This increase prompted community leaders to press for studies as to how the street system could further be improved. Both the Automobile Club of Southern California in 1921 and the city's Traffic Commission in 1922 prepared plans for upgrading street layouts. The Board of Supervisors created a Los Angeles County Regional Planning Commission, also in 1922. But these were all less than comprehensive in coverage and findings.

In 1924 community leaders hired the firm of landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted to prepare a survey of existing conditions and make recommendations for the improvement of the city's streets. This study, entitled *A Major Traffic Street Plan for Los Angeles*, covered what was then the extent of settlement. It reached to the south as far as Hyde Park and 110<sup>th</sup> Street, to the west as far as Beverly Hills, and to the southwest as far as Culver City.

Some of its recommendations followed older City Beautiful models. It suggested that Crenshaw Boulevard south of Wilshire Boulevard and Wilshire west of Crenshaw be developed as traditional parkways such as those constructed a generation earlier in Boston and Chicago. At the same time, the plan was foresighted enough to recommend parkways along the Arroyo Seco to Pasadena and through the Cahuenga Pass to the San Fernando Valley, which would serve both as pleasure drives and traffic arteries. Both the Arroyo Seco and the Cahuenga Pass Parkway proposals would find their way into later plans for the city's freeway system...

During the next six years Los Angeles worked to carry out the widening and straightening recommended by the Olmsted Plan. Within a year of the plan's publication the city's voters had approved a five million dollar bond issue and later accepted a special property tax for street improvements. The result was that, by the first years of the Great Depression of the 1930s, most of the arterial routes south of the Santa Monica Mountains had been identified and reconfigured as major distribution streets...

*The Architecture of the Auto, 1910-1930*

... In addition to new transportation infrastructure, proliferation of the automobile in the 1910s and 1920s also spawned a commercial enclave to the south and west of the central business district that was oriented around the sale, repair, and maintenance of cars. Capitalizing on the enhanced role that auto travel played, particularly in Southern California, several automobile manufacturers erected large, new showrooms and repair facilities along Figueroa and Flower Streets in what is now known as the South Park neighborhood. By the 1910s, the term “auto row” appeared in local newspapers and was used to describe the cluster of showrooms and associated businesses in the area. Throughout Downtown, multi-story “auto parks” were weaved into the central business district as early as the 1920s, providing patrons of department stores and other businesses with a convenient place to park their car while shopping. To entice motorists, many of these garages offered on-site services in addition to parking stalls. Some touted a rather robust menu of amenities including “a repair department manned by experts, a lubrication department, and a washing and polishing department ... a complete accessory and tire department with direct factory representation ... [and] a finely appointed ladies’ lounge...”

*Property Type: Car Showroom, 1920-1970*

Buying an automobile was first done through a livery stable, carriage dealer, or bicycle shop. These early car vendors were businessmen who obtained a license to sell a particular brand of auto. Once purpose-built automobile dealerships began to appear, just before the First World War, they fit into the existing pre-automobile streetscape. They were essentially storefronts on a commercial street with a large entrance door and windows to show the product.

Unlike the service station, the showroom retained throughout the 1920s a central business district location and a traditional relationship to the street. The auto manufacturers chose to remain urban and to adopt the historicist styles that characterized the elite architecture of the city. Most potential customers did not yet own cars and therefore relied on public transportation to reach a dealership; the impressive revivalist architecture assured them of a reputable vendor.

The auto manufacturers first experimented with building what one historian has referred to as “object-lesson” salesrooms in certain cities to show locally-owned dealerships what could be done. These corporate-sponsored buildings were designed to resemble banks and first-class office buildings, clad in traditional styles. “Exteriors often sported bas-reliefs, grand ornamental cornices, and entrance porticoes, while inside cars were sold in elegant surroundings in large, opulent sales salons.”

During the early twenties these urban dealerships began combining auto servicing and repair with sales. To fit onto their city sites they constructed multi-storied buildings complete with ramps and auto-sized elevators for access to the upper levels. The facades sported historicist detailing; generally the only feature on the street front that identified the building as an auto-service facility was the use of factory sash for the large windows on the upper floors. Unfortunately, these 1920s era center-city behemoths have almost vanished from Los Angeles. In Downtown Los Angeles several automobile manufacturers erected large, new showrooms and

repair facilities along Figueroa and Flower Streets in what is now known as the South Park neighborhood. As early as the 1910s the term “auto row” appeared in local newspapers and was used to describe the cluster of showrooms and associated businesses in the area...

By the mid-1930s, the auto showroom adopted the Streamline Moderne. In an attempt to encourage flagging sales during the Depression, some of the older downtown showrooms replaced their historicist ornament, at least at the showroom level, with abstract lines, curves, and circles. More important, however, was a rethinking of location for those few new dealerships that were built in the 1930s. Most potential customers already owned cars, so there was no need to be close to streetcar lines. Now ease of auto access and adequate parking were needed.

The auto showroom moved to the strip. Instead of remaining on a tight lot in the central or local business district, it placed itself on an arterial road that allowed it to spread horizontally. The common arrangement was a showroom in the front, complete with large expanses of glass, service bays to the rear, and adequate parking alongside for used cars and customer circulation. The showroom itself, with its expanses of glass, maintained its position directly on the street, without a setback. It was dressed in Streamline Moderne detailing, with an integral sign featuring the name and emblem of the brand sold within...

Though construction of new dealerships ceased during the Second World War, anticipating a surge of new car customers, the auto companies studied the problem of designing attractive facilities. As early as 1944, before the end of the war, there appeared Post-War Housing and Facilities for Studebaker Dealers by that now vanished brand. In 1945 Ford published Plans for New and Modernized Sales and Service Buildings. That same year General Motors held a “Design Competition for Dealer Establishments” and three years later issued Planning Automobile Dealer Properties based on the submissions to the competition.

These planning manuals carefully considered issues of location and design. Not only should dealerships be placed along arterials on large plots of land, a common practice since the 1930s, manuals decreed, but they should sit on the far side of an intersection on the homeward-bound side of a commuter route. Potential customers could have full view of the showroom while waiting for red lights and then, with free time after work, pull in and inspect the autos on display. There should be a procession of visual delights to greet customers: first the new cars, seen through a glare-free expanse of glass, and then the service wing, providing potential customers with the assurance of care in the future. The final element should be the used car lot, arranged with the best models in front.

Much of this advice came from studying the few dealerships that were built in the 1930s. But there were a number of subtle and not so subtle changes. A subtle change was the shrinking size of the showroom, with just a few of the best looking models on display, and the growing respectability of the parts and service department, with attractive counters and waiting areas. A not so subtle change was in the dealership’s primary identifying sign. The sign in the 1930s, while an important design element,

tended to be integrated into the architecture. By the 1950s the sign often detached itself from the building and became a free-standing, and increasingly dominant, element.

During the first years of construction, in the late 1940s and early 1950s, auto showrooms were typically subdued Mid-Century Modern designs, with flat roofs and plain surfaces. The mammoth glass windows showing off the cars provided character...

Over the next fifteen years the most important design development was the separation of the sign from the structure. The detached sign occasionally took on Googie-like extravagance to attract attention, but generally the need to exhibit the brand emblem and name had precedence. The detached sign, enormous by earlier standards, was generally limited to serving as a giant billboard for the corporate logo.

This reticence extended to the showroom structure itself. The Googie style could occasionally be seen in an exaggerated roof line or a canopy extended over the service drive but this was relatively rare. The point was to call attention to the cars on sale and not to the architecture. The same was true when New Formalism, with its classicizing proportions and details, began to appear in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Again, the architecture was secondary to the merchandise and thereby kept subdued.

From the mid-1950s onward the most common architectural approach was to treat the showroom as a minimalist Mid-Century Modern container...

As with other auto-related building types, the auto showroom underwent a change after the mid-1960s in response to both growing conservatism and, more importantly, the changing nature of the automobile industry. To be sure, the showroom remained the place to purchase and service a car but increasingly as a structure showrooms retreated from the road, behind parking lots, and became less visible. Instead, motorists were greeted by row upon row of new cars parked outside, displayed like cans of soft drinks on a supermarket shelf.

This mode of selling required great amounts of space. Most of the existing dealerships simply were not large enough. The result was the abandoning of locations that, in 1950, seemed quite adequate for vast lots on the outskirts of development. This was accompanied by a massive reduction in the number of dealerships as American-made brands disappeared and those few remaining consolidated facilities. The showroom and the service bay took on a utilitarian form and only the dealer sign, free-standing and standardized for the brand, attracted attention.

## HISTORIC RESOURCE ASSESSMENT

Because eligibility criteria for local HCM designation align in large degree with eligibility criteria for National and California Registers, the following evaluation considers eligibility under each of the criteria at federal, state and local levels under a single heading.

*Criterion A/1/1: Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history and cultural heritage.*

The subject property was evaluated under criterion A/1/1 for its association with its first tenant for whom the building was constructed, Spencer Kennelly, Inc., and the early history of the automobile in Los Angeles, specifically car showrooms. As established in this report, the history of the automobile industry is an important historic context in Los Angeles. SurveyLA provides the following eligibility standards for this property type:

- Originally constructed to sell, and often provide servicing for, the automobile
- Demonstrates convenient automobile access from the street
- Is an excellent example of the property type
- Contains design and site layout features that reflect the needs of selling and servicing the automobile
- Was constructed during the period of significance [1920-1970]

While the subject property meets two of the eligibility criteria, as it was constructed during the period of significance as an automobile showroom, it does not demonstrate automobile access from the street, it does not contain design or site layout features that reflect the needs of selling and servicing automobiles and is therefore not an excellent example of the property type. As the subject property does not meet the eligibility criteria, it is not significant as an early car showroom and it is therefore not eligible under criterion A/1/1. SurveyLA findings for the Central City CPA identified a number of properties that appear eligible as automobile showrooms, specifically another Chevrolet showroom a few blocks from the subject property at the corner of South Hope Street and 12<sup>th</sup> Street. Thus, there are better examples of the property type extant in the CPA.

*Criterion B/2/2: Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past.*

Although several individuals have been associated with the subject property, none rise to the level required to warrant consideration under Criterion B/2/2: association with the lives of persons important in our past. Spencer Kennelly and Henry Novisoff both seem to have managed successful businesses at the subject property. However, neither appear to have made a notable contribution to their field of selling used Chevrolet cars or selling tires, respectively. There is no evidence either person substantially changed the history of those fields. Therefore, the subject property is not eligible under criterion B/2/2.

*Criterion C/3/3: Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual or possesses high artistic values.*

While the building at the subject property was designed by John Montgomery Cooper, it does not appear eligible under criterion C/3/3. John Montgomery Cooper was a notable Los Angeles architect. He worked on a variety of properties throughout his career, including commercial, residential, and industrial properties. Several of his notable buildings are extant and listed in the National Register, including the Hollywood Knickerbocker Hotel, Grether & Grether Building, and Roxie Theater. In contrast to these other buildings, the subject property is very modestly-scaled without any recognizable architectural style and does not appear to be part of his important work. In addition, the subject property has been altered numerous times and no longer reflects its original architectural design.

*Criterion D/4: Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.*

The subject properties cannot be reasonably expected to yield information important in prehistory or history; therefore, they are not eligible under Criterion D/4.

#### *Historic District*

As noted above, a HPOZ “is any area of the City of Los Angeles containing buildings, structures, landscaping, natural features or lots having historic, architectural, cultural, or aesthetic significance.” The subject property is not part of a distinguishable unified neighborhood or area. The surrounding neighborhood contains a mix of building uses, including residential, commercial, and industrial, from a variety of time periods, including a substantial amount of relatively new construction. There is no significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures or objects united historically or aesthetically. In addition, there is not a strong sense of time of time and place. Therefore, there does not appear to be any potential National or California Register historic district or HPOZ to which the subject property could contribute.

## **ADJACENT AND NEARBY HISTORICAL RESOURCES**

There are no identified historical resources located adjacent to the subject property. The closest historical resources, the Herald-Examiner Building at 1111 South Broadway (formally determined eligible for listing in the National Register, listed in the California Register and HCM #178) and Commercial Club Building at 1100 South Broadway (HCM #1075) are both located at the intersection of South Broadway and 11<sup>th</sup> Street. The Herald-Examiner Building is significant for its architectural design in a Mission Revival style designed by renown California architect Julia Morgan in 1913. The building is also significant for its association with William Randolph Hearst. The building's setting was not identified as a character-defining feature in an environmental document for an on-going project.<sup>69</sup> Constructed in 1925, The Commercial Club Building was designed by architects Curlett & Beelman, the building is significant for its Italian Revival architecture as well as for its association as the headquarters of the Commercial Club of Southern California. The building is also currently undergoing rehabilitation. Documentation of character-defining features did not identify the setting as a character-defining feature.<sup>70</sup>

SurveyLA did not identify any potential historical resources or potential historic districts in the vicinity of the subject property.

## **CONCLUSION**

The subject property was evaluated in this report for potential historic and architectural significance. The building's history, as well as alterations, were researched and evaluated. While the subject property is an early example of a car showroom, the building does not meet eligibility criteria defined by SurveyLA for this property type. Therefore, the subject property does not appear eligible for listing in the National or California Registers or as an individual HCM under any of the applicable criteria. In addition, there does not appear to be any potential historic district to which the subject property could contribute. Therefore, the subject property does not qualify as a historical resource under CEQA and there would be no direct impacts to historical resources as a result of its demolition.

In addition, there do not appear to be any potential indirect impacts to historical resources as a result of the proposed development project. There are no identified historical resources immediately adjacent the subject property. Given the distance from the two identified historical resources and intervening buildings, the proposed project does not have potential to cause an indirect impact to the setting of the identified historical resources.

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<sup>69</sup> Historic Resources Group, "Cultural Resources Technical Report; Proposed Herald-Examiner Project: Broadway, Hill Street & 12 Street Sites," February 2016, 16-19.

<sup>70</sup> Urban Preservation & Planning, LLC, "Commercial Club Building Los Angeles, CA," presentation to City of Los Angeles Planning and Land Use Management Committee, September 9, 2014.

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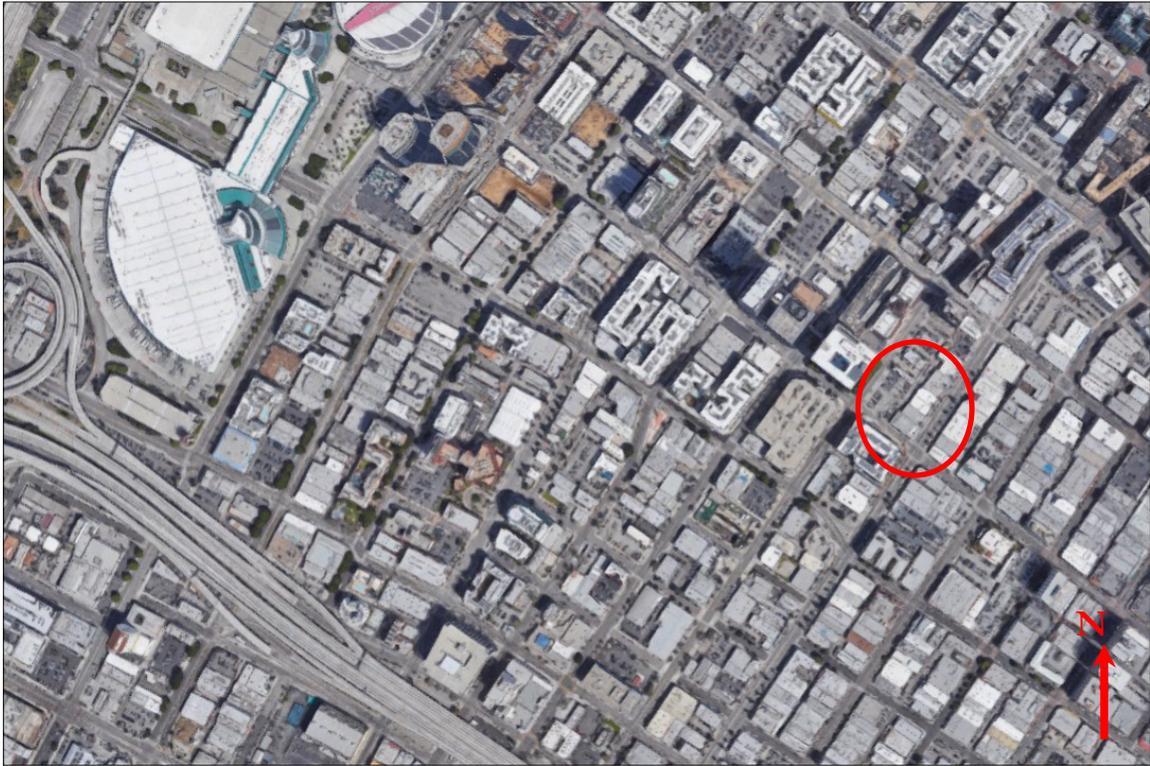
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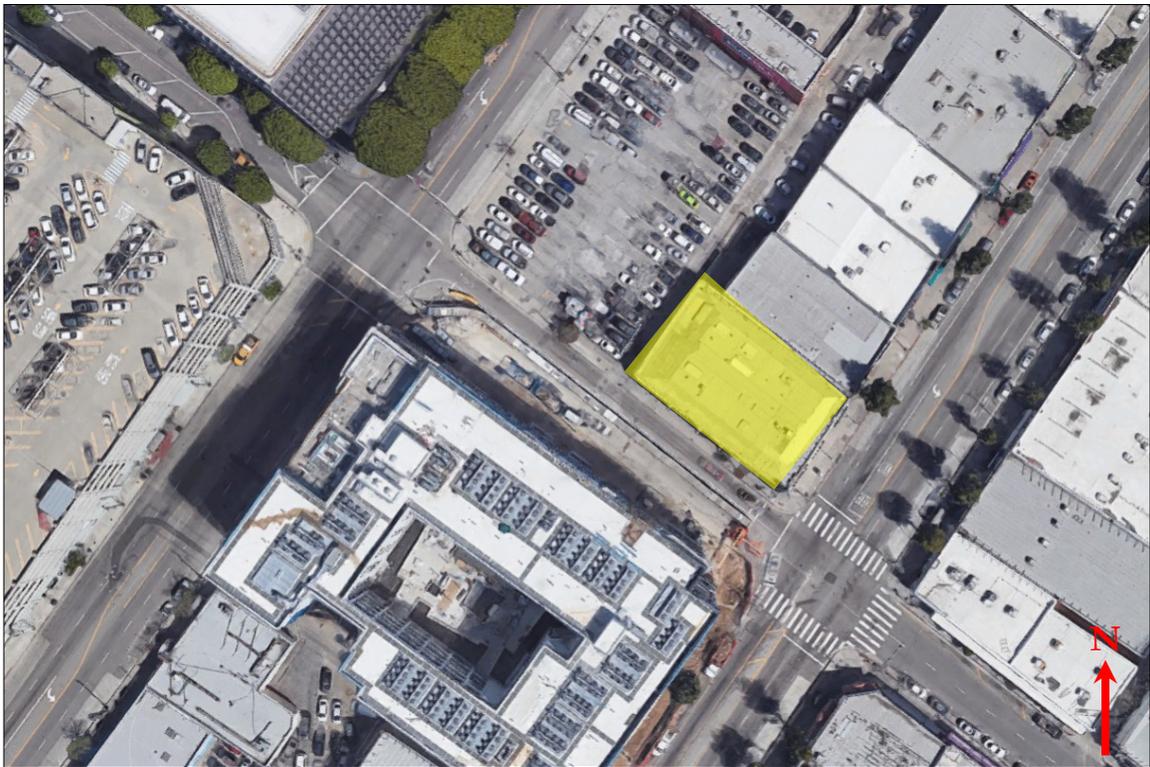
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Attachment A: Maps



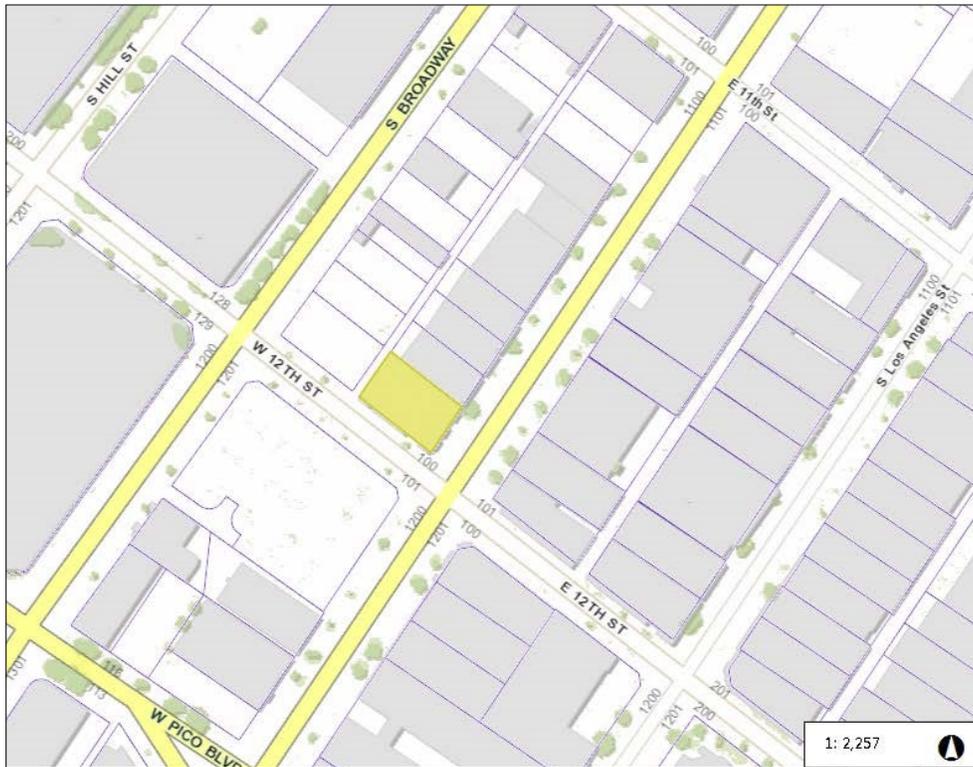
**Map 1:** Location map, subject property circled (Source: Google maps, 2019)



**Map 2:** Detail of location map, subject property highlighted yellow (Source: Google maps, 2019)

1159-1165 Main Street, Los Angeles, CA

Attachment A: Maps



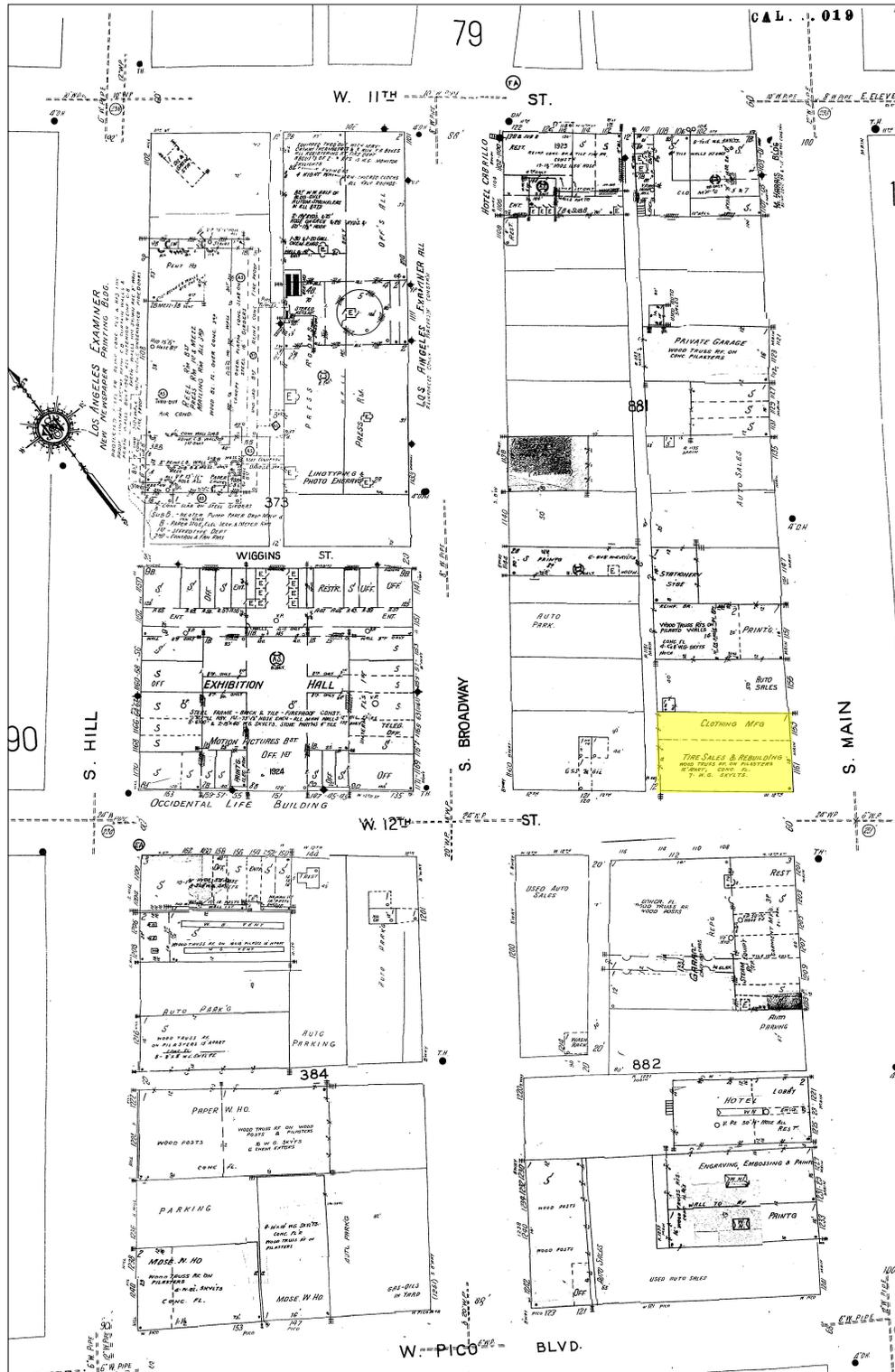
**Map 3:** Location map, subject property highlighted yellow (Source: Los Angeles County Assessor, 2019)



**Map 4:** Location map, subject property highlighted yellow (Source: Los Angeles County Assessor, 2019)

1159-1165 Main Street, Los Angeles, CA

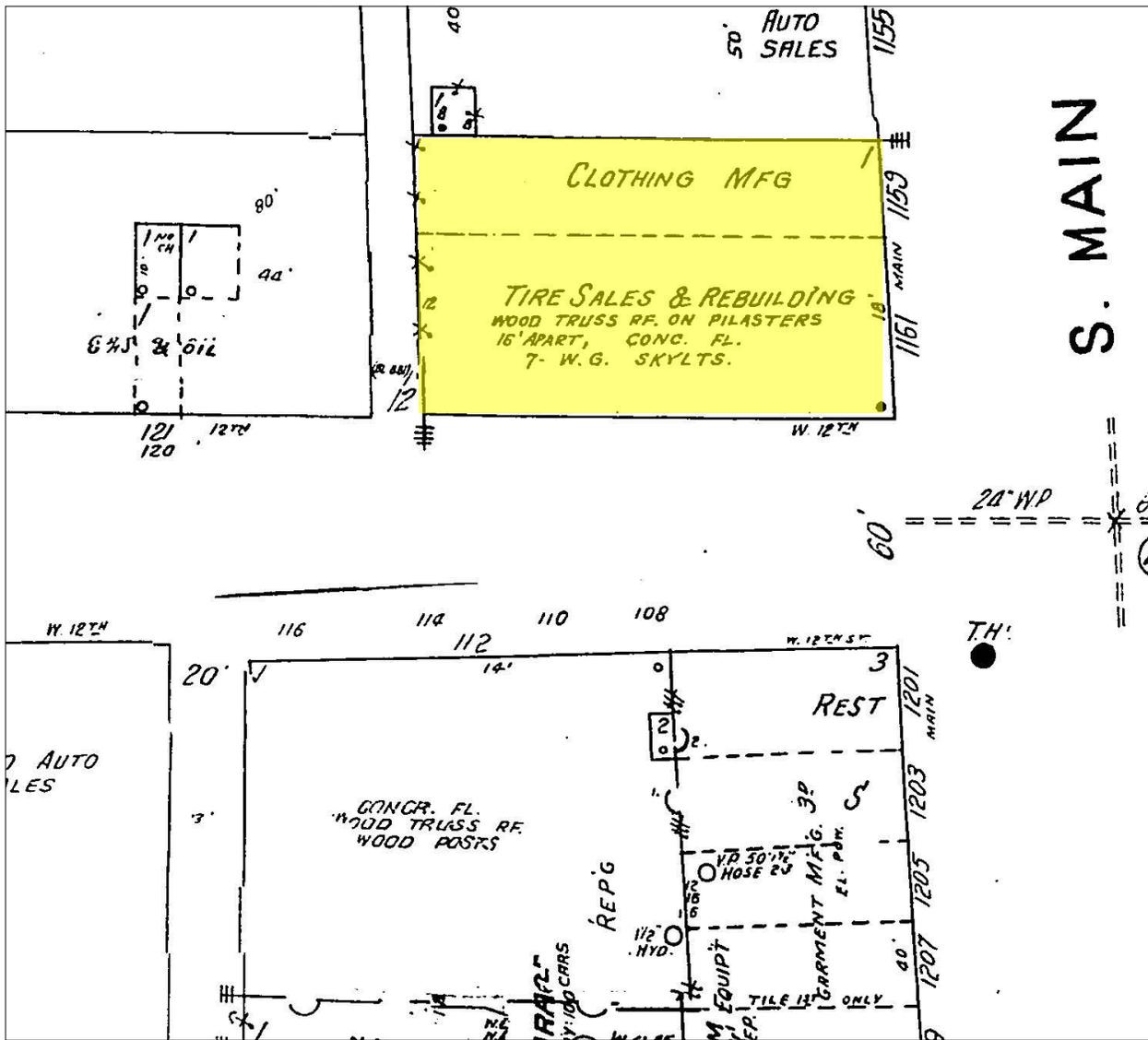
Attachment B: Historic Maps



Map 5: Sanborn Fire Insurance map, subject property highlighted yellow (updated to 1951)

1159-1165 Main Street, Los Angeles, CA

Attachment B: Historic Maps



Map 6: detail of previous Sanborn Fire Insurance map, subject property highlighted yellow (updated to 1951)

Attachment C: Contemporary Photographs



**Figure 1:** 1159-1165 S. Main St., south elevation (left) and east elevation (right), view northwest (Snow, 2019)



**Figure 2:** 1159-1165 S. Main St., east elevation, view west (Snow, 2019)

Attachment C: Contemporary Photographs



Figure 3: 1159-1165 S. Main St., east elevation, view southwest (Snow, 2019)



Figure 4: 1159-1165 S. Main St., south elevation (left) and east elevation (right), view northwest (Snow, 2019)

1159-1165 Main Street, Los Angeles, CA

Attachment C: Contemporary Photographs



**Figure 5:** 1159-1165 S. Main St., south elevation (left and center), east elevation (right), view northwest (Snow, 2019)



**Figure 6:** 1159-1165 S. Main St., west elevation (left) and south elevation (center and right), view northeast (Snow, 2019)

1159-1165 Main Street, Los Angeles, CA

Attachment C: Contemporary Photographs



**Figure 7:** 1159-1165 S. Main St., west elevation, view northwest (Snow, 2019)



**Figure 8:** 1159-1165 S. Main St., north elevation (left) and west elevation (left) view southeast (Snow, 2019)

Attachment C: Contemporary Photographs



**Figure 9:** 1159-1165 S. Main St., interior of north-most commercial space, view west (Snow, 2019)



**Figure 10:** 1159-1165 S. Main St., interior of north-most commercial space, view east from mezzanine (Snow, 2019)

1159-1165 Main Street, Los Angeles, CA

Attachment C: Contemporary Photographs



**Figure 11:** 1159-1165 S. Main St., interior of north-most commercial space, view of shaft and skylight from mezzanine (Snow, 2019)



**Figure 12:** 1159-1165 S. Main St., interior of center commercial space, view west, note newel post (Snow, 2019)

Attachment C: Contemporary Photographs



**Figure 13:** 1159-1165 S. Main St., interior of center commercial space, mezzanine, view north (Snow, 2019)



**Figure 14:** 1159-1165 S. Main St., interior of center commercial space, mezzanine vault, view north

Attachment C: Contemporary Photographs



**Figure 15:** 1159-1165 S. Main St., interior of corner commercial space, view southwest (Snow, 2019)



**Figure 16:** 1159-1165 S. Main St., interior of corner commercial space, view west of mezzanine (Snow, 2019)

Attachment C: Contemporary Photographs



**Figure 17:** 1159-1165 S. Main St., interior of corner commercial space, view east of stairs from mezzanine (Snow, 2019)



**Figure 18:** 1159-1165 S. Main St., Twelfth Street commercial space, view west (Snow, 2019)

Attachment C: Contemporary Photographs



**Figure 19:** 1159-1165 S. Main St., Twelfth Street commercial space, view southwest (Snow, 2019)



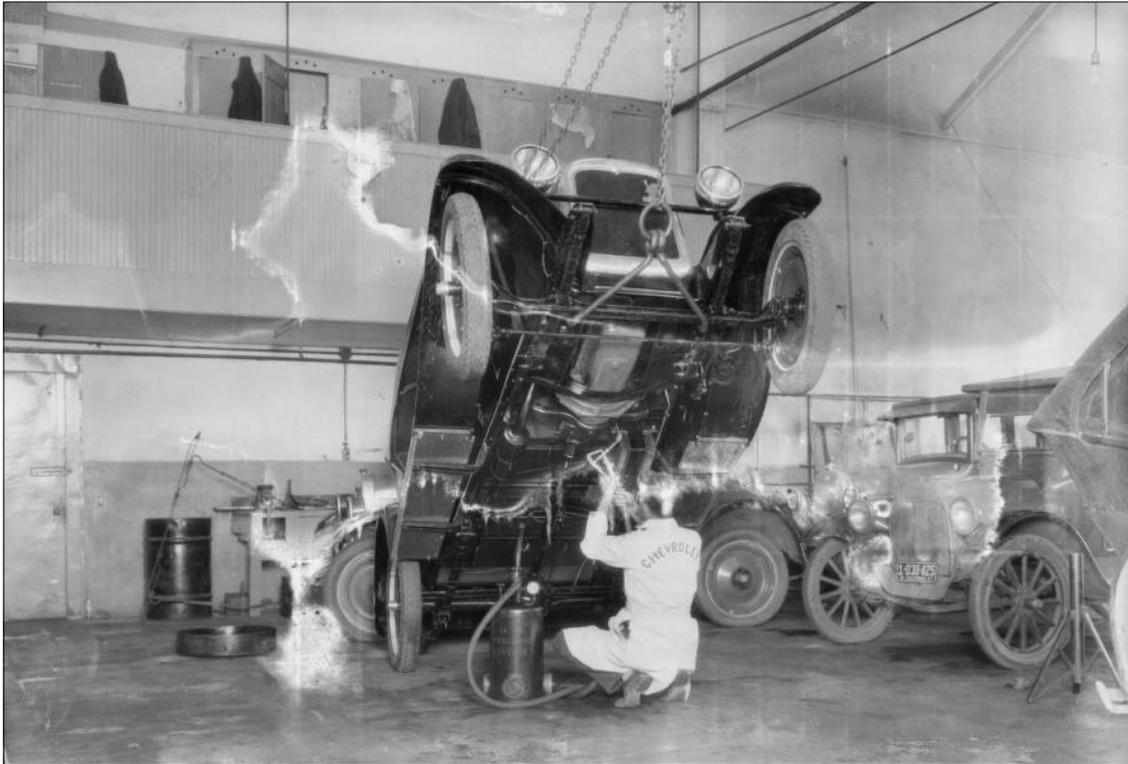
**Figure 20:** 1159-1165 S. Main St., Twelfth Street commercial space, view east (Snow, 2019)

Attachment C: Contemporary Photographs

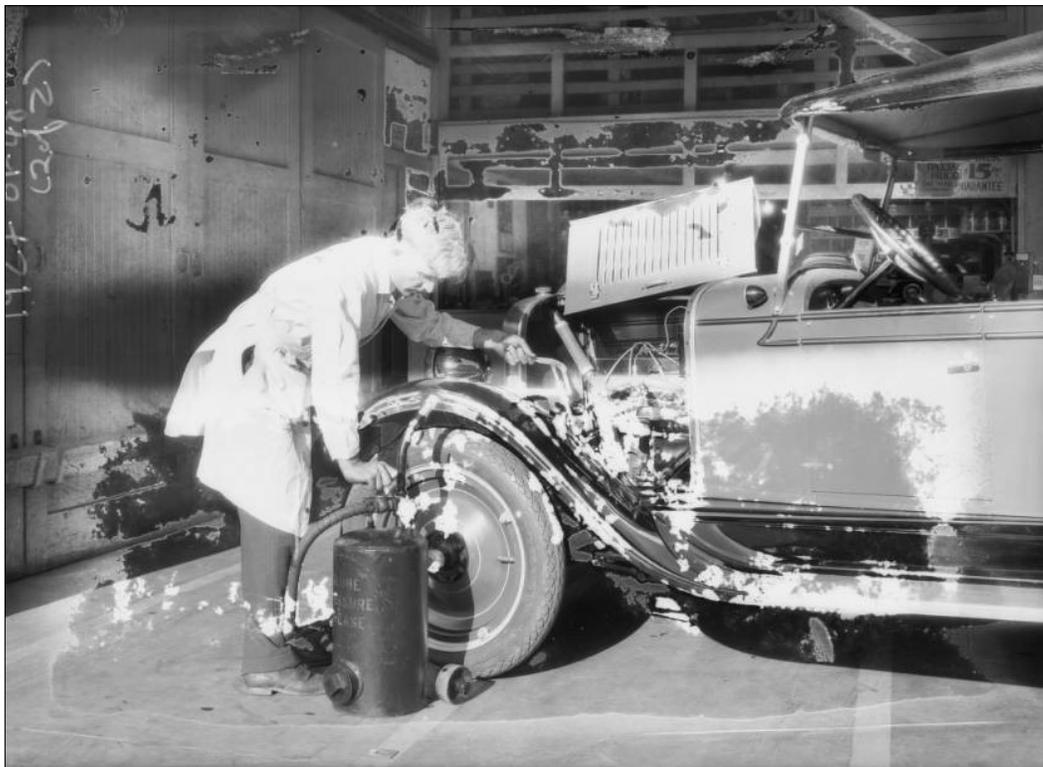


**Figure 21:** 1159-1165 S. Main St., Twelfth Street commercial space, view west (Snow, 2019)

**Attachment D: Historic Photographs**



**Historic Photograph 1:** 1159-1165 S. Main Street, interior (USC, 1927)



**Historic Photograph 2:** 1159-1165 S. Main Street, interior (USC, 1927)

**Attachment D: Historic Photographs**



**Historic Photograph 3:** 1159-1165 S. Main Street, interior (USC, 1927)

**Attachment E: Table of Permits**

<i>Date</i>	<i>Permit No.</i>	<i>Work</i>	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Architect/Engineer</i>	<i>Contractor</i>	<i>Valuation</i>
6/13/1921	13318	Concrete foundation 72.4' x 119.8'	Huntington Land & Improvement Co. - address: Pacific Electric Building	J M Cooper	J M Cooper - 334 Marsh Strong Building	300
6/18/1921	13845	Erect one story building 72'4" x 119'8" 21 ft high	Huntington Land & Improvement Co. - 1155 S Main	J M Cooper	J M Cooper - 334 Marsh Strong Building	20,000
8/11/1921	18968	Steel framework for electric sign on roof	Spenser Kennelly	J M Cooper	Philip Friedman & Son - Pacific Blvd & 50th St	100
5/4/1928	12943	**Mostly illegible. Removing show window.	Perfect Made Tire Company - 1161 South Main	n/a	Perfect Made Tire Company	150
7/20/1939	28465	Reroof with composition roof	Huntington Land & Improvement Co. - 1042 L.A. Railway Building	n/a	Strong Roofing and Insulation Company - 710 S Garfield, Alhambra	475
12/29/1953	LA77004	Parapet correction along Main St, 12th St, and rear alley	Henry J Novisoff - 1161 South Main	n/a	Orville A Smith - 14315 Lemoli Ave, Hawthorne	1495
7/13/1955	LA18636	Installation of two single face wall signs	U.S. Rubber Company (Novisoff & Sons) - 1161 South Main St	n/a	Electrical Products Corporation	843
6/30/1972	53561	2x3 projecting sign	Novisoff & Son - 1161 South Main St	B.L. Prenovich	Alert Signs	200

**Attachment E: Table of Permits**

<i>Date</i>	<i>Permit No.</i>	<i>Work</i>	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Architect/Engineer</i>	<i>Contractor</i>	<i>Valuation</i>
6/30/1972	53562	4x12 and 1x9 roof sign	Novisoff & Son - 1161 South Main St	B.L. Prenovich	Alert Signs	1100
1/15/1976	19738	5 x 8 existing roof sign, replace same size sign copy	Winston Tires - 1161 South Main St.	Prenovich	Local Neon	800
9/23/1986	46567	Full compliance with Div. 88	Young G. & Sue Ok Joo - 1766 Griffith Park Blvd, LA 90006	(e) M.G. Vahdani & Associates	M.G. Vahdani & Associates - 217 S. Orange, Glendale	54,000
10/14/1986	48082	Change of contractor on LA46567	Young G. & Sue Ok Joo - 1766 Griffith Park Blvd, LA 90006	(e) M.A. Vahdani & Associates - 217 S. Orange, Glendale	Kyung Nam Construction Inc.	201
11/14/1986	50693	New interior partition walls w/ toilets	Young G Joo – 1766 Griffith Park Blvd	n/a	Kyung Nam Construction	12,000
4/6/1987	62123	151” x 171” wall sign - individual letters	Howard Lee - 11565 Main St, LA 90015	Edward Young Joo - 10105 Kingsley Dr, LA 90006	Edward Joo - 1010 S. Kingsley Dr, LA 90006	4296
6/18/1987	68340	Interior partitions	Winston Tire / Howard Lee – 1161-65 South Main St, LA 90015	n/a	George Priest – 5823 Camino Pinzon, Anaheim 92807	4500
10/13/1993	93VN27931	2 3’x12’ wall signs	Winston Tire - 1161-65 South Main St, LA 90015	David Ehrlich	Manchel & Company - 16317 Devonshire St, Granada Hills 91344	5976

**Attachment E: Table of Permits**

<i>Date</i>	<i>Permit No.</i>	<i>Work</i>	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Architect/Engineer</i>	<i>Contractor</i>	<i>Valuation</i>
5/11/2000	00VN72177	Convert existing 71' x 82' retail store into four separate tenant spaces	Joo, Young G and Soon O - 5304 Ivafern Ln, La Canada 91011	n/a	n/a	47,000
6/13/2000	00VN74012	Transfer of permit to TDB. License #: B 757106	Joo, Young G and Soon O - 5304 Ivafern Ln, La Canada 91011	n/a	Yang Jaiyong – 2218 Pickwick Place, Fullerton 92833	0
7/13/2000	00LA01403	Revise work description on 00VN72177 for tenant improvement w/ new partition walls for 1 tenant only	Joo, Young G and Soon O - 5304 Ivafern Ln, La Canada 91011	n/a	Yang Jaiyong – 2218 Pickwick Place, Fullerton 92833	301

## Attachment F: Table of Tenants

### 1161 S. Main

Year	
1922	Chevrolet Auto Car, Southwestern Motor Co Distributors Julius Schlosser Pres and Mgr, Harry W. Bader V-Pres, F W Pasley Sec-Tres., Distributors Chevrolet Auto Cars and Used Cars
	P G Rogers, Confectioner
	No entry
1923	Chevrolet Auto Cars, Kennelly Spencer Inc. Distributors
1925	Kennelly Spencer Inc. Spencer, Kennelly Pres, Julius L. Schlosser V-Pres-Mgr, F W Pasley Sec-Tres, Distributors Chevrolet Auto Cars and Used Cars, Branch 961 S. Olive
1927	Kennelly Spencer Inc., Spencer Kennelly Pres, Julius L. Schlosser V-Pres-Mgr, Carrie B. Feely Sec, Distributors Chevrolet Auto Cars and Used Cars, Used Car Dept 1153 S. Main (Spencer Kennelly lived at 677 S. Bronson Ave)
1930	Perfect Made Tire Co. 908 S. Central av, 965 and 1161 S. Main (H.J. Novisoff)
1935	Perfect Made Tire Co (H.J. Novisoff)
1940	Perfect Made Tire Co (Thos and Henry Novisoff)
1942	Perfect Made Tire Co (Henry and Thos Novisoff)
1956	Novisoff & Sons Tire Co, Perfect Made Tire Co
1960	Novisoff & Sons Tire Co, Perfect Made Tire Co
1965	Novisoff-Sons Tire C, L A. Tire Whsle
1973	Novisoff & Sons Tire Co
1987	Winston Tire Company

### 1159 S. Main

Year	
1922	P G Rogers, Confectioner
1925	Jos Collins, drugs, r316 1/2 Myrtle
1927	Jos Collins, drugs, 1220 S. Olive
1929	Benj Goldenberg (Lena) furn, r 1100 S Manhattan pl
1930	Benj Goldenberg 2d hd furn, h65 Thornton av
1934	Andrew F Limper (Marie) restr, h 124 S. Lafayette Park pl
1936	Andrew F Limper (Marie) restr, h 124 S. Lafayette Park pl
1938	Jas N Tilton restr, r145 W 15th
1939	A F Limper
1940	A F Limper
1956	Crest Embroidery Co.
1960	Crest Embroidery Co.
1965	No entry
1973	Frank's Discount Store
1987	No entry