

Los Angeles Department of City Planning

RECOMMENDATION REPORT

CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

**CASE NO.: CHC-2009-198-HCM
ENV-2009-209-CE**

HEARING DATE: April 2, 2009
TIME: 10:00 AM
PLACE: City Hall, Room 1010
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA

Location: 756 South Spring Street
Council District: 14
Community Plan Area: Central City
Area Planning Commission: Central
Neighborhood Council: Downtown Los Angeles
Legal Description: Lot 1 of Flat Iron Tract

PROJECT: Historic-Cultural Monument Application for the
GREAT REPUBLIC LIFE BUILDING

REQUEST: Declare the property a Historic-Cultural Monument

**APPLICANT/
OWNER:** Main Spring Development, LLC
1541 Ocean Avenue #200
Santa Monica, CA 90401

**OWNER'S
REPRESENTATIVE:** Anna Marie Brooks
1109 Fourth Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90019

RECOMMENDATION **That the Cultural Heritage Commission:**

1. **Declare** the property a Historic-Cultural Monument per Los Angeles Administrative Code Chapter 9, Division 22, Article 1, Section 22.171.7
2. **Adopt** the report findings.

S. GAIL GOLDBERG, AICP
Director of Planning

[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]

Ken Bernstein, AICP, Manager
Office of Historic Resources

[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]

Lambert M. Giessinger, Preservation Architect
Office of Historic Resources

Prepared by:

[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]

Edgar Garcia, Preservation Planner
Office of Historic Resources

Attachments: January, 2009 Historic-Cultural Monument Application
ZIMAS Report

FINDINGS

1. The building “embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period style or method of construction” as an example of Beaux-Arts commercial architecture.
2. The property reflects “the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, State or community” for its association with the development of downtown Los Angeles.
3. The building is associated with a master builder, designer, or architect, as a work by the firm of Walker & Eisen Architects, consisting of Albert R. Walker and Percy A. Eisen.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (“CEQA”) FINDINGS

The Commission hereby recommends that Council find the proposed designation of the Great Republic Life Building as a Historic-Cultural Monument to be exempt from further analysis under the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, Sections 15308 (Class 8) and 15331 (Class 31).

CRITERIA

The criterion is the Cultural Heritage Ordinance which defines a historical or cultural monument as any site (including significant trees or other plant life located thereon) building or structure of particular historic or cultural significance to the City of Los Angeles, such as historic structures or sites in which the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, State or community is reflected or exemplified, or which are identified with historic personages or with important events in the main currents of national, State or local history or 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.

SUMMARY

Built in 1923 and located in the downtown area, this 13-story commercial building exhibits character-defining features of Beaux-Arts style architecture. The subject building is E-shaped in plan with three divisions clad in glazed terra cotta and granite arranged in the classic base-shaft-capital composition. The S. Spring Street entrance on the north corner has an opening leading to an inset entryway with an ornate metal entry gate door. The lower levels are defined by angled bays clad in rusticated terra cotta flanked by paired Ionic-style pilasters and capped by a bracketed cornice. The second level features wide double-hung windows paired with narrow windows with ornate panels and terra cotta cladding. The third through eleventh levels are clad in brick while the twelfth and thirteenth levels have terra cotta and brick cladding with Corinthian-crowned pilasters framing the bays at the capital with inset windows. The twelfth and thirteenth attic floors feature double-height Doric-style pilasters with the roofline entablature having a band of denticulation. The south elevation of the subject building is unadorned and has original wooden-frame double-hung windows.

The proposed Great Republic Life Building historic monument was designed by the firm of Walker & Eisen, consisting of Albert R. Walker and Percy A. Eisen. Walker & Eisen designed over 125 buildings during their partnership and are responsible for such prominent landmarks as the Fine Arts Building (1924, Historic-Cultural Monument #125); the Texaco/United Artists

Building (1927, Historic-Cultural Monument #523); the Oviatt Building (1928, Historic Cultural-Monument #195); and the Beverly Wilshire Hotel (1928). Several significant individuals are associated with the subject building such as A. Otis Birch, president of both the Capital Finance Building Company and the Great Republic Life Insurance Company. Milton Kauffman, Secretary of the Great Republic Life Insurance Company, was also previously the Director of the famed historical reenactment Mission Play of the Mission Playhouse in the City of San Gabriel. He would also later contribute to the development of Baldwin Park as a real estate developer.

The subject building appears significant as a well-preserved example of the Beaux-Arts style and for its association with the commercial and financial development of Spring Street as the "Wall Street of the West" in the early part of the 20th century.

Later additions to the subject property include a jacuzzi, elevated garden, glass house, and new mechanical equipment to the roof top. Floors 2-13 have been converted into living units. Two elevators have been modified and the first floor commercial spaces have been reconfigured.

DISCUSSION

The Great Republic Life Building property successfully meets three of the specified Historic-Cultural Monument criteria: 1) "embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period style or method of construction," 2) reflects "the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, State or community" and 3) is associated with a master builder, designer, or architect. As a commercial building designed in the Beaux Arts style by a prominent firm and reflective of the development of downtown Los Angeles, the property qualifies for designation as a Historic-Cultural Monument based on these criteria.

BACKGROUND

At its meeting of February 5, 2009, the Cultural Heritage Commission voted to take the application under consideration. On March 5, 2009, the Cultural Heritage Commission toured the subject property.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT ("CEQA") REVIEW

State of California CEQA Guidelines, Article 19, Section 15308, Class 8 "*consists of actions taken by regulatory agencies, as authorized by state or local ordinance, to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of the environment where the regulatory process involves procedures for protection of the environment.*"

State of California CEQA Guidelines Article 19, Section 15331, Class 31 "*consists of projects limited to maintenance, repair, stabilization, rehabilitation, restoration, preservation, conservation or reconstruction of historical resources in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic buildings.*"

The designation of the Great Republic Life Building property as a Historic-Cultural Monument in accordance with Chapter 9, Article 1, of The City of Los Angeles Administrative Code ("LAAC") will ensure that future construction activities involving the subject property are regulated in accordance with Section 22.171.14 of the LAAC. The purpose of the designation is to prevent

Great Republic Life Building

CHC-2009-198-HCM

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significant impacts to a Historic-Cultural Monument through the application of the standards set forth in the LAAC. Without the regulation imposed by way of the pending designation, the historic significance and integrity of the subject property could be lost through incompatible alterations and new construction and the demolition of irreplaceable historic structures. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards of Rehabilitation are expressly incorporated into the LAAC and provide standards concerning the historically appropriate construction activities which will ensure the continued preservation of the subject property.

The use of Categorical Exemption Class 8 in connection with the proposed designation is consistent with the goals of maintaining, restoring, enhancing, and protecting the environment through the imposition of regulations designed to prevent the degradation of Historic-Cultural Monuments.

The use of Categorical Exemption Class 31 in connection with the proposed designation is consistent with the goals relating to the preservation, rehabilitation, restoration and reconstruction of Historic buildings in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings.

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REPRESENTATIVE:** Anna Marie Brooks
1109 Fourth Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90019

RECOMMENDATION **That the Cultural Heritage Commission:**

1. **Take the property under consideration** as a Historic-Cultural Monument per Los Angeles Administrative Code Section 22.125 because the application and accompanying photo documentation suggest the submittal may warrant further investigation.
2. **Adopt** the report findings.

S. GAIL GOLDBERG, AICP
Director of Planning
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The subject building appears significant as a well-preserved example of the Beaux-Arts style and for its association with the commercial and financial development of Spring Street as the "Wall Street of the West" in the early part of the 20th century.

Later additions to the subject property include a jacuzzi, elevated garden, glass house, and new mechanical equipment to the roof top. Floors 2-13 have been converted into living units. Two elevators have been modified and the first floor commercial spaces have been reconfigured.

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FINDINGS

Based on the facts set forth in the summary and application, the Commission determines that the application is complete and that the property is significant enough to warrant further investigation as a potential Historic-Cultural Monument.

SUMMARY

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SIGNIFICANCE WORK SHEET

TYPE OR HAND PRINT IN ALL CAPITAL BLOCK LETTERS

Complete One or Both of the Upper and Lower Portions of This Page

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

THE Great Republic Life Building IS AN IMPORTANT EXAMPLE OF
NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT

Romanesque Revival ARCHITECTURE
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE (SEE LINE 8)

AND MEETS THE CULTURAL HERITAGE ORDINANCE BECAUSE OF THE HIGH QUALITY OF ITS DESIGN AND THE RETENTION OF ITS ORIGINAL FORM, DETAILING AND INTEGRITY.

A N D / O R

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

THE Great Republic Life Building WAS BUILT IN 1923
NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT YEAR BUILT

A. Otis Birch; Walter P. Temple; S. Dupuy; George H. Woodruff; Walker & Eisen, et. al. WAS IMPORTANT TO THE
NAME OF FIRST OR SIGNIFICANT OTHER

DEVELOPMENT OF LOS ANGELES BECAUSE (please see individual biographies)

**HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT
APPLICATION**

TYPE OR HAND PRINT IN ALL CAPITAL BLOCK LETTERS

IDENTIFICATION

1. NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT Great Republic Life Building
2. STREET ADDRESS 756 South Spring Street
- CITY Los Angeles ZIP CODE 90014 COUNCIL DISTRICT 14
3. ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NO. 5144-015-025
4. COMPLETE LEGAL DESCRIPTION: TRACT Huber Tract
- BLOCK 23 LOT(S) PT "UNNUMBERED LT" ARB. NO. 98
5. RANGE OF ADDRESSES ON PROPERTY 756 & 758 S. Spring Street; 755 & 757 S. Main Street; 101 West 8th Street
Los Angeles, CA 90014
6. PRESENT OWNER Main Spring Development LLC
- STREET ADDRESS 1541 Ocean Avenue #200 E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____
- CITY Santa Monica STATE CA ZIP CODE 90401 PHONE (____) _____
- OWNERSHIP: PRIVATE PUBLIC _____
7. PRESENT USE Undergoing conversion to mixed use ORIGINAL USE Office building w/ first floor commercial

DESCRIPTION

8. ARCHITECTURAL STYLE Romanesque Revival
(SEE STYLE GUIDE)
9. STATE PRESENT PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE OR STRUCTURE (SEE OPTIONAL DESCRIPTION WORK SHEET, 1 PAGE MAXIMUM)
- The Great Republic Life Building is located at the intersections of Spring, 8th and Main Streets. The fourth side is an on-grade parking lot, giving excellent, open views from all floors. The Romanesque Revival building is in three sections, following the base/shaft/capital plan. The base contains the entrance on Spring Street w/ 3 bays on the Spring and Main sides and 7 bays on the 8th Street side. The parking lot side originally was a backward E configuration for light/air shafts when 750 Main was still in place. The entry side corners of the building are square but chamfered while the Main Street corners are angled but chamfered. The base is composed of the commercial spaces and the second floor, having a singular bay at the ground framed by a pilaster at either side, w/ a half pilaster inset in each window bay. The second floor is made up of a wide double-hung window w/ a narrow one

**HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT
APPLICATION**

NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT Great Republic Life Building

10. CONSTRUCTION DATE: 1923 FACTUAL: ESTIMATED:

11. ARCHITECT, DESIGNER, OR ENGINEER Walker & Eisen

12. CONTRACTOR OR OTHER BUILDER Lange & Berastron

13. DATES OF ENCLOSED PHOTOGRAPHS April 2007, December 2008, January 2009
(1 8X10 BLACK AND WHITE GLOSSY AND 1 DIGITAL E-MAILED TO CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION@LACITY.ORG)

14. CONDITION: EXCELLENT GOOD FAIR DETERIORATED NO LONGER IN EXISTENCE

15. ALTERATIONS Roof has been modified by addition of jacuzzi, elevated garden, glass house, & new mechanicals.
Floors 2 - 13 have been changed by modification of spaces into living units, retaining marble hallway floors, all
windows, exposed brick walls, elevator lobbies. Two elevators had been previously modified. 1st floor commercial
spaces have been reconfigured yet again; yet entry/elevator lobbies are retained. No alterations to exterior.

16. THREATS TO SITE: NONE KNOWN PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT VANDALISM PUBLIC WORKS PROJECT
 ZONING OTHER _____

17. IS THE STRUCTURE: ON ITS ORIGINAL SITE MOVED UNKNOWN

SIGNIFICANCE

18. BRIEFLY STATE HISTORICAL AND/OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE. INCLUDE DATES, EVENTS, AND PERSON ASSOCIATED WITH THE SITE (SEE ALSO SIGNIFICANCE WORK SHEET. 750 WORDS MAXIMUM IF USING ADDITIONAL SHEETS)

(please see attached)

19. SOURCES (LIST BOOKS, DOCUMENTS, SURVEYS, PERSONAL INTERVIEWS WITH DATES) Please see "Bibliography"

20. DATE FORM PREPARED 01/03/2009 PREPARER'S NAME Anna Marie Brooks

ORGANIZATION _____ STREET ADDRESS 1109 Fourth Avenue

CITY Los Angeles STATE CA ZIP CODE 90019 PHONE (310) 650-2143

E-MAIL ADDRESS: historichomesla@aol.com

DESCRIPTION WORK SHEET

TYPE OR HAND PRINT IN ALL CAPITAL BLOCK LETTERS

THE Great Republic Life Building IS A 13 + basement STORY,
NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT NUMBER OF STORIES

Romanesque Revival , irregular E PLAN mixed use
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE (SEE LINE 8 ABOVE) PLAN SHAPE (Click to See Chart) STRUCTURE USE (RESIDENCE, ETC.)

WITH A brick FINISH AND terra cotta & granite TRIM.
MATERIAL (WOOD SLIDING, WOOD SHINGLES, BRICK, STUCCO, ETC.) MATERIAL (WOOD, METAL, ETC.)

IT'S flat w/ parapet ROOF IS suspended tile wood frame
ROOF SHAPE (Click to See Chart) MATERIAL (CLAY TILE, ASPHALT OR WOOD SHINGLES, ETC.) WINDOW MATERIAL

single pane display @ ground & double-hung throughout rest of building WINDOWS ARE PART OF THE DESIGN.
WINDOW TYPE [DOUBLE-HUNG (SLIDES UP & DOWN), CASEMENT (OPENS OUT), HORIZONTAL SLIDING, ETC.]

THE ENTRY FEATURES A north corner
DOOR LOCATION (RECESSED, CENTERED, OFF-CENTER, CORNER, ETC.)

ornate metal entry gate DOOR, ADDITIONAL CHARACTER DEFINING ELEMENTS
ENTRY DOOR STYLE (Click to See Chart)

OF THE STRUCTURE ARE (see attached)
IDENTIFY ORIGINAL FEATURES SUCH AS PORCHES (SEE CHART); BALCONIES; NUMBER AND SHAPE OF DORMERS (Click to See Chart)

NUMBER AND LOCATION OF CHIMNEYS; SHUTTERS; SECONDARY FINISH MATERIALS; PARAPETS; METAL TRIM; DECORATIVE TILE OR CAST STONE; ARCHES;

ORNAMENTAL WOODWORK; SYMMETRY OR ASYMMETRY; CORNICES; FRIEZES; TOWERS OR TURRETS; BAY WINDOWS; HALFTIMBERING; HORIZONTALLY;

VERTICALLY; FORMALITY OR INFORMALITY; GARDEN WALLS, ETC.

SECONDARY BUILDINGS CONSIST OF A none
IDENTIFY GARAGE; GARDEN SHELTER, ETC.

SIGNIFICANT INTERIOR SPACES INCLUDE entry lobby w/ plain balustrade wall and cement steps to basement, ceiling with
IDENTIFY ORIGINAL FEATURES SUCH AS WOOD PANELING; MOLDINGS AND TRIM; SPECIAL GLASS WINDOWS;

multiple decorative banding employing variants on exterior themes; elevator lobby w/ three elevators, marble walls,
ORNATE CEILINGS; PLASTER MOLDINGS; LIGHT FIXTURES; PAINTED DECORATION; CERAMIC TILE; STAIR BALUSTRADES; BUILT-IN FURNITURE, ETC.

original elevator floor indicator, original ornate brass mail shoot/box, ornate ceiling; original marble floors;

IMPORTANT LANDSCAPING INCLUDES elevated rooftop garden and rooftop planters
IDENTIFY NOTABLE MATURE TREES AND SHRUBS

Physical Description—p. 2—Exterior (con't)

set to either side. There are decorative panels between each second floor window and the first floor bay. The variation on Ionic volute of the interior pilasters and the variation on the Corinthian entablature of the building's corner pilasters each mark the top of the base level.

There is a variation on a wide entablature or horizontal band of architrave, frieze and cornice, chamfered at the building's corners, and dividing the base from the shaft level of the building. Within the frieze of this entablature is a single swag motif decorative inset from each of the three building's street front corners. Both are made of terra cotta.

The shaft is composed of stories three through eleven. It is made of variegated tan brick. The shaft level has pairs of wooden double-hung windows which fill each bay. At the base of the fourth floor there is a lesser band of terra cotta crowned by a band of anthemion and palmate detailing and featuring a shield, each, centered on the Spring and Main Street sides with two equally spaced shields on the 8th Street elevation.

There is another variation on Doric entablature, made up of pronounced dentils, and accented by one centered shield, each, on Spring and Main Streets, and two equally spaced shields on the 8th Street side, which divides the building's shaft from its capital level. Both are made of terra cotta.

The capital level is composed of floors twelve and thirteen. Its bays are demarcated by doubled terra cotta pilasters which are crowned by variations on Corinthian capitals, which are the same on the three street sides, except at the building's corners where they are chamfered. The bays here are demarcated by pairs of wooden framed double-hung windows as below.

Finally there is another row of entablature composed of terra cotta and made up of dentils, egg and dart, and other variations, which molds into the closed eaves of the building. There is a decorative inset at each street side corner of the building. The Main Street façade carries the original plain metal fire escapes and there is a straight run of fire escape ladder through the void in the eave to the roof.

The parking lot side of the building, now exposed, has two air shafts, with original wooden-frame double hung windows within them, and original wooden frame double-hung windows on the outer wall of the parking lot side.

The entry is a summary of the decorations used over the exterior of the building. At the north corner of the building is the entrance, decorated by an architrave of terra cotta with an inner surround of roping and an outer surround of a leafing border variant. Above that is a band of garland swags centered on empty shields topped by bows and with a floral button centered in the down sweep of the swags. Above that is a leaf border variant, a dentil band, an egg and dart band and a large leaf variant. There is a half pilaster at each side of the opening. Directly above that is a three part decorative pan

Present Physical Description—p. 3—Exterior (con't)

which is featured on all street sides of the building and the same pilasters which define the ground level bays are to either side of the entry.



THE GREAT REPUBLIC LOFTS
REPUBLICLOFTS.COM
FROM THE \$300s 213 627 6100

RIGHT
TURN
ONLY

Physical Description—p. 2—Interior (con't)

mail room to west with original mailboxes.

The interior commercial spaces have been reconfigured from the beginning to fit the needs of businesses from banks, to drugstores, to restaurants. Most recently they have been low rent, small businesses. For the last several years the rest of the building was a rat warren of sweat shop sewing rooms.

Present Conditions
Great Republic Life Building
756 Spring Street

The present condition of 756 South Spring Street improves daily. The exterior has been taken back to what the architect believes was the original color scheme. No other details of the exterior have been changed, except the roof.

Originally the roof had a large sign for Great Republic Life Insurance Company. To date, no photos have been found. Only the original permit for the sign and a later permit to move it to a different location on the roof appear to be extant. Nothing has been learned about signage once the Great Republic vacated the building.

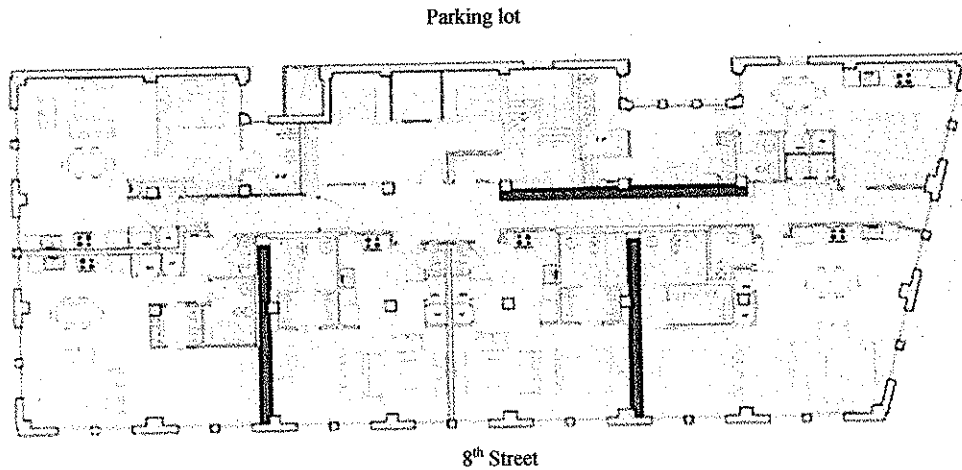
In the adaptive reuse the roof has been totally transformed. The southwest end of the roof holds a part of the building's mechanicals in a pleasing, almost sculptural arrangement. There is then a very open grid fence or divider. To the northeast of the divider is a very open, very modern metal framed glass house for the use of the tenants. Northeast of that is a low walled elevated garden. At the high end of the garden the space gives way to a raised Jacuzzi surrounded by steps which descend to the north and east sides. There, is a small deck with planters at the original parapet walls of the roof. The floor of the roof is suspended tile. The original brick roof house, on the northeast, with stairs to the thirteenth floor, has been retained.

Floors two through thirteen had been changed from their most recent use as sewing rooms to spare, sophisticated, modern living spaces. Each floor contains six identical units, from floor to floor. There are four one bedroom units and two studios on each floor. The units retain the wood framed one-over-one double-hung windows, the exposed brick walls, and the original open ceilings of metal I-beams, painted white. Interior sliding screens have been added to the windows as have three horizontal grille rails toward the base of each window for interior security of persons.

The hallways run their original corridors. They retain their marble flooring, although it will be covered with carpet.

In the one bedroom units there is an entry, some with and some without hallways. The exterior wall great room, which has space to furnish it as a living room and a separate dining room space, segues into the kitchen on the east or west interior wall. A large built-in closet separates the public from private spaces. There is a full bath, which has totally new appliances and tile, off a spacious bedroom.

N



756 South Spring Street
Floor plan: Floors 2 - 13

The studio units are entered into a kitchen and eating area, in one. There is a living room space which segues into a bedroom. The space has windows in both areas. The interior space off the bedroom is a large closet and a full bath.

The footings in the basement have been strengthened to support the load on the roof and to satisfy current building codes. The basement has been re-divided into rooms and corridors, to hold each type of mechanical and to provide storage for the tenants. The basement is accessed by front and back stairs at the northeast side of the building, to either side of the elevators.

Architectural Significance
Great Republic Life Building
756 South Spring Street

Permit No. 10194 for the Great Republic Life Building was issued March 8, 1923. The architects were Walker & Eisen. The contractors were Lange & Bergstrom and the owner was listed as Great Republic Life Insurance Co. The address was 756 South Spring. It was to be 150 feet tall (the inhabitable height limit at the time) although it is actually 158 feet tall (the extra height going into the uninhabited roof house). It had a concrete foundation, a steel frame, brick and terra cotta exterior walls, and a concrete and composite roof. It was 13 stories plus basement and had a footprint of 118 feet x 50 feet. Permit No. 56548 was issued November 11, 1923 for an electric sign, 14'9" x 58' 0" to be erected on the roof. A later permit, No. 25369 issued June 9, 1924, tells us that the sign was originally on the Spring Street side, but was then moved to the Main Street end.

The announcement in the *Los Angeles Times* of Dec 31, 1922, pg. V1, includes the following:

In design a clean, dignified, classic exterior has been adopted, carried out in...terra cotta and facing brick.

The site affords an unusually desirable and economic plan, in that it has three street exposures—50 feet on Spring, 119 feet on Eighth street and 51 feet on Main, thus providing a great expanse of store fronts on three sides without necessity for much loss of space in light courts.

In order to build the Great Republic Life Building they had to demolish "The Weld," a Victorian two-story mixed use commercial building which previously had been sited at the corners of Spring, 8th and Main Streets, a very desirable location.

In 1926 architects for a bank applied to change the basement and first floor for banking quarters. No further details were given.

There was a mezzanine added in 1928. It is no longer present.

On August 2, 1930 Harold Lloyd received a permit to, "Add Temporary Motion Picture Scene on Roof." I consulted with two Harold Lloyd experts and no consensus could be reached for what film this might have been.

The bulk of the remainder of the permits are for removing and installing new partitions on most floors, adding and subtracting private corridors, enclosing and un-enclosing stairways, and adding and changing awnings on the commercial spaces.

In 2006 David Lawrence Gray Architects of Santa Monica was commissioned to do an adaptive reuse project at the Great Republic Life Building, creating a mixed use space. The basement was updated for mechanicals and storage and reinforced to carry the

new roof load. The elevator lobby was to be restored; the commercial spaces are to be rehabilitated on the first floor. Floors 2 through 13 were to be converted to six living spaces on each floor, each one duplicating the space on the floor below. The roof was converted to mechanicals on the Main Street side. The mid roof space is occupied by a glass and steel frame house and an elevated garden. On the Spring Street end a Jacuzzi with steps and decking finishes out the plan with planters in front of the parapet walls.

The exterior of the building has been rehabilitated. The entire building and all trim pieces are there or have been recreated. The color scheme has been restored to what the architect believes to be the original. The commercial spaces will be completed last.

The Great Republic Life Building is a significant historic commercial building designed by Walker & Eisen, one of the best known firms of the 1920s. It is prominently placed near the southwest end of the Wall Street of the West. Yet, for reasons unknown, it was not included in the official historic district. This is a mystery given its fine design, its focus on insurance and oil firms on its original tenant list, and its location at the corners of Spring, 8th and Main Streets.



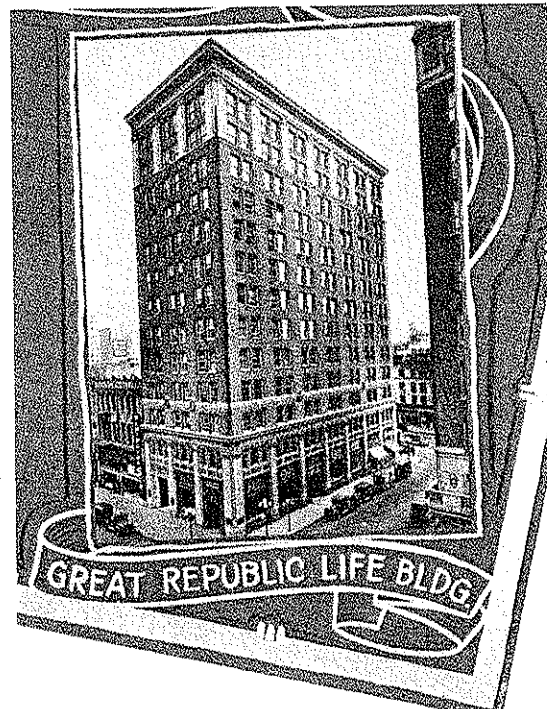
Great Republic Life Building
Source: Ad, Los Angeles Directory, 1925.

Historical Significance
Great Republic Life Building
756 South Spring Street

The Great Republic Life Building is historically significant. Built by a syndicate of friends known as the Central Finance Building Company in 1923 and completed in the first days of 1924, the Walker & Eisen (see biographies, elsewhere, in application) designed building is a fine example of Romanesque Revival architecture at the corner of Spring, 8th and Main Streets.

The syndicate that financed the building, the Central Finance Building Company, was made up of A. Otis Birch, president of the syndicate and of the Great Republic Life Insurance Co.; Walter P. Temple, capitalist; S. Dupuy, capitalist; George H. Woodruff, attorney and president of Standard Mortgage Corp.; A. W. Walker, architect; and Milton Kauffman, secretary. (see biographies, separately, elsewhere in application)

1923, the year the building was built, was the year of greatest real estate expansion in the early 20th Century in Los Angeles until the 1940s. The figure spent on the Great Republic Life Building varies from \$850,000 to \$1,000,000, depending on the source.



Great Republic Life Building
Source: Who's Who in Los Angeles County, 1927-1928, pg.14.

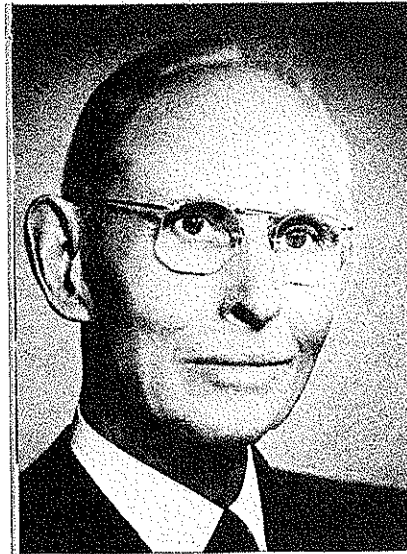
At the time of the building's opening the board of directors of the Great Republic Life Insurance Company included A. Otis Birch, president; W. H. Savage, vice-president and agency director; F. B. Olds, secretary-treasurer; W. J. Hettel, cashier; H.M. Brandel , medical director. (see biographies, separately, elsewhere in application).

A. Otis Birch, president of both the Capital Finance Building Company and the Great Republic Life Insurance Company, was one of Los Angeles multi-millionaires. He started in citrus farming; owned many ranches; oil wells; mines; the Menges Oil Company; was president and treasurer of the Birch-Smith Furniture Company; and had many other holdings. In the course of doing business some of the law suits he initiated created new laws. He was a creative and quiet business man who also gave millions to the Baptist Church and related organizations.

The Great Republic Life Building, in addition to housing First Republic Life Insurance Company, was home to oil companies, bond houses, banks, and a varying body of commercial endeavors. In 1930 Harold Lloyd was issued a permit to film on the roof, It is thought that this was for "Feet First" but no concrete evidence could be found. It later took on the Occidental Life Company as its anchor tenant.

Then it, like most of downtown, it fell on hard times. It finally became a rat warren of industrial sewing rooms until it was purchased by the current owner, Main Spring Development, LLC, in August of 2006. The owner commissioned David Lawrence Gray Architects to do a historic adaptive reuse as a mixed use building.

A. Otis Birch
President, Great Republic Life Insurance Company,
Central Finance Building Company and
President-Treasurer of the Birch-Smith Furniture Company



Albert Otis Birch

Albert Otis Birch (known in business as A. Otis) was born in Illinois on October 8, 1871. By 1880 his family had moved to Santa Ana, California. Twenty years later, in 1900, he still lived in Santa Ana and had taken a wife by the name of Marguerite Estelle N. Conoway commonly known as Estelle). He was a citrus farmer.

By 1910 he had become the President and Manager of the Menges Oil Company and he and his wife had migrated to a large manse which they named Bridgecrest, in South Pasadena. It was sited on three acres and was complete with a five car garage, a separate building to house the aviary, a fish pond, five maids, a butler and a gardener. He listed himself in the 1910 United States Federal Census as a capitalist with oil and land interests and is known to have owned the Menges Oil Company, the Birch Oil Company, and the Conoway Ranch in Yolo County, among other properties.

In the 1920s he decided to move the Great Republic Life Insurance Company, of which he was president, to larger, modern building. He formed a group of investor friends into a syndicate known as the Central Finance Building Company. The directors of Central Finance were A. Otis Birch as president; Walter P. Temple, capitalist and oilman; Sylvester Dupuy, capitalist; George H. Woodruff, attorney; A. R. Walker, architect; Milton Kauffman, secretary of the group. The syndicate bought the lot and building at the corners of Main, 8th and Spring Streets, an ideal lot with the potential for three street-side window walls.

They demolished the Weld Building, a two story mixed-use structure with shops and restaurants on the first floor and apartments on the second floor. The Weld had partially been destroyed in a 1904 fire at the Victoria, a boarding house immediately to the north. The owner of The Weld, a Mr. Ferguson, then repaired the fire damage and continued the building in its previous use.

The permit for the building built by the Central Finance Building Company, of which Birch was President, was issued March 8, 1923. The Great Republic Life Building was completed in January of 1924.

In 1930, for unknown reasons, Birch listed himself in the Census as a furniture merchant. It is true that he was President and Treasurer of the Birch-Smith Furniture Company. But, he was much more. He continued as President of the Great Republic Life Insurance Company; had his oil interests; land interests; and mining interests. His actions established new laws dealing with land reclamation, use of lands with Indian rights attached, railroad rights and others.

Birch resigned from the Great Republic Life Insurance Company in June of 1932 at age 60, when control was bought by a group of Oklahoma bankers and capitalists headed by T. J. McComb, former Oklahoma Insurance Commissioner and consulting actuary for several insurance companies in the United States. It took only two years for the company to go into receivership by the California Insurance Commissioner. At some point the assets were returned and the company operated until 1991 when its assets were again seized by the California Department of Insurance. It was placed under the Insurance Commissioner's control. The company's assets were apparently divided among other companies. The parent company of Great Republic Life Insurance Company is now based in Washington State.

The Birches retired to their home in South Pasadena. Mr. Birch still retained several of his other business interests. The Birches remained active in the Baptist church, related institutions, and community affairs, and travel. Mr. Birch, with the help of his staff, gardened, cared for his fish, the birds of his aviary and his cars. They hosted a party, with 1,500 guests, for Billy Graham.



Mrs. Estelle Birch

In the summer of 1965 the Birches, now in their 90s, and having outlived all their servants, save the gardener, grew increasingly unable to care for themselves. Estelle had developed cancer. A. Otis was deaf and nearly blind. They called on an Altadena nursing registry and hired two nurses—one for the day shift and the other for the night shift. The night nurse was named Pearl Choate. She soon took over, dismissing the second nurse. How this woman ever became certified by the agency is absolutely unknowable. She was a 6'0", 200+ pound woman. And, in the end, it turned out she had no nursing degree of any kind.



Pearl Choate

Pearl Choate kidnapped the Birches from their palatial South Pasadena manse and moved them to a duplex she owned in Covina. The Birches had no children and no close relatives. They had already given vast sums to the Temple Baptist Church, in downtown Los Angeles, where they were members for 67 years and to other church related institutions.

Choate hauled the Birches on a two month odyssey over the southwestern United States and into Mexico with temporary housing in Ensenada, Mexico; back to California; to Artesia, New Mexico; then to Harrington, Texas. There a man who was a distant cousin and another who was a director of a Baptist college to which the Birches had donated substantial funds, caught up with them. Choate chased them with a butcher knife screaming that she would cut their hearts out. Charges were filed and the Texas Rangers were sent to guard the structure where they were being housed, but Pearl had already taken off with them to Mexico. In Mexico they were interviewed by the FBI and police from Texas and, finding no reason to hold them, they were released.

Choate then returned them to a brother's home in Breckenridge, Texas. At one point they were in a nursing home for 18 days. While there, Mrs. Birch questioned why they were under the power of this homicidal woman and asked to be returned to her mansion in South Pasadena. Apparently no one heeded her plea, and her now deaf husband could not hear her. Estelle Birch died, while in the same room as her husband, in Choate's brother's house in Texas, on October 7, 1966. Her body was returned to California for interment at Inglewood Park Cemetery. There was an order from Texas for no newspaper notice and no funeral or memorial service in California. Thus, no friends attended her perfunctory funeral in Texas and no one appeared for her interment at Inglewood—because no one knew she had died. Not even her husband, S. Otis was in attendance at her interment. Estelle was 93 years old, had been married to Mr. Birch for 69 years, and finally was at rest--alone.

It is suspected that Mrs. Estelle Birch may have been killed by Pearl Choate but that allegation was never formally pursued. In the end she had no doctor appointments and no care for her cancer for over a month before she passed. A court document was issued for the disinterment of her body but no follow up action could be found.

Supposedly at the time of Mrs. Birch's death the Birches were in the process of adopting Pearl Choate, who was then 59 years old, as their child, for the purposes of inheritance. That was Pearl's story. There was an adoption application. Now that Mrs. Birch was removed from the picture Pearl grew more anxious to get her hands on the Birch fortune which she estimated at \$200,000,000. This had been the goal that she had announced to the day nurse when they were still at South Pasadena, "...when Mrs. Birch died...she was going to take Mr. Birch and marry him." (Phelan, pg. 86) And, "I'm going

A. Otis Birch—pg. 5

to take them for everything they've got." (Phelan, pg, 90) She had already stripped and sold the contents of the South Pasadena mansion, and gotten the oil rights and the mining rights signed over to her.

Pearl Choate began, in earnest, searching for a place to be married to A. Otis. She again loaded Mr. Birch, who by now was deaf and nearly blind and had an unexplained newly broken hip, onto a mattress in the rear of a car. She went wedding shopping on the road. Finally in Altus, Oklahoma, she found a justice of the peace who was willing to provide a curb-side marriage certificate. Pearl Choate was now officially Mrs. Pearl Birch—3 weeks after the death of Estelle.

The churchman, the cousin, and a writer for *Saturday Evening Post* again descended on the Texas court in an attempt to have the marriage annulled. They were unsuccessful.

They finally decided to check Pearl Choate's record. It went back to 1926. She had been convicted of vagrancy, drunk driving, shoplifting, malicious mischief, felony, and, "had a flock of arrests on which the disposition was unknown." In 1949 she was sentenced to Huntsville Prison in Texas for 22 years for killing a carpenter with four shots to the back. She was paroled in 1954, but returned in 1956 for a felony theft conviction for stealing from a woman to whom she was giving care and whom she had driven all over Texas. She had gone through six husbands by 1957 and listed all six of them as "deceased" and the seventh as "unknown." The prison record rated Pearl's rehabilitation prospects as "poor." She was released in 1963.

She came to Los Angeles in 1964. She scored a suspended 90-day sentence for "malicious mischief to vehicle." Then, she went to work for the nursing registry.

Married to A. Otis, Pearl appeared again in court but always seemed to win. A. Otis Birch passed on March 15, 1967, in a house trailer in Dallas. He was cremated and buried within a day. It is suspected that Pearl murdered him. His estate was settled in 1970. There were not enough funds to satisfy his funeral expenses.

George H. Woodruff
Attorney and Vice-President, Central Finance Building Company



George H. Woodruff

George H. Woodruff, was the attorney for the Central Finance Building Company; President of the Standard Mortgage Corporation and a member of several legal firms over his 30 years of practice in Los Angeles. He was Vice-President and later President of the Central Finance Building Company.

Woodruff was born February 25, 1873, in Watertown, Connecticut. He began practice in California in 1902. He was City Attorney for Whittier, California, 1903-04. He was President of the National Holding Company; and the Standard Mortgage Company. Woodruff was Vice-President of Investors Company; Temple Townsite Company; and the Monterey Land Company. He was a director in the National City Bank and other companies. Woodruff was Consul of Fidelity Savings and Loan Association; and President and Director of Fidelity Associates, Inc.

He was a member of the University, Jonathan, San Gabriel Country and Elks Clubs. He was also a Mason and a Shriner.

Woodruff died December 8, 1944, at age 72. He left behind his widow, Nellie Brittan Woodruff; a daughter; and three sons. Internment was at the San Gabriel Cemetery.

Walter Paul Temple
Director, Central Finance Building Company



Walter Paul Temple

Walter Paul Temple was a director of the Central Finance Building Company, a syndicate founded to buy the land for the Great Republic Life Building, in which the Great Republic Life Insurance Company was financially interested and had top floor offices.

Temple was a capitalist and oil man who made and lost several fortunes. He was the son of a Boston family which became famous when his father Francis Pliny Fiske Temple moved to Los Angeles. At the time the town was merely a pueblo. F. P. F. Temple married Antonia Margarita Workman, the daughter of another of Los Angeles's settlers. The elder Temple and the elder Workman founded the Temple & Workman Bank and financed the establishment of the first street car line in the City of Los Angeles in 1874.

Walter was the nephew of another Yankee, John Temple. Temple arrived in Los Angeles in 1822 and became the pueblo's first merchant. His brother arrived in 1830. They purchased several large tracts of land on the north side of Los Angeles. Temple Street and the Temple Block in Los Angeles are named for them.

Temple was born June 7, 1869, at Merced Ranch in the San Gabriel Valley. He attended St. Vincent's College, now Loyola, and then studied at Woodbury Business College.

When it came time to marry he chose Laura Gonzalez of San Gabriel, a member of the Alvarado family, as his bride. They exchanged vows November 28, 1903, and took up residence in Alhambra. Their son, Thomas, discovered oil on the family property which resulted in the famous and lucrative Montebello oil fields. This moved the family from moderate circumstances to serious wealth.

He founded the Town of Temple, a model city for middle income families in 1922 with a million dollar investment. The town was named to honor the Temple family and opened in July 1923. The name was changed to Temple City in 1928. His associates, Milton S. Kaufman, George H. Woodruff and S. Dupuy, all names familiar from the board of the Central Finance Building Company, invested in the downtown business district, four buildings of which were designed by Walker & Eisen. The town was a mile long and a half-mile wide and contained about a thousand business and residential lots.

Temple assisted John McGroarty to finance the Mission Play and theatre. He was president of Temple Holding Co.; and a director of the Talbert Oil Co., the San Gabriel Bank and the Central Finance Building Company which built the Great Republic Life Building. He was active in the San Gabriel Mission.

Walter P. Temple died November 13, 1938. Temple was interred at the San Gabriel Mission Cemetery.

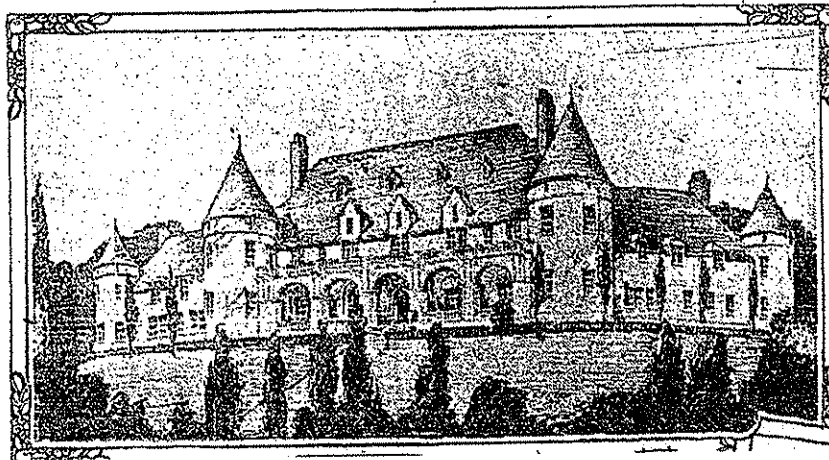
Sylvester Dupuy
Director, Central Finance Building Company

Sylvester Dupuy was born near Los Angeles in 1878 to parents who had come from France. His mother Marie died giving birth to twin boys and his father and the children returned to France. When Sylvester was 14 years old he returned to Los Angeles to herd sheep for an uncle. When he was 18, the uncle turned the management of the ranch over to him and returned to France.

He met and married a French woman, Anna Candelot. He leased additional land for his sheep raising operation. Soon he invested the farm profits in oil and land and became a capitalist. He helped Temple develop Temple City.

In 1924 he began to build his dream castle at Alhambra, basing it on a chateau in France. Designed by local architect John Walker Smart, who had designed several civic buildings in Alhambra, the 8,600 square foot castle had over 30 rooms and four red roofed towers. It had Italian marble in the entry; Holland tile on the roofs; wood paneling from Central America; and maple flooring from the original Alhambra High School. The family, feeling it was too ostentatious to refer to it as a castle, called it, "The Hill." The Dupuys took possession in 1927.

Dupuy became a sub-divider and created the Y Tire Sales for his sons. He died of a stroke in 1937, at age 58. Soon, everyone in the extended family had moved off "The Hill" with the exception of his widow, Anna. After World War II she sold it for \$60,000—a great loss—as the castle had cost over \$500,000 to build. The palatial home was divided into eight apartments and Anna lived in one until her death in 1949. The castle was later restored to a single family residence. The castle has had many owners and is currently occupied by the infamous music producer Phil Spector.



Dupuy Castle
Designed by John Walker Smart, completed 1927.

Milton Kauffman
Secretary, Central Finance Building Company



Milton Kauffman

When Milton Kauffman joined Central Finance Building Company in 1922 it was as Secretary. From there he went on to form his own career in development.

Kauffman was born February 10, 1882, in Tucson, Arizona. By 1900, at age 18, he was a resident of El Monte and was a grocery salesman. By 1910 he had become the proprietor of a general merchandising store and had married a woman named Maude. He registered for the draft in World War I. Nothing is known about his service record. In 1920 he was in the oil business. By 1930 he was no longer married but it is not known what happened to his former wife Maude. In 1930 he was in real estate.

He was a director of the Mission Play and of the Mission Playhouse. And he began his development career with E. J. (Lucky) Baldwin in the development of Baldwin Park.

From this beginning he went on to develop 49 tracts by subdividing and building a total of 20,000 homes. He became a millionaire with developments in West Covina, Whittier, Lancaster, Hawthorne, La Puente, Compton, Norwalk, Torrance, Gardena and Long Beach. He was president of the Kauffman-Wilson organization.

He married his second wife, Helen, 18 years his junior, on December 13, 1941. She sued him for \$5,200 a month in July of 1956, claiming to have separated from him

Milton Kauffman—p. 2

on April 29, 1956. She sued for separate maintenance and valued their community property at between \$2,000,000 and \$6,000,000 and asked that it all be awarded to her. This, while he was hospitalized for six months with a heart ailment.

Mr. Kauffman was a member of the Beverly Hills Club, The Los Angeles Athletic Club, the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce and the Gardena Chamber of Commerce.

Milton Kauffman died November 4, 1956, and Mrs. Kauffman was listed in his obituary as his widow. He was also survived by a son from his first marriage.

W. H. Savage
Vice-President and Agency Director,
Great Republic Life Insurance Company

William H. Savage was born in Kentucky about 1867. He joined the Great Republic Life Insurance Company in 1914, two years after arriving in Los Angeles from St. Louis.

He was one of two members of the board of directors to stay on at Great Republic Life after A. Otis Birch resigned. Savage remained Vice-President, as he had been, when the company moved to 756 South Spring Street in 1924, and added Agency Director to his resume. He retained both offices until he died on January 22, 1937, of a heart attack. He was 70 years old.

He left his widow, Ann, a son and a daughter. The Rev. R. P. Shuler officiated at his funeral service at Trinity Methodist Church. He is interred at Forest Lawn.

Biography: Dr. Harry McPherson Brandel
Medical Director, Great Republic Life Insurance Company



Dr. Harry McPherson Brandel

Harry McPherson Brandel was born April 1, 1889, in Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin. He earned a B. A. from the University of Wisconsin and graduated with an M.D. from Rush Medical College in 1912. He married Adele Persch in 1912 and removed from Chicago to Los Angeles. He opened a practice with the Moore-White Clinic and in 1915 entered private practice.

He was the Medical Director of the Great Republic Life Insurance Company. He then became medical referee for the Prudential Insurance Company for thirty years.

Dr. Brandel lost his wife in a tragic and bizarre incident during World War II. The couple was driving on Sepulveda Blvd., after dark, en route to his mother's home in Redondo Beach. They encountered soldiers, who were with a coffee truck delivering the brew to soldiers on night guard. For unknown reasons, and out of site of the Brandels, they had been stopping cars and removing the blue cellophane from their headlights. When they flagged Brandel, he thought they were trying to hitch a ride. Since he was driving a coupe, and therefore had no room, he kept going. A private shot at the car. He was supposedly aiming for a tire, but the bullet ricocheted off metal in the car and struck Dr. Brandel's wife, Adele, in the back. The soldiers disappeared. Brandel stopped and administered first aid, then drove her to the nearest hospital. After treatment there Mrs. Brandel was transferred to St. Vincent's Hospital, where she died at the ambulance entrance. The private was later prosecuted for homicide.

Dr. Brandel died November 16, 1957, at the California Hospital, at age 68. He had been a staff member at the hospital for 44 years. He predeceased a brother who was also a doctor; two daughters; a son; and six grandchildren.

Dr. Harry McPherson Brandel—p. 2

In life he was a member of the University Club of Los Angeles; Wilshire Country Club; Casa del Mar Country Club; Los Angeles Athletic Club; Alpha Delta Phi Fraternity; American Medical Association; State Medical Society; Medical Symposium Society; and the Los Angeles County Medical Association.

Albert Raymond Walker
Director, Central Finance Building Company
Architect



Albert Raymond Walker

Albert Raymond Walker was born in Sonoma, California on May 9, 1881. He graduated from Brown University at Rhode Island. He returned to California and first apprenticed in the firm of Hebbard & Gill in San Diego. After a year he returned to Los Angeles apprenticing with Parkinson & Bergstrum; then with A. F. Rosenheim, Hunt and Grey.

In 1909 he established his own practice, doing domestic and church architecture. In 1910 he formed a partnership with John Terrell Vawter. The firm of Walker & Vawter designed several churches. They also practiced domestic architecture. Their greatest accomplishment, as a partnership, was the Bible Institute on South Hope Street in Los Angeles. The building was cited as, "the largest and finest structure devoted to religious training in the world" and as, "one of the structural marvels of the Coast." (*Los Angeles Times*, April 6, 1913, pg. 1). It was also their last joint commission, as Vawter enlisted in the United States Army in 1917.

In 1919 Walker entered an architectural partnership with Percy C. Eisen that was to last until 1941. Their firm was known as Walker & Eisen. Walker's strength was, "as a pleasant man, extremely sensitive and brilliant." He also had a keen sense of business and was well affiliated socially. He had a fine mastery of detail and a special ability for anticipating construction costs and related challenges. This was a fortunate trait as in the 1920s developers and investors wanted to, "obtain the maximum illusion of bigness, spectacle, and yet, conventionality, for the least possible expenditure. (Schippers, p. 382).

However,

He never did anything alone and we never did anything alone...He was very much interested in good architecture, and he had a definite flair for the spectacular, façade-wise and even plan-wise—circular, octagon shapes, anything that gave it sparkle and interest.”

--Tape recorded interview with Gus W. Kalionzes, employee and latter-day business partner of Albert T. Walker, Mar 12, 1963.

In 1941 he joined the firm of Walker, Kalionzes, & Klingerman, where he practiced until his retirement at age 75, in 1954. His last major work before retiring was Saint Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Los Angeles.

According to his *Los Angeles Times* obituary of Sep 18, 1958, “The Walker & Eisen firm designed 293 office, commercial, industrial and apartment buildings, as well as hotels, theaters, schools, hospitals and municipal buildings throughout the southland.” Mr. Walker and his associates were credited with beginning the westward development along Wilshire Boulevard. Over his 50 year practice he and his associates designed over 350 buildings, forever changing the Los Angeles skyline. (*New York Times*, Sep 18, 1958, pg. 31).

Walker was a director in the Standard Mortgage Company, National City Holding Company, and the Central Finance Building Company. He was a member of the Brentwood Country Club, Hollywood Athletic Club and many other clubs and societies.

His obituary lists the following works:

Among [his works not already mentioned] were the...Bank of America at 7th and Spring Sts., the downtown Texaco, Signal Oil, Occidental Life [originally Great Republic Life] and Oviatt Buildings, the Beverly Wilshire Hotel, Gaylord and Tallmadge Apartments, the El Mirador [destroyed by fire and recreated] in Palm Springs, and many United Artists theaters throughout the State.

Albert R. Walker died Sep 17, 1958, at age 77. He was survived by his wife, Jessie, his daughter and two grandchildren.

Percy Augustus Eisen
Architect



Percy Augustus Eisen

Percy Augustus Eisen was born December 17, 1885, at Los Angeles. He was a second generation Californian and a third-generation architect. He trained as an architect with his father Theodore Eisen. He also worked as an engineer.

He formed the architectural partnership of Walker & Eisen in 1919, a partnership which lasted until 1941, a total of 22 years. Among their buildings were the Great Republic Life Building; National City Bank Building; Transportation Building; Gaylord Apartments; Signal Oil/Global Marine Building; Shell Oil Building; Ohio Oil Building; Texas Company/Texaco Building and United Artist's Theatre; California Hospital; the Wurlitzer Building; the Oviatt; the Security Title Insurance Building; the Fine Arts Building; Edwards & Wildey Building; the Beverly-Wilshire Hotel; Sunkist Building (demolished); and the Merchants National Bank Building.

He handled projects in other cities. Among them were the San Luis Obispo County Courthouse; Hilton in Long Beach; El Cortez Hotel in San Diego; and the Consolidated Bank Building in Tucson, AZ.

His reputation was as an excellent procurer of business for the firm. His brother Edward said of him, "He [Percy] was good natured, buoyant, and always friendly. He knew everybody. I don't know how, but he just knew them." He is said to have gained more than 60% of the firm's commissions. The firm of Walker & Eisen had a reputation as substantial architects. During 1923 and 1924 they employed fifty draftsmen, more than twice as many as their main competitor.

Eisen served in the Air Corps Procurement Division. After the war he formed a partnership with Eugene C. Hart and built homes for veterans in Inglewood and the San Fernando Valley.

In 1913 he married Miss Ruth Pierce at San Francisco. They had four children.

He was a member of the Flintridge Country Club; Jonathan Club; Elks; Masons; Saddle & Sirloin Club; Sons of the Golden West; the Institute of American Architects; and the Society of American Engineers.

Percy A. Eisen died the night of November 18, 1946, after suffering a heart attack in his office. He was 60 years old. Internment was at Forest Lawn Memorial Park.

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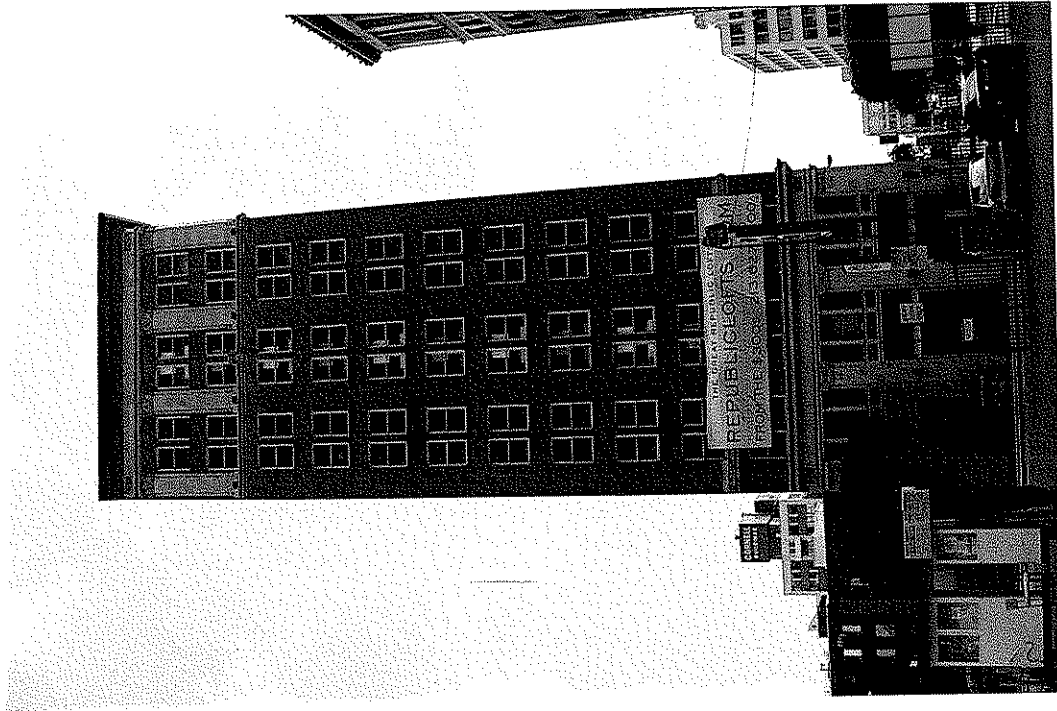
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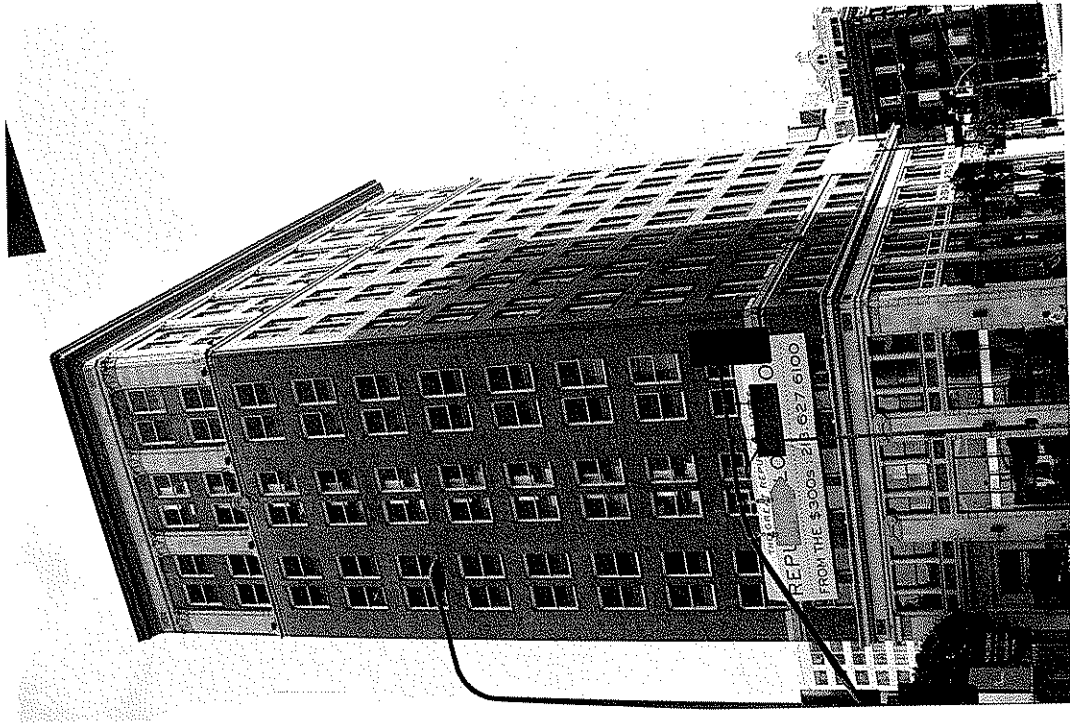
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Photo: January 2009 ~ © Anna Marie Brooks 2009

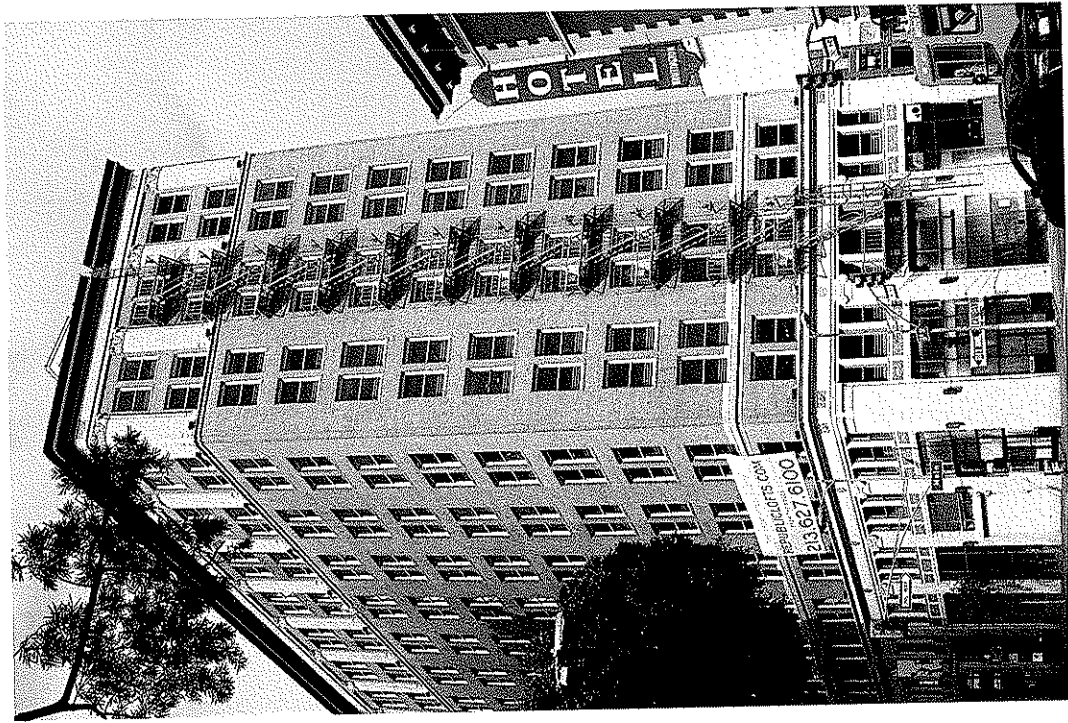


756 South Spring Street

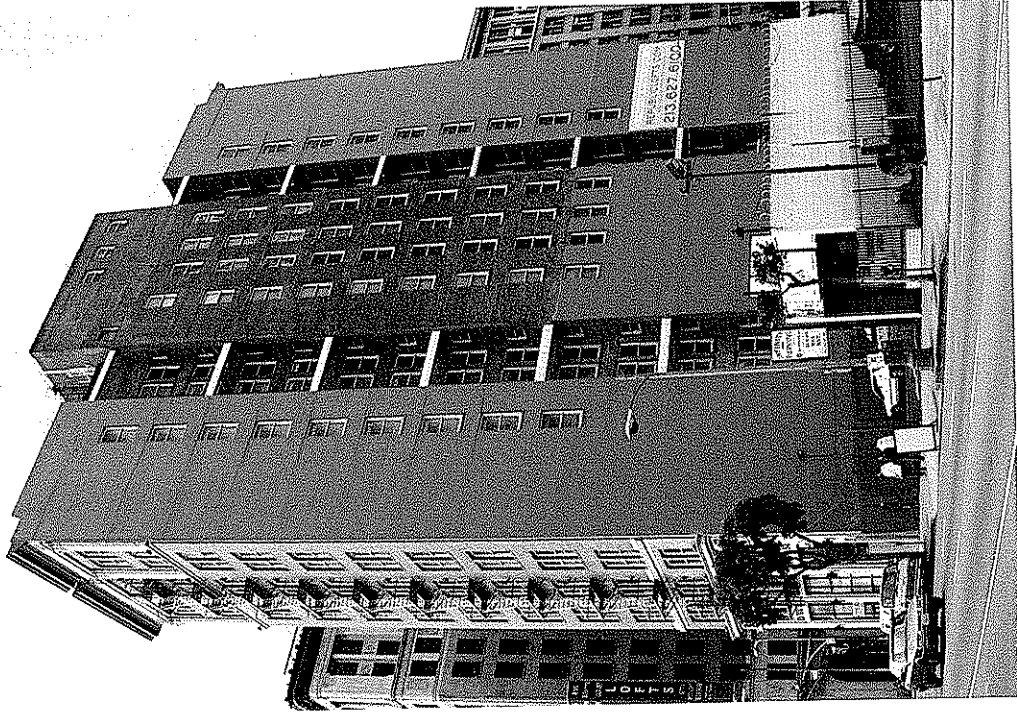


South Spring Street & West 8th Street

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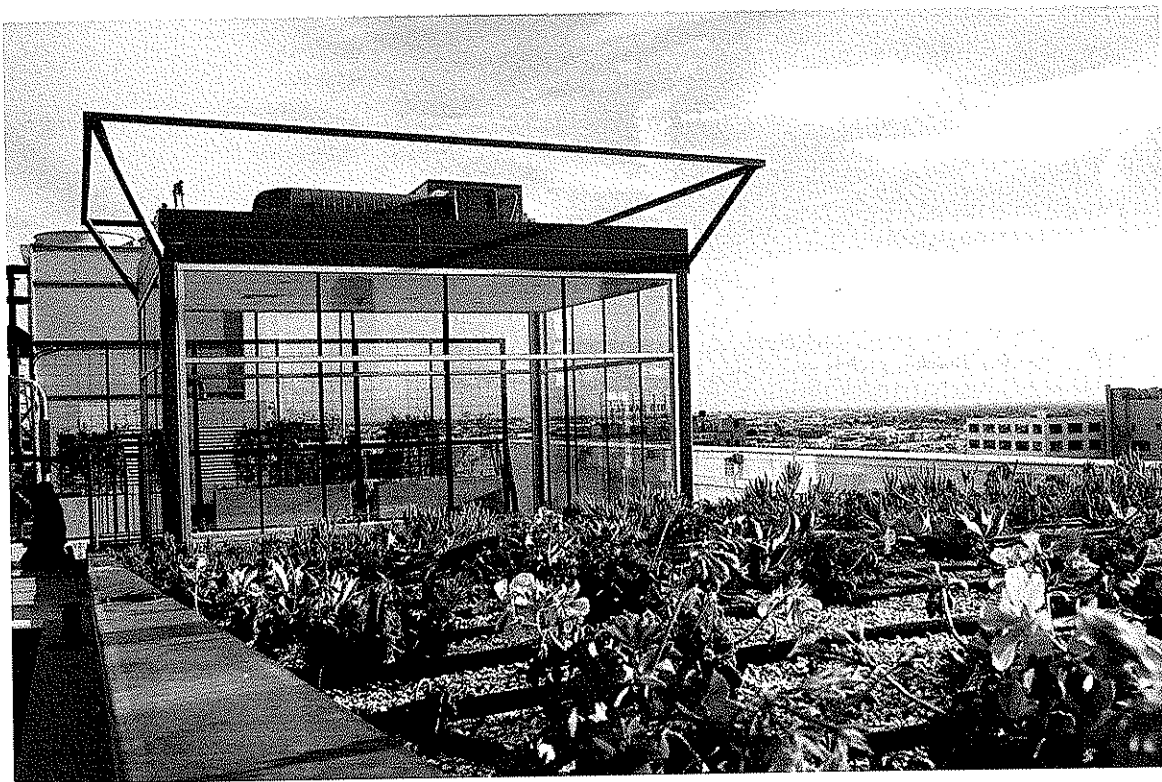


West 8th Street & South Main Street



South Main Street & Parking lot side

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David Lawrence Gray Architects ~ adaptive reuse project ~ 2009

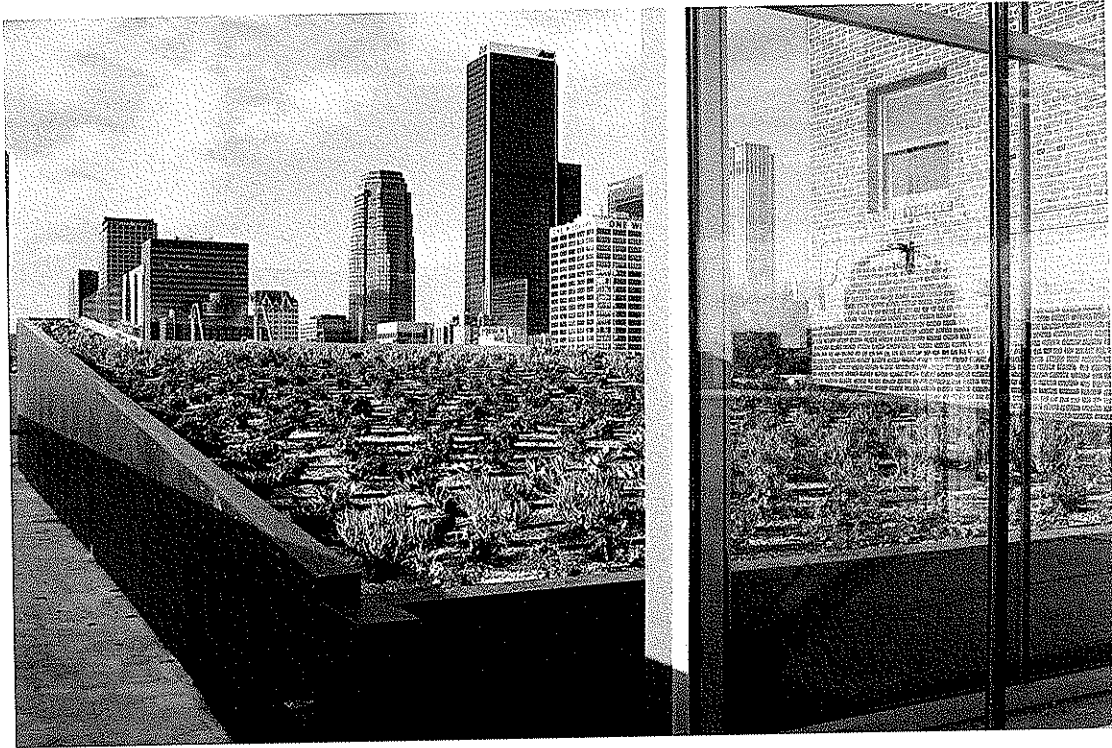


Mechanicals, glass house, elevated garden, viewed to south.

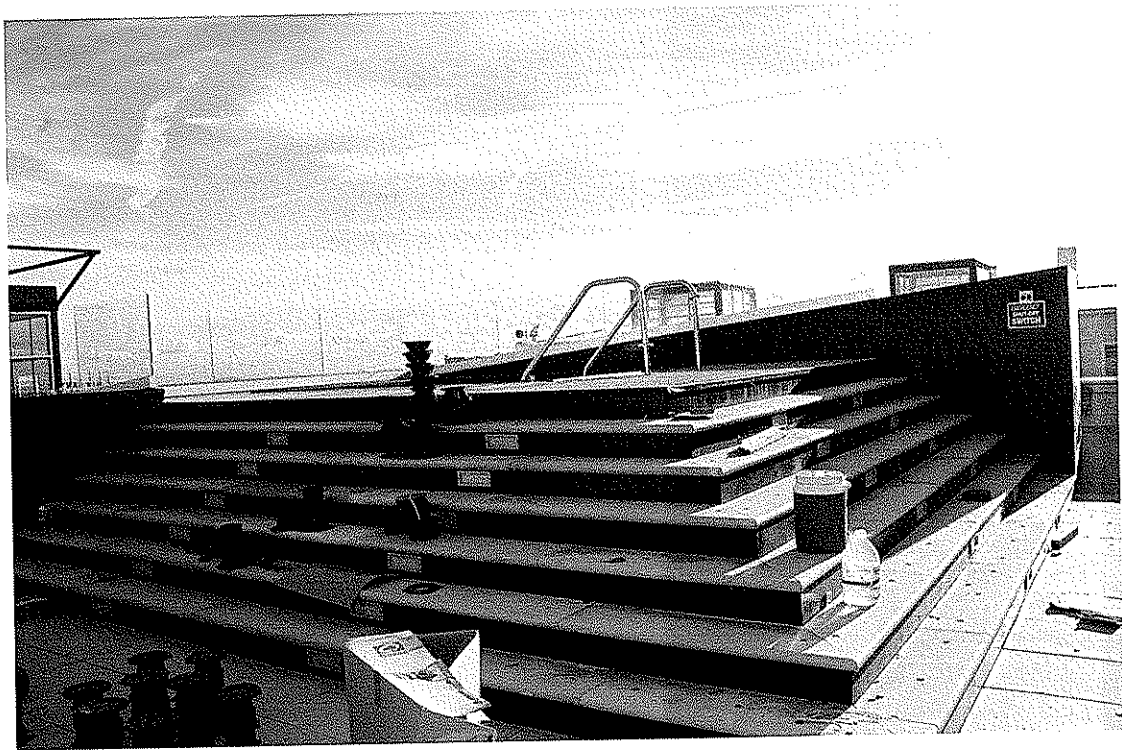


Planters along north edge of roof, viewed to northeast.

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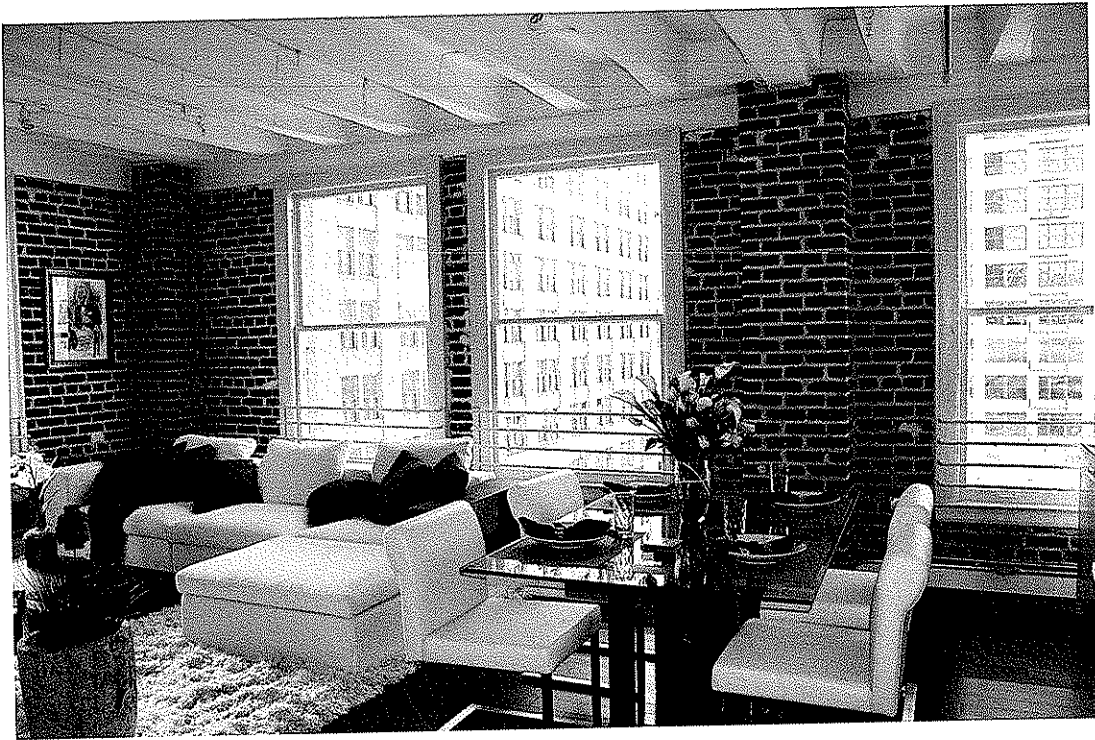


Portion of glass house, elevated garden w/ Jacuzzi behind northeast glass shield.

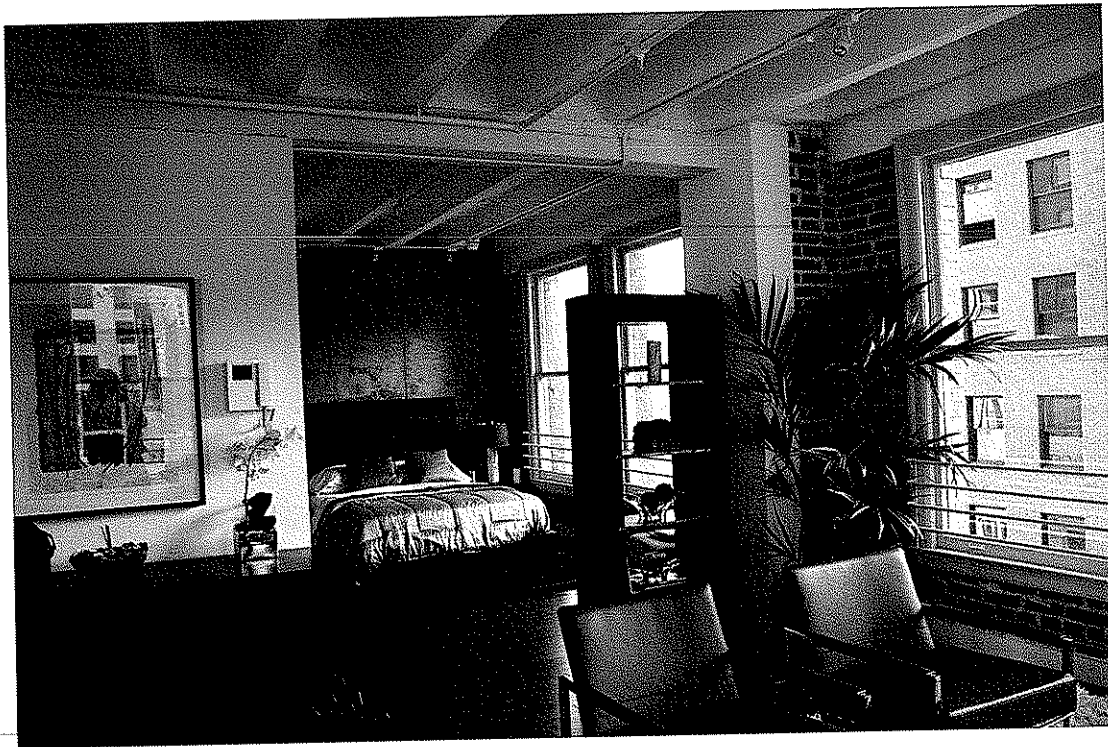


Portion of glass house, hidden elevated garden, Jacuzzi w/ glass shield and deck being installed.

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Living room/dining room of northwest one bedroom unit.



Bedroom of northwest one bedroom unit, viewed across living room.

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Closet door, bathroom entry, northwest one bedroom unit, viewed to the northeast.



Living room, northwest one bedroom unit, viewed to the south.

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Entry to northwest one bedroom unit, viewed to east.



Bathroom sink & commode wall, northwest one bedroom unit, viewed to east.

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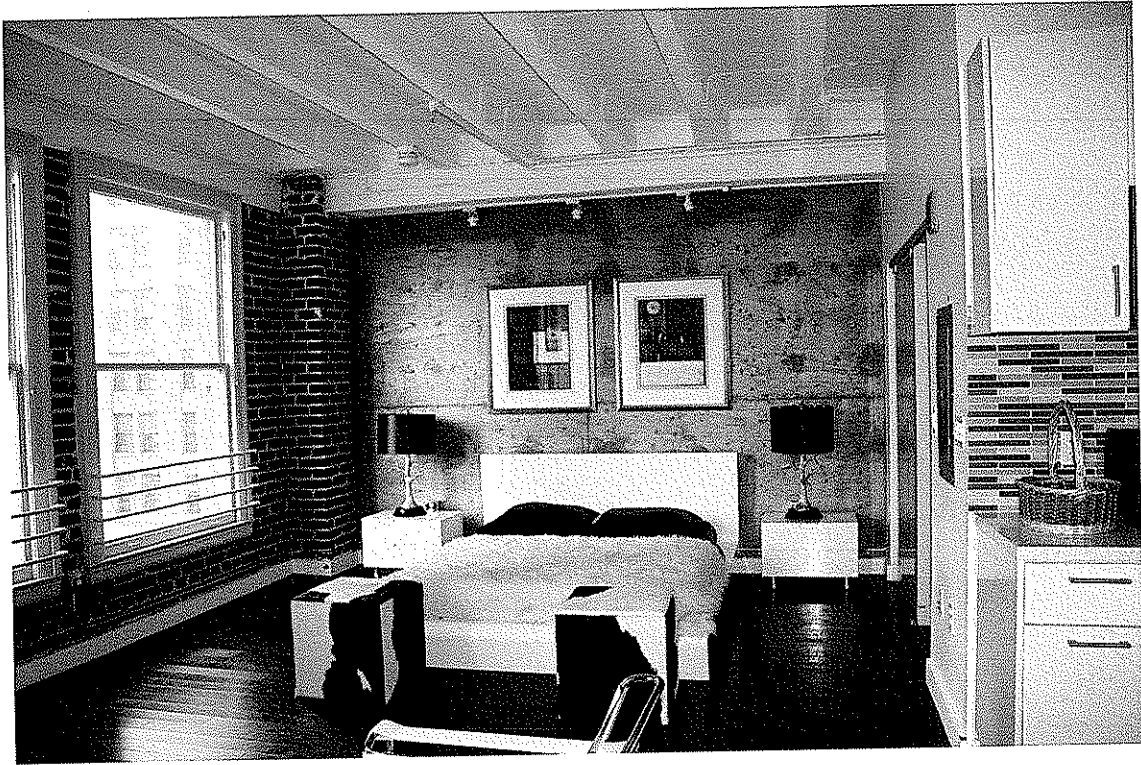


Dining room and kitchen, northwest one bedroom unit.



Bath tub wall, bathroom, northwest one bedroom unit.

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Bedroom, northwest studio unit, viewed to north.

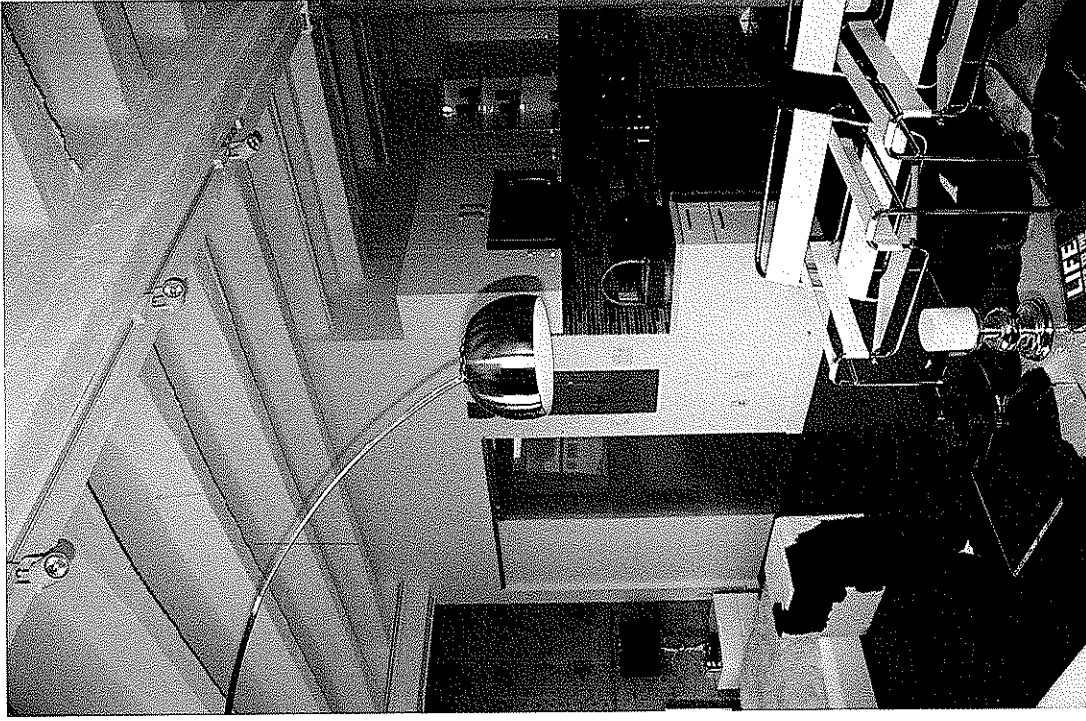


Living room, northwest studio unit, viewed to south.

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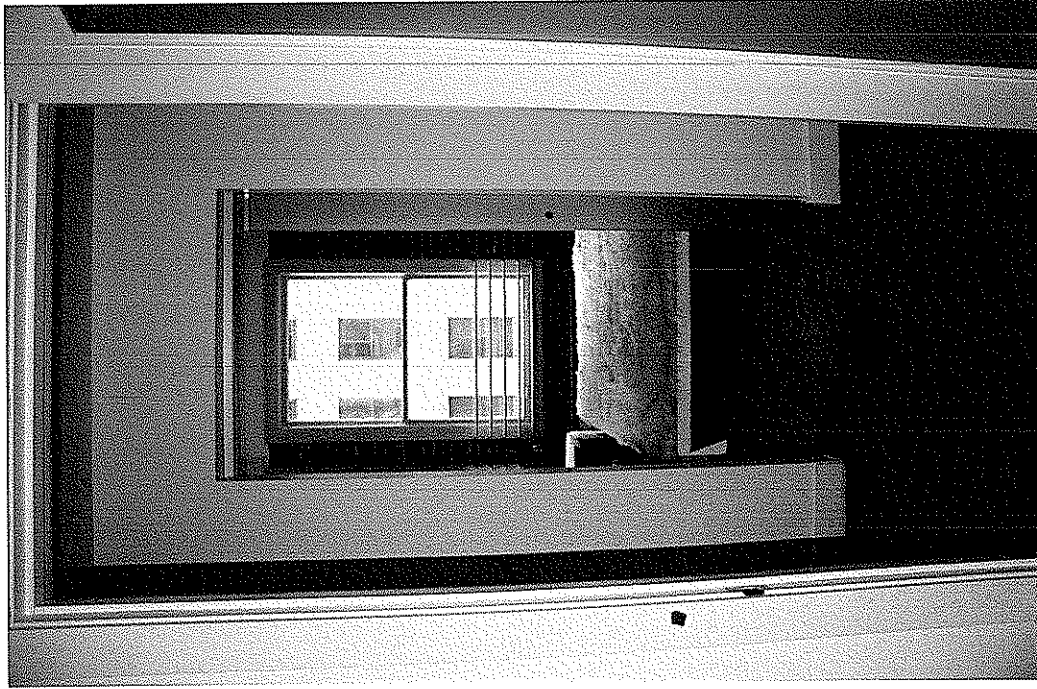


Eating area of kitchen, northwest studio unit, to west.



Closet/bathroom door, northwest studio unit, to northeast.

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From bathroom, thru closet, to bedroom, northwest studio unit, to west.



From closet to bathroom, northwest studio unit, to east.