

# Los Angeles Department of City Planning

## RECOMMENDATION REPORT

### CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

**CASE NO.:** CHC-2007-3528-HCM

**HEARING DATE:** October 18, 2007  
**TIME:** 10:00 AM  
**PLACE:** City Hall, Room 1010  
200 N. Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA  
90012

Location: 210 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
Council District: 14  
Community Plan Area: Central City  
Area Planning Commission: Central  
Neighborhood Council: Downtown Los Angeles  
Legal Description: FR 5 of Ord's Survey

**PROJECT:** Historic-Cultural Monument Application for the  
VAN NUYS BUILDING

**REQUEST:** Declare the property a Historic-Cultural Monument

**APPLICANT/  
OWNER:** Van Nuys Associates, LP  
6100 Center Drive, Suite 800  
Los Angeles, CA 90045

**OWNER'S  
REPRESENTATIVE:** Robert Chattel  
Chattel Architecture, Preservation, and Planning  
13417 Ventura Blvd  
Sherman Oaks, CA 91423

**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, 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:      July 16, 2007 Historic-Cultural Monument Application

## **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 building is associated with a master builder, designer, or architect, as a work by the architectural firm of Morgan, Walls & Morgan.
3. The property reflects “the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, State or community” for its association with the development of the San Fernando Valley and downtown Los Angeles.

## **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 1911-1912 and located in the downtown area, this 11-story steel-frame commercial building is designed in the Beaux-Arts style. It is rectangular in plan with a light court and located at the corners of S. Spring and W. 7<sup>th</sup> streets. The building’s primary facades face W. 7<sup>th</sup> (north) and S. Spring (east) Streets, consisting of eight bays on the 7<sup>th</sup> street façade and nine bays on the S. Spring St. façade. It is in the classical base-shaft-capital composition and clad in matte terra cotta with polished granite at the base. This features massive, fluted Corinthian columns spanning the lower two floors and double height, flat-headed storefront windows placed between the columns with high bulkheads. A cornice with dentils separates the second floor from the floors above. Vertical pilasters of terra cotta frame the bays of the shaft section, culminating in engaged capitals which help form a cornice separating the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> floors. Three one-over-one wood sash windows each with a leaded glass transom occupy the bays of the shaft. Decorative terra cotta in low relief frames the bays of the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> floors which form the capital section. A large denticulated and bracketed cornice crowns the building. The south and west elevations are secondary and are covered in painted stucco. The main lobby is accessed via an entrance on W. 7<sup>th</sup> street and fills the fourth bay with a double-height opening leading to an inset vestibule. The opening is highlighted with medallions, above which is inscribed the building named topped by a bracketed cornice. The vestibule walls, ceiling, and floor are covered with marble. Three sets of double wood and glass doors fill the entrance and are topped by a rectangular double transom windows. The main lobby is entirely clad in marble with pilasters adorning the walls and a coffered ceiling. There are four non-functional elevators in the lobby, three of which are fixed in the closed position and are highly detailed in bas relief depicting symbols and scenes of California such as sheaves of wheat, grizzly bears, Native Americans and industry.

The proposed Van Nuys Building historic monument was designed by the firm of Morgan, Walls & Morgan, consisting of Octavius Morgan, John Walls and O.W. Morgan. Morgan, Walls & Morgan designed other notable structures in the city such as the Kerckoff Building and Annex (1907, 1916, Historic-Cultural Monument #806), the Hellman Building (1910, Historic-Cultural Monument #729) and the Farmers' & Merchants' National Bank Building (1906). Two of the principals are also notable for their association with the firm Morgan, Walls, and Clements the designers of the El Capitan Theatre (Historic-Cultural Monument #495). The building was built by the Van Nuys Building Company using proceeds from I.N. Van Nuys' and Isaac Lankershim's subdivided farmland located in the southern San Fernando Valley.

The subject building appears significant as a well-preserved example of Beaux-Arts style architecture 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 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Later additions to the subject property include alteration of storefronts, window replacement on the light court, contemporary stuccoing of light court, elevator alterations (four nonfunctional elevators date from this 1929 work), and a rehabilitation project in 1982 which subdivided the ground floor for retail use and upper floor adaptation for low income senior housing.

## **DISCUSSION**

The Van Nuys Building successfully meets three of the specified Historic-Cultural Monument criteria: 1) "embod[ies] 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 with a master builder, designer, or architect. As a commercial building designed in the Beaux Arts style by Morgan, Walls & Morgan and reflecting the development of the San Fernando Valley and downtown Los Angeles, the property clearly qualifies for designation as a Historic-Cultural Monument based on these criteria.

While the subject building is located on a prominent intersection of downtown Los Angeles, the Van Nuys Building retains significant historical ties to the development of the San Fernando Valley. The building was constructed with the proceeds of subdividing sections of southern San Fernando Valley owned by I.N. Van Nuys and Issac Lankershim and housed the Van Nuys Building Company. The building also stands on land where the home of Van Nays once stood.

## **BACKGROUND**

At its meeting of August 16, 2007, the Cultural Heritage Commission voted to take the application under consideration. On October 4, 2007, the Cultural Heritage Commission toured the subject property.

# Los Angeles Department of City Planning

## RECOMMENDATION REPORT

### CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

CASE NO.: CHC-2007-3528-HCM

**HEARING DATE:** September 20, 2007  
**TIME:** 10:00 AM  
**PLACE:** City Hall, Room 1010  
200 N. Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA  
90012

Location: 210 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
Council District: 14  
Community Plan Area: Central City  
Area Planning Commission: Central  
Neighborhood Council: Downtown Los Angeles  
Legal Description: FR 5 of Ord's Survey

**PROJECT:** Historic-Cultural Monument Application for the  
VAN NUYS BUILDING

**REQUEST:** Declare the property a Historic-Cultural Monument

**APPLICANT/  
OWNER:** Van Nuys Associates, LP  
6100 Center Drive, Suite 800  
Los Angeles, CA 90045

**OWNER'S  
REPRESENTATIVE:** Robert Chattel  
Chattel Architecture, Preservation, and Planning  
13417 Ventura Blvd  
Sherman Oaks, CA 91423

### RECOMMENDATION That the Cultural Heritage Commission:

1. **Take the property under consideration** as a Historic-Cultural Monument per Los Angeles Administrative Code Chapter 9, Division 22, Article 1, Section 22.171.10 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

[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ken Bernstein, 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: July 16, 2007 Historic-Cultural Monument Application  
ZIMAS Report

## **SUMMARY**

Built in 1911-1912 and located in the downtown area, this 11-story steel-frame commercial building is designed in the Beaux-Arts style. It is rectangular in plan with a light court and located at the corners of S. Spring and W. 7<sup>th</sup> streets. The building's primary facades face W. 7<sup>th</sup> (north) and S. Spring (east) streets consisting of eight bays on the 7<sup>th</sup> street façade and nine bays on the S. Spring St. façade. It is in the classical base-shaft-capital composition and clad in matte terra cotta with polished granite at the base. This features massive, fluted Corinthian columns spanning the lower two floors and double height, flat-headed storefront windows placed between the columns with high bulkheads. A cornice with dentils separates the second floor from the floors above. Vertical pilasters of terra cotta frame the bays of the shaft section, culminating in engaged capitals which help form a cornice separating the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> floors. Three one-over-one wood sash windows each with a leaded glass transom occupy the bays of the shaft. Decorative terra cotta in low relief frames the bays of the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> floors which form the capital section. A large denticulated and bracketed cornice crowns the building. The south and west elevations are secondary and are covered in painted stucco. The main lobby is accessed via an entrance on W. 7<sup>th</sup> street and fills the fourth bay with a double-height opening leading to an inset vestibule. The opening is highlighted with medallions, above which is inscribed the building named topped by a bracketed cornice. The vestibule walls, ceiling, and floor are covered with marble. Three sets of double wood and glass doors fill the entrance and are topped by a rectangular double transom windows. The main lobby is entirely clad in marble with pilasters adorning the walls and a coffered ceiling. There are four non-functional elevators in the lobby three of which are fixed in the closed position and are highly detailed in bas relief depicting symbols and scenes of California such as sheaves of wheat, grizzly bears, Native Americans and industry.

The proposed Van Nuys Building historic monument was designed by the firm of Morgan, Walls & Morgan, consisting of Octavius Morgan, John Walls and O.W. Morgan. Morgan, Walls & Morgan designed other notable structures in the city such as the Kerckoff Building and Annex (1907, 1916, Historic-Cultural Monument #806), the Hellman Building (1910, Historic-Cultural Monument #729) and the Farmers' & Merchants' National Bank Building (1906). Two of the principals are also notable for their association with the firm Morgan, Walls, and Clements the designers of the El Capitan Theatre (Historic-Cultural Monument #495). The building was built by the Van Nuys Building Company using proceeds from I.N. Van Nuys' and Isaac Lankershim's subdivided farmland located in the southern San Fernando Valley

The subject building appears significant as a well-preserved example of Beaux-Arts style architecture 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 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Later additions to the subject property include alteration of storefronts, window replacement on the light court, contemporary stuccoing of light court, elevator alterations (four nonfunctional elevators date from this 1929 work), and a rehabilitation project in 1982 which subdivided the ground floor for retail use and upper floor adaptation for low income senior housing.

## **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.

### **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.



Chattel Architecture Planning & Preservation, Inc.

LOS ANGELES  
CITY PLANNING

2007 JUL 16 PM 1:39

## Transmittal

DATE July 12, 2007

TO Cultural Heritage Commission  
200 North Spring St.  
Room 667  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

FROM Robert Jay Chattel, AIA, President  
Shannon Ferguson, Associate

RE Historic Cultural-Monument Application for Van Nuys Building  
210 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Los Angeles, CA

VIA Federal Express

ENCLOSURES Enclosed please find one copy of the Historic-Cultural Monument Application for the Van Nuys Building.

Included with the application is one labeled photograph, which is keyed to the attached site plan, and one CD with digital image.

If you have any questions, please contact us at (818) 788-7954.

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 Van Nuys Building IS AN IMPORTANT EXAMPLE OF NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT

Beaux-Arts 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 Van Nuys Building WAS BUILT IN 1911-12 NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT YEAR BUILT

NAME OF FIRST OR SIGNIFICANT OTHER WAS IMPORTANT TO THE

DEVELOPMENT OF LOS ANGELES BECAUSE construction of the Van Nuys building and location of offices of First National Bank in the building helped to establish 7th and Spring streets as the new heart of the financial center of Los Angeles. The Van Nuys Building was commissioned and named for I.N. Van Nuys, a prominent landowner and businessman in Los Angeles. The Van Nuys Building embodies the distinctive characteristics of Beaux-Arts commercial architecture and the work of noted Los Angeles architectural firm, Morgan, Walls & Morgan.

**HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT  
APPLICATION**

TYPE OR HAND PRINT IN ALL CAPITAL BLOCK LETTERS

**IDENTIFICATION**

1. NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT Van Nuys Building
2. STREET ADDRESS 210 W. 7th Street
- CITY Los Angeles ZIP CODE 90014 COUNCIL DISTRICT 14
3. ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NO. 514-401-5033
4. COMPLETE LEGAL DESCRIPTION: TRACT Ord's Survey
- BLOCK 24 LOT(S) FR 5 ARB. NO. None
5. RANGE OF ADDRESSES ON PROPERTY 204 W. 7th Street, 212 W. 7th Street, 701 S. Spring Street
6. PRESENT OWNER Van Nuys Associates, LP
- STREET ADDRESS 6100 Center Drive, Suite 800
- CITY Los Angeles STATE CA ZIP CODE 90045 PHONE (310) 258-5173
- OWNER IS: PRIVATE Private PUBLIC \_\_\_\_\_
7. PRESENT USE Commercial/Residential ORIGINAL USE Commercial

**DESCRIPTION**

8. ARCHITECTURAL STYLE Beaux-Arts  
(SEE STYLE GUIDE)
9. STATE PRESENT PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE OR STRUCTURE. (SEE OPTIONAL DESCRIPTION WORK SHEET)
- Please see attached.
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT  
APPLICATION**

**NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT** Van Nuys Building

10. CONSTRUCTION DATE: FACTUAL 1911-1912 ESTIMATED \_\_\_\_\_

11. ARCHITECT, DESIGNER, OR ENGINEER Morgan, Walls & Morgan

12. CONTRACTOR OR OTHER BUILDER \_\_\_\_\_

13. DATES OF ENCLOSED PHOTOGRAPHS 2007  
(8X10 BLACK AND WHITE GLOSSY)

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

15. ALTERATIONS Please see attached.

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. BRIEF STATE HISTORICAL AND/OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE: INCLUDE DATES, EVENTS, AND PERSON ASSOCIATED WITH THE SITE (SEE OPTIONAL SIGNIFICANCE WORK SHEET)

Please see attached.

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

20. DATE FORM PREPARED 07/12/2007 PREPARER'S NAME Robert Jav Chattel, AIA

ORGANIZATION Chattel Architecture STREET ADDRESS 13417 Ventura Blvd.

CITY Sherman Oaks STATE CA ZIP CODE 91423 PHONE (818) 788-7954

**Description**

This 11-story steel frame with masonry perimeter wall commercial building is a rectangular in plan and located at the corners of S. Spring and W. 7<sup>th</sup> streets in downtown Los Angeles, in a dense, urbanized setting (Figure 1). The building has two primary façades: the W. 7<sup>th</sup> Street façade is eight bays wide, while the S. Spring St. façade is nine bays wide, both arranged in the classic base-shaft-capital composition are clad in matte terra cotta with polished granite at the base. Beaux-Arts in style, with Italianate details, colossal fluted Corinthian columns span the lower two stories of the building. Double height, flat-headed storefront windows are placed between the columns with high bulkheads. A cornice with dentils separates the second floor from the floors above. Three one-over-one wood sash windows each with a leaded glass transom above occupy the bays of the shaft. A vertical panel of decorative terra cotta frames the bays of the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> floors which are grouped and form the capital. A large denticulated and bracketed cornice crowns the building.

The south and west elevations are secondary and are clad in painted stucco. Windows have been infilled on the south elevation. The west elevation faces an alley and is clad in rusticated stone at the base. On the upper floors, paired double hung wire steel sash glass windows occupy the northernmost bay and three grouped double hung wire glass windows occupy the remaining seven bays.

The main lobby is accessed via an entrance on W. 7<sup>th</sup> Street and fills the fourth bay with a double-height opening leading to an inset vestibule. The opening is highlighted with medallions, above which is inscribed the building name topped by a bracketed cornice. The vestibule walls and coffered ceiling are clad in marble and the floor is covered with marble. Three sets of double wood and glass doors fill the entrance and are topped by rectangular double transom windows.

The ground floor lobby is entirely clad in marble. Pilasters adorn all the walls and the ceiling is coffered. Directly in front of the elevators is an original mail chute and collection box. Six elevator bays are located on the east side of the lobby. The north two bays contain contemporary elevator doors and cabs. Three elevator doors are fixed in the closed position and are highly detailed in bas relief depicting symbols and scenes of California, such as sheaves of wheat, grizzly bears, Native Americans, and industry. One lobby elevator cab is non-functional and on display with the interior clad in bronze. On the west wall, wood and glass windows alternate between the pilasters. The south end of the lobby is occupied by a staircase that once led to the second floor. The massive baluster and undulating hand rail is made entirely of marble. A wrought iron gate separates the middle of the stairs. At the mezzanine level are two stained glass windows and the ceiling is coffered.

To the east of the main entrance are an original directory and a set of double bronze doors topped by a denticled cornice. These doors lead to a hallway clad in marble with a marble balustrade. A curving staircase with linoleum over marble leads to the basement.

On all upper floors, elevator lobbies contain only two contemporary elevators. Most elevator lobby floors are covered in marble tiles, possibly original, and walls are clad in textured drywall while ceilings are suspended T-bar. A stairwell east of the elevator lobby contains cast iron stairs with marble treads. Corridors on all floors contain similar contemporary features. Floors are covered in carpet; walls are clad in textured drywall and ceilings are suspended T-bar with fluorescent light fixtures. The second floor corridor contains one of the only remnants of decorative historic fabric. A stained glass window similar to those in the ground floor lobby staircase overlooks the interior courtyard. The stained glass appears to have been salvaged, surrounded by smoked glass and placed into a contemporary rectangular window.

Residential units on upper floors are similarly detailed. Typical floor plans consist of studio and one bedroom apartment units with contemporary kitchen and bathroom fixtures. Ceilings are suspended T-bar and soffit at windows with a bulkhead.

### Alterations

On the exterior, alterations appear to have primarily occurred at the ground floor. Two storefronts on S. Spring Street were altered in 1982<sup>1</sup> when high bulkhead walls were removed. The glazing systems in all three storefront entrances on S. Spring Street have been replaced.<sup>2</sup> The glazing system has been altered in the storefront east of the main entrance (date unknown). Contemporary signage has also been added (dates unknown). Storefronts to the west of the main entrance appear to be intact from an early period. Windows have been replaced in the west two bays at third floor of the North facade. For the most part, these changes have not impacted the overall shape or configuration of the bays. All windows on the light court have been replaced and wall cladding is contemporary stucco.

On the interior, elevator doors, and possibly cabs, were first altered on all floors in 1929.<sup>3</sup> Currently four of the six elevators have been taken out of service. All non-functional elevator doors remain permanently closed, except for one elevator cab on display.

The Van Nuys Building underwent rehabilitation in 1982. The ground floor was subdivided for retail use, while upper floors were adapted for use as low income senior housing. Contemporary work on the upper floors includes slight narrowing of corridor width, reduction of the rectangular light court by several feet at the south, and loss of all interior demising walls to accommodate conversion to residential use.

Despite these alterations, the building, particularly the exterior and ground floor lobby, retains overall integrity of design, workmanship, material, location, setting, feeling and association.

### Significance

The Van Nuys Building appears eligible for designation as a Historic-Cultural Monument for its association with the development of S. Spring Street as the financial center of Los Angeles and southern California. Constructed in 1912, the Van Nuys Building contributed to the concentration of financial services firms and facilities that made S. Spring Street the "Wall Street of the West" from the early 1900s through 1940s. The Van Nuys Building is significant for its association with I.N. (Isaac Newton) Van Nuys, a prominent Los Angeles landowner and businessman. The Van Nuys Building embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period and method of Beaux-Arts commercial architecture and as the work of noted Los Angeles architectural firm, Morgan, Walls & Morgan.

Several small buildings that occupied the parcel, including the former Van Nuys home,<sup>4</sup> were razed to make way for construction of the building which began in 1911 by the Van Nuys Building Company. Described at the time as a "structural marvel," the steel framed building with reinforced concrete floors, concrete fireproofing, and finished plaster throughout, was to "rank with the finest of the modern buildings in the West."<sup>5</sup> At a cost of approximately \$1,250,000 to construct, the building was built to the 150 building height limit and was the largest in floor area of any building constructed in the city up to that time.

Upon completion in 1912, the entire first floor and basement of the building was occupied by First National Bank. As one of the oldest banks in California, First National was setting an important

---

<sup>1</sup> City of Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, "Application to Alter, Repair or Demolish," Permit No. 64864, 27 May, 1982.

<sup>2</sup> City of Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, "Application to Alter, Repair or Demolish," Permit No. 64864, 27 May, 1982.

<sup>3</sup> City of Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, "Application to Alter, Repair or Demolish," Permit No. 31114, 4 December, 1929.

<sup>4</sup> Harris Newmark, *Sixty Years in Southern California 1853-1913: Containing the Reminiscences of Harris Newmark* (Los Angeles: Dawson's Book Shop, 1984), 514.

<sup>5</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, "Steel and Granite Office Building for Seventh and Spring Streets. 8 January, 1911.

precedent by moving to what was then an area of little development. Bank stockholders believed the corner of 7<sup>th</sup> and Spring streets was an ideal location for a bank as it was poised to become the logical cross-town thoroughfare and would therefore become the nexus of the financial center of Los Angeles. By 1934, First National Bank's deposits had increased so dramatically that a second vault was installed in the basement.<sup>6</sup>

The upper floors of the building were designed for use as offices and were occupied by firms involved in the financial services industry. Major investment firms such as Dean Witter & Co.<sup>7</sup> and Merrill Lynch & Company were located in the building, along with land, security and bonds companies. Morgan, Walls & Morgan, building architects, occupied offices on the 11<sup>th</sup> floor,<sup>8</sup> oversaw many alterations to office suites.<sup>9</sup>

The Van Nuys Building is located in what was once the financial center of Los Angeles and southern California. The building and its historic use reflected and contributed significantly to the economic forces concentrated along S. Spring Street in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century. Although no longer used as a bank building, the Van Nuys Building retains physical features and characteristics from the period of significance and the context of the historic financial corridor along S. Spring Street.

The Van Nuys Building is also significant for its association I.N. Van Nuys, a prominent Los Angeles landowner and businessman. Isaac Newton Van Nuys (1835-1912) and Isaac Lankershim, purchased 59,000 acres in the southern San Fernando Valley. Lankershim and Van Nuys began dry-farming wheat in 1876. They were the first to successfully dry cultivate wheat in southern California on a large scale.<sup>10</sup> After 30 years of successful farming, the Lankershim-Van Nuys ranch was sold and subdivided for development in 1909.<sup>11</sup> The \$2,500,000 from the sale of the San Fernando Valley ranch directly financed construction of the Van Nuys Building.<sup>12</sup> In addition to his connection with the development of San Fernando Valley, Van Nuys was also involved in business development and banking in downtown Los Angeles. He was vice-president of the Farmers' and Merchants' National Bank, a director in the Union Bank, and a director in the Los Angeles Pressed Brick Company, and owner of the Van Nuys Hotel (1895, now Barclay Hotel).

Like many of the other buildings in the Spring Street Financial District, the subject property displays a thorough understanding of the Beaux-Arts style. The Van Nuys Building is consistent in scale and style with other Beaux-Arts/Commercial buildings from the period. Beaux-Arts style was popularized in the United States at the Chicago Worlds Columbian Exposition in 1893. Many of the design motifs attached to this style (heavy stone bases, monumental attics, grand arched openings, bas-relief decoration, etc.), became extremely popular for buildings in downtown business districts throughout the United States in the late-19<sup>th</sup> and early-20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The building appears to retain integrity and conveys the

---

<sup>6</sup> City of Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, "Application to Alter, Repair or Demolish" Permit No. 10536, 17 August, 1934.

<sup>7</sup> *Los Angeles Times* advertisement dated 19 May, 1912, announcing the opening of the Dean Witter & Co., Los Angeles office in the Van Nuys Building with Guy Witter in charge as resident Partner. Brothers Dean and Guy Witter launched the company in 1924 with headquarters in San Francisco. At the time of Dean Witter's death in 1969 there were nearly 80 branches of Dean Witter & Co. in the U.S. and Canada, and the company was the largest investment house on the West Coast. Dean Witter & Co. merged with Morgan Stanley Group, Inc. in 1997 ([www.deanwitterfoundation.org](http://www.deanwitterfoundation.org)).

<sup>8</sup> *Los Angeles Times*; 1 January, 1913, display ad.

<sup>9</sup> City of Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, "Application to Alter, Repair or Demolish" Permit No. 26209, 10 October, 1929.

<sup>10</sup> Harris Newmark, *Sixty Years in Southern California 1853-1913: Containing the Reminiscences of Harris Newmark* (Los Angeles: Dawson's Book Shop, 1984), 381, 493.

<sup>11</sup> Mulholland, Catherine, *The Owensmouth Baby: The Making of a San Fernando Valley Town* (Northridge: Santa Susana Press, 1987), 4-5.

<sup>12</sup> Clary, William W., *History of the Law Firm of O'Melveny & Myers 1885-1965* (Los Angeles: Privately Printed, 1966) Volume I, p.167-169.

characteristics of the style and period and is a sound example of the architects' understanding of the design principles popular at the time of the building's construction. Like these buildings, Van Nuys Building exudes both monumental grandeur and restraint and has long been recognized as one of the most exuberant examples of Beaux-Arts style in the Spring Street Financial District.

While Van Nuys Building possesses distinctive characteristics of the Beaux-Arts style, the building is also significant for its association with prominent Los Angeles architectural firm Morgan, Walls & Morgan.<sup>13</sup> The Van Nuys Building is important in documenting the early commercial work of Morgan, Walls & Morgan. Octavius Morgan first partnered with Ezra F. Kysor, an early architect in the city. The firm's most noted work in Los Angeles during that time was St. Vibiana's Catholic Church (1876).<sup>14</sup> Upon retirement of Kysor, Morgan formed a partnership with John Walls, later taking his son, O. W. Morgan, into the firm. Among the notable structures designed by Morgan, Walls & Morgan are the National Register-listed Kerckoff Building (1907) and Annex (1916), Spring Street Financial District contributors Hellman Building (1910) and Farmers' & Merchants' National Bank Building (1906),.

As is evidenced in the Van Nuys Building, Morgan, Walls & Morgan's early commercial buildings typically reflect influences of the Beaux-Arts or Classical Revival styles popular at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with exterior use of glazed terra cotta, decorative spandrel panels, low-relief sculptural ornamentation, and large projecting cornices. Van Nuys Building highlights the firm's early design abilities, which were firmly rooted in classicism and popular revivalist styles as applied to a large commercial building. The subject property is clearly a quality, highly-representative example of a prolific and able architecture firm that contributed greatly to the built environment of Los Angeles and southern California.

---

<sup>13</sup> Morgan, Walls & Morgan later became Morgan Walls & Clements as described in "Diversity, Conformity and Innovation: A Study of the Commercial Work of Morgan, Walls & Clements 1920-1940", UCLA Master of Arts thesis by Diane Williams Hlava, 1988. The Morgan, Walls & Clements collection is held by the Henry E. Huntington Library in San Marino, California.

<sup>14</sup> Henry Whitey, *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects, Deceased* (Los Angeles: Hennessy & Ingalls, Inc., 1970), p. 425-6.

**Sources**

Architectural plans by Morgan Walls & Clements, 11 April, 1929.

Boyle Workman, *The City that Grew, 1840-1936* (Los Angeles: Southland Publishing Co, 1935), 94.

City of Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, "Application to Alter, Repair or Demolish," Permit No. 31114, 4 December, 1929.

City of Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, "Application to Alter, Repair or Demolish" Permit No. 26209, 10 October, 1929.

City of Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, "Application to Alter, Repair or Demolish" Permit No. 10536, 17 August, 1934.

City of Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, "Application to Alter, Repair or Demolish," Permit No. 64864, 27 May, 1982.

City of Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, "Application to Alter, Repair or Demolish," Permit No. 64864, 27 May, 1982.

Clary, William W., *History of the Law Firm of O'Melveny & Myers 1885-1965* (Los Angeles: Privately Printed, 1966) Volume I, p.167-169.

Diane Williams Hlava, "Diversity, Conformity and Innovation: A Study of the Commercial Work of Morgan, Walls & Clements 1920-1940", UCLA Master of Arts thesis, 1988.

Grant Deed, Book 71, Page 234, 7 December, 1879.

Grant Deed, Book 88, Page 182, 17 March, 1882.

Grant Deed, Book 71, Page 236, 8 December 1879.

Grant Deed, Book 4530, Page 35, 3 March 1911

Harris Newmark, *Sixty Years in Southern California 1853-1913: Containing the Reminiscences of Harris Newmark* (Los Angeles: Dawson's Book Shop, 1984), 372, 514.

Henry Whitey, *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects, Deceased* (Los Angeles: Hennessy & Ingalls, Inc., 1970), p. 425-6.

John C. Poppeliers, S. Allen Champers, Jr., and Nancy B. Schwartz, editors, *What Style Is It?* (Washington, DC: The Preservation Press, 1983), p. 61.

*Los Angeles Times*, "Steel and Granite Office Building for Seventh and Spring Streets. 8 January, 1911.

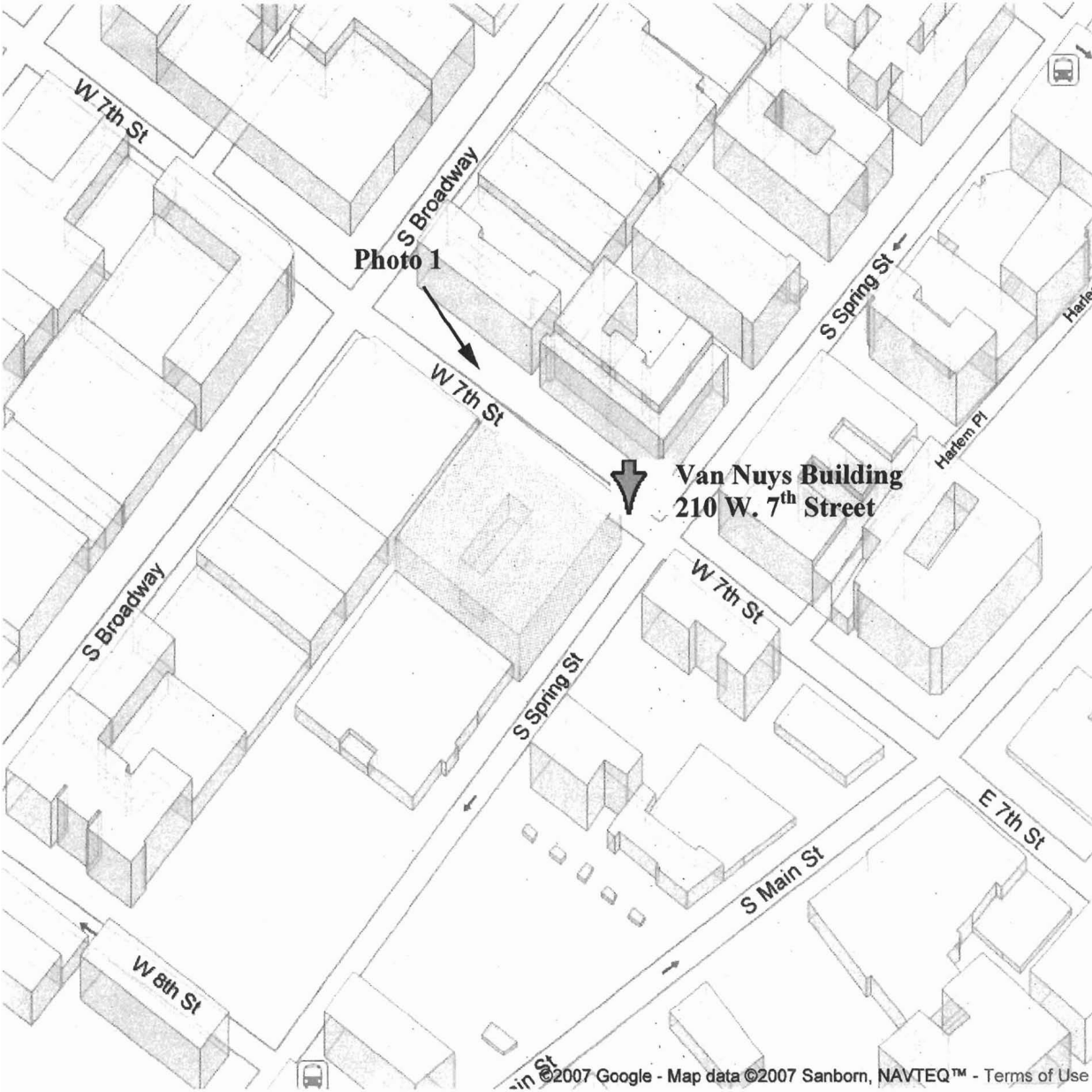
*Los Angeles Times*; 1 January, 1913; display ad.

*Los Angeles Times*; 30 March, 1922, "Prominent Architect Succumbs", p. 111.

Mulholland, Catherine, *The Owensmouth Baby: The Making of a San Fernando Valley Town* (Northridge: Santa Susana Press, 1987), 4-5.

Richard Longstreth, *City Center to Regional Mall* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), 75.

Tom Sitton, "Spring Street Financial District," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Statement of Significance, October 14, 1977.



**Figure 1:** Site map, Van Nuys Building is highlighted in orange.





## City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning

08/30/2007

### PARCEL PROFILE REPORT

#### PROPERTY ADDRESSES

212 W 7TH ST  
210 W 7TH ST  
204 W 7TH ST  
701 S SPRING ST

#### ZIP CODES

90014

#### RECENT ACTIVITY

None

#### CASE NUMBERS

CPC-2005-361-CA  
CPC-2005-1124-CA  
CPC-2005-1122-CA  
CPC-1986-606-GPC  
CPC-1985-342-ZC  
ORD-164307-SA1865  
ZV-1980-121-ZV  
ZV-1979-255-ZV  
ZA-1989-1151-ZV  
CND-79-474-ZV  
PKG-4987  
PKG-4986  
AFF-54337  
AFF-50812  
AFF-50811  
PRIOR-07/29/1962

#### Address/Legal Information

PIN Number: 127-5A211 78  
Area (Calculated): 17,110.1 (sq ft)  
Thomas Brothers Grid: PAGE 634 - GRID F5  
Assessor Parcel Number: 5144015033  
Tract: ORD'S SURVEY  
Map Reference: M R 53-66/73  
Block: 24  
Lot: FR 5  
Arb (Lot Cut Reference): None  
Map Sheet: 127-5A211

#### Jurisdictional Information

Community Plan Area: Central City  
Area Planning Commission: Central  
Neighborhood Council: Downtown Los Angeles  
Council District: CD 14 - Jose Huizar  
Census Tract #: 2073.00  
LADBS District Office: Los Angeles Metro

#### Planning and Zoning Information

Special Notes: None  
Zoning: C5-4D  
Zoning Information (ZI): ZI-2374 Los Angeles State  
Enterprise Zone  
ZI-940 Central Business District  
Redevelopment Project  
Regional Center Commercial  
See Plan Footnotes  
Central City  
None  
No  
Yes  
None  
US-79000489: Spring Street  
Financial District  
Available  
None  
None  
None  
No  
No  
Downtown Adaptive Reuse  
Incentive Area  
Eligible  
Central Business District  
Redevelopment Project  
City Center Redevelopment  
Project  
Yes  
Yes  
None  
No  
No

General Plan Land Use:  
Plan Footnote - Site Req.:  
Additional Plan Footnotes:  
Specific Plan Area:  
Design Review Board:  
Historic Preservation Review:  
Historic Preservation Overlay Zone:  
Other Historic Designations:

Other Historic Survey Information:  
Mills Act Contract:  
POD - Pedestrian Oriented Districts:  
CDO - Community Design Overlay:  
Streetscape:  
Sign District:  
Adaptive Reuse Incentive Area:

35% Density Bonus:  
CRA - Community Redevelopment Agency:

Central City Parking:  
Downtown Parking:  
Building Line:  
500 Ft School Zone:  
500 Ft Park Zone:

#### Assessor Information

Assessor Parcel Number: 5144015033  
Parcel Area (Approximate): 26,528.0 (sq ft)  
Use Code: 0550 - 5 or more units (5 stories or less)

Building Class:	Not Available
Assessed Land Val.:	\$1,940,094
Assessed Improvement Val.:	\$24,328,253
Year Built:	1913
Last Owner Change:	03/11/02
Last Sale Amount:	\$0
Number of Units:	299
Number of Bedrooms:	0
Number of Bathrooms:	0
Building Square Footage:	267,890.0 (sq ft)
Tax Rate Area:	3264
Deed Reference No.:	None

**Additional Information**

Airport Hazard:	None
Coastal Zone:	None
Farmland:	Area not Mapped
Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone:	No
Fire District No. 1:	Yes
Fire District No. 2:	Yes
Flood Zone:	None
Hazardous Waste / Border Zone Properties:	No
Methane Hazard Site:	Methane Buffer Zone
High Wind Velocity Areas:	No
Hillside Grading:	No
Oil Wells:	None
Alquist-Priolo Fault Zone:	No
Distance to Nearest Fault:	7.97949 (km)
Landslide:	No
Liquefaction:	No

**Economic Development Areas**

Business Improvement District:	Fashion District
Federal Empowerment Zone:	Los Angeles
Renewal Community:	No
Revitalization Zone:	Central City
State Enterprise Zone:	Los Angeles State Enterprise Zone
Targeted Neighborhood Initiative:	None

**Public Safety**

Police Information:	
Bureau:	Central
Division / Station:	Central
Report District:	163
Fire Information:	
District / Fire Station:	9
Battalion:	1
Division:	1
Red Flag Restricted Parking:	No

## CASE SUMMARIES

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

**Case Number:** CPC-2005-361-CA

**Required Action(s):** CA-CODE AMENDMENT

**Project Description(s):** CODE AMENDMENT TO UPDATE RESIDENTIAL STANDARDS AND INCENTIVIZE HOUSING IN THE CENTRAL CITY AREA.

**Case Number:** CPC-2005-1124-CA

**Required Action(s):** CA-CODE AMENDMENT

**Project Description(s):** TO REQUIRE PROJECTS IN THE CENTRAL CITY COMMUNITY PLAN TO COMPLY WITH DESIGN AND STREETScape GUIDELINES

**Case Number:** CPC-2005-1122-CA

**Required Action(s):** CA-CODE AMENDMENT

**Project Description(s):** INCENTIVES FOR HTE PRODUCTION OF AFFORDABLE AND WORKFORCE HOUSING IN THE CENTRAL CITY PLAN AREA

**Case Number:** CPC-1986-606-GPC

**Required Action(s):** GPC-GENERAL PLAN/ZONING CONSISTENCY (AB283)

**Project Description(s):** GENERAL PLAN/ZONE CONCSISTENCY - CENTRAL CITY AREA - COMMUNITYWIDE ZONE CHANGES AND COMMUNITY PLAN CHNAGES TO BRING THE ZONING INTO CONSISTENCY WITH THE COMMUNITY PLAN. INCLUDING CHANGESOF HEIGHT AS NEEDED

**Case Number:** CPC-1985-342-ZC

**Required Action(s):** ZC-ZONE CHANGE

**Project Description(s):** ZONE CHANGE FROM M2, C5 AND CM TO (Q)C4

**Case Number:** ZV-1980-121-ZV

**Required Action(s):** ZV-ZONE VARIANCE

**Project Description(s):** TO PERMIT THE CONVERSION OF AN EXISTING ELEVEN-STORY, COMMERCIAL OFFICE BUILDINGINTO A 299-UNIT SENIOR CITIZEN HOUSING FACILITY INVOLVING THE USE OF TWO AD- JACENT BUILDINGS IDENTIFIED AS ANNEX BUILDINGS 1 AND 2, WITH 81 PARKING SPACES IN SAID ANNEX BUILDINGS RESERVED FOR THE SENIOR CITIZEN HOUS ...

**Case Number:** ZV-1979-255-ZV

**Required Action(s):** ZV-ZONE VARIANCE

**Project Description(s):** Data Not Available

**Case Number:** ZA-1989-1151-ZV

**Required Action(s):** ZV-ZONE VARIANCE

**Project Description(s):** TO PERMIT DRIVEWAY AND RAMP SYSTEM OF THE ADJOINING BUILDING TO BE USED FOR THE ABOVE ADDRESS IN THE C5-4-D ZONE.

**Case Number:** CND-79-474-ZV

**Required Action(s):** ZV-ZONE VARIANCE

**Project Description(s):** Data Not Available

## DATA NOT AVAILABLE

ORD-164307-SA1865

PKG-4987

PKG-4986

AFF-54337

AFF-50812

AFF-50811

PRIOR-07/29/1962



Address: 212 W 7TH ST  
 APN: 5144015033  
 PIN #: 127-5A211 78

Tract: ORD'S SURVEY  
 Block: 24  
 Lot: FR 5  
 Arb: None

Zoning: C5-4D  
 General Plan: Regional Center Commercial