MODERN SKYLINE

Architecture and Development in the Financial District and Bunker Hill area

Docent Reference Manual

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ABOUT THE TOUR

This tour covers some of the newer portions of the downtown Los Angeles skyline. Almost none of the buildings are more than fifty years old – the traditional benchmark for being considered historic. It is admittedly a somewhat unusual theme for a tour by a preservation organization. However, as the saying goes, “it doesn’t have to be old to be classic,” and the understanding and preservation of modern and contemporary architecture are fast becoming important issues.

This tour will illustrate some of the challenges faced in preservation, such as the economics of adaptive reuse and the aesthetics of building an addition to a historic structure. It will discuss some of the issues of development, such as how buildings reflect a changing corporate image. It will also address the changing concepts of downtown: how does the city relate to the people who live and work in it? For example, there were no parks around the old financial district of Spring Street in its heyday, yet the “new” financial district is full of green spaces, fountains, and artwork.

The Central Business District explored in this tour is composed chiefly of post-World War II buildings. Most of the buildings are constructed in a style loosely known as Corporate International emphasizing skin-like façades of steel, glass, and marble. Efficiency is stressed in these structures: numerous floors increase the available office space, a repetitive façade keeps costs for construction and maintenance low, and a streamlined look advertises an efficient/modern workplace. However, in materials, placement, and form, many of these contemporary structures relate and refer to their more historic neighbors, incorporating some of the elements of Art Deco and Moderne style architecture.

It can be hard for preservationists to understand and embrace architecture of the recent past. It is generally with time that the qualities of a particular style or era are recognized. In the 1980s it seemed ridiculous to care about 1960s architecture; yet later on, 1960s styles were embraced as “retro” and now are being looked at and studied with appreciation. For the 1970s and 1980s, the conversation has hardly begun.

The Conservancy has been at the forefront of advocacy for the recent past, facilitating discussion and understanding of the future importance of buildings that, while no longer new, haven’t yet reached an age where their design style is considered “classic.” The conversation on recent past and contemporary architecture needs to be started so that the landmarks of the future are noted and preserved.
GAS COMPANY TOWER
(555 West Fifth Street)

Architect: Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM);
Richard Keating, Principal Architect

Cost: $337 million
Floors: 52    Height: 749 feet    Square footage: 1,336,000
Style: Late Modern

About the Architect: Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) is one of the world’s leading architectural firms and creator of such landmarks as Lever House, New York (1952); John Hancock Center, Chicago (1970), and the Willis (formerly Sears) Tower, Chicago (1974). Richard Keating began his career at Skidmore, Owings & Merrill in 1968 and was partner-in-charge of the Houston and Los Angeles offices during his 20-year tenure.

Features of Building Exterior: Typical of contemporary skyscrapers, the Gas Company Building is sheathed in glass and metal, with a granite base. Sited on a slope, a small court of public retail/restaurant space is accessed from the street level at 5th Street, near to Grand Avenue.

    Designed to house the Gas Company offices, the tenant is represented not only in the art and decoration of the tower, but in the shape of the actual structure itself. As designed by Richard Keating, the building rises in a series of layers that are stepped back cut back at the top to reveal an oval tower meant to symbolize a gas flame, the trademark of the client. On the west side of the building is a triangular column-like feature, perhaps the filament of that flame.

    Facing the back of the Gas Company Tower, on the wall of the Pacific Telephone Building, is a mural by famed New York Artist Frank Stella, which was commissioned as the Gas Company’s “percent for art.” Titled “Dusk,” it explores the ideas of motion and travel. Between the mural and the Gas Company Building is a water feature of low fountains, and a small garden courtyard that overlooks the city.

Features of the Building Interior: The interior is not accessible to tours. However, some of the lobby features can be viewed from a viewing platform on the Grand Avenue side. A unique feature of the lobby is the extension of the fountains from the north side into the lobby, under thick panels of glass.

About the Building: The building sits on a steeply sloped property that was once occupied by the First United German Methodist Church, a parking garage, and the San Carlos Hotel. For many years there was a Googie’s Coffee Shop on the ground floor of the hotel, with its trademark modern wraparound signage and neon. (Note: the original Googie’s that gave the design style its name was designed by John Lautner and located in West Hollywood).

    Along with US Bank Tower across the street, the Gas Company Tower project was part of the transfer of air-rights deal that paid for the addition to the Central Library (see US Bank Tower, page 11).

    The building has been featured in several movies, notably in Collateral (2004) starring Tom Cruise.
BUILDING ON THE PAST: THE ARCHITECTURE OF ADDITIONS

What makes a successful addition? Should additions differ in style from the original building? Would a seamless attachment be a more effective way of approaching an architectural addition?

Architects strive to design a structure that works in and of itself, a building whose parts relate in a particular way. When new construction adds to a building, the design of the original is heavily impacted and often disrupted. Is this disruption minimized best by copying the original as closely as possible, or by building something that only referencesthe original? It is generally accepted that differentiating the old from the new best maintains the integrity of the original.

The Secretary of the Interior has specific standards that address the issue of architectural addition:

- The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
- New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property.
  - The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
- New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

These standards encourage new additions to complement the original, rather than clashing or competing with it, yet also to be clearly different from the original. If an addition is too similar to the original, it can create a false and inauthentic sense of a building’s history by making unclear what is historic and what is new.

When considering the challenges and successes of any architectural addition to an historic structure, one must first consider its interaction not only with the structure to which it is attached, but the environment that surrounds it. Achieving a balance between the historic and modern is one of the greatest difficulties in establishing an effective design for an addition.

EXAMPLES OF ADDITIONS AT FIFTH AND GRAND:
- One Bunker Hill “greenhouses” and restaurant mall
- Biltmore Tower
- Tom Bradley Wing of the Central Library
ONE BUNKER HILL  originally Southern California Edison Co. Bldg.  
(601 W 5th Street)

**Architect:** Allison & Allison  
**Construction began:** 1929  
**Completed:** 1931  

**Floors:** 12  
**Height:** 222 feet  
**Square footage:** 273,000  
**Style:** Art Deco  
**Designation:** Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument #347

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**About the Architects:** James Edward Allison (1870-1955) and David Clark Allison (1881-1962) were brothers who had a successful Los Angeles architecture office, practicing from 1910 to 1942. The firm designed Royce Hall (1928-1929) and a number of other buildings at UCLA in the late 1920s and early 1930s, as well as many important churches and schools, including Wilshire Boulevard Temple (1922-1929) by David C. Allison with A. Edelman and S. Tilden Norton. The firm moved its offices to One Bunker Hill when the project was completed.

**Features of the Building Exterior:** Setbacks as well as inset corners give the building its distinctively Art Deco profile. Rising to 222 feet, the building has a tower that extends 72 feet above the 150 foot occupied space height limit. The first three stories are clad with limestone, while the upper stories and central tower are faced with buff-colored terra cotta. On the façade, the spandrels contain a characteristic Art Deco pattern, a square-in-a-diamond-in-a-square, a motif repeated in the central tower, lobby floor, and elevator ceilings. Three bas-relief panels over the entrance by artist Merrell Gage, represent “Generation,” “Distribution,” and “Utilization” of electric power.

The building was renovated in the 1980s, which resulted in the addition of the greenhouse-like enclosures on upper levels. The street-level shops were added in 1993 when the U.S. Bank Tower was built, and the access road in front of the south side was taken out. The recent alterations to the exterior of One Bunker Hill are considered by most to be successful as they do not interfere greatly with the look of the building and do not destroy the original materials.

**Features of the Building Interior:** (Note: the interior is not included on this tour, but is highlighted on Art Deco and Historic Downtown.) The elaborate, colorful lobby features two dozen different kinds of marble, Egyptian-influenced details, and murals.

**About the Building:** This building foreshadows the development of postwar skyscrapers both in its structure and style. At the forefront of modern engineering and technology, One Bunker Hill was one of the first steel-framed “earthquake proof” constructions in Los Angeles. All of the earthquake bracing and special connections for resisting earthquake stresses are welded and riveted, resulting in an unusually strong building. A 1929 L.A. Times article touted that “the 3500 tons of structural steel to be used, when finally put in place, will have resolved itself into the largest single welding job in the history of building construction.”

The electrical installations provided for all building services, including heating, lighting, cooling, circulating ice water systems, and high-speed elevators. One Bunker Hill was one of the first all electrically heated and cooled buildings in the western United States.
BILTMORE TOWER  (500 S. Grand Avenue)

**Architect:** Landau Partnership  
**Construction began:** 1985  
**Completed:** 1987

*NOTE: Biltmore Hotel, Schultze & Weaver, 1923-1928*

**Floors:** 25  
**Height:** 340 feet  
**Square footage:** 135,000

**Style:** Postmodern

**About the Architects:** The Landau Partnership, is now known as TLP, and expanded it project base to include art, entertainment, and event production, as well as architecture.

**Features of Building Exterior:** The Biltmore Tower is clad in brick and cast stone. The first nine stories of the building contain a parking structure and are clad almost entirely in brick without windows. The top third of the building has a geometric pattern of sectioning. It is octagonal in shape with bay windows on four sides. The gabled copper-clad roof disguises a rooftop helipad.

- On the Grand Avenue façade an section of the lower part of the tower has mismatched bricks that looks like a patch job. Some years ago, an a car inside the structure hit the wall and knocked bricks loose, which needed to be replaced.

**About the Building:** The Biltmore Tower project accompanied the 1984-1987 renovation of the Biltmore Hotel, which restored many of the earlier details of the hotel and updated its technology. This building in particular demonstrates the difficulties of building additions on historic structures. The old Biltmore Hotel has a strong relationship between its parts, having a very formal Beaux-Arts design that recalls an Italian palazzo. From the very start of the design process, the architects had the challenging problem determining how much could be added to accommodate the needs of an office building without marring the integrity of the original structure.

To better integrate a tall tower structure into the symmetrical design of the Beaux-Arts style hotel, the architects chose materials that closely matched those of the original building and included a continuous bay on all four elevations. To abide by the standards set by the Secretary of the Interior, the design of the new tower is distinct from the historic hotel. The windows are on a slightly larger scale than the original, and the octagonal copper roof adds a modern flair to the structure. The unusual shape of the roof along with the simplified, oversized architectural elements of the top floors are elements often associated with the Postmodern movement.

It is difficult to assess the impact of this architectural addition as it first appeared, as it has very little specific relation to its contemporary surroundings. The area directly around the project has changed drastically since the tower’s construction. The Library Tower (1990), Gas Company Tower (1991) and the Library Addition (1993) were all completed after the Biltmore Tower and affected the way the tower relates to its environment. What was once a distinctive tower on the downtown skyline is today overshadowed by giant office buildings.

In 1988, the building received an award from the Downtown Breakfast Club (comprised of business leaders involved in a variety of industries) as the top winner of the Best of Downtown Architecture that year.
Architect: Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer Associates; principal architect Norman Pfeiffer
NOTE: Original library: 1926, Bertram Goodhue and Carlton Winslow

Cost: $152 million (including renovation)
Floors: 8 (4 below ground)   Square footage: 330,000 for addition (historic building 225,000)
Style: Modern with Art Deco/Moderne influences

About the Architect: Well known for their sensitive treatment of historic buildings, Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer Associates (now Pfeiffer Partners) has worked on renovations and additions for many important buildings, including the Los Angeles Griffith Observatory, the Los Angeles Union Station, the Boston Public Library, and Radio City Music Hall. The firm specializes in feasibility studies, rehabilitation of historic structures, and new design and master plans for cultural and education projects.

Design Principal Norman Pfeiffer (1940 - ) was born in Seattle and attended the University of Washington before moving to New York to pursue architecture. He came to Los Angeles when Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer opened an Los Angeles office in 1986.

Features of Building Exterior: The building addition is on the east side of the original structure. As an addition to an historic building, it was important that it did not overwhelm the historic structure. The initial design by architect Norman Pfeiffer was rejected by the Cultural Affairs Commission (which has final design approval on all structures on city property) over concern it challenged the scale of the historic library. The architect concurred and revised his design to use a less radical and more traditional approach.

The addition, while not attempting to copy the exact style of the original Library, works off of the symmetry of the 1926 building. The section of the addition that is directly attached to the original Library is very similar in the color and window placement. The use of green terra cotta links the building stylistically to other 1920s landmarks in the city. The section of the addition facing Grand Avenue is composed of green terra cotta, tan stucco and large windows. At the base of the Grand Avenue side are smaller windows that allow a view of the interior of the addition and the length of the central atrium.

Features of Building Interior: This tour does not access the library interior. The Historic Downtown tour visits the Rotunda, but not the addition. Those wishing to learn more about the Central Library are encouraged to take one of the regularly-scheduled tours conducted by library docents, see www.lapl.org).

The 8-story addition with 4 of the floors below the entry level (street level on the 5th Street side) and four above, arranged around a central atrium that extends the full eight-story height. Escalators cascade down from level to level, and monumental green terracotta Egyptian-influenced columns also reach from the bottom level to the skylight. Three enormous chandeliers by artist Therman Statom represent the natural, man-made, and spiritual worlds.
**About the Building:** With the 330,000-square-foot addition in 1993, the Los Angeles Central Library became the largest public library in the western United States. To accommodate its construction, part of the Children’s Wing was destroyed, though most of its important architectural features were relocated or worked into the design of the new library. The southern portion of the Children’s Wing was preserved in its original location and includes the Art Room and Children’s Reading Room.

The firm of Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer was involved in the project from the early 1980s. Their ten-year effort began with master planning and program confirmation, as well as design of the addition. Brenda Levin and Associates supervised the restoration of the original building.

**Preservation and Reuse:** The Library was proposed for demolition in the mid-1970s. An outgrowth of the movement to save the library was the formation of the Los Angeles Conservancy in 1978. In 1983, after several years of public discussion, the City Council directed the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) to preserve the Library. However, the Library was further endangered in 1986 when two arson fires caused $22 million worth of damage. In 1987, the Whittier Narrows earthquake caused additional damage.

To address a severe need to expand the capacity of the Library and at the same time preserve the landmark Goodhue building, the developer Robert F. Maguire III and ARCO CEO Robert O. Anderson commissioned a private study in 1980 to try to find a way to achieve these seemingly incompatible ends. In the mid-1980s, guided by recommendations developed from this study, the Central Library embarked upon a major renovation directed by the CRA. The Library was to double in size with the addition of the East (Tom Bradley) Wing, but Goodhue’s building was to remain the “front door” of the Library. The project was to include the rehabilitation of the existing main library building, the construction of the new wing, a new landscaped West Garden built over a 600-car below-grade parking structure, and new landscaping, courtyards, and other street improvements surrounding the site.

The challenge of the project was how to pay for the expensive addition and rehabilitation. A financing plan, based on the recommendations of the 1980 study, was assembled by the CRA. Several financial incentives were employed, including the utilization of investment tax credits for certified historic rehabilitation of the Library, tax allocation bonds, and interest income on invested proceeds. The very complex financing continued to evolve over the decade and at one time included a sale-leaseback option which was ultimately not used.

One of the most creative solutions was the sale of the unused air rights (the vacant space from the top of the building to the maximum allowable building height on the site) of the Library. Under the terms of an agreement among the city, the CRA and the Library Commission, Maguire Thomas Partners purchased these rights for $125 million, almost the entire amount ($152 million) needed for the Library’s expansion. Maguire Partners was then able to “transfer” this unused space to adjacent properties, enabling construction of the two buildings exceeding normal height limits: the Library Tower and the Gas Company Tower. *(For more information see entry on US Bank Tower, page 11).*
The original landscaping of the West Lawn of the Central Library included a series of pools, anchored by a bronze relief, entitled “The Well of the Scribes.” The installation was designed by Goodhue, along with sculptor Lee Lawrie and philosopher Hartley Burr Alexander. By the late 1960s everything but the pool had been turned into a parking lot, and eventually the pool was a casualty as well.

When the library was renovated and expanded in the early 1990s, a decision was made to restore the West Lawn to park area. The overriding programmatic condition for the West Lawn was that the three central pools were to be rebuilt without alteration, as they originally had been designed by Bertram Goodhue.

The landscape architects were Santa Barbara-based Campbell & Campbell, working with Lawrence Halprin (see Bunker Hill Steps, page 13). “The design is an interpretation of Goodhue's original plan and thematic concept for the library – “The Light of Learning.” It re-establishes the three pools of the original central axis and creates a plaza forecourt for the new cafe pavilion. The articulation of the paving and walls extends the original vocabulary of the architecture into the garden.” (From the Campbell & Campbell website).

Southern California artist Jud Fine, in collaboration with Harry Reese, was commissioned to create a landscape/artwork utilizing Goodhue’s original layout. The resulting artwork, “Spine,” is based on the analogy of the structure of a book, with endsheets, a frontispiece, title page, etc. The pools themselves represent the spine of an open book and the steps represent pages. There are quotes on the stair risers that go from ancient writing to modern digital code, with the first step blank to symbolize the time before written language, and the top step blank step to symbolize the language of the future).

Artist’s statement: “The artistic and practical response to this “no alterations” constraint did not preclude additions. It was a given, however, that any additions would have to be in the spirit of Goodhue’s original design. Fortunately, Bertram Goodhue, posthumously, came to our aid. First and foremost, Goodhue was an architect who believed in a collaborative process of architecture. Goodhue believed that a public building should, from inception, be the result of a merging of the ideas and skills of architect, sculptor, painter, and conceptualist. … The Well of the Scribes (since lost) was a bronze relief, based on writers, writing, and historical codification across the world and throughout history, that anchored the three pools at the Flower Street entrance to the gardens. For the 1990s update, we determined that this concept would be the basis for the extension.” From “Spine” by Jud Fine and Harry Reese (1993, Los Angeles Library Association.)
U.S. BANK TOWER originally Library Tower    (633 W. Fifth Street.)

Architect: Pei Cobb Freed & Partners;  
Principal architects Henry Cobb and Harold Fredenburgh  


Cost: $315 million  
Floors: 73  
Height: 1018 feet  
Square footage: 1,300,000  
Style: Late Modern

About the Architects:  Henry Cobb (1926 - ) was born in Boston and educated at Harvard. As one of three founding principals of Pei Cobb Freed & Partners, Cobb been a part of the firm since its formation in 1955. The American Institute of Architects recognized the practice in 1968, when I. M. Pei & Partners (as the firm was then known) received the Institute's Architectural Firm Award. In 1992, Pei Cobb Freed & Partners received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the New York Society of Architects. Among the many civic, institutional, and office buildings for which Henry Cobb was the principal designer, one of the best known is the John Hancock Tower, Boston (1976). Harold Fredenburgh (1943-2016) worked on a number of iconic skyscrapers throughout the United States.

Features of the building’s exterior: According to the Pei Cobb Freed & Partners website, the tower was “shaped to create a memorable skyline image and yet grant primacy to Goodhue's library. It curves back deferentially from the small landmark to reorient its enormous mass while animating the area with dining, shops and a key urban connection: the new Bunker Hill Steps, which are adjacent to the tower, and afford the only direct pedestrian access between the previously separated upper and lower parts of downtown. As the backdrop to the library and also a new urban link, the tower makes its presence felt at street level not as a self-centered object but rather as one of several supporting actors on an urban stage where the unquestioned star is the historic library.”

The geometry of the building, with its triangular piers and sharp angles, as well as the cream and green color palate, also reference the architecture of the library, and the crenellated top at the top can be interpreted as a symbolic sunburst, echoing the one on the library’s pyramid.

As part of the development deal enabling construction of the tower, the Bunker Hill Steps (1990) were structurally integrated into its west side and provide storefront space to encourage pedestrian patronage of this public space (see next entry for description).

Features of Building Interior: Originally, the small, semicircular lobby was dominated by a 90-foot-wide mural depicting several angels.

In 2015, as part of a upgrade by new owners, the lobby has undergone an extensive redesign, and is expected to reopen in 2016 with a larger space and an enormous LED display.

About the Building: U.S. Bank Tower was, with the Gas Company Tower, one of the two buildings that resulted from the purchase of the air rights owned by the Central Library (see Central Library, preservation and reuse page 9). A difficult and complex negotiation, it took many hard-ball negotiators the better part of five years to hammer out the exact terms. On one side was the developer, Maguire Thomas Partners, looking for the best development deal; on the other side was the CRA, looking to cover the costs of renovating and expanding the Library. The extraordinary height of the tower was in part driven by the matrix of cost versus income, as the additional square
footage of the taller structure would provide needed income to the developer (and taxes to the city) to offset the cost of the project and reach the amount needed by the city to renovate the Library. The deal was signed in January of 1985, but it would be two more years before enough tenant lease agreements had been signed for construction to go forward.

For seismic safety, the building was installed with a curtain wall system able to accommodate seismic movement between each of the 73 floors without loss of structural integrity. The curtain wall utilizes a chevron truss composed of stone-supporting steel frames and glass-supporting aluminum frames. These elements are interrelated with more than 15,000 specially designed gyroscopic hinges and slides that compensate for seismic shock.

One of the tallest office buildings in the world when it was built, it is still one of the tallest on the west coast.

**Recent History:** In 2015, the building was sold for $367.5 million. The new owner, Singapore-based OUE Ltd., has begun a $50 million upgrade, creating an observation deck, display area, and restaurants at the top of the building, along with doing extensive remodeling to the street level exterior and street level lobby interior.
BUNKER HILL STEPS aka Library Steps (on Fifth Street between Grand and Flower)

Landscape Architect: Lawrence Halprin
Completed: 1990

About the Architect: Lawrence Halprin (1916-2009) was born in New York City, graduating from Harvard University in 1942 with a degree in landscape architecture. Following an apprenticeship with important landscape architect Thomas Church, during which he helped develop the contemporary California garden concept, Halprin opened his own office in 1949. Halprin was influenced by his wife (and often collaborator) Anna Schuman, a dancer. Some of the more celebrated of Halprin’s projects are Ghirardelli Square (1962-1968) and Embarcadero Plaza (1962-1972) in San Francisco. He also designed the Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial in Washington, D.C., with Robert Graham (designed 1974, completed 1997).

Halprin was involved in the redevelopment of Bunker Hill from its earliest days. In May 1969 Halprin’s firm was retained by the CRA as part of a team to come up with recommendations for the Bunker Hill Urban Renewal Project. The two-year study was completed in 1971.

Features of Structure: The Bunker Hill Steps create a split-landing streetscape that is structurally integrated into both the U.S. Bank Tower to the east and Citibank Plaza to the west. Made of pink stucco, terra cotta, and stone, the steps form a pedestrian environment that connects the top of Bunker Hill with the business district below.

On the east side sit Spanish-style arches that overlook the Citigroup building next door. A plaza at the top of the steps contains a pool that supplies water to the fountain, which continues down the central length of the steps. In the pool of water, atop a tall, thin pedestal is a bronze sculpture titled “The Source Figure” (1992) by Robert Graham. Integrated into the design of the steps are also works by other artists. The “sails” that are above the patios on the east side are by artist John Neary. Originally the wall and arches on the west side had a weathered appearance, which was the work of artist James Goodman.

About the structure: Lawrence Halprin designed this outdoor staircase, reminiscent of the Spanish Steps of Rome. It is placed to draw a relationship between the Los Angeles Public Library and the rest of Bunker Hill. The meandering path of the steps creates a continually changing view of the surrounding environment. Shrubs and trees are planted along its edges.

Development: Cost for the project was estimated at $1 million, and was part of the development deal for U.S. Bank Tower. It was reported that after all the deals were made to allow construction were agreed to, the CRA had one final demand: a park adjacent to the tower connecting 5th Street with upper Hope Street.
CITIGROUP CENTER
(444 Flower Street)

Architect: Albert C. Martin & Associates
Construction began: 1976   Completed: 1979

Floors: 48   Height: 625 feet   Square footage: 891,056
Style: Late Modern

About the Architects: See page 24

Features of Building Exterior: The boxy blue and silver office tower has an entrance plaza with a multi-level open atrium and retail plaza. Stepped open lobbies lead from the plaza to a rooftop garden on the third level that connects to the Bunker Hill Steps and circles around the building in a series of stairs and open areas.

Originally, the building’s entry plaza at the corner of 5th and Flower featured a grid of gray and white paving, planted with large palms. In 2011, the plaza was reconfigured, and terraced planters filled with drought-tolerant plants, fountains, and built-in benches were added. Partially blocking the corner from the street, it turned the plaza from a de facto grand entrance to the building into an urban park, fitted with tables, chairs, and umbrellas for cafés that front the plaza. The original palms were included in the redesign, as was the grid pattern.

History and anecdotes: The tower became a familiar icon to TV viewers in the late 1980s and early 1990s as the location of the offices of “L.A. Law.” AC Martin Partners, the firm that designed the building, has its offices here.

CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

“Cultural Landscape” is the current term used to describe parks, plazas, and other public spaces that are designed and landscaped.

Just as building design and architecture change with the times and go through phases and styles, so do public spaces such as plazas and parks. At the turn of the last century, parks were usually European in style, open with lots of trees, paved walkways, and a central fountain or bandstand. Often there were lots of benches, as it was assumed that these spaces would be used as public gathering areas.

The 1960s and 1970s saw the rise of the corporate plaza, wide open spaces that are not meant for lingering in, and which highlight the minimalist style, grand scale, and the functionality of the buildings that surround them. Many of these spaces are artistic and evocative, but are not necessarily people-friendly.

As tastes change and social gathering spaces regain importance, many of these stark plazas are being rethought to encourage more pedestrian use. Some, like Citigroup Plaza, are physically redesigned. Some, like City National Bank Plaza, are accessorized with people-friendly amenities such as tables and planters.

Preservation of Cultural Landscapes is a difficult topic. When social patterns change, public spaces are among the first impacted, and therefore the first to become obsolete. It takes creative thinking to see how re-programming a space might help re-energize it, as opposed to simply building something new in its place. An excellent source of information on this topic is the Cultural Landscape Foundation www.tclf.org.
Public Art at the Citigroup Center
The complex is also notable for the lavish amounts of public art located on its site.

- **“North, South, East, West”** (1982) by Michael Heizer. Location: Ground level at Fifth and Flower. The burnished stainless steel forms represent the four orientations (two rectangles for North, a reverse cone for East, an upright cone for South, and a wedge for West). (Note: Heizer is the artist for “Levitated Mass,” the installation with the boulder at LACMA).

- **“Shoshone”** (1981) by Mark Di Suvero. Location: On the deck above Flower Street, facing the Bonaventure Hotel. This 25-ton steel sculpture sits on the west side of the Citigroup Center and is aligned to frame the Bonaventure.

- **“Long Beach XXIII”** (1982) by Frank Stella. Location: Bottom level, near the elevators. This sculpture was actually a museum and gallery piece before it was purchased for $180,000 and mounted on a green marble wall next to the plaza lobby.


- **“Trench, Shafts, Pit, Tunnel, and Chambers”** (1982) by Bruce Nauman. Location: Fourth level roof garden, across from the Library. This piece is aligned on the plaza of the Citigroup Center to relate it to the Central Library across the street

**PERCENT FOR ART:** In 1985, Los Angeles adopted an Art in Public Places Policy, commonly known as the “Percent for Art” program. The Arts Development Fee ordinance requires developers of commercial or industrial projects (for ground-up buildings or additions) for which the total value of construction is $500,000 or more, to pay an arts fee equal to a percentage of the development cost (the percentage depends on the type of project).

A similar program is in place for city-owned property. The City passed a law in 1989 allocating one percent of all capital improvement cost to commission public artwork. DCA administers this program through its Public Art Division.

For additional information dca.publicart@lacity.org.
**550 SOUTH HOPE STREET** aka California Bank and Trust Building

**Architect:** Kohn Pedersen Fox; principal architect William Pederson  
**Construction began:** 1989  
**Completed:** 1991  
**Floors:** 28  
**Height:** 351 feet  
**Square Footage:** 572,000  
**Style:** Late Modern

**About the Architects:** Kohn Pedersen Fox (KPF) is an internationally renowned firm founded in 1976. KPF now have offices in New York, London, and Tokyo. Other works by the firm include 333 Wacker Drive (1984) in Chicago, the World Bank (1996) in Washington D.C., the Shanghai World Financial Center (2008), Heron Tower (2011) in London, and the International Commerce Center (2011) in Hong Kong. William Pedersen (1938- ), the founding design partner of KPF, is a graduate of University of Minnesota and MIT.

**Features of the Building Exterior:** This 28-story building is very sculptural in design. Each side of the tower’s façade is patterned differently and gives the impression of being composed of many slim boxes fitted around a central structure. The granite and glass form a highly woven pattern at the ground level and form the slightly convex shape of the west façade of the tower.

**About the Building:** The site was formerly occupied by the Church of the Open Door (1915). It was red-tagged after the 1987 Whittier Narrows earthquake and demolished.

The California Bank and Trust Building is placed in a visually awkward spot, blocked by high-rises and closely confined on all sides. However, a series of foot paths linked with those of the Los Angeles Public Library create an inviting setting for pedestrians.

Following the era of the glass box, and informed by the Postmodern movement, contemporary skyscraper architecture of the 1990s began to experiment with curves and varying layers, this was a change from the sleek and efficient boxes of the 1970s and 1980s which were popular at the height of the Corporate International era.

**Public Art on the Site:** “Site, Memory, Reflection” (1992), by Lita Albuquerque, is a single work of art consisting of architectural and sculptural elements worked into the pathway around the California Bank and Trust Building. Albuquerque’s work draws from the ceremonial architecture of ancient civilizations while staying intensely modern.

Elements of the work include a 70-foot diameter sunburst imbedded in the pavement of the Hope Street cul-de-sac that references the sun design on the pyramid tower of the library. Beyond the pyramid the sunburst-like crown of Library Tower is visible.

Underneath the granite stairs on the south side of the California Bank and Trust Building sits a small “Room of Memory.” Flanked by gold doors, the small, church-like room contains a monitor playing a video that retells the history of the Church of the Open Door, which occupied the site until it was damaged beyond repair in the 1987 earthquake.

A blue line runs up the granite stairway on the south side of the building and connects a blue medallion on the sidewalk to a polished gold medallion on a black granite monolith, 52 feet high. The height of the medallion is exactly the length of the stairs.
611 PLACE originally Crocker-Citizen’s Plaza, later AT&T Building  
(611 W 6th Street)

Architect: William L. Pereira & Associates  
Construction began: 1966  
Completed: 1968

Cost: $35 million  
Floors: 42  
Height: 623 feet  
Square footage: 1,150,000

Style: Corporate International

About the Architect: William Pereira (1909-1985) was born in Chicago and educated at the University of Illinois. He worked with Holabird & Root in Chicago before establishing his own firm in 1931, where he was active until his death in 1985. His resume lists an astounding number of projects - more than 425 from 1931 to 1983. After moving to Los Angeles in 1938, Pereira worked in Hollywood on such films as This Gun for Hire (visual effects, 1942), Jane Eyre (art director, 1944), and Johnny Angel (producer, 1945). Retiring from films, Pereira returned to architecture. He was a professor of architecture at USC from 1949 to 1957. Pereira partnered with Charles Luckman from 1950 to 1958, and the firm became known for its large-scale buildings and sculptural use of concrete and glass. Together they designed the LAX Theme Building (1955-1961, with Welton Becket & Associates, and Paul Williams), CBS Television City Studio (1953), and the Disneyland Hotel (1958) among many others.

Soon after the dissolution of the firm, Pereira embarked on a series of master plans, including the development of the 5,000-acre Bishop Ranch, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), the Malibu campus of Pepperdine University, and Irvine Ranch in central Orange County, as well as the master plan for USC. He ultimately completed ten buildings at USC. Perhaps his most famous building is the Transamerica Pyramid in San Francisco (1972).

Features of Building Exterior: The building has a textured, vertically striped façade with three-dimensional white piers alternating with dark windows. The first few stories of the building sit separately from the cruciform towers and hang over the sidewalk, providing a shaded pedestrian walkway and street-level retail. The west facing side of the building, where most of the systems are placed, is a monolithic windowless expanse of concrete.

Historical and Architectural Significance: Unlike many skyscrapers that rise uninterrupted from the sidewalk, the height of this 42-story office building is not readily apparent due to the overhang that creates a pedestrian walkway and makes it difficult to see the tower. The tower’s cruciform shape reputedly allowed one third more window space than a rectangular building of the same area.

In eras of busy development, each new building is touted as the largest, fanciest, or tallest. A Los Angeles Times article from 1968 on the opening of the Crocker-Citizens Center notes: “Crocker-Citizens Plaza’s neighboring tower, the Union Bank at 5th and Figueroa [under construction at the time], also is 42 stories high. It is on higher ground, 305 feet above sea level compared to the new structure’s 275 feet level – but because Crocker-Citizens floor-to-ceiling areas are larger, the new tower is taller by 39 feet.”
AON CENTER (originally UCB Tower, later First Interstate Tower) (707 Wilshire)

**Architect:** Charles Luckman and Associates  
**Construction began:** 1970  
**Completed:** 1973

**Cost:** $73.5 million  
**Floors:** 62  
**Height:** 858 feet  
**Square footage:** 1.1 million  
**Style:** High Corporate International

**About the Architect:** The only child of immigrant parents, Charles Luckman (1909-1999) graduated from the University of Illinois with a degree in architecture in 1931. The Great Depression left little work for architects so Luckman worked as an advertising draftsman and then as a salesman. He then worked for Pepsodent, where he rose quickly from sales manager to company president. *Time* magazine called Luckman the “boy wonder of American business.” In 1936, Lever Brothers purchased Pepsodent, and by 1946 Luckman was president of that firm too, and he was featured on the cover of *Time Magazine*. Collaboration with architects Skidmore Owings & Merrill on Lever Brothers’ Park Avenue headquarters (the famous Lever House) renewed Luckman’s interest in architecture. He resigned from Lever Brothers in 1950 to return to architecture practice.

Luckman came to Los Angeles and joined his former classmate at UI, William Pereira, in the partnership of Pereira & Luckman, from 1950 through 1958. In 1958, Luckman formed his own firm, Charles Luckman Associates. His design principles were formed by his decades of corporate experience. To Luckman, the client’s needs were superior to the architect’s vision. This philosophy, combined with his expert management, grew the firm within a decade to the fifth largest in the country within a decade. Notable buildings designed by his office include: the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center (1962) in Houston, the Prudential Building (1964) in Boston, and The Forum (1967) in Inglewood.

**Features of Building Exterior:** The tower is of black glass and steel, with inverted corners clad with aluminum, rising uninterrupted with an aluminum band at the roof line. Very slightly tapered, the base was designed to be 5-1/2 feet wider than the apex. With virtually no ornamentation other than the aluminum reverse corners, the building is an uninterrupted column, whose design accentuates the height of the building.

Renovations in 2008 by architects Johnson Fain modified the ground floor appearance by putting new, more transparent, curtain walls at the north and south entrances. The escalators on the north side were sided with bright primary colors to emphasize the “X” pattern they form.

**Miscellany:**
- The UCB Tower was the tallest building in the United States west of the Mississippi from 1974 to 1982.
- An estimated 12,000 sheets of 5’x7’ glass were used to cover the approximately 384,000 square feet of area, reported by the *Los Angeles Times* to be “enough to satisfy the window requirements of more than 1,250 average-sized homes.”
- In 1988 a fire on the 12th floor ended with one person dead and five floors destroyed. Damage was estimated at $50 million.
**MODERN BUILDINGS AND PRESERVATION**

The need for restoration and rehabilitation of a building’s construction material is not limited to older “historic” buildings. It can be surprising to note that buildings of the 1960s and 1970s may also require conservation. As architects experiment with new materials (such as aluminum or titanium), the way these materials age when used in construction might not be fully understood. In many cases new protocols have to be developed to guide conservation and/or replacement of materials that began to be widely used in architecture only recently.

As an example, in 2009 the Spectra Company was hired to restore the Aon Center’s aluminum corners, which had begun to deteriorate. Spectra came up with a plan to clean, restore, and seal the aluminum with protective coating. This was about the same time that protocols were being developed to determine whether to restore or replace the deteriorating aluminum used extensively at the Century Plaza Hotel in Century City.

**A VISUAL TIME LINE**

When describing the evolution of skyscraper design from Deco to Postmodern, it helps to show tourgoers a series of buildings to illustrate that progression. On 5th Street, and on 6th Street, between Grand and Flower, there are places where most of the major architectural styles are visible and you can point to them in date order to show the progression of styles.

- California Club (Robert Farquhar, 1930) – **Beaux-Arts**
- Central Library (1922-1926) – **Art Deco**
- Pegasus/General Petroleum (1949) – **Corporate Modern** (note ‘fins’)
- The Standard/Superior Oil (1955) – **Corporate Modern** (note flattening of façade)
- 611 Place/Crocker-Citizens Plaza (1969) – **Corporate International** (note height, exterior ornamentation)
- Aon Center/UCB Tower, (1973) – **High Corporate International** (note lack of ornamentation)
- Biltmore Tower (1978) – **Postmodern** (note oversize elements at roofline)
- 505 South Hope Street/California Bank and Trust (1992) – **Late Modern/Post Modern** (note breaking out of the box)
ADAPTIVE REUSE

Historic buildings are particularly vulnerable to demolition when they lose their tenants or change owners. That is often the time when a decision is made to tear the building down and erect another structure. Economics drive development, and in many cases an older building may not be considered as marketable as a newly constructed one. As much as a developer may appreciate the historic significance of a building, it has to make financial sense for them to preserve it. The rehabilitation and restoration of historic structures for use other than their original purpose can help to balance the conservation of the past with the needs of development and economic stimulation.

An historic building may be renovated for use by another client, often for a fraction of the cost of a new building. Adaptive reuse, when done following the rehabilitation standards of the Secretary of the Interior, preserves the building’s important architectural features while meeting the needs and expectations of the developer. Structures from the 1940s and 1950s are great candidates for restoration and reuse. Younger in age, they often need less work and are more easily technologically updated than earlier structures.

Adaptive reuse has been a successful way of preventing the destruction of many historic structures and has promoted a greater sensitivity toward architectural styles and aesthetics of the past. In the downtown Central Business District, two recent subjects of adaptive reuse are the Superior Oil and General Petroleum Buildings.
DOWNTOWN STANDARD originally Superior Oil Building (550 S. Flower Street)

Architect: Claud Beelman
Completed: 1955

Floors: 12  Height: 156 feet  Square footage: 146,110
Style: Corporate Modern
Designation: Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument #686
Listed in the National Register of Historic Places

About the Architect: Claud Beelman (1884-1963) was born in Ohio. The early phase of Beelman’s career was his association with the architect Aleck Curlett, which began in 1921. The firm of Curlett & Beelman designed many buildings, among them the Barker Bros. Building (1925) on Seventh Street, and the Elks Lodge (1927) near MacArthur Park. Beelman designed many major buildings on his own throughout his long career, including the Eastern Columbia Building (1930). A gap in Beelman’s work occurs between his redesign of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Hall (1938, now demolished) and the design of several important office buildings in the mid-1950s. Significant among the later buildings is the United California Bank Building (1959) on Spring Street, which was the first office tower built downtown following the removal of the 150 foot height limit in 1957.

Features of Building Exterior: The Superior Oil Building is a twelve-story, square, steel-framed structure with exterior concrete shear walls. The flat roof is surrounded by a parapet. A small box-like structure housing the mechanical tower sits on the roof.

Above the first story of black granite, the office building is virtually identical on every side. Each façade is fourteen window bays wide and consists of white marble covering concrete piers. It is one of the few marble-clad buildings in downtown. Recessed concrete spandrels are clad in ribbed stainless steel and the windows consist of single panels of green-tinted Solex glass. Solex is a ‘solar control’ tinted glass which debuted in 1952, touted to reduce the impact of heat from the sun, and therefore save on air-conditioning.

Features of Building Interior: All that remains of the original interior is the elevator lobby located on Sixth Street. The doors have stylized “S” door handles which stand for Superior Oil. The lobby is clad in black marble, with steel details. A frieze of nickel silver over the exit doors depicts a detailed picture of oil derricks and refineries. A world clock upon the wall gave a digital reading of the time in fifteen international cities, connecting Los Angeles with the rest of the world and pointing to its new position as a figure in world trade. A large globe once stood where the organ is now.

About the Building: In design, the Superior Oil Building combines the Corporate Modern style with Moderne detailing. Use of steel and glass, a consistent exterior program, and absence of projecting decoration are hallmarks of the Corporate Modern style. The presence of strong vertical lines created by alternating marble with steel and glass, as well as the use of textured materials, carry over from the Moderne style. Beelman used almost the same design a few years later on the United California Bank Building on Spring Street (discussed on the Downtown Renaissance tour).

Note how at street level, the Superior Oil Building’s materials are used to create dramatic effect – varying shades of black, grey, silver, and white are arranged from small to large as you enter the building. Just outside the front entrance, granite columns of almost solid black are based in
terrazzo created from pebble sized stones. Inside, the terrazzo floor features a mix of larger black and white pieces, and the scale is largest with the breccia that covers the elevator wall. Breccia (breh-key-yah) is sedimentary rock that includes large broken pieces of stone naturally embedded in a finer matrix.

**Adaptive Reuse:** The Superior Oil Building had been sitting empty for a period of time before being purchased in 1999. Renovations were completed in late 2002 and the building reopened as the Standard Hotel. Hotelier Andre Balacs, who created the Standard Hotel on the Sunset Strip, made this his downtown outpost. New amenities include a rooftop bar and pool.

The development company was sensitive to the original design of the building, keeping historic features when possible. The building has been listed in the National Register, which allowed the developer the use of use of tax credits (see below). The Los Angeles Conservancy was involved with advising the developers throughout the rehabilitation process.

**History and Anecdotes:** The Superior Oil Building originally stood as the third of three oil company headquarters in this part of downtown Los Angeles, together with the General Petroleum Building (1949), across 6th Street, and the Richfield Oil Building (1928) across Flower Street. The founders of Superior Oil, the Keck family, had a high budget set for the construction of their building, so no expense needed to be spared on materials or construction. Superior Oil was an extremely successful company for the Keck family, which amassed a huge fortune. Their charitable fund, the Keck Foundation, is second only in size to that of the Getty trust.

**TAX CREDITS**

The Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentive is a program administered by the National Park Service (NPS) that rewards private investment in rehabilitating income-producing historic properties, such as offices, rental housing and retail. The incentive provides a 20% tax credit for all qualifying hard and soft cost expenditures during rehabilitation.

There are a variety of other programs for tax incentives for restoring/maintaining historic properties. For more information visit [www.laconservancy.org/preservation](http://www.laconservancy.org/preservation).
THE PEGASUS originally General Petroleum Building, later Mobil Oil  (612 S. Flower Street)

Architect: Wurdeman & Becket  
Completed: 1949

Cost: $8 million  
Floors: 13  Height: 181 feet  Square footage: 246,448 (after conversion to apartments)

Style: Corporate Modern influenced by Streamline Moderne  
Designation: Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument #766  
Listed in the National Register of Historic Places

About the Architects: Welton Becket (1902-1969) was born in Seattle and studied architecture at the University of Washington and the Ecole de Beaux-Arts. In 1933 Becket formed a partnership with a former Washington classmate, Walter Wurdeman (1903-1949). Wurdeman & Becket, and later Welton Becket & Associates, designed many important structures, including the Pan Pacific Auditorium (1935, now demolished), the Capitol Records Building (1954), and the Music Center (1964). Becket was quoted as saying “A building should reflect the client, not the architect. I see no reason why I should express Welton Becket.” Growing through several mergers over the years, in 2009 the company was absorbed into AECOM.

Features of the Exterior: A monolithic rectangular box, the building uses geometrics to enhance its monumental quality. “Fins” (vertical architectural elements for sun control), are a major design element. The prominent fins are themselves set in a frame, which is set on a larger rectangle (windowless on the west elevation, with windows on the north and south elevations).

About the Building: The General Petroleum Building was reported to be the largest office building in Los Angeles at the time of its construction, having more than 500,000 square feet of office space. It was the architects’ largest commission to date and established their skill with office design. According to the firm’s website, they got the commission because of the success of the Bullock’s Department Store (now Macy’s) on Lake Avenue in Pasadena. “One of the directors at Bullocks’ was also an official at Mobil Oil Corporation. Impressed with the work on the department store, he was instrumental in the selection of Wurdeaman and Becket for the office building.”

It was constructed with the newest technology of the time. By using lightweight concrete aggregates and vermiculite fireproofing material, 13,000 tons were shed off the final weight of the building, which cut costs by an estimated 12%. Instead of steel beams, hollow concrete walls and gunite exterior walls were used. The “fins” on the building are sun shades. They were reportedly so efficient that they saved 300 tons of air-conditioning coolant annually.

The interior of the building was one of the first to use movable partitions to allow flexibility in the layout and setup of offices.

Adaptive Reuse: In 2003 the General Petroleum Building opened as The Pegasus, upscale loft-style apartments. Renovated by The Kor Group, The Pegasus has 322 units, plus 12,000 square feet of retail space. The second floor is used for parking (225 spaces) and the rental units are on the upper floors. The building has two atriums (or light wells) so every apartment has exterior windows, either to the street or to the atrium.
AC MARTIN AND CONTEMPORARY DOWNTOWN

Albert C. Martin (1879-1960) opened his office in Los Angeles in 1906, eventually expanding into a partnership that would later include his sons and grandsons. In 1928, the firm partnered with two other architects to design the Los Angeles City Hall. Other Martin-designed Los Angeles landmarks include the St. Vincent De Paul Church on Figueroa (1923) and the May Company Department Store Building (Wilshire at Fairfax, 1939).

What was originally Albert C. Martin, Architect became Albert C. Martin & Associates (the name under which the business district buildings were designed). Leading the firm were Martin’s sons, Albert Jr. (as design principal) and Edward Martin (structural engineer). The firm was so successful that a 1979 Los Angeles Times article said that the firm was responsible for “more than 50% of all the major buildings erected in downtown Los Angeles since World War II.” One of the most iconic of these buildings is the Department of Water and Power Building (1965) on Bunker Hill.

Today the firm is known as AC Martin Partners, and is in its third generation of practice. Chris Martin, FAIA, is the CEO and David Martin is the design principal. The firm is still one of the principal office tower architects in the city. A Martin-designed skyscraper is currently under construction at Seventh and Figueroa and will top out at 1,100 feet and be the tallest office building west of Chicago.

Visible to the southeast, but not part of the tour route:

FIGUEROA AT WILSHIRE Originally Sanwa Bank Plaza (601 South Figueroa Street)

Architect: Albert C. Martin & Associates
Construction began: 1986    Completed: 1990

Floors: 53  Height: 717 feet  Square footage: 1,000,000
Style: Late Modern with Art Deco influences

Features of Building Exterior: The pink granite and aqua-painted metal distinguish this tiered and layered tower. The unusual octagon shape as well as the recession of panels toward the top of the tower allows for more corner offices and alludes to the Art Deco style so popular in the earlier history of Los Angeles.

Architectural Significance: At the time of its construction, it was the second tallest building in Southern California. The unusual shape and color of the buildings shows the increasing trend toward creative approaches to office buildings. It has a very beautiful Frank Lloyd Wright–inspired lobby, with marble decorative touches.
DESTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT

The area today known as the Central Business District looks little like it did fifty years ago. The end of the World War II brought economic prosperity to the city and fueled the beginnings of modern development. During the ensuing enthusiasm for building, many historic structures were lost to make way for new office buildings. Because of its comparatively late urban beginnings, much of Los Angeles was not yet valued as historically significant – many important structures had not even reached their fiftieth birthdays at the time they were torn down. It is only relatively recently that the importance of saving buildings less than fifty years old has begun to be understood. Many things, style included, become passé before they become classic. It can be a challenge to look at something that is no longer in vogue, and put forth a case for its preservation. The Conservancy has been at the forefront of advocacy for the recent past, facilitating discussion and ways to understand the future importance of buildings that, while no longer new, haven’t yet reached an age where their design style is considered classic.

Changing tastes and changing economics drive development, and also drive preservation. Back in the late 1960s when Bunker Hill was razed and the Atlantic Richfield Tower torn down, there was not a strong voice for preservation in the city (the Los Angeles Conservancy was formed in 1978, and many other preservation organizations are newer still). The prevailing taste equated modern with progress and old with old-fashioned – not a significantly different attitude from that which saw Victorian and Beaux-Arts structures razed in the 1930s to make way for ‘modern’ Art Deco buildings.

Over the years, tastes have changed to the point that the unique architecture of an historic building can be seen as an advantage, not a liability. As such, the creation (and enforcement) of preservation ordinances, such as a Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ), are increasingly utilized to protect historic neighborhoods. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) enacted in 1970, has also proved a powerful tool in the preservation of historic structures by requiring Environmental Impact Reports to be filed when the demolition of an historic structure is proposed.
CITY NATIONAL PLAZA  originally ARCO Plaza  
(555 S. Flower St.)

Architect: Albert C. Martin & Associates
Construction began: 1968  Completed: 1972

Cost: $175 million
Floors: 52  Height: 699 feet  Square footage: 2,496,084
Style: High Corporate International

Architect: See page 24

Features of the Building’s Exterior: Two towers, essentially identical in design, flank a smaller three-story structure, all three of which are clad in highly polished dark green granite and black glass. The towers are tall and box-like with consistently placed windows and a smooth façade. Unifying the complex is a plaza of the same granite, only unpolished. On the west side of the complex is a wall of the same granite flame-finished (literally treated by torch to flake off impurities and create a weathered surface). The granite was quarried in Canada, near Quebec, then sent to Pisa, Italy, for cutting and polishing, and finally shipped to Los Angeles for final preparation.

Features of the Plaza: The plaza is a unified whole with the buildings that surround it. Without trees or plantings, the plaza provides a dramatic entry to the buildings. The design of the plaza is by landscape architecture firm Sasaki Walker (now known as SWA), demonstrating close collaboration between building design and landscape design. SWA was founded in 1957 by Hideo Sasaki and Peter Walker. The firm has collaborated with many architectural firms including I.M. Pei, Phillip Johnson, and Charles Moore, and is still active today with several offices, including one in Los Angeles.

In the center of the stark plaza is a bright orange sculpture of a staircase at the center of a fountain pool. Steps descend from the plaza into the pool, and the base of the fountain is crafted of the same granite as the plaza. The off-center placement of the staircase, as well as the swirling water at its base, give the sculpture a sense of motion. The sculpture was originally titled “Stairway to Nowhere,” but changed to “Double Ascension” because ARCO executives considered the first title not in keeping with ARCO’s goals.

“Double Ascension,” 1973, is by Herbert Bayer (pronounced “Buyer”). Bayer was a student and then a teacher at the Bauhaus school in Germany. The Bauhaus attempted to integrate arts and crafts to create architectural works and is commonly associated with such architects as Walter Gropius and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. Bayer was hired by ARCO in 1966 as the company’s art and design consultant and created the ARCO logo.

Patio tables, chairs, and umbrellas were added to the plaza around 2004. The furniture (and especially the umbrellas) changes the plaza from an austere space into one that is more welcoming, and better suited to accommodate downtown workers on lunch breaks. It has an added benefit is that the fixtures are not permanent, so the original design of the plaza is not compromised. Even the choice of design for the umbrellas (a nearly flat canopy, with very little peak, unlike traditional picnic table umbrellas) minimizes their profile against the towers.

Underground Mall: Included in the building design is an underground retail mall. Reported to be the nation’s largest subterranean shopping mall when it opened, it now operates as a food court with
limited other retail. The lowest level has now been converted to parking. The mall is accessed from escalators inside the tower lobbies as well as from escalators on the plaza. The wells for the lobby escalators retain their original 1970s wall treatment of brightly colored subway tiles (red and orange in one lobby escalator, blue and green in the other) interspersed with expanses of mirrors. Glimpses of the tile in the escalator wells can be seen from outside the building when the light is right.

Originally, the mall had motled brown floor tiles, a color popular in 1970s design. A make-over in 2004 replaced most of the brown tile with a polished concrete floor finished in light and neutral shades, significantly brightening up the space.

**About the Building:** At the time of its construction, these twin buildings were the tallest buildings in downtown Los Angeles (the 62-story Aon tower would not be completed for another year). The glass and marble skin of the Corporate International Style pioneered by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe became popular in Los Angeles in the 1970s and 1980s, and has been the basis of design for numerous office buildings. The theme of double towers is repeated throughout the Central Business District and can be seen in such examples as the Wells Fargo Plaza on Bunker Hill. Forerunners include Mies van der Rohe's Chicago Federal Center (1959).

**Additional Information and anecdotes:** Atlantic Richfield Company (ARCO) was created in 1966 with the merger of the Richfield Oil Corporation (of California), and the Atlantic Refining Company (of Philadelphia). By 1968 the headquarters was in New York. At the completion of this building, Los Angeles was designated the headquarters city, and all the executives were moved here. Company President Thornton Bradshaw gave this reason to the *Los Angeles Times* in 1972 as to why New York was rejected: “An oil company consists largely of people who come from the Southwest…they are outdoors kinds of people. We had 1,000 people in New York. They didn’t like it at all.”

On the west side of the complex, near the south side of the west tower, is an art piece that is made of a pair of elevator doors and decoration from the Atlantic Richfield Building that was on this site previously (see page 28).

**Current Information:** In 2003 the building was purchased by developer Thomas Properties Group. Plans were announced for a $125 million makeover designed to make the building more “user-friendly” for tenants and shoppers at the underground mall. In late 2003 City National Bank announced the leasing of 310,000 square feet (twelve floors) in the building, which was renamed the "City National Tower." The entire property was renamed "City National Plaza" in September 2005.
RICHFIELD TOWER  
(formerly at 5th and Flower)

Architects: Morgan, Walls & Clements; principal designer Stiles O. Clements  
Construction began: 1928  
Completed: 1929  
Demolished: 1968

Floors: 12  Height: 373 feet (including unoccupied space and 136 foot beacon)  
Sq. footage: not available

Style: Art Deco

About the Architects:  Morgan, Walls & Clements was part of the lineage of one of the oldest architectural offices in the city, dating back to the firm’s founder Ezra Kysor, architect of St. Vibiana's Cathedral (1876). Some of the many local projects by the firm with Stiles O. Clements as principal designer include the Samson/ Uniroyal Tire Company (now The Citadel, 1929) and the Pellisier Building (Wiltern Theater, 1930).

Features of the Building’s Exterior:  Clad in black terra cotta textured by shallow vertical flutes, the building rose in a series of setbacks culminating in a 136-foot-high beacon tower with the name "Richfield" spelled out in neon. Recessed spandrels enhanced the verticality of the building, which was highlighted with gold-glazed terra cotta ornament. Sculptures by noted artist Haig Patigian included muscular torsos of angels lining the parapet as well as other figures. The entire building was dramatically floodlit at night.

Features of the Building’s Interior:  The interior featured spectacular examples of Art Deco ornamentation. The vestibule had inlays of black and green marble along with bronze fixtures. The elaborate elevator doors were especially noteworthy. (A pair of the doors now stands as a sculptural element near the southwest corner of the tower nearest 5th Street; a second pair was given to the Los Angeles Conservancy, and is now in storage.)

About the Building:  When the Richfield Building was torn down it was only forty years old, a full ten years short of fifty, which is still one of the accepted benchmarks for determining landmark eligibility. At the time, there was not a strong voice for preservation in the city, although the loss of this building helped raise awareness for future preservation battles. Today, the importance of saving buildings less than fifty years old is more widely recognized, but is still a hurdle (See Destruction and Development).

- Two different Conservancy volunteers, Eric Lynxwiler and Rory Cunningham, each have one of the angels. The torso of each angel is about five feet tall and made of solid terracotta.
MANULIFE PLAZA

Architect: Albert C. Martin & Associates

Floors: 21    Height: 294 feet    Square footage: 392,626
Style: Late Corporate International

About the Architect: see page 24

Features of Building Exterior: The twenty-story Manulife Plaza employs a cubic plan, similar to other AC Martin buildings that preceded it. However, its east facing exterior wall is textured by a vertically stepped façade. It is clad in steel and highly reflective glass, popular for office buildings in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

At the northeast corner of the site is the sculpture “Salmon Run” (1982) by Canadian artist Christopher Keene. The developers of Manulife Plaza, Manufacturers Life Insurance Company, commissioned the artist to create a sculpture symbolizing commitment to energy and natural resources.

Historical and Architectural Significance: Constructed less than ten years after the Arco Plaza, the Manulife Plaza reflects a growing trend away from the strict box design of skyscrapers common to the 1960s and 1970s.
UNION BANK PLAZA
(445 S. Figueroa St.)

**Architect:** Albert C. Martin & Associates with Harrison and Abramovitz

**Construction began:** 1965  **Completed:** 1967

**Cost:** $30 million

**Floors:** 42  **Height:** 516 feet  **Square footage:** 620,000

**Style:** Corporate International

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**About the Architects:** Depending on the source, the architects are listed as a) Albert C. Martin & Associates, with Harrison & Abramovitz or b) Harrison & Abramovitz, with Albert C. Martin & Associates. According to David Martin (son of A.C. Martin, Jr., and design principal of AC Martin Partners), the local firm did the design and the engineering, with the New York firm on board for prestige.

Harrison & Abramovitz: Wallace K Harrison and Max Abramovitz were prolific New York architects. Abramovitz worked in Harrison’s office in the 1930s, and together they served as part of the design team for the 1939 New York World’s Fair. The two later formed a partnership that lasted from 1945 to 1976. Among their notable designs is the Alcoa Building, Philadelphia (1954), and Avery Fisher (now David Geffen) Hall at Lincoln Center, New York (1962).

AC Martin: see page 24

**Features of Building Exterior:** Placed on a sloped site, the forty-story tower rises uninterrupted from a plaza, which itself is set back above a two-story retail court at street level. The tower’s recessed windows are heavily framed with a grid of concrete panels. The effect of the panels is to give the building the sense of a monolithic skyscraper from a distance, but close up it looks as if a net or cage of concrete has been lowered over a glass tower.

To the north is a garden plaza designed by important modernist architect Garret Eckbo of Eckbo, Dean, Austin, & Williams. An area with mature coral trees in planters opens up to an area with reflecting pool and footbridges. The coral tree was designated as the official tree of Los Angeles in 1966, and when the Union Bank Building was “topped out” (the highest construction beam put in place) the beam was decorated with an American flag, the flag of the Connecticut General Life Insurance Company, and a coral tree sapling. The plaza is built atop a parking garage.

**About the Building:** The Union Bank Building was the first high-rise built in the Central Business District after the 1920s. It was one of the first skyscrapers erected after the 150-foot height limit was repealed in 1957 and the first building taller than City Hall. It was also the first structure to be completed as part of the Bunker Hill redevelopment project which began an era of skyscraper building in the Central Business District.

As the first structure completed as part of the Bunker Hill redevelopment project, the Union Bank Building was an important step in making the area attractive to new development. The developers were the Connecticut General Life Insurance Company, which purchased the land in 1965.
WESTIN BONAVENTURE HOTEL

Architect: John Portman & Associates
Completion began: 1974

Cost: $110 million
Floors: 35 Area: 1,474 rooms, plus retail space and restaurants
Style: Late Modern/Futurist

About the Architect: John Portman, originally from Atlanta, Georgia, is an architect famous for his atrium style hotel designs. His approach to design aimed at creating environments, not just functional space. His designs include the Hyatt Regency Hotel, San Francisco (1972); the Renaissance Center, Detroit (1973-1977); and the Westin-Peachtree Hotel, Atlanta (1976).

One of the first of the architect-developers active in the United States, he developed his first project, Merchandise Mart in Atlanta, in 1961. He acknowledged that as a young architect (he opened his own office in 1953 at the age of 29), he was losing commissions to better known competitors. He realized that if he were to develop his own projects, he would at least have those guaranteed commissions, so he became a developer as well. It was unusual in the 1960s for architects to also be developers, and even into the 1970s it was frowned upon (at that time, the American Institute of Architects considered it an ethical violation).

Very successful at both architecture and development, Portman was always an architect at heart. In a 2010 interview he said “I try never to get away from the fact that I am first an architect, and everything else supports that.”

Features of Building Exterior: Rising off the downtown skyline like a spaceship on a launch platform, this sculptural hotel is constructed around the idea of circular shapes. It is formed from a group of four mirrored cylinders surrounding a central column and planted upon a platform of sand-colored concrete. Numerous pedestrian skywalks connect the hotel at its upper lobby levels to surrounding buildings, allowing greater accessibility to the shops and restaurants located within the lobby. Capsule-like elevators shoot through the atrium roof to climb up the exterior of the building on the side of each cylinder.

Features of Building Interior: The shape of the exterior is reflected on the inside with a very complex lobby. The first six stories of the Bonaventure form the lobby area, a multi-story banquet, restaurant, and shopping area linked with an open atrium. At ground level, the central shaft is ringed by a bar, which is bordered by deep reflecting pools. At the third and fifth floor there are circular walkways around the central column, connected to bridges to the walkways around the inside perimeter of the building.

The California Ballroom on the second level is one of the largest ballrooms in the city. It has a seating capacity of 3,000 people theatre-style or 2,350 banquet-style.

The 34th floor of the central cylinder features a rotating bar with a 365 degree view of the city. On the 35th floor is a stationary restaurant.

About the building: The site of the hotel is within the 136-acre area of the CRA’s Bunker Hill renewal project. When the CRA was looking for a developer to purchase land and build a hotel,
John Portman was one of the applicants. (Another team that was interested in developing a hotel was Gene Summers and Phyllis Lambert, who ended up buying and revitalizing the Biltmore instead.)

John Portman specialized in hotels and convention complexes. Regarding the Bonaventure, he is quoted as saying it was not just a hotel, but “a whole community center” a modern version of “a Venetian village,” and a complete “city in miniature.”

The Bonaventure was criticized immediately after its construction for its fortress-like relationship to its surrounding. Although the series of pedestrian sky walks (paid for by the CRA) connect block to block over busy streets and intersections, allowing entrance from all sides and into many levels of the lobby area, the hotel remains all but inaccessible from the sidewalk.

The $110 million price tag for the development was reputed to be the most ever for a hotel.

The hotel underwent $35 million in upgrades in 2011, updating guest rooms and furnishings to better compete with the new Ritz Carlton and JW Marriott, and to keep it in line with hotel operator Starwood’s other properties. The ground floor lounge and reception areas received makeovers, but did not significantly impact historic features of the hotel.
HISTORY OF BUNKER HILL

Much of the current financial district of Los Angeles is situated on a parcel of land known as Bunker Hill. Named in 1875 on the centennial of the Battle of Bunker Hill and developed in the late 1800s, the area was a residential district that included a number of grand Victorian homes for the wealthy and powerful. Over time, the area became run down, the mansions became boarding houses (many with little or no maintenance), and narrow, winding streets, and other topographical challenges made the area difficult to maintain and to redevelop. By the 1950s the area was considered “blighted,” and the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) focused their attention on reinvigorating this part of downtown.

In 1959, the Los Angeles City Council adopted the Bunker Hill Urban Renewal Project. When the CRA was disbanded in 2012 due to state budget cuts, the project was the agency’s oldest active development project.

In the early 1960s, all structures on the hill were demolished or relocated, and much of the hill was flattened to create twenty-two ‘super blocks’ for development. In addition, new streets and infrastructure were added and the CRA subdivided and resold plots of land to developers.

Only two of the homes on Bunker Hill were saved from demolition. They were rescued and moved to a site in Highland Park that was named Heritage Square. Although the original two houses burned to the ground shortly after the move, other Victorian structures from around the city have since been moved to Heritage Square, which is now a museum open to the public.

However, despite the newly-cleared land, tax breaks, and promotion from the CRA, the development of the “new” Bunker Hill did not materialize as expected. Developers continued to choose more central downtown locations for their skyscrapers and much of Bunker Hill remained undeveloped until the early 1980s when several large projects were built, among them Mellon Bank (1982), Wells Fargo Plaza (1983), and California Plaza (1985).

The redevelopment of Bunker Hill, as well as the area south of Bunker Hill now known as the Financial District, coincided with the revision of the building height limit in Los Angeles (see appendix on height limits). This proved fortunate for the older Beaux-Arts financial buildings on Spring Street; for although that area fell on economic hard times, the buildings were left behind intact instead of being torn down to make way for new high rises. This puts Los Angeles in the unique position of having two contrasting and intact urban cores, one built prior to 1945 and one built post-WWII.

Anecdotes:
- The grassy knoll at 4th and Hill Streets is known as Angels Knoll. It was featured prominently in the 2009 film (500) Days of Summer. The park was owned by the now-defunct Community Redevelopment Agency, and has been closed since 2013, pending a development deal.
FOUR HUNDRED SOUTH HOPE originally O’Melveny and Myers, aka Mellon Bank

Architect: Welton Becket Associates; Principal architect Robert Tyler
Completed: 1982

Floors: 26  Height: 375 feet  Square footage: 685,300
Style: Late Corporate International

Architect: Welton Becket Associates, see Pegasus.
Robert Tyler (1926- ) was born in Los Angeles, and worked with area architects, including Edward Fickett and Welton Becket, before opening his own practice.

Features of Building Exterior: The building has a trapezoid shape and a lobby that projects outward from the tower to produce a transitional space between the exterior and the interior. Against the north façade is a garden walk with a fountain pool creating a protected pathway that cuts directly through to the opposite street. The roof of the building is slanted and compliments the trapezoid-shaped base. The façade is composed of alternating strips of brown granite and black, reflective windows. Trees planted around the building soften its interaction at the street level.

Note the similarity to the Wells Fargo Center across the street. It also has an angular shape and brown granite, but was designed by a different architect for a different client.

Public Art: The large white sculpture at the west entrance to the building is “Ulysses” (1988) by Alexander Liberman (1912-1999). This monumental sculpture stands in stark contrast to the straight and rational designs of the buildings surrounding it, because of its white color and circular forms.

Alexander Liberman was a painter, sculptor, photographer and writer. Russian-born, he came to America from Europe in 1943 and joined Vogue Magazine as art director. In 1962 he was named editorial director for Conde Nast Publication, a position he filled until he retired in 1994.

Another work of art was originally commissioned for the plaza. However, “Amaryllis” by Tony Smith was removed after poor critical and public response. The CRA came close to not approving Liberman’s sculpture, calling it “dated” and not “responsive to the site.” Part of their irritation may have stemmed from Liberman violating one of the cardinal principles of the CRA’s public art policy: that the artist should visit the site to ensure the art is site-specific.
BANK OF AMERICA PLAZA originally Security Pacific Plaza  
(333 S. Hope St.)

Architect: Albert C. Martin & Associates  
Construction began: n/a  
Completed: 1974  
Cost: $99 million  
Floors: 55  
Height: 735 feet  
Square footage: 1,422,000  
Style: Corporate International

Features of Building Exterior: The Security Pacific Building stands alone in a relatively large urban park. The main tower rises uninterrupted from the plaza, virtually the same on all four sides. Vertical piers clad in light-colored granite accentuate the height of the tower. The massiveness of the piers, which visually dominate the dark, recessed windows between, gives the tower a monumental quality. Although gardens and fountains surround the building, the plaza immediately around it is of granite, reinforcing the formidableness of the structure.

Note that the building is turned at a 45 degree angle from the street, and unusual placement for the 1970s when most buildings were sited parallel to the street.

Plaza: The bright orange sculpture, titled “Four Arches” (1974) by Alexander Calder, marks one entrance to the tower and provides a striking contrast against the muted colors of the building. When the building was in development, the CRA requested that the commission for the art work be awarded to a California artist. Having already decided on Calder (a Philadelphia native) for the project, the developers justified their choice by pointing out that Calder had lived in Pasadena for a time as a child. Calder (1898-1976) was known on for his “mobiles” as well as fixed works called “stabiles.”

Park: the park appears to be a flat landscaped area, but the large fountain structure in its center cascades down into a space revealing the presence of underground offices. Landscape architects Sasaki Walker & Associates were given the direction to reflect Southern California’s heritage in the park’s design. Rather than revisiting typical Spanish Colonial designs, they chose to as inspirations the Alhambra in Spain (the long narrow fountain pools), California citrus orchards (the ordered rows of trees), and Mayan cenote or water holes (circular opening to the underground level). The trees are Ornamental Pears, chosen for pretty blossoms and their hardiness.

Features of Building Interior: The building is notable for having one of the most open and spacious lobbies of Central Business District office buildings. The lobby has 27-foot-high ceilings, connecting by escalators to two lower levels. The space was partitioned off some years ago for banking offices, compromising the airiness of the original design on the north end. In contrast to the exterior that is dominated by the heavy granite, from inside the stone piers effectively disappear, bringing into prominence the glass panels. The resulting effect is that the exterior is fortress-like without views to the inside, while the interior seems to be made of glass with vistas to the gardens, pools, and artworks of the plaza.

The large tapestries in the lobby are by London-based artist Christopher Farr (2009) and were designed to echo both the grid of the building and the color of the Calder sculpture.
**Historical and Architectural Significance:** The Security Pacific Plaza works similarly to the Union Bank Plaza. Both towers are vertically drawn and are set back and away from the street, alone on their own sites. Uninterrupted height is the focus of this building, though the garden area to the south and the sculpture on both sides of the office building give scale to the site. It is a modern rendering of Le Corbusier’s “tower in the park” concept for cities.

The building is clad in 340,000 square feet of Gregio Perla granite from Spain.
Architect: Albert C. Martin & Associates
Completed: 1986

Style: Modern

Architect: See page 24

Features of Building Exterior: This low-rise building is perched high above a multilevel parking structure and is composed of a green steel frame with glass paneled walls. With its green color and low profile it all but disappears into the hillside. At night, the windows that cover the majority of the front elevation blaze with light, transforming the look of the building.

Plaza: The short pathway around the YMCA is the home of the Morgan Adams, Jr. Sculpture Garden, the project’s Percent for Art. The works chosen to grace this site are a mixture of abstract and figurative sculpture and both visually enrich the surrounding environment and reflect the YMCA’s mission in promoting healthy living.
**WELLS FARGO PLAZA**, originally **Crocker Center** (333 S. Grand Ave.)

**Architect:** Skidmore, Owings & Merrill  
**Construction began:** 1980    **Completed:** North Tower and retail, 1982  
South tower, 1983

**Cost:** $360 million    **Total Square footage:** 2.5 million  
**Floors:** North Tower: 54 stories (723 feet), South Tower: 44 stories  
**Style:** Late Corporate International

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**Architect:** See Gas Company Building.

**Features of Building Exterior:** The most notable features of this project are the jutting angles defining one corner of each of the two towers. The unusual footprint shape is a rectangle with one corner sheared off to create a triangular point (look at Google satellite view to get a better sense of the shape). When viewed certain ways, the acute point on the triangle creates an optical illusion of a wall with no volume behind it. The two towers are also of different heights; the north tower rises 54 floors, the south one 44. They are oriented with their points facing different directions (the point of the north tower faces south, the point of the south tower faces west). Between the towers sits a two-story atrium building for shopping and dining. All three of the buildings are clad in rose-brown granite.

Note the similarity to the neighboring Mellon Bank, with its red-brown granite and strongly angled shape footprint. Also, the placement of the two towers on either side of a small central building is similar to that of the Arco Towers.

**Features of Building Interior:** The two-story central atrium gives the impression of a greenhouse, with lush greenery accompanied by a series of connecting fountains. The design of the atrium landscaping was done by Lawrence Halprin (see page 13). The bronze figures are by Robert Graham.

Robert Graham (1938-2009) grew up in Mexico City. In 1950 he moved to California where he studied at the San Francisco Art Institute. He was married to actress Anjelica Houston. Also by Graham: “Source Figure” (1991) (at the top of the Bunker Hill Steps), and the Olympic Gateway at the Coliseum (1984). He also collaborated with Halprin on the 1998 addition to the Franklin Roosevelt Memorial in Washington, D.C.

**About the Building:**  
Originally called Crocker Center, it became Wells Fargo Center in 1986 when the two banks merged.

**Public Art in the Crocker Center Pedestrian Walks**

“Night Sail” (1985 south plaza): The only major sculpture by Louise Nevelson in Los Angeles, this sculpture is an assemblage of nautical forms set on a common frame. It is thirty feet tall and weighs thirty-three tons. Russian-born, Nevelson has been called the doyenne of American sculpture.


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CALIFORNIA PLAZA
(300 S. Grand Ave.)

**Architect:** Arthur Erickson Architects

**One California Plaza (north tower)**
- **Construction:** 1983 - 1985
- **Floors:** 42
- **Height:** 577 feet
- **Sq. feet:** 937,000

**Two California Plaza**
- **Construction:** 1989 - 1992
- **Floors:** 54
- **Height:** 750 feet
- **Sq. feet:** 1,330,000

**Cost:** $1.2 billion (all buildings in complex)

**Style:** Late Modern

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**About the Architect:** Arthur Erickson (1924-2009) was born and raised in Vancouver, B.C. He studied at the University of British Columbia and also McGill University in Montreal. Erickson traveled extensively, and was influenced by the architecture of Greece, Italy, the Middle East, and Japan. Interested in relating architecture to the terrain and climate, he did not subscribe to any particular architectural movement, although his designs have elements of Modern, Postmodern, and Brutalist styles popular in the 1960s, '70s, and '80s.

Erickson’s firm designed the two towers and collaborated on the plaza, but was not involved with design of the MOCA (1986) or the adjacent hotel (1992).

**About the Project:** California Plaza originated in 1980 as California Center, the winning entry in a design competition to redevelop eleven acres atop Bunker Hill. The original design was an integrated project with commercial, civic, retail, and residential combined with parks and plazas. Due to design changes requested by the developer, as well as the changing economic outlook, the project as completed in 1992 differed significantly from the original conception. The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) was paid for by the developers, Bunker Hill Associates, as part of the agreement with the City as the project’s percent for art. Completed in 1986, it was designed by Japanese architect Arata Isozaki.

**Features of the Buildings’ exteriors:** Both towers have glass skins of contrasting colors layered around a curved corner of an otherwise rectangular tower. One California Plaza (the northernmost) was the first completed (1985) and has two layers atop a base with a square window grid. The curved corners are on the east/west axis. Two California Plaza (1992) has three layers and is twelve stories taller than the other. The base of Two California Plaza is of Sanduba granite from Brazil, and has window openings the shape of lollipops. The tower’s curved corners face north and south.

**Watercourt:** As a base connecting the two towers with the adjacent hotel and museum is a two-level plaza known as Watercourt. A food court with additional retail surrounds an enormous water feature that doubles as a performance space when the water is turned off. WET Design collaborated with Arthur Erickson on the design of the fountain and plaza. The Watercourt space and funding for the space’s arts programming are the project’s Percent For Art contribution.
UPTOWN ROCKER (north side of 4th St. between Hope and Grand)
Lloyd Hamrol, 1986

The artist described his design as a “...tribute to the car culture. It is meant as a parody of the omnipresence of cars and our addiction to their necessity. The piece captures a moment in a bumper to bumper procession of car symbols as they cycle on the loop of an endless highway. It seems hopeless, but the possibility of escape is offered as the lead car begins a leap toward the Grand Street overpass. Will it make it? The question will never be answered – the hope always remains.” It received a fresh coat of paint in 2008.

UNTITLED, or BELL COMMUNICATIONS ACROSS THE GLOBE (420 S. Grand Ave.)
1961, Anthony Heinsbergen

On the side of the Pacific Bell Building (visible down Hope Place at the top of the Bunker Hill Steps) is a classic modern mural. The artist said “This mosaic was not intended to be a map. Our objective was to tell the story of worldwide communications by cable, radio, telephone, and satellite.” Near the center of the mural a brass statue holds underwater cables with one hand and a satellite transmitter with the other.

Anthony B. Heinsbergen (1894 -1981) moved from the Netherlands to Los Angeles in 1907. In 1922, Heinsbergen formed a company that subsequently decorated the interior of hundreds of buildings, including the Biltmore Hotel (1923), and Los Angeles City Hall (1928), as well as designing interior murals for movie theaters, including such Los Angeles landmarks as the United Artists (1927), the Hollywood Pantages (1930), and the Wiltern (1930-1931).
**APPENDIX A: A SHORT SUMMARY OF MODERN ARCHITECTURE STYLES**

Naming styles of architecture, especially from the recent past, is a moving target. It often takes distance to assign a particular style to a thing, because it usually is not until the style is no longer current that it is possible to assess, understand, and categorize it.

Although many of the buildings on the tour may have elements of particular style categories such as International or Postmodern, most often they are a combination of many things. Time and distance will give the future a better handle on our present and recent past than we can have now.

**INTERNATIONAL STYLE**
The International style is the design most associated with “modern” skyscrapers. In its purist form, the International Style, through its proponent Ludwig Mies Van Der Rohe, advocated “less is more,” as well as functionalism. In Miesian architecture and other examples in strict International style, the artistry is found in subtle details such as scale and materials, and the structure’s relationship to landscaping. There is little or no applied ornament.

With its emphasis on function, efficiency, order, and power, the International Style provided the ideal face for big business, and became the hallmark for Post-WWII skyscraper design.

**CORPORATE MODERN**
This branch of modernism lasted through most of the 1940s to the end of the 1950s. Often confused with the International style, Corporate Modern differs through its emphasis on visual weight. Concrete, not just steel and glass, is used prominently in the exterior. This emphasis, combined with the presence of concrete, provides these structures and their corporations a sense of solidity, gravity, and establishment. Not as severe as the International Style, the grids and lattice-like façades of these buildings are a natural evolution from the vertical thrust of the piers that were trademarks of Art Deco.

**LATE MODERN**
Parallel with later generations of the International Style, was the appearance of what architectural historian Charles Jencks titled “Late Modern.” Primarily a style of the 1970s to the early 1980s, Late Modern is important because it occurred in a gap between the utilitarian, idealist rigidity of Modern, and the more playful context of Postmodern. Whereas International Style buildings were typically rectangular towers, Late Modern buildings often played with form, including sloped roofs, setbacks, and sharp angles. This style also began to embrace color and reflective surfaces, instead of the more somber palette of the International Style.

**POST MODERN**
“Postmodern” is a loose stylistic designation coined by Charles Jencks in the mid-1970s to refer to a self-conscious use of traditional architectural elements usually added as decoration (often in a whimsical manner) to what would otherwise be essentially Late Modern in style. More a reaction to the obliviousness and austerity of high modernism than a movement, Postmodern buildings appropriate past architectural references, often classical, without duplication and proceed in a way that is playful but often ironic, and always in context either to the surrounding environment or the client.
APPENDIX B: LOS ANGELES' BUILDING HEIGHT LIMITS

In 1904, a City Council-appointed commission drafted the ordinance limiting the height of buildings to 130 feet (extended to 150 feet in 1911).

Architect John Parkinson was a member of the commission. It is interesting to note that as a result of the ordinance, Parkinson's under-construction 175-foot tall Braly Block (on the corner of Spring Street and 5th) remained the tallest office building in the city for more than fifty years (the only taller buildings, City Hall and the U. S. Courthouse, were government buildings).

Note: the height limit applied to occupied space. Unoccupied space could rise above that level, which led to towers for housing systems, and elaborate decoration on top of these towers. One example is the Eastern Columbia Building (1930) on Broadway at Ninth, which rises to a total height of 264 feet, including its tower and “crown.”

One might assume that the ordinance was implemented out of concern for earthquakes, even though it preceded by more than a year the great San Francisco earthquake. In actuality, the height limitation was apparently enacted to retain the “broad structural safety” of the buildings as well as to prevent the “Manhattanization” of Los Angeles. With so much room to grow, Angelenos valued the sunshine reaching the sidewalk, which might be obliterated by taller buildings.

The building height limit of 150 feet was repealed by voters in 1957 (a public vote was necessary because it was an amendment to the City Charter). The law was changed to use a Floor to Area ratio known as FAR). In simple terms, this is the amount of height allowed relative to ground space. The densest FAR approved was 13-to-1: essentially, thirteen stories worth of square footage. Designers could choose to stack that square footage however they chose; for example, a thirteen-story building that built out to the property line on all sides would contain X number of square feet; a building of the same square footage that utilized only half of its plot of land would be able to rise twenty-six stories.
APPENDIX C: A BRIEF HISTORY OF LOS ANGELES

On September 4, 1781, a group of 44 settlers founded *El Pueblo de la Reyna de Los Angeles* (The Town of the Queen of Angels). The governor of California made generous grants of ranch land to retired soldiers, and soon the flourishing colony was divided into mission, pueblo and rancho, with the city center centered on the Plaza (where Olvera Street is today).

Following the Mexican War of Independence from Spain (1810-1821), California was made a territory of the new Republic. During Mexican rule, from 1821 to 1847, the main trade was in hides, tallow, wine, and brandy.

During the Mexican-American War (1846-1848), Captain John C. Frémont claimed the pueblo for the United States. The Capitulation of Cahuenga was signed in 1847, effectively ending the fighting in Southern California. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hildalgo of 1848 ended the war, which resulted in Mexico ceding what became the American Southwest to the United States. California received statehood in 1850, the first of the southwest territories to do so.

The introduction of an American cash economy to replace the barter economy of the Mexican era forced the rancheros to mortgage their land to obtain money. By 1865, four-fifths of the ranchos were in American hands.

Los Angeles grew slowly until the railroads came west, and people and goods more easily reached the area.
- In 1869, the Central Pacific and the Union Pacific completed the transcontinental railroad from Omaha to Sacramento. Although the line didn’t reach to Los Angeles, it still had an effect on immigration to the area.
- In 1876 the line from San Francisco to Los Angeles was completed by the Southern Pacific, which triggered a small land boom.
- In 1885, the Santa Fe completed its Los Angeles link of the transcontinental railroad, breaking the Southern Pacific monopoly. Railroad fares all over the country dropped to ridiculously low prices (during a fare war in March 1885, the Santa Fe did a one-day promotion advertising a $1 ticket from Los Angeles to Kansas City).
- In 1905 the Union Pacific arrived in Los Angeles, making Los Angeles the western terminus of three major transcontinental railroads.

A land boom followed the coming of the railroad. Between 1880 and 1896 Los Angeles experienced astronomical growth, increasing from a population of 11,090 to 97,382 in just sixteen years. By 1889, the boom had subsided, but Los Angeles had become a major city.

Between 1890 and 1915, Los Angeles’ infrastructure was vastly improved: a public transportation system was created, oil was discovered, and the harbor was enhanced. In 1913, water was brought from the Owens Valley via an aqueduct, enabling further growth. In 1915, the San Fernando Valley joined the city of Los Angeles, more than doubling the city’s size.

The wave of immigration to Los Angeles between 1920 and 1940 was the largest internal migration in the history of the United States. The Depression did nothing to abate this flow, as unemployed workers flocked to Los Angeles looking for opportunity. New industry enriched the economy. Airplanes, clothing, and tires joined oil, movies, and citriculture as Los Angeles products.
As of the most recent census in 2010, the City of Los Angeles covered 469 square miles, and was the second most populous city in the United States (after New York). Los Angeles County encompassed more than 4,000 square miles and included 88 different incorporated cities.

**POPULATION, CITY OF LOS ANGELES**

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<td>1885</td>
<td>11,183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>50,395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>102,479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>130,198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>310,198</td>
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<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>576,673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>1,238,048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>1,361,437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>1,970,358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>2,481,595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>2,811,801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>3,485,390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>3,485,390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>3,792,621</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1869: Transcontinental railroad completed to Sacramento
1876: Southern Pacific link from San Francisco to Los Angeles completed
1885: Santa Fe link to transcontinental railroad completed 1885
1905: Union Pacific comes to Los Angeles
MODERN SKYLINE TOUR LOGISTICS

Packet pick up: Security desk at Pacmutual
Parking: Pacmutual
Meet: Center of Pershing Square
Restrooms: Pershing Square garage (security guard will give access)
          Standard Hotel
          Bonaventure
          Wells Fargo Center
Approximate length of tour: 2-1/2 hours

Interiors accessed on tour
Please DO NOT enter buildings that are not designated as having an interior on the route. This is an insurance issue. Also, stay on pedestrian right-of-ways (sidewalks and crosswalks, etc).

Superior Oil/Standard Hotel
• Entrance lobby (rear lobby optional)
• Do NOT go to the rooftop bar, unless it is a morning tour with less than ten people.

Bonaventure Hotel
• You can ride to the top in the elevators, but do NOT get out on any of the upper floors.

Wells Fargo Center
• Atrium
GAS COMPANY TOWER  
Skidmore, Owings & Merrill; Richard Keating  
Floors: 52  Height: 749 ft  SqF: 1,336,000

ONE BUNKER HILL 1931, Allison & Allison  
Construction began: 1929  Completed: 1931  
Floors: 12  Height: 222 ft  SF: 273,000

BILTMORE TOWER  
Floors: 25  Height: 340 ft  SF: 135,000

TOM BRADLEY WING, LAPL  
1993, Hardy, Holzman, and Pfeiffer Associates; principal architect Norman Pfeifer  
Cost: $152 million (incl renovation)  
Floors: 8 (4 below ground)  Square footage: 330,000

U.S. BANK TOWER  
1989, Pei Cobb Freed & Partners; principal architects Henry Cobb and Harold Fredenburgh  
Cost: $315 million  
Floors: 73  Height: 1018 ft  SF: 1,300,000

BUNKER HILL STEPS aka Library Steps  
1989, Lawrence Halprin

CITIGROUP CENTER  
1979, Albert C. Martin & Associates  
Construction began: 1976  Completed: 1979  
Floors: 48  Height: 625 ft  SF: 891,056

550 S HOPE ST aka California Bank and Trust  
1991, Kohn Pedersen Fox; William Pederson  
Floors: 28  Height: 351 ft  SF: 572,000

611 PLACE originally Crocker-Citizen’s Plaza, 1968, William L. Pereira & Associates  
Construction began: 1966  Completed: 1968  
Cost: $35 million  
Floors: 42  Height: 623 ft  SF: 1,150,000

AON CENTER (originally UCB Tower, later First Interstate Tower)  
1973, Charles Luckman and Associates  
Cost: $73.5 million  
Floors: 62  Height: 858 ft  SF: 1.1 million

DOWNTOWN STANDARD originally Superior Oil  
1955, Claib Beelman  
Construction began: n/a  Completed: 1955  
Floors: 12  Height: 156 ft  SF: 146,110

THE PEGASUS originally General Petroleum Building, 1949, Wurdeman and Becket  
began: n/a  Completed: 1949  Cost: $8 million  
Floors: 13  Height: 181 ft  SF: 246,448

FIGUEROA AT WILSHIRE Originally Sanwa Bank  
1990, Albert C. Martin & Associates  
Construction began: 1986  Completed: 1990  
Floors: 53  Height: 717 ft  SF: 1,000,000

CITY NATIONAL BANK PLAZA originally ARCO Plaza  
1972, Albert C. Martin & Associates  
Construction began: 1976  Completed: 1985  
Floors: 12  Height: 373 ft (including 136’ beacon)

MANULIFE PLAZA  
1982, Albert C. Martin and Associates  
Floors: 21  Height: 294 ft  SF: 620,000

UNION BANK PLAZA originally Union Bank Square  
1967, Albert C. Martin with Harrison and Abramovitz  
began: 1965  Completed: 1967  Cost: $30 million  
Floors: 42  Height: 516 ft  SF: 620,000

WESTIN BONAVENTURE HOTEL  
1976, John Portman and Assoc  Cost: $110 million  
began: 1974  Completed: 1976  
Floors: 35  Area: 1,474 rooms, plus retail

STUART M. KETCHUM DOWNTOWN YMCA  
1986, Albert C. Martin & Associates  
Construction began: n/a  Completed: 1986

BANK OF AMERICA PLAZA originally Security Pacific  
1974, Albert C. Martin and Associates  
Completed: 1974  Cost: $99 million  
Floors: 55  Height: 735 ft  SF: 1,422,000

WELLS FARGO PLAZA, originally Crocker Center  
1982-83, Skidmore, Owings and Merrill  
Cost: $360 million  Total SF: 2.5 million  
Floors: North 54 stories (723 feet), South 44 stories

MELLON BANK originally O’Melveny and Myers  
1982, Welton Beckett Associates; Robert Tyler  
Completed: 1982  Floors: 26  Height: 375 ft  
SF: 685,300

CALIFORNIA PLAZA  
1985 & 1992, Arthur Erickson  
One CP Completed: 1985  Floors: 42  Height: 577ft  
Two CP Completed: 1992  Floors: 54  Height: 750ft