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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BILTMORE HOTEL

Conception:
In April 1921, a group of prominent Los Angeles businessmen announced plans for a new civic enterprise: building a world-class hostelry in the burgeoning downtown area located around Pershing Square. The projected $10 million cost was to be financed by the sale of stocks and bonds. The names of people and businesses buying into the proposition reads like a Who’s Who of Angelinos: Harry Chandler, three Hellmans (I. H., M. S., and Marco), Arthur Letts, and E. P. Clark, to name a few. A 1921 Los Angeles Times editorial stated that “It is essentially a community project, destined to bring large benefits to Los Angeles.”

The developers chose the site at the corner of Fifth Street and Olive Street because at the time it was seen as the cultural and economic heart of the city. The planned hotel would be on main avenues of traffic, near rail terminals (the red car terminal was at 4th and Hill) and its guest rooms would have commanding views of Pershing Square. After extensive planning and deliberations, this group of businessmen and financiers formally organized themselves as the Central Investment Corporation (CIC) later that year. The group purchased the Olive Street site from various private owners, including Saint Paul’s Pro-Cathedral of the Episcopalian church.

The CIC also announced its intention to purchase the land immediately behind the Olive Street lot for expansion of the hotel at a later date. Thus, the Grand Avenue parcels (including the Salvation Army’s Young Women’s Boarding Home) were purchased. In addition, the lot at the corner of Fifth Street and Grand Avenue was purchased in 1922 specifically for a live theatre.

The investment group also agreed that in order for the new hotel to succeed, it would need to be managed by a leading hotel executive, who had to be committed to the project before construction began. That led the developers to John McEntee Bowman, renowned for his extremely successful hotels on the East Coast, including the Biltmore Hotel in New York City.

John McEntee Bowman (1875-1931) was born in Toronto, Canada, coming to New York at age seventeen. He managed the New York Biltmore hotel for hotelier Gustav Baumann, and took over the hotel lease when Baumann died in 1914. Bowman continued to develop the Biltmore brand, with luxury hotels around the country.

Bowman was initially reluctant to become involved with a hotel in Los Angeles, because of speculation that the city could not finance such an ambitious private project. However, after visiting Los Angeles, Bowman agreed to take on the project and form a company to lease the proposed hotel for twenty-five years – with certain conditions. Bowman was adamant that the hotel contain no less than one thousand rooms, and be “first class in every respect.” Bowman chose the New York firm Schultze & Weaver as architects, with Herbert R. Stone in charge of furnishing and decorating. As part of the financing arrangements, Bowman himself agreed to underwrite $1.5 million in art and furnishings. Bowman also agreed to name the new Los Angeles hotel after his proven Biltmore Hotels in New York City and Rhode Island, named after the 1895 estate of George Vanderbilt, located in North Carolina.
ARCHITECTS
When John Bowman chose Schultze & Weaver as architects of the hotel, he selected a firm that was brand new. However, Bowman knew Leonard Schultze from his work on the New York Biltmore Hotel and other projects when Schultze had been part of Warren and Wetmore.

Schultze & Weaver was founded in 1921 by Leonard Schultze and S. Fullerton Weaver, and based in New York. Los Angeles’ Biltmore Hotel (1923) was the first of Schultze & Weaver’s Los Angeles commissions, and the first of more than a dozen major hotel commissions, such as New York’s Park Lane (1922-24), Sherry-Netherland (1927) and Waldorf Astoria (1931.) The firm went on to design several Los Angeles buildings including the Jonathan Club (1924), the Hellman Bank on Spring Street (1924), and the Subway Terminal Building (1926.)

Leonard Schultze (1877-1951) was born in Philadelphia and graduated from City College of New York. Rather than go to Paris to study at the Ecole des Beaux Arts like many of his peers, he trained privately with E. L. Masqueray, a graduate of that school. At the age of 21, Schultze served in the Spanish-American war as part of the U. S. Volunteer Engineers. He joined the architectural firm of Warren & Wetmore in 1903. One of his major projects with them was as chief of design and construction for the Grand Central Terminal and related structures, which included a number of hotels, including the Biltmore (1913) and Commodore (1919), both operated by John McEntee Bowman. Schultze later left Warren & Wetmore, going into partnership with S. Fullerton Weaver. When Schultze died at the White Plains Hospital, a building designed by Schultze & Weaver.

S. Fullerton Weaver (1880-1939) was born in Philadelphia. He attended military academy, and earned a civil engineering degree from University of Pennsylvania. He later established the Fullerton Weaver Realty Company, specializing in apartment hotels in New York City. Between 1914 and 1915, he commissioned two buildings from Warren and Wetmore. The building at 420 Park Avenue was supervised by Schultze. After military service in World War I, in which he served as an infantry major in France, Weaver joined Schultze in 1921 to form Schultze & Weaver. Although an engineer by training, Weaver’s real value was likely in his real estate knowledge and his social connections. He was great-grand-nephew of President James Buchanan and moved in high society. He was an insider to the world of the rich and powerful (clientele for the type of hotels the firm designed).

Earl Heitschmidt (1894-1977) worked with Schultze & Weaver in the 1920s. He supervised construction of the 1928 addition to the Los Angeles Biltmore, and may have been involved with the design of some of the interiors of the 1923 building. Heitschmidt went on to a long and successful career in Los Angeles. His firm’s projects include CBS Studios on Sunset (1938) and the Harvey Mudd College Plan (1956). He was civically active, serving on boards from AIA to the Chamber of Commerce.
CONSTRUCTION
Excavation for the first phase of the hotel began on March 27, 1922. During the excavation, 76,000 cubic yards of earth were removed and 46,000 barrels of cement were used to lay the foundation. In addition, the construction crew of roughly 1,000 men erected 200 tons of steel. Construction was completed in eighteen months and on October 2, 1923, the Biltmore hosted its grand opening. The total project cost was $10 million.

After completion, the hotel was leased to the Los Angeles Biltmore Company with Bowman as President, James Woods as Vice President and managing director, and Charles Baad as residential manager.

OPENING
When the Biltmore Hotel opened, it was the largest hotel west of Chicago. The opening night party was attended by three thousand members of Los Angeles’ elite, including Douglas Fairbanks, Theda Bara, Myrna Loy, Delores Del Rio, Cecil B. DeMille, Jack Warner, Cornelius Vanderbilt Jr., and Jack Dempsey. Speeches by William Jennings Bryan and William G. McAdoo were broadcast on KHJ.

In keeping with the Spanish Baroque elements of the hotel’s architecture, the main hall was named the Galería Real, and the large ballroom added in 1928 the Sala de Oro.

Charles Baad (1877?-1956) was the first resident manager of the Biltmore. Originally from Ohio, he came to Los Angeles in 1920. He managed the Alexandria Hotel before joining the Biltmore staff. He and his wife, Eleanor, had an apartment in the Biltmore. He died in his room at the Biltmore in 1956, still in the position of managing director of the hotel.

1920’s EXPANSION
The Biltmore was so successful that within a year of the grand opening, the company went ahead with Phase II of the project, which was to expand the hotel with a wing facing Grand Avenue. Details of the $4 million expansion were formally announced in May 1927. The firm of Schultz & Weaver returned to design the Grand Avenue expansion, with Earl Heitschmidt acting as supervising architect. The addition was completed in 1928 and added five hundred new guestrooms, a swimming pool, and the world's then-largest ballroom, the Sala de Oro (later renamed the Biltmore Bowl). On Grand Avenue, much of the street level retail space was taken by the clothier I. Magnin and Company.

The original plan included construction of a theatre at the southeast corner of Fifth and Grand. After a false start with a different theatre developer, Central Investment Corporation struck a deal with A. L. Erlanger to build the theatre (also designed by Schultz & Weaver, which opened in 1924 (see page 26 for more information.)

The 1920s also marked the declining status of the Alexandria Hotel as Los Angeles’ preeminent hostelry. The Biltmore Hotel and its expansion offered a luxurious new destination for the A-list crowd. Not only was the physical building magnificent, but the management of the hotel was considered the best in the country. The Alexandria’s management was not able to keep up with the competition and the soon-to-worsen economy, going bankrupt in 1932.
1930s and WWII
The opening of the Grand Avenue expansion of the Biltmore coincided with a change in the economic climate that preceded the Great Depression. Economic troubles, and probable leadership issues spurred by Bowman’s death in 1931, caused Bowman’s company to default on the lease in 1933.

On January 1, 1934, sportsman and hotel proprietor Baron Long assumed control of the operation of the hotel. With Prohibition also ending, Long converted the Sala de Oro and the Supper Room into night clubs known as the Biltmore Bowl and the Rendezvous Room. The Biltmore Bowl became a social hub and popular venue for events such as the annual Navy Ball and Academy Awards presentations. Within four years, the hotel was again operating profitably. Edward Bernard was his Resident Manager, and after he retired, Edward’s son Baron Bernard followed in his footsteps. The Bernard family managed the hotel for different owners up through 1969.

Baron Long (1883?-1962) was born in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, and graduated from DePauw University. He came to California in 1908 and became involved in promoting professional sports, including boxing and horse racing. In addition to his sports interests, Long built and operated Los Angeles’s first all-night club, the Vernon Country Club, as well as other establishments – all of which closed with the implementation of Prohibition. In 1916, he and several others built and operated the Tijuana Race Track and later built and operated the Agua Caliente Race Track (1934) in Baja. His first hotel operations were in San Diego – the Van Nuys in 1918 and the U. S. Grant in 1920.

Baron Long’s lease of the Biltmore ran for twenty-five years, after which he served as chair of the board of the Los Angeles Biltmore Hotel Company. He and his wife Martha lived in the hotel. She continued to live there several years after his death in 1962.

Edward Bernard (1904?-1969) was born in New York and came to California as a boy. He started in the hotel business as a bellboy in the Santa Barbara Hotel at the age of fourteen, and worked his way through USC by working at the Alexandria. After graduation, he spent a year studying hotel management in Europe under the sponsorship of Baron Long before joining the staff of the U. S. Grant Hotel in San Diego. He served as manager of the Grant for seven years before taking charge of the Biltmore. At the end of Long’s lease, Bernard became vice president and managing director of the company, followed by his son, Baron Bernard.

During World War II, Los Angeles became a busy debarkation city. As a result, the hotel set up cots on the second floor for military personnel on leave from local military centers. In those days, the Biltmore coffee shop alone was reported to have served thousands of people daily. The Biltmore also hosted the USO in the early days of the war, and served as an Officers Club. Baron Long’s yacht, The Norab, was used for a time as General MacArthur’s headquarters.
**POST WWII**
In 1948, the Central Investment Corporation retired the mortgage (six years ahead of schedule) and changed its name to the Los Angeles Biltmore Hotel Company. They sold the hotel to Corrigan Properties in 1951 for more than $12 million.

Before the Convention Center was built in 1971, the Biltmore had a good share of convention trade. Ideal for large gatherings, the hotel had 1,500 rooms, space for serving 1,200 people in one room (Biltmore Bowl), and the Biltmore Theatre which could offer seating for 1,700.

Until its decline in the late 1960s along with the rest of downtown, the Biltmore played non-stop host to high society, international political figures, movie stars and royalty, including Rudolph Valentino, the Prince of Wales, J. Paul Getty, Howard Hughes, Herbert Hoover, and Eleanor Roosevelt.

**1970s**
By the mid-1970s downtown Los Angeles had experienced a mass exodus as residents and businesses left for the suburbs. The Biltmore was not immune to the state of disrepair that was rampant in downtown. Corrigan Properties, the hotel's owner, had done only minor renovations since the company had purchased it in 1951. As years of neglect and decay had taken their toll, the Biltmore was slated to become low-cost senior citizen housing. However, in 1976, Phyllis Lambert and Gene Summers of the architectural development firm, Ridgeway Ltd., purchased the building for $5.4 million.

Summers and Lambert were originally interested in developing a new hotel project on Bunker Hill. After negotiations fell through, the pair opted for renovation of the Biltmore instead. Renovation turned out to be the economical alternative: building a new 1,500 room hotel could have cost as much as $90 million. Renovation of the Biltmore cost one-third that much.

With Summers acting as Principal, the firm restored the original detailing of the public spaces, while completely renovating the guestrooms. According to Summers, the hotel was in very bad shape – it even had the original 1923 horsehair bed mattresses in some guest rooms. For the Biltmore restoration, Summers acted as architect, owner, contractor, decorator, and hotel manager all in one.

The architects furnished the renovated Biltmore with modern furniture reminiscent of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (whom Summers had studied under). Renowned pop artist, Jim Dine, a close friend of Summers, was commissioned to create artwork to be displayed throughout the hotel.

The $30 million restoration and renovation received an American Institute of Architects (AIA) National Honor Award in 1980 for the juxtaposition of contemporary furnishings and art work in a restored historic setting. The work of Summers and Lambert on the Biltmore is credited with contributing to beginning the revival of downtown Los Angeles.

**Phyllis Bronfman Lambert** (1927 - ) was born in Montreal, Canada, and earned a Master of Science in Architecture from the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT), Chicago. She was instrumental in convincing her father, Samuel Bronfman, to choose Mies van der Rohe to design the Seagram Building (1958) in New York, for which project she served as director of planning. In 1974 she partnered with Gene Summers to create Ridgeway Ltd.
Gene Summers (1928- ) received his Master of Science in Architecture from IIT. He worked with Mies van der Rohe as project architect from 1950-1966, later coming to Los Angeles to establish his own office. In 1974 he partnered with Phyllis Lambert to create Ridgeway Ltd. One of Summers’ highest profile projects was McCormack Place in Chicago (1970) while a partner with C. F Murphy Associates. He served as the dean of the College of Architecture at IIT from 1989-1993. He also designs high-end furniture.

1980s
In 1984, new tax laws forced Canadian Phyllis Lambert to sell her interest in the Biltmore, which in turn caused Gene Summers to do the same. Biltmore Partners, consisting of co-owners Westgroup and First Boston Real Estate Inc., bought the hotel for $75 million and spent another $200 million on extensive renovation, restoration, and new construction. During this restoration, the main lobby was relocated from the Olive Street entrance to the former Music Room on Grand Avenue. 235,000 square feet of additional office space was created by remodeling guest rooms. Extensive restoration of Smeraldi’s works was undertaken, under the guidance of Tony Heinsbergen, son of Anthony Heinsbergen. The restoration architects for this project were Barnett Schorr Architects of Seattle.

As part of this renovation, a 24-story office tower was constructed on the site of the former Biltmore Theatre (see page 24.)

OTHER CHANGES IN THE BILTMORE’S OWNERSHIP
In 1990, the hotel was sold to a Japanese investment group, T.A.T. Los Angeles Ltd., for a reported $219 million. The hotel continued to be managed by Windsor Hotel Group. In early June 1996, Regal Hotels International, Inc., acquired the property and renamed it the Regal Biltmore Hotel.

CURRENT STATUS
In 2000, Millennium & Copthorne Hotels purchased the Biltmore (and other Regal properties), and the hotel was subsequently renamed the Millennium Biltmore Hotel. Under Millennium management, the hotel has undergone upgrades to the banquet and guest rooms, as well as the public spaces.

The Biltmore is one of fifteen Millennium Hotels with a “Green Policy, ” meaning that environmentally sensitive practices are used throughout the hotel, from water conservation to eco-friendly cleaning materials.

There are now 683 rooms total, with 48 suites. The suites range from one to three bedrooms. There is a staff of over 500, many who have been with the hotel for decades.

The Biltmore Hotel is a member of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Historic Hotels of America. Established in 1989 by the National Trust, Historic Hotels of America recognizes quality hotels that embody the preservation of their historic integrity, architecture and ambiance. To be eligible, the hotels must be located in a building that is at least 50 years old, and listed or eligible to be listed on the National Register, or be recognized locally for having historic significance. As of 2016, there are 275 member hotels located across the United States.
ARCHITECTURE

For the Biltmore commission, the firm of Schultze & Weaver looked to the principles of a standard Beaux Arts composition with Spanish Baroque detail.

Beaux Arts: The term Beaux Arts comes from the name of the prestigious Parisian architectural school, L’Ecole de Beaux Arts, which stressed the study of Greek and Roman architecture as a basis for design. Many American architects studied at the school and the style was used extensively for public buildings at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century.

A Beaux Arts building is typified by the use of classical order and detail. Features common in Beaux Arts buildings as evident in the Biltmore are:

1. Symmetrical facade
2. Use of columns and pilasters, sometimes on a colossal scale
3. Horizontal belt-courses
4. Pronounced cornice in the attic level, often decorated with brackets and moldings
5. Flat roof
6. Ornamentation derived from a classical source

The facades of Beaux Arts buildings are typically designed with a traditional tripartite division. The term “tripartite” literally means three parts, as in the three parts of a column: the base, shaft, and capital. The exterior of the Biltmore is clearly divided in this manner.

- **The base**, or street level, section is sheathed in granite and limestone. Elaborate Corinthian pilasters and columns separate barrel-arched openings. The entrance is centered along the length of the building, and set back under a coffered barrel vault supported by Ionic columns.
- **The shaft**, the middle layer of the building, is of unornamented brick with cream terra cotta quoins defining the corners and rises for multi stories.
- **The attic** story at the top of the building (like the capital of a column) is highly decorated and capped with a projecting copper cornice.

Schultze & Weaver designed the Biltmore in an E-plan (three wings, projecting from a shared rear), which allowed for light and air circulation. This was a typical shape for buildings of the period, and Schultze & Weaver used the same composition for the nearby Subway Terminal Building (1926).

As is usual with hotels, the public spaces are on the lower floors and the guestrooms housed above. The architects further divided the public spaces to separate event attendees from overnight guests of the hotel. Overnight guests entered through the Olive Street lobby (now Rendezvous Court), while guests of the social functions entered directly into the Galeria. This division is no longer apparent, as the check-in lobby is in a former banquet room off the Galeria, which is also the main **porte cochere** where party guests arrive.

When the Biltmore opened, John McEntee Bowman wrote that, “The Biltmore has the fine solidity of the Italian, the richness of ornament of the Spanish, the grace and beauty of the French, and so it represents truly the splendid era when the Renaissance swept all of Europe.”
DECORATIVE MOTIFS AND THEMES

There are several decorative themes that are repeated both on the exterior and the interior of the building.

- **Food**: Look for cornucopias and garlands of fruit (twining around columns, etched into the glass of the Rendezvous Court chandeliers, painted onto ceilings, etc.), images of Ceres, goddess of agriculture (Olive Street entrance, Rendezvous Court, and Crystal Ballroom), and game animals and hunting weapons (Emerald Room).

- **Angels**: For the City of the Angels. Pretty much everywhere.

- **Water**: Mermaids (Rendezvous Court, Galeria), ocean explorers Columbus and Balboa (Olive Street entrance, Rendezvous Court), Pacific Ocean on “coat of arms” (Galeria), satyrs pouring water (Galeria).

- **Mythology**: Satyrs, griffins, mermaids, gods, and goddess are located both inside and out.

EXTERIOR

OLIVE STREET ENTRANCE:

On either side of the barrel vault are ornamental friezes; the right depicts Neptune, the Roman god of the sea, and the left depicts Ceres, the Roman goddess of agriculture. Along the extrados (the exterior edge between the crown and the haunch) of the arched vault, there are reliefs of Balboa, the Spanish explorer who navigated the Pacific Ocean in 1513, and Columbus, the Italian navigator who sailed the Atlantic and came upon America in 1492. The decoration both inside and out is filled with surprising details. One example is the sea snail depicted underneath the image of Balboa.

Under the barrel vault opening are reliefs of leaves and flowers. The limestone cornice of the base section is made of leaves, floral patterns as well as the egg and dart pattern. Along the length of the Olive Street frontage are four friezes that depict the Seal of Los Angeles. Also, there are four small shop entrances capped with pointed pediments that incorporate the egg and dart and dentil plan.

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Seal of Los Angeles:
- Lion and castle are from the arms of Spain, representing Los Angeles under Spanish rule from 1542-1821.
- Eagle holding the serpent is from the arms of Mexico, representing Los Angeles under Mexican rule from 1822-1846.
- The bear flag represents the sovereign Republic of California under its independence of 1846.
- The stars and stripes represent California's formal recognition of statehood in 1850, making the city of Los Angeles an American city.
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Millennium Biltmore Hotel Tour Manual
Revised February 2016
INTERIOR

THE RENDEZVOUS COURT:
The Rendezvous Court was originally the main lobby of the hotel, with check-in counters along the south wall. The grand arched window filled with decorative ironwork allowed guests to look out to the trees of Pershing Square.

The three-story court is bordered by colonnades vaulted ceilings on its north and south sides. The ceiling is plaster with a faux wood finish, and painted with Moorish-style designs attributed to Anthony Heinsbergen. Wrought iron tie beams support the structure of the ceiling at each second joint, while the principal beams of the ceiling are placed on projecting imposts over the load bearing portions of the arcade. The walls and columns of the Rendezvous Court are of terra cotta, finished to resemble travertine marble.

The ends of the imposts are decorated with cherubs and rams. The ram is first sign of the zodiac and symbolizes the beginning of spring, while the angels represent, appropriately enough, the City of Angels. Friezes of mythical figures that are set in squared borders line the ceiling and are interspersed by figures of griffins holding heraldic shields (note: as far as we know, the shields are general designs and do not correspond to any particular families.) The two bronze chandeliers with etched glass were imported from Europe in 1923.

The fountain and low stone wall partitions were added in the late 1980s remodel. Note how the materials used in these additions blend seamlessly with the original elements in the lobby.

The striking double staircase and doorway with its elaborate decoration is based on a staircase in Spain’s Burgos Cathedral (completed 1567). The Biltmore’s stair, as well as the Cathedral’s, features an intricate metal balustrade, at the foot of which is a sculpted griffin (the Biltmore’s is made of terra cotta). The two figures in the medallions at the head of the stair are Ceres and Balboa, repeating motifs found on the Olive Street façade.

Two rounded pilasters decorated with twinning grape vines and cherubs flank the doorway at the top of the stairs. The pilasters are capped with Corinthian capitals that contain projecting angelic busts. Centered above the doorway is an alcove that is topped by a broken pediment. Hanging from the middle of the doorway is a clock that features astrological motifs on one side and a clock face on the other.

Anthony Heinsbergen, (1891–1981). Born in Holland, he emigrated in 1907. Under Giovanni Smeraldi he worked on much of the Biltmore’s interior decoration. He founded the A.B. Heinsbergen Decorating Company in 1922. His company was responsible for the decoration of hundreds of Los Angeles buildings, including Los Angeles City Hall (1928), and the Los Angeles Theatre (1931). Theatre decoration was a specialty of Heinsbergen Decorating Company, with about 700 projects credited to the firm. Anthony's son Anthony T. (known as Tony) carried on the family business, and both he and his father supervised subsequent restorations of the Biltmore’s paintings. Both father and son are now deceased.
RESTAURANTS

SMERALDI’S:
Smeraldi’s is one of the hotel’s two restaurants (the other is Bugis Street). The sunken western-most portion of the space was originally the Men’s Lounge. The eastern half was later reclaimed from the retail shops that once lined Olive Street, including the former Biltmore Soda Fountain and Coffee Shop. In the sunken portion of Smeraldi’s restaurant the dark wood paneled walls contrast with the lighter shade of the decorative cast-plaster beamed ceiling that resembles carved wood. Two rows of squared Corinthian columns divide the room. A landscape mural decorates the far wall of the restaurant. Painted in 1986 by Alan Shonneman, Walter Lab, and Victor Henderson (who also painted the mural in the current registration lobby), it is comprised of three panels placed inside three arches. The central arch was the location of the doorway to the original shopping arcade that connected to the Biltmore Theatre.

BERNARDS:
The private dining room on the south side of the Rendezvous Court was originally the Men’s Grill. It is wainscoted in chestnut-finished oak, and has a sunken main dining area. The capitals of the pilasters feature the omnipresent angel-figure of the hotel. Geometric wood paneling covers the wall surfaces. In 1976 the restaurant became Bernard’s, an exclusive (and very expensive) French restaurant created and named after Bernard Jacoupy, then director of food and beverage at the hotel. Prior to its opening as Bernard’s, a fire had damaged the Smeraldi decoration on the beams. Anthony Heinsbergen Jr. was commissioned to replicate the original paintings in anticipation of the restaurant’s opening. At this time cork was added between the beams. After several different make-overs (Bernard himself moved on to other restaurants), Bernard’s closed in 2001. The room is currently used for parties and banquet meetings.

BUGIS STREET (accessed from Olive Street or the Galeria):
The interior of this Singaporean restaurant is designed in contemporary Asian fashion and includes five private dining rooms. It occupies the space originally designated as a shopping arcade from Olive Street to the back of the original hotel building. The space also originally provided access to the foyer of the Biltmore Theatre.

Restaurant Anecdotes:
- A 1930s brochure for the Biltmore listed four restaurants: The Rendezvous (now the Gold Room), The Lounge (now Smeraldi’s), Biltmore Grill (later Bernard’s), and The Coffee Shop (on Olive Street). The Coffee Shop was advertised as “A new ultra-modern, air-conditioned restaurant with counter and table service….booths upholstered in Foam Rubber, the newest and most comfortable substance now used in latest airplanes.”
- In 1936, the cost of a full five-course steak dinner was $1.50.
- In 1987, the original vintage 1923 silver service designed and created especially for the Biltmore’s grand opening was found packed away in the basement and brought out for use at Bernard’s
BASEMENT AREAS

KITCHEN (not accessed on the tour):
The 25,000 square foot facility is located in the basement and equipped to serve 3,500 meals a day. It was designed as five separate kitchens to serve the various restaurants and food services that the hotel has offered, including a separate kitchen for room service.

Kitchen Anecdotes:
- The Graf Zeppelin, while in Los Angeles on its historic round-the-world aerial trip in 1929, replenished its commissary with a complete supply of food from the Biltmore kitchens.
- The hotel used to bottle their own brand of wine and liquor.
- In the late 1940s, the hotel kept a special kosher kitchen with separate utensils, dishes, and glassware. As early as the 1920s the Biltmore was a popular venue for banquets and fundraisers for Jewish organizations.

FORMER BARBERSHOP/ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES:
The Biltmore’s Barbershop was in the basement directly under the lobby, in the area now used for administrative offices. Gene Summers remembered the Barbershop as “the most spectacular place, with about 20 chairs.” The artist Jim Dine utilized this vacant space as a temporary studio when he was commissioned to work for the Biltmore by Summers. It is now the administrative offices of the hotel.

HEALTH CLUB (not accessed on the tour, entrance off Galeria)
The facility is designed in the style of the opulent cruise ships of its day, such as the Queen Mary. There is solid brass trim on the windows and doors throughout. Decorative tile bordered in Greek and oceanic patterns cover the walls and deck of the pool area, accented with picture tiles of mermaids and men. The centerpiece is a Roman-style pool is of blue hand-laid imported Italian tile surrounded by a solid brass railing.

The Health Club is part of the 1928 addition. For many years it operated as a private men's club offering temporary membership to male guests, but in 1979 it offered comparable membership to women as well. Today the health club facilities are available only to hotel guests. (Note: one of the many elements that go into creating a first class hotel is exclusivity, hence the guests-only policy for the spa).

In addition to the swimming pool, the spa features a steam room, dry-heat sauna, whirlpool, weight room, and personalized services like massages. The Jacuzzi and weight rooms are not original; they were added in the early ’80s. Massage tables were once lined up where the fitness equipment is now located on the western portion of the facility.
GALERIA AND ADJACENT SPACES

GALERIA:
This 350-foot long Galeria, which spans the width of the building from north to south, is the main artery of the banquet rooms of the Biltmore. It was designed to accommodate the social functions of the hotel without interference from the hotel's commercial function of serving travelers. Guests coming for social events would enter directly into the Galeria from Fifth Street or the south porte cochere. Overnight guests would bypass the Galeria, reaching their rooms via elevator directly from the check in lobby on Olive Street (now the Rendezvous Court).

Various banquet rooms open into this space. Above each of the principle passages, except for the South Galeria and Tiffany Room, are reliefs depicting two satyrs holding a coat of arms with North American motifs: the bison from the old Indian head nickel, a Native American profile, a tepee, and a sunburst. There are ox skulls atop the columns flanking the Galeria entrances, a standard neo-classical motif known as a bucrane.

Throughout the Galeria, the angel figure is used both on the capitals and as applied ornament to the circular ceiling frescos that were painted by Smeraldi. The ceiling in the Galeria is broken into nine sections. The pattern of the ceiling alternates sections of coffers with circular frescos that display classic goddesses, winged horses, and Roman ruins. According to witnesses of the hotel's construction, Giovanni Smeraldi lay on his back to paint the ceilings while perched atop scaffolding.

Depictions of satyrs and fruits and leaves are sculpted onto the three-quarter columns that are located next to the coiled columns. In between these paired columns is a floral and checkerboard pattern that is accented by a shallow alcove.

The patterned marble floor with its subtle variations in hue utilizes the basic geometric shapes of triangles, diamonds, rectangles and squares and is bordered by black marble. In its early days, the Galeria was set up as an art gallery, with pictures hung along walls and various other art pieces resting on tables. Sofas and potted plants lined the walls to make the Galeria more conducive to lingering visitors.

The gallery was also a popular spot for celebrities, causing many people to come and stare at the famous guests. The public gawking became such a problem that the Biltmore hired a bouncer in the '20s and '30s. When the bouncer spotted loiterers, he would present them with a card that explained that the Galeria seats were reserved for paying guests, a polite way of asking the visitor to leave.

Giovanni Smeraldi (1868?-1947) was an Italian muralist who came to the United States in 1889 after training at the Vatican. He assisted in the decoration of the Blue Room at the White House and the Grand Central Terminal in New York (a project on which he would have worked closely with Leonard Schultze). He came to Los Angeles in 1921 to work on the Biltmore and maintained a studio on South Berendo Street until he died in 1947. Smeraldi's work can also be found at the Hellman Bank on Spring Street (also by Schultze & Weaver, 1924) and the Doheny Library (1931) at USC, as well as at other Biltmore Hotels around the country.
RECEPTION LOBBY (former MUSIC ROOM):
This room was originally the Music Room. In the 1984 renovation, it was reconfigured and became the hotel’s new lobby, entering off Grand Avenue. The lobby is serviced by the porte-cochere that was constructed with the office tower.

The fountain is original, made of terra cotta. The design features flowers, cherubs, fruits, fish, and a lion’s head. The ornate ceiling features an Italian Renaissance-style skylight (lit by artificial light). The floor design, carpeting inset into a parquet floor, is not original although its design mimics the ceiling pattern.

The openings in the east wall leading to the Galeria were added during the remodel. A patterned terra cotta arc with a central circular alcove, cornucopias, angels, and leaves tops the original entrance to the Galeria from the Music Room.

The mural behind the reception desk in the lobby was created in 1986. The artists were Alan Shonneman, Walter Lab, and Victor Henderson. The trompe l’oeil painting depicts a glass solarium accessible from the main lobby. In the distance is the downtown skyline with City Hall, Bunker Hill, and the Arco Towers.

Anecdotes about the Music Room:
- In the late 1930s, afternoon tea dances were held here. The dances became so popular that they were later expanded to what is now the Gold Room (originally the Supper and Palm rooms)
- This room was John F. Kennedy's campaign headquarters in 1960 during the Democratic National Convention.
- Contrary to urban legend, the ceiling was not featured in The Poseidon Adventure.
- Featured in Ghostbusters (1984) as the room destroyed when the Ghostbusters trap the hotel ghost.
- A former PR director for the hotel said that Giovanni Smeraldi once desired that his ashes be placed in the fountain, but he changed his mind.

GALLERY BAR and COGNAC ROOM:
Before the 1928 expansion, the Cognac Room was the foyer for the Music Room, and the bar was the location of a men’s room and a vestibule. With the expansion to Grand Avenue, the vestibule became the entrance of the North Galeria, a corridor leading to Grand Avenue. In the ’80s renovation, the North Galeria was divided to create the space for the Galeria Bar and the elevator lobby for the tower and upper floors of the 1928 addition. The ceiling pattern of the Galeria is repeated in this passage. Over the bar is the Americana coat of arms.

The Cognac Room to the north, with its vaulted ceiling, is decorated with two Anthony Heinsbergen murals from the late 1930s that were carved in wood and painted in oil. These are two of at least four murals originally placed in the Gold Room (the others are now lost). Display cases in the wall of the Cognac Room contain items from the Hotel’s past, including liquor bottles that link to the colorful Baron Long.
EMERALD ROOM
Total Square Footage: 5,454
Seating Capacity Banquet Style: 225

This room served as the main dining room of the hotel. Originally called the Renaissance Room, the entrance has a coffered ceiling and medallions of mythical figures.

Lining the room are two rows of terra cotta columns resembling travertine (believed to absorb sound) forming a double arcade. Large windows (now installed with mirrors instead of window panes, line two of the walls, with the third having false widows and the fourth being the entrance.

Individual dog portraits of different breeds are located on the soffit (underside of the beam), between each column in the colonnade. The hand painted cast-plaster beams in the ceiling feature various hunting tableaux of birds and rabbits. A frieze of mythical creatures surrounds the central part of the ceiling. Hanging from the four imported Italian chandeliers are colored crystals. The doors on the western portion of the south wall allow for passage into the adjacent Gold Room.

During a recent restoration, the hand-painted beams of the cast-plaster ceiling were carefully washed to freshen and highlight its vivid artwork while the walls and columns were painted a slightly darker shade than in the other rooms to blend with the ceiling.

Emerald Room Anecdotes:
- Lyndon B. Johnson had his headquarters here in the 1960 Democratic National Convention.
GOLD ROOM
Total Square Footage: 5,940
Seating Capacity Banquet Style: 300

The Gold Room has undergone several changes over the years. Originally, the space was divided into the Supper Room and the Palm Room. A level change marked by an open arcade distinguished the two parts of the space. Different wall and ceiling treatments were given to the two spaces that shared the one room.

The Palm Room was the area nearest the entrance, and was decorated to resemble a garden-like setting. The Palm Room served as an informal area for tea or coffee service, or as a waiting area for diners before moving on to the Supper Room. Placed a level up from the Palm Room, on the far side of the dividing columns, the Supper Room was an elegant dining area and featured an elaborately coffered ceiling, wood paneling, and Neo-Classica design elements. Originally, there were rectangular steps located in the middle of the room that allowed for passage between the two rooms.

In 1935, the rooms were remodeled into their current state with a semi-circular balustrade that projects beyond the columns/arcade line. The arcade itself has been reconfigured, from many columns and arches, forming a more substantial arcade, to one large arch flanked by two smaller ones, which functions more as a frame or proscenium than as a dividing line. The remodel was supervised by Wayne McAllister (see Biltmore Bowl), at which time it was renamed the Rendezvous Room. The large mirrored windows and some of the arches in the south wall were covered with Heinsbergen murals and draperies hung around them (two of the murals are now hanging in the Cognac Room, the others are lost). The change ushered in the era of the tea dances and the big bands.

Though the rooms retain the floor plan of the 1935 remodel, the room’s décor has been returned to the look of the room in the 1920s, with heavy drapes around the windows and the Heinsbergen murals removed.

Two different historical styles are evident. In the lower section, formerly the Palm Room, the decoration utilizes a simple Renaissance blind arcade with Ionic capitals. The abutments are delineated with medallions depicting mythical figures. Classical figures are also portrayed on the underside of the ceiling beams. The gold painted ceiling has a diamond pattern set in squares. The bordering ceiling panels contain painted harps, plants and more classical figures.

The upper section, formerly the Supper Room, was decorated in a much heavier style. A gold-painted cast plaster ceiling with elaborate arabesques dominates the upper portion of the room, which is lined by nine mirrored windows and rimmed by an ornamental gold frieze and painted swaging. The brass wall sconces also serve as air-ducts and are reminiscent of wildlife with birds, fruit and flowers.

Gold Room Anecdotes:
- There is a hidden door near the south-east corner of the room that leads to a corridor and service elevator. Legend is that this was a secret bedroom, accessible from Olive Street, for politicians to misbehave. It was not a speakeasy, as is sometimes reported.
CRYSTAL BALLROOM
Total Square Footage: 6,300
Seating Capacity Banquet Style: 600

The design of the ballroom is Neo-Classical, a style typified by the use of romantic, delicate colors overlaid with shallow white-stucco ornament as is seen in the friezes of this room. Paired pilasters and three-quarter columns line the room, interspersed with balconies. During the 1950s, glass panels were inserted in the gold painted cast iron balcony railings, replacing metallic grillwork that mimicked the pattern of the green-plaster frieze encircling the ceiling.

The thirty-foot-high ceiling is covered with a single seamless canvas painted with goddesses, cupids, satyrs, and other mythical figures. Artist Giovanni Smeraldi and his workmen reportedly took seven months to paint the ceiling. In the center of the ceiling is a representation of Ceres, the Roman goddess of agriculture, poised in the heavens and surrounded by angels.

In a 1990s restoration, the ceiling was washed with a special formula to remove nicotine and smoke discoloration, and then touched up where paint had peeled. Finally, a coat of buttermilk was applied to give the ceiling a uniform sheen and protect it from future damage.

From the shallow-coved ceiling hang two crystal chandeliers, imported from Europe. Each chandelier measures twelve feet in diameter. A stepped border of ornamental plaster that separates the walls and ceiling contains cherubs, oceanic motifs, and sea-creatures interspersed with an egg and dart pattern. Caryatids (human figures), once supported the corner balconies.

When the hotel was first built, the Crystal Ballroom did not have direct access to the Galeria. There was a foyer with columns and stairs, but the area between the foyer and the ballroom was a pantry for food service for the ballroom. Today the service area is shared between the ballroom and the Tiffany Room, and there is direct access from the Galeria to the Ballroom.

Anecdotes about the Crystal Ballroom:
- In the 1920s, the Crystal Ballroom featured weekly fashion shows offering the latest in furs, satin, and crystal beading to the “smart set.”
- The first organized banquet of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences was held here on May 11, 1927. Some 300 leaders of the motion picture industry met to discuss plans for the newly organized Academy. Louis B. Mayer suggested focusing attention on cinematic achievements by presenting awards of merit, thus the Academy Award was born. As he listened to the discussion, MGM Art Director, Cedric Gibbons, began sketching a design, and the concept for the Oscar statuette was born. Later, local artist George Stanley would transform that sketch into the famous statuette. (Popular legend has it that Gibbons drew the famous Art-Deco figure on a linen napkin, but the napkin has never been found.)
TIFFANY ROOM
Total Square Footage: 4,224
Seating Capacity Banquet Style: 100

This was formerly called the Colonnade Room, and originally served as the foyer to the Crystal Ballroom. It provided the transition between the automobile entrance and the main ballroom.

The eastern wall contains alcoves, spun and fluted paired columns with composite capitals of lions, scrolls (called volutes), and acanthus leaves. Sculptures depicting Spanish conquistadors and royalty line the north wall, and immediately below those figures are medallions depicting Queen Isabella and Christopher Columbus.

Brass chandeliers incorporate crystal plumes, only a few of which remain. The cast plaster, wood-tone ceiling with a recessed octagon pattern has hand-painted beams.

The north wall was originally open to the Crystal Ballroom and its balconies, until it was enclosed with a blind arcade in 1970 due to fire safety issues. The Tiffany Room is the smallest of the Biltmore's major public rooms.
BILTMORE BOWL (downstairs):
Total Square Footage: 14,000
Seating Capacity Banquet Style: 800

When it opened in 1928 as part of the new wing of the hotel, the Sala De Oro as it was then called, was the largest ballroom in the hotel (and possibly on the west coast). The 140-foot-long, 107-foot-wide room was elaborate in design with a lofty vaulted ceiling almost three stories high that was covered in ornamental plaster and painting. There were forty-six boxes on the main and mezzanine levels. The stage at the end of the hall was on hydraulics to allow it to be lowered to be level with the dance floor. The mezzanine level had a check room that could accommodate one hundred guests at a time. The main level of the Sala de Oro was on the same level as the original basement, giving direct access for delivery vehicles. It also had its own kitchen.

In 1934, the Sala de Oro was transformed into the Biltmore Bowl, brainchild of manager Baron Long. Touted as the world’s largest nightclub, the room was reconfigured by architect Wayne McAllister so that the stage was in the middle of the long wall opposite the foyer. The room was split horizontally, with the mezzanine level becoming the entrance level. From the new entrance level, the floor dropped in a series of five tiers to the dance floor creating excellent sightlines.

Wayne McAllister (1907-2000) took drafting in high school, but had no formal training in architecture. He frequently involved other designers in his projects including his wife, Corrine, as well as Anthony Heinsbergen, Millard Sheets, and Tony Duquette. He had a long association with Baron Long, starting with the Agua Caliente resort (1928) and continuing with other projects including the Balboa Brewery in San Diego (1932). When Long took over the lease of the Biltmore, he asked McAllister to renovate the Sala de Oro. McAllister also gained fame for his streamlined drive-in restaurants of the 1940s and 1950s, and as designer of some of the early iconic buildings on the Las Vegas Strip.

There was a fire in the Bowl circa 1950, which may have damaged some of the decorations. The Bowl was redesigned in a contemporary style for the ‘50s, yet it still maintained much of the tiered seating. Also in the 1950s, the room below the Biltmore Bowl was converted into an exhibit hall, originally called the Rex Room (now the Regency Room) and escalators were installed. The foyer on the lower level still retains some of its ceiling decoration but the only remainders of the Sala de Oro’s elaborate decoration in the Regency Room are the decorative ventilation grills.

At the end of 2001 the Biltmore Bowl underwent another renovation that eliminated the tiered seating and brought the style more in line with the rest of the hotel. It now encompasses nearly 14,000 square feet.

Anecdotes about the Biltmore Bowl:
• The Academy Award ceremonies in 1931, 1935-39, 1941-42 were held here.
• In the 1930s the Bowl held the city's top social event, the annual Navy Ball, which attracted Los Angeles' powerful such as the Chandlers and Dohenys to honor the Pacific Fleet's commander-in-chief.
• The Biltmore Bowl was home to the bands of Harry James, Jimmy Grier, and Joe Reichman.
OTHER SPACES OFF THE GALERIA

MEZZANINE MEETING ROOMS
There are nine smaller meeting rooms on the Mezzanine off the Galeria. Four of these, the Athenian, Roman, Grecian, and Corinthian rooms, match the decoration of the larger banquet rooms with elegant wood paneling and carved ceilings. The other five mezzanine rooms are modern with dropped ceilings and fluorescent lighting.

SOUTH GALERIA
The South Galeria accesses Grand Avenue, and serves as the entrance to the Biltmore Bowl. This portion of the hotel is from the 1928 addition. The actual demarcation between the original and addition is marked by the staircase. Smeraldi is credited with the Pompeian-styled painting on the vaulted ceiling. A balustrade of veined Umbrian marble connects imposing terra-cotta piers that are topped with a frieze of flowers and a cornice in the egg and dart pattern. The air ducts in the ceiling resemble a coat of arms while the more modern brass chandeliers incorporate leaves in their design. The patterned marble floor is the same as that of the Galeria. The “marble” columns at the base of the stairway coming off of the main galeria are metal faux-finished to look like marble.

LADIES RECEPTION ROOM / SUNDRIES SHOP
When the hotel opened, it boasted a Ladies Reception Room, where the sundries shop is now, across from the Emerald Room. Floor plans for the hotel at that time showed the room also had a staircase to the mezzanine level to access hairdressing, cosmetics, and manicure salons. This separate parlor for ladies was a holdover from an earlier era when men and women would socialize separately. By the time the hotel opened, the practice of having a Men’s Lounge and a Ladies Reception Room was already going out of fashion. It was not long before the Ladies Reception Room at the Biltmore was put to other uses, and the ladies began to regularly use the Men’s Lounge.
GUEST ROOMS OF THE BILTMORE HOTEL

HISTORY:
As part of the opening publicity, there were descriptions of the rooms and services to be available in the new hotel. Each floor had its own clerk to take care of keys, mail, and messages. In addition, the front of each leg of the hotel could be closed off to create a five-room apartment with its own private hall. Each guest room had its own bathroom. Running ice water was available in every room and guests could request a radio connected to the hotel’s giant antenna.

DRUMMERS ROOMS:
Originally one whole floor was devoted to “drummer’s rooms,” designed for traveling salespeople. Typically these rooms offered wall beds which could be folded up to ensure an atmosphere for conducting business, and had specially designed tables for display of samples. As late as the 1950s, traveling salespeople used these rooms for displaying manufacturers’ samples. The trunks of goods would be shipped ahead, and the bellman would deliver them to the room and set up the merchandise before the salesperson arrived. When the salesperson checked out, the trunk would be shipped ahead to another hotel in a different city.

- One salesperson who stayed at the hotel became a life-long resident. Thelma Becker checked into the hotel on January 7, 1940, as a young traveling representative for a manufacturer of women’s wear. She remained a resident of the hotel for over 55 years. Ill health forced her to move out of the hotel and into a convalescent home in 1997. In August of 2003 she celebrated her 90th birthday, and the chef from the Biltmore baked her a birthday cake. Ms. Becker died in 2004.

PRESIDENTIAL SUITE
The Presidential Suite still retains hidden buttons in the paneling that reportedly triggered the opening of hiding places during the days of Prohibition. It occupies the 10th and 11th floors with a spiral staircase and a private elevator to insure security for those staying in this 4,600 square foot suite. As of 2016, the price of a stay in the suite was just under $5,000 a night.

- The Presidential Suite of the Biltmore Hotel has been used by presidents and royalty alike. The list of presidents that have stayed here includes: Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry Truman, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, and Bill Clinton. During the Royal Gala of 1988 the Duke and Duchess of York stayed here.
- In the mid-1960s, the Beatles landed in a helicopter atop the Biltmore and used this suite as a hideaway on their first U.S. Tour. Ingrid Bergman also stayed here while performing at the Music Center during her first stay in Los Angeles after her controversial marriage to Italian director Roberto Rossellini.

Music Suite: Another splendid suite in the hotel is the Music Suite totaling 2,000 square feet. This suite has two bedrooms with private baths, a large dining/sitting room, a small service kitchen and a music salon that includes a grand piano.
ADDITIONAL HISTORY OF THE BILTMORE

FILMING:
The first report of filming at the Biltmore was made in January, 1924 (Cecil B. DeMille’s “Triumph”). From the 1930s onward, the Biltmore has been a popular film location for features, television shows, and commercials. Particularly notable for extensive use of the hotel are Bachelor Party (1983), Doctor Detroit (1983), Ghostbusters (1984), Fabulous Baker Boys (1989) and Dave (1993). For a list of films, go to the Biltmore’s website http://www.millenniumhotels.com/usa/millenniumbiltmorelosangeles/90anniversary/biltmore-filming-history.html

THE BLACK DAHLIA:
(Note: not all tourgoers are crime fans. Lurid detail of this murder is not appropriate for this tour)

What is arguably the most famous Los Angeles-based unsolved murder was that of Elizabeth Short, dubbed “the Black Dahlia,” who was brutally murdered in 1947. She was last seen alive at the Biltmore Hotel.

Born in 1924 near Boston, Elizabeth Short’s eventually came to Hollywood. An attractive young woman, she often wore black clothing to match her dark hair, which inspired some of her neighbors to call her “The Black Dahlia,” after the popular 1946 film The Blue Dahlia starring Veronica Lake.

On January 9, 1947, Elizabeth was dropped off at the Biltmore Hotel after spending several weeks in San Diego. Elizabeth told an acquaintance that she was going to meet her sister in the lobby. Hotel employees recalled that she made several telephone calls while she waited. At about 7 o'clock, she stepped out of the lobby onto Olive Street where she said goodnight to the doorman and walked away. She wasn't seen again until the morning of January 15, 1947, when her body was found in a vacant lot in the Crenshaw District. No one has ever been charged with her murder. It is still an open case in the files of LAPD’s Robbery-Homicide Division.

GHOSTS:
Every old building has its ghost stories, and the Biltmore is no exception. Over the years staff from the General Manager on down have told stories of haunting in the basement, the swimming pool, the elevator shaft, and the Crystal Ballroom.
BILTMORE TOWER
Landau Partnership, 1987

The Biltmore Tower is a 24-story office tower offering 132,000 square feet of office space, and nine levels of garage parking accommodating 359 automobiles.

The exterior cladding incorporates a six brick mix, which duplicates what was used in the original hotel except for purple clay that was no longer available. The first nine stories, which contain the parking levels, are windowless. The upper stories employ bay windows like that of the 1928 addition. The thirty-six-foot-high pitched copper roof rises two hundred feet above the original height of the hotel and disguises a rooftop helipad.

The Biltmore Tower project accompanied the 1984-87 renovation of the Biltmore Hotel. This building demonstrates the challenges of designing additions to historic structures. The original hotel follows formal Beaux Arts design, and from the start of the design process, the architects had the challenge of 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 Art style hotel the architects chose materials that closely matched those of the original building. They used bricks from the original clay quarry, matched cast stone to the original limestone quoins, 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 Secretary of the Interior has two specific standards that address the issue of additions to historic structures:

“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.”
BILTMORE THEATRE (demolished):

As part of the original development plan, Central Investment Corporation purchased the lot at the corner of Fifth and Grand for development of a theatre.

The Biltmore Theatre, located where the office tower now stands, was designed by Schultze & Weaver and cost an estimated one million dollars to build. In keeping with the overall design of the Biltmore Hotel, the theatre was designed in the Spanish and Italian Renaissance style with mixed brick, carved stone and terra cotta. Access to the theatre was along Fifth Street. The theatre could also be accessed via the hotel. The hotel also supplied the water, electricity and heating for the theatre.

The theatre was operated by A. L. Erlanger, who owned a chain of theatres around the country. The 1,700-seat theatre opened in 1924 with Will Rogers emceeing the ceremony. The theatre was equipped to support live theatre and opera productions. It spotlighted such entertainers as Lunt and Fontaine, Henry Fonda, Ann Miller, Mae West, Helen Hayes, and Kathryn Grayson throughout the years. The theatre closed in 1964 due to competition from the newly opened Music Center. The theatre was demolished shortly thereafter and the land was converted into a parking lot.
APPENDIX A: 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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**Events**

- **1860**: Transcontinental railroad completed to Sacramento
- **1876**: Southern Pacific link from San Francisco to Los Angeles completed
- **1885**: Santa Fe link to transcontinental railroad completed
- **1905**: Union Pacific comes to Los Angeles