

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received JUN 25 1986

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Bank of Balboa/Bank of America

and/or common Bank of America

2. Location

street & number 611 E. Balboa Boulevard

n/a not for publication

city, town Newport Beach

n/a vicinity of

state California code 06

county Orange

code 059

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> n/a	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name 611 E. Balboa Limited

street & number 3152 Redhill

city, town Costa Mesa

vicinity of

state California 92626

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County Recorder

street & number 400 Civic Center

city, town Santa Ana

state California 92702

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town

state

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date n/a

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The ex-Bank of America building at 611 Balboa Boulevard on the Balboa Peninsula in Newport Beach is a two-story in height, poured concrete, Mediterranean/Spanish Colonial Revival style building, erected in 1928. It is located on the community's main street a block from the center of town and a block from the beach. It is in the area of town that experienced a building and economic boom in the late Twenties/early Thirties as a local commercial center and a regional entertainment center. Many of these buildings remain, giving the area today a scale quite similar to that of the Thirties/Forties era.

The two-story, rectangular building, 84'6" in length and 39'6" across the front, gives a powerful, vertical impression due to several factors including: the height/width and length ratios on the facades, its corner location, and its closeness to the streets. A triple ply red tile roof tops the gabled end roof structure. The exterior retains exceptional integrity to the period of construction.

The principal exterior facade, i.e., the north facade facing Balboa Boulevard, exhibits a high degree of ornamentation, some of which is repeated elsewhere on the exterior. This ornamentation is quite eclectic including decorative elements associated with several styles such as Spanish Colonial Revival, Classical Revival, Gothic, and Moderne. A 25' high arched recessed main entry includes: a molded scrollwork surround; wood, wrought iron, and brass embellishments such as a clock in the upper arched window area; and a second arched scrollwork half surround above that concludes at two gargoyled ends. At the peak is molded cement crest that includes a shield topped by an eagle with two cherubic boys on each side. Between the surrounds, the concrete has been scored to give the impression of stone blocks. The only exterior alteration appears to be the front door which is now of aluminum, probably replacing the original brass in the 1950's.

The entry is flanked on both sides by heavy windows. Above each window under a heavy lintel is a molded cement decoration (mock window hood) that includes acanthus leaves, and torches on the posts, and bird, and human images in the frieze. Below the windows is a Moderne combination of geometric indentation in alternating circles and squares.

See Continuation Sheet

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1928 **Builder/Architect** W.H. Bowman/Morgan, Walls, Clements

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The significance of this building stems from its historical associations as a long time important instrument of commerce to the community, and its importance to the development of the town, as well as from its fine eclectic period architecture. The building is associated with people and events significant to the history of the area. It embodies distinctive characteristics of a type and method of construction and was designed by an architectural firm of great prominence in the era for buildings of this type.

The Bank of America occupied and operated in this building from 1934 through 1984, fifty years during which the community came to consider this the Bank of America building. Many of the citizens and businesses of Balboa, as well as the prominent entertainment industry business and visitors to the area, have been patrons here, but this building was not originally a Bank of America. It was once the headquarters of the Bank of Balboa, which built and opened the facility with much fanfare in 1928.

The Bank of Balboa, the first bank in town, was organized by George P. Edwards, of Berkeley, and it opened its doors in the Jordan Building diagonally across the street, on September 30, 1922. The administration of the bank changed over the next several years until Dr. F. C. Ferry reorganized the bank and became President in 1927. It was under his term that the new building was erected and opened. Dr. Ferry was a prominent local businessman and active in civic affairs. He was president of the original School Board, president of the Chamber of Commerce, and a member of several service organizations. Dr. Ferry was also an early home movie avocationalist. Remarkably, a video of the construction of this first concrete building in the area, and its grand opening as the Bank of Balboa has been made from the old 16mm films still in possession of the family.

See Continuation Sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Sherman, H.L. History of Newport Beach. Los Angeles, Times-Mirror Press, 1931.
 Meyer, S.A. Fifty Golden Years: A History of Newport Beach, 1906-1956.
 Newport Harbor Publishing Co., 1957.
 Newport News articles. August 9, 1928 pps 4,7,10
 Balboa Times articles. July 12, 1928 pl. August 2, 1928 pl. August 9, 1928 pl.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 3400 sq. ft. (.078 acre)

Quadrangle name Newport-Costa Mesa

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A	<u>1</u> <u>1</u>	<u>4</u> <u>1</u> <u>6</u> <u>5</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u>	<u>3</u> <u>7</u> <u>1</u> <u>8</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>	B	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>
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Verbal boundary description and justification

AP# 48-123-12 The nominated property occupies city lots 7 + 8 of Parcel 8 Tract 7599, and it is 40' x 85' in size. These are the historic boundaries.

List all states and counties for properties overliapping state or county boundaries

state	n/a	code	county	n/a	code
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state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Robert Selway, Consultant for

organization 611 E. Balboa Limited

date October, 1985

street & number 2414 Bonnie Brae

telephone (714) 541-4052

city or town Santa Ana

state California 92706

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Kathryn Guethrie

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 6/15/86

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Alfred B. ...
 Keeper of the National Register

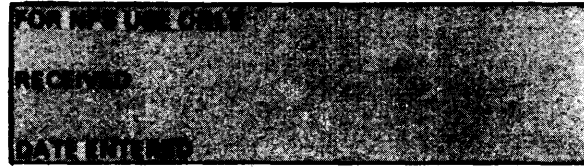
7-24-86

Address

 of

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**



CONTINUATION SHEET 1

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 1

Description continued

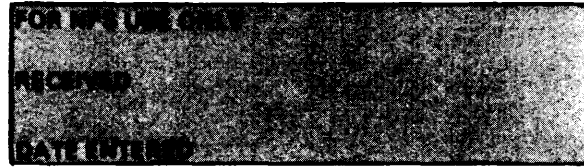
An equally prominent exterior feature is the row of seven high, narrow arched windows on the long east facade. They include pilasters between, a plain molding below that actually goes entirely around the building, and an arched pattern above repeating the shield and scrollwork motif from the front. The west side of the building, facing the parking lot, is plain, and the rear is plain with the exception of three rectangular windows to the second floor office/storage area.

The interior of the building is of a design and impression consistent with the exterior as far as its verticality, strength, and ornamentation. With the exception of the small second floor area to the rear, the main space goes from plain tile floor to heavy roof beams and timbers. None of the original bank furnishings remain. However, the space and its design features do remain, some of which are very interesting.

The windows on the east side sit in eight bevelled, recessed spaces (one false) that are repeated as shallow aediculae on the west. Below the windows on the north facing front are polychromatic tile mosaic bulkheads in a spear point pattern of blue and orange circled with yellow daisies. At the rear, the 18 inch thick walled 12' x 20' vault is surrounded by a large version of the same tile mosaic. Also at the front are the original Spanish style cast iron decorations including a clock. At both the front and the rear at the gabled end peaks are large circular, colorful terra cotta depictions of Balboa, the Spanish explorer for whom the town and the first bank in the building were named.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**



CONTINUATION SHEET 2

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 1

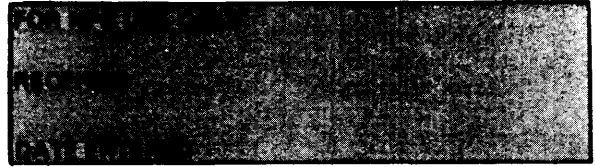
Significance continued

In July, 1928 shortly before the building opened, the general contractor, W.H. Bowman, was quoted in the Newport News that "this building will be the finest bank building in the County, if not in all of southern California, and will materially add to the appearance of the Balboa business section, to which was also recently added the Rendezvous Ballroom and the Ritz Theatre." This was truly a building and entertainment industry boom area in southern California at the time with other buildings nearby including the new Bath House and Balboa Inn. Comments at the opening in August reinforced Mr. Bowman's high regard. The News reported on August 9, that comments of visitors and outsiders were to the effect that "the opening of the new bank will do more to put Balboa on the map than any other thing because it gives the community stability and value."

The bank's administration, although wishing to project strength and stability through their building, also did not wish to intimidate the community depositor nor depart from the decade long successful southern California marketing symbols. Publicity emphasized "Romance", as well as stability, with ads and even broadsheets in local and County papers depicting knights and ladies and Mediterranean settings. Famed cowboy cartoonist Jack Lindsley provided Western/romance drawings, and the children of the regionally prominent Lugo family were the first depositors.

Unfortunately, neither stability nor romance was able to weather the Depression, and the Bank of Balboa closed its doors in February 1932 when a run on local banks closed it down along with the other bank in the area, First National of Newport Beach. According to Meyer, Newport Beach editorial historian, no charges were made against officers and liquidation resulted in returns to depositors commensurate with those of the times invested in other securities.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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CONTINUATION SHEET 3

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 2

Significance continued

In 1932-34, Bank of America purchased the building at a substantial discount and moved in to provide service for fifty years to a varied clientele.

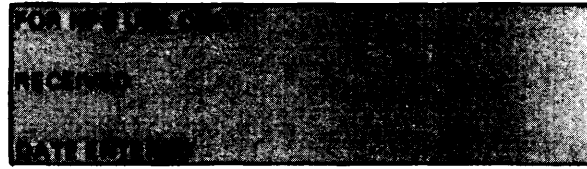
Architecturally, the ex-Bank of America/Balboa retains exceptional integrity of design and appearance especially on the exterior where its walls, roof, fenestration, and ornamentation are intact to the period of construction. The prominent impression of the building, then, continues today, due in part to the integrity of appearance, but also to the continuity of scale in the immediate area. The ornamentation and eclectic decor of the front facade, the windows, and several interior features such as the terra cotta rondels and colorful tile mosaics are prototypical of the period and are in very good condition.

The architectural firm for the project was Morgan, Walls, and Clements- a firm of major significance, which designed many prominent theaters, office buildings, and banks in the Los Angeles area (particularly Hollywood) in the 1920's and 1930's. They include the Wilvern Theatre and Samson Tyre and Rubber Co. No other properties by this firm are known in the area.

The firm is known as epitomizing and perfecting the Spanish Colonial Revival design and variations which symbolized the period and the region. Their role in this project probably stems from the fact that Dr. Ferry was from Hollywood and active in several Los Angeles financial ventures, and from the desire of the bank's board to erect a headquarters that would be architecturally imposing. The building exhibits an overall appearance and individual design features exemplary of the firm's work.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**



CONTINUATION SHEET 4

ITEM NUMBER 8

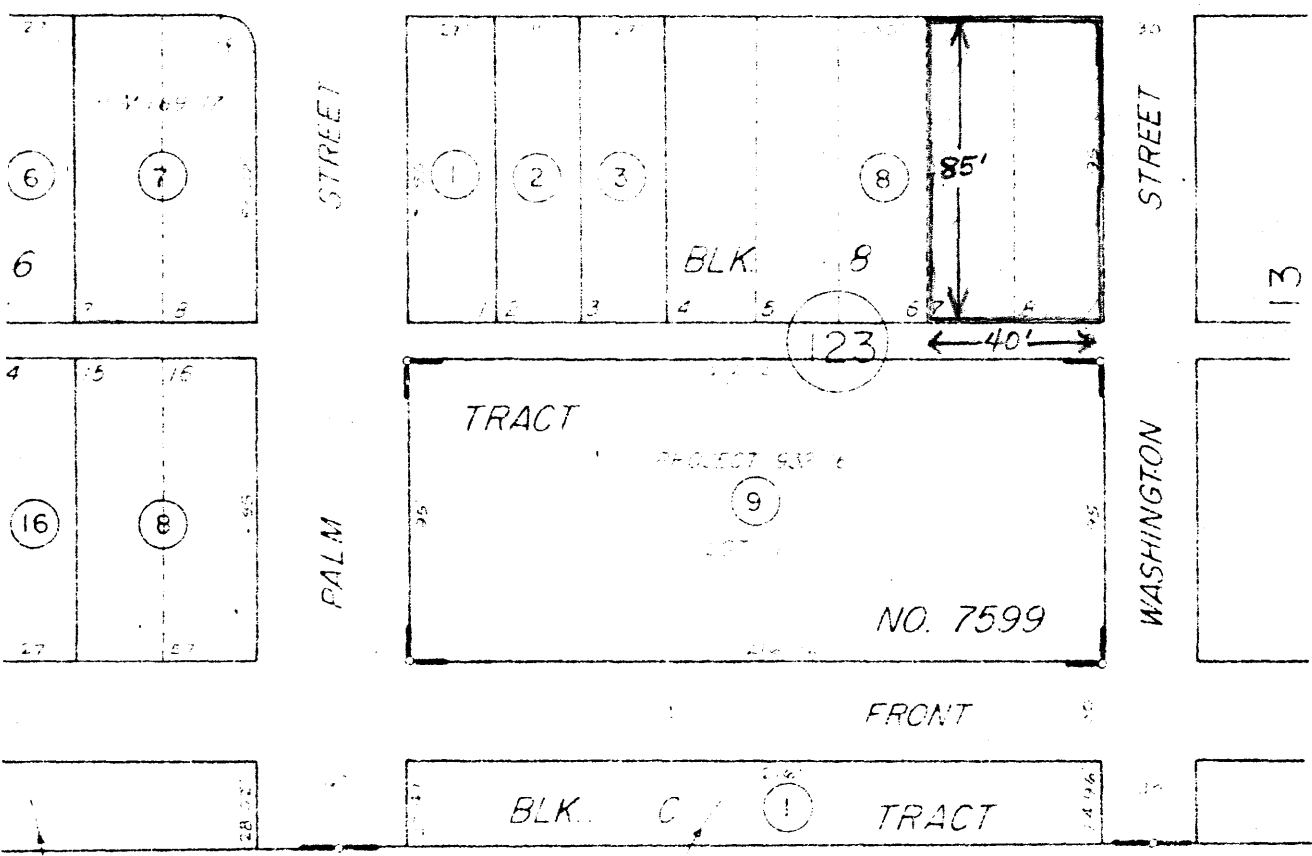
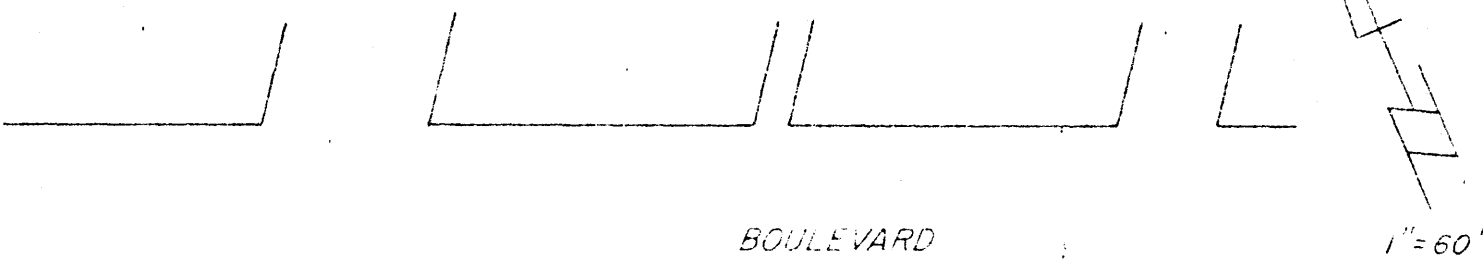
PAGE 3

Significance continued

The bank building is an excellent example of an adaptation of several period styles (especially Spanish Colonial Revival) into a regional expression utilized to meet the ambitious bank plans of a small southern California coastal community. The quality and comparatively large size have helped to perpetuate its role as the primary banking facility on the Balboa Peninsula.

BANK OF BALBOA/BANK OF AMERICA

611 East Balboa Blvd.
Newport Beach, Orange County, California



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