

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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

1. Name

OCT 22 1982

historic Silberstein Park Building

OHP

common La Grande Hotel

2. Location

street & number 426, 430, 434 Broadway

N/A not for publication

city, town Chico

N/A vicinity of

congressional district First

state California

code 06

county Butte

code 007

3. Classification

| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use |
|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> district | <input type="checkbox"/> public | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied (partially) | <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 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 type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted | <input type="checkbox"/> government |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> being considered | <input checked="" 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 Bank of America

street & number 400 Broadway

city, town Chico

N/A vicinity of

state California 95926

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Butte County Recorder's Office

street & number 25 County Center Drive

city, town Oroville

state California

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Historic Building Survey, by Chico
title Heritage Assn. -- in preparation

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date December 7, 1981 by Julie Henley, surveyor

federal state county local

depository for survey records Special Collection Section, Meriam Library, CSUC, Chico

city, town Chico

state California

7. Description

Condition
 excellent deteriorated
 good ruins
 fair unexposed

Check one
 unaltered
 altered

Check one
 original site
 moved date N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Silberstein Park Building is a three-storey, 1909 commercial building faced in white terra cotta with classically derived details. It faces the west side of the downtown Chico plaza and is one of the few survivors of the rash of remodeling of Chico commercial structures in the 1950's. Except for a necessary modification of a theatre space into a retail space on the ground floor after a 1924 fire, the exterior of the building looks essentially the same as it did in a 1912 photograph.

It is a two-part commercial block with a retail ground level and a two-storey office level above, finished with a deep cornice beneath a parapet. It is a rectangular brick building on a concrete foundation with the street facade faced with a highly glazed white terra cotta brick. The street level is divided into two retail areas with traditional plate-glass display windows and recessed doorways. The door leading to the upper floors is on the right side of the facade. The upper level is four bays wide with triple double-hung windows with transoms within each bay. Floral terra cotta panels accent each window section. Three panels in the blind attic storey level state the original name of the building and date: "Erected + Silberstein+Park+Building - 1909". The ornate projecting cornice above the panels is accented with block modillions and consoles above the piers and double consoles above the end piers.

The overall appearance is that of a small urban early 20th century office building, unlike any other commercial building in the area.

The building remains essentially the same on both the interior and the exterior. The plans called for a three-storey structure to be devoted to two stores on the ground floor and offices on the second and third floors. The rooms planned for stores measured 28 by 100 feet each. The stairway to the office rooms on the second floor led from the sidewalk and opened up on the second floor to a large corridor. The rooms were finished in light oak. The interior was modified within three years to accommodate the change from offices to hotel rooms. The City Director of Public Works has established that the interior is basically sound and a prospective buyer intends to restore it to office space again.

One lower retail area was converted into a theatre space from 1912 - 1924. After a fire, the space reverted to retail usage again, although the ticket box still remains as a display case in the center of the entry.

The scale of the Silberstein Park Building relates harmoniously with the other buildings surrounding the park: the Post Office on the opposite corner, the Municipal Building across the park, and the Waterland Breslauer Building to the north. As a terra cotta-clad representative of contemporary Bay Area commercial structures, it is unique in the Chico area.

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/ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> art | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> music | <input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> theater |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> communications | <input type="checkbox"/> industry | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> invention | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) immigrant element |

Specific dates 1909-10

Builder/Architect

A. J. Bryan

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Architecturally the Silberstein-Park Building is the unique representative in the Chico area of a structure with a glazed terra cotta brick exterior, and the only local commercial building of comparable size resembling early 1900's commercial structures popular in urban areas like San Francisco and Oakland. Its exterior ornamentation, featuring floral panels and an ornate cornice, has survived intact, with the exception of changes made to accommodate a theatre, which was succeeded by stores after a fire during the first owner's lifetime. The building relates harmoniously with the four major surviving buildings which frame the rest of Chico Downtown Center Plaza. The original interior has been characterized as sound despite lack of maintenance and minor alterations to accommodate residents while it was serving as a hotel. The building played an important commercial role when it replaced one-storey wood frame buildings and reflected the commercial expansion of the city with its focus on the City Plaza, housing retail stores, a theatre, and then a hotel.

The owner was a significant contributor to the history of Chico, both as merchant and as the fulfillment of the "American dream" cherished by so many immigrants of the late 19th century from the eastern parts of Europe. Beginning as a laborer on the Bidwell rancho, he became a prominent businessman and property owner, whose descendants or associates are still active in merchandising and in the professions.

Historical Context of building and owner:

In 1884 Herman Silberstein purchased one half of Lot 3, Block 19, between 4th and 5th Streets, facing Broadway, probably from Frederick Ackerman and C. C. Goodrich, who had bought the lot from Ira Weatherbee in 1882. Weatherbee, owner of the "Dogtown Nugget", had bought Block 19 in 1873 from the Upper Sacramento Agriculture Society, to which its president John Bidwell had deeded it in 1870.

Herman Silberstein was born in 1856, in a small town in eastern Poland, near the Russian border. He worked in Kempen as a tinner until he fled during the Bismarck period, as did many other German Jews. His wife, Yettle (b. Germany 1855), and their baby, Hannah, joined him in Amsterdam, from where they sailed steerage for New York. Herman Silberstein left his wife and child with relatives in New York while he journeyed to Chico, arriving in 1877. He got a job on the Rancho Bidwell, where he worked for one year saving money to bring his family West. Yettle and baby Hannah arrived in Chico in 1878. The couple started with a small cigar store on Broadway between 2nd and 3rd. The store was expanded into a men's furnishing store and later the business was moved to mid-block of 3rd Street.

Herman and Yettle Silberstein had five daughters: Hannah (b. GermanY), Hattie, Lizzie, Gussie, and Martha, all born in Chico.

Early in 1909, Herman Silberstein made plans to build a large three-storey building on Lot 3 of Block 19. In February 1909, the one-storey wooden frame buildings (which

(cont'd)

9. Major Bibliographical References

See attachment

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property 0.2 acre

Quadrangle name Chico, Butte Co., CA

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

Assessor's parcel no.: Block 19, 1083

A

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| Zone | | Easting | | | | Northing | | | | | | | | |

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| Zone | | Easting | | | | Northing | | | | | | | | |

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|------|--|---------|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
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| Zone | | Easting | | | | Northing | | | | | | | | |

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lot 3, in Block 19 of the City of Chico, according to the official map thereof filed in the office of the County Recorder of the County of Butte, State of California.

Building occupies its historic 66' x 132' parcel.

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

state N/A code county N/A code

state N/A code county N/A code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Julie Henley, Giovanna Jackson, and Quentin Griffiths

organization Chico Heritage Association

date Oct. 13, 1982

street & number Box 2078

telephone (916) 342-2728

city or town Chico

state California 95927

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Kennell

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 12/28/82

For HCERS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register of Historic Places.

J. Dillon
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

Chief of the State Historic Preservation Office

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

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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8. Historical Context (cont'd.)

had been put up soon after 1874) were torn down to make way for construction. In March 1909 the construction bid was awarded to the firm of Bernight and Kennedy of Oroville and Chico; the firm's bid was \$42,592. This bid did not include the heating and plumbing systems; this would be under a separate contract. Soon after this, the plumbing and heating contracts were awarded to W.F. Pilgrim of Chico.

The Chico Daily Enterprise said in March of 1910:

. . . Mr. Silberstein spared no expense. He built it with a view of Chico's future growth. This is a building that Chico is proud of and it will long stand as a monument to the city and its walls will enclose great business activities. It will for years to come reflect credit upon the city of Chico.

The architect of the Silberstein Park Building, A. J. Bryan, was active in Chico from the 1870's to the 1910's and was a member of the San Francisco chapter of the A.I.A. He designed both commercial and residential buildings in the Chico area, including the State Normal School, c. 1887, and the Chico Municipal Building, 1911. Bryan's book, Architectural Proportion, published in 1880, is included in H. R. Hitchcock's American Architectural Books (#229).

In 1912 or 1913, Herman Silberstein converted his office rooms on the second and third floors into a hotel, called the La Grande. In November of 1912, the Lyric Theatre opened in the street floor section of the Silberstein Park Building, where the Chico Book Store is now located. The Lyric Theatre had vaudeville acts and films. All the films were silent and were shown on hand-crank projectors. Later on the Lyric Theatre was owned by the National Theatre Syndicate. Fire broke out in the theatre at 11:30 a.m., September 1, 1924. The Chico Daily Record stated that the damage was between \$7,000 and \$8,000. The stage, screen, settings, and new organ were completely destroyed. Room 18 of the La Grande Hotel sustained smoke damage. The cause was narrowed to two possibilities: young men carelessly smoking, or defective wiring. The Lyric Theatre's remaining equipment was then moved to the Broadway Theatre.

Herman Silberstein died July 29, 1925. His obituary, which appeared in the Chico Daily Enterprise July 30, stated that he was a large Chico property holder, his principal possessions being:

the Silberstein Park Building on Broadway, the buildings on 3rd Street occupied by H. Rosen, the Beardon Barber Shop, Mears Pool Room, Conery and White Electrical Shop, and on Main Street occupied by Shuster Real Estate. At the Junction

(cont'd)

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8. Historical Context (cont'd)

he owned in partnership with William Wise, a block of Main Street, consisting of nine stores. On Broadway, between 5th and 6th, he owned two stores recently constructed; one of them being the Polly Ann Bakery. He also owned considerable property on Orient Street in Chinatown. Business associates in Chico estimate today that he left a fortune valued at \$400,000-\$500,000.

Mrs. Bertha Birvetz, Mr. Silberstein's granddaughter, relates that when the Silbersteins were living in the house, still standing, two blocks away, on the northeast corner of Normal and 5th, the gardens extended to 5th Street, where there was a fountain. That fountain was eventually donated to the city and stood for many years in the little square on 9th Street where Broadway and Main Streets join. Mrs. Girvetz also stated that the fountain and its plaque disappeared.

Herman Silberstein willed the Silberstein Park Building (La Grande Hotel) to his wife Yettle. Yettle died on March 31, 1930; she was 76 years old. The Chico Daily Enterprise stated that "She was the last of the old Ostroski family, so long identified with Chico property." Yettle Silberstein left the Silberstein Park Building to her daughters, Hannah Wise and Hattie Wise. Hannah Silberstein had married Isaac Wise; they had two children, Merton and Sadie.

Hattie Silberstein Wise, wife of Isaac's brother William, was born in Chico in 1878 and lived in Chico until 1941, when she moved to Santa Barbara. She died in 1952. Her husband predeceased her in 1937. The Chico Daily Enterprise stated:

He was a prominent resident for over forty years. He was born in Santa Rosa and came to Chico in 1897. First employed as a clerk for Herman Silberstein, later became a partner and manager of properties with A.G. Eames on Orient Street. Was well-informed about business conditions -- always square in all his dealings. He had one daughter, Bertha.

The Silberstein Park Building was owned by members of the Herman Silberstein family until 1979, when it was sold to the Bank of America for \$250,000.

Herman and Yettle Silberstein were truly a part of America's immigrant heritage. Their "American Dream" gave Chico one of its most interesting structures, the Silberstein Park Building.

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1935, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1940, 1941, 1942, 1945, 1948, 1950,
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Chico News & Review. February 1981.

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San Francisco Chronicle: 5-4-1978.

Articles concerning building:

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10-14-1909; 12-11-1909; 3-7-1910; 3-19-1910; 4-25-1910.

Oral Contacts:

Charles Andrews
Len Brown
Bertha Girvetz
Ted Merriam
John Nopel
Larry Richardson
Justin Smith
M. Tobias
Mendel Tochterman

Al Caton, Manager of Hills of Eternity Cemetery, Colma, CA.
Chico Cemetery Office records
Mid-Valley Title Company
C.S.U.C. Special Collections

OF CHICO T. 22N. R. 1E. M. D. B. & M.

Tax Area Code 2-01

4-14

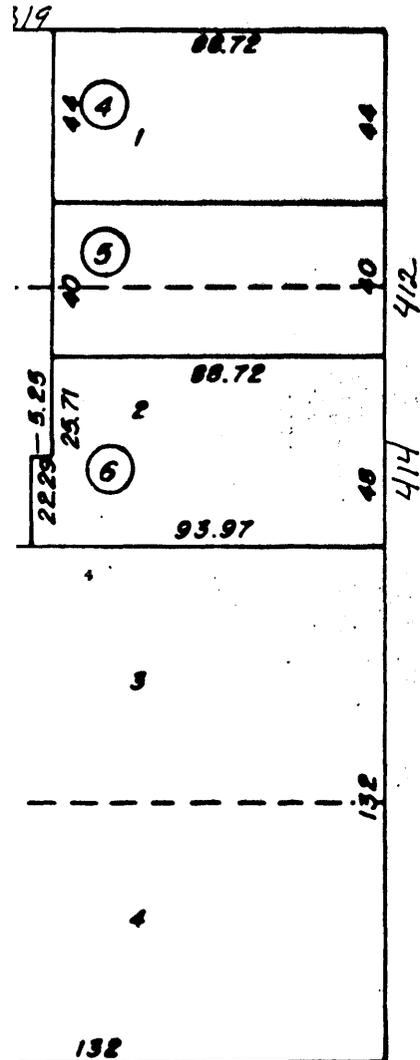
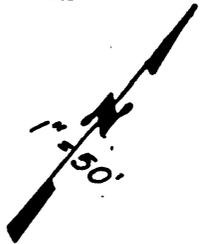
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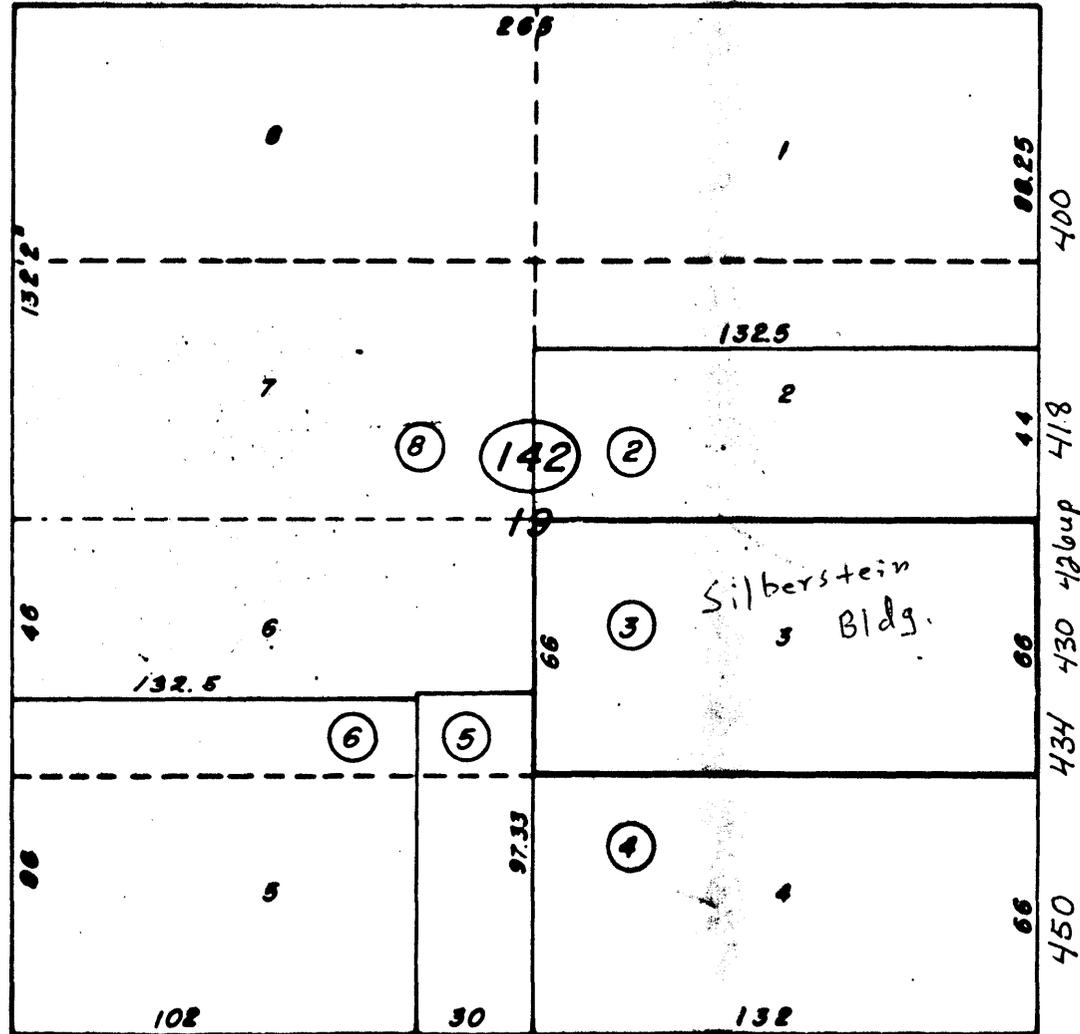
SILBERSTEIN PARK BUILDING
426-434 Broadway
Chico, Butte County, California

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ST.

SALEM



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BROADWAY