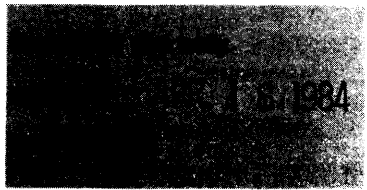


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

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



1. Name

historic The Friday Morning Club

and/or common Variety Arts Center

2. Location

street & number 938-940 South Figueroa Street N/A not for publication

city, town Los Angeles N/A vicinity of congressional district 18th

state California code 06 county Los Angeles code 037

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

library, theater, women's club

name Society for the Preservation of Variety Arts, Inc.

street & number 938-940 South Figueroa Street

city, town Los Angeles N/A vicinity of state California 90015

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County of Los Angeles Hall of Records

street & number 227 North Broadway

city, town Los Angeles state California 90012

6. Representation in Existing Surveys (See Continuation Sheet)

title 1) California Historic Resource Inventory (Hatheway, People Mover Survey - downtown LA) has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date June, 1978 federal state county local

depository for survey records Community Redevelopment Agency, 354 S. Spring St.

city, town Los Angeles, California 90013 state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date <u>N/A</u>

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Friday Morning Club building is a five-story, reinforced concrete and steel, Italian Renaissance Revival building, which has remained virtually unaltered since its construction as a women's club and theater in 1924. (Extensive mezzanines above the third and first floors give the building the appearance of a seven-story building from the exterior.) Marked overall by the restraint of Renaissance styling, its major exterior architectural features include a triple arched entrance supported on freestanding Corinthian columns and a "snowflake" pattern balcony surmounted by elaborately detailed, triple arched windows mirroring the entrance arches below. Most of the interior features of the building have also remained untouched over the years, including the hand-painted, concrete ceilings - coffered in the main theater and molded to look like wood beams elsewhere throughout the building - and the Tiffany designed, Batchelder tile fireplace of the library. Within a two block radius of the building stand two contemporary large, gray, severe, Italian Renaissance style commercial buildings - the Standard Oil Building and the Petroleum Building - which, in context, set off the more residential or palatial appearance of the Friday Morning Club building.

The front and main facade of the building faces west on Figueroa Street. It is constructed entirely of concrete, which is modelled into imitation stone blocks at the first two stories. The major focus of the ground floor is the colonnade which stretches the length of the facade, shooting up at the center into a monumental triple arched entranceway. The colonnade consists, to left and right of the triple arches, of ten freestanding Corinthian columns supporting an oversized, plain entablature (which is now used to display theater information). The capitals of the columns display different decorative designs. Freestanding Corinthian columns, paired to left and right, support the three arches of the entrance. Cable and lozenge moldings adorn the intrados of each arch. Otherwise, the archway and entablature above, which forms the base of the second story balcony, are smoothly articulated, marked only at the top by a corbel table of small, pointed trefoils in relief.

The second floor features simple sash windows, cleanly articulated, as do the other floors. Three doors, spaced above the entrance arches, open onto the second floor balcony. Dividing the second floor from the third is a wide, plain molding, decorated with four simple, boss-like projections and, at its center, by the projecting balustrade of the third floor balcony.

Supported on ten, two-tiered decorative brackets, the balustrade is formed of concrete cast in a pierced, "snowflake" pattern. The three arched windows above the balcony, mirroring the entranceway below, are the most elaborately detailed elements of the facade. The pilasters, intrados and voussoirs of the arches are lushly decorated with concrete leaf and floral patterns, their delicacy belying the material used in their construction.

(See Continuation Sheets attached)

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input 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) radio

Specific dates 1923-1924 **Builder/Architect** Allison & Allison, architects

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Friday Morning Club building is significant because of its association with the Friday Morning Club - a major women's club in Los Angeles, its connection with the Golden Age of Radio in the 1930's, the quality of its architecture - including its fine interior details as well as its elegant Italian Renaissance influenced exterior, and its association with the architectural firm of Allison & Allison, which designed it in 1924. The building, which has remained largely untouched through the years, possesses the integrity of location, setting, feeling and association that it did at its opening.

From its inception, the Friday Morning Club building has been associated with a variety of individuals and activities which have made a significant contribution to Los Angeles culture. The structure was built as the clubhouse of the Friday Morning Club, a women's club established in Los Angeles in 1891 to foster charitable activities.

Humanitarian activities of the club included originating the idea of kindergartens in Los Angeles and establishing the city's first mobile libraries. Women's suffrage was a cause espoused early by the club and, particularly, by its founder, Caroline Severance. Severance, whose correspondence with Susan B. Anthony is preserved in club files, was given the honor, at the age of 91, of being the first woman to register to vote in Los Angeles.

The club provided a forum for prominent personalities of the day. From 1931 to 1935, for example, its speakers and guests included Countess Alexandra Tolstoy, Robert Stacy-Judd speaking on his explorations and Sherwood Anderson. Its guest books include the names of numerous public figures, including Jane Addams, William Jennings Bryan and William Butler Yeats.

To generate additional income to pay off the sizeable mortgage - the \$375,000 structure was not completely paid for until 1948 - a theater was built on the first floor of the building. The theater, which was central to Los Angeles' cultural scene in the 1920's and 1930's, was alleged at the time to be the most acoustically perfect in the city. Louis O. MacLoon, a local entrepreneur, operated the theater as a legitimate playhouse from 1924 to 1927. The Los Angeles Times on the morning of the theater's opening enthused that "The glory that is Los Angeles will reach its highest climax tonight" with the theater's opening. Will Rogers served as toastmaster of the opening; guests included such Hollywood luminaries as

(See Continuation Sheets attached)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(See Continuation Sheet)

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .381

Quadrangle name Hollywood

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	1	3	8	3	5	1	0	3	7	6	7	7	3	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification Building occupies its historic 100' x 166' lot. Lot 11, of Eugene Meyers Subdivision of block 65 of Ord's Survey, in the City of Los Angeles, as per map recorded in Book 5 Page 330, Miscellaneous Records, in the office of the County Recorder of said County

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

state N/A code county N/A code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Marvin A. Brown

organization Los Angeles Conservancy

date June 2, 1983

street & number 849 South Broadway, Suite 1225

telephone 213-623-2489

city or town Los Angeles

state California 90014

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

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date

12/20/83

For HCRS use only

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

Entered in the National Register

date

5-17-84

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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CONTINUATION SHEET Survey Rep. ITEM NUMBER 6 PAGE 1 of 1

- 2) City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument No. 196
Cultural Heritage Board
Cultural Affairs Department
Room 1500, City Hall
Los Angeles, California 90012

August 6, 1978 X Local

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CONTINUATION SHEET Description ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1 of 3

Three square openings are cut into the wall of the fourth floor, directly above the triple arches below. Each is split in the center by a freestanding Corinthian column. Between the fourth and fifth floors a parapet projects out, smoothly articulated with a slight curve to the bottom. It supports the fifth floor balcony. Sash windows, set deep into the wall, which are capped by a simple cornice and dentils, stretch the entire length of the floor, ending at a small, hip-roofed, one-story tower, decorated with double arched windows, which rises on the northeastern corner.

The remaining sides of the building have few decorative features. The north and south facing sides are smooth and featureless, with balconies at the fourth floor; both are set back in the center, giving the building a moderate H-shape. The rear (east) elevation is a solid concrete wall, broken only at the top story by windows. The most striking feature of the sides is the 52 foot scale model of the Italian luxury liner Contessa di Conte, built by MGM Studios in 1947, which is docked on the roof, visible from the parking lot abutting the north side.

The interior of the building is as fine and well-preserved as the exterior. Originally housing all of the functions of the women's club which built the structure - the Friday Morning Club, which now leases back the fifth floor - it is now utilized by the Society for the Preservation of Variety Arts ("SPVA") as a theater, performing arts center, library and museum. Although ownership has passed from the women's club to the SPVA, most of the rooms in the building continue to serve their original functions.

The first floor of the building was constructed with two adjoining lobbies, one for the women's club and one for the main theater, providing separation of functions. Two original Otis, self-levelling, gumwood-panelled, manually operated elevator cars open into the small club lobby. The theater lobby to the left has a high, coffered, hand-painted, concrete ceiling which, like the hand-painted concrete ceilings throughout the building, is original and in excellent condition. An arcade, just below the ceiling, runs around the top of the lobby.

The main theater is the grandest room in the building. Its highlight is a hand-painted and gold-leafed, coffered, concrete ceiling molded to look like wood. Each of the many small coffers contains a different, classical, painted motif. Arches and columns painted to look like marble stretch along the exterior aisles of the main floor. The balcony level also features an arcade of marbleized columns, with a rhythm of two arches to each one below. The six wheel-like chandeliers which hang from the ceiling are original;

(See Continuation Sheet)

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CONTINUATION SHEET Description ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2 of 3

the cherub torchers standing to either side of the stage, though not original, were once used in MGM films. Backstage, the counterweight system for moving the scenery, which was originally hemp and sandbags, has been replaced by the SPVA by the iron system salvaged from the old Ritz Theater which once stood at Wilshire and La Brea in Los Angeles. Each of the nine dressing rooms on the upper floors backstage has a window overlooking the stage, a convenience to performers awaiting their cues. (The dressing rooms are now primarily used for storage.)

The main library of the SPVA on the second floor is in much the same condition it was when originally used by the Friday Morning Club as a library. The classical door moldings which frame the openings of the library's alcoves, and the sliding, panelled, pocket doors which separate the library from the original women's club boardroom, are of walnut and were originally from the Sartori residence. The fireplace - the decorative hallmark of the room - was also donated in the early 1930's to the women's club by the Sartori family. It is a Tiffany design, constructed of large Batchelder tiles. The ceiling is hand-painted, constructed of concrete "beams." W. C. Field's trick billiard table, which graces the center of the room, is part of the library's collection, which also includes vaudeville and radio sketches, scripts, photographs, gag files and recordings.

A radio museum and small theater, which was originally the recital hall of the Friday Morning Club, are housed on the third floor. The theater features a mezzanine supported on concrete brackets and the original hand-painted, concrete ceiling.

Much of the activity of the SPVA centers on the fourth floor, which houses the main ballroom. The high ceiling of the ballroom, molded of concrete to simulate wood beams, is hand-painted in dark colors. Six original iron, 24-lamp chandeliers hang from it. The panelled walnut screen at the rear of the room, painted with Art Nouveau motifs, is also original. It is flanked by two torchere lamps which once stood to either side of the main stage downstairs. A number of other decorative features of the room were salvaged from Los Angeles area buildings by the SPVA. They include the cut and bevelled glass windows to the sides of the walnut screen, rescued from a Westlake Park home; tall Art Deco torchers in the entry niches from the Sweldom store in downtown Los Angeles; and the Art Deco railings from the former Santa Ana City Hall. A more contemporary salvaged feature, also preserved by the SPVA, is the old Johnny Carson "Tonight Show" set, which stands off to the side of the stage.

(See Continuation Sheet)

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CONTINUATION SHEET Description ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 3 of 3

The lobby and lounge of the main ballroom also feature salvaged architectural features. Duplicates, and some original panels, of the Earl Carroll Theatre Wall of Fame - stars' names signed on concrete panels - hang in the lounge below the hand-painted, concrete "beam" ceiling. The mahogany bar of the lounge came from a former saloon in San Pedro; the oak panelling of the elevator lobby from the Phillips Mansion in Los Angeles.

Once occupying the entire building, the Friday Morning Club now occupies only the fifth floor. Skylights and, again, hand-painted, imitation wood beamed concrete ceilings are the architectural highlights of the floor. The club's collection of oil paintings and antiques graces the lobby.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Significance ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1 of 2

Sid Grauman, Theda Bara, Cecil B. DeMille, Sam Goldwyn and Charlie Chaplin.

In 1928 the Los Angeles Repertory Theatre took over the theater from MacLoon and continued to operate it as a legitimate theater. To sustain itself between productions in the 1930's, the theater began showing Chinese films, booked speakers and, during radio's Golden Years, broadcast live radio shows. Speakers at the theater during this time included Eleanor Roosevelt, Randolph Churchill, Lowell Thomas and Dorothy Parker. Such popular radio shows as The Burns and Allen Show, The Al Jolson Show and "Hollywood Hotel" with Dick Powell and Louella Parsons - all on CBS radio - were broadcast live, in front of an audience, from the theater. Eddie Cantor also used the facilities for broadcasting.

The theater declined with the coming of television and the Friday Morning Club concomitantly began a period of decline. In 1977 the club sold the building to the Society for the Preservation of Variety Arts ("SPVA"), which leased the fifth floor back to it. The SPVA had been formed in 1975 to further public interest in live variety theater and to house its extensive collections. The SPVA now fully utilizes the building. Live music, magic and shows are performed in the main theater, smaller theater on the third floor, which once served as the recital hall of the Friday Morning Club, and in the fourth floor ballroom. The SPVA's collections are housed in the remainder of the building (with the exception of the fifth floor), both on the walls and in its music library, radio museum and main library, which is located on the second floor where the women's club library originally was located.

The Friday Morning Club building is not only significant because of its historical associations. It also embodies the distinctive characteristics of Italian Renaissance Revival architecture in a highly artistic fashion, amidst a number of other contemporary commercial structures which exhibit variations of the style. The exterior of the building has remained virtually untouched over the years. Its simple, elegant facade is interrupted only by the triple arched groupings at the center of the facade, which provide a decorative break to an otherwise constrained facade.

Several other contemporary Italian Renaissance styled buildings are still located within a two block radius of the Friday Morning Club building: the Standard Oil Building and the Petroleum Building, one block west and south on Olympic are representatives of the style at its severest. Their decoration is basically limited to terra cotta modelled like gray stone. The Figueroa Hotel across the street, also Italian

(See Continuation Sheet)

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CONTINUATION SHEET Significance ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2 of 2

Renaissance influenced, has a brick facade and conforming triple arch motif, which gives it, like the Variety Arts Center, a more palatial or residential feeling than the oil buildings.² The integrity of the Friday Morning Club building is further pronounced by this association with its contemporaries.

The workmanship and design of the building, both inside and out, exhibit the highest artistic values. The concrete used throughout the building is molded with such plasticity that it appears to be a number of materials other than concrete. On the exterior, the concrete is molded to appear like stone and, particularly with the finely detailed decoration of the arches and third floor balustrade, terra cotta. Inside, the concrete is also disguised. The ceilings - coffered in the main theater and molded like wood beams elsewhere - are cast to look like wood or wood constructions. The hand-painted detailing of the ceilings, beautifully done and still in excellent condition, contributes to the illusion.

The building's fine architectural details are not limited to the facade and ceilings. The library possesses beautiful walnut moldings and the decorative hallmark of the structure's interior - a Tiffany designed, Batchelder tile fireplace. These features are not original to the structure, but were added approximately fifty years ago and are now an integral and historic part of the building.

Seeking a building which would reflect its position and stature in the community, the Friday Morning Club hired the firm of Allison & Allison to design its new clubhouse. (The old clubhouse, located on the same site, had been built in 1899.) Allison & Allison was one of Los Angeles' most prominent and prolific architectural firms from the 1920's through the 1940's. Among their major California commissions were the Southern California Edison Company Building; First Congregational Church in Los Angeles; Santa Monica, Palo Alto, Chaffey and Santa Ana High Schools; and twelve of UCLA's buildings. They worked within the total array of popular revival and classical styles; the Friday Morning Club serving as an example of their adeptness at the Italian Renaissance style. The Southern California Chapter of the AIA awarded them an honor award for meritorious work in 1924 for their design of the building.

1

Standard Oil Bldg., 605 W. Olympic Blvd. and Petroleum Bldg., 1011 S. Flower St. are listed as structures of major importance on the California Historic Resources Inventory (Hatheway, S. 7th St. Retail Concourse Survey - downtown LA). Depository: CRA, LA.

2

Figueroa Hotel, 939 S. Figueroa, listed as structure of major importance on Hatheway, People Mover Survey, CHRI. Depository: CRA, LA.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Bibliography ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1 of 1

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M.B. 53-79

TRACT NO. 5395

M.B. 55-35

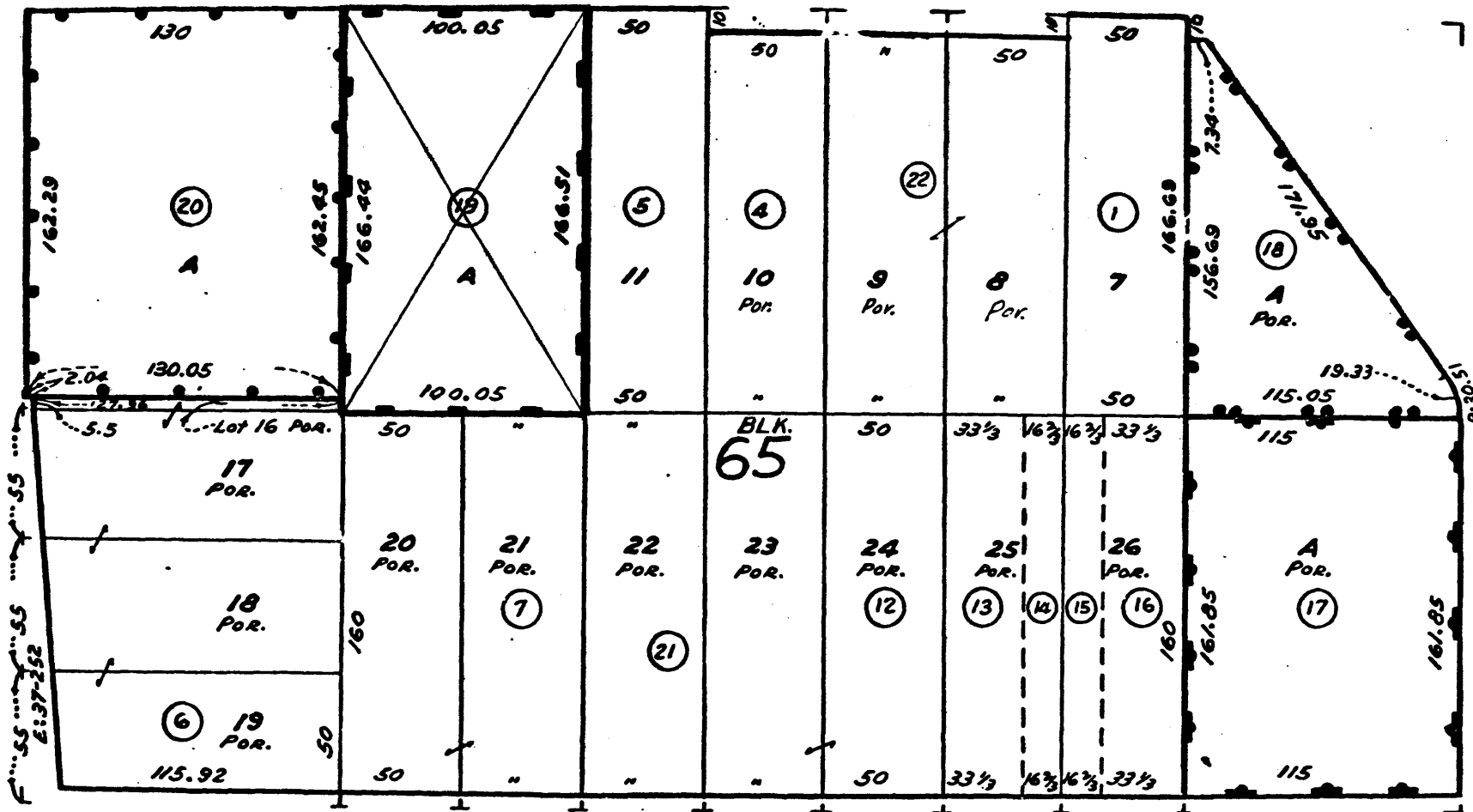
5138-2
SCALE 1"=60'

FIGUEROA ST.

ST.

BLVD.

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OLYMPIC

70

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70

C.F. 1381-1

FLOWER ST.

THE FRIDAY MORNING CLUB
938-940 South Figueroa Street
Los Angeles, Los Angeles Co., CA

ST.

CK 65 ORD'S SURVEY

TRACT NO. 4383

M.B. 51-10