

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

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

For NPS use only

received JUN 17 1986  
date entered 8-14-86

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

**1. Name**

historic Santa Paula Hardware Company Block/Union Oil Company

and/or common Union Oil Company Building/California Oil Museum

**2. Location**

street & number 1003 E. Main Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Santa Paula

N/A vicinity of

state California

code 06

county Ventura

code 111

**3. Classification**

| Category  | Ownership                                   | Status  | Present Use                                     |
|---|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> district               | <input type="checkbox"/> public             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied        | <input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site                   | <b>Public Acquisition</b>                   | <b>Accessible</b>                                   | <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 checked="" 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 UNOCAL

street & number P.O. Box 7600

city, town Los Angeles

N/A vicinity of

state California 90054

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Ventura County Government Center, County Recorder's Office

street & number 800 South Victoria Avenue

city, town Ventura

state California 93009

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Santa Paula Survey

has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1981

federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records State Office of Historic Preservation, P.O. Box 2390

city, town Sacramento

AUG 6 1985

state CA 95811

## 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**

Located on a prominent corner of Main and Tenth Streets, this combination one- and two-story brick and stone commercial building features a cantilevered tower with four projecting bay windows. Primarily Queen Anne in style, influences of the Italianate are found in the round and segmented arched windows. The Main Street first floor facade has a cast iron front with large plate glass windows divided by an arched entrance to the second floor of Sespe sandstone. A decorative stone belt course separates the first and second floors. A corbeled brick cornice repeats the round arches of the second floor windows. Segmented arches are found on both the east and west sides of the building and used primarily over double hung windows. The building has maintained its integrity over the years and serves as an important anchor for the commercial district of Main Street's east end.

The focal point of the building is the 5-sided cantilevered corner tower with its silver painted bell-cast roof topped by a tall flagpole. Decorative floral details are found above and below the narrow double hung windows which are separated by grooved and capped pilasters. There are four second story slanted bay windows. Each bay is capped with a cornice and displays the same exact details as the tower. The remaining windows on the second story are round arches highlighted by projecting radiating bricks. The round arches are repeated under the stepped corbeled brick cornice. The brick chimneys also repeat the round arch and corbeled top.

The facade and west side of the building are divided into two parts. The second floor is built of brick and separated from the first floor by a stone belt course. The stone is arranged in geometric patterns using two different colors of stone -- Sespe sandstone (purple) and what appears to be a light brown sandstone. A flower pattern, repeating the flower design on the tower and bay windows, has been carved into the stone. The first floor facade of the building is of cast iron and glass separated in the center by the main upstairs entry. The original west entrance was recessed and is now flush with the front of the building. The east entrance was replaced with fixed glass to serve as a museum display window.

The first floor on the Tenth Street side of the building is of cut stone. It is grey-green in color with a band of lighter colored stone across the top. This stone comes from the Santa Paula Creek area. The stone is pierced with two large arched fixed windows with radiating arched transoms. A large recessed arched entry is located near the rear of the west side. Remaining rectangular shaped windows are double hung and recessed under segmented stone arches.

The east side two-story portion of the building, containing the L-shape, is constructed of brick. Windows are rectangular and double hung with segmented brick arches. A two-story shed roof portion on the east rear side may have been added later. The upper section is of wood. Another shed roof wooden addition is located behind the building on the west side on top of the rectangular single-story portion of the building.

The rear of the single-story portion of the building is constructed of stone with stone lintels above the door and windows. The recessed entry has two panel doors.

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Additional exterior features include cast iron decorative vents and ornate hardware. The cast iron columns on the front of the building are from the Coronado, California foundry. Two plaques are placed at either side of the entry to the upstairs offices. One was donated for Union Oil Company's diamond anniversary in 1965 by the Native Daughters "in memory of the founders of Union Oil Company, October 17, 1890." The other was presented in August, 1940 in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of Union Oil Company by the City of Santa Paula.

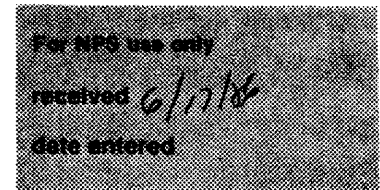
The few alterations to the exterior of the building include the small unobtrusive row of concrete blocks found under the large arched window on Tenth Street and the changing of the front entry on the west side from a recessed to a flush entrance. The east front entrance was changed to a fixed window. The shed roof wooden additions at the rear of the building were added at a later unknown date. These alterations are minor and unobtrusive compared to the retention of the overall character of the building.

Noteworthy interior features found in the upstairs offices include ten fireplaces each with a different wooden mantle and elaborate tiles. Some of the tiles feature raised designs of women's heads or animals. Many have floral patterns. Two large safes have the original decorative painting with the names of the companies -- Hardison and Stewart Oil Company and Mission Transfer Company. Inside the safes are the original built-in wood cubbyholes and drawers. Many of the plaster rosettes and much of the original hardware is still found on the ceilings and doors. Wooden wainscoting is found on most walls.

The Union Oil Company building is located at the east end of the commercial shopping district of Main Street. This building serves as an important anchor of the district. To the west of the building is a gas station. Directly across the street is a Taco Bell restaurant and a row of single story commercial buildings.

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Dates of Alterations: (approximate)

The row of concrete blocks under the arched window on the west side of the building was probably done in the 1950s. The store was converted to a museum during this period and many openings were changed. The arched window closest to Main Street on the west side of the building was originally a recessed entry. It may have been changed at this time as well.

The facade entrance on the west was probably changed in the early 1950s as well. It had originally been a recessed entry and it was changed to a flush entry.

The east facade entrance was removed and made into a fixed window in the 1950s or 1970s when the museum diorama was installed. The windows were probably altered then as well. The bulkheads were removed and replaced with larger windows and wood framing at the base. These are the windows adjacent to the front entries. This was probably done at the same time as the entry changes.

The shed roof addition in the rear, located next to the outside stairway on top of the rear one story portion of the building, was built in 1955 according to Santa Paula building permits.

In 1957, according to permits, a 6' x 14' laboratory was built and covered with stucco behind the main two-story building. A shed roof wood structure was built on top of it.

The outside metal stairway was added in 1972, according to building permits.

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

**Specific dates** Begun 1889, completed 1890 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Santa Paula Hardware Company Building, more commonly referred to as the Union Oil Company Building, is historically significant as the birthplace of the Union Oil Company on October 17, 1890. Today it houses the California Oil Museum and the Ventura Area Production Office. The architectural style is significant as the only commercial Queen Anne style structure in Ventura County that remains from the 1890s with its integrity intact. It has been declared a Ventura County Cultural Heritage landmark and is a prominent visual landmark located at the busy downtown intersection of Santa Paula's Main Street commercial district and State Highway 150 (Tenth Street). Lyman Stewart, Wallace Hardison, and Thomas Bard, key individuals in the growth and development of the oil industry in Ventura County, were instrumental in construction of the building.

Originally known as the Santa Paula Hardware Company when first completed in February of 1890, this impressive stone and brick edifice first housed the offices of the Hardison and Stewart Oil Company and the Mission Transfer Company, a refining and marketing business. In October 1890, the Hardison and Stewart Oil Company, the Sespe Oil Company, and the Torrey Canon Oil Company joined forces to form the Union Oil Company with its principal stockholders being Lyman Stewart, Wallace Hardison, and Thomas Bard. The incorporation papers were signed in the second floor offices.

Hardison and Stewart formed the Santa Paula Hardware Company in January 1890. The purpose was to manufacture farm implements, hold real estate, and conduct a general hardware business. The hardware store was located on the west side of the first floor, and the post office was located on the east side. Offices for the various oil companies were located on the second floor. In 1900, the Union Oil Company moved its main headquarters from Santa Paula to Los Angeles. Union Oil maintained the building as its field division office. In 1950, the California Oil Museum was established by the Union Oil Company on the first floor of the building.

Lyman Stewart and Wallace Hardison had gained their oil experience in Pennsylvania before coming to Ventura County in 1883. They set up their first office in Newhall in Los Angeles County while drilling in the Los Angeles and Ventura County areas. In 1886, they moved to Santa Paula and established their second office in a wooden building on Main Street. A crusader for oil, Stewart, who became president and general manager of Union Oil, promoted the use of oil over coal in drilling rig equipment in industrial plants, and in ships, railroads, and heating. He helped Union Oil to diversify and try new petroleum products and markets. These included the manufacturing of asphalt for roofing and road paving, gasoline, benzine, and lubricating oils, grease, and kerosene.

Wallace Hardison became interested in agriculture as well, and in 1893 he joined Nathan Blanchard to form the Limoneira Company, one of the world's largest lemon companies. Thomas Bard became Ventura County's first and only U.S. Senator in 1900 and left Union Oil Company that same year. Through the pioneering efforts of Stewart,

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Hutchinson, W.H. Oil, Land and Politics, Oklahoma: U. of Iklahoma Press, 1965  
 Waddell, P.R. & Niven, R.F. Sign of the 76, Los Angeles, CA; Union Oil Co. of CA, 1976  
Ventura Democrat, 8/15/89; 9/5/89; 10/17/89  
Ventura Vidette, 2/1/90, 1/23/90. Letters-Hardison & Stewart Oil Co., May 22, 1890-Oct. 7, 1891

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property 0.23

Quadrangle name Santa Paula

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

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**Verbal boundary description and justification** The property nominated is a rectangular shaped lot 75' across and 140' deep with a southern frontage on Main Street. It is bounded on the west by Tenth Street, on the north by an alley, and on the east by a gas station. This is the historic property boundary. Parcel # 101-0-212-155

### 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 Judy Triem, San Buenaventura Research Association

organization N/A

date November 22, 1985

street & number 627 E. Pleasant Street

telephone (805) 525-1909

city or town Santa Paula

state California 93060

# 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 Guatieri*

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 6/12/86

### For NPS use only

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

Entered in the  
National Register

8-14-86

*J. Melrose*  
 Register of the National Register

Attest:

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
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Hardison, and Bard, the oil industry in Ventura County eventually established itself as the number two industry in Ventura County, second only to agriculture. The Union Oil Company, far exceeded the limits of Ventura County, and went on to become one of the world's largest oil companies.

The Union Oil Company and the smaller companies that came before and after it had a broad economic impact on Ventura County. Not only did it establish an important economic base for the county, but it had a significant impact on jobs thus causing an increase in populations in Santa Paula and Fillmore as well as other areas of the Santa Clara Valley and Ojai.

The building is architecturally significant to Ventura County for it is the only large commercial structure built in the Queen Anne style that remains virtually unaltered. At the time it was built the cost was approximately \$32,000. The cut stone work and the careful attention to detail seen especially in the ten carved wood fireplaces each with a different mantle and tile design make this building the most important pre-1900 commercial building in Ventura County.

Although an architect for the building has not yet been found, an article in the Ventura Democrat for August 15, 1889 stated that "Lyman Stewart arrived from Los Angeles with plans and specifications of the new brick building." Carpenters said to have worked on the building were B.L. Pressey and Harry Payton.

RANCHO SANTA PAULA Y SATICOY  
 POR LOTS 25, 28

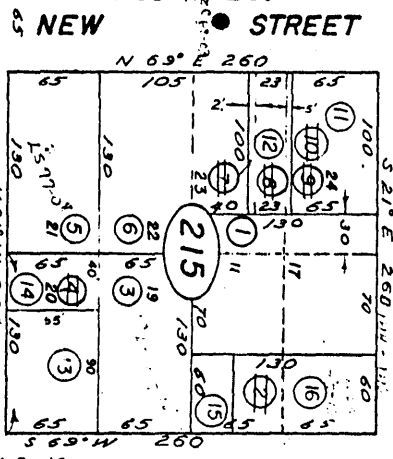
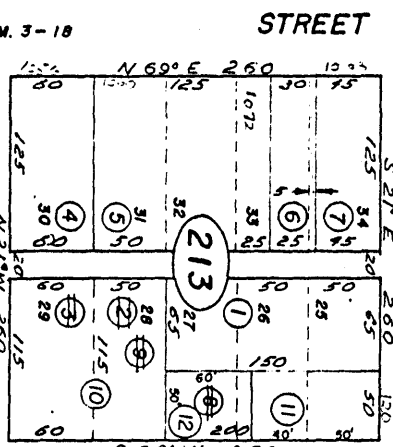
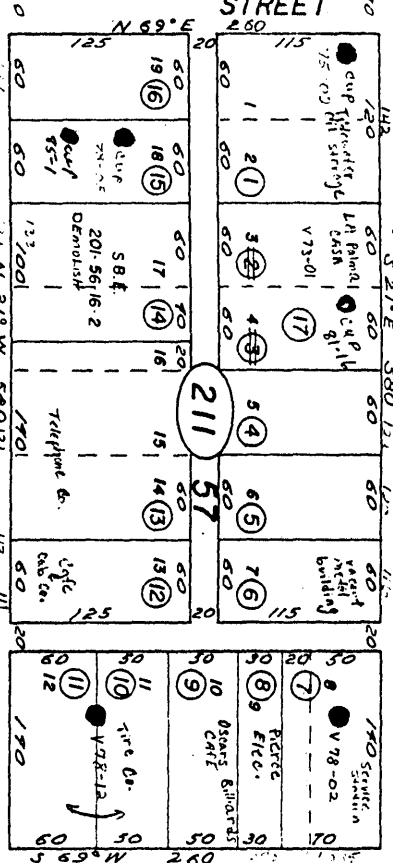
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STREET



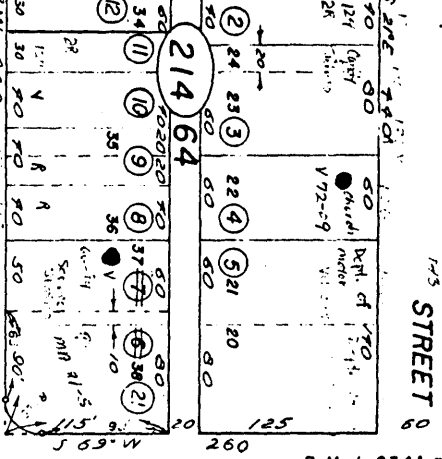
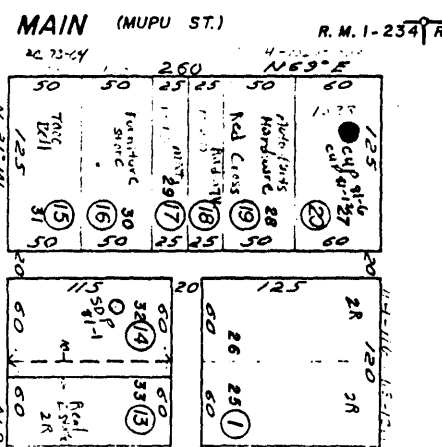
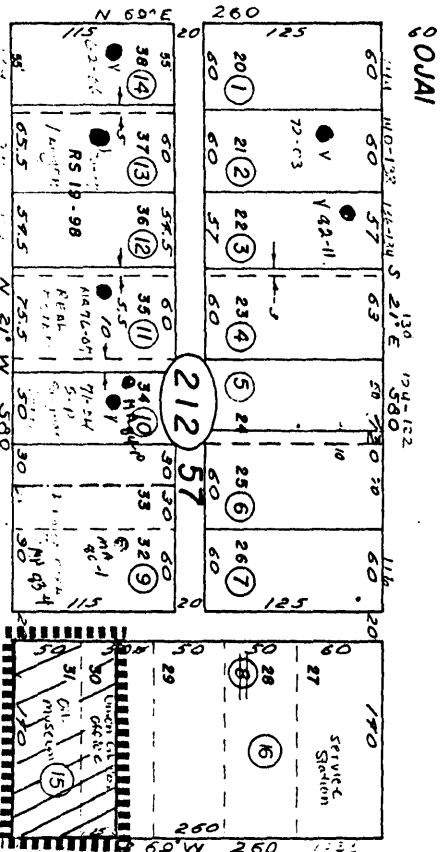
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STREET



Blanchard & Bradley Tract R.M. Bk. 1, Pg. 234  
 Orcutt & Moore Tract R.M. Bk. 3 Pg. 18; V.C.O.M. Vol. 1, Pg. 38  
 Richmond Tract R.M. Bk. 5, Pg. 15  
 Santa Paula, City of V.C.O.M. Vol. 1, Pg. 27

CITY OF SANTA PAULA  
 Assessor's Map Bk. 101, Pg. 21  
 County of Ventura, Calif.  
 1957

UNION OIL COMPANY BUILDING  
 1003 E. Main Street  
 Santa Paula, Ca.

