

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

FEB 26 1992

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Young Men's Christian Association (Santa Ana-Tustin chapter) other names/site number

2. Location

street & number 205 West Civic Center Drive city, town Santa Ana state California code CA county Orange code 059 zip code 92701

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private, public-local (checked), public-State, public-Federal. Category of Property: building(s) (checked), district, site, structure, object. Number of Resources within Property: Contributing 1, Noncontributing 2 buildings, sites, structures, objects. Total 3.

Name of related multiple property listing: NA

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of certifying official: Steade R. Craig Date: 2/23/93 California Office of Historic Preservation State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of commenting or other official Date State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
determined not eligible for the National Register.
removed from the National Register.
other, (explain:)

entered in the National Register

Signature of certifying official: Helmut Zuer Date: 3/25/93

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Social / fraternal
Meeting hall / recreational facility

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Vacant / Not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Spanish Colonial Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Concrete

stucco

roof Clay tile

other Terra-cotta features

Wrought iron railings

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Santa Ana-Tustin Young Men's Christian Association building, completed in 1924, is a three story with raised basement, Spanish Colonial Revival influenced institutional building. The building, designed by Frederick H. Eley, expresses the atmosphere and tradition of Southern California living, but was also designed with utility in mind. During the 68 years that the YMCA served the Santa Ana and Tustin communities, it functioned as a social, recreational facility as well as providing residential accommodations for men and young boys. The public areas of the building are located at basement and first floor levels and the private, dormitory rooms are situated on the upper two floors. The basic plan of the 43,000 square foot building is U-shaped. At ground floor, however, the U is closed on the north side by the gymnasium structure. Historically the building centered around an open air patio.

Erected and furnished at a cost of \$300,000 (including site acquisition), the YMCA is located at the corner of Church (now Civic Center Drive) and Sycamore Streets. Dominating these public streets at this intersection, the structure presents an imposing mass. It is situated in an urban setting just beyond the Northern boundary of the National Register Downtown Santa Ana Historic District and has an important visual relationship to two National Register structures, the Old Orange County Courthouse (1901) and the Howe-Waffle House.* It is physically separated from these landmarks by a planted island and Civic Center Drive, a busy traffic route.

* (1889), moved to this site in 1973

EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The building has two primary facades with entrances, one facing south (Church Street) and one facing east (Sycamore Street). These are the most architecturally detailed. The two secondary facades, facing north and west, are plainer and less detailed. The walls of the YMCA building are reinforced concrete, 18 inches thick. This may account for the fact that the building survived the 1933 Long Beach earthquake and subsequent 1971 Sylmar earthquake with no structural damage and only minor interior damage. These earthquakes took a heavy toll on many other important Frederick H. Eley buildings. A cornerstone is located at the south-east corner of the building.

The building is capped by a low-pitched red clay tile roof, with hipped ends, which rests on top of a symmetrical arrangement of windows. An ornate tile roofed entryway on the south side of the building, with Tuscan pilasters and arches (three oversized and two smaller ones), faces a curved entry drive characterized by a planted island. Historically, the use of palms and Italian cypress established a Mediterranean atmosphere that complemented the light stucco building finish. The two formal entrances are reached by raised stairways. As well as projecting from the face of the wall, these areas are formed in terra-cotta (in subtle blue and brown tones). The words, "YOUNG MEN'S

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CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION", are impressed in the terra cotta units above the arches at the southern entrance. Two YMCA medallions are built into the walls above each of the two smaller entry arches at the same entrance. A photograph, in the November 12, 1978 edition of the Los Angeles Times, shows changes to the entry stairs at Civic Center Drive. Slump blocks have been used to reconfigure the stairway.

Industrial type metal windows are symmetrically placed at second and third floor levels of the two primary facades. These windows consist of either single or paired top-hung outward opening lights over side-hung casements. A molded string course divides the second and third floor levels and provides a distinctive horizontal element to the building. This is reinforced by the projecting eaves and gutter line and the rhythmical placement of the windows. The windows at ground level are of wood construction and are either double hung sash windows or fixed lights with a glazed transom section above.

Projecting slightly from the face of the building at third floor level are ornate terra cotta balconies. These are supported on corbels and are centered in the projecting end bays on the south facade, and above the Sycamore entrance. Wreathed or twisted pilasters divide the balconies into bays with wrought iron railings.

INTERIOR DESCRIPTION

Historically, members of the organization and guests, entered the building by way of a great social lobby, which had a feeling of being able to provide comfort despite it's size. Rough exposed concrete ceiling beams, artistic wrought iron lighting fixtures and the general design of the room suggested a Spanish influence. The social space was equally divided between men and boys. These two great rooms were almost identical in size, and both centered on all parts of the building. Focal points of these spaces were the striking fireplaces. A plaque located in the lobby stipulated that there was to be no smoking in the lobby. This plaque was a condition of a \$25,000 donation towards the initial YMCA building program by N. H. Leonard. From the lobby, french doors lead to the central patio, the focus of which was a fountain. Offices were arranged at the south-east corner of the building, off the lobby area.

While the YMCA building's original 1924 interior appearance at this level is still evident, subsequent alterations have diminished the strength of the original composition. The great lobby spaces have been compromised by poorly placed interior partitions. The original exposed concrete ceiling beams and floor systems have been concealed by suspended ceilings, behind which sprinkler, lighting, plumbing and mechanical systems have been installed during the past decade. The no-smoking plaque is not currently visible and the central patio has been built over. In May, 1942, the dining room was altered to create a new department headquarters for the YMCA boys division. A new entrance was built to give an independent access to this department.

The patio, the gymnasium, the plunge (or swimming pool) and the dormitory all have their separate

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entrances off the lobby. The gymnasium, a room fifty by eighty feet in floor space, which was splendidly equipped with apparatus in 1924, is located at the north-east corner of the building. The plunge, located in the basement, contained fifty thousand gallons of filtered water warmed just enough to make it comfortable. Batchelder tiles grace the walls and small hexagonal clay tiles finish the floor around the plunge. The Batchelder tiles are currently in poor condition, severely damaged in an attempt to clean the surface and remove paint layers. The surface appears to have been sandblasted and the glazed tile finish has been substantially destroyed. It is not known when this damage was done. In the early 1970's, a raised area with a jacuzzi was built onto the northern end of the swimming pool area.

The dormitory, consisting of eighty-three single and double occupancy rooms, is located at second and third floor levels. These were arranged off a central corridor. The small single occupancy rooms, which essentially consisted of a bed, a table, a chair, a window and a bible, rented for \$6 a week or less in 1924. These rooms were originally heated by individual gas fired heating units, which were replaced in 1962 by a hot water circulation type heating system. The dormitory area was historically served by one bathroom per floor. In the early 1970's a new exit stairway was built onto the end of the east dormitory wing and the bathroom facilities were modernized.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The area immediately adjacent to the southern boundary of the YMCA, underwent a substantial change in the 1960's. Surface streets were realigned to form a continuation of Civic Center Drive and portion of the original entry driveway and some of the original landscaping were sacrificed in the process.

There are a few modern (post-1970's) additions to the site. A handball court was added to the rear of the property and, an aerobics and maintenance structure was built on the western boundary of the YMCA building. A \$87,000 renovation, in 1971, involved mostly exterior and interior repainting as well as revamping of the lobby areas and athletics department. Awnings were installed above second and third floor windows at the south and east facades. New landscaping was planted to the south of the building. This landscaped area is, however, not part of the nomination.

In a March 18, 1973 Santa Ana Register article, E.B. Sprague, the only living member of the first 15-member YMCA Board of Directors, noted that while the interior of the building had been much improved, the building looked much the same as it did in 1924 and that the "Y" participants had access to the same facilities.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Social History
Recreation
Architecture

Period of Significance

1924-1943

Significant Dates

1924

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Significant Person NA

Architect/Builder
Eley, Frederick Harry

The Santa Ana-Tustin Young Men's Christian Association building is significant under Criterion A in the areas of social history and recreation for the role it played in the lives of young men and boys in the communities of Santa Ana and Tustin during the years 1924-1943. The building continued as a YMCA until 1991; however, nothing of exceptional significance has occurred within the last fifty years. The arbitrary ending date of 1943 is therefore chosen. The building is also significant under Criterion C in the area of architecture as a building designed by Frederick H. Eley, Santa Ana's first registered architect. The building is one of the best remaining examples of Eley's civic work. It is also designed in a style, Spanish Colonial Revival, for which Eley was best known.

SOCIAL HISTORY AND RECREATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

The YMCA building was described as a veritable "hall of health" and a "character-building center" for boys and young men in the newspaper articles that heralded its opening on April 25, 1924. It was emphasized from the beginning that the new building was not the YMCA but, "merely a convenient home or headquarters", from where the work of the organization could be carried on. Each word in the name, Young Men's Christian Association, identifies the services extended to the community at that time. The YMCA was made up of hundreds of men and boys who united in membership to carry out the work of the organization. It was open to men and boys of all ages, religious affiliations and ethnic backgrounds. In becoming a member of the association, one became a member of a world brotherhood of more than 2,000 branches (in 1924), and a million members in cities throughout the world.

The facilities of the YMCA were as varied as the needs of men. It included a social club, an athletic club with a gymnasium, pool, playgrounds and baths under careful supervision, a men's hotel, an institution for service, an educational center, and a place where religious instruction was given. The development of physical, mental, moral and spiritual well being of the young men who joined the association was all catered for, youth recreational activities, sports programs, special skills classes, leadership skills, high school youth and adult training were all offered at the Santa Ana-Tustin YMCA.

"The official beginning of the YMCA in Santa Ana was in 1907 with E.E. Wilson, the first County Chairman, and Warren Douglass, the first County Secretary", stated J. A. Cranston, Superintendent of Santa Ana Schools in an article in the Santa Ana Register, April 16, 1931. Cranston reported that

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there were eight secretaries during the years 1907 to 1924. "At the end of that time", Mr. Cranston wrote, "the work had developed sufficiently to warrant securing a local secretary for each region". Fullerton, Anaheim, Orange, and Santa Ana each had their own chapters, raised their own funds and employed their own secretary. Prior to that there was a policy of having close relationships between various units. Santa Ana was the recognized center.

An early Californian pioneer, E.B. Sprague, brought the spirit of the "Y" to Orange County when he arrived from Iowa in 1906. He helped to organize the chapter the following year and was instrumental in securing Ralph Smedley as Santa Ana's first YMCA General Secretary in 1922. In earlier positions Smedley had had a close association with YMCA building programs. His first YMCA General Secretary position was in San Jose in September, 1919. In 1922, he moved to Santa Ana to develop building plans, raise money, and supervise the construction of the new Santa Ana-Tustin YMCA building. The architect he worked with was Frederick H. Eley.

In a brief history of the Santa Ana YMCA, compiled for the Santa Ana Cultural Heritage Report E-21, R. Carson Smith writes that Ralph Smedley brought the Toastmasters International to Santa Ana and in 1941 resigned from the YMCA to devote himself fulltime to Toastmasters International.

The Santa Ana Lions Club (chartered on January 24, 1922) along with other service clubs such as Rotary and the Kiwanis, raised \$234,000 for the construction of the YMCA building. It was at a Lion's Club Directors meeting, on February 16, 1922, that Lion Rev. Perry Schrock suggested that the organization write to the Orange County YMCA to start a movement for the YMCA building in Santa Ana.

The YMCA building has been used by many organizations over the years. It has adequately fulfilled it's purpose of being for service to man. During the Second World War the gymnasium was of much assistance to Santa Ana College, then located on North Main Street. The YWCA, The Crippled Children's Relief Association, boys and girls of Juvenile Hall all used the facilities. During the latter years the residential quarters of the YMCA provided inexpensive housing for low income individuals. Day care programs for young children and a day shelter program for the homeless mentally ill operated out of the YMCA building during the 1970's and 80's.

After decades of caring for the needs of the local community, the landmark Santa Ana-Tustin YMCA closed it's doors in May, 1991. Low membership, a result of the post-war migration of families from downtown Santa Ana, debt and the inability to compete in Orange County's fierce health club market, all took their toll on the viability of the ailing facility. The City of Santa Ana's Redevelopment Agency acquired the property in early 1992 and there are plans to turn the building over to a developer to form a Single Room Occupancy hotel. The building is currently boarded up awaiting redevelopment.

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ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The YMCA building, designed in 1922 by pioneer architect Frederick H. Eley, is one of his best remaining civic works in Santa Ana. As Santa Ana's first registered architect, the list of buildings that he designed is impressive. It includes many residences, schools, churches and public buildings. He designed over 75 buildings in the Orange County area and was one of two regional architects based in Santa Ana at the time that the YMCA was constructed.*

A biography of Frederick H. Eley, included in Men of California, indicates that Eley was born at Colchester, England, on January 30, 1884, was educated at English public schools and at Birbeck College, University of London, and came to California in September, 1907. He made his headquarters in Santa Ana from 1911 to 1937. Advertisements for Fred H. Eley, architect, practicing out of Room 5, the Hervey-Finley Building in Santa Ana, regularly appeared in the newspaper the Daily Blade during the month of February, 1911. In 1937, he moved to Salem, Oregon, and maintained offices there until he retired in 1952.

Only a small representation of the civic work of Santa Ana's most prolific early architect remains. Notable works designed by Eley including the McKinley (1923), Lowell (1922), Muir (1922) and the Franklin elementary schools, were demolished in 1971 following the Sylmar earthquake. The Ebell Club on French Street, Santa Ana's Fire Station Headquarters # 1 on Sycamore Street and the YMCA building at Civic Center Drive, represents what remains of his best work. The YMCA building is the most prominently situated and important of these three structures. The building is constructed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style, as were most of the other school and public buildings that he designed. Although he designed some Craftsman bungalows and Period Revival homes and buildings, it is for his use of the Spanish Colonial Revival style that he is best known.

A portfolio of works compiled by Mr. Eley, and used to secure architectural commissions, extensively features the YMCA building. Eight of the forty-three photographs included in the portfolio are of the YMCA. Other buildings featured are the Leo Borchard and C.S. Cruikshank residences, the Ebell Clubhouse and several school buildings. The portfolio was recently donated to the Santa Ana Library by Frederick Eley's daughter, Dorothy, and is kept in the Santa Ana History Room.

Frederick Eley served on the YMCA Board of Directors for a number of years.

* A list of the buildings designed by Frederick H. Eley is attached to this nomination. The 4 page list was prepared by Robert L. Richardson.

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City of Santa Ana's Cultural Heritage Evaluation Committee Reports E-144, E-145, E-146, E-147, E-148 and E-149, written by Robert L. Richardson and dated 8-20-84.

Santa Ana Register: December 21, 1922 (with architect's sketch of proposed YMCA building)

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Verbal Boundary Description continued:

the north line of said Block "C", 29 feet to the northeast corner of said Block; thence north 109.02 feet; thence east 125; thence south 299.02 feet to the north line of Church Street; thence west 154 feet to the point of the beginning.

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photographs (additional)

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- 1) Young Men's Christian Association (Santa Ana-Tustin chapter)
205 West Civic Center Drive
- 2) Santa Ana, California 92701
- 3) Hans Ku
- 4) December 23, 1992
- 5) Heritage Orange County, Inc
515 North Main Street, Suite 208, Santa Ana, California 92701

The above information is the same for all of the four additional photographs submitted.

- 6) South elevation (facing Civic Center Drive)
- 7) 1

- 6) East elevation (facing Sycamore Street)
- 7) 2

- 6) North elevation
- 7) 3

- 6) West elevation
- 7) 4

Orange County

SKETCH MAP

Young Men's Christian Association (Santa Ana-Tustin chapter)
205 West Civic Center Drive
Santa Ana, CA 92701

BROADWAY

SYCAMORE STREET

sidewalk

sidewalk

Jacuzzi addition
(post 1970's)
non-contributing

HANDBALL COURT &
MAINTENANCE BUILDING
(post 1970's)
non-contributing

Stairway
addition
(1970's)
non-contributing

Gymnasium
(1924)
contributing

GYMNASIUM

east
entrance

PATIO

YMCA
BUILDING
(1924)
contributing

AEROBICS BUILDING
(post 1970's)
non-contributing

south entrance

PLANTED ISLAND
non-contributing

CIVIC CENTER DRIVE



NORTH

Scale: 1" = 50' 0"
(approximately)

Carpark to Old Orange County
Courthouse

