

**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 National Bank of Whittier Building

and/or common Bank of America Building

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2. Location

street & number 13002 East Philadelphia Street n/a not for publication

city, town Whittier, n/a vicinity of congressional district 33rd (1970)

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 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 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 Whittier Investors I; Westcap Financial Group, general partner

street & number 1843 Bush Street

city, town San Francisco, n/a vicinity of state Calif. 94109

5. Location of Legal Description

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

street & number 227 North Broadway

city, town Los Angeles state Calif. 90012

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title State Historic Resources Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 7/21/77 federal state county local

depository for survey records State Office of Historic Preservation

city, town P O Box 2390 Sacramento, state CA 95811

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Bank of America Building, formerly known as the National Bank of Whittier Building, is a six story reinforced concrete bank and office structure located at the southwest corner of Greenleaf Avenue and Philadelphia Streets in Whittier, California. The structure is constructed with facades situated directly on the property lines on Philadelphia and Greenleaf Streets with no setbacks. These street facades are clad in terra cotta and are designed in an ornate and somewhat unusual Second Renaissance Revival style. The facades on both Philadelphia Street and Greenleaf Avenue are similar in design with the exception of the entryways which front on Philadelphia Street.

The ground floor features a granite base and four pilasters with capitals, separated by three windows on the Greenleaf Avenue facade, and two windows and the bank entry on the Philadelphia Street facade. Each of these large rectangular pane window openings has a small transom of leaded glass at the top.

The building is structured in a three part vertical composition, with base, shaft, and capital. The base is comprised of the first and second floors, and is separated from the shaft by the terra cotta belt described below. The shaft is comprised of the third through the fifth floors, and the capital of the sixth floor and cornice. The bank entryway is surrounded by ornate terra cotta panels decorated with urns and creeping vines. Above the doorway is a cornice with dentils, a keystone, and a cartouche bearing the date of construction of the building, 1923. The original doors of the bank were replaced in 1964 during the remodelling of the bank lobby. Smaller windows adjoining each side of the pilasters are also ornamented at the top with small panes of leaded glass. On the Greenleaf Avenue facade, both the windows at the North corner and the small doorway at the South corner have been enclosed with stucco. These enclosures occurred as a result of the remodelling.

A highly decorated stringcourse which separates the first and second floors has a vitruvian scroll pattern. An ornate terra cotta belt separates the second and third floors. This belt has dentils and a fleur-de-lis pattern. A smaller stringcourse separates the fourth and fifth floors and is also scroll-patterned.

The windows above the first floor are grouped and centered above the first floor pilasters. These windows are tri-grouped and each set features three double-hung windows. These windows are outlined in an egg and dart pattern. The windows between floors are separated by terra cotta panels adorned with the urn and vine pattern. This window pattern is carried up to the sixth floor where panes of terra cotta with stylized urns and vines adjoin each window. A column of single double-hung windows is located at the corners of the building with two columns at the northeast corner of the structure. Finally, the building is topped by an ornate, bracketed cornice.

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Two other exterior features are of interest: a brass four-faced clock on the ground floor at the corner of Greenleaf Avenue and Philadelphia Street, and a plaque commemorating the building as the location of the first law office of Richard M. Nixon. This plaque is located on the exterior wall near the lobby entrance.

The building is rectangular on the first floor, but floors two through six feature a light court with walls of unadorned stucco on hollow tile. The walls of the east and south elevations are of the same stucco on hollow tile.

The exterior of the building is virtually unchanged from the original. The buildings interior has undergone some modification over time. The interiors of floors two through six still retain many of the original improvements, including brass and cast iron stair railing, much of the original wood framing, doors, and door surrounds and wainscoting, marble washrooms, and baseboards, and the original manually operated elevator. The original ceilings have been covered by acoustical tile in order to hide mechanical ducting which was later installed for air conditioning.

The interior bank lobby on the ground floor was remodeled in the early 1960's. The building has a bank vault in the basement and the attendant operated elevator services this vault as well as the upper floors.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1923 **Builder/Architect** John and Donald Parkinson

Statement of Significance (In one paragraph)

The Bank of America Building, formerly the National Bank of Whittier Building, is of significance because it is the best remaining example of its style, Second Renaissance Revival, in the greater Whittier area. The building was designed by the noted Los Angeles architectural firm of John and Donald Parkinson. The site has been the location of at least four banks, which have had an important role in the commercial development of the community. Additionally, the structure is of significance to American politics because it was the first law office of Richard M. Nixon, who became the 37th President of the United States.

The present site of the old Bank of America Building was developed in 1887 for the private bank of Tellinghast and Henry. After the 1880's boom subsided, the Bank of Whittier took over the Tellinghast and Henry Bank Building. The Bank of Whittier was organized by Washington Hadley, an early Whittier pioneer. In 1900, this bank was reorganized into the National Bank of Whittier, with Washington Hadley as the President. In 1911 his son, Albert Hadley became President. In 1922, it was decided that there was a need for a more modern bank building, and the Los Angeles firm of John and Donald Parkinson was commissioned to design the new structure.

At a cost of \$414,000 a new steel reinforced concrete structure replaced the earlier 1880's brick building. The new structure featured a spacious banking room and office space above. It was designed in an ornate Second Renaissance Revival style, and was the largest and the tallest building in Whittier at the time of its construction; and for many years thereafter. In 1928 the First National Bank, successor to the National Bank of Whittier, merged with Whittier Savings, and in 1929, Merchants Bank merged with the Bank of Italy, which became the Bank of America. Thus, the site has been continually occupied by banks since 1887, and these banks have played an important role in the economic development of the community.

A noted architectural firm, Parkinson and Parkinson designed a number of important southern California buildings, including the Los Angeles Coliseum in Exposition Park and its later enlargement; the Los Angeles Gas and Electric building; the Title Insurance Building at 433 Spring Street; and the J. D. Spreckles Building in San Diego. Earlier in the century, John Parkinson won wide recognition as architect of many public and commercial buildings. He was responsible for the design of the old Mason Opera House, the original California Club, the Los Angeles Athletic Club, the Pacific Mutual Life Insurance building on West Sixth Street, and several buildings at the University of Southern California. He was also on the team of architects which designed the present Los Angeles City Hall.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Arnold, Benjamin and Clark, Artilissa, History of Whittier, 1933. Pgs. 113-118.
Mazo, Earl and Hess, Stephen, Nixon, a Political Portrait, Harper & Row, 1968, Pgs. 14-29.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 0.14 acre

Quadrangle name Whittier, CA

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	1	4	0	4	2	8	0	3	7	6	0	1	0	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

See continuation sheet.

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 Steven Hightower, President

organization Westcap Financial Group

date June 1, 1982

street & number 1843 Bush Street

telephone (415) 931-6300

city or town San Francisco

state California 94109

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

K. M. Ellen

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date November 8, 1982

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

Linda Flint McCullum
Keeper of the National Register

date 12-30-82

Attest:

Chief of Registrar

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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The National Bank of Whittier Building has been the location of law offices since its construction in 1923, as Whittier was and is the location of a division of the Los Angeles County Courts. In 1937 Richard Milhous Nixon joined the Whittier law firm of Wingert and Bewley, which had its offices in the building. Thus, the Bank of America building is the site of the first law office of the 37th President of the United States. Nixon operated from this office until he opened a branch office in La Habra a few years later.

In summary, the old Bank of America Building has much significance to the City of Whittier and its surrounding area. Its site has served as a banking location for over a hundred years. The building is the site of the first law office of Richard M. Nixon, later to become the 37th President. And the building is the finest and one of the few remaining intact examples of Second Renaissance Revival construction in the area, designed by the important Los Angeles Architectural firm of John and Donald Parkinson.

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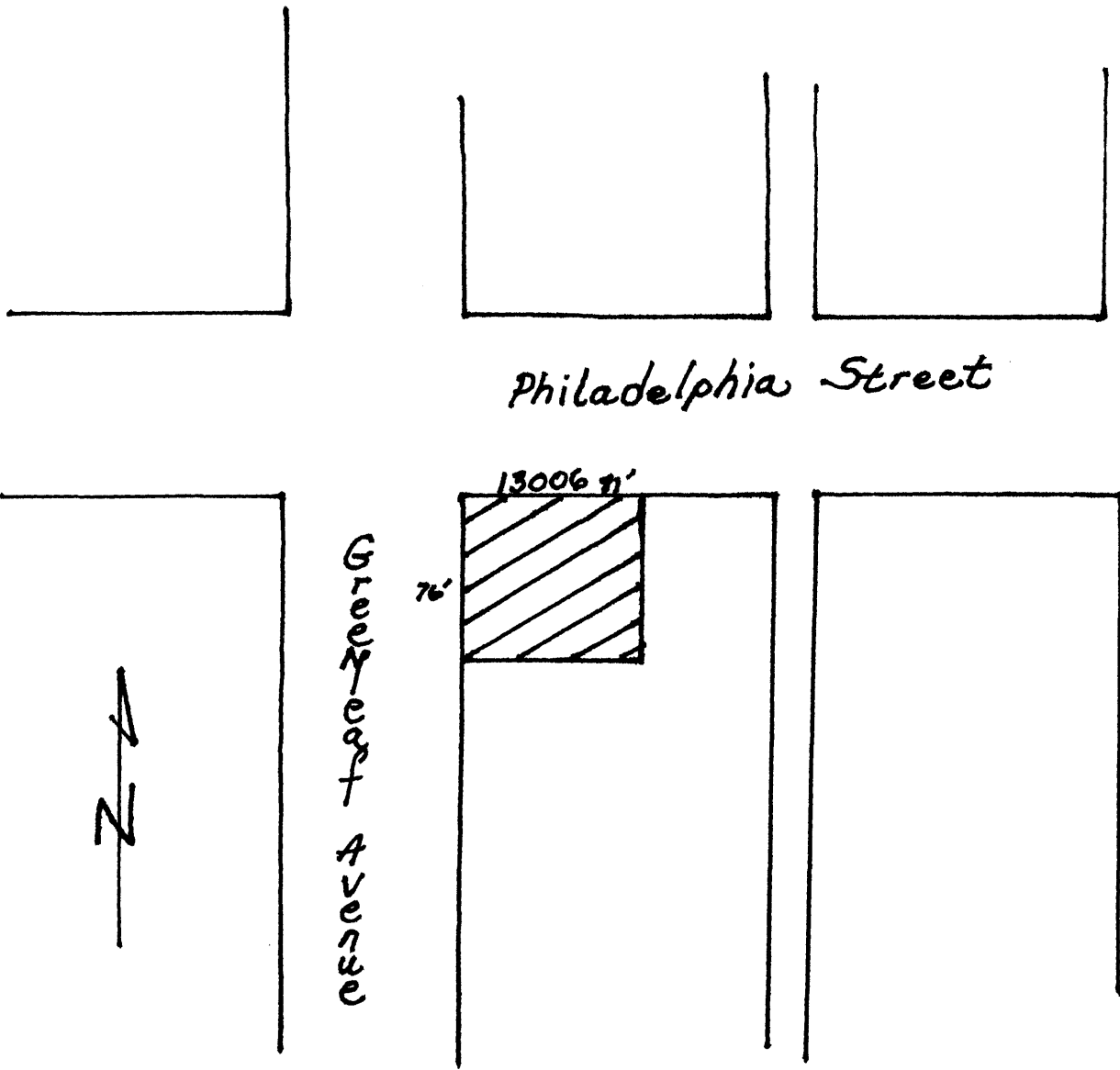
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- #9. Southwest Builder and Contractor, "J. & D. Parkinson Prepare Plans for Bank Building", 10-13-1922, pg. 30, column #1. Whittier City Building Department, Letter from John and Donald Parkinson.
- #10. Verbal Description: The north west corner of the property is the south east corner of Philadelphia Street and Greenleaf Avenue. From this point the property extends east 81.42 feet along Philadelphia Street, then south 75.75 feet, then west 81.42 feet to Greenleaf Avenue and finally 75.75 feet north to the corner of Greenleaf Avenue and Philadelphia Street. Building occupies its entire historic lot. Assessor's Parcel Number 8139-22-13.

NATIONAL BANK OF WHITTIER BUILDING
13002 East Philadelphia Street
Whittier, Los Angeles County, CA

Sketch Map



Scale 1" = 80'