

996

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Royal Laundry Complex

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 443 South Raymond Avenue  not for publication N/A

city or town Pasadena  vicinity N/A

state California code CA county Los Angeles code 037 zip code 91105

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 15 AUG 2007  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

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 for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. 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): \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature] for  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action  
Edson H. Beall 9-27-07

Royal Laundry Complex  
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	0	buildings
		sites
0	1	structures
1	0	objects
4	1	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

**Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

Early Auto-Related Properties in Pasadena, CA

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY/processing site  
COMMERCE/specialty store

COMMERCE/business

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19<sup>th</sup> AND 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS/  
Spanish Colonial Revival  
MODERN MOVEMENT/Streamlined Moderne

foundation CONCRETE  
walls CONCRETE  
STUCCO  
roof ASPHALT  
other CERAMIC TILE

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Royal Laundry Complex  
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California  
County and State

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

1927

1939

1955

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Significant Dates**

1927

1939

1955

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Kaufmann, Gordon B.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- Previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

\_\_\_\_\_

Royal Laundry Complex  
Name of Property

Los Angeles County, CA  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.89

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>11</u>	<u>394120</u>	<u>3777860</u>	3	---	---
2	---	---	---	4	---	---

See continuation sheet.

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Christy McAvoy, Managing Principal; Laura Janssen, Senior Architectural Historian

organization Historic Resources Group, LLC date April 27, 2007

street & number 1728 Whitley Avenue telephone 323 469-2349

city or town Los Angeles state CA zip code 90028

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

#### Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

### Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

Name Jeffrey Lee; 443 South Raymond Owner LLC

street & number 475 Washington Boulevard telephone 310 827-0171

city or town Venice state CA zip code 90292

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number   7   Page   1  

Royal Laundry Complex, Los Angeles County, California

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## 7. Narrative Description

### *Summary*

The Royal Laundry is a complex which housed the operations of a commercial laundry plant catering to the household laundry trade. The site is in an industrial area of Pasadena, directly south of the main historic commercial area of the city. The buildings and one sign are located at the southwest corner of South Raymond Avenue and Bellevue Drive, with the main buildings aligned with the sidewalk and forming a continuous street wall. There are three buildings and a sign along the street and a new parking structure that sits at the southwest (rear) portion of the property. The three historic buildings are the Main Plant (1927) at the corner of Raymond and Bellevue, a poured in place concrete structure; the Annex (ca. 1930) and the Drive-up Building (1939) are of wood frame construction, and the historic Overhead Sign (1955) is painted sheet metal construction. The style of the structures varies. The Main Plant is restrained Spanish Colonial Revival. The Drive-up Building is Streamline Moderne. The Annex building was originally designed and built in a utilitarian style, but was partially altered in 1939 to integrate with the new Streamline Moderne Drive-up Building. The Overhead Sign was designed to be compatible with the Streamline Moderne design of the Drive-up Building. All historic buildings are one story high with the exception of the Main Plant, which is a single volume with a mezzanine built around the perimeter. The contemporary two and one-half story parking structure (2003) constructed in the southwest portion of the site was built to accommodate the adaptive reuse of the property and is counted as a non-contributing structure. It abuts the Drive-up Building and connects to the Annex and Main Plant via a pedestrian walkway at ground level. It is architecturally distinct from the other buildings and is set back from the street, partially hidden by the Drive-up Building. The Royal Laundry was extensively rehabilitated into commercial office space using the Tax Certification process and was approved by the National Park Service. Character-defining features have been rehabilitated according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

### *Site Description*

The Royal Laundry site occupies the north end of the block that fronts South Raymond Avenue to the east, Bellevue Drive to the north and Edmondson Alley to the west. Royal Laundry has occupied a portion of the site since approximately 1910. Though other Royal Laundry buildings preceded the current ones on the site, the extant buildings were constructed in the following order:

1. Main Plant at corner of Raymond and Bellevue, 1927 (source: historical ephemera and newspaper stories; year not entered on building permit)
2. South Annex of main plant, ca. 1930 (source: building permit not available; appears on 1931 Sanborn Map). Altered in 1939 to be architecturally compatible with the Drive-up Building.
3. Drive-up Building, 1939 (source: building permit)
4. Overhead Sign, 1955 (source: building permit)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Royal Laundry Complex, Los Angeles County, California

---

A former driveway ran between the South Annex and the Drive-up Building leading to a paved driveway court where loading and delivery took place. This is now an enclosed landscaped courtyard that provides outdoor seating and a walkway between the new parking structure and main buildings.

### *Main Plant*

The Main Plant of the Royal Laundry was constructed in 1927. The building is rectangular in plan. The volume extends to the sidewalk on the north and east facades, and to the rear alley (Edmonson Alley) on the west facade. The exterior is painted poured in place board-formed concrete. The building has a sawtooth roof concealed by a surrounding parapet, the top of which is edged with a repeating wave or scalloped design.

The basic industrial exterior is monumentalized by grouping the two stories of metal-sash windows into long, vertical bays. The bays are divided by engaged columns, so that the windows form the intercolumniations. The cast concrete columns are fluted with a decorative capital and stepped base. On the street-facing facades, seven of the window bays are grouped into three larger bays. On the west end of the longer, north facade is an additional, fourth grouping three window bays wide to the west of a doorway, toward the alley. The columns and windows are framed within unadorned, rectilinear openings. The exterior wall along the alley (west) has two stories of steel sash rectangular window groupings in a poured concrete facade.

The original main entrance is set within the central window bay on Raymond Avenue. The wood, double doors have a large glass light in the center, and are surmounted by a transom of octagonal, clear, leaded glass. The entrance is surrounded in multicolored glazed tile from Tropico Potteries. Over the recessed doors, the tile features the name of the business with Royal Laundry's coat of arms: a lion in a shield with a banner reading "unexcelled" below it. Green-blue glazed tile forms a wainscot at the base of the two bays to either side of the entrance. Inside the entrance doors is an area with terra cotta quarry tile floor which was the original lobby. A staircase to the south with a wrought iron hand rail, leads to the mezzanine.

The interior of the Main Plant is a single, large volume with concrete floors and a U-shaped concrete mezzanine. There is a sawtooth roof with wood facing on its sloping sides and steel sash windows on its north-facing, vertical sides. The structure is supported by new painted steel columns that are compatible with the existing and new steel beams support the mezzanine.

The mezzanine--which runs along the east, south and west perimeter of the building--is reached either by a new open steel staircase or new passenger elevator at the south end of the building. The new mezzanine mimics the original mezzanine by overlooking the main floor but now has expanded floor area, and there is a bridge that spans the opening. The mezzanine floor is held away from the exterior walls limiting its visibility through the windows.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Royal Laundry Complex, Los Angeles County, California

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A series of spaces along the south side of the Main Plant runs the depth of the building. This area has brick partition walls, a wood bowstring truss roof, and steel-frame skylights. These spaces originally contained the boilers and other machinery which fueled the plant. The succession of spaces from east to west are separated by brick partition walls. The original rolling fire doors clad in sheet metal have been retained in place. A lightwell with several wood sash windows have metal clad rolling fire shutters retained in place. The pass-throughs between the Main Plant and the South Annex have been enlarged and new restrooms have been added to this area.

Recent tenant improvements have added partition walls to select areas of the main floor and mezzanine levels but have maintained the voluminous character of the space. The machine rooms have been converted into conference rooms.

### *South Annex*

While its exact date of construction can not be established from City of Pasadena records, the Annex building to the south of the Main Plant appears to have been constructed around 1930. It appears to have been constructed after the Main Plant and is shown on the 1931 Sanborn Map, placing its construction between 1927 and 1931. It was constructed to accommodate the expansion of the original laundry facilities.

The Annex is rectangular in plan and adjoins the Main Plant to the north. It is one story high and covered by a low-gabled roof surrounded by a parapet. The building is of frame construction with a concrete foundation, and the exterior is finished in stucco. The street façade, along Raymond Avenue, is a rectangular, symmetrical elevation with a row of four large, rectangular openings in the center and smaller rectangular openings located on either side of the central four. The original glazing of the street facade had been altered to include louvered panes and plywood panels, although the fenestration pattern remained unchanged.<sup>1</sup> A new storefront system with the same configuration was added during the rehabilitation.

The south facade of the Annex was remodeled in 1939 as a part of the construction of the Drive-up Building to the south. The east end of the south facade has a horizontal band of multilight, steel sash casement windows. A shallow canopy projects from the face of the parapet, with a striated metal fascia finishing the edge. The profile of the parapet steps up toward the corner and terminates in a Streamline Moderne style pylon. This pylon is the same as that which terminates the south end of the facade of the Drive-up Building, and the fascia is also the same as that of the Drive-up Building.

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<sup>1</sup> Historic photographs taken in the early 1930s for promotional purposes show the fenestration pattern.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

Royal Laundry Complex, Los Angeles County, California

The west end of the south facade consists of a series of bays which originally had multilight wood sash windows. This end of the building had been repeatedly altered and was severely deteriorated. The windows and the entrance door were replaced with a new storefront system during the rehabilitation.

The west façade abuts the rear alley, in line with the Main Plant, and has an irregular pattern of window placement. Three infilled bays are reminders where garage entrances had been cut to accommodate a former auto body shop tenant.

The interior of the Annex is an open volume with new partition walls and a restored open wood truss ceiling.<sup>2</sup> The ceiling is supported by new steel beams which are carried by narrow steel piers.

### *Drive-up Building with Overhead Sign*

The Drive-up Building was constructed to create a place for the public to interface with the plant when bringing in laundry and dry cleaning. The building is one story high and irregular in plan, with the primary facade forming a concave curve to the street. The building is of frame construction with a concrete foundation, and the exterior is finished in stucco. The roof is flat and surrounded by a parapet. A flat canopy projects from the facade over the windows sheltering the primary and north facades. A horizontally striated metal fascia finishes the edge of the canopy. Signage in the form of metal letters which stood at the edge of the canopy no longer exist. A stucco clad wing wall extending from the north side screens the courtyard from public view.

The curving primary facade has fourteen bays comprised of windows and double doors. The windows are composed of three horizontal, aluminum-frame sash. The doors are wood with a central glazed panel. There is a raised concrete walkway that projects from the building line. The driveway, which mimics the curve of the building, has been landscaped with traffic-rated pavers underneath the grass, and there are curb cuts at the southern and northern ends.

The double-sided painted sheet metal Overhead Sign that spans the driveway was added to the building in 1955. The west end vertical support is integrated with the horizontal portion that attaches to the parapet of the building. Within the horizontal portion is rear-lit marquee for movable plastic letters. It is topped by a painted sheet metal slightly s-curved arrow that points towards the building. The southeast corner of the primary facade is punctuated by a tall Streamline Moderne pylon. Together with the Overhead Sign, they call attention to the building from passing cars, and defines the south end of the Royal Laundry complex. Originally, the arrow of the Overhead Sign had the words DRIVE-IN & SAVE spelled out in neon tube lighting. Although the lettering has been removed, the sign still retains its form and intent by attracting awareness to the building.

<sup>2</sup> The ceiling was originally open to expose the structural trusses, according to historic photographs.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 5

Royal Laundry Complex, Los Angeles County, California

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The north façade has a blade pilaster which visually separates the interior spaces on the exterior. There is one large glass block window to the east that designates the reception area and two multi-light steel sash windows which mark the service areas. The south façade has four new clerestory windows and two new overhead rolling doors with suspended canopies for the loading dock area.

The front room of the Drive-up Building was originally a reception area for customers to bring their laundry into the building. This reception area has its original curved layout and many of its original fixtures and finishes intact. The walls are faced with wood veneer paneling with horizontal seams between the wood panels defined with flat, silver metal bands. The west wall has four wood-framed openings with metal transom grilles that lead to the storage room to the west, and three wood framed display cases inset into the wall. The display cases once held hand-painted advertisements for the laundry establishment.<sup>3</sup> There is a plastered soffit and ceiling with a crown molding where they join, and a glass block window at the north end of the room. The east wall is almost wholly glazed with the aluminum-frame sash windows and wood framed double doors. The rooms to the west of the reception area are utilitarian service rooms used for storage.

### *Parking Structure (non-contributing)*

Built in 2003, a new two and one-half story unfinished CMU parking structure replaces a former single-story garage. The parking structure sits at the southwest portion of the site and abuts the Drive-up Building to the east. It is built on grade and is accessed from a driveway at the southeast corner of the site off Raymond Avenue. This new structure is visually distinct from the other buildings on the site.

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<sup>3</sup> J. Edward Tufft, "Drive-In Service *Deluxe*," *Laundry Age*, October 1939, 74.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

Royal Laundry Complex, Los Angeles County, California

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## 8. Narrative Statement of Significance

### *Summary*

The Royal Laundry, located in Pasadena, California, is a complex of four buildings plus a sign; three of the buildings and the sign contribute to the significance of the site. The fourth building is a new parking structure added during rehabilitation for the adaptive reuse of the property in 2003. The Main Plant (1927), the South Annex (ca. 1930) and the Drive-up Building (1939) with its overhead monument sign (1955) are eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C at the local level of significance in two contexts. The Main Plant, built in 1927, is one of Pasadena's most architecturally significant industrial buildings designed by master architect Gordon B. Kaufmann, and is eligible under Criterion C for its high artistic merit. The significant date for this building is 1927, the year of its construction. The Drive-up Building of 1939 and the adjacent ca. 1930 South Annex, which was modified at the time to integrate with the Drive-up Building, are eligible under Criterion C under the Multiple Property Documentation for Early Auto-Related Properties in Pasadena. The Drive-up Building was identified in the initial survey for the documentation, but the owner at that time declined to have the building listed in the National Register. The significant date for the Drive-up Building and the Annex is 1939, the year in which the Drive-up Building was constructed and the Annex building was modified. The Overhead Sign in front of the Drive-up Building was added at a later date to be compatible with the Drive-up Building and is an identifiable contributing feature of the building. The significant date for the sign is 1955. The Drive-up Building and the Main Plant were cited by the Pasadena Cultural Heritage Commission as eligible for local landmark listing; the Overhead Sign was locally designated as a historic sign in 2002. The site currently has a rating of 2S3 in the State Historic Resources Inventory having been determined eligible by Part 1 Tax Certification in February 2001. The complex retains its integrity of location, setting, design, workmanship, material, feeling and association.

### *The Royal Laundry Company*

The Royal Laundry Company was established in approximately 1910, and was combined with another Pasadena laundry, the Yosemite Laundry, in 1919. The president of the company at this time was Arthur C. Tubbs, who left another large Pasadena laundry concern, Troy Laundry, to purchase a controlling interest in the Royal Yosemite Laundry in 1916. As early as 1917, the Royal Laundry advertised itself as "biggest, busiest, best" among Pasadena laundries. According to city directories, the business became known as the Royal Laundry in 1921. Laundries were important businesses in Pasadena, and employed large numbers of people to do household laundry for well-to-do and middle-class families. In 1911, when the Royal Laundry was in its first years of operation, there were eleven laundries in Pasadena. The city's population and business and industrial base grew significantly over the next twenty years, and by 1931 there were forty-two laundries in Pasadena. This number included a small number of women who took in laundry in their homes.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

Royal Laundry Complex, Los Angeles County, California

The Royal Laundry operated just south of the corner of East Bellevue Drive and South Raymond Avenue from its inception, at which time it was located next to the Pasadena Grand Opera House. The Opera House was demolished in the 1920s, and the Royal Laundry eventually expanded to the corner, subsuming the neighboring land on which the Opera House had stood.

Arthur Tubbs died in 1923 and his son, Harry A. Tubbs, then took over the presidency of the Royal Laundry Company. According to a biographical sketch of Harry Tubbs, his father Arthur Tubbs had planned for major growth of the business before his death. A new era appears to have begun for the business in 1927, when their expansion commenced with the construction of the Royal Laundry's first architecturally significant building.

### *The Main Plant, 1927*

The Main Plant at the corner of South Raymond Avenue and Bellevue Drive opened in 1927. It was designed by a highly noted architect, Gordon B. Kaufmann, during a very significant period of his career. Around the same time, Kaufmann was designing the campuses of the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena and Scripps College in Claremont. Hiring an architect of Kaufmann's stature to design the facility appears to have been part of a plan to greatly strengthen the identity of the business within Pasadena. On September 27, 1927, the new plant of the Royal Laundry was opened to the public. The monumental concrete exterior, defined by bays of columns and windows, featured cast concrete details and an entrance surrounded by multi-colored tile.

The Royal Laundry had taken the unusual step of inviting its customers to tour the Main Plant on opening day, with the machines and employees working until ten o'clock at night so that as many people as possible could see their building and their operations first-hand. The invitation to the public to tour the facility at any time remained standing. Due to the concentrated size of Pasadena's industrial district where it was located, the laundry was not far from the main commercial center of town or from residential neighborhoods. Customers could have visited at any time to see the plant, where they would have been received in the lobby, with its "luxurious fittings and artistic finishings" and "a stairway suggestive of a Spanish home".<sup>4</sup>

### *Gordon B. Kaufmann*

Gordon B. Kaufmann (1888-1949) was one of the most significant architects of Southern California. During his career, Kaufmann designed a diverse portfolio of building types, including residences in Beverly Hills and Pasadena, major commercial buildings in downtown Los Angeles, and the architectural design for Hoover Dam. Kaufmann's body of work follows stylistic patterns distinctive to southern California where Mission, Mediterranean and period revival styles of the 1920s shift towards Art Deco, Moderne and Modernist styles in the 1930s and 1940s.

<sup>4</sup> *Pasadena Star News*, September 27, 1927, 14.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

Royal Laundry Complex, Los Angeles County, California

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Born in England in 1888, Kaufmann studied architecture at the Polytechnic in London. Upon graduating in 1908, Kaufmann immigrated to Canada, where he worked in British Columbia. In 1921 he relocated to Los Angeles, where he lived until his death in 1949. Kaufmann's professional career in Los Angeles included a partnership in the firm Johnson, Kaufmann, Coate between 1921 and 1925. He later managed his own office. His reputation as an architect earned him leading roles in the Fine Arts Alliance and the Construction League of California—the latter afforded him the opportunity to weigh in on recommendations to establish California's Uniform Building Code.

During the 1920s, Kaufmann's designs emphasized Spanish Colonial Revival, Mediterranean and other popular period revival styles. In 1926, he prepared the master plan for Scripps College in Claremont and designed many buildings at the school mainly in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. Beginning in 1927, he designed most of the buildings at the La Quinta Resort near Palm Springs in the Mission revival style. He also designed numerous buildings at the California Institute of Technology, including the Athenaeum in 1930 (Italian Mediterranean) and several dormitories in 1931 (Spanish/Italian Romanesque). In 1930 Kaufmann designed a commercial center (Spanish Colonial Revival) in Westwood Village near the University of California, Los Angeles. Kaufmann's design for Santa Anita Park from 1934 to 1940 was one of his largest commissions and illustrates his skills in blending traditional and modern designs in a single entity by incorporating Colonial Revival with Art Deco and Moderne. Kaufmann was particularly well regarded for his residential work, the best known being Greystone, a Beverly Hills mansion in the Tudor and Jacobean styles designed for Edward L. Doheny as a gift to his son in 1926 which is maintained today as a public park.

Kaufmann's 1927 design for the Royal Laundry in Pasadena marked the beginning of his transition from traditional styles to modern influences that would characterize his work throughout the 1930s. Examples include the Art Deco Times-Mirror Building in downtown Los Angeles and his architectural design for Hoover Dam in 1932. Both expanded the scale and style of his work, and upon the completion of these projects Kaufmann would design primarily in the modern style, although elements of classical styles continued to exist in his designs.

During a distinguished career Kaufmann received the Legion of Merit award and an AIA Certificate of Merit in 1930. At the French Exposition in 1937, Kaufmann was awarded a Gold Medal. He served on the boards of many professional and social organizations including the Southern California Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, The Sierra Nevada Region AIA, the Building Congress and the California State Chamber of Commerce. He became a naturalized citizen in 1934 and served in the U.S. Army Chemical Warfare Division from 1942 to 1945. After the War, Kaufmann returned to his architectural practice but died in 1949 at the age of 61.

### *Significance among Industrial Buildings in Pasadena*

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 9

Royal Laundry Complex, Los Angeles County, California

The Royal Laundry Main Plant is significant for its design in the context of industrial buildings in Pasadena. Pasadena had a small industrial district, in which the main industries in the 1920s through the 1940s were laundries, light manufacturing (such as furniture), custom automobile assembly, storage and transport, lumber yards and milling. The industrial area grew around the north-south axis of the Santa Fe rail tracks, which entered the city through the center of the block between Raymond Avenue and Arroyo Parkway (then Broadway). Passenger and freight terminals were located at the north end of the rail corridor, just south of the main commercial district of the city along Colorado Boulevard. The industrial district was confined to Broadway (Arroyo Parkway), Raymond, and Fair Oaks Avenues between Del Mar Boulevard in the north and the Arroyo Seco (now the route of the Pasadena Freeway) in the south. Today, many of the buildings in this area from the period before World War II have been demolished and uses such as storage, hospital and medical buildings, retail, and offices predominate.

Because of the proximity to the residential and commercial areas of the city, and the fact that the industries of Pasadena were generally not heavy industries, the industrial district looks not entirely unlike the other commercial areas of the city. Commercial buildings are interspersed among the industrial buildings, as are some small turn-of-the-century residential buildings. Most of the industrial buildings are vernacular or utilitarian in design, including those which are listed in the Old Pasadena National Register district.

Pasadena's most significant industrial buildings are from later periods and housed very different types of operations at a much larger scale. Pasadena's main power plant (not listed in the State Historic Resources Inventory) is significant architecturally as well as historically. The plant, however, was built in 1938 for the City of Pasadena, not for commercial use.<sup>5</sup>

Few buildings of the scale and time period of the Royal Laundry can be compared to it for architectural value. One other laundry in Pasadena is listed in the National Register; the Home Laundry at 432 South Arroyo Parkway, built in 1922. The Home Laundry's English Revival architecture, with its brick exterior and gable roof at the street, reflects both its name and its location adjoining a residential neighborhood. The Royal Laundry plant was very different in style, but the business used a similar strategy of commissioning a building that would make a visual impression on their clients in the years before drive-up laundry service. Like the Royal Laundry, the Home Laundry later constructed a drive-up dry cleaning plant, but not until the 1960s. The Royal and Home Laundry buildings are the only remains of the major Pasadena laundries.

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<sup>5</sup> Another large and architecturally significant Pasadena industrial building is the Stuart Pharmaceuticals plant, which is listed in the National Register. However, this facility dates from 1958 and is not comparable to the 1927 Royal Laundry building.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 10

Royal Laundry Complex, Los Angeles County, California

The Royal Laundry Annex (ca. 1930) built to the south approximately doubled the size of the plant.<sup>6</sup> On the 1931 Sanborn, the use of this building is identified as finishing and preparation work: the front half of the building was for “ironing and clothes dressing,” with “sorting, wrapping, and loading” done in the rear half. This utilitarian building did not gain architectural significance until it was modified in 1939 (see below).

### *The Drive-up Building, 1939*

In 1939 the Drive-up Building was constructed. At this point the laundry was still under the direction of Harry A. Tubbs, who had overseen the construction of the 1927 Main Plant and ca. 1930 Annex buildings. Tubbs continued to push the laundry into innovative territory, by announcing new services to meet changing needs and by announcing those changes with a significant architectural statement. The new laundry building was published in the local *Star News*, in *Architectural Record*, and in *Laundry Age* (the latter two being national publications).

### *Significance among Early Auto-Related Properties in Pasadena*

As noted in the Early Auto-Related Properties in Pasadena, California Multiple Property Listing, Pasadena had high rates of automobile ownership in the era before World War II, and many existing businesses adapted their practices in order to accommodate customers in their automobiles. The Royal Laundry Drive-up Building was specifically named in the Preliminary List of Eligible Properties and named in the context of “Influences of the Automobile on Other Businesses: 1924-44.”<sup>7</sup> In this context, the building is eligible for listing under Criterion C since its form is directly influenced by its planned contact with customers in their cars.

The Statement of Historic Contexts notes that “(l)audry and food businesses were especially revolutionized by the automobile.”<sup>8</sup> In earlier periods, the Royal Laundry had picked up and delivered its customers’ laundry by delivery truck, making the truck itself the main contact between the customer and the company. When Royal Laundry invited its customers to come to the plant, they expected that touring the facility would leave a favorable impression, causing customers to give the company their business. It was not the company’s intent to invite customers to the plant to drop off their laundry on a regular basis. However, by the mid-1930s, more women were working outside the home and therefore were not available to receive deliveries and pick-ups. It became more convenient for customers to drop off and pick up their own laundry by car.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> No original building permits for the Annex are available at the City, and no primary sources have yet been located regarding its construction, so the architect and actual date of construction cannot be firmly established. However, the building appears on a 1931 Sanborn Map and clearly was constructed after the 1927 main plant.

<sup>7</sup> National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, “Early Auto-Related Properties in Pasadena, California,” January 1996, E11-12.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, E11.

<sup>9</sup> “Drive-In Service *Dehuxe*,” *Laundry Age*, October 1939, 74.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 11

Royal Laundry Complex, Los Angeles County, California

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The effect of creating a building that would accommodate the car was the addition of monumental signage that would attract customers. As noted in the Statement of Historic Contexts, "While drive-ins and similar establishments were often designed in popular styles of the period...Signage was an important element of roadside architecture."<sup>10</sup> Large signs meant motorists could see an establishment sooner, thus signs increased in size and sophistication in the following years.

The Drive-up Building was designed by George Whyte in 1939 and exhibits many features which provide for the automobile. The original signage of the building is carried on pylons which reach above the roofline of the buildings to announce the laundry's presence to drivers on South Raymond Avenue. The primary facade of the building is curved with the shape of the driveway in front, echoing the natural trajectory of a car pulling in from the street. The driveway also provided parking for several cars parallel to the primary facade for those customers who would come inside the building (though originally it was intended that many customers would be attended to in their automobiles by employees who would meet the car in the driveway). The Streamline Moderne design of the building communicates smooth motion and speed, emphasizing the efficiency and ease with which drivers could approach the building, drop off or pick up their laundry or dry cleaning, and drive away with little interruption to their path of travel.

When the Drive-up Building was constructed, the ca. 1930 Annex was altered to provide a northern visual boundary for the driveway. The Streamline Moderne pylon on the southeast corner of the Annex, which mirrors the pylon on the south end of the Drive-up Building, was constructed at this time, as was a long, built-in planter along the windows of the south side of the building. The Annex is a contributing building on the site since its exterior was partly remodeled in 1939 in order to continue the architectural theme of the complex to the south, where the new Drive-up Building stood.

By 1939, the high standard of design which the Royal Laundry had pursued since 1927 had caught up with the rest of the industry, and the typology of a laundry building was now considered important enough to merit attention in the architectural press. In 1944 when they published the Drive-up Building, *Architectural Record* pointed out a circumstance in the laundry industry for which Harry A. Tubbs seemed to have been preparing since 1927:

The laundry has moved *uptown*, especially with the advent of the drive-in type of service. The laundry truck is no longer the only point of contact between customer and plant. The plant itself is its own best salesman.<sup>11</sup>

To further enhance this notion of ease, efficiency and presence the Overhead Sign that spanned the driveway was added to the Drive-up Building in 1955. Constructed by the Wyper Sign and Neon Company the hollow

<sup>10</sup> "Early Auto-Related Properties in Pasadena, California," January 1996, E12.

<sup>11</sup> "Laundries: Architectural Record's Building Types Study, No. 94." *Architectural Record*, October, 1944, 93.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 12

Royal Laundry Complex, Los Angeles County, California

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sheet metal sign had a rear-lit marquee for movable plastic letters that was topped by an arrow with neon lettering. Although added several years after the Drive-up Building was completed, the sign was designed to be compatible with the Streamline Moderne design of the building. It extended the message of speed and economy out towards the street. It was a simple but effective two-sided sign board that improved the drive-through experience. The sign has gained significance as an identifiable contributing feature of the building.

### *Conclusion*

Laundry service businesses were widespread in Pasadena through the 1930s. All had access to the same basic machinery and processes for completing the given tasks, as these were supplied by chemical and laundry machine and equipment companies. The Royal Laundry considered the public face of their plant to be the best representation of the level of service, efficiency, and cleanliness they provided. One other existing laundry (the Home Laundry) in the 1920s commissioned a building which would serve to promote their image (in that case, giving it the appearance of a residence or a commercial building) and that building is listed in the National Register. Aside from these two laundry buildings, there are no other remaining commercial industrial buildings in Pasadena from this time period which exhibit a similar high quality of design and the intent to draw recognition to an industrial business through architecture.

The significance of the Royal Laundry compared to other Pasadena laundry buildings in the 1920s and 1930s appears to have been due mainly to its emphasis on the modernity and attractiveness of its plant. In 1927 and in the year of their expansion in 1939, they used architectural design in order to create a recognizable, attractive and distinct public face to the city along South Raymond Avenue and to adapt to the increasing use of the automobile. The three buildings and the sign on the site which were constructed or modified with this intent are the Main Plant, the Drive-up Building, the Annex building, and the Overhead Sign. These structures have been determined eligible for the National Register under Criterion C.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number   9   Page   13  

Royal Laundry Complex, Los Angeles County, California

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 14

Royal Laundry Complex, Los Angeles County, California

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### 10. Geographical Data

#### *Verbal Boundary Description*

The legal description of the Royal Laundry is: POR OF LOTS 21 THRU 26 OF M R 10-31 AND POR OF LOT 14 OF M R 7-54. The site is bound by South Raymond Avenue to the east, East Bellevue Drive to the north, Edmondson Alley to the west and abuts unrelated commercial property to the south.

The boundary of Royal Laundry is also shown on the accompanying map entitled "Assessor Map, County of Los Angeles".

#### *Boundary Justification*

This boundary, which was reviewed and approved by the National Park Service as part of the tax credit certification process, reflects the current ownership of the legal parcel that is associated with the buildings now as part of the recent tax rehabilitation project.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Additional  
Documentation \_\_\_\_\_ Page 15

Royal Laundry Complex, Los Angeles County, California

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## Additional Documentation

### *Photographs*

Photographer: Carly Caryn  
Date of Photographs: April 2007  
Location of Negatives: Historic Resources Group  
1728 Whitley Avenue  
Hollywood, CA 90028

1. Exterior. Annex and Main Plant, East Elevation. Northwest view.
2. Exterior. Main Plant, East Elevation. West view.
3. Exterior. Tiled entrance, Main Plant, East Elevation. Southwest view.
4. Exterior. Wrought iron window bars, Main Plant, East Elevation. West view.
5. Exterior. Decorative cornice, SE corner of Main Plant. Northwest view.
6. Exterior. Main Plant and Annex Buildings, East Elevation. Southwest view.
7. Exterior. Main Plant, North Elevation. Southwest view.
8. Exterior. Decorative columns, Main Plant, North Elevation. South view.
9. Exterior. Decorative columns detail, Main Plant, North Elevation. Southeast view.
10. Exterior. NW corner of Main Plant and adjacent alley. Southwest view.
11. Exterior. Main Plant, East Elevation. Northeast view.
12. Exterior. Window detail, Main Plant, West Elevation. East view.
13. Exterior. Annex Building, West Elevation. Northeast view.
14. Exterior. Adjacent parking structure, West Elevation. Southeast view.
15. Exterior. SE corner of Annex Building & entrance to interior courtyard. Northwest view.
16. Exterior. Courtyard between Annex Building (left) and Drive-up Building (right). East view.
17. Exterior. Annex Building, South Elevation. Northeast view.
18. Exterior. Main entrance to Annex Building, South Elevation. North view.
19. Exterior. Roof, Main Plant and Annex. South view.
20. Exterior. Roof, Main Plant and Annex. Southwest view.

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National Park Service

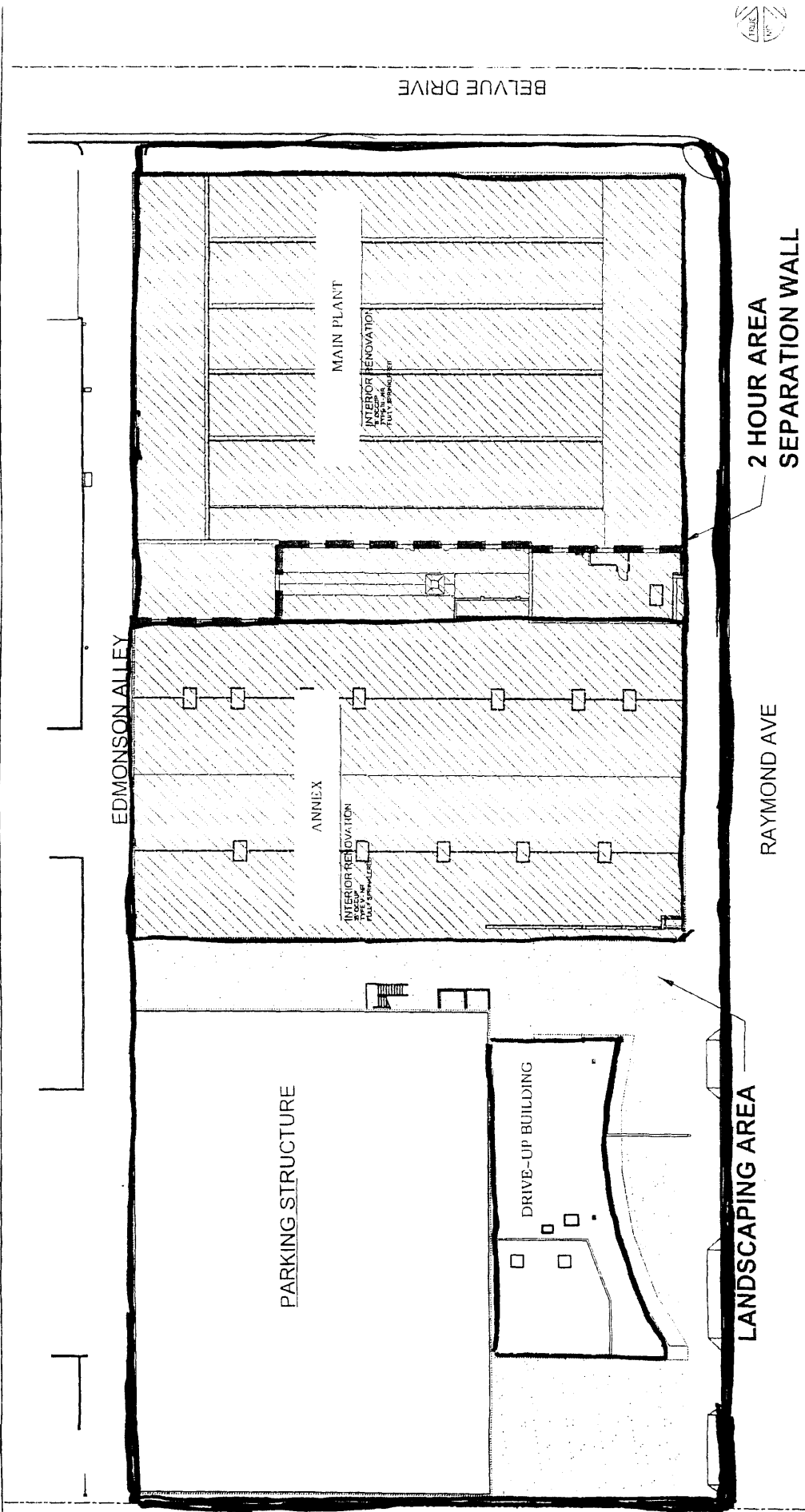
## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number            Additional  
Documentation            Page   16  

Royal Laundry Complex, Los Angeles County, California

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21. Interior. Annex Building. South view.
  22. Interior. Annex Building. Southwest view.
  23. Interior. Lightwell between Annex Building & Main Plant. Northwest view.
  24. Interior. North brick wall of Annex Building. Northwest view.
  25. Interior. Pass-through between Annex & Main Plant. South view.
  26. Interior. Pass-through between Annex & Main Plant. Northeast view.
  27. Interior. Main entrance and stairwell to mezzanine of Main Plant. Southeast view.
  28. Interior. SE corner stairwell from mezzanine, Main Plant. East view.
  29. Interior. Mezzanine of Main Plant. West view.
  30. Interior. Mezzanine of Main Plant. Southwest view.
  31. Interior. Main Plant from mezzanine. South view.
  32. Interior. Main Plant. Northeast view.
  33. Interior. Window detail, north wall of Main Plant. Northwest view.
  34. Exterior. Parking lot and Drive-up Building. Northwest view.
  35. Exterior. Drive-up Building, East Elevation. Southwest view.
  36. Exterior. Drive-up Building, East Elevation. Southwest view.
  37. Exterior. Drive-up Building, East Elevation. Southwest view.
  38. Exterior. Drive-up Building, East Elevation. Southwest view.
  39. Exterior. Door detail, Drive-up Building, East Elevation. West view.
  40. Exterior. Drive-up Building, North Elevation. South view.
  41. Interior. Drive-up Building. North view.
  42. Interior. Drive-up Building. North view.
  43. Interior. Drive-up Building. South view.
  44. Interior. Drive-up Building. South view.
  45. Interior. Drive-up Building. North view.

PLOT PLAN 1/32" SCALE



Royal Laundry  
443 S. Raymond Ave.  
Pasadena, CA 91105  
Los Angeles County

County of Los Angeles: Rick Auerbach, Assessor

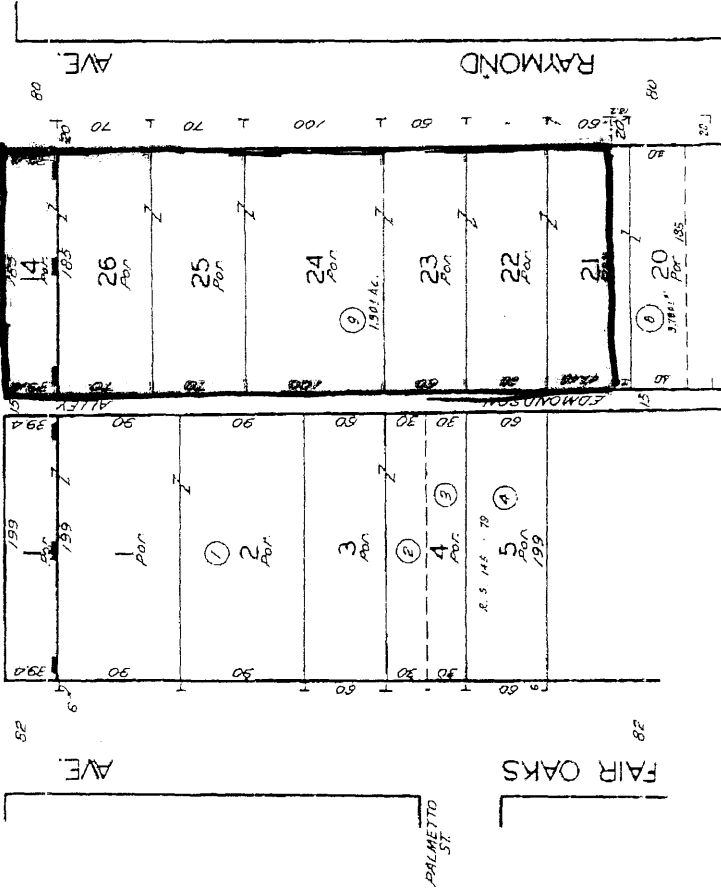
Royal Laundry

Pasadena, Los Angeles County  
California

5722 5  
SCALE 1" = 80'

1996

BELLEVUE DR.



**JULIA E. WARD HOMESTEAD TRACT**

M. R. 7 - 54

BANBURY'S SUBDIVISION OF

LOT 12 AND A POR. OF LOT 9

IN BLK 'H' OF SAN PASQUAL TRACT

M. R. 10 - 31

CODE  
7500

FOR PREV. ASSM'T. SEE: 1912-3  
5722-6

ASSESSOR'S MAP  
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, CALIF.