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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

APR 12 1994

NOV 24 1993

CHP

INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION

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 68). 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 Pasadena Playhouse Historic District

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 464-611 E. Colorado Blvd., 550-655 E. Green St.
21-127 S. El Molino Ave., 150 N. - 101 S. Madison Ave.

not for publication

city or town Pasadena

vicinity

state California code CA county Los Angeles Co. code 037 zip code 91101

3. 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Phyllis Zidell
Signature of certifying official

4/5/94
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 certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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): _____

for
Edson H Beall
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5-19-94
Date of Action

Name of Property _____

County and State _____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property
(Check only one Box)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
42	10	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
1	1	objects
43	11	Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

All buildings: Singer Building (1)
5 in 3 nominations First Trust Bldg(2)
Pasadena Playhouse (2)

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/Theater

COMMERCE/TRADE/Specialty Store

RELIGION/Religious Facility

COMMERCE/TRADE/Financial Institution

COMMERCE/TRADE/Professional

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/Theater

COMMERCE/TRADE/Specialty Store

RELIGION/Religious Facility

COMMERCE/TRADE/Financial Institution

COMMERCE/TRADE/Professional

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Spanish Colonial Revival

Art Deco

Beau-Arts

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls STUCCO

TERRA COTTA

roof TERRA COTTA

other BRICK

Narrative Description

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

See Continuation Sheets.

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.

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 a 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.

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 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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ArchitectureCommunity Planning and DevelopmentPerforming ArtsCommerce**Period of Significance**1906 - 1944**Significant Dates**N/A**Significant Person**N/A**Cultural Affiliation**N/A**Architect/Builder**Listed under "Contributing Buildings" in sect. 7.**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

City of Pasadena - Urban Conservation Archives

Name of Property

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acres of Property 24.5

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 1	3 9 4 9 0 0	3 7 7 8 7 5 0	3	1 1	3 9 5 3 0 0	3 7 7 8 4 6 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	1 1	3 9 5 0 8 0	3 7 7 9 0 5 0	4	1 1	3 9 4 7 2 0	3 7 7 8 5 0 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

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 Leonard Kliwinski, Project Manager; James C. Wilson, Principal

organization Thirtieth Street Architects, Inc. date 11/22/93

street & number 2821 Newport Blvd. telephone (714) 673-2643

city or town Newport Beach state California zip code 92663

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

name/title

street & number telephone

city or town state zip code

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 120 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 Reduction Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**Pasadena Playhouse Historic District
Los Angeles County, CA**

DESCRIPTION

The Pasadena Playhouse Historic District contains approximately 50 buildings which represent the eastward growth of the city's urban character and amenities during the 1920s and 1930s. The buildings collectively contribute to the visual character of the district and create a distinctive "sense of place." The district is partially located along Colorado Boulevard, once the old Route 66 and a central ceremonial street since the City's beginning. A significant portion of the district runs along South El Molino Avenue, the home of the Pasadena Playhouse, a cultural and architectural focus of the district. Other buildings included in the district which share common physical and historical characteristics are located along nearby Green Street and Madison Avenue.

Pasadena's commercial and cultural center was concentrated downtown in what is now known as the Old Pasadena Historic District (National Register, 1983) until the 1920s. Spurred primarily by the construction of the nearby Civic Center, a nationally significant example of civic art in the "City Beautiful" style of the 1920s, (National Register Historic District, 1978), that decade saw the business and financial community begin to move eastward along Colorado Boulevard. Retail and specialty stores migrated for close proximity to the popular Hotel Maryland on Colorado between Los Robles and Euclid, also on the eastern side of downtown. New cultural, religious and residential facilities soon followed. The Pasadena Playhouse Historic District includes the most intact and contiguous collection of buildings which are representative of this "second wave" of growth in the City of Pasadena. The boundaries selected for the district relate to distinct changes in the visual character of the area, including the appearance of non-contributing (altered or recent) buildings and parking or vacant lots.

Since its inception, the district has been a desirable urban place for working, dwelling, recreation and commerce. An advertisement found in the Pasadena Star-News of April 24, 1923 for the Barcelona Apartments at 85 N. Madison Avenue succinctly describes the appeal of the Pasadena Playhouse Historic District in its heyday:

The location: right in the zone of all the activities - social, religious, commercial and amusement - yet a block away from the traffic, noise and dust of Colorado Street - just one block from interurban car lines - and convenient to cafes, restaurants and hotels.

The streets of the district have retained this feeling and atmosphere to the present day. While some of the buildings have been altered over time to a certain degree, the contributing buildings generally retain the appearance of the district during its period of significance. Elements such as the historic streetlights along both sides of Oakland Avenue contribute to this character. The Oakland Avenue streetscape also includes some of the more significant buildings in the district,

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which actually front on other streets, such as the Star-News Building, the Singer Building, the First Methodist Church and the First Church of Christ Scientist.

The majority of the contributing buildings within the district share a consistent design vocabulary. This vocabulary includes the presence of repeating bays; building front built to the street edge; differentiated ground level, middle and top; human-scaled elements; tile roofs when visible from street; upper windows in recessed openings; lower windows that open broadly to the street; and well marked, articulated entrances.

Small scale one and two-story commercial buildings predominate in the Pasadena Playhouse Historic District, but collectively, the buildings illustrate a wide variety of scale, style and use. Multi-story commercial buildings as well as large churches are interspersed throughout the district. Tall buildings located among the shops on Colorado Boulevard, including the Star-News Building at 525 E. Colorado and the First Trust Building at 587-611 E. Colorado (National Register, 1986), as well as the broad lanes of the Boulevard, impart a distinctly urban character to this portion of the district.

Green Street has an intimate scale and character. Lined on both sides with laurel trees, the relatively narrow street contains mostly one and two-story structures built for specialty retail use. The block of 1920s and 1930s period revival buildings from 561 to 655 Green Street is an attractive and pedestrian-scaled grouping. They are constructed of brick and concrete and are clad in a variety of materials including stucco, cast stone, terra cotta and ceramic tiles. Most of the buildings front up to the property line, with the exception of the gas station at number 650, which is set back. The corner buildings are strongly oriented to both streets, having corner entrances angled 45-degrees to the streets. The high level of integrity and overall coherence of scale make this one of the most significant and pleasant areas on Green Street. Also located on this street are some larger scale historic structures including the Pacific Telephone Company Building (currently undergoing rehabilitation) and the Classical Revival style First Church of Christ Scientist with its spacious lawns.

A diverse range of architectural styles is represented in the Pasadena Playhouse Historic District. Several of the most significant buildings in the Spanish Colonial Revival style are located in one block of South El Molino Avenue. The Lockwood Building (No. 21-27) is an elegant, ornate example of the style and the Pasadena Playhouse (No. 35-39; National Register, 1975) adds Mission and Pueblo Revival elements to its interpretation. Symes Cadillac (655 E. Green St.) at the corner of El Molino contributes its similar finishes and subtle detailing to the Spanish flavor of this block. Also within the district, the Singer Building (520-528 E. Colorado; National Register, 1934) is an excellent example of the Spanish Colonial Revival with exuberant detailing.

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The Mira Monte Hotel (127 S. El Molino) as well as the Barcelona Apartments (85 N. Madison) were designed in the more restrained Mediterranean Revival style. Many of the small retail buildings, including some along Green Street, were designed in the Spanish Revival style. Other styles used for this building type include Georgian Revival (Harry FitzGerald, Inc. at 489 E. Colorado) and Art Deco (Warner Building at 469-483 E. Colorado).

Churches reinforce the cultural atmosphere of the district and illustrate the architectural quality and diversity of the district. Two are designed in the Gothic Revival style, the Presbyterian Church Parish House at 541 E. Colorado and the First Methodist Church at 500 E. Colorado. The First Church of Christ Scientist is in the Classical Revival style.

Two historic signs are within the district: the Zinke's Shoe Repair neon sign (1948) and the Pasadena Playhouse sign (1935). These signs are significant urban design features in the district and are the only remaining examples of historic neon signs remaining within the district.

While the Pasadena Playhouse Historic District is primarily non-residential in character, several early houses do remain which document the pre-1920 residential nature of the area. The shingled Craftsman style house at 105 S. El Molino Avenue (1906) and the Tudor Revival style house at 116 S. El Molino Avenue (1907) remain as fine examples of their style, and are representative of the residential character which was once found on all streets of the district. Similar houses once lined the surrounding streets (including Colorado Boulevard) but were razed for commercial uses. The Mira Monte Hotel and the Barcelona Apartments exemplify both the multi-family property type in the district and the Spanish/Mediterranean design trend of the mid-1920s.

The following list gives the address, year built, architect, historic name (if known) and a brief architectural/historical description for each contributing building. The primary sources used to compile the list were Pasadena's Architectural and Historical Inventory forms and State of California Historic Resources Inventory forms located in the City of Pasadena Urban Conservation Archives.

Contributing Buildings

- | | | |
|----|--|---|
| 1. | 469-483 E. Colorado Blvd.
Warner Building | Built: 1927
Architect: Marston and Maybury |
|----|--|---|

Designed in 1927 by one of Pasadena's leading firms, Marston and Maybury, this building expresses the exuberance of Art Deco decoration better than any other in Pasadena.

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Pasadena Playhouse Historic District
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The reinforced concrete structure is a long (130 feet), single-story string of retail spaces, able to house six or seven individual small shops, but now used for a single business. The Art Deco decoration on the facade was designed by Jess Stanton, who also did design work on the Pasadena Civic Auditorium.

The completely fanciful perforated design is based on spiral forms, somewhat reminiscent of sea shells, and executed in green glazed terra cotta forming a grille for the transoms above the display windows. The terra cotta was built by Gladding, Mc Bean and Co. The major portion of the facade is blank with small relief panels at intervals repeating the circle, swirl and spiral design motifs.

The building was commissioned by Thomas W. Warner, prominent Pasadena citizen and founder of the Borg-Warner Company. In its early years it housed a row of exclusive shops catering to the guests of the nearby Maryland Hotel and other wealthy winter visitors to Pasadena.

The original shops at the time of the building's opening, representative of the type of specialty retail which led the Pasadena Playhouse Historic District to thrive commercially, included: Howater Millinery; George A. Clark Company, "Correct Dress for Men"; Fred T. Huggins, Shoes; Max Littwitz, Inc., Fine Linens; A. Schmidt & Sons, Silverware; and Siebrecht's House of Flowers.

2. 489 E. Colorado Blvd.
Harry FitzGerald, Inc.

Built: 1926
Architect: Bennett and Haskell

This small one-story stucco building, designed in 1926 by architects Cyril Bennett and Fitch Haskell, remains one of the most elegant and least altered on all of Colorado Boulevard. It was built for Harry FitzGerald, who operated one of Pasadena's most exclusive men's shops for over twenty-five years in this location.

Cast stone Tuscan columns form a portico, separating the deeply recessed entrance, with its heavy cast bronze double doors, from sidewalk traffic. Small windows flank the arcade, providing display space both on the street and within the portico. Cast stone panels with a simple wreath and garland design in relief, incorporating a large stylized "HF", decorate the space above the windows. A slate-covered gabled roof with three small projecting dormers add to the building's Georgian Revival character.

Functionally, the building is designed to draw pedestrians into the portico to view the displays and then perhaps to enter the shop. The design is a remarkable departure from the red tile roofs

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and pale stucco walls of the Spanish Revival style favored at this time for commercial structures along Colorado Boulevard.

The new building was hailed as "another step in the architectural, commercial and metropolitan growth of Pasadena" in the Pasadena Star-News of August 20, 1926, marveling at the novel idea of on-site parking, as well as hinting at the future growth of the area:

The new FitzGerald store is situated on Colorado Street, between Oakland and Los Robles avenues, where parking is not ordinarily crowded. It will be as the city grows. A feature of the new store, therefore, is a twenty-foot driveway on the east side of the building, which leads to a commodious automobile parking section at the rear.

3. 525 E. Colorado Blvd. Built: 1924-25
Star-News Building Architect: Joseph J. Blick

The Pasadena Star-News has its origins in Pasadena's earliest newspaper, the Chronicle, founded in 1883. Its successor was the Pasadena and Valley Union (founded 1884), which merged with the Pasadena Star (founded 1886) in 1889. The Star in turn merged with the Pasadena Daily News (founded 1890), becoming the present Star-News. It is unusual in having survived as a small-town local newspaper, now serving not just Pasadena but also the San Gabriel Valley.

Designed by local architect Joseph J. Blick, the Star-News Building represents a solution to the special requirements of a newspaper office. Built in 1924-25 of reinforced concrete, the structure was designed with massive walls and columns to support the weight of hundreds of tons of machinery and equipment. This is apparent from the exterior in the deep-set ground floor windows. The exterior relief detailing is executed in the glazed, light brown terra cotta with which the entire building is faced. The ornamentation adds interest to the simple rectangular lines of the building. Its most prominent feature is the two-story high arched entrance on Colorado, with a clock set into the arch above the door. An ornate metal pattern outlines the arch and frames the door and window panes. Arched windows on the third floor echo the form of the entrance, creating a graceful rhythm of repeating curves, especially along the western facade.

In building this headquarters the Star-News moved eastward, as did many other businesses throughout the 1920s. The move is described in the article "Larger Site is Taken By Star-News" of November 15, 1923:

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It is not the intention of the Star-News to give up its present building. Even after the proposed new building is completed and occupied, an office will be maintained as at present at Raymond Avenue and Holly Street. In this way, the Star-News will be able to serve, with equal convenience, all parts of the rapidly growing business district.

In its location with reference to the requirements of the Star-News and its patrons, the new site could hardly be improved upon. The lot is high and sightly, and the cutting through of Oakland Avenue will undoubtedly make it one of the choice business corners of the city.

The opening of Oakland Avenue was decided on several months ago by the City Board of Directors as a civic betterment urgently needed, and preliminary work in connection with it is now well underway. Another important improvement in this immediate vicinity has recently been announced by the Home Telephone Company, which will erect its building at the southeast corner, directly opposite the proposed new home of the Star-News.

4. There is no building number 4 included.

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5. 587-611 E. Colorado Blvd. Built: 1927-28
and 34-42 N. Madison Ave.
First Trust Building and Garage Architects: Bennett and Haskell

Currently listed in the National Register. An eight-story reinforced concrete bank and office building of Italian Renaissance Revival design, with the upper two stories stepped back and topped by a glass and steel cupola. The building has an ornate, well-preserved interior which includes murals by Alson Clark. North of the bank building is a two-story, L-shaped concrete parking garage, an early and notable Pasadena example, with retail shops at the first floor.

6. 592 E. Colorado Blvd.
Zinke's Shoe Repair (sign only)

This 1948 neon pole sign is a rare remaining example of historic neon on Colorado Boulevard. Oriented toward the automobile, the sign represents the commercial nature of the street. The sign is listed in the City of Pasadena Historic Sign Inventory. When it is 50 years old it will be a contributor to the district.

7. 520-528 E. Colorado Blvd. Built: 1926
Singer Building Architect: Everett Phipps Babcock

Currently listed in the National Register. A two-story Spanish Colonial Revival building with clay tile roof, cast stone finials and Churrigueresque ornamentation at the entrances. The building also features ornate wrought iron panels and lanterns. The corner location and entrance serve to focus additional attention on the unusual roofline and fine detailing.

Built for the Singer Sewing Machine Company, this building was the location of the Pasadena Singer store for over fifty years. This outstanding example of a small commercial building in the Spanish Colonial Revival style was rehabilitated for office use in 1981.

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8. 500 E. Colorado Blvd. Built: 1922-1924
First Methodist Church Architect: Thomas P. Barber

Set back from busy Colorado Boulevard and accented by large trees, the First Methodist Church structure is composed of five interconnected Gothic Revival buildings. The main sanctuary, an administration building, an assembly hall, a chapel and a Sunday School are all grouped around a spacious colonnaded courtyard resembling a medieval cloister.

The exterior is clad in grey and cream cast stone, similar in appearance to Indiana limestone. Conventional English Gothic elements include gabled parapets raised above the roofline, simple buttresses along exterior walls between large windows, and foliated tracery patterns on the heavy oak doors and on some of the windows.

In 1887, the Methodists erected a new frame church at the southeast corner of Marengo and Colorado, then a fine residential area. In 1901, they replaced the frame building with a stone one. The eastward expansion of the commercial center and the construction of the Civic Center in the 1920s made the Marengo-Colorado site a prime one for development purposes. With the money realized from the sale of that property, the Methodists were able to build their large present church, as well as to pay for the removal of the old stone church to Holliston Avenue, where it was given to another congregation.

In the 1920s, the site at Oakland and Colorado was in the center of a new fashionable shopping district, close to the Maryland Hotel and the Civic Center. Wealthy hotel guests who were Methodists attended services at the First Methodist Church and donated the church organ.

9. 472-480 E. Colorado Blvd. Built: 1922
Bruce Building Architect: Joseph F. Rhodes

The siting of this two-story stucco clad brick building next to the high-roofed chapel of the First Methodist Church serves to bridge the gap between that larger structure and the one-story buildings to the west. The first floor storefronts have been remodeled, but the second floor retains its original fenestration and decorative elements, which include concrete piers scored to resemble stone, decorative panels below second story windows and a dentilled frieze below the parapet.

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10. 464-468 E. Colorado Blvd. Built: 1922
Gerlach Building Architects: Marston and Van Pelt

This building was originally a finer gift/art goods shop owned by Walter W. Gerlach and his wife Bertha for over twenty years. The shop, built close to the Maryland Hotel, was one of numerous shops of this type concentrated in the area to cater to the considerable tourist trade.

The one-story stucco building's chief design element is the red tile roof which slopes gently toward the street paralleling the raised parapets at either end of the building. The center roof section is raised, slightly recessed and hipped, and divides the facade into three sections. A rendering in the Pasadena Star-News of July 8, 1922 shows quoins at the piers and corners and five arches in the entryway. The storefronts were altered in 1939 to their present configuration.

11. 21-27 S. El Molino Ave. Built: 1927-28
Lockwood Building Architect: Frederick Kennedy, Jr.

This two-story reinforced concrete building which has an ornate cast stone facade is one of the premier examples of Spanish Colonial Revival commercial architecture in Pasadena. The exceptionally fine detailing includes stained glass windows in the transoms of each shop. The interior preserves significant details, such as the cast stone bas-reliefs and fireplaces, which lend the building special significance. Kennedy was a prominent local architect; among other significant buildings, he designed the First Baptist Church in the Civic Center.

Early tenants in the building included prominent interior decorators and dealers in fine china and quality art goods. The use as well as the style of the building complemented the shops in the adjacent Pasadena Playhouse which also featured fine furniture and antiques, along with a restaurant.

12. 35-39 S. El Molino Ave. Built: 1924-25, school bldg. 1936-38
Pasadena Playhouse Architects: Elmer Grey, Cyril Bennett

Individually listed in the National Register, the Pasadena Playhouse is an architectural and cultural focal point of the historic district. A Spanish Colonial Revival building with Mission elements, the Playhouse is centered around a courtyard enclosed on three sides. Paved in flagstone and surrounded by arcades, the central courtyard is raised above street level. The composition of the building is asymmetrical and informal, almost residential in scale. The stucco

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walls are textured and irregular to resemble adobe and masonry construction. The adjacent six-story concrete school building was built in 1936.

The architect, Elmer Grey, also designed the Beverly Hills Hotel and the Huntington Library and Art Gallery (in conjunction with Myron Hunt.) In style and function, the Playhouse relates to the Civic Center several blocks to the east. Together with the central city churches and other commercial buildings and institutions located within the vicinity of the Civic Center, the Playhouse serves to expand the Civic Center concept (of significant public spaces and uses) within the Pasadena Playhouse Historic District.

13. Pasadena Playhouse sign

This 1935 freestanding neon sign on a metal pole is set into the sidewalk on the east side of the Symes Cadillac building. The sign announces the direction of the Pasadena Playhouse and ties these Spanish style 1920s buildings together. It is listed in the City of Pasadena Historic Sign Inventory.

14. 105 S. El Molino Ave. Built: 1906
Residence Architect: not known

This one-and-one-half story house was built in 1906 with elements of the Craftsman style. A large hexagonal roofed dormer is centered on the steeply pitched shingled roof. The house, covered in wood shingles, contains multi-paned wood casement and fixed windows. The house was converted into five apartments in 1944, and remains a good example of the former residential nature of the district.

15. 115 S. El Molino Ave. Built: 1909 (Alterations: 1937)
Perkins (Mary L.) House Architect: C.W. Buchanan (original)

Originally constructed in 1909 as a one-and-a-half story, single-family residence, this building was extensively remodeled in 1937 into a three-unit apartment house. The 1937 alterations impart a distinctive Streamline Moderne appearance to the building; only the first floor door and window openings recall the original Craftsman style architecture. Particularly noteworthy are the curvilinear form of the second floor balcony railings and roof.

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The building is significant as a rare local example of a residential Streamline Moderne building. Since its 1937 alteration, the building has been relatively unchanged.

16. 127 S. El Molino Ave. Built: 1927
Mira Monte Hotel Builder: Foss Design and Building Company

In 1929 there were eighteen major hotels in Pasadena, to serve the considerable winter tourist trade which had a large impact on the development of the city. The Mira Monte Hotel, of modest size compared to the large hotels, is the only one to operate virtually intact as a residential hotel from this era. Set back from the street on a slightly raised lawn, the hotel is a three-story wood frame building, L-shaped in plan. It features such Mediterranean details as rough-cast stucco walls, red tile roofs, arched openings, quoins, and a tower. The interior of the building has sustained few changes and survives substantially intact.

On the rear lot of the hotel are two non-contributing buildings. A 1908 garage was modified in 1927 and 1945 to become a rustic cottage. In 1962 a two-story frame and stucco residence with a swimming pool was added adjacent to the cottage.

17. 116 S. El Molino Ave. Built: 1907
Webb (William Edgar) Residence Architect: John C. Austin

A two-and-one-half story mansion with a corner turret, the Webb House exhibits Arts and Crafts and Art Nouveau features. Tudor and medieval elements from the Arts and Crafts period include half-timbering in the third story gables and tower, Gothic arched windows and Tudor arched entries. Leaded glass windows feature fluid Art Nouveau designs on a geometrical background. This house, which was moved in 1924 from its original site at 65 South Madison (at Green) and converted into apartments, remains as a fine example of its style and as a representative example of the residential character which was once found on all streets of the district.

18. 561-575 E. Green St. Built: 1928
Architect: David Ogilvie

A one-story, Spanish Colonial Revival style commercial block, this brick building is oriented toward the corner of Green and Madison with a 45-degree angled entry. Store fronts and entry doors were altered in the 1950s. However, significant detailing remains, including mottled blue tile bulkheads, transom grilles, cast stone elements and terra cotta tile vents.

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19. 589 E. Green St. Built: 1928
Architects: Louis Du Puger Millar and
Edward A. Hayes

Anchoring the corner, this small scale Spanish Colonial Revival brick building curves at the corner, providing orientation towards both Green Street and Madison Avenue. Two stories in height, its tile roof is capped by a small cupola. Three arched display windows facing the corner are separated by fluted columns with capitals. Doorways on either side of these windows are arched and decorated with scroll-like ornamentation, with deeply recessed quatrefoil windows above.

20. 593-597 E. Green St. Built: 1929
Architect: Louis Du Puger Millar

This is a two-story Monterey Colonial Revival commercial building of brick construction. The street facade is symmetrical with the ground floor articulated by an arched opening flanked by large multi-paned display windows. A wrought iron gate is set into the arch and, within the entry, stairs lead up to the second floor. Above the display windows are diamond-shaped leaded glass transoms set between wooden spindles. The second floor has a central pair of French doors, flanked on each side by two pairs of shuttered casement windows. The building has a gabled tile roof with extended end walls. In the early 1930s, architects Millar and Hayes had offices in this building.

21. 601 E. Green St. Built: 1940
Architect: H.B. Traver

This simple one-story reinforced brick building relates well to the scale of the other buildings on the block. A recessed entry with double paneled doors is on the west side, and a large multi-paned window with brick bulkhead is on the east. A row of wood-framed transom windows is above. The facade is stucco, with corner fluted pilasters defining the ends of the building.

22. 603 E. Green St. Built: 1940
Architect: Harold Bissner

This building, originally a bakery, is a two-story brick Colonial Revival "rowhouse". The side-gabled roof is set between extended wall parapets. The second story has three six-over-six double

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hung windows with wood shutters. The ground floor has a large arched opening on the east and two arched multi-paned windows on the west side. A wrought iron gate encloses the recessed entry and vines cover the lower portion of the building. This structure is one of several contributing period revival buildings on this block of Green Street.

23. 605-609 E. Green St. Built: 1931
Architect: Theodore L. Pietsch

A striking facade of shiny black 4-by-4 ceramic tile keynotes this two-story Art Deco building. Corner projecting piers frame the building. The ground floor has large display windows with tiled bulkheads on the east side and a recessed entry on the west. The original owner designed jewelry with butterfly motifs which accounts for the butterfly theme used in decorative elements throughout the building, including the wrought iron gate to the second floor apartment stairway, and the leaded glass transoms above the second story windows.

24. 655 E. Green St. Built: 1925
Symes Cadillac Architects: Marston, Van Pelt and Maybury

Now known as Jacob Maarse Florist, this is a one-story Spanish Colonial Revival design. The building is typical of the luxurious auto showrooms common in 1920s Pasadena, others of which remain on Colorado Boulevard. The architects also designed the Pacific Asia Museum as well as many other significant Pasadena buildings. A photograph of the original building shows parapet details which have been covered by the corner sign or removed and a tile door frame which is covered by metal casing. These areas could easily be restored, greatly enhancing the appearance of the building.

25. 650 E. Green St. Built: 1930
Union Oil Co. Builder: Union Oil Co.

A one-story masonry building used as a garage and a small Spanish Colonial Revival gas station are located at this corner lot. The garage, located at the west end of the lot, is L-shaped in plan and has a flat roof with low parapets. The Green Street facade has wide expanses of industrial metal-sash windows. Several large openings for servicing cars are located along the east and north facades. The gas station is located at the opposite corner of the lot and contains a freestanding, metal-frame canopy with a hipped tile roof (added in 1935). The adjacent brick gas station office has a gabled tile roof and large plate glass windows.

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This building is a good example of the adaptation of a period revival (Spanish Colonial) style to a utilitarian use. It is also notable as an intact, fairly early example of the gas station building type.

26. 600 E. Green St. Built: 1925
Pacific Telephone Company Architect: John and Donald Parkinson

This three-story, Beaux Arts style office building is constructed of reinforced concrete, with a granite base and terra cotta facing. Like other buildings on Green Street, it is oriented toward the corner with a 45-degree bay positioning the main entrance directly at the corner. Pilasters define bays of regularly spaced recessed steel windows on the two main elevations.

In the early years of the 20th century, there were two rival telephone companies in Pasadena: the Sunset Phone Co. and the Home Telephone and Telegraph Co. The Home, which was originally housed on North Raymond, eventually won out over the Sunset and built this office building in 1925 as part of their expansion. In 1935, the Home Company merged with Pacific Telephone to create the system still in use today. The building is currently undergoing seismic retrofit and rehabilitation.

27. 550 E. Green St. Built: 1908-09; Reading room, 1933
First Church of Christ Scientist Architect: Franklin P. Burnham
Marston and Van Pel: (1933)

This is a Classical Revival structure of reinforced concrete with a stucco finish, built in a cross-axial plan and surmounted by an imposing copper dome. Three sides of the building have porticos with Ionic columns and Corinthian pilasters. This was the first church to be constructed of reinforced concrete in Pasadena. The landmark dome is visible from much of the downtown area.

Adjacent to the church, on the Green Street side, is a smaller reading room of concrete and brick, designed in a compatible Classical Revival style.

28. 65 N. Madison Ave. Built: 1925
Professional Building Architects: Dodd and Richards

An eight-story office building in the Gothic Revival style. The two-story ground floor (new storefronts in 1958) houses shops and provides a tall grand entrance in the form of a Gothic arch.

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Strong vertical lines (simulated buttresses) lead the eye upward to the parapet which is accented by a series of decorated pinnacles. The structure is reinforced concrete with cast stone ornament and trim. The adjoining parking lot was established in 1930 and is landscaped with holly bushes and benches.

The Professional Building, designed and built for physicians and dentists, is Pasadena's only example of Gothic Revival office building architecture (a style popular in Eastern cities such as New York and Chicago).

29. 85 N. Madison Ave. Built: 1924
Barcelona Apartments Architect: The Littleton Company

An L-shaped four-story stucco apartment building with a red tile gable roof. The main entrance in the corner of the L is marked by flanking columns and a panel of foliage designs in cast stone relief above the doorway. Additional Spanish Colonial Revival details include deeply recessed casement windows and recessed arches above upper story windows. The L-shaped plan of the building affords the opportunity for a spacious lawn.

This was the first cooperatively owned apartment building in Pasadena. Opened in 1924, the 31 units originally sold for from \$2,800 to \$13,700. The Pasadena Star-News of January 26, 1924 reported on this method of owning a residence which was new to Pasadena, and its success at the Barcelona:

The plan of occupant ownership was evolved as a means of solving the high rent questions. Monthly payment equaled half of what one would have to pay out in rent in most cases in a similar unit owned by a landlord.

The first enterprise of this kind here has met with success. The legal Department of the Title Insurance and Trust Company, Los Angeles, which has been handling the legal details, told us that there has been developed in the case of the Barcelona Apartments the most workable and the most efficacious scheme for acquiring ownership that they have yet encountered.

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30. 90-104 N. Madison Ave. Built: 1932
Architect: not known

An office complex containing a U-shaped building wrapped around a two-story central structure, designed with restrained Spanish Colonial Revival detailing. Upon the success of the nearby Professional Building, the north and south wings of the "U" were built as medical offices in 1932. A two-room addition at the rear was built in 1939. The front portion (arcaded breezeway) was built in 1956. The central building was originally a residence but was converted into medical offices in 1940. A long garage building is at the rear of the site.

31. 112 N. Madison Ave. Built: 1922
Residence Architect: not known

This English Cottage Revival residence was built in 1922, prior to the construction of the Professional Building in 1925, which brought an influx of office use to Madison Avenue. The one-and-one-half story house has a steeply pitched, cross-gabled roof with a small gabled dormer. The exterior has a stucco finish and wood casement windows. The house was remodeled for office use in 1962 and a flat roofed 600 square foot addition built in 1968.

32. 120 N. Madison Ave. Built: 1909
Barnes (Ella M.) House Architect: Sylvanus B. Marston

This residence is the earliest known building by Sylvanus B. Marston, a notable Pasadena architect who designed public and residential buildings in many styles including the Pasadena Athletic Club, YMCA and Jacob Maarse Building. The one-and-one-half story shingle and stucco house has a long, sloping clipped gable roof and a deeply recessed porch accented by large drum stuccoed columns supporting the porch roof. A large gabled dormer breaks the roof line at the center of the front (west) facade. French doors lead out onto a small porch in the dormer.

The house was converted into offices in 1963. A broad lawn and plantings preserve the residential character of the building.

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33. 150 N. Madison Ave. Built: 1924
Scottish Rite Cathedral Architect: Joseph J. Blick

A monumental Moderne structure in glistening white, the Scottish Rite Cathedral is a design of simple vertical planes accented by ochre cast stone panels around the entrance. These panels with their projecting grooved buttresses further emphasize the verticality of the design. Cast stone arrow feathers flanking each of the three deeply recessed entry doors and the enormous cast stone Sphinxes on each side of the entrance stairs are the only ornamental relief in the geometric design.

As the meeting place of one of the oldest fraternal orders in Pasadena (organized in 1895), the Scottish Rite Cathedral represents a long continuous tradition. The architect, Joseph J. Blick, had a long Pasadena career, beginning in 1895 and continuing until the 1940s. Blick also designed the Star-News Building within this historic district.

34. 101 S. Madison Ave. Built: 1938
Architect: not known

This mixed-use building was built to house two apartments and four stores in 1938. The two-story brick building has two one-story protruding wings which flank a small central courtyard. Colonial Revival detailing includes classical cornice trim, wood multi-paned double-hung and casement windows and wood shutters. The scale and style of the building relate well to the rest of the district, particularly to the other period revival buildings along nearby Green Street.

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Non-contributing Buildings

497 E. Colorado Blvd.	Chul Jin Martial Arts	1949
505 E. Colorado Blvd.	Community Bank	1949
592 E. Colorado Blvd.	Zinke's Shoe Repair	1978
600-610 E. Colorado Blvd.	United Artists Theater	1931
615 E. Colorado Blvd.	BIF Furniture	1930
572 E. Green St.	Office Building	1961
26 S. Madison Ave.	The White Hut	1978
52 S. Oakland Ave.	Office Building	1963

The majority of the above buildings are considered non-contributing to the Pasadena Playhouse Historic District due to their construction outside of the period of significance (defined as 1906-1944). These buildings are not architecturally or historically significant in the context of the district. However, two buildings which fall within the period of significance (600-610 E. Colorado Blvd., United Artists Theater; and 615 E. Colorado Blvd., BIF Furniture) are not included as contributing due to extensive alterations and lack of integrity. The United Artists Theater is described further in the following section. Photographs of all non-contributing buildings are included with this nomination.

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600-610 E. Colorado
United Artists Theater

Built: 1931
Architects: Bennett and Haskell

This theater, built in 1931, was remodeled in 1960. In its current state, this is classified as a non-contributing building. However, the original Art Deco architectural elements of the theater and shopfronts currently covered could be restored. Historic photographs exist to aid in the restoration. Since this building has architectural and historical significance, a brief history is included.

The Pasadena Star-News announced on January 25, 1931 that the "erection of a United Artists Theater... was assured today by the signing of a lease between the United Artists of California Film Corporation and the Colorado Madison Syndicate, holders of the property. The new Pasadena theater will be one of a chain of United Artists motion picture theaters to be erected in California." This theater "will afford the United Artists an entrance into Pasadena which they charge has heretofore been denied them. It is, from their standpoint, one of a large number of theaters to be built so that the corporation may become an exhibitor as well as a producer of feature pictures."

The following reference is from "Walker and Eisen: Twenty Years of Los Angeles Architecture, 1920-1940" found in Southern California Quarterly 45 (1964), p. 371-391.

At the beginning of the 30s Walker and Eisen were commissioned for a chain of theaters by the United Artists (U/A) Corporation. The commission came through Joseph Schenk, U/A executive who had also been instrumental in awarding the contract for the Texaco Building Theater. The chain of U/A Theaters built throughout California were patterned almost without variation after a model established by the studio. These theaters proved to be quite different from the movie palaces of a few short years before. The design now reflected a new kind of popular taste. Suddenly everything was blue mirrors and chromium stair rails; light fixtures were shards of jagged frosted glass, and cubism was espoused by the carpet makers.

The cost of the theater was \$230,000. The 900-seat theater was "modernistic throughout" with black and silver decorations. a rendering of the theater was published in the Pasadena Star-News of May 1, 1931, and shows a very ornate Art Deco building with chevrons etc.

Further research is required to determine whether the Pasadena United Artists Theater was the first of the United Artists chain and the "model" or prototype for the modern U/A theaters that followed, or, if it was simply the first in the Pasadena area.

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The architects, Albert R. Walker and Percy Eisen, also designed the Fine Arts Building (1924) and the Oviatt Building (1928) in Los Angeles. They were known for their adaptations of the Renaissance, Romanesque, Gothic and Spanish Colonial styles. The firm designed the Texaco Building on Broadway in Los Angeles in 1927, which contained a United Artists Theater. They moved toward simplicity in design and materials with their industrial buildings (Braun Corporation, 1931), and the use of concrete, exhibited in the design of the Pasadena United Artists Theater, played an important role in their stylistic change.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Pasadena Playhouse Historic District developed throughout the 1920s as a major concentration of retail, business and cultural activity in the City of Pasadena. The development of the district illustrates the beginning of the eastward growth of the City of Pasadena. For its role in the expansion of urban activity beyond the pre-1920 Central Business District, the Pasadena Playhouse Historic District meets Criterion A as representing significant events in the history of Pasadena, under the context of community planning and development, and commerce. The significant role of the Pasadena Playhouse in the performing arts field also qualifies under Criterion A. The district also meets National Register Criterion C in the area of architecture as containing many significant examples of period architectural styles.

Pasadena's growth and development: 1900-1930

The expansion of the city of Pasadena's population, industrial and land bases are interconnected. The population of Pasadena in 1900 was a little over 9,000. By 1910 the city's population tripled to over 30,000. The city's acreage doubled as a result of the annexation of North Pasadena in 1904 and East Pasadena in 1906. It continued to grow with the annexation of San Rafael Heights and Linda Vista (1914), Pasadena Heights (1916), Annandale (1917) and the Arroyo Addition (1919). While Pasadena's early growth was characterized by the annexation of undeveloped and semi-developed land to the west and north, the thrust of subsequent annexation activity in the 1920s was primarily to the east with its flat developable lands. Seventy-seven annexations in all had combined to bring Pasadena's total area to 23,009 square miles.

The boundaries of the city of Pasadena as incorporated in 1886 were as follows: the Arroyo Seco on the west; a line just past Lake Avenue on the east; Columbia Street on the south; and Mountain Street on the north. While all of these boundaries have been enlarged over time, it is the major eastward expansion over time which is most visible.

The Arroyo Seco still acts as a natural, geological western boundary, with the City of Pasadena now incorporating the houses on either side of the valley. The southern edge of Columbia Street has also remained surprisingly firm as it continues to be part of the southern boundary. This is partially due to the strong community of South Pasadena; once Pasadena incorporated, they were soon to follow in getting a city charter. The northern boundary has also not increased by much; today it reaches Woodbury Road and is met by the City of Altadena. The only truly open edge of

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Pasadena, the eastern boundary has increased the most over the years. With its first limit set because of the lack of residents beyond Lake Avenue, the eastern edge eventually expanded beyond the original limits of Rancho San Pasqual with its new limit at Michillinda Avenue, meeting the neighboring cities of Sierra Madre and Arcadia.

While Pasadena's City fathers were busy adding to their domain, the business sector was continuing to grow and change. Industry flourished in the Los Angeles region after World War I, and the urban form for which the area is known began taking shape. Industrial suburbs offered employment opportunities; and separate residential suburbs emerged. In 1910, 88 industries that employed 500 people in Pasadena were listed. By 1920, Pasadena, with a population of 45,000, had 1,000 people employed in the city's 191 industries. Strengthened by increasing demand, property values rose dramatically during this time. In the 1920s the Chamber of Commerce instituted a campaign to attract industry to the city. The Chamber sought to secure only "clean industries" such as textiles, clothing, printers and machine tool manufacturing. It touted the city's low electricity rates and its stable work force as enticements. By 1930 Pasadena's population had grown to 76,000; yet the city's industrial base had decreased to 150 companies.

The enactment of a city zoning ordinance in 1922 led to both regulation and expanded opportunities for the development of business and industry in Pasadena. The zoning ordinance had a significant impact on the commercial development of the Pasadena Playhouse Historic District. Under the new ordinance, the entire area which is now contained in the District was zoned either "Commercial District" or "Third Residence District" (which permitted apartment buildings and hotels). This zoning permitted areas once reserved for single-family residences (for example, North Madison Avenue, South El Molino) to expand into office, retail or apartment uses. The Pasadena Star-News on September 23, 1930 described the significance of the city's

first real zoning ordinance, passed in 1922. Prior to this, "piece meal" zoning had been resorted to for the protection of certain sections of the city as residential neighborhoods; but it became increasingly clear that the courts did not look with favor on that type of zoning, hence Pasadena, in Passing a comprehensive ordinance, was among those cities which were pioneering in progress.

In 1922 Pasadena had twenty-eight miles of business frontage for a population of 51,530...since 1922, we have added fifteen miles of additional frontage to the business zone.

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Chronology and historical development of the district

In the early 1900s, Colorado and Fair Oaks was the heart of downtown Pasadena. Development on Colorado Street and around the intersection of Moline (as El Molino Avenue was then called) consisted mostly of single-family houses set back considerably from the street right of way. As originally platted in the 1870s, the major east-west streets were Walnut Street, Colorado Street and California Street. Subsequently streets called First Street, Herkimer and Hull appear on the maps but they do not align with each other and appear as individual block-long streets or alleys.

An article titled "Oranges Once Grew Along Colorado", in the Pasadena Star-News of August 19, 1925, gives a brief historical overview and captures the feeling of the area included in the Pasadena Playhouse Historic District prior to the development of the 1920s. The description centers on the site of the Star-News Building, a contributing structure located at 525 E. Colorado Boulevard:

Where the new home of the Star-News now stands was once a part of the Lake Vineyard Land and Water Company tract, subdivided in 1876 by B. D. Wilson. The village of Pasadena at that time lay entirely west of Fair Oaks Avenue, and the opening of 2500 acres of land east of Fair Oaks by Mr. Wilson in 1876 marked the first expansion of the community beyond the borders of the first colony tract.

Pasadena in these early days was closely surrounded by various kinds of ranches, citrus groves predominating. The site of the Star-News Building was once included in an orange orchard which bordered Colorado Street at that point.

A quarter of a century ago [1900], Colorado Street east of Marengo Avenue was one of the exclusive residential districts of the city and many fine homes were erected along the wide avenue, their attractive gardens adding to the beauty of this part of the city. About 25 years ago, Charles Frost, then president of the Los Angeles Pressed Brick Company, bought the present site of the Star-News and erected a large two-story house which was one of the "show places" of the community...The Frost home, a reminder of the days that were gone, was wrecked to make room for the new home of the Star-News.

According to this article, the location of the main post office at Garfield Avenue in September 1915 started the rapidly growing movement of larger business houses eastward. The Star-News reported in September, 1915, that on Colorado east of Marengo, "new stores, apartment houses, and office buildings have sprung up if not quite by magic at least surprisingly." This movement took on full force with the construction of the new Civic Center to the east of the Central

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Business District. The Civic Center Plan, approved by a bond issue in 1923, called for construction of three buildings: a city hall, library and civic auditorium. These joined the already existing Post Office, YMCA and YWCA. With the creation of the Civic Center, Pasadena's commercial center continued to move eastward along Colorado Boulevard.

Prior to 1922, Green Street, another important artery in the district, did not extend eastward beyond Los Robles Avenue. The City's effort to create a secondary east-west street which would provide improved traffic circulation in the downtown led to the extension of Green Street eastward from Euclid to Hill in 1923. This extension triggered the commercial growth of Green Street. "Green Street, since its reconstruction," reported the Star-News in 1926, has acquired a new importance and now carries a greatly increased traffic." One of the first buildings to be constructed was the Home Telephone Company building in 1925. Other buildings followed as Green Street became a fashionable retail and office area.

By 1931, as shown on a Sanborn Map, only a few of the old houses which formerly predominated in the district remained. The area was developed commercially with larger building footprints and no setbacks. The district by then had a variety of new active uses including two new movie theaters, the Pasadena Playhouse and new retail shops. Most of the significant buildings of the district existed by this year. Green Street had been completed and Colorado Boulevard was known as the "Street of a Thousand Palms" due to the Queen Palms that lined its length. A few years earlier, in 1926, the Star-News had reported: "Intensification of the use of business properties on Colorado Street is building up metropolitan characteristics on the street ... Also, Green Street, since its reconstruction, has acquired a new importance and now carries a greatly increased traffic...Eight new merchants in the past year between Los Robles and El Molino, the greatest number of any block on Colorado...[Real Estate] sales have been made within the past six months in almost every block on the street [with] the largest single sale at Los Robles, and the greatest number between Los Robles and El Molino."

In the subsequent decade the Queen Palms disappeared when Colorado Boulevard was widened. Herkimer and Hull were connected and renamed Union Street. The scale of new development in the surrounding area substantially increased, yet the scale and character of buildings which distinguish the Pasadena Playhouse Historic District boundaries remained substantially intact.

The movement of businesses eastward from the Central Business District during the important years of the early to mid-1920s was noted by businessmen and real estate developers, as well as journalists, as the events occurred. "Los Robles and Colorado continues to be the focal point of real estate and building activity in the business district...the entire south side of Colorado, between Los Robles and Oakland, is a scene of activity," reported the Star-News on August 19,

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1922. "Business building work near Colorado corner is now impressive. Many firms will be housed there."

A 1923 article by C.V. Sturdevant (developer of a major building on Colorado between Marengo and Euclid in 1909) is titled "East Colorado Street Has Set Rapid Pace for Other Sections in Development." The first-hand view is subtitled "Extraordinary growth of business and values on main thoroughfare is outlined by one of first to see its possibilities."

When I came to the country village of Pasadena in 1886, business was practically confined to Fair Oaks Avenue, and to Colorado Street between Raymond and Delacey with the general belief and prediction that Pasadena business would follow the line to Los Angeles, chiefly on South Fair Oaks with some overflow conceded to South Raymond.

Those who predicted that business would go east on Colorado beyond the Santa Fe track were considered visionary and impractical.

The fifty-foot lot on the south side of Colorado, just west of the corner of Marengo, was used as a nursery sales ground and went begging at \$50 per foot. A twenty-five foot lot, a part of which is included in the present post office site, sold only a few years ago at \$100 per foot.

The eastern movement of trade and business and the development of eastern Colorado Boulevard and the surrounding area throughout the 1920s had a substantial impact on the form and image of the community. D.M. Linnard, owner and developer of a site at Colorado and Madison expressed his optimistic view in "Would Build Shops For Business" (Pasadena Star-News, December 26, 1923):

I believe in a great future for Colorado Street as a boulevard of wonderful shops, a second Rue de la Paix that will be even more attractive to our own people than the famous fashion mart of Paris ...

One of the advantages of Colorado Street that will contribute to its popularity as one of the greatest streets of attractive shops in the country, is that it will be free from the congestion of a closely built-up business section. Churches with their spacious grounds and extensive frontage will aid the motor shoppers with ample parking space in business hours, and that is one of the first considerations with many in this day of difficult traffic problems.

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A street of wonderful shops, such as Colorado Street is destined to be, with the transition already well under way, will be attractive not only to residents of our city, but to the people of Los Angeles, surrounding towns, and to the winter and summer visitors, who will continue to come to Pasadena in added numbers -- many of them to become permanent residents -- and to contribute greatly to its growth and prosperity.

In commenting upon the development of East Colorado Street in 1923, Clifton J. Platt, organizer and president of the East Colorado Street-Lake Avenue Improvement Association, gave his personal history and opinion:

Establishing business in Pasadena in 1899 I began the study of the expansion of this city, realizing that here was a city bound to grow. That the cities of Southern California are growing, moving objects, no one doubts.

The business district of Pasadena was centered around Fair Oaks and Colorado Street. The district has expanded with the years. I purchased the old Brockway residence at Euclid and Colorado Street and built the first brick business building in that section, east of Garfield Avenue. In a few years this building was sold at a handsome profit.

This preface is only given as a brief history, showing that many years ago I had come to the conclusion that Pasadena's business area was moving eastward on account of natural causes. Colorado Street absorbed the larger part of that growth because it is the line of least resistance, and the growth [is] being distributed both north and south of this line. In other words, business goes to meet its patrons.

During the last few years new firms have opened many up-to-date stores east of Euclid Avenue. You will find more than a dozen fashionable establishments east of Los Robles Avenue, some of these handling exclusive lines of the finest merchandise. It is no longer necessary to go down town for all shopping, and the stores closer at hand are being well patronized.

All sections of Pasadena are expanding. It is a fact that a larger part of this growth is eastward and will continue eastward because of the extensive open areas of land in that direction inviting the homemaker thither. Pasadena is destined to be a big city.

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The eastward move of businesses is clearly visible in the case of the Warner Building, a contributing structure at 469-483 E. Colorado, built in 1927. The highly publicized opening of the attractive Art Deco building contained the following example: "Another concern in the Warner Building which has been kept on the move because of the changing trend of business in the shopping area of Pasadena is the Fred T. Huggins Company, shoes." This company started in 1901 at 149 E. Colorado, moved to 33 E. Colorado and then to 345 E. Colorado, before settling at 469 E. Colorado.

George A. Clark Co. opened a small shop in 1904 at 14 South Fair Oaks Avenue. "From its first location the company moved to 30 East Colorado Street and then as the trend of business moved eastward, 84 East Colorado Street was believed to be a more desirable location. After that the [shop] was located in the attractive store at 265 East Colorado Street, just west of the post office, but when Mr. Clark heard of the proposed Warner Building to be erected in the midst of what he considers the better shopping district the decision was made [to move once again.]"

By 1927, local businessman W.T. Jefferson made the suggestion to change the name of Pasadena's "most luminous bisecting artery" from Colorado Street to Colorado Boulevard. The idea of a "grand boulevard" as a continuous grand ceremonial route through the City achieved success partially through the concentration of cultural, retail and business establishments in the Pasadena Playhouse Historic District.

The Pasadena Playhouse

The Pasadena Playhouse is the oldest theatrical producing organization in the western United States. It dates back to 1916, when Gilmor Brown and his Savoy Stock Company moved into the "Old Savoy" on North Fair Oaks Avenue, replacing burlesque with the plays of Shakespeare, Ibsen, Barrie and Shaw. The Community Playhouse Association (later called Pasadena Playhouse Association) was incorporated October 17, 1918. When the Old Savoy was condemned by the Fire Department, the Community Players raised funds in a door-to-door campaign for purchase of land and the building of a new home.

According to the Playhouse architect, Elmer Grey, the construction of the new building was a strong matter of civic pride, which coincided with the building of the nearby Civic Center:

The association had a large membership with strong public sentiment in back of it, and its building enterprise was being watched by similar bodies in many parts of the country. Pasadena was also about to have a new Civic Center with a fine new

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City Hall, a Library and an Auditorium, and the enthusiasm aroused in connection with these enterprises also doubtless lent a contributory hand.

On May 18, 1925, the new Playhouse opened to the public. In 1928, with the world premiere of Eugene O'Neill's "Lazarus Laughed" gaining for it a position of prominence in theatrical circles, the Playhouse Association opened its School of Theatre Arts, and the first class was graduated in 1930. Many prominent professional actors and Hollywood stars achieved their early training at the Playhouse, which was the first American theater to have staged all of Shakespeare's 37 plays. In 1937, the Pasadena Playhouse was named by the California State Legislature as the "State Theatre of California." "The Playhouse...earned its global reputation for expanding the boundaries of the American theater," reported the New York Times upon the building's rehabilitation in 1986.

The Cultural Heritage Committee of the City of Pasadena, on August 20, 1969, recommended the Cultural Heritage Landmark designation of the Pasadena Playhouse as an institution of cultural importance. This was the first landmark designation approved by the City. The Playhouse was listed in the National Register in 1975 and as a Certified Rehabilitation Project in 1986.

In addition to its renowned cultural significance, the Playhouse had an important role in the financial success of the surrounding area. Conversely, the shops at the Playhouse would play a significant role in the financing of the building, as reported in the Star-News in "Community Playhouse Looming" (June 20, 1921):

Plans call for a frontage of about 160 feet, preferably on Colorado Street. Three stores on each side of a wide entrance into a spacious court, extending 200 feet back to the theater building, would help to finance the upkeep of the structure. Other store spaces, in two stories, facing the interior court, would add still more to the revenue.

The shops also clearly had a stylistic influence on further development in the Pasadena Playhouse Historic District, as California Southland reported upon the opening of the Playhouse:

On either side of the patio which opens toward the east are shops where the artists and craftsmen of the town will display their products, and those who cannot find room there are crowding this eastern section of Colorado Street and El Molino for store rooms. It is to be hoped that builders on nearby lots will keep to a two-story height and leave the decorative tower...to dominate. Pasadena can have this, her own original shopping district in the Pasadena style.

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Route 66 and the role of the automobile in shaping the district

Route 66, recognized as early as 1929 as a "famous highway" and the "Main Street of America", traversed Colorado Boulevard through the Pasadena Playhouse Historic District on its way through Pasadena. Route 66 was the major highway linking Chicago and Los Angeles before the age of the interstate highway system. Starting at the corner of Jackson Boulevard and Michigan Avenue in Chicago, it ran 2,200 miles to the corner of Santa Monica Boulevard and Ocean Avenue in Santa Monica. When it was completed in 1926, Route 66 entered Pasadena from the east on Foothill Boulevard, traveling west to Hill Street, turning south on Hill to Colorado Boulevard, west on Colorado to Fair Oaks Avenue, and then proceeding south on Fair Oaks Avenue into South Pasadena. With the completion of the Pasadena Freeway in 1941, the route was changed to enter Pasadena on the east at Colorado Boulevard, to proceed west on Colorado to Arroyo Parkway and then south on Arroyo Parkway into the Pasadena Freeway.

Ultimately, Route 66 became a symbol of American restlessness, mobility and opportunity. Memorialized in literature, song and folklore, hundreds of thousands of travelers got their "kicks on Route 66." Both the original route and the post-1941 Route 66 included the portion of Colorado Boulevard located within the Pasadena Playhouse Historic District. The automobile reinforced Colorado Boulevard as Pasadena's Main Street, with its commercial vitality and its image as a ceremonial corridor.

Both commercial and residential development in the Pasadena Playhouse Historic District were shaped by the automobile. By the 1920s most streets were seen primarily as arteries for motor vehicles. Prior to the auto, residential developments had to be located relatively close to public transportation lines. By the 1920s more people could fulfill the ideal of life in a single-family home in a neighborhood of detached houses, private yards and tree-lined streets. Thus, the new mobility combined with the fast encroachment of commercial uses contributed to the declining residential nature of the district. Those that stayed on lived in newer urban types of housing, exemplified by the cooperative Barcelona Apartments, or in the old mansions now subdivided into apartments. These residents enjoyed the urban amenities of the district as described with optimism in a 1924 brochure for the Barcelona Apartments: "Just one block from Colorado Street and close to all business, social, religious and amusement activities... There will be a decided increase in land values in the very near future."

Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, the hub of commercial activity shifted further eastward along Colorado Boulevard to Lake Avenue and the surrounding area. The presence of notable commercial and cultural institutions, however, assured the continuing significance of the Pasadena Playhouse Historic District. The district merits recognition and preservation for its major role in the urban development of the local community as well as its significant

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architectural assemblage, containing numerous individually distinguished buildings, many of which are by important local architects.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The district boundaries are indicated as the dotted line on the accompanying base map entitled "Pasadena Playhouse Historic District."

VERBAL BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary includes those contiguous properties which are considered contributing to the historical and architectural significance of the district.

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Pasadena Playhouse Historic District
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PHOTOGRAPHER: Barry Kyler, Thirtieth Street Architects, Inc.

DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH: June, 1993

LOCATION OF ORIGINAL NEGATIVE: Urban Conservation Archives, City of Pasadena, Ca.

DESCRIPTION OF VIEWS:

1. 469-483 E. Colorado Blvd., Looking north.
2. 489 E. Colorado Blvd., Looking north.
3. 525 E. Colorado Blvd., Looking northeast.
- 4a. There is no photograph number 4a.
- 4b. There is no photograph number 4b.
- 5a. 587-611 E. Colorado Blvd., Looking northeast.
- 5b. 36-44 N. Madison Ave., Looking east.
6. 592 E. Colorado Blvd., Looking west.
7. 520-528 E. Colorado Blvd., Looking southeast
8. 500 E. Colorado Blvd., Looking southwest.
9. 472-482 E. Colorado Blvd., Looking south.
10. 464-468 E. Colorado Blvd., Looking south.
11. 21-27 S. El Molino Ave., Looking west.
12. 35-39 S. El Molino Ave., Looking northwest.
13. Pasadena Playhouse Sign, Looking west.
14. 105 S. El Molino Ave., Looking west.

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15. 115 S. El Molino Ave., Looking west.
16. 127 S. El Molino Ave., Looking west.
17. 116 S. El Molino Ave., Looking east.
18. 561-575 E. Green St., Looking northwest.
19. 589 E. Green St., Looking northeast
20. 593-597 E. Green St., Looking north.
21. 601 E. Green St., Looking north.
22. 603 E. Green St., Looking north.
23. 605-609 E. Green St., Looking north.
24. 655 E. Green St., Looking northwest.
- 25a. 650 E. Green St., Looking south.
- 25b. 650 E. Green St., Looking south.
26. 600 E. Green St., Looking southeast.
- 27a. 550 E. Green St., Looking southeast.
- 27b. 550 E. Green St., Looking south.
28. 65 N. Madison Ave., Looking north.
29. 85 N. Madison Ave., Looking northwest.
30. 90-104 N. Madison Ave., Looking northeast.
31. 112 N. Madison Ave., Looking east.
32. 120 N. Madison Ave., Looking east.
33. 150 N. Madison Ave., Looking southeast.
34. 101 S. Madison Ave., Looking northwest.

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35. Looking northwest towards 400 block E. Colorado Blvd.
36. Looking southeast towards 400 block E. Colorado Blvd.
37. Looking southwest towards Pasadena Playhouse on S. El Molino Ave.
38. Looking northwest towards Pasadena Playhouse on S. El Molino Ave.
39. Looking northwest towards 600 block E. Green St.
40. Looking northeast towards 500 block S. Madison & 600 block E. Green St.
41. Looking southeast towards 500 block S. Oakland Ave.
42. Looking north towards 500 block S. Oakland Ave.

Non-Contributing Buildings

43. 497 E. Colorado Blvd., Looking north.
44. 505 E. Colorado Blvd., Looking north.
45. 592 E. Colorado Blvd., Looking south.
46. 610 E. Colorado Blvd., Looking south.
47. 615 E. Colorado Blvd., Looking north.
48. 572 E. Green St., Looking northwest.
49. 26 S. Madison Ave., Looking south.
50. 52 S. Oakland Ave., Looking northeast.

