

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 05001407

Date Listed: 4/21/2006

Sears, Roebuck & Company

Mail Order Building

Los Angeles

CA

Property Name

County

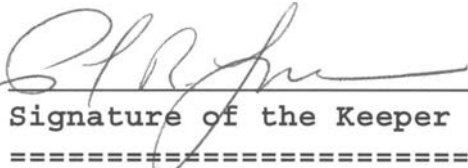
State

N/A

Multiple Name

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.



Signature of the Keeper

4/21/06

Date of Action

=====

Amended Items in Nomination:

U. T. M. Coordinates:

The corrected U. T. M coordinates for the Sears property should read:

A.	11	387080	3765460
B.	11	387480	3765320
C.	11	387440	3765000
D.	11	387120	3765120

[The polygon created by the UTM points generally encompasses the nominated parcel, but does not define the exact boundaries. The boundaries are presented more precisely in the verbal boundary description and sketch map.]

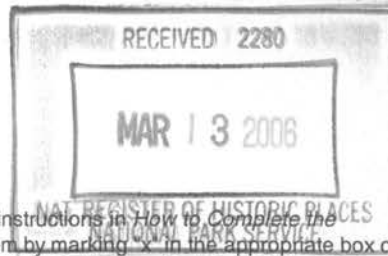
These clarifications were confirmed with the CA SHPO office.

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DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file  
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

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 **Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building**

other names/site number

2. Location

street & number **2650 East Olympic Boulevard** NA  not for publication

city or town **Los Angeles** NA  vicinity

state **California** code **CA** county **Los Angeles** code **039** zip code **90023**

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.)

*Stephen D. Mikesell*  
Signature of certifying official Title

*3/10/06*  
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 of the Keeper

Date of Action

*GP Ryan*

*4/21/06*

**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	
1		Buildings
		Sites
		Structures
		Objects
1		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**

0 \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Function or Use**

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

COMMERCE/TRADE – Department Store, Warehouse

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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

COMMERCE/TRADE – Department Store, Warehouse

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

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

MODERN MOVEMENT – Art Deco

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
 (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

\_\_\_\_\_

roof Concrete & Synthetics

\_\_\_\_\_

walls Concrete

\_\_\_\_\_

other \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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

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Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building  
Los Angeles County, California

The Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building is located on a 22-acre parcel of land at the southwest corner of Olympic Boulevard and Soto Street. Constructed of reinforced concrete, the building has an irregular plan and a flat roof. A wide two-story base surrounds the building's nine-story mass. The tall central tower divides the primary elevation. The tower, steeped profile, and cast stone ornamentation around the entrances are all evocative of the Art Deco style. The two-story sections on the front (north) facade, as well as portions on the east and west, were covered with a flat-panel cladding system in 1964. A series of additions were made to the rear of the building between 1929 and 1964. Nevertheless, the building continues to retain sufficient integrity to convey its feeling, association, location, setting, materials, and design.

The original portion of the building has a rectangular shape with an east-west orientation. The central tower provides a strong vertical emphasis to the mostly nine-story mass of the building. Its form and ornamentation are the focal point of the design. Windows are stacked vertically in two columns and run up the center of the tower on all four sides. As the tower rises to the top it steps back and is vertically articulated with narrow bas-relief panels. The two wings on either side of the tower are identical in design. Along the primary elevation these wings step down to eight stories. Cast stone elements and other formed concrete decorations mark the roof parapets.

The retail store is located in the lower two stories of the north end of the building, which fronts Olympic Boulevard. This portion of the building was remodeled in 1964. Originally it was designed in an A-B-C-B-A pattern with the main entrance located at the base of the tower. The design of the main entrance repeated the design of the tower in that it stood out from the rest of the base. Massive piers to each side stepped up as they rose vertically. Bas-relief panels accented the top of each pier and three more were positioned above the side-by-side doorways. This set of doorways was framed by bas-relief work. Above the doorways were multi-paned windows. The middle bays were more simply detailed the outer bays, which featured ornamentation similar to that used on the tower and main entrance. Secondary entrances were located on the east and west sides, and were probably more heavily used than the main entrance as they were related to the surface parking lots on each side of the building. The fenestration on all floors consisted of large metal-frame industrial windows set in large horizontal openings between the piers. Many of the windows contained paired sets of operating casement sashes. Metal fire escapes climbed the building on the east and west elevations, and a series of basement level loading docks characterized the south elevation. Elevators used by the mail order departments were located at the southeast and west corners.

Additions were planned for the south end of the building as the business grew and that turned out to be the case. The first addition was made in 1929. The existing Art Deco style entrance on the west elevation dates from this period. Other additions followed in 1940, 1959, and 1964. The 1929 and 1940 additions are illustrated on the 1950 Sanborn Map in section 10 page 15 of this application. Each



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Section number 7 Page 2

Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building  
Los Angeles County, California

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addition consisted of reinforced concrete construction, but the engineering was different in each phase. Steel-framed casement windows continued to be used but were slightly different in each addition. In some cases, window openings on the side and rear additions have been closed. The 1940 alterations also included the existing signage on top of the tower.

The upper floors of the north end and all of the south end of the building was used by the mail order department. Many of the upper floors retain the open floor plans. Most remain unaltered. The reinforced concrete construction that characterizes the building, including the structural columns and solid floor slabs, is visible throughout the interior. The original building features mushroom-shaped columns and solid floor slabs, while the additions employ the more traditional use of square columns and concrete beams and girders.

On the east and west sides of the building are surface parking lots. On the rear, the loading dock is set just off 12<sup>th</sup> Street. There are a few mature specimen trees, mostly *Chorisia speciosa* along the front (north) elevation. They do not appear to have been part of a designed historic landscape plan. The property is otherwise void of plant life.

While the 1959 and 1964 rear additions do not detract from the significance of the building, they are not character-defining features. In fact, it was anticipated that additions would be required as business grew. The changes to the front of the building are incompatible with the historic architecture, but reversible. Much of the original material remains underneath the existing cladding, as it was integral to the structural system of the building. The existing cladding consists of pre-cast concrete aggregate panels with steel frames. The use, layout, and circulation system in this part of the building were not changed. The main entrance on Olympic Boulevard and the side entrances off the adjacent parking lots continue to function as they did originally. However, the doorways have been replaced and they were reclad with travertine. Given the massive scale of the structure, the unaltered state of the upper floors, the reversibility of the 1964 changes, the building continues to retain sufficient integrity to reflect its historic significance.

**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.)

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE

**Period of Significance**

1927-1955

**Significant Dates**

1927 - building constructed

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

NA

**Cultural Affiliation**

NA

**Architect/Builder**

Nimmons, George C., architect

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

(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:

\_\_\_\_\_

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Los Angeles County, California

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The Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A. The building is historically significant in the context of commerce for its strong association with Sears, Roebuck & Company. Perhaps no other business institution in the United States is as responsible for ushering in the era of mass consumption as Sears, Roebuck & Company. Originally constructed in 1927, the Los Angeles building housed Sears, Roebuck & Company's warehouse, distribution, and merchandising facilities for the entire southwestern United States, as well as one of the company's early retail stores. As such, the Los Angeles building played a critical role in the success of the company. Although the company continues to occupy the retail store, the period of significance has been arbitrarily set at 1955 because nothing of exceptional importance occurred after that time. Like most commercial structures, the Los Angeles building has seen alterations and additions over the years. Yet the original building is easily envisioned without its later appendages and continues to convey its role in the commercial history of the nation.

Sears, Roebuck & Company was synonymous with the surge in the mass consumer market in America during the early and mid-twentieth century. Established in 1886 by Richard Sears, the company became one of the largest mail-order businesses in the country and the seventh largest corporation in the world. By 1927, Sears provided goods to eleven million customers, equaling one out of every three American families, and distributed over seventy-five million catalogs per year.

Julius Rosenwald, who assumed operation of the business in 1895, leaving Richard Sears to market the company's products, is largely attributed with the success of this mail-order empire. Under Rosenwald, Sears came to encompass all the processes of a capitalistic enterprise, including the processes of extraction, fabrication, distribution, and consumption. He sought to offer rural customers a broad range of products, and developed a new business ethic that promoted customer satisfaction. The company slogan, "Satisfaction Guaranteed or Your Money Back," for example, reflected this new philosophy. A new emphasis was also placed on economies of scale and the streamlining of product distribution, as business expanded and a new operating infrastructure was created.

The infrastructure necessary to sustain the company's expansion rested upon ten (later twelve) mail-order centers strategically located across the country. Constructed between 1906 and 1928, these centers handled the processing and distribution of orders from customers, and were specifically located so that most customer orders could be filled in three to four days. In these buildings was captured the scale and ambition of the country's rapid expansion and improving standard of living. They remain architectural centerpieces in the neighborhoods they occupy and some are, to this day, among the largest structures in their respective regions.

During the late 1920s as more people began to live and work in American cities, a shift emerged in the consumer market as retail stores eclipsed the success of the older mail-order businesses. To capitalize on

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Los Angeles County, California

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these changes, Sears, Roebuck & Company hired General Robert Wood in 1924. Formerly employed by Montgomery Ward, the company's major competitor, Wood launched a campaign to pursue new retail markets found in the rising American working class.

Wood built upon the success of Sears' established mail-order business by building a network of retail stores around the existing mail-order centers and distribution infrastructure. In fact, many of the mail-order centers constructed in the late 1920s, including the one in Los Angeles, incorporated retail stores in their original design as a result. Wood's strategy was a success. Between 1925 and 1927, twenty-two Sears' stores opened in major United States cities. In 1929, there were three hundred twenty-four stores, and by 1932 the company's retail sales surpassed those of the mail-order sales.

Sears, Roebuck & Company sold most of its mail-order centers in a wave of restructuring starting in the 1980s. Only the Los Angeles distribution center continued to function, while the centers in Philadelphia and Kansas City were demolished. In 1994 the company left the mail-order business discontinuing the publication of its catalog. While the warehouse space in the Los Angeles building became obsolete, the retail store continues to operate.

The Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building in Los Angeles merits listing in the National Register as the only large mail-order plant constructed by Sears, Roebuck & Company in the southwestern United States. It was the seventh mail-order center built by the company and was only the second constructed on the west coast, the other being located in Seattle. The facility provided mail-order service to markets in California, Arizona, Utah, Nevada, western New Mexico, and Hawaii, as well as parts of Asia. It also contained the company's twelfth retail store and one of the few built in conjunction with a mail-order center.

The only comparable building in California to the subject building was the Montgomery Ward Building in Oakland. It was an eight-story, 950,000 square-foot store and mail-order warehouse of reinforced concrete frame and slab floors which was originally constructed in 1923. It was thereafter expanded by the addition of connected warehouse buildings and a multi-story parking garage. It became the first branch of Montgomery Ward Company in California, and distributed merchandise throughout the western states, much of it manufactured by local enterprises.

The history of Montgomery Ward Company is similar to that of Sears, Roebuck & Company. In 1872 Aaron Montgomery Ward, a traveling salesman created a single sheet catalogue with one hundred sixty-three items that customers could order through the mail. By 1883, the catalogue had expanded to ten thousand items covering two hundred forty pages. Like Sears, the company entered the retail business in the 1920s, opening its first store in Plymouth, Indiana in 1926. By 1928 the company had two hundred forty-four stores. In 1930, Sears proposed a merger of the two companies, but Montgomery Ward

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Section number 8    Page                    5    Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building  
Los Angeles County, California

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Company declined the offer. The company's position began to shift in the 1960s as Sears, and J.C. Penney began to dominate the market. Later those companies would see their positions decline as the likes of K-mart, Target, and Wal-Mart expanded. The catalogue was discontinued in 1985 so that the company could focus on its retail stores.

The following year the company ceased operations in Oakland and vacated the building. Plagued with financial problems during the 1990s, the company filed for bankruptcy in 2000. The site in Oakland was eventually sold to the school district, and the building was demolished in 2001 after a lengthy legal battle to save it.

While the Los Angeles building does not appear to be eligible under Criterion C, its architectural history is worth noting. The Los Angeles building was one of the ten original mail-order distribution centers commissioned by Julius Rosenwald and designed by George C. Nimmons. A native of Wooster, Ohio, Nimmons began his career in the Chicago office of Burnham & Root, where he worked as a draftsman for ten years. At the age of twenty-eight, Nimmons served as Superintendent of Buildings for the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition under the direction of Daniel Burnham, his employer who was appointed Director of Works.

In 1897, Nimmons formed a partnership with William K. Fellows. They designed several large commercial buildings in Chicago, including the first Sears, Roebuck & Company mail-order center in 1906. Following completion of the Sears' Chicago center, Nimmons and Fellows received commissions to design additional mail-order centers.

Nimmon's partnership with Fellows lasted until 1910. From 1910 until 1933, the architect remained in private practice as principal of the George Nimmons & Company and subsequently the firm of Nimmons & Company. He then partnered with George W. Carr and Clark C. Wright until his retirement in 1945. Nimmons is responsible for a large number of buildings found across the county. Examples of his work include the Reid Murdoch Building (Chicago 1913-14), Lake Shore Place (Chicago 1924-25), the Sears, Roebuck & Company mail order plants in Chicago, Dallas, Seattle, Atlanta, Philadelphia, Kansas City, Minneapolis, Memphis, and Boston, and numerous other Sears, Roebuck & Company stores and facilities. The four-building complex in Chicago (1905-06) served as the company's headquarters until 1973. It also included the printing plant that for many years produced the Sears Catalog.

All of the mail order centers share a common design vocabulary, which isn't surprising as the same architect designed them for the same purpose. A central tower flanked by lower masses is found in all of the buildings. The older buildings, like the one in Chicago, were finished with red brick with stone trim. The later buildings, like the one in Los Angeles, adopted the Art Deco style and were either finished in



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Los Angeles County, California

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concrete or stucco. Two of the ten – those in Philadelphia and Kansas City – have been demolished. Only the ones in Chicago and Boston have been listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Similar to other structures designed by Nimmons, the function of the Los Angeles building determined its design. The lower two stories, which housed the 57,600 square foot retail store, provided a wide base out of which the mass of the structure was erected. The retail store required a much larger floor area than the mail order departments housed in the rest of the building. Similarly, the mail-order departments were best arranged over each other in a multi-storied configuration. This design provided light for offices in each level and interior space for the movement of merchandise throughout the building. The 226-foot tower was likewise designed to house a large water tank that supplied the building's gravity-fed sprinkler system.

One of the most significant aspects of the building is its reinforced concrete construction. A relatively new use for large commercial and industrial buildings in the 1920s, reinforced concrete construction reduced the overall cost of constructing large buildings and provided architects with more freedom to manipulate the form and ornamentation of their designs. Using reinforced concrete, the structural load-bearing capacity of a building could be carried in floor slabs rather than in more traditional beams and girders. This innovation saved on overhead room and reduced the floor-to-floor heights required in multi-stories buildings. The reinforced concrete construction also provided the means to ornament the building with elaborate Art Deco style details without employing other materials.



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Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building  
Los Angeles County, California

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Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building  
Los Angeles County, California

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National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Store,  
Boston, Massachusetts, listed 1/7/1991,

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property 12.3 acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	11	387300	3765300	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 **Teresa Grimes** \_\_\_\_\_organization \_\_\_\_\_ date **June 30, 2005** \_\_\_\_\_street & number **4211 Glenalbyn** \_\_\_\_\_ telephone **323-221-0942** \_\_\_\_\_city or town **Los Angeles** \_\_\_\_\_ state **CA** \_\_\_\_\_ zip code **90065** \_\_\_\_\_**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 **10309 Folsom Blvd. L.P., attn: Mark Weinstein** \_\_\_\_\_street & number **1640 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 112** \_\_\_\_\_ telephone **310-395-3430** \_\_\_\_\_city or town **Los Angeles** \_\_\_\_\_ state **CA** \_\_\_\_\_ zip code **90401** \_\_\_\_\_**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  
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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Sears, Roebuck & Co. Mail Order Building  
Los Angeles County, CA

Section number 10\_ Page 9a

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### Geographical Data

#### Verbal Boundary Description:

Assessor's Parcel Number 5183-012-004 corresponding to Tract #9410 por of Lot 1 and Tract #6783 por of Lots 2, 3, 4 and 5 of Block 8; also as that land bounded by 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Soto Street, Olympic Boulevard, and Rio Vista Ave. in Los Angeles and comprising 12.3 acres; as shown on the accompanying Sketch Map.

#### Boundary Justification

The legal lots the building historically and currently occupies.

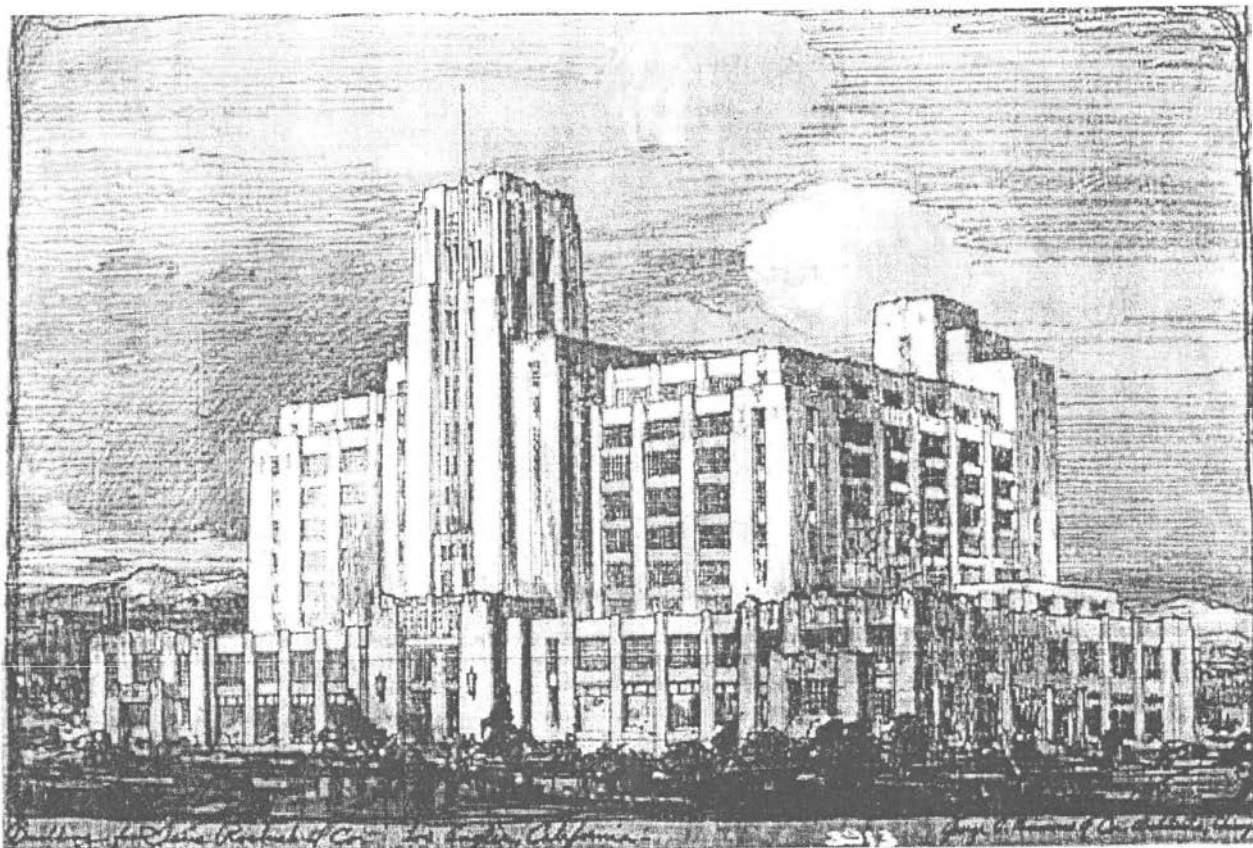
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National Park Service

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Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building  
Los Angeles County, California

HISTORIC RENDERING  
Los Angeles Central Library Photo Collection  
No Date



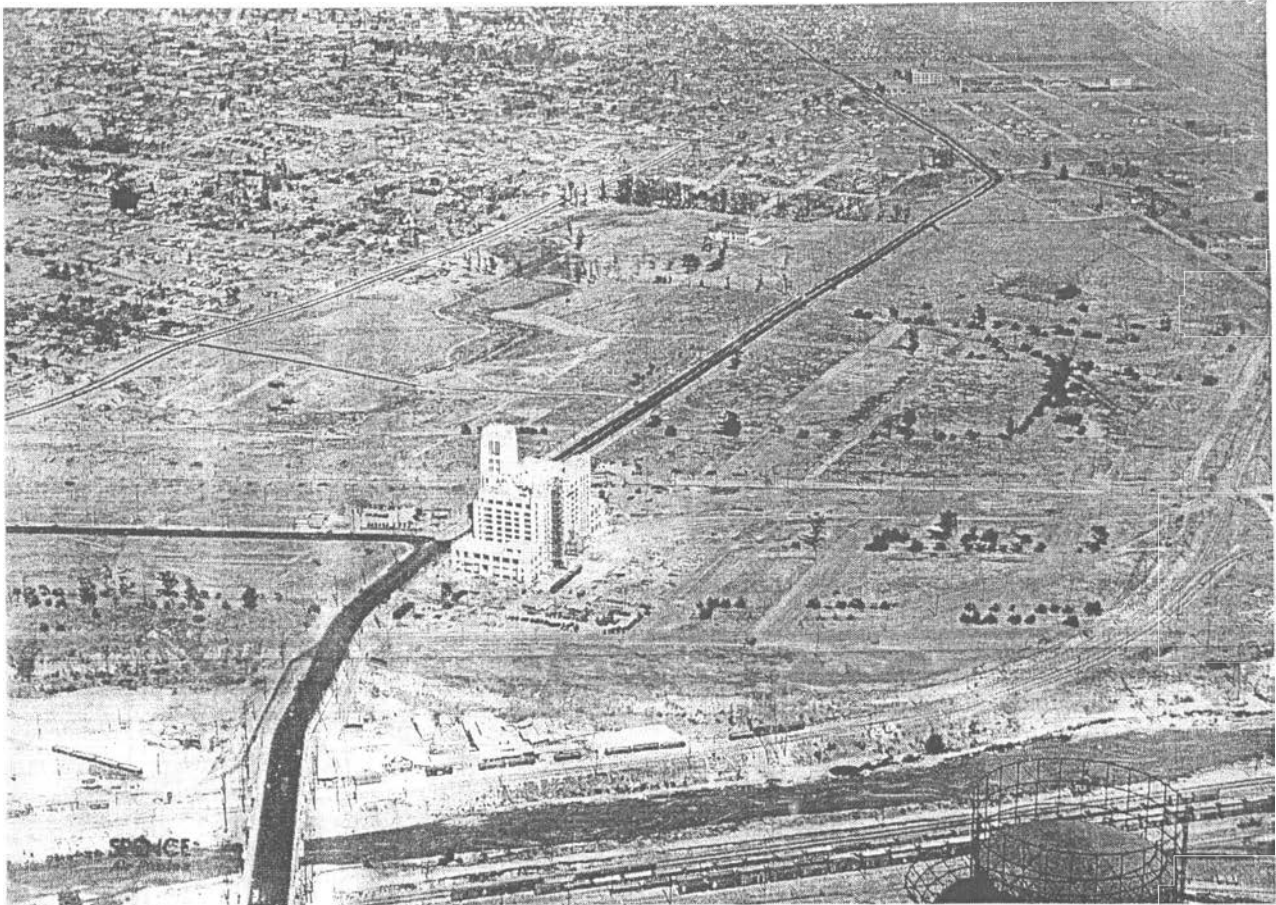
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Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building  
Los Angeles County, California

AERIAL  
Sears, Roebuck & Company Archives  
1927



LOS ANGELES MAIL ORDER -- 1927

Gross Area - 383,462 sq. ft.



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Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building  
Los Angeles County, California

ENTRANCE  
Sears, Roebuck & Company Archive  
1927



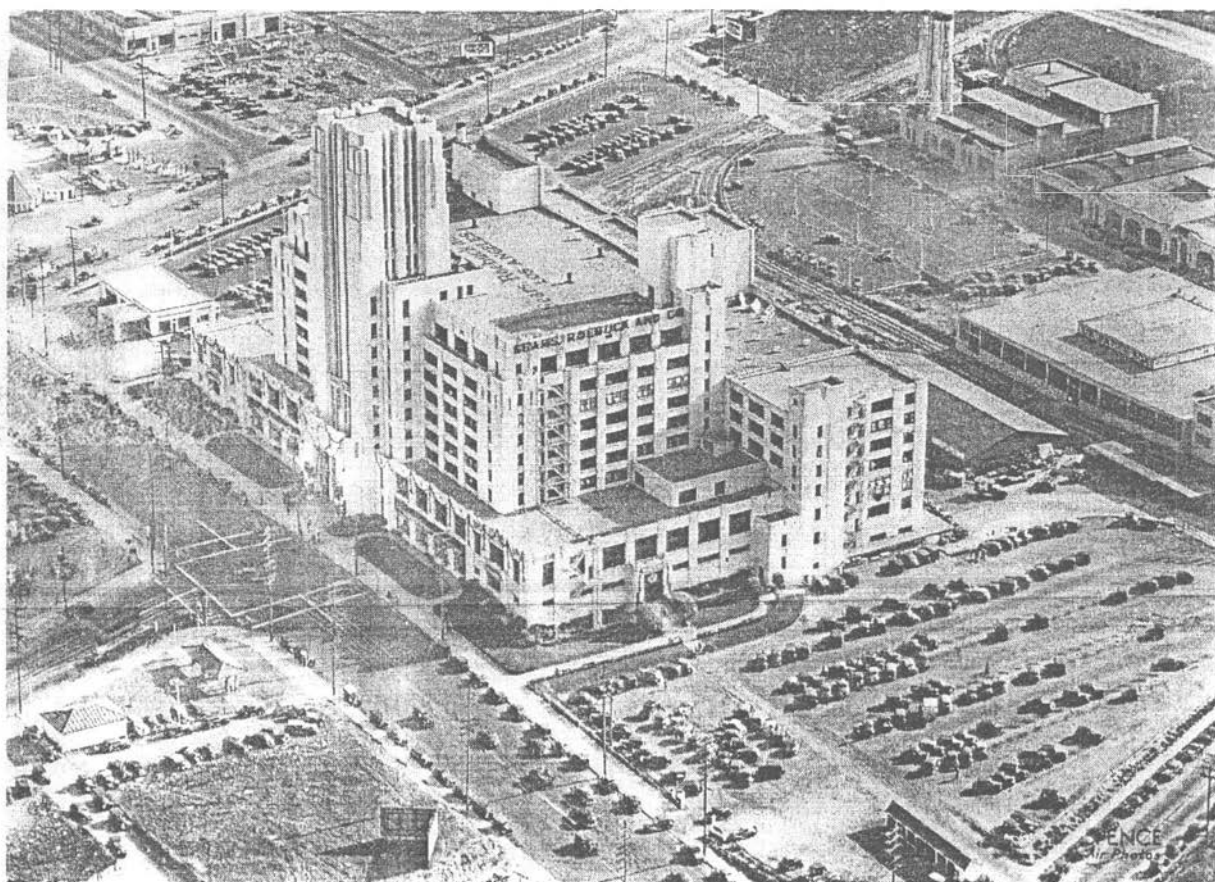
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Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building  
Los Angeles County, California

AERIAL  
Sears, Roebuck & Company Archive  
1936



1936

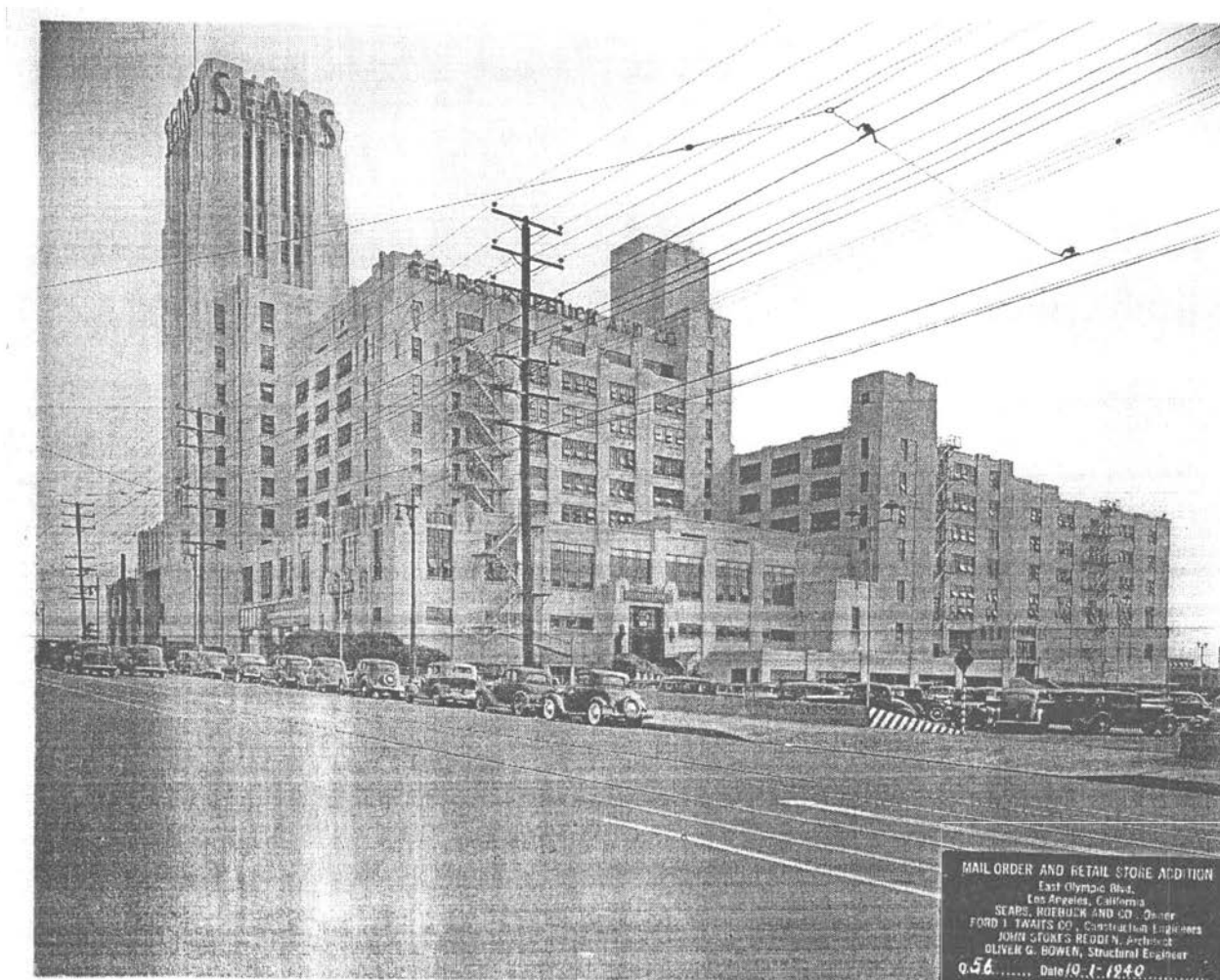
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 13

Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building  
Los Angeles County, California

AERIAL  
Sears, Roebuck & Company Archive  
1940



MAIL ORDER AND RETAIL STORE ADDITION  
East Olympic Blvd.  
Los Angeles, California  
SEARS, ROEBUCK AND CO. - Owner  
FORD I. TRAVIS CO. - Construction Engineers  
JOHN STUMPS REEDEN, Architect  
OLIVER G. BOWEN, Structural Engineer  
056 ..... Date 10-1-1940 .....

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 14

Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building  
Los Angeles County, California

AERIAL  
Sears, Roebuck & Company Archive  
1953



1953

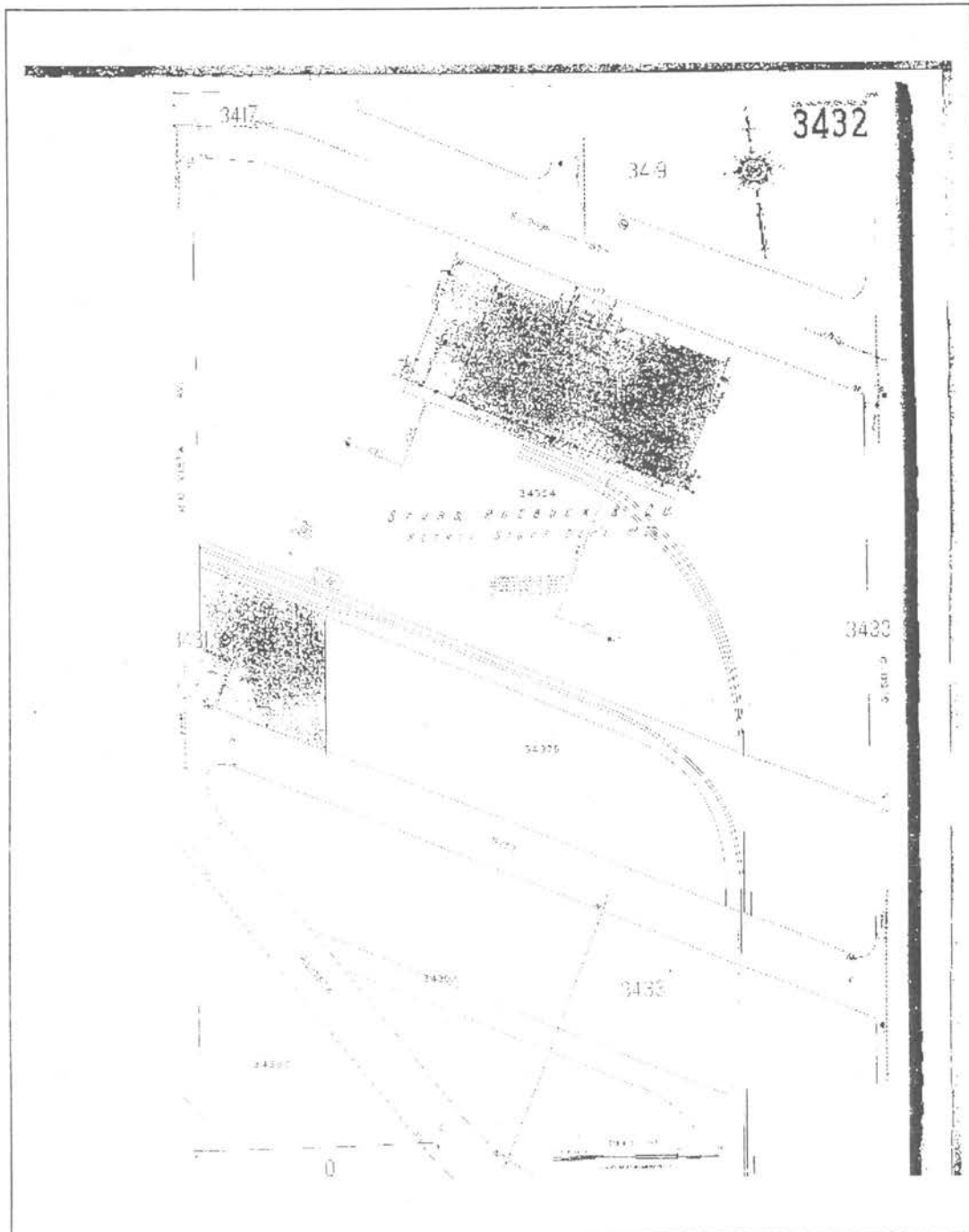
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 15

Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building  
Los Angeles County, California

SANBORN MAP  
1928





United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 16

Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building  
Los Angeles County, California

SANBORN MAP  
1950





United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 17

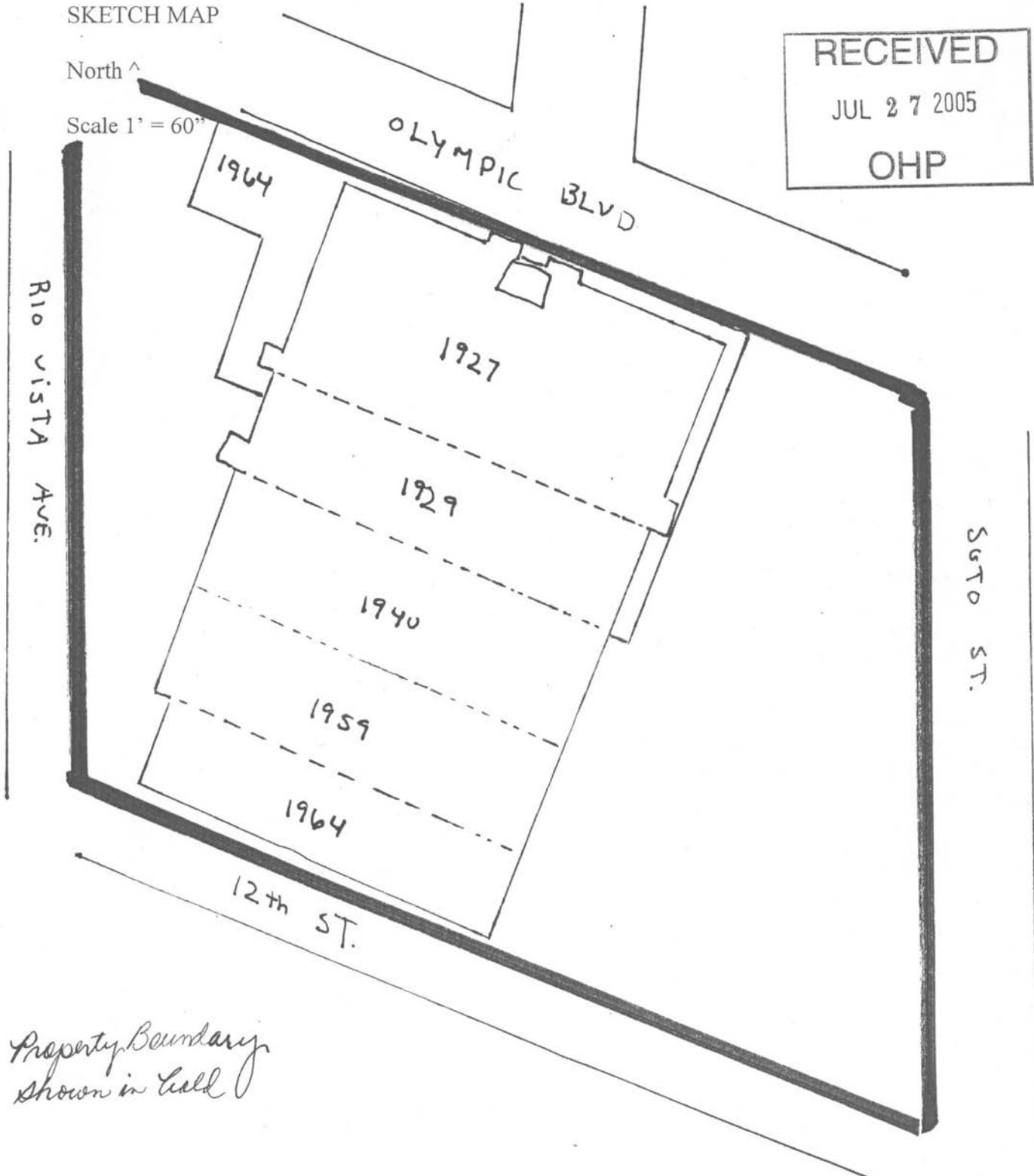
Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building  
Los Angeles County, California

SKETCH MAP

North ^

Scale 1" = 60'

RECEIVED  
JUL 27 2005  
OHP



*Property Boundary  
shown in bold*









CUSTOMER PICK UP

METAL STORE

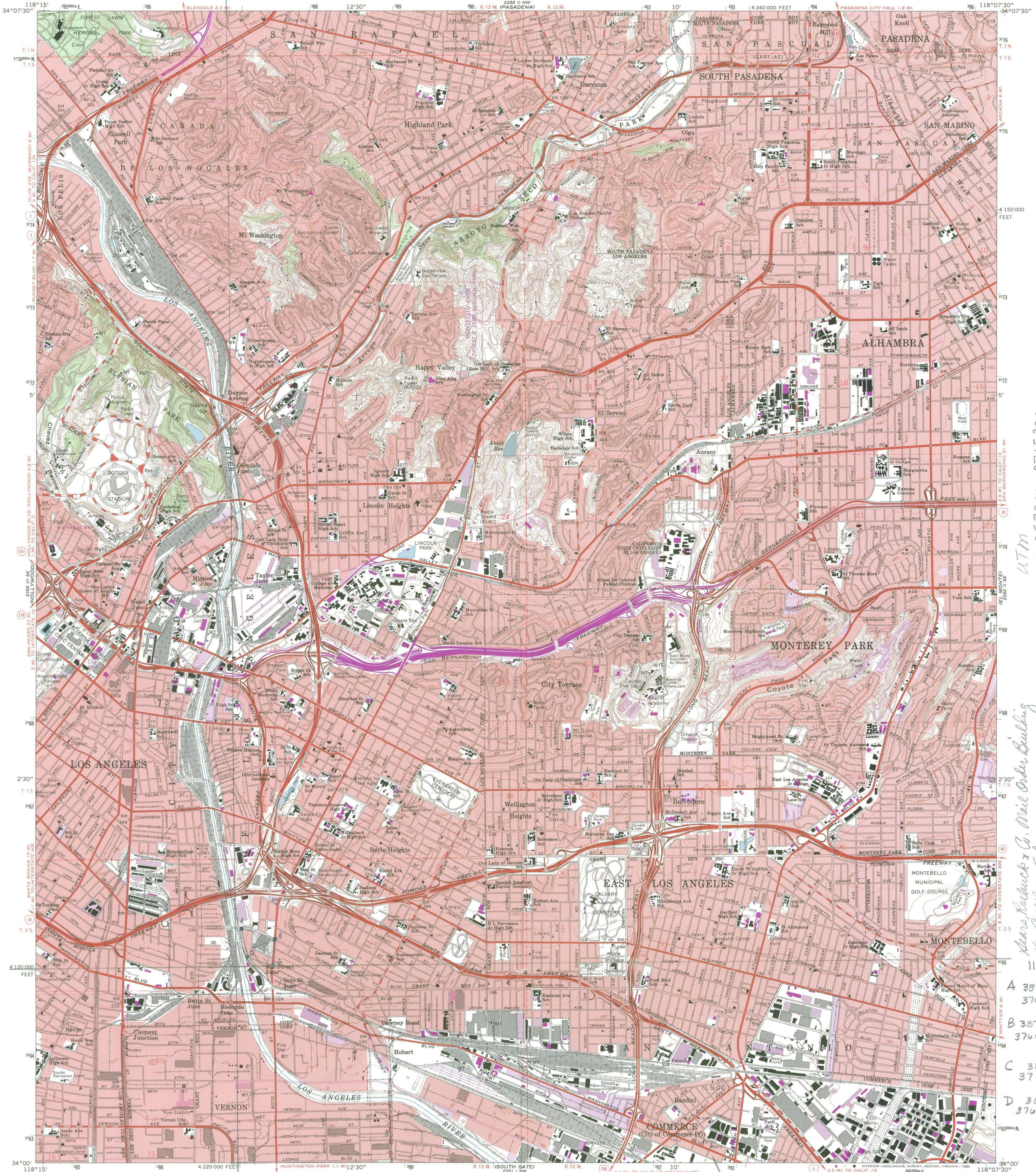
FIRE LANE NO PARKING

PEDESTRIAN CROSSING

SEAP







UTM  
11-387300 - 3765300

*Stearns, Beckwith & Co. Mail Order Building  
Los Angeles, CA  
Los Angeles County*

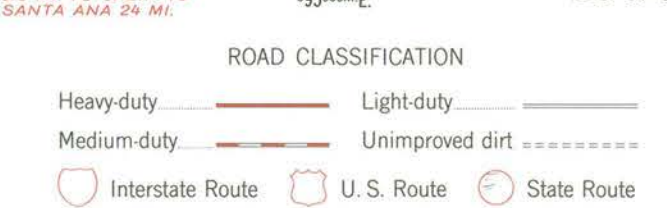
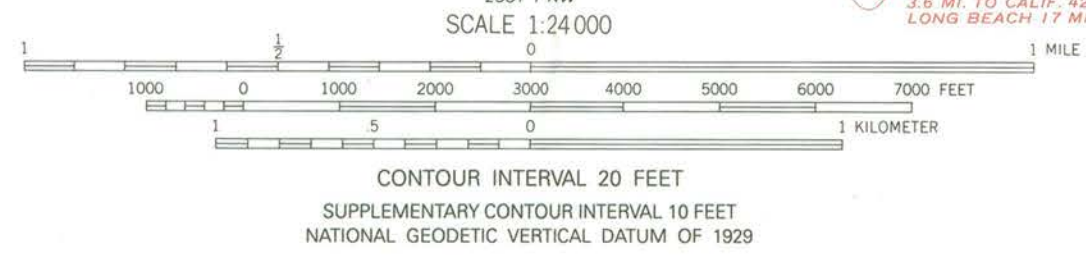
- A 397 080  
3765450
- B 387 480  
3765320
- C 387 420  
3765000
- D 387 120  
3765120

Produced by the United States Geological Survey in cooperation with California Department of Water Resources  
Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA and Los Angeles City and County  
Compiled from aerial photographs taken 1964. Field checked 1966  
North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27). Projection and 10 000-foot ticks: California Coordinate System, zone 7 (Lambert Conformal Conic)  
Blue 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator ticks, zone 11  
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 27 and NAD 83 for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geodetic Survey NADCON software  
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map  
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown  
A portion of the south half of this map lies within a subsidence area  
Vertical control based on the latest available adjustment

Produced by the United States Geological Survey in cooperation with California Department of Water Resources  
Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA and Los Angeles City and County  
Compiled from aerial photographs taken 1964. Field checked 1966  
North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27). Projection and 10 000-foot ticks: California Coordinate System, zone 7 (Lambert Conformal Conic)  
Blue 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator ticks, zone 11  
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 27 and NAD 83 for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geodetic Survey NADCON software  
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Produced by the United States Geological Survey in cooperation with California Department of Water Resources  
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A portion of the south half of this map lies within a subsidence area  
Vertical control based on the latest available adjustment

Produced by the United States Geological Survey in cooperation with California Department of Water Resources  
Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA and Los Angeles City and County  
Compiled from aerial photographs taken 1964. Field checked 1966  
North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27). Projection and 10 000-foot ticks: California Coordinate System, zone 7 (Lambert Conformal Conic)  
Blue 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator ticks, zone 11  
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 27 and NAD 83 for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geodetic Survey NADCON software  
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map  
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown  
A portion of the south half of this map lies within a subsidence area  
Vertical control based on the latest available adjustment



LOS ANGELES, CA  
3411B-A2-TF-024  
1966  
PHOTOREVISED 1981  
MINOR REVISION 1994  
DMA 2352 II SW-SERIES V895

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

Revisions shown in purple and woodland compiled from aerial photographs taken 1978 and other source data  
This information not field checked. Map edited 1981  
Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas



# National Register of Historic Places

## Note to the record

Additional Documentation: 2016

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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.

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building (AMENDMENT)

Other names/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of related multiple property listing: \_\_\_\_\_

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

## 2. Location

Street & number: 2650 East Olympic Boulevard

City or town: Los Angeles State: CA County: Los Angeles

Not For Publication:  N/A Vicinity:  N/A

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

national  statewide  local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A  B  C  D

	Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer	8/9/16
Signature of certifying official/Title:		Date
<u>California Office of Historic Preservation</u>		
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government		

In my opinion, the property <input type="checkbox"/> meets <input type="checkbox"/> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
_____	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
_____	
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building  
(AMENDMENT)  
Name of Property

Los Angeles County,  
California  
County and State

---

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

  
Signature of the Keeper

9.26.16  
Date of Action

---

#### 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

Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building  
(AMENDMENT)  
Name of Property

Los Angeles County,  
California  
County and State

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>1</u>	_____	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 1

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE – Department Store, Warehouse

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

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE – Department Store, Warehouse

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

Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building  
(AMENDMENT)  
Name of Property

Los Angeles County,  
California  
County and State

---

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT – Art Deco

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---

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: concrete

Foundation Concrete

Roof Concrete & Synthetics

Walls Concrete

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

---

### Summary Paragraph

See continuation sheets



Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building  
(AMENDMENT)  
Name of Property

Los Angeles County,  
California  
County and State

---

**Narrative Description**

**See continuation sheets**

Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building  
(AMENDMENT)  
Name of Property

Los Angeles County,  
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.

### Criteria Considerations

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

- 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building  
(AMENDMENT)  
Name of Property

Los Angeles County,  
California  
County and State

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1927-1966  
1927-1955 (original from nomination)  
1955-1966 (proposed in this amendment)

**Significant Dates**

1927 – building constructed  
1929 – addition  
1936 – addition  
1940 – addition  
1945 – addition  
1959 – addition  
1964 – addition

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

1927: Nimmons, George C., original architect  
1936: Young, G. B.  
1940: Redden, John Stokes

Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building  
(AMENDMENT)  
Name of Property

Los Angeles County,  
California  
County and State

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

**See continuation sheets**

---

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

**See continuation sheets**

Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building  
(AMENDMENT)  
Name of Property

Los Angeles County,  
California  
County and State

---

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

**See bibliography included in the 2005 National Register Nomination and the Part I application.**

---

### 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 # \_\_\_\_\_  
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

### Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other  
Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

---

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acree of Property** 12.3 acres

Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building  
(AMENDMENT)  
Name of Property

Los Angeles County,  
California  
County and State

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |                               |                               |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Latitude: <b>34.024387</b> | Longitude: <b>-118.221179</b> |
| 2. Latitude:                  | Longitude:                    |
| 3. Latitude:                  | Longitude:                    |
| 4. Latitude:                  | Longitude:                    |

**Or**

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

- |                    |                        |                            |
|--------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Zone: <b>11</b> | Easting: <b>387300</b> | Northing: <b>3765300 3</b> |
| 2. Zone:           | Easting:               | Northing: <b>4</b>         |
| 3. Zone:           | Easting:               | Northing:                  |
| 4. Zone:           | Easting :              | Northing:                  |

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Assessor's Parcel Number 5169-010-006 corresponding to Tract #9410 por of Lot 1 and Tract #6738 por of Lots 2, 3 ,4 and 5 of Block 8; also as that land bounded by 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Soto Street, Olympic Boulevard, and Rio Vista Ave. in Los Angeles and comprising 12.3



Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building  
(AMENDMENT)

Los Angeles County,  
California  
County and State

Name of Property

acres; as shown on the accompanying parcel map.<sup>1</sup> The boundary of the property is unchanged from the original nomination and listing.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries correspond to the parcel and lots the building historically has occupied.

---

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Robert Chattel with Justin Greving, Laura G. Carias, and Kristen Hayashi  
organization: Chattel, Inc.  
street & number: 13417 Ventura Boulevard  
city or town: Sherman Oaks state: CA zip code: 91423  
e-mail robert@chattel.us  
telephone: 818-788-7954  
date: 08/13/15

---

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

**Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.) \

**Photographs**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

---

<sup>1</sup> This boundary description was taken from the 2005 National Register nomination; however, the assessor's parcel number has been corrected. Refer to the "Purpose of Amendment" section of this document for further information on the correction to the assessor's parcel number for the subject property.

Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building  
(AMENDMENT)  
Name of Property

Los Angeles County,  
California  
County and State

## Photo Log

Name of Property: Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building

City or Vicinity: Los Angeles (Boyle Heights)

County: Los Angeles

State: CA

Photographer: Robert Chattel

Date Photographed: July 16, 2015

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

0001 / 1 of 46: East elevation, view west

0002 / 2 of 46: South elevation (left) and east elevation (right), view northwest

0003 / 3 of 46: South elevation, view north

0004 / 4 of 46: West elevation (left) and south elevation (right), view northeast

0005 / 5 of 46: West elevation, view east

0006 / 6 of 46: North elevation, view south

0007 / 7 of 46: East elevation, view northwest

0008 / 8 of 46: East elevation entrance, view west

0009 / 9 of 46: West elevation, view east

0010 / 10 of 46: Detail view of 1970 alteration showing attachment of the screen façade, view north

0011 / 11 of 46: West elevation entrance, view east

0012 / 12 of 46: South elevation, view northwest

0013 / 13 of 46: First floor retail space, view southeast

0014 / 14 of 46: First floor boiler room, view northwest

0015 / 15 of 46: Second floor lobby, view southeast

0016 / 16 of 46: Second floor retail space, view southeast

0017 / 17 of 46: Second floor retail space, view southwest

0018 / 18 of 46: Second floor, view southeast

0019 / 19 of 46: Third floor, view southwest

0020 / 20 of 46: Third floor, view west

0021 / 21 of 46: Fourth floor, view northwest

0022 / 22 of 46: Fourth floor, view southeast

0023 / 23 of 46: Fifth floor, view southwest

0024 / 24 of 46: Sixth floor, view northwest

0025 / 25 of 46: Sixth floor, view south

0026 / 26 of 46: Sixth floor restroom, view south

0027 / 27 of 46: Seventh floor, view east

0028 / 28 of 46: Eighth floor, view north

0029 / 29 of 46: Eighth floor office, view west

0030 / 30 of 46: Eighth floor restroom, view north

0031 / 31 of 46: Eighth floor, view northwest

0032 / 32 of 46: Ninth floor, view north

Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building  
(AMENDMENT)

Los Angeles County,  
California  
County and State

Name of Property

- 0033 / 33 of 46: Tenth floor, view northeast
- 0034 / 34 of 46: Tenth floor, detail of package chute, view north
- 0035 / 35 of 46: Tenth floor elevator lobby, view north
- 0036 / 36 of 46: Tenth floor, view northwest
- 0037 / 37 of 46: Tenth floor, view east
- 0038 / 38 of 46: Typical stair
- 0039 / 39 of 46: Typical stair
- 0040 / 40 of 46: Central tower, eleventh floor (subfloor), view east
- 0041 / 41 of 46: Central tower, thirteenth floor mechanical room, view west
- 0042 / 42 of 46: Central tower, thirteenth floor, view west
- 0043 / 43 of 46: Central tower, thirteenth floor stairwell, view west
- 0044 / 44 of 46: Central tower, fourteenth floor, water tank, view southeast
- 0045 / 45 of 46: Rooftop, detail of tower, view north
- 0046 / 46 of 46: Rooftop, view southwest

**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.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building (Amendment)
----- Name of Property Los Angeles County, CA
----- County and State
----- Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 7 Page 1

PURPOSE OF AMENDMENT

In 2006, the Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building, located at 2650 E. Olympic Boulevard in the Los Angeles neighborhood of Boyle Heights, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. In the National Register nomination, an arbitrary period of significance from 1927-1955 was established, reflecting the 50-year cutoff date when the nomination was submitted. The portions of the building that were less than 50 years old at the time were determined not to have exceptional significance. As a result, the 1959-1964 additions that expanded the building’s footprint, as well as a 1970 alteration, were identified as non-contributing features.

The purpose of this amendment is to extend the period of significance for the Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building to encompass the 1959-1964 additions, to provide supplementary information clarifying how the building developed and was used over time, and to correct the Los Angeles County Assessor’s parcel number that was listed in the 2005 National Register nomination. This amendment recommends that the period of significance should be increased to span from 1927 to 1966 in order to recognize the southernmost rear addition as a contributing feature due to its centrality to Sears’s operations and because it has surpassed fifty years of age since the nomination was first submitted. The southernmost rear addition, which was added to the building in 1959 with further additions in 1964, was significant to the continued growth of the Sears, Roebuck & Company in the post-war period; it increased the amount of office and warehouse space necessary to process and store merchandise awaiting shipment to customers across the country. The proposed 1966 end date for the revised period of significance marks the year when the final significant addition to the property was completed. This date also coincides with the 1966 announcement that the western headquarters of Sears would move to a new building in Alhambra, California. Additionally, while reviewing the National Register nomination, the Los Angeles County Assessor’s Parcel Number (APN) that was listed was found to be incorrect. The correct APN for 2650 E. Olympic Boulevard is 5169-010-006 and should replace 5183-012-004 in all official records.

7, DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY

The Sears building is situated on a 12.3-acre parcel that encompasses an entire city block. It is bounded by Soto Street and Rio Vista Avenue to the east and west, and E. Olympic Boulevard and E. 12<sup>th</sup> Street to the north and south. Architect George C. Nimmons designed the original Sears building in the Art Deco style. Even at the time of completion in 1927, future additions to the building were anticipated as the company continued to grow at a rapid pace. Subsequent additions in 1929, 1936, 1940, 1945, 1959, and 1964 expanded the footprint of the building towards the south (rear). Reflecting their warehouse function and later date of construction, the additions, while not distracting from the original 1927 design, are more utilitarian in architectural character than the original 1927 building, the additions thus carry out the original vision for the property, and do not detract from the original design intent.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building  
(Amendment)

Name of Property

Los Angeles County, CA

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 7 Page 2

NEW CONTRIBUTING FEATURE

Expanding the period of significance will specifically encompass the 1959-1964 addition to the building. The characteristics of the newly proposed contributing feature are described in the following narrative:<sup>1</sup>

Between 1959 and 1964, the Sears, Roebuck & Company completed a ten-story addition to the south of the 1940-1945 addition. In 1959 seven stories were added expanding the building to the south by seven bays, and in 1964, the top three stories were added. This further extension of the rectangular mass of the building accommodated additional flexible warehouse and office space. The 1959-1964 expansion was necessary to increase capacity as mail-order and retail operations grew in the post World War II years. All of the additions to the 1927 Art Deco building, including the 1959-1964 additions, are more utilitarian in appearance than the original design. While less architecturally detailed, the additions are consistent with and do not detract from the original design intent. In order to accommodate the 1959 expansion, the LA Paper Box Factory, a one-story commercial warehouse facing 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue, was demolished. By the end of all construction phases, the Sears building extended almost to the southern boundary of the property.<sup>2</sup> The last addition (1964) was built adjacent to the one-story Ingram building (now demolished) located at the corner of 12<sup>th</sup> Street and Rio Vista Avenue.

Like the earlier additions to the buildings, the 1959-1964 ten-story addition is of unornamented reinforced concrete construction. It is topped by a flat roof which is hidden by a plain parapet. Towers mark the locations of staircases and elevators. The addition measured seven bays on the side elevations (east and west) and seventeen bays on the rear (south elevation). Above the ground level, the rectangular alternation of piers and spandrels define bays of either industrial sash windows or blind panels.

As part of this addition, the loading dock area constructed as part of the 1940-1945 addition was expanded to the south and a one-story loading facility, comprised of exterior space covered and defined by a canopies, was erected at the southwest corner. Canopied loading docks also were built along the entirety of the south elevation, and along the west elevation, north of the Ingram building.

The interior of the 1959-1964 addition included staircases located at the southeast and southwest corners, restrooms along the west elevation, freight elevators along the south and east elevations, and a package chute towards the north end of the addition. Envisioned in this expansion was flexibility in the use of the floors depending on the company's needs. While the elevations of the addition were to be

<sup>1</sup> Information was excerpted from the "Historic Preservation Certification Application Part 1 – Evaluation of Significance," completed by Chattel, Inc. in July 2014. Only information regarding the additions made after 1959 is included in this document. For a complete history of the alterations to the building, see either the document entitled: "Historic Preservation Certification Application Part 1" or the original National Register nomination, see Attachment E.

<sup>2</sup> See the 1959-1964 addition noted in Attachment C schematic diagram. The 1959-1964 expansion was also completed in two phases. The first phase, which was completed in 1961, included the construction of seven of the ten stories. For the first phase of this addition, see: "1959 Mail Order Expansion, Sears Roebuck and Co," drawings prepared by Bowen & Brown Inc., dated February 14, 1959 and Certificate of Occupancy Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, permit LA 34883-59, issued March 3, 1961. Drawings for this addition indicate the remaining three stories were anticipated and are sketched in as "future addition." Although a certificate of occupancy for the remaining three stories was not located, drawings from a later period date this addition to 1964, indicating the remaining three stories were completed at this time.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 3

Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building  
(Amendment)

Name of Property

Los Angeles County, CA

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

finished with industrial steel windows located in the center of most structural bays, some bays were left unfenestrated with temporary filler walls finished in plaster.<sup>3</sup> Infill of this nature would have allowed for easy installation of windows in the future if, at some point in time, Sears determined these areas needed to be reconfigured to accommodate a different use and to allow more natural light in these spaces.

#### NON-CONTRIBUTING FEATURES

In 1968, the firm Robert Clements & Associates was hired to update the image of the retail store located in the Sears building.<sup>4</sup> This work, which was completed in 1970, included construction of a new two-story addition, remodel of the existing one-story garden center located along the west elevation, and construction of a new one-story free-standing concession stand on the east elevation. Entrances to the north and east elevators were remodeled and new façade was installed that wrapped the lower bays of the north elevation and portions of the east and west elevations. The interior of the Sears retail store was remodeled and an escalator was added. Sometime in the recent past, the loading area along the west elevation was dismantled and the two, one-story loading facilities were removed.

Recently, filler walls of select bays on the eighth and ninth stories of the west, south, and east elevations have been removed and left open to the elements.

None of these additions or alterations are being proposed for inclusion in the National Register listing.

<sup>3</sup> "1959 Mail Order Expansion, Sears, Roebuck and Co.," drawings prepared by Bowen & Bowen, Inc. dated February 14, 1959. Details of the west elevation identify some infill areas and state as follows: "plaster interior only."

<sup>4</sup> "Additions and Alterations to Los Angeles Catalog Order Plant and Retail Store," drawings prepared by Robert Clements and Associates, dated July 29, 1970. It should be noted that Robert Clements is the son of the master architect Stiles Clements. Robert Clements' firm still exists and is now known as Clements and Clements. A newspaper article describing this addition by Clements stated the project was to be completed in the late summer of 1969; however, a certificate of occupancy for a "snack bar" was not issued until March 1970 ("Sears Store Being Given a New Look," *Los Angeles Times*, May 25, 1969, J18, and Certificate of Occupancy Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, for permit LA 77212/68, issued March 10, 1970).



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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building (Amendment)
----- Name of Property Los Angeles County, CA
----- County and State
----- Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 1

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Sears & Roebuck Mail Order Building in Los Angeles was previously found eligible for and listed in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A. The building was deemed historically significant in the context of commerce because of the central role played by Sears, Roebuck & Company in ushering in the era of mass consumption in the United States. This era corresponded with the post-World War II population boom and an explosion in the construction of single-family homes in California and the West. This building played a critical role in Sears' pioneering of the retail mail order business in the western United States.

SEARS, ROEBUCK & COMPANY

The following early history of Sears, Roebuck & Company (Sears) is quoted and summarized from the 2006 National Register nomination for the subject property (Teresa Grimes, May 15, 2009) as follows:

Sears, Roebuck & Company was synonymous with the surge in the mass consumer market in America during the early and mid-twentieth century. Richard Sears established the company in 1886 and within a short period of time, the company became one of the largest mail-order businesses in the country and the seventh largest corporation in the world. By 1927, Sears provided goods to eleven million customers, which equaled one out of every three American families, and it distributed over seventy-five million catalogs per year.

Julius Rosenwald, who assumed operation of the business in 1895, is largely attributed with the success of this mail-order empire. Under Rosenwald, Sears came to encompass all the processes of a capitalist enterprise, including the processes of extraction, fabrication, distribution, and consumption. He sought to offer rural customers a broad range of products and developed a new business ethic that promoted customer satisfaction. The company slogan, "Satisfaction Guaranteed or Your Money Back," for example, reflected this new philosophy. A new emphasis was also placed on economies of scale and the streamlining of product distribution, as business expanded and a new operating infrastructure was created.

During the late 1920s, as more people began to live and work in American cities, a shift emerged in the consumer market as retail stores eclipsed the success of the older mail-order businesses. To capitalize on these changes, Sears, Roebuck & Company hired Robert Wood, a former employee of Montgomery Ward, the company's major competitor. Wood worked to build upon the success of Sears's established mail-order business by developing a network of retail stores around the existing mail-order centers and distribution infrastructure. Additionally, Wood was quite savvy to launch a campaign to pursue new retail markets found among the rising working class.

The Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building in Los Angeles has been listed in the National Register as the only large mail-order plant constructed by Sears, Roebuck & Company in the southwestern United States. It was the seventh mail-order center built by the company and was only the second constructed on the west coast, the other being located in Seattle. The facility provided mail-

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building  
(Amendment)

Name of Property

Los Angeles County, CA

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 2

order service to markets in California, Arizona, Utah, Nevada, western New Mexico, and Hawaii, as well as parts of Asia. It also contained the company's twelfth retail store, which was one of the few built in conjunction with a mail-order center.

SEARS BUILDING

As early as 1926 Sears announced plans to construct two buildings in Los Angeles, a joint mail-order plant and retail store, located on an eight-and-a-half-acre site along what is now known as Olympic Boulevard, and a "mammoth" retail store at Vermont and Slauson Avenues.<sup>5</sup> The Sears building on Olympic Boulevard, with an estimated construction cost of over \$5,000,000, was erected at a record pace. It was completed in just 171 days, with construction occurring from late December 1926 into June of the next year.<sup>6</sup>

At the grand opening of the building on July 23, 1927, tours highlighted the "efficient" operation of the distribution center that allowed for products to be shipped within 24 hours of receiving the order by mail. This effort to generate interest in the Sears building reflected the large market soon to be even better served by the company. Although this was the seventh mail-order plant of its kind constructed in the United States for Sears, it was built to serve not only California, but almost the entire western United States, including Nevada, Utah, Arizona, parts of New Mexico, Hawaii, and portions of Asia.<sup>7</sup>

Design of the Sears building reflected a change in the way the company wished to be viewed by the American public. For the development of Sears's brand, offering high quality goods at low costs was just as important as constructing and occupying buildings that possessed a significant architectural presence. Sears wanted to present itself as a corporation that produced inexpensive and quality goods while it also buttressed its image through the creation of architecturally impressive buildings across the United States. The combination of these characteristics became integral with the Sears brand. Moreover, as the Chicago-based architecture firm of Nimmons, Carr and Wright continued to design buildings for Sears, the nexus between the utilization of efficient construction methods and materials and the creation of iconic and expressive works of icons of architecture was perfected. Architectural historian Richard Longstreth explains that, in contrast to the more "pedestrian" attempts at mail-order plans constructed earlier in Kansas City and Atlanta, the Los Angeles, Memphis, Boston, and Minneapolis locations for Sears found a happy medium between their utilitarian nature and a more "ambitious symbolic role."<sup>8</sup> Aside from the minimal sculptural detailing and massing said to reflect the designs of famous architects such as Eliel Saarinen and Bertram Goodhue, the buildings had a certain "non-western" approach to scale and proportion that created "beacons of modernity in their respective

<sup>5</sup> "Sears Roebuck & Company Coming to Los Angeles," *Los Angeles Times*, 5 Dec 1926: 2. The retail store opened in 1927 and closed in 1976; building is no longer extant.

<sup>6</sup> "New Building Mark Set," *Los Angeles Times*, 26 June 1927: E4.

<sup>7</sup> "Mail-order Plant Opening Prepared," *Los Angeles Times*, 22 July 1927: A3.

<sup>8</sup> Richard Longstreth, "Sears, Roebuck and the Remaking of the Department Store, 1924-1942," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 65, No. 2 (June, 2006): 242. Richard Longstreth is a noted architectural historian and in addition to writing about Sears retail stores, he has published extensively on the design of retail stores, particularly in Los Angeles.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building (Amendment)
----- Name of Property Los Angeles County, CA
----- County and State
----- Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 3

locations.”<sup>9</sup>

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE

The original nomination states that 1927-1955 was arbitrarily determined to be the period of significance for the Sears & Roebuck Building since this nearly 30-year span reflected the peak in economic activity at the Los Angeles location.<sup>10</sup> When the Sears & Roebuck Mail Order Business Building was listed in 2006, only the portions of the building that were constructed prior to 1956 identified as historic. Because of Criteria Consideration G, the 1959 and 1964 additions were considered to lie outside of the period of significance and were therefore determined to be non-contributing features of the building. Presently, these additions have now reached 50-year threshold necessary for their consideration as contributing features of the building. Moreover, they retain sufficient integrity to convey their significance in the development of the Sears building and the company's role as a pioneer in the retail mail order business in the Western United States. Since the additions completed between 1959 and 1964 facilitated growth for Sears, Roebuck & Company according to a previously envisioned expansion scheme, and their timing coincided with an era of phenomenal growth in population and housing in the western United States in general and California in particular, they should now be recognized as contributing features.

The oldest portion of the Sears building in Los Angeles was constructed in 1927 during a pivotal era in its corporate history when the company transitioned its focus from mail-order to retail sales. Additions in 1929, 1936, 1939-1947, and 1959-1964 reflected and contributed to the company's transition and rise as a retail powerhouse, especially in the western United States. The additions are significant for their association with the most important period of retail growth in the Western United States. These additions allowed the Sears building to efficiently store and manage distribution of an increased inventory to ship to customers and retail stores.

The period of national growth following World War II was an important era of expansion for Sears, in general, and particularly in regard to its Pacific Coast territory. Before the war, the territory was comprised of 65 retail stores in California, Oregon, Washington, Nevada, Arizona, and Utah.<sup>11</sup> By 1949, the company's sales volume exceeded \$2 billion, and it operated 635 stores. This included 79 in the Pacific Coast territory. Los Angeles was identified as a "hot spot," as it was home to the largest retail store in the company's portfolio.<sup>12</sup> In 1952, Sears identified California as "one of the nation's best retail markets" and Southern California, specifically, as an important area for future expansion.<sup>13</sup> By 1955, California accounted for the largest percentage of company sales, which was \$3.2 billion.<sup>14</sup>

The warehouse, distribution, and merchandising facilities at the Los Angeles location were essential to

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 244.

<sup>10</sup> Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building National Register Nomination, 2006: Section 8, page 3.

<sup>11</sup> "Barrows Named to New Sears Post," *Los Angeles Times*, 7 Jan 1941: 25.

<sup>12</sup> "Sears Roebuck Names Angeleno as Coast Chief," *Los Angeles Times*, 11 Jan 1949: A2.

<sup>13</sup> "Sears Executives See Bright California Future," *Los Angeles Times*, 18 Jul 1952: A2.

<sup>14</sup> "Sears Schedules \$50,000,000 a Year Expansion," *Los Angeles Times*, 24 Nov 1955: 40.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 4

Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building (Amendment)
----- Name of Property
Los Angeles County, CA
----- County and State
----- Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

the entire southwestern United States region in the postwar period as mail-order sales expanded. To keep up with the growth, Sears executives understood that expansion of the Los Angeles facility was necessary. The addition to the rear of the building, completed in 1964, was intended to provide additional warehouse space and office space to support the company's operations. As Sears continued to expand operations, additions to the Sears building were both integral to the company and necessary. Soon, it was clear that further expansion at 2650 East Olympic Blvd was no longer feasible. Sears officials determined that a new site was essential to facilitate growth of the company by separating the administrative headquarters function from the mail-order warehouse and local retail operation. In 1966, Sears officially announced the construction of a new western corporate headquarters in Alhambra, putting an end to 39 years of continual expansion of the Sears building that served as a mail-order plant, a retail store, and the company's western corporate headquarters.

Given that the original period of significance included several additions to the building that were necessary to facilitate the continuing expansion of operations at the Sears Los Angeles location, it is appropriate to extend the period of significance to 1966. This extension of the period of significance will then encompass the final expansion of the building, which more accurately reflects Sears's substantial postwar role in the retail and catalog business, especially in the western United States.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Maps Page 1

Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building  
(Amendment)

Name of Property  
Los Angeles County, CA  
County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)



Google earth

feet 1000  
meters 500



Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building  
2650 East Olympic Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA  
Coordinates: 34.023990°, -118.221665°

Figure 1. Google Earth map showing property location in decimal degrees.





A large, multi-story, beige-colored building, likely a parking garage or industrial structure, viewed from a street corner. The building has many windows and a prominent tower section on the right. A utility pole stands in the foreground, and a paved road with white lane markings is visible. The sky is clear blue.

A paved road with white lane markings, viewed from a street corner. The road is wide and appears to be a major thoroughfare. There are some vehicles parked or moving in the distance, including a white truck and a dark car. A utility pole stands in the foreground, and a paved road with white lane markings is visible.









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STARS

STARS

RETAIL STORE

RETAIL STORE







SEARS

Sears

Street





MINIS  
23-3900

SEARS

Sears

TAUL STORE

El Tropical Shack

EL SIMÓNIMO DE FRIO **Pool** LIGHT

STARBUCKS COFFEE



FILMING  
213-623-3800

# Sears

## RETAIL STORE



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TAXES DONE FREE  
@ MARR BROS

SWITCH & SAVE  
\$50  
TAXES DONE FREE  
@ MARR BROS

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Sears

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SUMMER & SAVE \$50









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WE ACCEPT MANY  
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Use your  
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GREAT SAVINGS  
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VOGUE

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& Stationery

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REPAIR

watch  
jewelry













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FILA  
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FILA

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clearance

great price

clearance

CONINGTON



down  
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SPRINKLER VALVE

EXIT











EXIT  
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SPRINKLER VALVE







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SEARS

50  
C279







National Register of Historic Places  
Memo to File

# Correspondence

The Correspondence consists of communications from (and possibly to) the nominating authority, notes from the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, and/or other material the National Register of Historic Places received associated with the property.

Correspondence may also include information from other sources, drafts of the nomination, letters of support or objection, memorandums, and ephemera which document the efforts to recognize the property.

**OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION**

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October 28, 2005

Ms. Jan Matthews, Keeper  
National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service 2280  
1201 I (Eye) Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20005

Subject: **Sear, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building**  
Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, California  
National Register of Historic Places

Dear Ms. Matthews:

Enclosed please find the **Sear, Roebuck & Company mail Order Building** nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. This property is located in Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, California. On August 5, 2005 the State Historical Resources Commission unanimously found the property eligible for the National Register under Criterion A in the area of commerce at the local state of significance.

The property was determined eligible for the National Register in 2001 pursuant to a 106 consensus determination.

If you have any questions regarding this nomination, please contact Cynthia Howse of my staff at (916) 653-9054.

Sincerely,

Milford Wayne Donaldson, FAIA  
State Historic Preservation Officer

Enclosures



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: CALIFORNIA, Los Angeles

DATE RECEIVED: 11/01/05      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 12/08/05  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 12/23/05      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 12/15/05  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 05001407

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N    DATA PROBLEM: N    LANDSCAPE: N    LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N    PDIL: N    PERIOD: N    PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N    SAMPLE: N    SLR DRAFT: Y    NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT     RETURN     REJECT    \_\_\_\_\_ DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RETURN

SEE ATTACHED COMMENTS

RECOM./CRITERIA RETURN

REVIEWER Paul R. Lusignan      DISCIPLINE HISTORIAN

TELEPHONE 202.354.2229      DATE 12/15/05

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

**SEARS, ROEBUCK & COMPANY MAIL ORDER BUILDING**  
**Los Angeles County, CA**

**National Register of Historic Places - Return Comments:**

---

The current documentation is being returned so that technical issues regarding the nomination can be addressed. Specifically, the acreage, U. T. M. coordinates, and verbal boundary description appear to provide conflicting information. National Register listing and approval will be completed upon correction of the items noted below and resubmission of the nomination to the National Register.

**Geographical Data/Verbal Boundary Description**

Properties larger than 10 acres must provide at least three (3) U. T. M. points. Normally, a polygon can be created that approximately encompasses the area to be registered.

In reviewing the nomination materials the USGS map reveals a large parcel of land surrounding the mail order building. No information is provided regarding extant resources or the physical condition of this area however. Nor is there any justification provided for the inclusion of this area. The sketch maps submitted with the nomination are confined to the areas bounded by Olympic, Soto, 12<sup>th</sup>, and Rio Vista, which is much smaller than the area defined by the USGS map and the acreage figure (22-acres) provided. Please clarify the extent of the nominated area based on the verbal boundary description and correct any inconsistencies in the materials provided, including the property acreage. If the larger area is to be included, please provide information on the extant condition of this area and a justification for its inclusion, in particular the areas where non-Sears company buildings appear to have been built during the historic period.

**Level of Significance**

The nomination form and the SHPO Certification box designate the level of significance at the local level, but the Staff Evaluation sheet and Cover Letter note state level significance. Is local the correct level of significance as nominated?

If you have questions regarding these comments, please contact me directly at the number listed below.



---

Paul R. Lusignan, Historian  
(for) Keeper of the National Register  
(202) 354-2229

12/15/05  
Date

A:\searsroebuck.rtn



**SEARS, ROEBUCK & COMPANY MAIL ORDER BUILDING**  
**Los Angeles County, CA**

**National Register of Historic Places - Return Comments:**

---

The current documentation is being returned so that technical issues regarding the nomination can be addressed. Specifically, the acreage, U. T. M. coordinates, and verbal boundary description appear to provide conflicting information. National Register listing and approval will be completed upon correction of the items noted below and resubmission of the nomination to the National Register.

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**Level of Significance**

The nomination form and the SHPO Certification box designate the level of significance at the local level, but the Staff Evaluation sheet and Cover Letter note state level significance. Is local the correct level of significance as nominated?

If you have questions regarding these comments, please contact me directly at the number listed below.



Paul R. Lusignan, Historian  
(for) Keeper of the National Register  
(202) 354-2229

12/15/05  
Date

A:\searsroebuck.rtn

**Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building  
Los Angeles, Los Angeles County  
Staff Evaluation**

The Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building is located on 22 acres. It was completed in 1927 and received its first additions in 1929. Other additions followed in 1940, 1959, and 1964. Most of the additions were made to the rear. The front elevation changes to the lower floors date to 1964 and are the most damaging to the building's historic integrity. Given the massive scale of the historic parts of the building, the 1964 changes to the front elevation do not appear to make the building ineligible for the National Register under Criterion A.

The property is being nominated to the National Register under Criterion A at the state level of significance in the area of commerce during the years 1927-1955 for the importance of the mail order business in California history. The building is the only large mail-order plant constructed by Sears, Roebuck & Company in the southwestern United States. It was the seventh mail-order center built by the company (twelve were eventually built) and was one of two built on the west coast, the other being located in Seattle. The Los Angeles warehouse provided mail-order service to markets in California, Arizona, Utah, Nevada, western New Mexico, and Hawaii, as well as parts of Asia. The building also contained the company's twelfth retail store and one of the few built in conjunction with a mail-order-center.

The property was determined eligible for the National Register in 2001 pursuant to a 106 consensus determination.

The nomination Commissioners received gave an incorrect acreage on page 7-1. The correct acreage is 22. The error has been corrected.

Staff recommends listing at the state level of significance under Criterion A.

Cynthia Howse  
Historian II  
July 21, 2005



**OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION**

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March 10, 2006

Ms. Jan Matthews, Keeper  
National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service 2280  
1201 I (Eye) Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20005

Subject: **Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building**  
Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, California  
National Register of Historic Places

Attention: Paul Lusignan

Dear Ms. Matthews:

Enclosed please find corrected pages for the **Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building** nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. This property is located in Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, California. On August 5, 2005 the State Historical Resources Commission unanimously found the property eligible for the National Register under Criterion A in the area of commerce at the state of significance.

The first page has been corrected to show the property is being nominated at the state level of significance. The fourth page has been corrected to show that the property boundary consists of 12.3 acres. The verbal Boundary Description has been corrected to state the boundary corresponds to that shown on the Sketch Map. The Sketch Map has been corrected to clearly show the property boundary.

If you have any questions regarding this nomination, please contact Cynthia Howse of my staff at (916) 653-9054.

Sincerely,

Milford Wayne Donaldson, FAIA  
State Historic Preservation Officer

Enclosures

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: RESUBMISSION

PROPERTY NAME: Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: CALIFORNIA, Los Angeles

DATE RECEIVED: 3/13/06 DATE OF PENDING LIST:  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 4/26/06  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 05001407

DETAILED EVALUATION:

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT \_\_\_\_\_ DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

The Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building in Los Angeles, California is significant at the state level under National Register Criterion A in the area of Commerce. Built over a period of years between 1927 and 1940, the historic building components represented a major west coast warehousing and distribution facility associated with the regionally and nationally important Sears, Roebuck & Company mail-order firm. The substantial building complex dramatically illustrates the firm's enormous success and expansion during the early twentieth century as Sears established itself as one of the largest and most innovative merchandisers in the country.

[A number of similar properties associated with Sears, or its major competitor at the time Montgomery Ward, have been individually listed in the National Register, including significant distribution facilities in Boston, Chicago (NHL), Minneapolis, Portland, Oklahoma, Oakland, and Baltimore.]

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept Criterion A

REVIEWER PAUL R. LUSIGNAU DISCIPLINE HISTORIAN

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE 4/21/06

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR (Y/N)



**Sears Roebuck & Company Amendment**  
**Los Angeles County, California**  
**National Register of Historic Places**

The Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building on East Olympic Boulevard in Boyle Heights was listed in the National Register in 2006, with a period of significance of 1927-1955. In 1959, a seven-story expansion was added to the building, adding a total of seven bays. In 1964, three more stories were added to this expansion for a total of ten stories. The 1964 addition is unornamented reinforced concrete, topped by a flat roof that is hidden by a plain parapet. Towers mark the locations of staircases and elevators. Above ground level, the rectangular alternation of piers and spandrel bays define bays of either industrial sash windows or blind panels. The addition also includes an expanded loading dock area, itself an expansion of the building's 1940-1945 addition.

The original nomination included portions of the building constructed prior to 1955, with later 1959-1964 additions treated as non-contributing elements of the building. This amendment extends the period of significance to include the 1959-1964 additions as contributing elements, based on its centrality to business operations at Sears, and expansion of business in the early 1960s. The property is eligible under Criterion A for its association with commercial mail-order distribution, at the local level of significance.

The period of significance is extended to 1966, the year that the western headquarters of Sears moved to a new building in Alhambra, California. The amendment also revises an incorrect Assessor's Parcel Number for the building site included in the earlier nomination. The original Sears building was completed in 1927, an Art Deco design by architect George C. Nimmons.

Subsequent additions were completed in 1929, 1936, 1940, 1945, 1959, and 1964, reflecting the growth of Sears' business and southern California. As areas primarily intended for warehousing, the subsequent additions are more utilitarian in nature and style than the original Nimmons design, but carry out the original vision for the property and have gained significance in their own right.

The amendment was submitted on behalf of the property owner. No letters of support or objection have been received.

Staff supports the amended nomination as written and recommends that the State Historical Resources Commission support the determination that the Sears Roebuck & Company is eligible under Criterion A at the local level of significance, amending the

period of significance of 1927-1966, and the amendment should be listed in the National Register. Staff recommends the State Historic Preservation Officer approve the amendment for forwarding to the National Park Service for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

William Burg  
State Historian II  
July 5, 2016



### Nomination Submittal to Keeper Checklist

NOMINATION: SBMS ROYBUCK & CO. AMENDMENT

DATE: AUG. 9, 2016

REVIEWER: WILLIAM BURC

- Reviewer electronically marks appropriate elements of certification with an X, and by request for (R.N.), enters SHPO Title and State Agency in Section 3 on first page of nomination form.
- Reviewer writes cover letter for SHPO's signature.
- Executive Secretary copies cover letter, original nomination, and supporting documentation including staff report onto archival paper (Keeper copy).
- SHPO signs cover letter, and signs and dates first page of nomination on Keeper copy.
- Executive Secretary copies signed cover letter and signed first page of nomination onto regular copy paper.
- Executive Secretary returns original nomination, signed copies, and Keeper copy to reviewer for final approval.
- Reviewer checks quality of archival copy, recycles unsigned cover letter and unsigned first page of nomination, and returns Keeper copy to Executive Secretary with photographs, photography CD, and map(s).
- Executive Secretary prepares label and sends materials via overnight service to the Keeper.
- Reviewer returns original nomination to accordion file.
- Reviewer updates Due List with date nomination was sent to NPS.
- Reviewer completes this sheet and files accordion folder with pending nominations.

**OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION**

1725 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, Suite 100  
SACRAMENTO, CA 95816-7100  
(916) 445-7000 Fax: (916) 445-7053  
calshpo@parks.ca.gov  
www.ohp.parks.ca.gov

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AUG 12 2016

Nat. Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service

August 10, 2016

J. Paul Loether  
Deputy Keeper and Chief, National Register and National Historic Landmark Program  
National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service 2280  
1201 I (Eye) Street, NW, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington, DC 20005

Subject: **Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building Amendment  
Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, California  
National Register of Historic Places**

Dear Mr. Loether:

The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the amendment to the nomination for the Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building Amendment to the National Register of Historic Places. This property is located in Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, California. On July 29, 2016, the State Historical Resources Commission unanimously found the property eligible for the National Register under Criterion A at the local level of significance, amending the period of significance to 1966.

The property is nominated on behalf of the property owner. No letters of support or objection were received.

If you have any questions regarding this nomination, please contact William Burg of my staff at 916-445-7004.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Julianne Polanco".

Julianne Polanco  
State Historic Preservation Officer

Enclosures



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

PROPERTY NAME: Sears, Roebuck & Company Mail Order Building

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: CALIFORNIA, Los Angeles

DATE RECEIVED: ~~11/01/05~~ 8.12.16  
DATE OF PENDING LIST: 12/17/05  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 9.27.16  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 05001407

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA

REVIEWER

DISCIPLINE

TELEPHONE

DATE

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

*Accept*  
*Edson Beall* *History*  
*9.26.16*