

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED JUL 24 1979

DATE ENTERED

SEP 4 1979

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Guaranty Building

AND/OR COMMON Allstate Title Building

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 6331 Hollywood Blvd.

CITY, TOWN Hollywood

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
24th

STATE California

VICINITY OF
06 CODE

COUNTY Los Angeles

CODE 037

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Hollywood Ivar Building Company (Mr. A. M. Solender; Mr. Larry Sade;
Mr. Thomas & Ms. Helene Spiegel; Mr. Paul & Ms. Herta Amir)

STREET & NUMBER 1180 S. Beverly Dr. #708

CITY, TOWN Los Angeles

STATE California 90035

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, Hall of Records, Los Angeles County Courthouse
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

STREET & NUMBER 320 W. Temple Street

CITY, TOWN Los Angeles

STATE California 90012

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Historic Resources Inventory

DATE November 1978

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Hollywood Revitalization Committee, 6253 Hollywood Blvd.

CITY, TOWN Hollywood

STATE California 90028

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

A twelve story reinforced concrete Beaux Arts bank and office structure, the Guaranty Building is located on the corner of Ivar Street and Hollywood Boulevard. The building has basic Neo-Renaissance and Classical Revival characteristics with tripartite divisions, the top and bottom sections mirroring one another. These sections are sheathed in terra cotta and grey granite; the remaining body of the building is faced with light colored brick. The plan of the building is rectangular and the massive block created by the twelve story building towers above surrounding structures. A steel and neon Bank of America sign crowns the top cornice of the building.

The first two floors on the Hollywood Boulevard elevation are tied together by two massive Corinthian engaged columns at the recessed entrance bay, and are flanked on either side with two rectangular piers on block bases topped with modified Corinthian capitals. An egg and dart design adds decoration around the doors and on the second story molding. A classic cornice serves as a stringcourse at the top of the third story.

The fourth to tenth floor is treated as one unit, the central part of the architectural design. Within this central unit exist three horizontal divisions; a central bay projects forward set against slightly recessed side bays. These divisions are further defined by the window treatment. Single, double-hung sash windows break the wall surface of the side bays. Paired, double-hung sash windows articulate the central bay.

Stone columns begin on the eleventh floor and extend to the twelfth with capital ornamentation and a heavy cornice finishes the design at the roofline. Brass and bronze metal work adds to the beauty of the building. The lobby has marble floors and walls done in a running pattern. Elevator doors are brass with a textured quilted pattern.

The side elevation of the Guaranty Building is designed with the same tripartite divisions as the facade. However, engaged piers have replaced the use of columns and the central division of the building reads as one unit.

Limited alteration was done to the building in 1931. The addition of another street front entrance, and alteration of the banking quarters to accommodate the Bank of America.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES Built: 1923

BUILDER/ARCHITECT John C. Austin & Frederick Ashley
William Simpson Const. Co/Builder

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Guaranty Building located at 6331 Hollywood Boulevard in the City of Los Angeles has played a major role in the commercial development of this area. As a key financial institution, the Guaranty Building is a fine example of the use of a Neo-Classical architectural expression to project the desired "conservative" image.

The northeast corner of Ivar and Hollywood Blvd. has always occupied a special place in the social and economic history of Hollywood. Part of the original Hollywood ranch owned by Horace and Daeida Wilcox, the corner became the first permanent site of the First Methodist Church of Hollywood in 1910. The Guaranty Building and Loan Association paid the church \$2000 per front foot for the site in 1923, and proceeded to erect the twelve story Guaranty Building, one of the first height-limit (150') buildings on Hollywood Blvd.

The owner and builder of the Guaranty Building was one of Hollywood's most prominent and civic-minded citizens. Gilbert Bessemyer was born in Hollywood on his father's ranch in 1885. The family had a reputation for industry, integrity, and business ability. Gilbert, after attending public schools and the Normal School of Los Angeles, entered banking, and, in the words of local historian E.O. Palmer:

"...was successful while in subordinate positions not involving questions of judgment.... He was a tall, slender blond; his address was pleasing, his tone confidential, his demeanor kindly and inclined to be helpful. He made friends easily and by these exemplary qualities became the confidential advisor of many uncertain old ladies and others who were confused about investments."

By 1912 he was a director of the Hollywood National Bank and Citizens Savings bank. These were acquired by Security Trust and Savings (Security Pacific today) in 1919, and Beesemyer and a partner organized the Central Commercial Savings Bank (later known as the Bank of Hollywood).

The period of the Twenties was a time of unprecedented growth in Hollywood. The film industry had changed a sleepy Los Angeles suburb into the glamour capital of the world. Businessmen and merchants, conscious of their new image, embarked upon an ambitious building program, designed to create an image of sophistication and respectability unparalleled on the West Coast.

The complicated financial transactions of the film industry and a burgeoning real estate market had created a need for a number of financial services. Guaranty Savings took its place with other giants: Bank of America, Security Trust, and First Federal of Hollywood, among others. These and their smaller affiliates handled the investments of film moguls and citizens alike. Such institutions needed prestigious, substantial buildings, and Beesemyer led the way by commissioning John C. Austin and Frederick Ashley to build the Guaranty Building.

Classical Beaux Arts Buildings were popular from 1900 on for those businesses who wished to project a conservative image, primarily financial institutions.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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The Guaranty Building, designed in this tradition, was intended to be part of a national pattern, a style which exuded solidarity and respectability. The firm of Austin and Ashley constructed the building with a mixture of Neo-Renaissance and classical detailing. The ornate columns of the ground floor were mirrored in the pilasters of the top stories, giving a unity of design to the structure. The two-tone aura, brought about by the use of contrasting materials, heightened the visibility of the building, and made it the most prominent financial institution of the Boulevard. John C. Austin and his partners were noted for a number of important commissions in the Los Angeles area, among them: Los Angeles City Hall, 1926-28; Griffith Park Observatory and Planetarium, 1935; the entrance facade of St. Vibiana's Church, 1922; and the Shrine Civic Auditorium, 1920-26. Their execution of a flawless classical Masonic Temple in 1922 on Hollywood Boulevard probably gained them the attention of Gilbert Beesemyer.

By 1926, Beesemyer's activities were diverse and increasingly civic-oriented. He and a number of others widened and put sidewalks on existing streets, thereby increasing traffic and commerce on Cahuenga and on Vine, establishing Hollywood and Vine as the city's central district. He was a member of the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce, a founding member of the Lion's Club, a member of the Hollywood Athletic Club, president of the Central Commercial Savings Bank, vice president of West Coast Glass, Secretary of Guaranty Savings, and connected with the North American Bond and Mortgage Company. Friends described him as a liberal church-goer and family man. The building continued to attract entertainment clients to its office space, among them producers, agents, and columnist Hedda Hopper.

As it had played a leading role in the economic rise of Hollywood, the Guaranty Building and its management played a starring role in the demise of that prosperity. The depression did not hit Hollywood as hard as other parts of the country, but what effects it had were directly attributable to Guaranty Savings. Palmer's version is blunt, yet protective:

By 1930 the building trades had exceeded the demand and ceased activity. Business generally, missing their support, was receding...the secretary of the Guaranty Building and Loan Association admitted to his directors his personal overdraft of \$7,630,000 with the comment, 'I thought I could quickly return it...

The blow staggered Hollywood, rendering many of her best (the frugal and Industrious) penniless at a time when reserves were most needed. Allied institutions and a few not so connected closed their doors. The depression progressed conspicuously from that time.

By 1931, a kind of recovery was taking place in Hollywood. The Guaranty Building became home to the Allstate Title Company, which aided in the recovery. Thus, through expansion and depression, the building and its owner have become an integral part of Hollywood's financial history and a physical expression of that industry's conservative image on the Boulevard.