

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

982

**1. Name**

historic Builders Exchange Building

and/or common Builders Exchange Building

**2. Location**

street & number 202-208 North Main Street \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Santa Ana \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ congressional district 38th

state California code 06 county Orange code 059

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input 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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	n/a	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other:retail/vacant

**4. Owner of Property**

name Barbara Mathewson

street & number 394 Weymouth Place

city, town Laguna Beach \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state CA 92651

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Records Office, County of Orange

street & number 630 N. Broadway

city, town Santa Ana \_\_\_\_\_ state CA 92701

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

1. Santa Ana Multi-Modal Transportation Historic Properties Survey

title Santa Ana Historic Properties Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes \_\_\_\_\_ no

\*Preliminary certification, Tax Reform Act, Part 1 approved 8/31/81

date 1980 \_\_\_\_\_ federal  state \_\_\_\_\_ county  local

depository for survey records State Office of Historic Preservation, P.O. Box 2390

city, town Sacramento \_\_\_\_\_ state California 95811

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## 7. Description

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**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved      date \_\_\_\_\_

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**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The Builders Exchange Building is located at the north corner of Main Street and Second Street. It is a two-story U-shaped structure with a basement constructed of brick, reinforced concrete, and having a partial steel frame. Designed in a simplified Beaux Arts style, the building has had only minor alterations to both exterior and interior.

Front Facade:

Roughly symmetrical, the front facade is where most of the building's detail is concentrated. The ground floor features three shops. One shop and pool hall takes up the entire north end of the first story. The other two shops occupy the south end of the building. They are separate from the north end by an elaborate entry way to the second floor.

At the base of the building is a course of black tiles. Each store has original windows and doors except for the pool hall where the doors have been altered. Above the doorways are transoms.

The ground floor entrance to the upper story is flanked by terra cotta fluted pilasters with Corinthian capitals. The pilasters support a small architrave which sits in front of a belt course. Above the door is a terra cotta panel with a cartouche. Two large urns flank a central decorative motif to form the crown of the shallow entrance portico. A fluted pilaster with a Corinthian capital divides the south half into two shops.

The second story is characterized by paired double hung windows, symmetrically distributed across the facade. Above the second story entry is a lone window surrounded by terra cotta quoins. A thinner string course wraps around the building directly above the windows.

Above the quined window is a tile plaque displaying the name of the building. Small circular medallions are evenly dispersed in the space above the paired double hung windows and below the dentilated cornice. Above this is another terra cotta plaque with swags; it is capped by a stylized terra cotta decoration which projects above the roof. A flag pole is directly behind this decorative element.

Second Street Side:

The ground floor is dominated by an expanse of brick wall in the central portion. The detailing on this side is similar to that of the front facade. An entrance which is identical to that of the facade is located at the east end. A garage which has had new doors placed upon it is adjacent to the side entry. A transom is above as are fluted pilasters to each side. A side shop entry way is next to the garage opening. It has a simple door with two square windows on either side. Pilasters are to each side of it. Further down are two lone square windows.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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Rear Elevation:

The rear of the building is a plain unadorned brick exterior with a narrow service alley dividing the building into a U-shape. Simple double hung windows relieve the otherwise plain brick rear of the structure.

North Building Face:

This portion of the structure at one time abutted a neighboring structure to the north, and was simple and unadorned at the time of construction. The north wall of the structure has been covered with stucco, but the original windows are in place on the second story level.

## 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 type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bldg. industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** Oct. 1928-Feb. 1929 **Builder/Architect** William Rohrbacher/ CA Lansdowne

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

In October of 1928 the Santiago Improvement Company announced in the Santa Ana Daily Register its "intent to make the Builders Exchange Building the Building center of the Orange County community." This broad statement was not just another real estate dream because the construction of the building was a model project of Orange County Builders Exchange, the building trade organization in Orange County. The building was intended to showcase the most modern and progressive building techniques and materials. All construction and subcontracting was done by members of the Orange County Builders Exchange. It incorporated steel and brick, copper store fronts, plate glass, composition roofing, and gas steam heat.

The Builders Exchange Building was built by the C. A. Lansdowne Construction Company, which later built the city's most architecturally unique building, the Santora Building. Lansdowne had located in Santa Ana the previous April, and the Builders Exchange Building was his first major construction job. It was built for \$65,000 and the first tenants were the Southern California Edison Company at street level, and the offices of members of the Builders Exchange were located upstairs. An architect's rendering of the original building was published in the Real Estate Section of the Santa Ana Daily Register on October 20, 1928.

The tenants of the Builders Exchange Building included Western Auto Supply at 202 North Main (1934-1950) and National Cash Register at 204 in 1940. The Southern California Edison Company remained at 208 North Main from 1929 until approximately 1950.

The Builders Exchange became in 1938 the Orange County Builders Association which became affiliated with the California Association of Builders Exchanges in 1949. The Builders Exchange was founded in the early 1920s as a self-help association designed to promote quality construction and services to members. The association was in part responsible for the local adoption of building codes and the exchange provided financial services, insurance services, and a social forum for members. In 1938, it became the Orange County Builders Association which became affiliated with the California Association of Builders Exchanges in 1949. The organization exists today and provides many of the same services to members including a plan room for contractors to prepare bids of projects.

The significance of the Builders Exchange was that it provided the first industry self-regulation and standards in a geographic area of rapid, unregulated growth. It was a building industry booster group that could assure the public of quality construction in an era when many homes of questionable construction were the rule. The quality of Santa Ana's historic building stock today is the result of early code adoption and self regulation by such reputable members of the building industry as the membership of the Builders Exchange.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Santa Ana Daily Register, October 20, 1928

# 10. Geographical Data

ITEM NOT VERIFIED AGENCE NOT VERIFIED

Acreeage of nominated property .28  
 Quadrangle name Tustin

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A	<u>11</u>	<u>419700</u>	<u>3734180</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C			
E			
G			

B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D			
F			
H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

Town of Santa Ana, Block 6, Lot 1, and the south 49.5 feet of Lot 4.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	<u>n/a</u>	code	county	code
state		code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Harold Thomas  
Environmental Coalition of  
 organization Orange County, Inc. date 10/29/80  
 street & number 206 W. Fourth Street telephone (714) 836-4314  
 city or town Santa Ana state California 92701

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature R. M. Ellen

title \_\_\_\_\_ date March 23, 1982

For HCRS use only  
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register  
for Delores Byers Entered in the National Register date 4/29/82  
 Keeper of the National Register  
 Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chief of Registration

