

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

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

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Bradbury Building

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

304 South Broadway

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Los Angeles

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

25th

STATE

California

VICINITY OF

CODE

06

COUNTY

Los Angeles

CODE

037

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

**PRESENT USE**

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Western Management Corporation, Mr. P. D. McKelvey, Manager

STREET & NUMBER

448 South Hill Street

CITY, TOWN

Los Angeles

VICINITY OF

STATE

California 90013

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Hall of Records

STREET & NUMBER

320 West Temple Street

CITY, TOWN

Los Angeles

STATE

California 90012

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE

1963, 1968

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

OAHP-National Park Service

CITY, TOWN

Washington,

STATE  
D. C.

# 7 DESCRIPTION

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

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Ester McCoy and John Griebner describe the structure in their HABS report.

Fronting on both Broadway and Third Street, the structure occupies the entire site.

The Bradbury Building is on a corner, extending 125' on Broadway and 188' on Third Street, is framed in steel, with brick masonry walls and stone trim; square head windows in banks of twos and threes occur on the lower stories and round head ones in the attic story. The offices are two rooms deep and surround on four sides an L-shaped court; walls facing the court are of glazed and unglazed brick.

The plan wraps around an interior court, 1/5 of the area of each floor devoted to balconies and the roof is of hipped trusses of cast iron, glazed with hammered plate glass, L. L. Bradbury brought from his mines the heavy timbers used as joists.

The building is essentially the same as when constructed, except for repartitioning, walling in of fireplaces and modernizing of plumbing. The walls are load bearing. Plan is L-shaped the circulation is by open stairs in the court, and four tiers of balconies around the vertical bar of the L-shape. The balconies become narrower as the building rises, thus increasing the space of the court, increasing the sense of openness and the amount of light on the ground floor. The glazed roof is approximately 50' by 100'. The side court, which forms the horizontal bar of the L-shape, lights the east-facing offices.

The interior court is one of the few great interior spaces in Los Angeles; forms appear to rise to the source of light, stairs to leap into space, turn and return again to the rhythm of the balconies. The balcony passages give depth and deep shadow to the enclosed space.

Materials are boldly combined. Rose-colored Italian marble treads slide into the metal strings of the openwork cast iron stairs; lighted from both sides, the marble is luminous.

The floors are tile on the ground level and on balconies, oak T&G flooring in the offices, marble slabs on stairways. Iron work is the most beautiful part of the Interior--the rails, door knobs, mail slots and elevators are covered with tendrillike plants and flowers.

# 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input 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

1893

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

George H. Wyman

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This unique five-story office building was built in 1893 for Louis Bradbury (who owned it until 1944). George Herbert Wyman was only 32 when he designed the structure and had no formal architectural or engineering training at that time. A heavy sandstone exterior leaves one unprepared for the cage of light filled glass within. The whole is a cobweb of cast iron covered with delicate art nouveau ornament. The open elevator cages are still used--they rise slowly and quietly in this brightly lighted court.

Harold Kirker has described it:

"After the Rosenthal Building, it is refreshing to consider the extant Bradbury Building in Los Angeles, the most significant commercial design from the decade of the nineties and one of the few buildings not influenced by the neoclassic reaction. The circumstances regarding this structure are as unusual as the finished project. The architect, George Herbert Wyman, came to California for his health in 1891. Without formal training in design or construction, he took a brief apprenticeship in the office of an uncle and later worked as a draftsman for Summer P. Hunt, who received a commission from Louis Bradbury for a commercial building on Broadway at Third Street. For some reason the work was taken from Hunt and offered to Wyman, who accepted the challenge after communing with his dead brother over a planchette. The result was a masterpiece.

The Bradbury Building, completed in 1893, was inspired by the architect's infatuation with the California light and by a description of a utopian building in Edward Bellamy's Looking Backward. This fictional structure was "a vast hall full of light, received not alone from the windows on all sides but from the dome, the point of which was a hundred feet above....The walls were frescoed in mellow tints, to soften without absorbing the light which flooded the interior."

This quotation will serve as sufficient description of the interior of the Bradbury Building itself and compensates for the wholly inadequate impression conveyed by photographs. Because the site offered Wyman no possibilities other than those that were usual in urban commercial planning, he contented himself with an exterior of chaste Sullivanesque proportions in brown brick, sandstone, and terra cotta, and concentrated all of his talents upon the great court--the "vast hall full of light." Here he created a remarkable effect of hazysunlight by using walls of glazed brick in rose and gold, pale yellow floor tiling, stair treads and sills of rich brown marble,

(Continued)

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Ester McCoy, "A Vast Hall of Light: The Bradbury Building," Arts & Architecture, April 1953, Vol. 10, pp. 20-21, 42-43.  
 Progressive Architecture, New York, November 1962.  
 Gebhard-Winter, "A Guide to Architecture in Southern California," Los Angeles County Museum, 1965.  
 Los Angeles Times, May 4, 1947, Part I, p. 1, March 6, 1950, Part I, p. 13.  
 Kirker, Harold. California's Architectural Frontier, Peregrine Smith, Inc., 1973.

pp. 116-117.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

UTM REFERENCES

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 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

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 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C 

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D 

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Carolyn Pitts, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

Historic Sites Survey Division, National Park Service

DATE

2/22/77

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L Street, NW.

TELEPHONE

202/523-5464

CITY OR TOWN

Washington,

STATE

D. C.

## 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 National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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and gold-grained woodwork. Light enters from the glass roof as well as from a band of clerestory windows, below which runs a frieze of brown terra cotta. In contrast to this "sunset glow," Wyman left exposed and painted black all structural iron parts in the court, such as galleries, staircases, and elevator shafts. The Bradbury Building was Wyman's single important work and was ignored in contemporary architectural circles. The Californians, as usual, were looking to the East and sought salvation in yet another imported revival."<sup>1</sup>

The aesthetic quality of the Bradbury Building derives from the superb environment of an inner court flooded with light. It is an early and excellent example of a break with facade architecture; by treating the sides of the inner court as facades, the architect has provided an off-street space which is a leisurely inner street. It is an oasis in the downtown core of the city; it is visited annually by dozens of architecture students, and because of its dramatic force is used frequently as a set for motion pictures and television films. It has been restored in the last few years.

<sup>1</sup>Kirker, Harold, California's Architectural Frontier  
Peregrine Smith, Inc., Santa Barbara, 1973, pp. 116-117.