



NAME	Armory Hall/American Legion Hall			REF. NO. 128
ADDRESS	313 North Birch Street			
CITY	Santa Ana	ZIP	92701	ORANGE COUNTY
YEAR BUILT	1911	LOCAL REGISTER CATEGORY: Landmark		
HISTORIC DISTRICT	Downtown Santa Ana	NEIGHBORHOOD	N/A	
NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION	A, C	NATIONAL REGISTER STATUS CODE	1D	

Location: Not for Publication Unrestricted

USGS 7.5" Quad _____ Date: _____ T _____ R _____ ¼ of _____ ¼ of Sec _____ : _____ B.M.

Prehistoric Historic Both

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE: Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival

DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND RELATED TO PERIOD ARCHITECTURE:

The Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival style, as its name implies, encompasses two major subcategories. The Mission Revival vocabulary, popular between 1890 and 1920, drew its inspiration from the missions of the Southwest. Identifying features include curved parapets (or *espadana*); red tiled roofs and coping; low-pitched roofs, often with overhanging eaves; porch roofs supported by large, square piers; arches; and wall surfaces commonly covered in smooth stucco. The Spanish Colonial Revival flourished between 1915 and 1940, reaching its apex during the 1920s and 1930s. The movement received widespread attention after the Panama-California Exposition in San Diego in 1915, where lavish interpretations of Spanish and Mexican prototypes were showcased. Easily recognizable hallmarks of the Spanish Colonial Revival are low-pitched roofs, usually with little or no overhangs and red tile roof coverings, flat roofs surrounded by tiled parapets, and stuccoed walls. The Spanish vocabulary also includes arches, asymmetry, balconies and patios, window grilles, and wood, wrought iron, tile, or stone decorative elements.

CONSTRUCTION HISTORY: (Construction data, alterations, and date of alterations)

September 26, 1983. Rebuild and seismic rehab
March 6, 1984. Tenant improvements

RELATED FEATURES: (Other important features such as barns, sheds, fences, prominent or unusual trees, or landscape)

None

DESCRIPTION: (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, settings, and boundaries.)

The appearance of this two and three-story brick building dates to its post 1933 earthquake reconstruction and substantial rehabilitation in 1984. An example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style, the building is asymmetrical in its composition, with exposed red brick exterior walls. The focal point of the design is the entry, a two-story high archway located at the southwest corner of the building. The actual doorway is deeply recessed within the barrel-vaulted space. Set high up on the façade next to the opening, a single bulls eye window is the only other feature of this wing, which is crowned by a red tile shed roof. To the north, the flat roofed three-story wing features a row of arched windows beneath a projecting cornice over the first floor. Other notable details of this wing include a row of projecting bricks, which suggest a frieze below the roofline, and shallowly recessed panel containing the current name of the building, "Santa Ana Veterans Hall" on a blue tiled background. In good condition, the building has been modified from its 1934 appearance by the enclosure of some windows and the removal of its stucco facing.

Note: This property has a façade easement with Heritage Orange County.

HISTORIC HIGHLIGHTS:

The Armory Hall/American Legion Hall was built in stages, with the first construction taking place around 1910, a rear addition made in 1922, an entirely new façade created following the Long Beach Earthquake in 1934, and substantial rehabilitation occurring in 1983-84 (Thomas). It was constructed as the third home of Santa Ana's Company L Armory (the first was up the street at 400 West Fourth Street, the second at 214½ East Fourth Street), and was utilized for that purpose from 1910 until the mid-1950s. Founded as the Santa Ana National Guard Company F in 1890, the unit changed its name to Company L when it was called to active duty during the Spanish American War in 1898. The organization played an important dual role in the community, as a vehicle for military service and as a community institution that sponsored social and civic events. Members of Company L provided assistance in the aftermaths of both the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and Fire and the 1933 Long Beach Earthquake, and went on to serve in World Wars I and II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. In World War II, the building was utilized as the West Coast Army Training Center and was used as a broadcasting station. The name of the unit was changed to Company A, 161st Armored Infantry Battalion in 1954 (Marsh).

RESOURCE ATTRIBUTES: (List attributes and codes from Appendix 4 of Instructions for Recording Historical Resources, Office of Historic Preservation.)

(HP13) Community Center/Social Hall
(HP34) Military Property

RESOURCES PRESENT:

Building Structure Object Site District Element of District Other

MOVED? No Yes Unknown Date: _____ Original Location: _____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: (Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, geographic scope, and integrity.)

Santa Ana was founded by William Spurgeon in 1869 as a speculative townsite on part of the Spanish land grant known as Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana. Early growth and development was stimulated by the arrival of the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1878 and the Santa Fe Railroad in 1886. By the end of the 1880s, Santa Ana’s downtown business district was defined by five city blocks of brick commercial buildings on Fourth Street, with the heart of the city at the intersection of Fourth and Main Streets (Thomas, 8:1). The early 1900s witnessed the construction of many new business blocks or remodels along Fourth and the adjacent streets, and by the 1920s Santa Ana’s downtown had expanded in all directions to include both commercial and civic development.

The Armory Hall/American Legion Hall was a significant focal point of the community’s life. Company L was a source of patriotic pride to Santa Ana, and the role it played in war efforts as well as in peace time crises such as the cleanup following the 1933 Long Beach Earthquake has been chronicled in Charles Swanner’s book, *The Story of Company L, Santa Ana’s Own*. This property housed Company L for over 40 years, and was used for drills, as a place of assembly when the unit was called into active duty, and for sponsored activities such as dances and athletic events. The building also possesses architectural interest as an example of the Spanish Colonial Revival of the 1930s, and complements the two Spanish styled buildings around the corner at 309 and 315 West Third Street. Character-defining exterior features of the Armory Hall/American Legion Hall, which should be preserved, include but may not be limited to: brick construction; tile roofing; arched entry; arched and flat-headed window treatments on the façade; brickwork; round window, and architectural detailing such as the first floor cornice.

SUMMARY/CONCLUSION:

This building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1984 as a contributor to the Downtown Historic District. Under the regulations implementing the California Register of Historical Resources, the building is also listed in the California Register. The property is included in the Santa Ana Register of Historical Property and has been categorized as “Landmark” because it “is on the national register,” “is on the state register,” “has historical/cultural significance to the City of Santa Ana,” and “has a unique architectural significance” (Municipal Code, Section 30-2.2).

OWNER AND ADDRESS: _____

RECORDED BY: (Name, affiliation, and address)
Leslie J. Heumann
Science Applications International Corporation
35 S. Raymond Avenue, Suite 204, Pasadena, CA 91105

DATE RECORDED: July 30, 2001

SURVEY TYPE: (Intensive, reconnaissance, or other)
Intensive Survey Update

REPORT CITATION: (Cite survey report and other sources)
Les, Kathleen. "Santa Ana Historic Survey, Final Resources Inventory: Downtown." May 1980.
Thomas, Harold M. "Downtown Santa Ana Historic District" National Register nomination form, 1984.

REFERENCES: (List documents, date of publication, and page numbers. May also include oral interviews.)
Harris, Cyril M. *American Architecture: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*. New York, WW Norton, 1998.
Heritage Orange County and City of Santa Ana, *Downtown Walking Tour*, Santa Ana, 1986.
Marsh, Diann. *Santa Ana, An Illustrated History*. Encinitas, Heritage Publishing, 1994.
McAlester, Virginia and Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984.
National Register Bulletin 16A. "How to Complete the National Register Registration Form."
Washington DC: National Register Branch, National Park Service, US Dept. of the Interior, 1991.
Whiffen, Marcus. *American Architecture Since 1780*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1969.
Swanner, Charles D. *The Story of Company L, Santa Ana's Own*. Claremont: Fraser Press, 1954.

EVALUATOR: Leslie J. Heumann **DATE OF EVALUATION:** July 30, 2001

EXPLANATION OF CODES:

- **National Register Criteria for Evaluation:** (From Appendix 7 of Instructions for Recording Historical Resources, Office of Historic Preservation)
 - A:** that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
 - C:** that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
- **National Register Status Code:** (From Appendix 2 of Instructions for Recording Historical Resources, Office of Historic Preservation)
 - 1D:** Contributor to a listed district.