



NAME	Rohrs Building			REF. NO.	194
ADDRESS	415 North Sycamore Street *				
CITY	Santa Ana	ZIP	92701	ORANGE COUNTY	
YEAR BUILT	1924	LOCAL REGISTER CATEGORY: Contributive			
HISTORIC DISTRICT	Downtown Santa Ana	NEIGHBORHOOD	N/A		
NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION	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Location: Not for Publication Unrestricted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: Other: One- or Two-Story Brick Commercial

DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND RELATED TO PERIOD ARCHITECTURE:

As newly settled American towns grew, commercial centers evolved from simple beginnings of a handful of wood-frame commercial buildings to more permanent construction in brick. One frequently seen building type, the one- or two-story brick commercial building, owed its appearance more to function than to the popular architectural styles. It may be recognized by its relatively modest scale, brick construction, and façade topping parapet, which could be partially raised in a stepped or triangular pattern. Façades were

* See construction history

generally finished with a different color brick than the common red bond used on non-public elevations. Fenestration was straightforward, with storefronts and display windows banded by transoms on lower stories and double-hung sash on upper stories, when present. Symmetry, with a central emphasis keyed by the parapet, was common. Architectural detailing, if any, was picked out by contrasting color bricks or by variations in brick patterns. Commercial buildings of this type began appearing in the late 19th century and persisted through the first two or three decades of the 20th century. In later years, the building type was often adapted to automobile-related uses, such as garages and repair shops.

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

Note: Historically, this building also included the address 413 North Sycamore Street.

August 16, 1927.	Alterations for Rohrs.	September 2, 1983.	Demo front 20 feet of building to install elevator.
May 24, 1945.	Stair to basement & mezzanine floor.		
October 1, 1948.	Alterations to store building.	October 7, 1983.	Seismic rehab, interior alterations.
January 13, 1950.	Alterations to business.	July 9, 1984.	Tenant improvement (1 st floor and basement).
July 13, 1950.	Alteration to store building basement.	October 12, 1984.	Tenant improvement and fire corridor (2 nd floor).
October 1, 1952.	Alteration within business building.	May 20, 1988.	Tenant improvement.

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.)

Located on the east side of Sycamore Street, between the Rankin Department Store building and the Ramona Building, this is a two-story commercial building intended to house retail establishments on the ground level and offices on the upper story. Of brick construction, the façade is faced with the original salmon colored brick on the upper story while the lower story has been covered with brown colored brick. The roof is shielded by a stepped parapet, raised in the center to accommodate a tablet inscribed “ROHRS BLDG 1924.” A molding course caps the parapet. Glazed white brick defines a paneled frieze between stories and frames the three identical windows located on the upper level. The two street level storefronts have been enclosed and completely altered, probably in the mid 1980s.

HISTORIC HIGHLIGHTS:

The Rohrs Building was constructed in 1924 by George Preble for Fred Rohrs, a pioneer resident of Santa Ana and a close friend of the Spurgeon family (Marsh, 48). The upstairs tenant for many years was the Business Institute and Secretarial School, later the Johnson Business Institute. Street level stores included Haber’s Ladies Furnishings and later, Remington Rand Business Equipment. By the 1950s, the property was owned by Rankin’s Department Store, located next door to the south.

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

(HP 6) 1-3 story Commercial Building

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 Rohrs Building is architecturally noteworthy for its intact upper story and parapet, which remain sufficiently intact to imply its 1920s construction date, even with the storefront alterations. The characteristic features of this vernacular type of American “Main Street” architecture include the brick construction, stepped parapet, and the use of contrasting brick to pick out architectural elements based on a classical vocabulary. Character-defining exterior features of the Rohrs Building, therefore, which should be preserved, include but are not limited to: brick exterior; white glazed brick trim; parapet; second floor bay division; and the inscribed name piece.

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 “Contributive” for its contribution to “the overall character and history” of downtown Santa Ana and as a “good example of period architecture” that “has not been substantially altered” (Municipal Code, Section 30-2.2(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 3, 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.
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 Department of the Interior, 1991.
Whiffen, Marcus. *American Architecture Since 1780*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1969.

EVALUATOR: Leslie J. Heumann **DATE OF EVALUATION:** July 3, 2001

EXPLANATION OF CODES:

- National Register Criteria for Evaluation: (From Appendix 7 of Instructions for Recording Historical Resources, Office of Historic Preservation)
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.