

635 SOUTH STREET (COMMERCIAL BUILDING)
Long Beach
Los Angeles County
California

HABS CA-2859
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CA-2859

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

635 SOUTH STREET (COMMERCIAL BUILDING)

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Location: The commercial building is located at 635 South Street, North Long Beach, California. The commercial building faces South Street to the south, and is bounded by 59th Street on the north, Atlantic Avenue on the west, and Lime Avenue on the east. The commercial building is situated on the north corner of Lot 30, Block 16 of Tract 6521 (Assessor's ID 7124-032-916).

The coordinates for 635 South Street are 33.860331 N, 118.184117 W; these were obtained using Google Earth and, it is assumed, NAD 1983. There is no restriction on the release of the locational data to the public.

Present Owner
and Occupant:

City of Long Beach Redevelopment Agency.

Present Use:

The subject property was constructed as a "Store Building" for commercial uses. The building is currently unoccupied.

Significance:

The building was designed in a vernacular commercial style with some post-World War II modern elements. Construction was completed by Alvin L. Odell in 1948, and Howard's 5-10-25 Cent Store occupied the building between 1948 and 1960. The building is representative of the economic growth and development history of North Long Beach, specifically Atlantic Avenue and vicinity, following the end of World War II.

Project Information:

This architectural recordation project, an Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) Level II documentation for 635 South Street, was prepared for The City of Long Beach Redevelopment Agency, Long Beach, California. The documentation was undertaken by PCR Services Corporation (PCR), Santa Monica, California. The survey, research, and written documentation was conducted and prepared by PCR historians, Margarita J. Wuellner, Ph.D., Director of Historic Resources, Jon Wilson, M.Arch., Senior Historian, and Amanda Kainer, M.S., Assistant Architectural Historian. The HABS photography was completed by Tavo Olmos, Positive Image Photographic Services, Irvine, California. The project was conducted during December 2009.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: The building was constructed in 1948.
2. Architects: Unknown.
3. Original and subsequent owners, occupants, uses: The original owners were H.J. Welborn and J.J. Beaumont. Purpose-built for retail, the original tenant was Howard's 5-10-25 Cent Store.
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Alvin L. Odell.
5. Original plans and construction: The original layout of the subject property was a rectangular plan with a public commercial space located along South Street and a private storage and work space in the rear of the building. 635 South Street was constructed as a one-story building measuring 40 feet wide, 80 feet long, and 19 feet tall. It was built with wood framing, stucco walls, and finished with paint. The four structural columns supporting the street-facing, primary elevation are either steel or wood with a field-stone veneer.
6. Alterations and additions: Overall, the exterior of 635 South Street is largely unaltered, but the interior has been remodeled and the original spatial layout and function compromised. The original tenant was Howard's 5-10-25 Cent Store, who occupied the building until 1960. Since 1960, the building has had several occupants who completed tenant improvements to serve their commercial needs. There are no building permits on record at the City of Long Beach documenting the changes; however, interior changes were visible during the site survey.

B. Historical Context:

The Development of North Long Beach¹

The project site is located in the area of Long Beach known as North Long Beach. The area was located within Rancho Cerritos, subdivided in 1887 as the California Colony Tract, a predominantly agricultural area in the early twentieth century. The southern boundary of the subdivision was South Street. The development potential of North Long Beach increased when the Los Angeles Flood District was established during the winter of 1914-1915 to address the flooding created from the Dominguez creek, Rio Hondo, and Los Angeles River.

¹ *Historic Context taken from: San Buenaventura Research Associates. "Historic Setting." North Village Center EIR, Long Beach, 2007, pgs. 3-4.*

The discovery of oil in 1921 and the construction of a modern harbor between 1925 and 1930 sparked an unprecedented boom in the building industry in Long Beach, including associated residential, commercial and industrial development. The acute demand for housing and the availability of capital resulted in the residential and commercial development of North Long Beach. The Virginia Club relocated from Rancho Los Alamitos to Rancho Los Cerritos in 1921, as a result North Long Beach began to attract more prosperous residents. To support the increase in residential density, commercial corridors developed along Atlantic Avenue and American Avenue (now Long Beach Boulevard), which continued into the late 1940s. The North Long Beach area was annexed to the City of Long Beach in 1923.

The stock market crash in 1929 and the 1933 Long Beach Earthquake had a devastating impact on the built environment, both financial and physical. In 1935, thanks to funding from the federal Works Progress Administration, parks and transportation facilities as well as civic and recreational buildings in the city were improved. By the eve of World War II, the local economy was sufficiently reinvigorated by the oil and air transportation industries and as a result commercial building accelerated in the vicinity of this North Long Beach thoroughfare. The wartime defense industry served to fully restore it, unlike many Southern California communities, which only truly rebounded in the postwar period. Once again, Long Beach was infused with work, money and people, and crowds came back to the seaside Pike Amusement Park.² By the mid-twentieth century, a Sanborn Map from 1950 illustrates Atlantic Avenue had been entirely developed between 59th Street and 56th Street, with rows of one-story commercial buildings, restaurants, furniture stores, a movie theater, a gasoline station, and an automobile service garage.³

635 South Street

The commercial building at 635 South Street in North Long Beach was constructed by Alvin L. Odell in 1948 for the owners, H.J. Welborn and J.J. Beaumont.⁴ Between 1948 and 1960, Howard's 5-10-25 Cent Store occupied the commercial building.

2 *Historic Context taken from: San Buenaventura Research Associates. "Historic Setting." North Village Center EIR, Long Beach, 2007, pgs. 3-4.*

3 *Sanborn Map Company. Los Angeles, California. Volume 3, Sheet 318.*

4 *Long Beach Department of Building and Safety. Permit and Inspection Record. 635 South Street. #L-4278. May 13, 1948.*

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Constructed in 1948, the form, architectural details, and materials of the 3,200 square foot building reflect the influences of the vernacular commercial style with some post-World War II modern elements, which are evident in the building's massing, and glazed storefront.
2. Condition of fabric: The building is in good condition. It appears that the building has been regularly maintained over the years with few changes to the exterior.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The one-story commercial building is primarily rectangular with overall dimensions of approximately 80 feet long by 40 feet wide by 19 feet high.
2. Foundations: The commercial building sits on a reinforced concrete foundation.
3. Walls: The exterior walls are clad in stucco and finished with paint. The four structural columns supporting the street-facing primary elevation have a field-stone veneer.
4. Structural system, framing: The exterior walls are made of wood-frame construction and are clad in stucco and finished with paint. The four structural columns supporting the street-facing primary elevation are made of either steel or wood and cloaked with a field-stone veneer.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The primary entrance consists of two wood door openings with a transom window above each door. The rear of the building has both an original wood panel entrance door and a double door for loading and unloading.
 - b. Windows: There are two pairs of fixed single-light storefront windows divided by an aluminum mullion and supported by an aluminum frame on the primary (south) elevation and one pair on the corner east elevation. The windows have low knee walls with a field-stone veneer. There are five fixed windows on the east elevation with wood frames, mullions, and muntins, and two double hung single-light windows with metal bars on the rear (north) elevation. There is one slender fixed window with metal bars also on the rear (north) elevation.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: There is a flat roof with a metal capped parapet.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The subject property has a rectangular plan with a public commercial space located along South Street and a private storage and work space in the rear of the building.
2. Flooring: The interior floors are made of concrete.
- 3: Wall and ceiling finish: The interior walls are made of gypsum board.
4. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation: The building is heated and air-conditioned.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

City of Long Beach Department of Development Services, Building Division,
Building Permits.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Bartolotto, Julie. Historical Society of Long Beach. "Re: 635 South Street." Email to the author. 29 December 2009.

B. Likely sources not yet investigated:

Papers of the significant persons associated with 635 South Street.

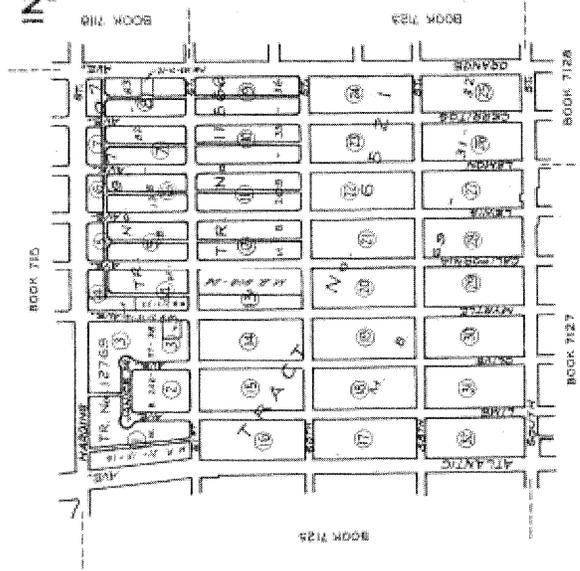
C. Supplemental material:

Los Angeles County Assessor's Tract Map.
Los Angeles County Assessor's Index Map.
Sanborn Map Company. Long Beach, California. 1914-1950. Volume 3, Sheet 318.
Current Aerial. Google Maps.

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7124
SCALE 1/4" = 400'
INDEX MAP

INDEX - 7124
SCALE 1/4" = 400'



CITY OF LONG BEACH

REGISTERED MAP
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, CALIF.

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