

ORDINANCE NO. C- 6763

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE
CITY OF LONG BEACH AMENDING THE LONG BEACH
MUNICIPAL CODE BY ADDING SECTION 16.52.670
RELATING TO THE NOMINATION OF A COMMERCIAL
STRUCTURE AT 240 LONG BEACH BOULEVARD AS
AN HISTORICAL LANDMARK

The City Council of the City of Long Beach ordains as
follows:

Section 1. Section 16.52.670 is added to the Long
Beach Municipal Code to read as follows:

16.52.670 240 LONG BEACH BOULEVARD

Pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 2.63 and
with the recommendation of the Planning Commission,
the City Council designates the following building as
an historical landmark in the City: A commercial
structure at 240 Long Beach Boulevard.

A. Location, description and reasons for designation. Located at 240 Long Beach Boulevard in the City of Long Beach, this commercial building was built in 1924 and has been in continuous commercial use in downtown Long Beach for over fifty years. Its Streamline Moderne facade, added in the 1930s, is an intact and typical period piece. Framed by curving piers with vertical accents, the facade exhibits the

1 typical three horizontal lines and chevron moldings.
2 The south pier rises in three curved steps to form a
3 characteristic tower reminiscent of the contemporary
4 "skyscrapers". The separation of the transom from
5 the display windows below is typical of the original
6 1924 building. The facade, a classic Streamline
7 Moderne design, is the result of post-earthquake
8 repairs, representing the rebuilding of downtown Long
9 Beach in the "modernistic" style of the 1930s.

10 As home to Acres of Books, it is an established
11 and familiar feature on Long Beach Boulevard that has
12 a regional attraction. Acres of Books is a unique
13 and highly valued bookstore which has been in
14 continuous operation as a family-run business for
15 over fifty years. It is a mecca for bibliophiles,
16 and is widely recognized as a unique cultural
17 resource all over the region.

18 Bertrand Smith, who established Acres of Books
19 in Long Beach in 1936, was a nationally recognized
20 antiquarian book dealer. In 1959 he made a very
21 generous and important gift to the City of Long
22 Beach, donating more than two hundred and fifty rare
23 and old editions to the Long Beach Public Library.
24 These volumes are now kept in the Miller Room. As a
25 philanthropist and benefactor to the City and its
26 people, Mr. Smith was a person significant in the
27 past.

28 B. General guidelines and standards for any

John R. Calhoun
City Attorney of Long Beach
333 West Ocean Boulevard
Long Beach, California 90802
Telephone (213) 590-6061

1 changes. The "Standards for Rehabilitation and
2 Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings"
3 prepared by the Secretary of the Interior (Revised,
4 1983), as amended, are incorporated by reference, and
5 they, along with the following additional guidelines
6 and standards as recommended by the Cultural Heritage
7 Commission shall apply to the landmark:

8 Any alterations, modifications or repair of the
9 above structure shall be done so in keeping with its
10 historic character, and any alteration, modifications
11 or changes shall follow the Secretary of Interior's
12 Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for
13 Rehabilitating Historic Buildings.

14 No environmental changes shall be permitted to
15 the exterior of the building unless a Certificate of
16 Appropriateness has been applied for and approved by
17 the Cultural Heritage Commission or by the City
18 Planning Commission, upon appeal, authorizing such
19 environmental changes.

20
21 Sec. 2. The City Clerk shall certify to the passage
22 of this ordinance by the City Council and cause it to be posted
23 in three conspicuous places in the City of Long Beach, and it
24 shall take effect on the thirty-first day after it is approved
25 by the Mayor.

26 I certify that the foregoing ordinance was adopted by

27 ///

28 ///

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the City Council of the City of Long Beach at its meeting of
July 24, 1990, by the following vote:

Ayes: Councilmembers: Braude, Edgerton, Drummond, Clark,
Robbins, Smith, Kellogg, Harwood.

Noes: Councilmembers: None.

Absent: Councilmembers: Grabinski.



City Clerk

Approved:

7-27-90
(Date)


Mayor

WHK/am
05/31/90
06/18/90
OR\120.HL

ACRES OF BOOKS
240 Long Beach Blvd.

Criteria for Designation

- A. It possesses a significant character, interest or value attributable to the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, the southern California region, the state or the nation or if it is associated with the life of a person significant in the past.

Acres of Books is a unique and highly valued bookstore, which has been in continuous operation as a family-run business for over 50 years. It is a mecca for bibliophiles, and is widely recognized as a unique cultural institution all over the region.

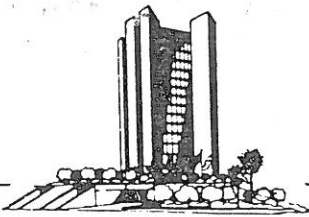
Bertram Smith, who established Acres of Books in Long Beach in 1936, was a nationally recognized antiquarian book dealer. In 1959, he made a very generous and unique gift to the City of Long Beach, donating more than 250 rare and old editions to the Long Beach Public Library. These volumes are now kept in the Miller Room. As a philanthropist and benefactor to the City and its people, Mr. Smith was a person significant in the past.

- D. It portrays the environment in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style.

Its Streamline Moderne facade, the result of post-earthquake repairs, is an intact and typical period piece. Framed by curving piers with vertical accents, the facade exhibits the typical three horizontal lines and chevron moldings. The south pier rises in three increments to form a characteristic tower. The separation of the transom from the display windows below is typical of the original 1924 building.

- I. It represents an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood or community due to its unique location or specific distinguishing characteristic.

This store has been a unique Long Beach institution for over 50 years, and is an important part of downtown Long Beach. It is an established and familiar feature on Long Beach Boulevard, and the lively visual characteristics of the Streamline Modern style lend it distinction among its bland neighbors.



CITY OF LONG BEACH

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & BUILDING

333 WEST OCEAN BLVD. • LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA 90802

(213) 590-6651

July 17, 1990

HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
City of Long Beach
California

SUBJECT: CULTURAL HERITAGE LANDMARK DESIGNATION
240 Long Beach Boulevard
(Acres of Books)

BACKGROUND:

This building was identified as worthy of landmark designation in the Expanded Downtown Historic Survey completed in July 1988. It is one of a group of important structures in the downtown area that have been recommended for landmark status by the Cultural Heritage Commission.

The building is significant for the following reasons:

- 1) It is an intact and excellent example of Streamline Moderne architecture, representing the rebuilding of Long Beach following the '33 earthquake. The original building was constructed in 1924 to house a market. The Streamline Moderne/Art Deco facade exemplifies a style popular in the '30's, but few examples of this quality still exist in Long Beach. The horizontal bands, stepped tower, chevron design and curving corners are hallmarks of that style.
- 2) Bertram Smith, founder of Acres of Books, was a nationally renowned antiquarian book dealer and benefactor of the City of Long Beach Public Library. He founded Acres of Books in Long Beach in 1936 in another location, and moved to the present building in 1960. In 1959, he made a major donation of more than 250 rare books and old editions to the Long Beach Public Library. The Bertram Smith Gift Collection has been placed in the Miller Room.
- 3) Acres of Books is widely regarded as a unique bookstore, a source for antiquarian book dealers, mecca for lovers of books and repository of hard-to-find volumes. It is considered a regional resource and a magnet for special-interest visitors. It is the largest used bookstore in the West, and possibly in the nation. As such it is a "unique and irreplaceable asset," worthy of the City's protection.

The Cultural Heritage Commission found that this building met three of the City's criteria for landmark designation (see attached report).

The Director of Planning and Building and the Director of Redevelopment have reviewed this nomination and have concerns relating to the long-term preservation of the building. Its mid-block location and low scale make it difficult to undertake the large-scale redevelopment of the entire block. However, if the building is threatened in the future, the cultural significance of Acres of Books may be addressed by:

- relocating the business to a building equivalent in volume and satisfactory to the owners, and photographing the building before demolition.
- Breaking up a large-scale development scheme into smaller components, which can be situated around Acres of Books.

Landmark designation would mean that a demolition request is subject to a six-month delay, to allow an opportunity to explore alternatives to demolition. This time may be used by other City agencies to provide for relocation and documentation, if alternatives to demolition are not viable.

It should be noted that the existing building meets the City's current 1991 seismic ordinance.

This nomination was approved unanimously by the Cultural Heritage Commission on September 7, 1989, and by the Planning Commission on November 30, 1990. The City has received numerous letters of support for designation, and a petition signed by 193 people.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE CITY COUNCIL:

Declare ordinance read the first time and held over to the next regular meeting of the City Council for the final reading, designating 240 Long Beach Boulevard as a cultural heritage landmark.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Schauer, Chair
City Planning Commission

by: 
Robert J. Paternoster
Director of Planning and Building

JS:RJP:RAL:1cr
ACRES.CC

Attachment

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

Ser. No. _____
HABS _____ HAER _____ NR 5 SHL _____ Loc _____
UTM: A _____ B _____
C _____ D _____

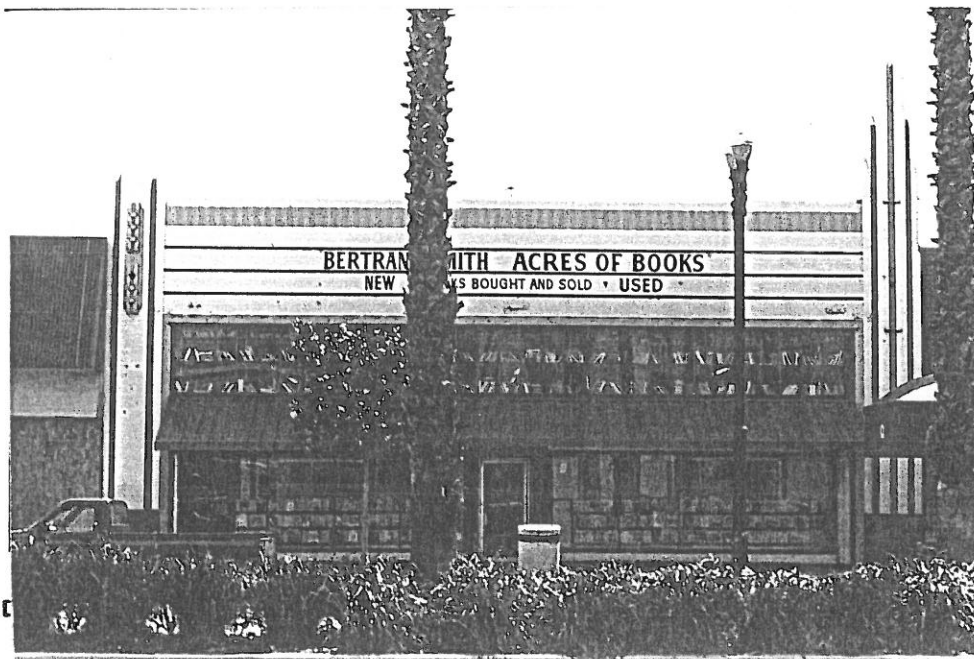
IDENTIFICATION

1. Common name: Acres of Books
2. Historic name: _____
3. Street or rural address: 240 Long Beach Boulevard
City Long Beach Zip 90802 County Los Angeles
4. Parcel number: 7281-017-011
5. Present Owner: E. Phillip Smith, Alice L. Smith Address: 240 Long Beach Blvd.
City Long Beach Zip 90802 Ownership is: Public _____ Private X
6. Present Use: Commercial Original use: Commercial

DESCRIPTION

- 7a. Architectural style: Streamline Moderne
- 7b. Briefly describe the present *physical description* of the site or structure and describe any major alterations from its original condition:

The facade of this one-story plus mezzanine commercial building suggests a Streamline Moderne market, a supposition born out by a 1933 post-earthquake building repair permit. Broad piers frame the glazed exterior. The right (south) pier rises in three increments to form a characteristic tower or marquee while the shorter left pier is ornamented at frieze level. Spanning the top and bottom frieze are two chevron moldings. Although the storefront, with its single, central entry has been re-glazed, it retains the original separation of the transom from the display windows below. A metal canopy has been added, emphasizing the separation. The building is in good condition.



8. Construction date: 1924
Estimated _____ Factual X
9. Architect Unknown
10. Builder Unknown
11. Approx. property size (in feet)
Frontage 50 Depth 250
or approx. acreage _____
12. Date(s) of enclosed photograph(s)
April, 1988

13. Condition: Excellent ____ Good X Fair ____ Deteriorated ____ No longer in existence ____
14. Alterations: Street level facade
15. Surroundings: (Check more than one if necessary) Open land ____ Scattered buildings ____ Densely built-up X
Residential ____ Industrial ____ Commercial X Other: _____
16. Threats to site: None known ____ Private development X Zoning X Vandalism ____
Public Works project ____ Other: _____
17. Is the structure: On its original site? X Moved? ____ Unknown? ____
18. Related features: _____

SIGNIFICANCE

19. Briefly state historical and/or architectural importance (include dates, events, and persons associated with the site.)

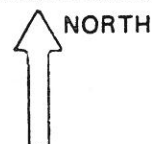
Originally constructed in 1924, this building housed a neighborhood market. When it was damaged in the 1933 earthquake, the owner, Security Foundation Ltd. hired the General Contracting Co. to rebuild. The building was reconstructed in an Art Deco style, popular in Southern California in the 1930s. The building today retains the horizontal banding, vertical piers, and glazing which are representative of the style. It continues to maintain a visual link to the commercial past of Long Beach and is compatible in scale with its neighbors.

Founded by Bertram Lee Smith, the first location of Acres of Books was at 140 Pacific, established in 1936. The store was relocated to Long Beach Boulevard in 1960.

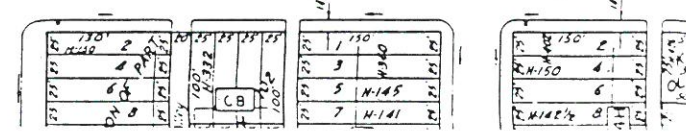
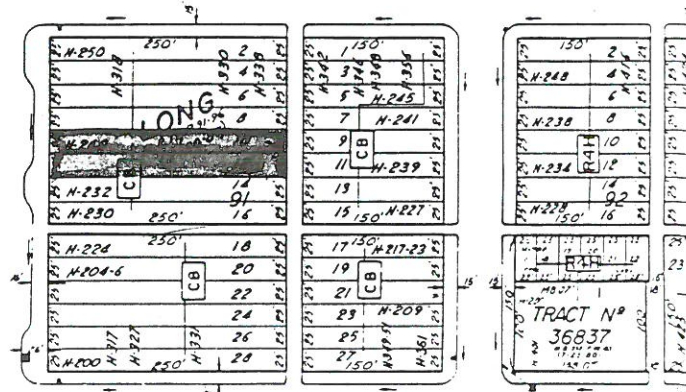
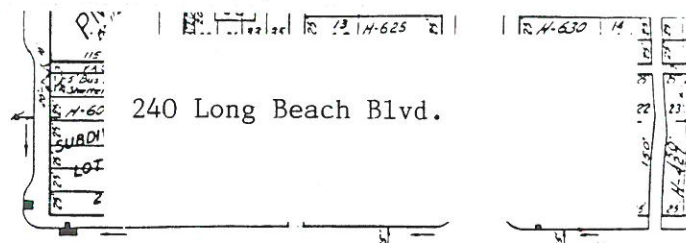
The building had served several functions: market, car dealership and nightclub, prior to housing the bookstore.

20. Main theme of the historic resource: (If more than one is checked, number in order of importance.)
Architecture X Arts & Leisure ____
Economic/Industrial ____ Exploration/Settlement ____
Government ____ Military ____
Religion ____ Social/Education X
21. Sources (List books, documents, surveys, personal interviews and their dates).
1980 Long Beach Cultural Heritage Survey
Los Angeles County Tax Assessor Local Roll, 1986 and 1987
1960 Sanborn Maps
Southwest Builder & Contractor, various dates
22. Date form prepared October, 1988
By (name) Johnson Heumann Research for
Organization City of Long Beach Comm. Dev. Dept.
Address: 333 W. Ocean Blvd.
City Long Beach Zip 90802
Phone: (213) 590-6342

Locational sketch map (draw and label site and surrounding streets, roads, and prominent landmarks):



See continuation sheet



HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

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UTM: A _____ B _____
C _____ D _____

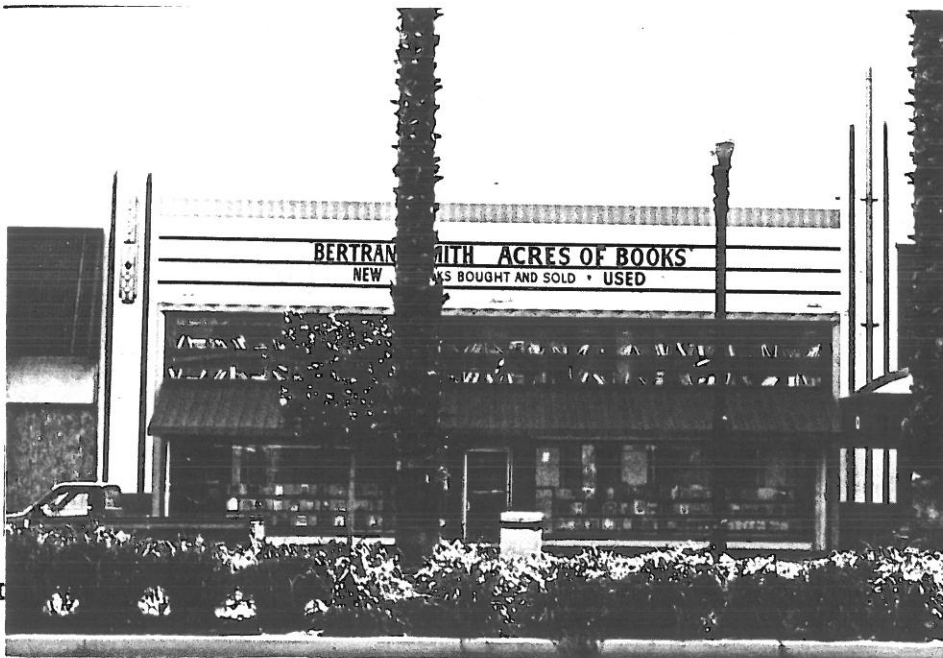
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