National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

Name of Property	
storic name Bekins Storage Co. Roof Sign	
ner names/site numberStandard Fireproof Storage Co. Roof Sign	
Location	
reet & number511 S. Fair Oaks Avenue	not for publication
y or town Pasadena	□ vicinity
ate California code CA county Los Angeles	
State/Federal Agency Certification	and the second s
Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this professionally statewide locally (See continuation sheet for additional continuation of certifying official/Title	ments.)
meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this properties of the participality of statewide locality (See continuation sheet for additional continua	ments.)
Mark does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property See continuation sheet for additional considerable Signature of certifying official/Title Date Date	ments.)
meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property statewide locally (See continuation sheet for additional comments) Signature of certifying official/Title Date California Office of Historic Preservation State of Federal agency and bureau In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteric comments.) Signature of certifying official/Title Date	ments.)
Mational Park Service Certification Register criteria. recommend that this property Date	ia. (See continuation sheet for additional
Mational Park Service Certification Register criteria. recommend that this property Date	ia. (See continuation sheet for additional Date of Actio
Mational Park Service Certification Mational Register.	ia. (See continuation sheet for additional Date of Action
Mational Park Service Certification Register criteria. recommend that this property Date	ia. (See continuation sheet for additional Date of Action
Mational Park Service Certification Signature of the National Register Criteria. Tecommend that this property Date Date	ia. (See continuation sheet for additional
Mational Park Service Certification State or Federal agency and bureau	ia. (See continuation sheet for additional Date of Action

Bekins Storage Co. Roof Sign Name of Property

Los Angeles County, California County and State

5. Classification		N t of Doo	average within Bromark		
Ownership of Property Check as many boxes as apply)	ership of Property (as many boxes as apply) Category of Property (Check only one box)		Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)		
⊠ private	☐ building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing		
☐ public-local ☐ public-State ☐ public-Federal	☐ district ☐ site ☐ structure ☒ object	0	1	buildings	
		0	0	sites	
		0	0	structure	
		1	0	objects	
		1	1	Total	
Name of related multiple p (Enter "N/A" if property is not part	of a multiple property listing.)	in the National	tributing resources pr Register	eviously listed	
Early Automobile-Related	Properties in Pasadena (1897-	-1944)0		11.00	
6. Function or Use		Current Function			
Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)		(Enter categories from			
OTHER: Commercial Adv	vertising	OTHER: Comm	ercial Advertising		
7. Description					
Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions		Materials (Enter categories from	instructions)		
OTHER: Roof Sign		foundation N/A			
	•	walls N/A			
		roofN/A			
		other ME	TAL/Steel		
		OTI	HER: Neon		

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Continuation Sheet(s).

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

	7 _	1 of 1	DESCRIPTION
Section number	Page		

Bekins Storage Co. Roof Sign Pasadena, Los Angeles County, CA

DESCRIPTION

The Bekins Storage Co. Roof Sign is a large, two-sided, neon roof sign atop the four-story Bekins Storage Co. Building. Each rectangular metal face is approximately 32 feet long and 12 feet high. The sign is mounted perpendicular to the street on a steel frame, some 60 feet above the ground. The sign is visible for several blocks in both directions along South Fair Oaks Avenue, originally part of historic Route 66 and a major transportation corridor in the city.

The two sign faces are identical, with individual, open channel, metal can letters with white returns and neon. The sign text, "BEKINS STORAGE CO.," all in serif capital letters, is broken into two lines separated by scrollwork on a dark green field. "BEKINS" extends across the top of the sign, with the individual letters distinctively skewed by an arced baseline like the Bekins company logo. "BEKINS" in green neon is separated from "STORAGE CO." in red neon by light blue neon scrollwork, also with metal cans. "MOVING" in dark blue neon, with no metal cans, alternatingly flashes over the "STORAGE CO." line of text.

The sign was originally designed and installed with bulb lighting in 1926 by Noice and Merrill Engineers and the Greenwood Advertising Company with the text "STANDARD FIREPROOF STORAGE CO." In 1929 the originally bulb-lit sign was converted by electricians J. E. Davies and J. F. Winn to neon and the text was apparently changed at that time to "BEKINS STORAGE CO."—replacing the first two words in the same style letters as the original and retaining the second two words—and the scrollwork was added. The sign remains unaltered from its 1929 appearance.

The Bekins Storage Co. Building is a four-story reinforced-concrete warehouse, industrial in appearance with modest Spanish Renaissance Revival-style ornamentation on the primary elevation. The building was designed by architect J. J. Blick and constructed by civil engineer and builder Clarence P. Day in 1925-26 for the Standard Fireproof Storage Company. The three-story walls of the Pasadena Biscuit Company, completely gutted by fire in c.1925, were incorporated into the new building. Bekins Van & Storage Company purchased the building in 1928. The building is non-contributing.

The Bekins Storage Co. Building is considered a non-contributor for purposes of this nomination since it is not associated with the context (Influences of the Automobile on Other Businesses, 1924-1944) under study for the multiple property nomination, "Early Auto Related Properties in Pasadena." Designating the building a non-contributor is not intended to convey an assessment that it is unimportant or non-historic. Future study may indicate the building has significance within another context, for example, industrial architecture in Pasadena. If such significance is established, the building will be re-classified.

Record #_

Los Angeles County, California County and State

8. Statement of Significance	
Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property in the criteria property in the crit	
for National Register listing.)	COMMERCE
A Property is associated with events that have ma a significant contribution to the broad patterns o our history.	de ARCHITECTURE f
☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.	
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant a distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.	
□ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.	
Criteria Considerations (Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)	Significant Dates
S. Carrier Land	1920, 1929
Property is:	
A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.	Significant Person
□ B removed from its original location.	(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
☐ C a birthplace or grave.	N/A
C a birtiplace of grave.	Cultural Affiliation
□ D a cemetery.	
\square E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.	N/A
□ F a commemorative property.	
☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significa	nce Architect/Builder
within the past 50 years.	N/A
Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continua	ation sheets.)
9. Major Bibliographical References	
Bibilography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing thi	is form on one or more continuation sheets.)
	Primary location of additional data:
Previous documentation on file (NPS): ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (3 CFR 67) has been requested ☐ previously listed in the National Register ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register	☐ State Historic Preservation Office ☐ Other State agency ☐ Federal agency
 ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey 	20 - T C C C C C. C. (1975) (1974) (1984) (1984) (1984) (1984) (1984) (1984) (1984) (1984) (1984) (1984) (1984) (1984) (1984) (1984) (1984) (1984) (1984) (1984) (1984)
#	Design & Historic Preservation Archives
recorded by Historic American Engineering	CITY OF PASADENA/Planning & Permitting Dept.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number ___8 Page __1 of 3

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Bekins Storage Co. Roof Sign Pasadena, Los Angeles County, CA

SIGNIFICANCE

The Bekins Storage Co. Roof Sign is locally significant for its associations with the historic context, "Influences of the Automobile on Other Businesses (1924-1944)," under Criterion A in the area of Commercial Advertising and Criterion C in the area of Commercial Signage as a locally significant example of early large roof signs and projecting signs in Pasadena and of commercial signage primarily meant to be read from the passing automobile. The Bekins roof sign, with sign faces approximately 32 feet long and 12 feet high, was constructed as a bulb-lit sign in 1926 and converted to neon in 1929; it retains its 1929 appearance. The two-sided sign was strategically positioned atop the four-story Bekins Storage Co. Building—some 60 feet above the ground and mounted perpendicular to the street—to be visible in both directions for several blocks along South Fair Oaks Avenue, originally part of historic Route 66 (1926-1940; the route changed in 1940 with the opening of the Arroyo Seco Parkway) and a major transportation corridor in the city and the surrounding area up to the present day.

The Bekins roof sign is the best-remaining example of the many large roof signs and projecting signs constructed in Pasadena prior to World War II: it is one of the oldest-surviving roof signs, a once-common form of commercial advertising meant to be viewed at a distance and which took on added significance with the introduction of the automobile; it is one of the oldest-remaining examples and earliest large-scale uses of neon, whose introduction in the 1920s revolutionized commercial signage; and it is the most distinctive of the remaining pre-war roof signs—in terms of design, size, location/visibility, and use of neon—in the city.

Coinciding with the advent of the streetcar system in Pasadena in the 1890s and followed closely by the introduction of the automobile in the Los Angeles area in 1897, the orientation of commercial signage changed and signs became a more significant part of the local landscape in the first decades of the twentieth century. Large illuminated roof-top signs and projecting signs had an early association with theaters, movie palaces, and department stores, all dependent on attracting large crowds, but the use of large illuminated signs became more practical and widespread with turn-of-the-century advancements in electrification and illumination—and necessary when commercial establishments could no longer rely solely on foot traffic for business by virtue of the increased mobility of customers and the increased business competition it permitted. With the considerable growth of the southern California region during the subsequent decades, the interrelated ascension of the automobile as the chief mode of transportation, and the introduction of neon in Los Angeles in 1923, the 1920s-1930s was a tremendously prolific period for commercial signage in Pasadena and the greater Los Angeles area.

More and more signs were designed to be visible from greater distances, and at greater speeds, and to incorporate illumination, animation and special effects, novelty, color, and other features which could catch the eye and draw the attention of passers-by. Large wall signs were painted directly on the sides of buildings. Signs became larger in size, with bigger lettering, and were placed in more highly prominent locations, such as on roof tops or mounted on the sides of buildings. Signs were illuminated to increase their visibility and appeal to streetcar and

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number ____8 Page __2 of 3

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Bekins Storage Co. Roof Sign Pasadena, Los Angeles County, CA

automobile passengers alike. Large signs and billboards appeared adjacent major transportation routes and the emerging highway system. Signage became an important component in commercial buildings and, in the extreme cases, the integration of architecture and signage became indistinguishable, as with programmatic or so-called "Roadside" architecture. Most significant in the design and illumination of signs was the use of neon, which completely transformed commercial advertising in the myriad of design possibilities it presented.

Neon was introduced in the United States in 1923 by a Los Angeles Packard dealer, who purchased two neon signs in Paris which virtually "stopped traffic in downtown Los Angeles. The police complained that the neon was causing a traffic jam and neon took California by storm." Frenchman Georges Claude was the early leader in the use of neon and argon gas, having pioneered its development with key inventions in the commercial fractional distillation of neon in 1907 and the development of a corrosion-resistant electrode, patented in 1915. Claude granted a territorial franchise in Los Angeles in 1924. Neon offered many advantages in comparison to earlier light sources; with its flexible luminosity, limitless configurations, and range of color combinations, neon soon became the primary method of illumination for commercial signage. The use of neon in the United States, like the automobile, was closely associated with the economic, technological, and cultural shifts of the 1920s and 1930s—a period of popular consumerism and "Machine Age modernism"—apparent also in the rise of industrial design and the emergence of the Art Deco, Streamline Moderne, and International styles.²

By the 1920s and 1930s, large roof signs and projecting signs were a common form of commercial advertising for theaters, department stores, banks, and other larger business establishments in Pasadena, including Jensen's Raymond Theater (c.1921), Clune's Pasadena Theater (c.1920), the Washington Theater (1925), Security National Bank (c.1920s), Sears Roebucks (c.1920s), Bekins Storage Co. (1926), and the Pasadena Star-News (c.1926-1930s). Most of the early signs were bulb-lit signs, but by the late 1920s many incorporated neon. Some roof signs, like the Bekins sign, were bulb-lit signs converted to neon. Most large roof signs and projecting signs were located on or oriented toward the city's major thoroughfares, with the largest signs meant to be visible from Colorado Boulevard even if the signs were located several blocks away. With the establishent of the National Old Trails Route in 1913 and the designation in 1926 of Colorado Boulevard and South Fair Oaks Avenue as part of Route 66, signage oriented toward these streets was meant not only for local and seasonal consumption, but for the many newcomers traveling the route as well.

The Bekins Storage Co. roof sign is the only surviving example of the large roof signs and projecting signs from the pre-war period constructed in Pasadena. Other large signs have been removed, the result of seismic concerns, failed businesses, or replacement with more contemporary signage. The City's zoning code no longer allows roof signs and some projecting signs, and a non-conforming sign abatement program in the 1970s-1980s required

¹ Stern, p. 36.

² Ibid.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number ___8 Page __3 of 3

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Bekins Storage Co. Roof Sign Pasadena, Los Angeles County, CA

the removal of many of the remaining early signs. [The city created a Historic Sign Inventory, which includes the Bekins roof sign, in the late 1980s which exempts historic pre-1960 signs from the current code requirements. Most of the signs in the inventory are from the post-war period.] A few small roof and projecting signs also remain from the period, but none of the relative size, distinctive period design, use of neon, or prominence of location as the Bekins roof sign. The Bekins sign sits atop the Bekins Storage Co. Building, a non-contributor.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

		9		1 of 1
Section	number		Page	

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bekins Storage Co. Roof Sign Pasadena, Los Angeles County, CA

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Advertisement for Bekins Van & Storage Company, in the Pasadena Star-News, October 10, 1928.

Building Permit (May 1926), Electrical Permit #4212G (June 1, 1926), Electrical Permit (January 29, 1929), City of Pasadena.

"City of Pasadena Historic Context Statements," prepared by Pamela O'Connor for City of Pasadena, Design & Historic Preservation Section, Planning Division, unpublished draft 1992.

"Early Automobile-Related Properties in Pasadena (1897-1944)," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Submission, prepared by Historic Resources Group and the City of Pasadena, Design & Historic Preservation Section, Planning Division, draft January 12, 1996.

Historic Sign Inventory, Historical/Architectural Survey #42, City of Pasadena, Urban Conservation Section, Planning Division, 1987-88.

Historical/Architectural Survey #15: Arroyo Parkway, City of Pasadena, Urban Conservation Section, Planning Division, 1989.

Stern, Rudi. Let There Be Neon. New York City: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1979.

3
oric Preservation Section/Planning Division
ing Dept. date 9/28/95 rev.1/12/96
telephone _(818) 405-4228
stateCA zip code91109-7215
roperty's location.
g large acreage or numerous resources.
roperty.
telephone
state CA zip code 94105

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page ______1 of 1

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Bekins Storage Co. Roof Sign Pasadena, Los Angeles County, CA

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property is Parcel Number 5713-041-014.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary includes the entire city parcel that historically has been associated with the property.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____1 of 1

PHOTOGRAPHS

Bekins Storage Co. Roof Sign Pasadena, Los Angeles County, CA

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographer:

City of Pasadena (Brian D. Goeken)

Date of Photographs:

September 1995

Location of Original Negatives:

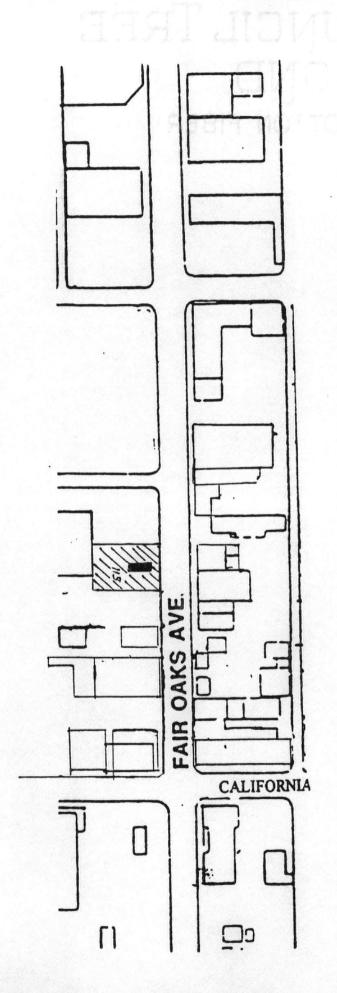
Design & Historic Preservation Archives

CITY OF PASADENA/Planning & Permitting Department

Description of Views:

- 1. South face of roof sign, looking north along South Fair Oaks Avenue toward downtown Pasadena.
- 2. South face of roof sign, looking north along South Fair Oaks Avenue.
- 3. Street (east) elevation of building, with partial view of south face of roof sign.
- 4. Detail of roof sign, with partial view of south face, steel frame, and building parapet.
- 5. Detail of roof sign, with side view (east end of sign), steel frame, and building parapet.
- 6. North face of sign, looking south along South Fair Oaks Avenue.

Bekins Storage Company Roof Sign Pasadena, Los Angeles County, CA





CONTRIBUTING

NON-CONTRIBUTING

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION
PROPERTY Bekins Storage Co. Roof Sign NAME:
MULTIPLE Early Automobile-Related Properties in Pasadena. NAME:
STATE & COUNTY: CALIFORNIA, Los Angeles
DATE RECEIVED: 9/09/97 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 9/22/97 DATE OF 16TH DAY: 10/08/97 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 10/24/97 DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:
REFERENCE NUMBER: 97001212
NOMINATOR: STATE
REASONS FOR REVIEW:
APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N
COMMENT WAIVER: N
ACCEPTRETURNREJECTDATE
ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:
The Bekins Storage Company Roof Sign is eligible under National Register Criteria A and C in the areas of Commerce and Architecture (Commercial Art Design). The metal and neon tube roof-top sign is a rare and significant illustration of pre-World War II commercial advertising design in Pasadena and clearly reflects the evolving themes outlined in the MPS context for "Early Automobile-Related Properties in Pasadena." The nomination is based on a citywide
"sign" inventory that places the Bekins sign in a comparative context and relates it to the strong automobile culture that developed in Pasadena during the historic 1920-1940 period.
"sign" inventory that places the Bekins sign in a comparative context and relates it to the strong automobile culture that developed in Pasadena during the historic 1920-1940 period.
"sign" inventory that places the Bekins sign in a comparative context and relates it to the strong automobile culture that developed in Pasadena during the historic 1920-1940 period. RECOM. / CRITERIA Accept (Exteria A+C
"sign" inventory that places the Bekins sign in a comparative context and relates it to the strong automobile culture that developed in Pasadena during the historic 1920-1940 period. RECOM. / CRITERIA Accept Certeria A+C REVIEWER Haul Lusianan DISCIPLINE HISTORIAN
"sign" inventory that places the Bekins sign in a comparative context and relates it to the strong automobile culture that developed in Pasadena during the historic 1920-1940 period. RECOM. / CRITERIA Accept (Exteria A+C



BEKINS STORAGE CO.

BEKING

SELF- TORAUS

RECORD STORAGE



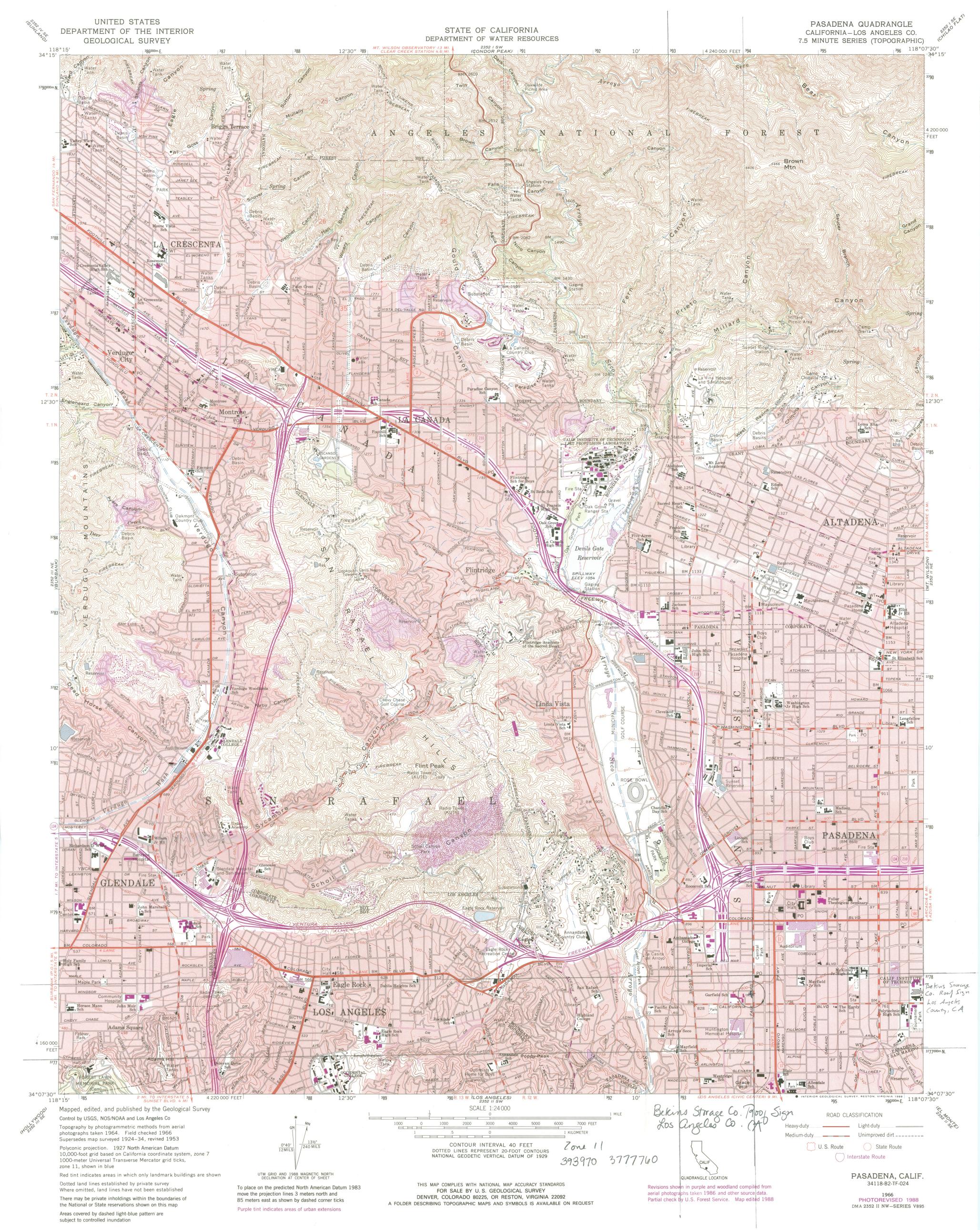












OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

P.O. BOX 942896 SACRAMENTO 94296-0001 (916) 653-6624 FAX: (916) 653-9824



September 3, 1997

Ms. Carol D. Shull, Keeper National Register of Historic Places National Park Service U.S. Department of the Interior P.O. Box 37127 WASHINGTON, D.C. 20013-7127

Subject:

Bekins Storage Company Roof Sign

Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed is the National Register nomination for the property named above. This property is located in Pasadena, Los Angeles County, California. If you have any questions regarding this nomination, please contact Maryln Bourne Lortie of my staff, at (916) 653-8911.

Cherilyn Widell
State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE TUE, SEP 30, 1997, 10:56 AM Page:

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES PROPERTY REPORT

REFERENCE No.: 97001212 Control No.: 970922/nep

PROPERTY NAME: Bekins Storage Co. Roof Sign

OTHER NAME/ Standard Fireproof Storage Co. Roof Sign

SITE No.

MULTIPLE NAME: NOT APPLICABLE

ADDRESS/ 511 S. Fair Oaks Ave.

BOUNDARY

CITY: Pasadena

COUNTY: Los Angeles STATE: CALIFORNIA

Restricted Location Information: Owner: PRIVATE Resource Type: OBJECT

Contributing Noncontributing

Buildings 0 1
Sites 0 0
Structures 0 0
Objects 1 0

Nomination/Determination Type: SINGLE RESOURCE

Nominator: STATE GOVERNMENT Nominator Name:
NOT APPLICABLE

마음이 많은 사람들은 내용하는 생각들이 하지만 한 경기를 하는 것이 살아왔다면 하셨다면 했다.

Federal NOT APPLICABLE Agency:

NPS Park Name: NOT APPLICABLE

Certification: DATE RECEIVED/PENDING NOMINATION Date: 09/09/97

Othon NOT APPLICABLE

Other NOT APPLICABLE Certification:

Historic OTHER

Functions:

Historic NOT APPLICABLE

Subfunctions:

Current OTHER

Functions:

Current NOT APPLICABLE

Subfunctions:

Level of LOCAL Applicable Criteria: EVENT

Significance: ARCHITECTURE/ENGINEERING

Significant Person's Name: NOT APPLICABLE

Criteria Considerations: NOT APPLICABLE

Area of Significance: COMMERCE ARCHITECTURE

Periods of: 1925-1949 Circa: Specific Sig. Years:

Significance:

1926 1929 1944

Architect/Builder/Engineer/

Cultural Affiliation:

Designer:

NOT APPLICABLE

NOT APPLICABLE

Other Documentation:

NOT APPLICABLE

HABS No. N/A

HAER No. N/A

Architectural OTHER

Styles:

Describe Other Style: Roof Sign

Foundation Materials: NONE LISTED

Wall Materials: NONE LISTED NONE LISTED
Roof Materials: NONE LISTED

OTHER Other Materials: STEEL

Acreage: 0.9

UTM Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

Coordinates: 11/ /3 93 970/ /37 77 760