

# Firestone Tire Service Building

**500 N. Harbor Boulevard**

**1929**

**Spanish Colonial Revival**

**Status: Local Landmark;  
Listed on the National Register**



This “L”-shaped building was designed by Morgan, Walls and Clements of Los Angeles, a productive firm responsible for a large quantity of the Spanish Colonial Revival commercial architecture in Southern California. In this example, there is a mix of the earlier Mission style, such as the “bell tower” and arches.

The 7,150-sq.-ft. building was built for C. C. Chapman for \$17,000, after the Alician Court Theatre (now Fox Fullerton) directly to the north was completed for him. The Firestone Tire and Rubber Company was a longtime tenant, starting in 1929; the building was used as a garage, gas station and other automobile related businesses until 1978.

The building was one of the city’s first super service stations, a new form of building design that started in 1914. Like the Firestone facility, most super service stations were “L”-shaped buildings set toward the rear with a large forecourt that allowed drivers to see at a glance the services offered.

Stiles O. Clements, the building’s architect, was one of the first architects in Southern California to design buildings to accommodate growing automobile use. By the 1920s, Southern California led the nation in car ownership, forcing architects to design buildings that reflected the area’s growing reliance on the automobile. At the same time that he was designing the Firestone building, Clements was working on two other buildings in Los Angeles for the Chapman Brothers which reflected this change in architecture: The Chapman Park Studio Building (3501 W. 6th Street), which provided adjacent parking for clients, and the Chapman Park Market Building (3451 W. 6th Street), the first “super” drive-in market in Los Angeles that opened three weeks before the firestone store. At the time, The Market, which provided free parking for 500 cars, was the costliest and largest drive-in market in the western United States. Both of these Spanish Colonial Revival buildings, noted for their elaborate wrought iron and Churrigueresque detail, are now Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monuments.

While the firm of Morgan, Walls & Clements designed 1,691 buildings during its peak years from 1920 to 1940, including a large number of small Spanish Colonial Revival commercial businesses, the company only designed nine buildings in Orange County.

The Firestone building was converted into retail space in 1978, but the building's original use as a super service station is still evident in its layout and arrangement. While obscuring to some extent the features of the original style, the building's conversion to commercial shops is a good example of adaptive reuse, now owned by the Fox Fullerton Theatre Foundation. The property underwent a complete renovation in 2016, and revenue from the commercial tenants are being used to pay for improvements that will be made to the adjacent Fox Theatre.



**Firestone Tire Service Building, 1941**