

# Bowen Building

**213-215 W. Commonwealth Avenue**

**1927-1928**

**Brick Commercial**

**Status: Significant Property**



Three unusual aspects are apparent in this mid-1920s brick commercial building: 1) the common imitation of a wood-structure storefront was not part of the design, 2) the construction of a second story for living quarters with stairways at each end of the structure, and 3) the lack of a decorative parapet at the top. More typical is the use of two colors of brick and the variation in the size of the pilasters separating the window openings across the façade to produce a decorative effect.

While the structure appears to be one, the more easterly portion of the building was built in 1927, and the westerly portion a year later in 1928. The westerly portion of the building was constructed for Reuben Vivian, a long-time miner, apparently as an investment. Once completed and united with the easterly portion as one legal lot, the property was sold a number of times until it was acquired by Warren Bowen and his wife, Gladys in 1938. Bowen operated a number of businesses from this building in the ensuing 27 years, finally selling the property in 1965.

A sizeable one-story addition at the back of the building was made in 1955, under Bowen's ownership. Improvements for earthquake safety, completed in 1994, are inconspicuous and minimally affect the appearance of the building's front façade.

The building may be considered as one of the oldest mixed-use developments in the city, with commercial space on the ground floor and three apartments on the second floor.