

Sanitary Laundry Building

221-225 W. Santa Fe Avenue

1928

Brick Commercial

Status: Local Landmark



This brick commercial building was designed with an unusually complex façade that has produced a very rhythmic effect. There are actually three separate sections, each with four narrow bays, within the 116-foot-long facade. The repetitive treatment of the parapet and pilasters among these three sections unifies the building’s façade, even though there is variation in the design within the openings. The building’s “saw-tooth” roof with clerestory windows is another distinguishing feature.

The structure was originally used as a commercial laundry, built for Arthur W. Cleaver, who also owned the imposing Spanish Colonial Revival residence at 519 W. Fern Drive.

Beginning in the early 1920s, Arthur Cleaver operated the Sanitary Laundry at this location. He hired local contractor Edward Schenck to remodel an existing building on this property, making numerous changes and additions. After becoming very wealthy from his oil leases in 1927, he had a completely new building constructed to replace the existing one in 1928. The new building was the best-equipped laundry in Orange County, and the business was one of the largest employers in north Orange County. In December 1938, Cleaver sold his laundry business and equipment but retained ownership of the property and building until his death in 1943. The Sanitary Laundry was in business until the late 1940s.

Seismic improvements to the building were made in 1993. From 2010 to 2018 the building was the home of the Magnoski Arts Colony, a multi-gallery arts venue. Presently, the building is being used for warehousing and storage.