

Fullerton Savings and Loan Headquarters Building

200 W. Commonwealth Avenue

1961

International Style

Status: Unrecognized

Significant Property



Constructed in 1961, this building is an outstanding example of International Style architecture applied to a two-story commercial structure. The reinforced concrete building's front elevation is composed of a curtain wall of aluminum mullions and glass in a distinctive modular pattern. The exterior remains untouched from its original design and is well preserved.

The building was designed and constructed by a renowned firm from St. Louis, the Bank Building & Equipment corporation of America (BBC), the nation's first design-build company serving the financial industry. From 1950 to 1965, BBC was the nation's leading designer of banks. The firm's trend-setting architecture revolutionized financial building design in America, completely changing the public personality of banks.

The Fullerton Savings and Loan Association building was deliberately designed to look non-institutional: a friendly, light, and airy structure designed to attract customers. The bold and fresh look of the building added a new visual reference to West Commonwealth Avenue. Unlike Fullerton's earlier pedestrian-oriented banks located in the downtown core, the new thrift was also automobile-oriented. The building's large, eye-catching signs and vertically-oriented windows were designed to grab the attention of motorists, who could then use the large parking lot at the rear of the bank.

The interior features a noncontributing 500-square-foot mural ("Heritage Mural") designed and painted by local artist Anthony Trasport, with assistance from Roger Hendricks, an associate professor at the State University of New York at Purchase College, and Manuel Gonzalez, a teacher at the Orange County High School of the Arts. Dedicated on March 1, 2006, the mural portrays three distinct eras in Fullerton's history: the 1920s; the 1950; and the present day.

The building is also significant for its historic association with the Fullerton Savings and Loan Association. Before closing its doors in 2011, the Fullerton Savings and Loan Association (later Fullerton Community Bank) would become the oldest independently owned and managed savings and loan association in Fullerton. For almost 80 years the thrift provided loans to homeowners and businessmen, playing an important role in the city's residential and commercial growth.