

DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES

Old Bank District Timeline



THE HELLMAN BUILDING

411 Main Street

The Hellman Building, constructed in 1903 in Downtown Los Angeles to honor Herman Wolf Hellman, is a landmark of architectural and historical significance. Designed by German architect Alfred F. Rosenheim, the eight-story Beaux-Arts building was revolutionary for its scale and craftsmanship, featuring a steel skeletal frame, mosaic floors, vaulted skylights, stained glass, and an Italian marble grand staircase. Celebrated for its elegance and innovation, the Hellman Building remains a globally recognized symbol of Los Angeles's architectural heritage and a lasting testament to the city's cultural history.

THE CONTINENTAL

408 S Spring Street

Designed by John Parkinson, the Braly Block—now known as the Continental Building—was completed in 1905 and became one of Los Angeles's first skyscrapers. Standing 12 stories tall, it remained the city's tallest building for over fifty years due to new height restrictions enacted shortly after its completion. Considered technologically advanced and nearly fireproof, the building featured modern systems such as steam heating and a vacuum system. Named after businessman John Hyde Braly, the building has housed numerous banks and now functions as loft-style apartments, while its ornate attic-level exterior remains intact.



THE SAN FERNANDO

400 Main Street

The San Fernando Building was developed by

James B. Lankershim, a prominent California

landowner who expanded his family's vast

agricultural empire into real estate and banking,

between 1907 and 1911. Seeking a foothold in Los

Angeles's financial district, Lankershim

constructed the building in two phases, with the

first six floors completed in 1907 and the top two

added in 1911. Despite the gap and a change in

architects, the design appears seamless, with only

the cornice marking the original roofline. Originally

featuring amenities such as a café, billiard room,

Turkish bath, and a penthouse residence for

Lankershim himself, the building was redeveloped

in 2000 into seventy loft-style apartments.



TOM GILMORE

Gilmore Associates

Tom Gilmore created the Old Bank District in Downtown LA by pioneering the use of the city's 1999 Adaptive Reuse Ordinance, transforming neglected historic bank buildings into desirable loft apartments and retail spaces, starting with the San Fernando, Hellman, and Continental buildings, which revitalized the area and spurred broader downtown redevelopment in the early 2000s. His vision, inspired by New York's urban vibrancy, proved there was a strong market for downtown living, turning a blighted block into a thriving, historic urban neighborhood.

