

SurveyLA

Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey

LOS ANGELES CITYWIDE HISTORIC CONTEXT STATEMENT

Context: Entertainment Industry, 1908-1980

Theme: Institutional Properties Associated with the Entertainment Industry, 1919-1980



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PREFACE

This theme is a component of SurveyLA’s citywide historic context statement and provides guidance to field surveyors in identifying and evaluating potential historic resources relating to institutional properties associated with the entertainment industry. Refer to www.HistoricPlacesLA.org for information on designated resources associated with this context (or themes) as well as those identified through SurveyLA and other surveys.

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THEME INTRODUCTION

This theme, “Institutional Properties Associated with the Entertainment Industry,” examines the development of institutional properties associated with the entertainment industry, which includes the fields of motion pictures, radio, television, and sound recording. The entertainment industry as we know it today originated at the dawn of the 20th century with the production of motion pictures; as time went on, the industry evolved to include the establishment and growth of other media, including radio, television, and sound recording. While this theme focuses primarily on those properties associated with the motion picture industry, as well as patterns of institutional development associated with the establishment and expansion of adjacent entertainment industry-related institutions, it should be noted that properties associated with every medium may be eligible under this theme. The narrative history of the development of the entertainment industry in Los Angeles is included in the “Industrial Properties Associated with the Entertainment Industry” theme; this theme is intended to supplement the information included in that theme to assist in the identification and evaluation of institutional property types.

Evaluation Considerations

This theme may overlap with other SurveyLA contexts and themes as follows:

- Properties significant for their architectural quality may also be evaluated under themes within the “Architecture and Engineering” context.
- Properties may also be significant under other themes within the “Entertainment Industry” context.
- Institutional properties may also be evaluated under themes within the “Labor History” theme of the Industrial Development context.
- Properties may also be significant within themes of ethnic/cultural contexts of the citywide context.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

The entertainment industry played, and continues to play, a significant role in the economic and cultural development of Los Angeles. A large part of the city's identity is tied to its role as a center of the entertainment industry. The relationship of Hollywood, the concept, and Los Angeles, the place, can best be described as symbiotic.¹ Over the course of the 20th century, film, radio, television, and sound recording evolved into major forms of nationwide communication and entertainment. These endeavors transformed the landscape of Los Angeles from a sea of citrus groves into a bustling hub of entertainment-related activity. Unions and other entertainment-related organizations fought for fair wages, work days, and benefits for their members; set up funds to support them through hard times; and established trade publications to report on the doings of the entertainment industry. These organizations occupied and constructed buildings throughout Los Angeles to suit their needs; most often locating their headquarters in Hollywood, Downtown Los Angeles, or the surrounding neighborhoods.

The Labor Movement in the United States

The United States labor movement originated during the colonial era, when a free-wage labor market emerged among skilled artisans.² The earliest recorded strike in American history was organized in 1619 by Polish workers and artisans in Jamestown, Virginia,³ but it took nearly two centuries for trade unions to successfully organize. The Federal Society of Journeymen Cordwainers, formed in Philadelphia in 1794, was the country's first sustained trade union organization. From that point forward, local craft unions proliferated. They published standardized lists of prices for their work, defended their trades against the encroachment of cheap labor, and demanded shorter work days.⁴

In the early 19th century, central labor bodies formed, merging individual craft unions within cities. With the organization of the International Typographical Union (ITU; originally the National Typographical Union) in 1852, national unions blended local unions of the same trade across the United States and Canada.⁵ The ITU agitated for union recognition, wage increases, and equalizing women's wages and working conditions.

Beginning in the 1830s, advocates of labor reform and equal rights for laborers formed political parties to combat industrial capitalism. Among these were the National Labor Union (formed 1866) and the Noble and Holy Order of the Knights of Labor (commonly referred to as the Knights of Labor; formed 1869). During the 1880s, the separation between political party and trade union blurred as the Knights of Labor carried on strikes and organized along industrial lines, jeopardizing national trade unions, which demanded that the group confine itself to its declared purposes. When the Knights of Labor refused, the

¹ John Chase, *Glitter Stucco and Dumpster Diving* (London: Verso, 2000), 61. For more on the history of the motion picture industry, see the "Industrial Properties Associated with Entertainment Industry, 1908-1980" theme of this context.

² For a more in-depth history of the labor movement in the United States, see City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning, "Context: Industrial Development; Theme: Labor History, 1870-1980," in *SurveyLA: Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey Project, Historic Context Statement*, 2017.

³ "Our Labor History Timeline," AFL-CIO, accessed November 2019, <https://aflcio.org/about/history>.

⁴ "Labor Movement," History, accessed November 2019, <http://www.history.com/topics/labor>.

⁵ "Labor Movement."

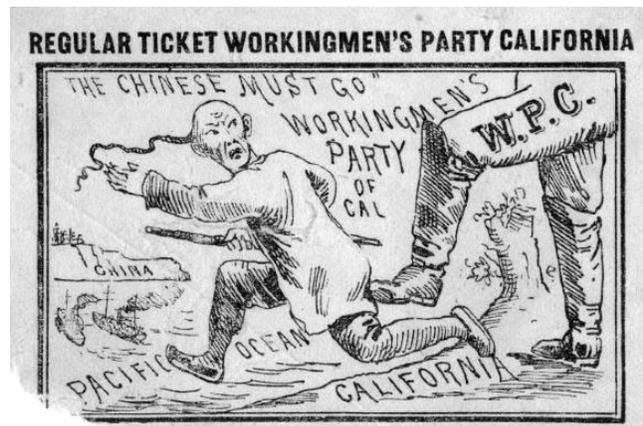
national trade unions formed the American Federation of Labor (AFL) in December 1886. The AFL viewed trade unionism as indispensable, and denied labor reform any role in the organization. As industrialism progressed, labor reform lost popularity, leading to the demise of the Knights of Labor.⁶

The Labor Movement in Los Angeles

While Los Angeles' relatively late industrialization hindered the early formation of a solid labor movement, a small, tenacious trade union movement, influenced by national trends in organized labor, took hold by the late 19th century. Federations of skilled craftsmen dominated the movement into the 1930s. Most were racially exclusive, allowing only white workers to join, a practice which persisted for decades.⁷

The early campaign for organized labor in Los Angeles was shaped by the battle against local businesses' crusade for an "open shop" mentality. Employers such as Harrison Grey Otis, publisher of the *Los Angeles Times*, resolved to destroy the labor movement. Local industries engaged freely in union-busting activities, and conflict between manufacturers and workers became widespread throughout the city. However, the labor union movement emerged in Los Angeles with the successful formation of Local 174 of the International Typographical Union in 1875.⁸

The economic boom of the 1880s brought more businesses and manufacturers to Los Angeles. Skilled workers began to form unions, many of which remain in existence. Workers in the building trades led the way, forming unions for plasterers, carpenters, and bricklayers, among others. When the boom went bust at the end of the decade, the labor movement was weakened. Regardless, by this point, labor had established a foothold in Los Angeles, with the formation of several stable unions. The movement achieved several political goals, including the passage of the federal Chinese Exclusion Laws of 1882,⁹ and the formation of several labor-oriented political



Political cartoon depicting the Workingmen's Party opposition to Chinese immigration, c. 1890. (Historical Society of Pennsylvania)

⁶ "Labor Movement."

⁷ Much Los Angeles labor history included in this document was adapted or excerpted from City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning, "Context: industrial Development; Theme: Labor History, 1870-1980," in *SurveyLA: Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey Project, Historic Context Statement*, October 2017; Grace H. Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1955), 3; Michael Kazin, "The Great Exception Revisited: Organized Labor and Politics in San Francisco and Los Angeles" in *Pacific Historical Review* 55, 3 (August 1986), 375.

⁸ "International Typographical Union Records, 1903-1986," Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research finding aid, accessed November 2019, <http://pdf.oac.cdlib.org/pdf/scl/itu.pdf>. In union parlance, local chapters of national and international organizations are referred to as "locals." For more information about labor history in Los Angeles, see City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning, "Context: Industrial Development; Theme: Labor History, 1870-1980," in *SurveyLA: Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey Project, Historic Context Statement*, 2017.

⁹ California labor leaders at the time believed that Chinese immigration harmed conditions for white workers.

parties that achieved some success in local elections (including the Workingmen’s Party, Knights of Labor, and People’s Party).

Turn-of-the-century Los Angeles experienced an all-out war between business and labor to decide whether the city would be an “open shop” or “closed shop” town.¹⁰ The 1890 strike of Typographical Union Local 174 was the first major skirmish. The battle began when Otis joined with three other newspapers to cut wages 20 percent. When the union refused, Otis responded by firing all of the *Los Angeles Times*’ unionized workers, and hiring strikebreakers to replace them. Local 174 went on strike, and initiated a consumer boycott of the People’s Store, a large advertiser in the *Los Angeles Times* with a mostly working-class clientele. By 1900, the conflict escalated “from a small, local dispute into a citywide struggle over the open shop, with ramifications at the state and even the national level.”¹¹

Both sides consolidated forces during this conflict. The business elite launched a full-blown war against labor unions, seeking to make Los Angeles an open shop city. This campaign was spearheaded by “the disciplined and well-financed juggernaut” of the Merchants and Manufacturers Association (M&M), founded in 1896.¹² By 1900, the M&M had “the support of virtually all of [Los Angeles’] leading shipping, lumber, oil, iron and steel, and haulage firms, as well as the citrus growers in the surrounding countryside.”¹³



Ruins of the Los Angeles Times building, October 1, 1910. (Find A Grave)

The escalating conflict came to a head in October 1910 with the bombing of Ink Alley adjacent to the *Los Angeles Times* building by brothers James and John McNamara, leaders of the Bridge and Structural Iron Workers Union. The bombing crippled much of the strike wave of the early 20th century, as many employers simply refused to meet demands of picketing workers.

In the 1920s, the labor movement in Los Angeles remained significantly smaller and weaker than in other industrial cities, though modest gains occurred in some sectors, including the motion picture

¹⁰ “Closed” shop – or “union” shop – refers to workplaces where all workers are required to belong to a union in order to work there. “Open” shop refers to a workplace where employees are not required to join a union.

¹¹ John H.M. Laslett, *Sunshine Was Never Enough: Los Angeles Workers, 1880-2010* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 27.

¹² Kazin, “Great Exception,” 387; Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement*, 189.

¹³ Laslett, *Sunshine Was Never Enough*, 27.

industry.¹⁴ As the number of production workers rose from 6,000 in 1921 to 30,000 in 1940, they faced several challenges – especially job instability – as film production rose in the 1920s.

The Great Depression spurred change within labor unions. Dissatisfaction among industrial workers, combined with collective bargaining legislation, brought mass production industries within the grasp of the AFL. When craft unions thwarted the AFL’s organizing efforts in 1935, several members of the United Mine Workers left the AFL and formed the Committee for Industrial Organization (CIO), which provided critical support to emerging unions in the auto, rubber, and steel industries, among others. In 1938, the CIO was formally established as the Congress of Industrial Organizations.¹⁵

The “dismal state of unionization” in early 1930s Los Angeles resulted from the disinterest or disinclination of workers to join unions.¹⁶ Many workers believed unions were unnecessary, “telling organizers, ‘Why should I pay union dues to have somebody tell me what I can do? Why should I let you negotiate for me with the company? I’ll do it myself.’”¹⁷ Union organizers similarly faced an uphill battle in areas where commuting was commonplace, as commuters preferred to go home rather than attend union meetings.¹⁸ Additionally, evangelical Protestant churches, to which some workers belonged, “discouraged outside loyalties – such as unions – because they distracted members from the pursuit of individual salvation.”¹⁹ Finally, many Americans associated the labor movement with Communism, and opposed it outright.²⁰ However, despite the labor movement’s early struggles, unions eventually took root, and the demise of the “open shop” in Los Angeles began.²¹

By the end of the 1930s, the top Los Angeles “industrial employers were, in descending order, motion pictures, food processing, apparel, aircraft, furniture, oil refining, rubber, auto assembly, and oil-well equipment. These industries employed 71 percent of the city’s industrial workforce in 1939.”²² Throughout the 1930s, the CIO slowly acquired a foothold among Southern California oil, auto, steel, rubber, garment, and aircraft workers, a trend that became more pronounced after Congress passed the National Labor Relations Act (Wagner Act) in 1935, granting American unions the right to collectively bargain.²³ However, despite the new legislation and the friendlier political climate toward labor, local employers remained stoically anti-labor. Several powerful organizations launched new “open shop” drives, counteracting advances provided by the Wagner Act. In the late 1930s and 1940s, the evolution of a “bureaucratized and institutionalized system of relations among labor, management, and government” became a “critical turning point for American labor.”²⁴ Power shifted from the shop floor

¹⁴ Adapted from City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning, “Context: Industrial Development; Theme: Labor History, 1870-1980,” in *SurveyLA: Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey Project, Historic Context Statement*, 2017.

¹⁵ “Labor Movement.”

¹⁶ Becky M. Nicolaides, *My Blue Heaven: Life and Politics in the Working-Class Suburbs of Los Angeles, 1920-1965* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 81.

¹⁷ Nicolaides, *My Blue Heaven*, 81.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 81-82.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 81.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*, 227.

²² *Ibid.*, 49.

²³ Leonard Pitt and Dale Pitt, “Labor Union Movement, 1875 to 1945,” *Los Angeles A to Z* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), 244.

²⁴ Nicolaides, *My Blue Heaven*, 5.

to national union headquarters, and to the CIO in particular, “which assumed a ‘top-down’ system of control.”²⁵

After World War II, the labor movement overcame the prevailing “open shop” mentality in Los Angeles. “The massive industrial surge spurred by World War II was the key turning point, bringing unionism to Los Angeles once and for all.”²⁶ Unions achieved recognition in many industries, though the road to acceptance was generally rough. Nationwide, over 12 million workers belonged to unions, and collective bargaining was widely used throughout the industrial economy.²⁷

Panic about the alleged Communist threat in the United States, which became known as the Red Scare, worsened the political climate for labor. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the Cold War between the



Meeting of the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), 1947. (Associated Press)

United States and the Soviet Union intensified.²⁸ Alongside Senator Joseph R. McCarthy, the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), established in 1938, investigated allegations of Communist activity in the United States, with particular focus on the motion picture industry, believed to harbor a large number of Communists.²⁹ Anti-labor forces attributed any form of union militancy to communist subversion, and McCarthyism split most unions. In Los Angeles, as in much of the United States, the conservative leadership of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) expelled major local unions with left-leaning leadership.³⁰

Despite setbacks from the McCarthy era, the prosperity of Cold War industry greatly benefitted the organized labor movement. In 1955, the AFL and the CIO merged (AFL-CIO), affirming the persistence of industrial unionism. Collective bargaining more than tripled weekly earnings in manufacturing between 1945 and 1970, gaining union members unprecedented security against unemployment, old age, or illness.³¹ In 1956, the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, a delegate body formed by a merger of the AFL and CIO and covering most of the labor movement, was formed. Industrial and white-collar unions continued to gain members in the 1960s and 1970s. However, organized labor remained a sectional movement, covering at most a third of America’s wage earners, and inaccessible to those in the low-wage secondary labor market.³² Between the 1970s and the 1990s, union membership declined

²⁵ Nicolaides, *My Blue Heaven*, 5.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 227.

²⁷ “Labor Movement.”

²⁸ “Red Scare,” History, accessed November 2019, <http://www.history.com/topics/cold-war/red-scare>.

²⁹ “HUAC,” History, accessed November 2019, <http://www.history.com/topics/cold-war/huac>.

³⁰ Pitt and Pitt, “Labor Union Movement, Since 1945,” *Los Angeles: A to Z*, 244.

³¹ “Labor Movement.”

³² “Labor Movement.”

in the industrial and construction sectors, but expanded in the service and government sectors, and in certain white-collar fields.³³

Organized Labor in the Entertainment Industry

Because Los Angeles' entertainment industry did not experience substantial development until after 1910, unionism made its first inroads into the industry on the east coast. Many national and international unions were founded in New York, and expanded across the country alongside the entertainment industry. Film, radio, and television production involved "a mix of proletarians (carpenters, painters, electricians) and entrepreneurs (such as screenwriters)."³⁴ With such a wide range of occupations involved in one industry, unions and trade guilds formed to represent each group.

Several early labor organizations in the entertainment industry were established by musicians. The first musicians' union in Los Angeles, the Musical Protective Association, was formed in 1888, but was discontinued in 1890 due to lack of member interest.³⁵ In 1894, the Los Angeles Musical Society was organized in the rooms of the Republican Club at Second and Main Streets. After changing their name to The Los Angeles Musical Association, the club became National League of Musicians Local 19.³⁶ Another such club, the Musicians Union, was formed as early as 1892, and met at the Trades Hall at First and Los Angeles Streets (not extant),³⁷ and later at S. Central and E. 18th Streets in Downtown Los Angeles. The American Federation of Musicians (AFM), organized in Indianapolis on October 19, 1896, served as a voice for musicians.³⁸ AFM Local 47, established in 1897, was located at 1417 ½ Georgia Street by the 1920s (not extant). In 1904, AFM Local 47 set the first wage scales for orchestras traveling with comic operas, musical comedies, and similar shows. In 1927, *The Jazz Singer*, the first "talkie," was released, displacing orchestras in movie theatres, and for the first time, the AFM experienced "wholesale unemployment brought about by technology."³⁹ Within three years, 22,000 musicians who had accompanied silent movies lost their jobs, while only a few hundred recording jobs were created. However, because synchronizing music with movies was difficult work, the AFM was able to set high wage scales for its members with Vitaphone,



1920s American Federation of Musicians Local 47 Headquarters, 1417 ½ Georgia Street (AFM, Local 47)

³³ Pitt and Pitt, "Labor Union Movement, Since 1945," *Los Angeles: A to Z*, 244.

³⁴ Gerald Horne, *Class Struggle in Hollywood: Moguls, Mobsters, Stars, Reds, & Trade Unions* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2001), 13.

³⁵ "History," American Federation of Musicians Local 47, accessed November 2019, <http://www.afm.org/about/history-2/>.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ 1892 Los Angeles City Directory 1892.

³⁸ "History," American Federation of Musicians Local 47.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

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Moviephone, and other phonograph record makers. On January 21, 1950, AFM Local 47 moved to its new location at 817 N. Vine Street in Hollywood.⁴⁰



*Musicians Union of Hollywood, 807-831 North Vine Street
City Historic-Cultural Monument No. 1158 (HistoricPlacesLA)*

Beginning in the 1910s, the rising popularity of silent (and later, talking) films adversely affected other forms of entertainment, including traveling shows and theatrical productions. Vaudeville, which evolved from burlesque in the early 20th century, remained popular until approximately 1930.⁴¹ However, entertainment gradually moved from stage to screen, and many workers made a parallel transition. Film production required many of the same skills as theater production, and added new employment opportunities in film projection, duplication, and distribution.

New York was home to many of the country's earliest entertainment-related labor organizations. The International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Moving Picture Technicians, Artists and Allied Crafts of the United States (IATSE), founded by stage hands in 1893 in support of fair wages and working conditions, was one of many associations originally formed in New York.⁴² In 1913, IATSE and the AFM agreed to support each other during controversies in theaters.⁴³ Actors' Equity, started in New York in 1913, was composed of theater actors in support of fair employment practices. In 1916, the group joined the AFL.⁴⁴ The American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) was founded in New York City in 1914, and was the "first such body formed to protect the rights of composers and

⁴⁰ "History," American Federation of Musicians Local 47. Local 47 remained at this location until July 14, 2017, when the organization moved to 3220 Winona Avenue in Burbank.

⁴¹ "Vaudeville the Mainstay of Theatre," IATSE, accessed November 2019, <http://www.iatse.net/history/vaudeville-mainstay-theatre>.

⁴² "About the IATSE," IATSE, accessed November 2019, <http://www.iatse.net/about-iatse>

⁴³ "History," American Federation of Musicians Local 47.

⁴⁴ "Equity Timeline 100 Years: The First Years," Actors' Equity Association 1913-2013, accessed August 2019, https://www.actorsequity.org/timeline/timeline_firstyears.html.

collect fees for the public performances of their music.”⁴⁵ It provided a central agency to acquire and distribute the money due to songwriters per the United States Copyright Act of 1909.⁴⁶

Unionization and the Motion Picture Industry

Several New York-based entertainment industry labor organizations made inroads in Los Angeles around the turn of the 20th century. In 1896, the Los Angeles Theatrical Workers Union joined IATSE.⁴⁷ Recognizing the growth of motion pictures, IATSE asserted jurisdiction over projectionists in 1907. IATSE fought anti-labor employers and became an entertainment industry powerhouse (now affiliated with the AFL-CIO).⁴⁸ It grew to encompass 19 local unions, and played a major role in organized labor in Los Angeles. In 1920, actor Frank Gillmore, a founding member of Actors’ Equity, visited Los Angeles to investigate film actors’ working conditions. Shortly thereafter, the AFL declared jurisdiction over principal actors in motion pictures.⁴⁹ Actors’ Equity, however, was ultimately unsuccessful in representing screen actors in Los Angeles, a position filled by the Screen Actors Guild when it was founded in 1933.

The introduction of organized labor to Los Angeles’ motion picture industry faced challenges. In the early 20th century, Los Angeles’ entertainment moguls espoused the same “open shop” mentality as the city’s other business leaders.⁵⁰ Among the earliest professional organizations in Los Angeles’ nascent film industry was the Motion Picture Producers’ Association (MPPA), formed in 1914 by producers to promote open shop in Hollywood and counter early unionization efforts in Los Angeles.⁵¹

Producing films involved diverse sets of laborers, including writers, craft workers, actors, and directors. Each of these groups belonged to different unions, established to represent their interests. In 1916, the AFL sent an organizer to Los Angeles to help movie studio workers unionize. Motion picture stagehands formed Local 33 of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE), which became the dominant union in Hollywood, establishing offices at Cahuenga Boulevard and Selma Avenue.⁵² IATSE Local 33 waged strikes in 1919 and 1921, both of which were unsuccessful in the face of producer resistance and jurisdictional disputes among unions. After more friction, IATSE and the producers signed the Basic Studio Agreement of 1926, which recognized IATSE and the locals of carpenters, painters,

⁴⁵ “ASCAP,” Encyclopaedia Britannica, accessed November 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/ASCAP>. According to the 1936 Los Angeles City Directory, the organization’s legal counsel office was located at 411 West Seventh Street (Jewelry Theater Building) in 1925, and at 315 W. Ninth Street in 1936. The May 1956 and March 1960 Los Angeles Street Address Directories list the organization at 3440 Wilshire Boulevard and 6430 W. Sunset Boulevard, respectively.

⁴⁶ “ASCAP.”

⁴⁷ “Los Angeles Theatrical Workers Union Joins the Alliance,” IATSE, accessed November 2019, <http://www.iatse.net/history/los-angeles-theatrical-workers-union-joins-alliance>. According to the 1942 Los Angeles City Directory, the IATSE financial office, along with a few of the local union branches, was located at 6472 Santa Monica Boulevard.

⁴⁸ Pitt and Pitt, “International Alliance of Theatrical and Stage Employees (IATSE),” *Los Angeles: A to Z*, 222.

⁴⁹ “Equity Timeline 100 Years, 1920s,” Actors’ Equity Association 1913-2013, accessed August 2019, https://www.actorsequity.org/timeline/timeline_1920.html.

⁵⁰ City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning, “Context: Industrial Development, Historical Overview: Summary,” in *SurveyLA: Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey Project, Draft Historic Context Statement*, 2011, 1.

⁵¹ “Timeline: 1914,” IATSE, accessed November 2019, <http://www.iatse.net/timeline>.

⁵² Steven J. Ross, *Working-Class Hollywood: Silent Film and the Shaping of Class in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

electrical workers, and musicians under its rubric, but also mandated conflict resolution by a committee of producers and union heads in New York. This agreement remained in place for over twenty years.

The American Society of Cinematographers (ASC), formed in Hollywood in 1919. The ASC served the “dual purpose of advancing the art and science of cinematography and bringing cinematographers together to exchange ideas, discuss techniques and promote the motion picture as an art form.”⁵³

Although personal residences often served as impromptu meeting places in the early days of individual labor organizations, it became increasingly important to have an identifiable location at which meetings could be held, and where an organizational identity could be established. Proximity to the studios was likely an important factor in the sites selected for union headquarters, as the ability to quickly and efficiently organize members was key to demonstrating their membership’s power. ASCAP maintained a presence at the Homer Laughlin Building at 315 South Broadway (1897, John Parkinson) in downtown Los Angeles as early as 1918.⁵⁴



*Homer Laughlin Building (Grand Central Market), 315 South Broadway
City Historic-Cultural Monument No. 1183 (Los Angeles Public Library)*

Early Professional Organizations

In 1922, the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA; renamed the Motion Picture Association of America in 1945), was founded to promote the business interests of its members: Paramount Pictures, 20th Century Fox, Loews (MGM), Universal Studios, Warner Brothers, Columbia Pictures, United Artists, and RKO Pictures. At the time, these studios represented approximately 75 percent of the films produced in the United States.⁵⁵

At a dinner party at his home in 1927, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM) studio head Louis B. Mayer proposed creating an organization to promote the film industry. A week later, a group of 36 “luminaries of the film industry” met at the Ambassador Hotel (3400 Wilshire Boulevard, not extant) to hear a

⁵³ “About” The American Society of Cinematographers, accessed November 2019, <https://theasc.com/asc/about>. In 1936, the ASC moved into its present location at 1782 N. Orange Drive.

⁵⁴ ASCAP is now located at 7920 Sunset Boulevard, and shares a building with the Directors Guild of America.

⁵⁵ “Ultimatum by Hays to Purify Movies,” *The New York Times*, June 5, 1922; Joel Spring, *Images of American Life* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 50; IATSE, Timeline. The Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) created the film-rating system used today (i.e. G, PG, etc.).

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proposal to found the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.⁵⁶ Articles of Incorporation soon followed, and Douglas Fairbanks was elected the first president.⁵⁷ Initially, five branches were established: producers, actors, directors, writers, and technicians. “The film industry [...] managed to avoid any real labor strife into the thirties by coopting union sentiments through the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.”⁵⁸ The *Hollywood Reporter* noted that the Academy “contributed to an unprecedented era of management-labor cooperation - but it also kept actors, writers and directors from forming unions.”⁵⁹ The Academy created the first standard contracts for freelancers and offered arbitration to its members, but was not regarded as a strong advocate for actors’ rights.



Founding members of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Douglas Fairbanks seated at center, c. 1927. (Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences)

The Academy has occupied a number of offices since its founding. In 1927, the organization rented a suite of offices at 6912 Hollywood Boulevard (not extant) as temporary headquarters, before moving to office space on the mezzanine level of the Roosevelt Hotel (7000 Hollywood Boulevard; Fisher, Lake & Traver, 1926; City Historic-Cultural Monument No. 545) in November 1927.⁶⁰ In April 1929, the Academy installed screening facilities in the Roosevelt's Club Lounge and equipped the space with Vitaphone,

⁵⁶ Neal Gabler, *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood* (New York: Doubleday, 1988), 321.

⁵⁷ “Academy Story,” accessed November 2019, <http://www.oscars.org/academy-story>.

⁵⁸ Gabler, *An Empire of Their Own*, 320-321.

⁵⁹ Steve Pond, “Before the Guild,” *DGA Quarterly*, Winter 2011, accessed November 2019, <https://www.dga.org/BeforeTheGuild>.

⁶⁰ Robert Osborne, *85 Years of the Oscar: The Official History of the Academy Awards* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1989), 10.

Movietone, and other sound systems, setting the stage to host advance screenings of as-yet-unreleased motion pictures.⁶¹ Headquarters for the Academy were at 7046 Hollywood Boulevard from 1930 until 1935, when the offices moved to the Taft Building (6280 W. Hollywood Boulevard) and the library moved to North Gordon Street. In 1946, the Academy purchased the Marquis Theatre at 9038 Melrose Avenue (not extant) and moved operations there. The building had a 950-seat theater and space for staff offices and the ever-growing library holdings. Among the Academy's more notable achievements was the annual Academy Award ceremony.⁶² In 1973, the Academy began construction on its new headquarters at 8949 Wilshire Boulevard (dedicated 1975) in the city of Beverly Hills.



*Marquis Theater, 9038 Melrose Avenue, c. 1945.
(Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences)*

Labor Movement in the 1930s

In the early 1930s, tensions between the studios and various labor groups within the studio system mounted. In conjunction with the labor movement in Los Angeles, many entertainment-related unions developed.⁶³ Discontent with film studios' labor practices and rigid control over actors' lives and careers led to the formation of the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) in 1930. The organization, which boasted a membership of over 1,000 within a year of its founding, established its headquarters at 1655 N. Cherokee Avenue in 1933.⁶⁴ The founding members of SAG were also members of the all-male Masquers' Club.⁶⁵ Although the AFL recognized SAG in 1935, the studios refused to negotiate with that organization or the Writer's Guild for several years after their founding. SAG soon became the catalyst for powerful movie strikes, including the 1937 strike that forced studios to recognize the union as the collective bargaining power for actors.

⁶¹ Osborne, *85 Years of the Oscar*, 11. One of the Academy's most important components is the ATAS/UCLA Television Archives, created in 1965 in conjunction with UCLA's Department of Theater Arts. It contains the largest collection of kinescopes, tapes and films from the earliest days of television.

⁶² The Marquis Theatre was the site of the 1949 Academy Awards. For more information on the Academy Awards, see the "Commercial Properties Associated with Entertainment Industry, 1908-1980" theme in this context.

⁶³ Horne, *Class Struggle in Hollywood*, 155. California saw an explosion of organized labor between 1931 and 1938.

⁶⁴ Ken Orsatti, "How SAG Was Founded," in William D. Henslee and Elizabeth Henslee, *Entertainment Law and Business* (New York: Wolters Kluwer, 2019), 629-633.

⁶⁵ The Masquers Club, "The Masquers: We Laugh to Win," accessed November 2019, <http://www.masquersclub.org/press/press-kit.pdf>. The Masquers were located at 6735 Yucca Street (not extant) in 1925; they moved to 1765 N. Sycamore Avenue in 1927.

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Entertainment Industry/Institutional Properties Associated with the Entertainment Industry

In January 1936, the Screen Directors Guild formed to negotiate with studios for better treatment, better pay, and better conditions. Because the founding members, including John Ford, King Vidor, and Frank Tuttle, wielded considerable clout in the entertainment industry, the guild's formation sent shock waves through Hollywood. The guild demanded more input into script development, casting, and preproduction decisions; freedom from micromanaging producers and studio executives; and the right to be in the editing room.⁶⁶ The Guild's first headquarters was located at 6671 Sunset Boulevard, Crossroads of the World (1936, Robert V. Derrah; City Historic-Cultural Monument No. 134, National Register of Historic Places).



*Entrance to Crossroads of the World, 1939
City Historic-Cultural Monument No. 134
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

By the end of the 1930s, unions were an established presence in the entertainment industry, possessing collective bargaining power that studios could no longer ignore.⁶⁷ The Screen Writers Guild (WGA), established in 1933, shared the SAG building.⁶⁸ In 1936, studios signed a contract with the Guild. The Screen Directors Guild, formally organized in 1936, initially met at the Hollywood Athletic Club (6525 Sunset Boulevard, 1924, Meyer & Holler).⁶⁹ The organization represented the “creative and economic rights of directors and the directorial team.”⁷⁰ The Carpenters Local Union 1506, which represented carpenters who built sets and scenery for the motion picture industry, moved into its Art Deco Union Hall at 5168 W. Santa Monica Boulevard in 1935. Following the lead of Actors’ Equity, radio performers from Los Angeles and New York joined forces to found the American Federation of Radio Artists (AFRA) in 1937. The Society of Motion Picture Film Editors (MPEG), composed of film, sound, and music editors, formed the same year.⁷¹ In their first contract talks in 1938, MPEG won a ten percent wage increase for members. The Art Directors League, which formed in 1929 as a craft guild, decided to unionize in 1937 following the passage of the Wagner Act (National Labor Relations Act) in 1935. They met at the Roosevelt Hotel and founded the Society of

⁶⁶ Steve Pond, “A Guild is Born,” *DGA Quarterly*, Winter 2006, accessed November 2019, <https://www.dga.org/Craft/DGAQ/All-Articles/0604-Winter2006-07/Features-A-Guild-is-Born.aspx>.

⁶⁷ Morgan Thompson, “Hollywood is a Union Town,” *The Nation* 146, no. 14 (April 2, 1938), 381-383.

⁶⁸ Writers Guild of America, West, “Guide to the Guild,” accessed November 2019, https://www.wga.org/uploadedFiles/who_we_are/fyi15.pdf#page=15.

⁶⁹ Directors Guild of America, “History: 1936,” accessed November 2019, <https://www.dga.org/The-Guild/History.aspx?value=1936&Decade=1930s&Year=1936>.

⁷⁰ “About the DGA,” Directors Guild of America, accessed November 2019, <http://www.dga.org/The-Guild/History.aspx>.

⁷¹ Motion Picture Editors Guild, “A Brief History of The Editors Guild, IATSE Local 700,” accessed November 2019, <https://www.editorsguild.com/Guildshistory.cfm>.



*Carpenters Local Union 1506, 5168 W Santa Monica Blvd
(HistoricPlacesLA)*

Motion Picture Art Directors, which became the Art Directors Guild (ADG). Television art directors were included in 1949, and the organization joined IATSE the same year.⁷²

Post-World War II Labor in the Entertainment Industry

In the years following World War II, the entertainment industry was fraught with acrimonious conflict between unions and studio heads, as well as discord between rival unions. Individual unions struggled for permanent recognition as well as improved wages, hours, and benefits for their members.

Syd Cassyd founded the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences in 1946. In 1947, Edgar Bergen became the Television Academy's first president. In 1964, the Academy's national offices moved from New York, where they had been located since the 1957 merger of the east and west coast branches, to 9126 Sunset Boulevard in the present-day City of West Hollywood.⁷³ The Academy moved its offices to 7188 W. Sunset Boulevard by 1973.⁷⁴ By 1976, tensions between the two branches of the Academy had grown so much that, at the semiannual national board meeting at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel, each chapter designated a five-man negotiation team to attempt to reach a détente. Later that year, the Los Angeles chapter filed a lawsuit to dissolve the organization, to which the New York chapter replied by countersuing to take over the entire Television Academy. The groups parted ways in 1977.

To counteract the difficulties of collective bargaining, many unions merged, or joined larger organizations such as IATSE. These included the Society of Motion Picture Film Editors, which in 1944 voted to become the Motion Picture Editors Guild (MPEG), Local 776 of the IATSE.⁷⁵ In 1952, AFRA merged with the Television Authority to form a new union – the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA).⁷⁶ The Writers Guild of America, West was formed from the Screen Writers, Radio Writers, and Television Writers Guilds in 1954.⁷⁷ In 1963, the Screen Directors Guild merged with the Radio and Television Directors Guild to form the Directors Guild of America (DGA).

⁷² Michael Baugh, "The Guild: Local 800 History," accessed November 2019, <https://adg.org/the-guild/full-history/>. The Art Directors Guild purchased the building at 11969 Ventura Boulevard in 2005.

⁷³ Los Angeles Street Address Directory, May 1956 and March 1960.

⁷⁴ Los Angeles Street Address Directory, July 1973.

⁷⁵ "Motion Picture Editors Guild."

⁷⁶ In 1981, AFTRA merged with SAG to form SAG-AFTRA.

⁷⁷ Pitt and Pitt, "Writers Guild of America, West, Inc.," *Los Angeles A to Z*, 561. By 1963, the Writers Guild of America, West, was located at 8955 Beverly Boulevard. Source: *Film Daily Year Book*, 1963.

SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

Entertainment Industry/Institutional Properties Associated with the Entertainment Industry

Postwar prosperity prompted established organizations to build new headquarters or to move their offices. The Studio Utility Employees Local 724 (6700 Melrose Avenue) was built in 1946. SAG moved into offices at 7750 W. Sunset Boulevard (1956, E.J. Samaniego). This was the organization's fourth location, but the first building constructed for them. In 1955, the Screen Directors Guild moved into its new headquarters, complete with a private theater, at 7950 Sunset Boulevard (not extant).⁷⁸ In 1960, MPEG moved into offices at 7715 Sunset Boulevard (1960, Douglas Honnold) and Camera Local 659 (now the International Cinematographers Guild, Local 600) joined as a partner.⁷⁹



*Studio Utility Employees Local 724, 6700 West Melrose Avenue
(HistoricPlacesLA)*



*Screen Actors Guild Headquarters, 7750 West Sunset Boulevard
(HistoricPlacesLA)*

Numerous organizations represented entertainment workers in Los Angeles which have no known extant resources. These include the Motion Picture and Sound Editors, founded in 1953; the Producers Guild of America (formed out of the 1950 Screen Producers Guild and the 1957 Television Producers Guild);⁸⁰ the Association of Independent Commercial Producers (AICP), founded in 1972 with offices in New York and Los Angeles; and the Independent Film and Television Alliance, founded in 1980 as the American Film Marketing Association.

⁷⁸ "1954", Directors Guild of America, accessed November 2019, <http://www.dga.org/The-Guild/History.aspx?Decade=1950s&Year=1954>. This building was demolished in 1985 to make way for a new six-story building.

⁷⁹ "Motion Picture Editors Guild." The Motion Picture Editors Guild still occupies the same offices; Local 600 moved out of 7715 Sunset in 2003.

⁸⁰ "History," PGA Producers Guild of America, accessed November 2019, <http://www.producersguild.org/?page=history>.

Social Organizations

Like other major industries in the United States, there were several social organizations focused on various aspects of the social welfare of workers in the entertainment industry.

The Motion Picture Directors' Association (MPDA) was founded in Hollywood in 1915, dedicated to “improve the moral, social and intellectual stand of all persons concerned with the motion picture producing business.”⁸¹ The MPDA was the first group to represent directors as a single entity, but declined to act as a labor union.⁸² The group, which grew to encompass approximately 200 members, published a journal, *The Director*, from 1924 to 1927. With the founding of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, the group was essentially defunct.

Because work in the entertainment industry was often cyclical and salaries were sporadic, stars such as Charlie Chaplin, Mary Pickford, and Douglas Fairbanks saw the need for an organization dedicated to entertainment industry professionals who had fallen on hard times. The Motion Picture Relief Fund (now the Motion Picture and Television Fund) was created in 1921 to provide financial assistance funding to those in need. The fund was supported in the 1920s by star-studded benefits including balls, movie premieres, polo matches, fashion shows, and card parties. In the 1930s, Mary Pickford developed the Payroll Pledge Program, a payroll deduction plan for studio workers, talent groups, unions and producer representatives, and in 1932, the Motion Picture Relief Fund gave \$190,000 to film workers.⁸³ The fund’s radio program, the *Screen Guild Show*, began in 1939, and hosted such guests as Jack Benny, Judy Garland, and Joan Crawford. The show ran for 13 years, raised \$5.3 million dollars, and was one of the most popular network radio programs of the time.

The Motion Picture and Television Fund’s main mission since 1941 has been to support the retirement home located in Woodland Hills (23388 Mulholland Drive), a large campus with numerous buildings and landscape features that are not open to the public. Known as “The Lot,” the retirement home features cottages for independent living, a 256-bed hospital, and landscaped grounds.⁸⁴ One of the campus’ first buildings, the Country House, was designed by notable Los Angeles architect William Pereira. The building, now called the Ray and Fran Stark Assisted Living Villa, won an Honor Award from the Southern California Chapter of the American Institute of Architects in 1947.



Motion Picture Relief Fund's Country House and Hospital, 1950 (Los Angeles Public Library)

⁸¹ Pond, “A Guild is Born.”

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Kevin Starr, *The Dream Endures: California Enters the 1940s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 269.

⁸⁴ Pitt and Pitt, “Motion Picture and Television Fund,” *Los Angeles A to Z*, 333.



*Motion Picture and Television Fund Historic District,
Woodland Hills (HistoricPlacesLA)*

Trade Publications

Concurrent with the formation of many of the entertainment industry's unions and social organizations was the establishment of periodicals dedicated to the entertainment industry. However, despite being mediators of entertainment industry news, the relationship between labor organizations and trade publications was often adversarial, and became more so as time progressed.

Although early newspapers in Hollywood often commented on events related to the film industry, it was not until 1930 that a newspaper was established that devoted itself solely to reportage of the film industry. The *Hollywood Reporter* launched on September 3, 1930, from a three-room office at 1606 North Highland Avenue (not extant).⁸⁵ The small newspaper office accommodated a miniscule staff who delivered commentary six days a week on developments in the film industry.

The new trade newspaper format capitalized upon the establishment of motion pictures as one of the nation's top ten industries and the interest generated by its celebrities and film moguls. The format was successful enough that, three years after the founding of the *Hollywood Reporter*, a rival trade newspaper was formed called the *Daily Variety*. *Variety* had originally been launched in 1905 as a weekly publication covering the New York City vaudeville scene, but a daily version with reporting from Los Angeles was added in September 1933 to compete with the *Hollywood Reporter*. The *Daily Variety* shared space in the weekly *Variety's* Los Angeles offices at 6282 Hollywood Boulevard (Taft Building; City Historic-Cultural Monument No. 666).

The trade newspapers soon established themselves as authoritative voices not only of deals and gossip, but also the inner workings of the studio system, and they became an important vehicle for creating public perceptions of labor relations between the studios and workers. When the studios announced that they would cut pay by fifty percent in 1933, the pages of the trades were soon filled with news of the workers' unionization. The representation of strife within the studio system however, would not truly culminate within the pages of trade publications until the industry's labor strikes in the late 1940s.

⁸⁵ Cynthia Littleton and Duane Byrge, "A Paper Tale: With a Passion for 'Pictures' and a Larger-Than-Life Persona, The Reporter's Founding Publisher and Editor-in-Chief, William R. Wilkerson, Gave Life to an Industry Institution." *The Hollywood Reporter*, March 17, 2005, archived from the original at accessed November 2019, https://web.archive.org/web/20061029224606/http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/hr/about_us/history.jsp.

Such strikes were important stories within the trades, especially in the cultural climate of post-World War II America, when such demonstrated dissent was viewed as an indication of Communist leanings.

By 1936, *The Hollywood Reporter* had sufficiently established itself as the voice for all events related to the film industry and the paper relocated to new, well-appointed offices at 6713 Sunset Boulevard (City Historic-Cultural Monument No. 1151).

Although established daily newspapers often had buildings designed specifically for the production of newspapers, such as the 1930 building in Hollywood for the *Hollywood News*, the new location for *The Hollywood Reporter* was neither designed for use as a newspaper building nor even dedicated solely to that function. The building was mixed in use with men's haberdashery and barber shop on the ground floor when the *Hollywood Reporter* first opened its offices, although these retail and service spaces were soon vacated as the paper expanded.⁸⁶



Hollywood Reporter Building, 6713 Sunset Boulevard, City Historic-Cultural Monument No. 1151 (Curbed LA/Wilkerson Archive)

Antagonism between trade publications and entertainment-related labor unions culminated in "Hollywood Black Friday." By the mid-1940s, workers' unions including IATSE and SAG led strikes against the studios, and in 1946, a riot ensued outside Warner Brothers' Burbank studios as police used tear gas on unionized protesters. Trade publications became major vehicles for the dispersal of anti-union sentiment and the fears of "reds"- fears which would eventually culminate in 1947 in the summoning of members of the film industry before the House Un-American Committee (HUAC) in Washington D.C., and the subsequent prosecution of the "Hollywood Ten" for contempt of Congress. Just one month before the HUAC met in Washington D.C., the *Hollywood Reporter* railed against the "Soviet-dominated" unions for the strikes and labor strife within the industry. By this time, the trade newspapers were an established voice through which public opinion was formed and legitimized, and, as the "Red Scare" became pervasive within the American consciousness, allegations of communism were often levied against union members within their pages.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Littleton and Byrge, "A Paper Tale."

⁸⁷ Horne, *Class Struggle in Hollywood, 1930-1950*, 186.

The Entertainment Industry and Higher Education

In 1932, the University of Southern California (USC) became the first American college or university to offer a Bachelor of Arts degree in film. Founding faculty included Douglas Fairbanks, William C. DeMille, Irving Thalberg, and Darryl Zanuck. In 1940, the Department of Cinematography became the Department of Cinema, and moved into the former Architecture and Fine Arts Building, in a facility that became known as “the stables.”⁸⁸ During the postwar years, approximately 70 percent of film students attended USC on the GI Bill.⁸⁹ “Films for Television” was added to the department’s course list in 1947, and two years later, a class in documentary production was introduced.⁹⁰ The Eileen Norris Theater Complex was completed in 1976.⁹¹ USC faculty member and Academy Award winner Tomlinson Holman developed the THX audio/visual reproduction standard in the Eileen Norris Theater and later utilized in film venues worldwide.⁹² The Peter Stark Producing Program was established in 1979, and the USC School of Cinema-Television became an independent academic unit in 1983. Since its founding, the School of Cinematic Arts has had a profound impact on the film industry. Notable alumni include actors Macy Gray, Will Ferrell, America Ferrera, and John Wayne; film and television executives Robert Greenblatt (NBC), Michael Ireland (20th Century Fox), and Jonathan Glickman (MGM); and directors Judd Apatow, Ron Howard, and George Lucas.



Norris Cinema Theater, University of Southern California (Flickr)

⁸⁸ USC Cinematic Arts, “History from 1929 to 1941,” accessed November 2019, <http://cinema.usc.edu/about/history/1929-1940.cfm>.

⁸⁹ USC Cinematic Arts, “1941-1970,” accessed November 2019, <http://cinema.usc.edu/about/history/1941-1970.cfm>.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ USC Cinematic Arts, “1971-1992,” accessed November 2019, <http://cinema.usc.edu/about/history/1971-1992.cfm>.

⁹² USC Event Calendar, “Norris Cinema Theater (NCT),” accessed December 2019, https://calendar.usc.edu/norris_cinema_theatre_nct#.XjIKu2hKibg.

ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS FOR INSTITUTIONAL PROPERTIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY

Summary Statement of Significance:	Properties evaluated under this theme are significant in the areas of Entertainment, Labor, and Social History. They are directly associated with labor, professional, trade, social, educational, or other institutional organizations that played an important role in the history of the entertainment industry in Los Angeles.
Period of Significance:	1919 – 1980
Period of Significance Justification:	The period of significance begins in 1919, the beginning of the Major Studio Era, and ends in 1980, the end date for SurveyLA. The end date may be extended over time.
Geographic Location:	Hollywood, Studio City, North Hollywood
Area(s) of Significance:	Entertainment, Labor, Social History
Criteria:	NR: A CR: 1 Local: 1
Associated Property Types:	Institutional
Associated Property Sub-types:	Professional, Trade, Labor, Social, or Educational Organization Headquarters
Property Type Description:	A property that houses a labor, professional, social, educational, or trade organization headquarters related specifically to the entertainment industry.
Property Type Significance:	A property is significant under this sub-theme for its association with institutional development specifically related to the entertainment industry. Significant properties are the original or long-term home of a labor, professional, social, educational, or trade organizations.

Eligibility Standards:

- Must be proven to have played a significant role in institutional development related to the entertainment industry

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- Original or long-term home of an important entertainment-related labor, professional, social, educational, or trade organization during the period of significance

Character Defining / Associative Features:

- Retains most of the essential physical features from the period of significance
- May be the original site of a significant entertainment industry-related labor, professional, social, educational, or trade organization
- May be the long-term home of a significant entertainment industry-related labor, professional, social, educational, or trade organization
- Organizations may include guilds, unions, academies, and trade publications
- Many of these sites continue to host significant entertainment industry-related organizations today
- Often located in proximity to the motion picture studios
- For the National Register, properties associated with events that date from the last 50 years must possess exceptional significance

Integrity Considerations:

- Should retain integrity of Location, Design, Feeling, and Association from the period of significance
- Should retain sufficient integrity to convey significance
- Original use may have changed
- Setting may have changed (surrounding buildings and land uses)

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