

NAILING IT DOWN

Vacancy Factor Within Bounds

BY TOM CAMERON

One needn't be up to his ears in property development to notice the steady increase in the number and size of high-rise apartment and office buildings in Southern California.

Or to wonder whether perhaps the supply of these types of space isn't outpacing the demand.

It's difficult—from an exact point of view, impossible—to get precise information on whether we're overbuilt or not, but the Building Owners and Managers Assn. has compiled results of an April survey on office and loft structures in the Los Angeles area.

The study involved 152 major office and loft buildings (inclusive of single-purpose structures but not including governmental properties, with an aggregate rentable (competitive and non-competitive) space of nearly 17 million sq. ft.

The over-all occupancy ratio was 92.05%. That in 76 competitive buildings included in the survey was 87.99%. (Competitive in this sense means space available for rent; non-competitive is that devoted to the exclusive use of the owner, such as a big insurance company, or lessee who has signed up the whole building).

Los Angeles office building average occupancy for above-ground-floor space was 91.56% in 129 buildings surveys and 94.81% for ground floors. Upper-floor occupancy by groups was 100% in 68 office buildings, while 28 reported less than 85% occu-

pancy. Ground floor occupancy by groups was 100% in 109 office buildings, while 13 reported less than 90%.

We don't have the figures for comparable space in other cities, so are unable to point the finger or hide our face. But it would seem that the situation here is far from unfavorable.

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Maybe there's a suggestion here for some of our quarreling nations: Bill Milligan of Tempo Advertising in Los Angeles and Robert Follett of Tempo Advertising in Temple City found they were involved in confusion among clients and the public. Instead of hiring lawyers, they agreed that whichever firm had the less invested in stationery would change its name, with the other paying the cost of changes in printing. Milligan lost (won?) and now wishes to be known as the boss of Trend Advertising.

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William Krisel, formerly associated with the architectural firm of Palmer & Krisel, has opened his own offices in Los Angeles and San Diego . . . Oliver W. Speraw, former district sales manager for a major real estate firm, has

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launched his own business under the name of Speraw Realty in Long Beach . . . Harold Shapiro has organized Southern California Realty & Management Co. in Hollywood . . . Paul Laszlo, designer, has been invited to inspect the International Textile Market for Clothing and Furnishings in Milan by Vittorio Sanguineti, Italian trade commissioner here.

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David K. Sutherland, 34, has been named boss of Janss Corp.'s land development division, according to L. S. Guthrie, vice president in charge of that phase of the company's operations . . . Greetings to Matthew (Matt) P. English, new corporate secretary and general manager of the Building Owners and Managers Assn., whose new president is William R. Black, vice president of Title Insurance and Trust Co. And farewell to Mark C. Cohn, veteran manager who retired while I was away on vacation. With Mark's occasional use of obscure but appropriate words, many a copy reader hastened to consult Noah Webster to be sure somebody hadn't goofed.

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The story of property development here is so vast and important that it's a temptation to resort to superlatives. This department seems to provoke challenges (some of them valid) when we write of the "first" or "biggest" or "tallest" development of one kind or another. We've about decided to soft-pedal these provocative adjectives except when we're prepared to prove them without more research than we have time or inclination for.

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Lucile Fickett, wife of Edward H. Fickett, architect, has opened an interior design studio in Westwood Village . . . Veteran actor Ray Harris has joined Tanner Realty "to fill in some time profitably between engagements," as he puts it . . . Dean A. Swanson has been named manager of the San Diego office of Ralph C. Sutro Co., mortgage banking firm.

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Jack Heselov Associates reports opening an office at 8448 Reseda Blvd. in Northridge. They're appraisers and loan consultants.

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Indicating the importance of housing to the general economy, the projected 1.6 million homes to be started this year means a gain of 100,000 dwelling units, which means 127,000 bathtubs, 470 million bricks, 1 million kitchen cabinets . . . Nineteen members of the Roofing Contractors Assn. are back from a four-day seminar in Mazatlan. They were guided on a tour of construction projects in the Sinaloa city by Jaime Tarrible, noted Mexican architect. (What—no marlin fishing?)

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Joseph L. Amestoy and Raymond A. Flanders have established their own architectural firm at 170 E California Blvd., Pasadena.

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John A. Swanson has been named deputy chief land agent of the General Services Department of California. He was formerly chief appraiser for Columbia Savings & Loan . . . And Marvin J. Ree, formerly with H. F. Whittle Investment Co., is now a partner in the Crawshaw Mortgage and Investment Co.

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Intrusions by neighborhood children are a headache for builders and developers. Bartin J. Fenmore, president of Fenco Enterprises, Sherman Oaks, came up with this: He organized Fenmore's Sidewalk Superintendents and invited all local children to become members. Each child gets a badge and agrees to keep off the job during construction, and to try to keep his friends away, too. At the end of the job, all the kids are given a tour of the project, their questions are answered, and then are taken to an ice cream parlor for malts and sodas. Robert Miller and Marc Graham, Fenco vice presidents, say the safety record and lack of vandalism is unmatched. The customary builder approach has been to threaten and scare children away. Voluntary compliance is paying off in the safety of the children, and neighborhood goodwill. And the company's image isn't damaged, either.

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Betty Carlton, Hollywood realtor, occasionally puts out a pamphlet called "Friendly Thoughts." In the springtime edition appear many worthwhile philosophical bits. One of them becomes more and more apropos: "You're getting along in years when it takes you half as long to get tired and twice as long to get rested." Que verdad!

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Did you read that piece in Reader's Digest about the potentialities of "unslumming" as compared to the now-conventional process of evicting occupants from a depressed area and building a redevelopment project?

Anyway, downtown Los Angeles is winning practical approval frequently as a place where the future is bright. Campus Casuals of California has bought the southwest corner of 12th St. and Grand Ave. and plans to modernize its 65,000 sq. ft. at a cost of more than \$100,000. Milton Blain of Haas Realty handled the arrangements.

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SUGGESTED READING: "How to Estimate Market Value in Selling Real Estate," by Ray H. Arnold (Prentice Hall, price not given); "Case Studies in Shopping Center Valuation," by Stephen G. Thompson, editor of *The Appraiser*, organ of American Institute of Real Estate Appraisers (AIREA office, 36 S Wabash Ave., Chicago, \$2.50); "How to Invest & Protect Your Profits in Real Estate Syndicates," by Hugo Rothschild, revised by Daniel S. Berman (Doubleday, \$4.95); "Retirement Facilities Register" (Active Retirement Executives Assn., 6043 Hollywood Blvd., Los Angeles 90028, \$12).