



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: January 13, 2023 REPORT NO. HRB-23-002

HEARING DATE: January 26, 2023

SUBJECT: **ITEM #2 – Edward and Emma Newman Building**

RESOURCE INFO: [California Historical Resources Inventory Database \(CHRID\) link](#)

APPLICANT: Purpose Real Estate Group; represented by Heritage Architecture and Planning

LOCATION: 2906-2912 University Avenue, North Park Community, Council District 3  
APN 446-412-1000

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Edward and Emma Newman Building located at 2906-2912 University Avenue as a historical resource.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Edward and Emma Newman Building located at 2906-2912 University Avenue as a historical resource under HRB Criterion A with a period of significance of 1929-1932 and under HRB Criterion C with a period of significance of 1929. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

1. The resource is a special element of the historical and economic development of North Park and the City as a whole and retains integrity to its 1929-1932 period of significance. Specifically, the resource is representative of the early commercial development of North Park that occurred along University Avenue as a result of the expansion of streetcar lines and subsequent residential growth. The commercial center at 30<sup>th</sup> and University developed into the community's primary commercial core and the 2906-2912 University Avenue building housed North Park's first department store, the Mudd Department store, from 1929-1932.
2. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the One-Part Commercial Block type by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the building type specifically, the resource encompasses the entire parcel, retains a boxed form, features a large expanse of wall above the storefront intended for signage and large glass display windows to illustrate its use as a commercial space. Additionally, the building continues to convey the historic significance of the Spanish

Colonial Revival style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style; including a faux-adobe stucco exterior, pilasters with scroll-like capitals, corner tower, arched transom windows, terra cotta tile accents, and clay pipe attic vents.

## BACKGROUND

This item is being brought before the Historical Resources Board in conjunction with a preliminary review application to determine whether or not the building is historically significant as part of a constraints analysis for future development. The subject resource is a two-story, one-part commercial structure constructed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style in 1929. The building sits on the corner of University Avenue and Kansas Street in one of the North Park Community's commercial districts.

The property was identified in the [2016 North Park Community Plan Area Historic Resources Survey](#) and was determined to be individually eligible for designation on the local register.

The historic name of the resource, the Edward and Emma Newman Building, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name Edward and Emma Newman, who constructed the building as a commercial structure.

## ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Heritage Architecture & Planning, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criterion C. Staff concurs that the site is a significant historical resource under HRB Criterion C, and also finds the property significant under Criterion A. This determination is consistent with the *Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria*, as follows.

*CRITERION A - Exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's, a community's or a neighborhood's historical, archaeological, cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, landscaping or architectural development.*

The *North Park Community Plan Area Historic Context Statement* written in conjunction with the 2016 North Park Community Plan Area Historic Resources Survey discusses the transformation of North Park into its current state and identifies themes and sub-themes significant to the development of North Park and the City of San Diego as a whole. One significant theme identified in the context statement is "Early Commercial Development in North Park" and the sub-theme "University Avenue." Relevant excerpts from the information provided in the context statement are summarized below.

The population of San Diego rose dramatically in the first decades of the twentieth century. The city saw an influx of primarily working and middle-class residents during this period, largely attributable to two events: the arrival of the United States Navy in San Diego, and the growth of tourism following the Panama-California Exposition. The growing presence of the Navy brought increasing numbers of military personnel and their families to San Diego. At the same time, San Diego experienced measurable increase in tourism. The 1915 Exposition brought nearly four million tourists to the city and extolled "the area's climate, agricultural and water-borne resources." Many of the Exposition visitors returned to San Diego to live, work, invest and retire.

The development of North Park during this period was influenced by the completion of the streetcar lines, which ran along Adams Avenue, University Avenue, and 30th Street. As the population of San Diego doubled from 1910 to 1920 (from 39,500 to 75,000), most of the new growth occurred in this area east of downtown. According to the San Diego Union, in 1924 North Park was considered the fastest growing district in San Diego. Housing was constructed in the neighborhoods surrounding University Avenue and the Adams Avenue trolley line. Residential and commercial areas that were in tracts that had been subdivided previously began to be developed rapidly in order to accommodate the area's growing population. Civic and institutional development in North Park was also prevalent during this period, as it grew from an agricultural area into a suburban community, influenced first by the development of the streetcar system, and later by the prevalence of the automobile.

North Park's primary commercial thoroughfares are along University Avenue and El Cajon Boulevard. Each emerged with a different ambience, density, and architecture due to the influence of the predominant mode of transportation during their main period of development.

The streetcars lines provided four basic routes of travel along which both residential and commercial development first occurred. Important nodes of commercial development were located on University Avenue and 30th Street, and at Park Boulevard and Adams Avenue, as a result of the intersection of the streetcar lines. With the rise of private automobiles and the increased traffic along University Avenue, these commercial nodes were expanded, ultimately creating a linear commercial corridor.

Commercial clusters were established along two separate nodes of University Avenue. The first, and most substantial, development occurred at the intersection of 30th Street and University Avenue, which was a transfer point of the streetcar lines. The second was established further east on University Avenue, at approximately the 4100 block. This block is a smaller, "main street" type of commercial area which typically developed at the intersection of two trolley lines. Many service-related businesses opened here including attorneys, barbers, a dentist, insurance sales, a notary, a funeral parlor, a newspaper office, and, as always, real estate offices. Retail shops in this block included a hardware store, a grocery, a butcher shop, and a bakery.

The commercial center at 30th and University developed into the community's primary commercial core. In 1910, the population of North Park was still relatively small and commercial establishments at 30th and University primarily catered to the needs of local residents. This included the establishment of home-improvement retailers, grocery stores, pharmacies, and other neighborhood services. The first substantial commercial development at 30th and University began in 1912 when Stevens & Hartley built a three-story, multi-use structure. Another major expansion of the commercial center at 30th and University began in 1921. An improvement in the economic conditions and an increase of population stimulated this growth, as many merchants saw potential for expansion of their businesses. By late 1922, there were approximately fifty businesses in the commercial center at 30th Street and University Avenue. This period of expansion continued into the 1930s, at which point North Park's commercial center was second only to downtown San Diego.

The subject resource, built in 1929 by Edward Newman, housed two large retail spaces when it was first constructed. The Mudd Department store, North Park's first department store, and the Maw Music Company shared the building. The Mudd Department store opened to much fanfare in

December of 1929. The decline of business due to the stock market crash caused the Newmans to sell the building in 1932 to the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. The Mudd Department store moved to 30<sup>th</sup> Street and University Avenue and the Maw Music Company closed its doors.

Modifications to the subject resource are detailed in the discussion of Criterion C below. These modifications do not impair integrity of location, setting, feeling and association as it relates to Criterion A. Furthermore, the building is still recognizable as a commercial structure and is able to convey its historic significance as a special element of the commercial development of North Park.

Significance Statement: The resource is a special element of the historical and economic development of North Park and the City as a whole and retains integrity to its 1929-1932 period of significance. Specifically, the resource is representative of the early commercial development of North Park that occurred along University Avenue as a result of the construction of streetcar lines and subsequent residential growth. The commercial center at 30<sup>th</sup> and University developed into the community's primary commercial core and the 2906-2912 University Avenue building housed North Park's first department store, the Mudd Department store, from 1929-1932. Therefore, staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion A.

*CRITERION B - Is identified with persons or events significant in local, state or national history.*

Research into the owners and tenants of the property at 2906-2912 University Avenue did not reveal any individuals who could be considered historically significant in local, state or national history. The building is associated with the Independent Order of the Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F), a fraternal order who used the property from 1932-2003. The I.O.O.F are significant to the history of San Diego; however, the property best associated with the order, 526 Market Street, is already listed on the San Diego Register as HRB #70. Furthermore, no events of local, state or national significance are known to have occurred at the subject property. Therefore, the property is not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion B.

*CRITERION C - Embodies distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period or method of construction or is a valuable example of the use of natural materials or craftsmanship.*

The subject resource is a two-story, one-part commercial structure constructed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style in 1929. The building is generally constructed in a box shape with a tower on the southeast corner. The exterior of the structure features a faux-adobe stucco texture and pilasters with scroll-like capitals. The roof over most of the structure is flat with a stepped parapet wall except the tower portion which features a hipped roof. Large storefront windows with tiled bulkheads are present on the south and west facades. Over the storefront windows are arched, divided lite, steel transom windows. Two recessed entrances are present on the University Avenue façade with a decorative faux gable interrupting the parapet over the eastern entrance. On the west façade, three of the arched transom windows have been replaced with rectangular, divided lite steel windows.

Several modifications have been made to the property since its 1929 date of construction. Circa 1933 window and door openings on the Kansas Street façade were modified. In the 1940s, some of the original arched upper windows on the west façade were replaced with rectangular steel divided lite windows. In 1955 the original fixed canopies on the University Avenue façade were removed

and a metal fixed canopy was installed on both street facades. At an unknown date prior to 2000 the Mission-style clay tile roofing was replaced with red asphalt shingles. Sometime after 2015 the ceramic tile bulkheads were covered with new black ceramic tile. In 2017 several of the storefront display windows on the University Avenue façade were replaced with operable awning windows. This window replacement was reviewed by historical resources staff and determined to be consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. These modifications do not significantly impair integrity of design, materials, workmanship or feeling as it relates to HRB Criterion C.

The One-Part Commercial Block building type developed in the United States during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and soon became a common feature in towns and cities. This building type is quintessentially urban and consists of a simple box with a decorated façade. One-part commercial buildings are in essence the lower story of the two-part commercial block type. This building type was common in cities and towns during an initial period of development because they could be constructed with a relatively small investment. Often speculators constructed these buildings as a means to generate income until a more profitable, larger structure could be erected. These buildings can often be found in rows of similar or identical units with little to no separation between the sidewalk and glazing of the front facade. Most one-part commercial block structures were constructed to be used as retail stores and character defining features of this property type include a box form, large glass windows, a decorative cornice or parapet, and expanses of wall that provided a place for advertisements and signage.

The Spanish Colonial Revival style uses decorative details borrowed from the entire history of Spanish architecture. Its vocabulary is influenced by Moorish, Byzantine, Gothic or Renaissance precedents. The style became popular after the Panama-California Exposition of 1915 and reached its height in the 1920's and early 1930's before rapidly declining in the 1940's. Identifying features include a low-pitched roof with little or no eave overhang, red tile roof covering, stucco exterior wall finishes, an asymmetrical façade and arches above doors and principle windows. Common decorative details are patterned tiles, carved stonework, large focal windows, wooden or iron window grilles, decorative vents and balconies.

Significance Statement: The building continues to convey the historic significance of the One-Part Commercial Block type by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the building type specifically, the resource encompasses the entire parcel, retains a boxed form, features a large expanse of wall above the storefront intended for signage and large glass display windows to illustrate its use as a commercial space. Additionally, the building continues to convey the historic significance of the Spanish Colonial Revival style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style; including a faux-adobe stucco exterior, pilasters with scroll-like capitals, corner tower, arched transom windows, terra cotta tile accents, and clay pipe attic vents. Therefore, staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion C.

*CRITERION D - Is representative of a notable work of a master builder, designer, architect, engineer, landscape architect, interior designer, artist or craftsman.*

The subject property at 2906-2912 University Avenue was built by William E. Gibbs. Gibbs has not been established by the Historical Resources Board as a Master Architect, Designer or Builder, and there is insufficient information to designate him as such at this time. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion D.

CRITERION E - *Is listed or has been determined eligible by the National Park Service for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or is listed or has been determined eligible by the State Historical Preservation Office for listing on the State Register of Historical Resources.*

The property at 2906-2912 University Avenue has not been listed on or determined eligible for listing on the State or National Registers. Therefore, the property is not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion E.

CRITERION F - *Is a finite group of resources related to one another in a clearly distinguishable way or is a geographically definable area or neighborhood containing improvements which have a special character, historical interest or aesthetic value or which represent one or more architectural periods or styles in the history and development of the City.*

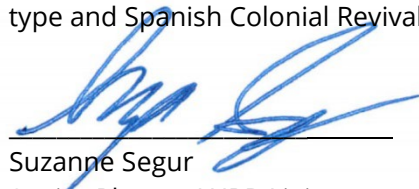
The property at 2906-2912 University Avenue is not located within a designated historic district. Therefore, the property is not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion F.

#### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Designation brings with it the responsibility of maintaining the building in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The benefits of designation include the availability of the Mills Act Program for reduced property tax; the use of the more flexible Historical Building Code; flexibility in the application of other regulatory requirements; the use of the Historical Conditional Use Permit which allows flexibility of use; and other programs which vary depending on the specific site conditions and owner objectives. If the property is designated by the HRB, conditions related to restoration or rehabilitation of the resource may be identified by staff during the Mills Act application process, and included in any future Mills Act contract.

#### CONCLUSION

Based on the information submitted and staff's field check, it is recommended that the Edward and Emma Newman Building located at 2906-2912 University Avenue be designated under HRB Criterion A as a special element of the development of North Park and the City with a period of significance of 1929-1932 and under HRB Criterion C as a good example of both the One-Part Commercial building type and Spanish Colonial Revival architectural style with a period of significance of 1929.



Suzanne Segur  
Senior Planner/ HRB Liaison  
Development Services Department

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Attachment(s):

1. Draft Resolution
2. Applicant's Historical Report under separate cover

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A  
ADOPTED ON 1/26/2023

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 1/26/2023, to consider the historical designation of the Edward and Emma Newman Building (owned by North Park Building LLC, 1001 Page Mill Road #200, Palo Alto, CA 94304) located at **2906-2912 University Avenue, San Diego, CA 92104**, APN: **446-412-10-00**, further described as BLK 206 LOTS 21 THRU 24 W 90 FT in the City of San Diego, County of San Diego, State of California; and

WHEREAS, in arriving at their decision, the Historical Resources Board considered the historical resources report prepared by the applicant, the staff report and recommendation, all other materials submitted prior to and at the public hearing, inspected the subject property and heard public testimony presented at the hearing; and

WHEREAS, the property would be added to the Register of Designated Historical Resources as **Site No. 0**, and

WHEREAS, designated historical resources located within the City of San Diego are regulated by the Municipal Code (Chapter 14, Article 3, Division 2) as such any exterior modifications (or interior if any interior is designated) shall be approved by the City, this includes but is not limited to modifications to any windows or doors, removal or replacement of any exterior surfaces (i.e. paint, stucco, wood siding, brick), any alterations to the roof or roofing material, alterations to any exterior ornamentation and any additions or significant changes to the landscape/ site.

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED, the Historical Resources Board based its designation of the Edward and Emma Newman Building on the following findings:

(1) The property is historically significant under CRITERION A as a special element of the historical and economic development of North Park and the City as a whole and retains integrity to its 1929-1932 period of significance. Specifically, the resource is representative of the early commercial development of North Park that occurred along University Avenue as a result of the expansion of streetcar lines and subsequent residential growth. The commercial center at 30<sup>th</sup> and University developed into the community's primary commercial core and the 2906-2912 University Avenue building housed North Park's first department store, the Mudd Department store, from 1929-1932. This finding is further supported by the staff report, the historical research report, and written and oral evidence presented at the designation hearing.

(2) The property is historically significant under CRITERION C for its distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the One-Part Commercial Block type and Spanish Colonial Revival architectural style and retains integrity to its 1929 date of construction and period of significance. Specifically, the resource encompasses the entire parcel, retains a boxed form, features a large expanse of wall above the storefront intended for signage and large glass display windows to illustrate its use as a commercial space. Additionally, the building features a faux-adobe stucco exterior, pilasters with scroll-like capitals, corner tower, arched transom windows, terra cotta tile accents, and clay pipe attic vents. This finding is further supported by the staff report, the historical research report, and written and oral evidence presented at the designation hearing.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, in light of the foregoing, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego hereby approves the historical designation of the above named property. The designation includes the parcel and exterior of the building as Designated Historical Resource **Site No. 0**.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Secretary to the Historical Resources Board shall cause this resolution to be recorded in the office of the San Diego County Recorder at no fee, for the benefit of the City of San Diego, and with no documentary tax due.

Vote:

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
TIM HUTTER, Chair  
Historical Resources Board

APPROVED: MARA W. ELLIOTT,  
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
LINDSEY SEBASTIAN,  
Deputy City Attorney

DRAFT



RECORDING REQUESTED BY  
CITY OF SAN DIEGO  
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

**WHEN RECORDED MAIL TO**

HISTORICAL RESOURCES BOARD  
ATTN: HRB SECRETARY  
1222 FIRST AVENUE, MS 501  
SAN DIEGO, CA 92101

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SPACE ABOVE THIS LINE FOR RECORDER'S USE

RESOLUTION NUMBER **N/A**

HISTORICAL DESIGNATION OF PROPERTY ON

**2906-2912 University Avenue, San Diego, CA 92104**

ASSESSOR PARCEL NUMBER **446-412-10-00**

HISTORICAL RESOURCES BOARD NUMBER **0**