



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: October 15, 2020 REPORT NO. HRB-20-048

HEARING DATE: October 29, 2020

SUBJECT: **ITEM #6 – Butler Boyd Commercial Building**

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

APPLICANT: 770 12th Ave LLC; represented by Marie Burke Lia

LOCATION: 770 12th Avenue, Downtown Community, Council District 3
APN 535-133-10-00

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Butler Boyd Commercial Building located at 770 12th Avenue as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Butler Boyd Commercial Building located at 770 12th Avenue as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1933 under HRB Criterion C. This recommendation is based on the following finding:

The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of a One-Part Commercial Block type building with Art Deco influences and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1933 period of significance. Specifically, the resource encompasses the entire parcel, features a large expanse of wall above the storefront intended for signage and large glass display windows and doors to illustrate its use as a commercial space. Art Deco influences include the stepped parapet, evenly spaced pilasters with decorative speed lines and stucco cladding.

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 property is located in the East Village neighborhood of the Downtown Community on a corner parcel between F Street and 12th Avenue, now known as Park Boulevard.

The property was located within the boundaries of the 2005 East Village combined Historical Property Survey Report but was not identified as significant.

The historic name of the resource, the Butler Boyd Commercial Building, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Butler Boyd, who constructed the property as a commercial rental property.

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Marie Burke Lia which concludes that the resource is not significant under any HRB Criteria. Staff disagrees and finds that the site is a significant historical resource under HRB Criterion C. 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.

Research into the history of the property at 770 12th Avenue did not reveal any information to indicate that the property exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's or Downtown's historical, archaeological, cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, landscaping or architectural development. Therefore, staff does not recommend 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 770 12th Avenue did not reveal any individuals who could be considered historically significant in local, state or national history. Butler Boyd was the original owner and was a developer at the time of construction. However, even if he was determined to be a significant individual, he would be better associated with his development or personal residence in Ocean Beach. 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 property is located on a corner parcel between F Street and 12th Avenue, now known as Park Boulevard, and features two visible facades; the primary east elevation and the secondary north elevation. The primary façade features a stepped parapet, decorative vertical speed lines, modern stucco cladding, and evenly spaced Art Deco style pilasters. The primary façade also features a large expanse of wall above the storefront intended for signage above a modern awning which replaced the original flat marquee. Underneath this awning are additional window openings and below these windows are larger, modern windows and a centralized door which make up the majority of the east elevation. Although they are made of modern materials, the windows and doors still allow the building to convey its significance as a one-part commercial block type of building. From left to right, the secondary north elevation features one bay of display windows with modern glazing followed by three bays with divided lite wooden windows with evenly spaced pilasters between and a roll up garage door located at the end of the elevation. Art deco influences on a one-part commercial block building type were common in the 1930s in urban environments and featured design elements such as pilasters, speed lines, stucco cladding, stepped parapets and geometric and vertical motifs to draw the public's attention to the

property. Changes to the display windows and doors were not uncommon as the building's tenants changed.

Per the *Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria* under HRB Criterion C a resource's significance may be established by its style, type, period or method of construction. In order to be eligible under Criterion C for building type, the resource's form and materials must clearly demonstrate through the presence of essential physical features a specific purpose and/or function. In its current condition, the subject property has been adaptively reused to house a portion of the New School of Architecture and Design while it continues conveying its historic One-Part Commercial Block type.

Modifications have occurred to the property since its 1933 date of construction and include the replacement of the entry door and display windows on both elevations in their existing openings with modern materials, removal of the original marquee and replacement with a new awning, modern lace stucco texture, and a rollup garage door within an original garage door opening. Despite these modifications, the resource continues to convey the one-part commercial block type through the presence of a large expanse of wall above the storefront intended for signage and large glass windows and doors which demonstrates its specific use as a retail commercial space. Overall, these modifications do not impair the resource's ability to convey the character-defining features of the one-part commercial block building and do not significantly impair integrity as it relates to Criterion C and type of construction.

The One-Part Commercial Block building type developed in the United States during the mid-19th 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.

Significance Statement: The resource 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, features a large expanse of wall above the storefront intended for signage and large glass display windows and doors to illustrate its use as a commercial space. Art Deco influences include the stepped parapet, evenly spaced pilasters with decorative speed lines and stucco cladding. 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 770 12th Avenue was built by Butler Boyd. Butler Boyd 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 770 12th 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 770 12th 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 Butler Boyd Commercial Building located at 770 12th Avenue be designated with a 1933 period of significance under HRB Criterion C as a good example of the One-Part Commercial Block building type with Art Deco influences.



Emma Haggerty
Associate Planner



Suzanne Segur
Senior Planner
Development Services Department

EH/ss

Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON 10/29/2020

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 10/29/2020, to consider the historical designation of the Butler Boyd Commercial Building (owned by 770 12th Ave LLC, 11440 W Bernardo Court #390, San Diego, CA 92127) located at **770 12th Avenue, San Diego, CA 92101**, APN: **535-133-10-00**, further described as BLK 76 LOT L 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 Butler Boyd Commercial Building on the following findings:

(1) The property is historically significant under CRITERION C for its distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of a One-Part Commercial type building with Art Deco influences and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1933 period of significance. Specifically, the resource encompasses the entire parcel, features a large expanse of wall above the storefront intended for signage and large glass display windows and doors to illustrate its use as a commercial space. Art Deco influences include the stepped parapet, evenly spaced pilasters with decorative speed lines and stucco cladding. 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: _____
DAVID MCCULLOUGH, Chair
Historical Resources Board

APPROVED: MARA W. ELLIOTT,
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: _____
LINDSEY SEBASTIAN,
Deputy City Attorney