



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: November 2, 2017 REPORT NO. HRB-17-071

HEARING DATE: November 16, 2017

SUBJECT: **ITEM #9 – Coliseum Athletic Club**

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

APPLICANT: SD Coliseum MQ, LLC <LF> Navarra 1401-85 E Street-LP represented by Scott A. Moomjian

LOCATION: 1485 E Street, 92101, Downtown Community, Council District 3
APNs 534-354-05 and 534-354-06

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Coliseum Athletic Club located at 1485 E Street as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Coliseum Athletic Club located at 1485 E Street as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1924 to 1979 under HRB Criterion A. This recommendation is based on the following finding:

The resource is a special element of the downtown and East Village's sporting venue development and retains integrity to the 1924-1979 period of significance. Specifically, the resource served as the third boxing athletic club built in San Diego and the city's only dedicated boxing venue from 1938-1979.

BACKGROUND

This item is being brought before the Historical Resources Board in conjunction with the owner's desire to have the site designated as a historical resource. The building is located in the downtown core.

The property is identified in the 1988 Historic Site Inventory of the Centre City East for Centre City Development Corporation (CCDC) and determined eligible for listing. The property is also listed in the CCDC Downtown San Diego African-American Heritage Study. The property was determined significant for its association with the contributions and experiences of African-Americans in downtown San Diego between 1860 and 1960.

The historic name of the resource, the Coliseum Athletic Club has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of the building when it was originally constructed.

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Scott Moomjian which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criterion A and Staff concurs. 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.

Constructed originally in 1924 in the Spanish Eclectic style, the Coliseum Athletic Club served as a sports venue for the downtown area and the East Village the decades before the advent of televised sporting events. The subject property was one of a number of different clubs, both amateur and professional, built to promote boxing as a sport. When originally constructed the building was designed in a detailed manner with corner hipped roof towers, an articulated parapet, clay tile and arched openings. The 1930s were considered the "golden era" of boxing in San Diego. Boxing was the only professional spectator sport in town until the late 1960s when Harry William Lane moved his ball club to town.

The Coliseum featured the first ten round boxing match in the state in January 1925. At its opening, the Coliseum was in direct competition with Dreamland Athletic Club, a facility also built to promote boxing. While Dreamland showcased matches on Wednesday nights, the Coliseum provided entertainment on Friday nights. The growing metropolis was unable to sustain two clubs and Dreamland eventually closed its doors leaving the Coliseum to provide entertainment. The Coliseum continued to be popular as a venue and expanded in 1927 to accommodate the crowds.

On April 5, 1938, the building was substantially damaged by a fire that gutted the arena and left very little of the original building in place. The owners commenced rebuilding the structure which was complete by September of the same year. During the reconstruction, matches were played at Lane Field. The new building was more utilitarian in nature and similar to the boxy appearance found on the building today. It featured a square shaped building, with an arched wooden truss roof and gabled center section and skylights, five windows at the upper north elevation and decorative grilles at the northeast and northwest elevations.

The first fight at the newly rebuilt arena was between famed local Archie Moore and Johnny "Bandit" Romero. Between 1938 and 1950, the Coliseum regularly hosted Rusty Payne, "Irish" Spud Murphy and Archie Moore. In the 1950s and 1960s, the Coliseum was closed for extended periods of time. With the advent of televised boxing matches, the Coliseum found it difficult to compete for audiences. Promoters worked to stage weekly matches to keep boxing at the Coliseum relevant. The last match held at the property was in December 1979 between "Irish" Spud Murphy and Dave Madrid.

In the 1980s, the building was purchased by the Navarra family and used as a storage facility for their local furniture business, Jerome's. The interior seats were removed and the lower level spectator area was in-filled.

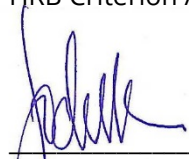
Significance Statement: The resource is a special element of the downtown and East Village's sporting venue development and retains integrity to the 1924-1979. Specifically, the resource served as the third boxing athletic club built in San Diego and served as the city's only dedicated boxing venue from 1938-1979. Therefore, staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion A.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

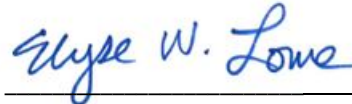
Designation brings with it the responsibility of maintaining the building in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The benefits of designation include the availability of the Mills Act Program for reduced property tax; the use of the more flexible Historical Building Code; flexibility 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 Coliseum Athletic Club located at 1485 E Street be designated with a period of significance of 1924-1979 under HRB Criterion A as a special element of downtown and the East Village's sporting venue.



Jodie Brown, AICP
Senior Planner



Elyse W. Lowe
Deputy Director
Development Services Department

JB/el

Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON 11/16/2017

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 11/16/2017, to consider the historical designation of the **Coliseum Athletic Club** (owned by SD Coliseum MQ, LLC <LF> Navarra 1401-85 E Street-LP, 9404 Genesee Avenue, Suite 330, San Diego, CA 92037) located at **1485 E Street, San Diego, CA 92101**, APN: **534-354-05-00 and 534-354-06-00**, further described as BLK 6 LOT 4 LEASE PER DOC 16-0453633 IN LOTS 1 THRU 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 Coliseum Athletic Club on the following findings:

(1) The property is historically significant under CRITERION A. Specifically, the resource is a special element of the downtown and East Village's sporting venue development and retains integrity to the 1924-1979 period of significance. Specifically, the resource served as the third boxing athletic club built in San Diego and the city's only dedicated boxing venue from 1938-1979. 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: N/A

BY: _____
DAVID MCCULLOUGH, Chair
Historical Resources Board

APPROVED: MARA W. ELLIOTT,
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: _____
CORRINE NEUFFER,
Deputy City Attorney