



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: February 8, 2018 REPORT NO. HRB-18-012

HEARING DATE: February 22, 2018

SUBJECT: **ITEM #5 – 6035 University Avenue**

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

APPLICANT: Spyglass Investment Group; represented by Scott A. Moomjian

OWNER: Roy and Helen Lee

LOCATION: 6035 University Avenue, Eastern Area Community, Council District 4
APN 473-280-33-00

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the property located at 6035 University Avenue as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Do not designate the property located at 6035 University Avenue under any adopted HRB Criteria.

BACKGROUND

This item is being brought before the Historical Resources Board in conjunction with a proposed building modification or demolition of a structure of 45 years or more, consistent with [San Diego Municipal Code Section 143.0212](#). The resource is a two-story office complex consisting of four buildings constructed in 1962 in the Contemporary style.

The property has not been identified in any historic surveys, as the subject area has not been previously surveyed.

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Technical Report (HRTR) was prepared by Urbana Preservation and Planning, which concludes that the resource is not significant under any HRB Criteria 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.

Research into the history of the property at 6035 University Avenue did not reveal any information to indicate that the property exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's or Eastern Area'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 6035 University Avenue did not reveal any individuals who could be considered historically significant in local, state or national history. 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 a two-story commercial complex constructed in 1962 as medical offices. The complex is composed of four stucco clad structures of differing sizes grouped around an interior courtyard. The eastern half of the front façade features a wall accented with concrete shadow blocks while the western half possesses a cantilevered second floor with a concrete screen below. In the center of the façade is the entrance to the courtyard with a bridge above connecting the second stories of two of the buildings. On the interior, the landscaped courtyard contains a series of concrete pathways that lead to the doors of the office units. Several sets of open metal staircases lead to a balcony which encircles the entire second floor. Both the stairs and balcony are ornamented by a metal geometric railing. The entrances to the offices are simple, unornamented wood doors while the windows are large, fixed and also of wood. Most of the ornamentation occurs on the front façade and the courtyard while the other three exterior facades exhibit a simple design. Windows on the west and south facades are a mix of wood framed fixed and metal framed jalousie. The east façade features smaller metal casement windows.

Several modifications have been made to the structure since its construction in 1962. On the front façade, a light soffit was added across the building at a height between the first and second floors. The balcony railing over the entrance to the courtyard has been enclosed with Masonite panels. Security bars and gates have been added at the front entrance. The hardscaping in the courtyard has been modified by the addition of more concrete pathways and the removal of a water feature. The building has been restuccoed in a similar texture at least once and there is evidence that decorative vertical bands were removed from the east façade. The HRTR suggests that the building was expanded behind the concrete screen on the front façade and that additional doors were added inside the courtyard however there is no evidence to definitively support these claims. On the west and south exterior facades, the areas below the windows are covered in Masonite boards which is generally used as a replacement material. This evidence suggests that these areas have been modified however this cannot be definitely proven.

Unlike earlier styles which are generally defined by exterior decorative details, the Contemporary style focused on interior spaces and their relation to the outdoors. Emphasis was placed on integrating the indoors with the outdoors by utilizing windows and exterior living areas such as balconies and courtyards. The style was popular in San Diego in the 1950's and 1960's largely because it could be easily adapted to hillside lots. Character defining features include strong roof forms with deep overhangs and exposed beams; large, aluminum framed windows; non-traditional exterior finishes including vertical wood siding, concrete block, stucco and flagstone; sun shades, screen or shadow block accents; broad masonry chimneys; and distinctive triangular, parabolic or arched forms, angular massing and courtyards or balconies. Other common features include asymmetrical facades, broad expanses of wall surfaces with integral patterns and recessed or obscured entrances. Contemporary commercial buildings often incorporate "eyebrow" overhangs, stylized signage, minimal architectural details and a horizontal orientation.

The property located at 6035 University Avenue is an example of the Contemporary style. The complex features a strong flat roof, large windows, stucco exterior, a concrete screen and shadow block accents, courtyard, balconies, and asymmetrical façade. While the property displays many of the character defining features of the Contemporary style, it was constructed to be used as an office building but is more representative of a typical residential complex of this time period. Because the original use was an office building, the structure should be evaluated as a commercial/office building rather than a residential structure. According to the [San Diego Modernism Historic Context Statement](#), commercial buildings in the Contemporary style typically feature long horizontal massing, extensive use of glass windows to open the interior space to the street, updated Moderne elements such as "eyebrow" overhangs, and minimal architectural details on the façade. The subject resource does not have "eyebrow" overhangs or a long horizontal massing and the front façade displays many decorative architectural details. Also, the structure features large windows but they are concentrated mostly in the courtyard and the design of the structure turns inward rather than out to the street. This design is more typical of an apartment complex which was the specialty of the builder J.H. Hedrick Company. A more notable example of J.H. Hedrick Company's work in office buildings is the structure located at 2970 Fifth Avenue constructed in 1961. Therefore, because the property does not exhibit the characteristics typical of Contemporary commercial buildings, staff does not recommend 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 6035 University Avenue was designed and built by J.H. Hedrick Company. The J.H. Hedrick Company has not been established by the Historical Resources Board as a Master Architect, Designer or Builder, and there is insufficient information to designate them 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 6035 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 6035 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 property located at 6035 University Avenue should not be designated under any adopted HRB Criteria.



Suzanne Segur
Associate Planner



Sonnier Francisco
Senior Planner/ HRB Liaison

ss/sf

Attachment(s):

1. Applicant's Historical Report under separate cover