



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: August 18, 2016 REPORT NO. HRB-16-049

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board  
Agenda of August 25, 2016

SUBJECT: **ITEM #5 – Arts & Crafts Press Building**

APPLICANT: CALFA Holdings Five LLC represented by Marie Burke Lia

LOCATION: 3554-3590 Kettner Boulevard, 1949 West Walnut Avenue and 3553-3595 California Street, Midway-Pacific Highway Community, Council District 2

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Arts & Crafts Press Building located at 3554-3590 Kettner Boulevard, 1949 West Walnut Avenue and 3553-3595 California Street as a historical resource.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Arts & Crafts Press Building located at 3554-3590 Kettner Boulevard, 1949 West Walnut Avenue and 3553-3595 California Street as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1963 under HRB Criterion C. The designation excludes the 1982 addition within the lower level rear parking lot. This recommendation is based on the following finding:

The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of a Modern Contemporary style commercial building and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1963 date of construction and period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits horizontal orientation, strong flat roof form, angular massing, large aluminum framed storefront glazing, varied non-traditional exterior materials, distinctive gridded trellis shade element, and integrated rooftop display element.

### 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 property is a Modern Contemporary style commercial facility constructed in 1963 within all of Block 156 of Middletown in the Midway-Pacific Highway Community. The property is bounded by Kettner Boulevard to the east, West Walnut Avenue to the north, California Street to the west, and Vine Street to the south.

The building is located on APN 451-690-17-00. The property was identified in the Draft 2011 Midway Community Plan Area Historic Resources Reconnaissance Survey and given a Status Code of 5S3, "Appears to be individually eligible for local listing or designation through survey evaluation."

The historic name of the resource, the Arts & Crafts Press Building, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of its historical use or tenant and the historic name of the building established by the original owner as shown on the original 1962 construction drawings.

## 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 historic 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 3554-3590 Kettner Boulevard, 1949 West Walnut Avenue and 3553-3595 California Street did not reveal any information to indicate that the property exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's or Midway-Pacific Highway'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 3554-3590 Kettner Boulevard, 1949 West Walnut Avenue and 3553-3595 California Street 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 was constructed in 1963 as a Modern Contemporary style commercial/light industrial building with multiple tenant spaces and integrated rooftop and street level parking. The building is sited on an a large sloping rectangular lot consisting of an entire block bounded by Kettner Boulevard, West Walnut Avenue, California Street, and Vine Street.

Although drawn as a single building on the plans and interpreted visually as a single building, the site can be considered as having two main sections, one occupying the northern half of the lot and one to the south. The northern section consists of a lower, ground floor level with rooftop parking and a main upper level fronting onto Kettner Boulevard. The southern section consists of a partial,

lower level with adjacent surface parking lot accessible from California Street, and a main upper level accessible from Kettner Boulevard with a third floor showroom display above.

The building exhibits an L-shaped plan form and strong horizontal massing while responding to the sloping lot along Vine Street and West Walnut Avenue. The building's structural system is generally of concrete and steel, and permits extensive storefront glazing opening interior spaces primarily out to Kettner Boulevard. Additional exterior materials include painted stucco and brick, as well as wood and steel applied ornamentation. The strong flat roof form at the primary elevation is interrupted briefly by a distinctive glass showroom element intended for the prominent display of goods to pedestrians and motorists. A gridded trellis provides shade for the sizeable entry patio at the northern section of this façade. The trellis system connects to the southern section of the building and is repeated again over the building's entry from the rooftop parking lot area.

Alterations to the subject property are limited and do not significantly impact the building's character defining features or integrity as it relates to the 1963 date of construction and period of significance. A 1982 addition within the lower level parking lot is shown on the Assessor's Building Record behind and below the main showroom section of the building along the southern portion of the Kettner Boulevard. The historic report cites a number of further modifications based upon review of original construction drawings. These include the painting of portions of brick exterior, storefront replacement at the California Street entrance, various storefront and glazing alterations, stucco enclosure removal of a portion of the trellis system at the west (rear) elevation, and steel signage structure added over the rooftop showroom display. Overall, the alterations do not significantly affect essential physical features critical to the Modern Contemporary style of the building – there is little to no impact to composition, massing, scale or decorative elements. Accordingly, the alterations do not greatly impair the building's integrity of design, materials, workmanship and feeling. Thus, the building remains eligible under HRB Criterion C.

The Modern Contemporary style was ubiquitous in San Diego during the 1950s and 1960s as a style for commercial buildings and streetscapes. These buildings display many of the same design features as Contemporary style homes, such as angular massing, varied materials use, and unusual roof forms, especially on freestanding commercial buildings. Signage for street front commercial buildings in the Contemporary style was generally large, with bold free-standing letters attached to building facades that were frequently lighted in order to attract passing motorists. For Contemporary buildings with private parking lots such as grocery stores, signage was frequently taller and rose above the building itself, serving as a beacon in large parking areas.

The adopted *San Diego Modernism Historic Context Statement* lists primary character defining features of the Contemporary style as strong roof forms including flat, gabled, shed, or butterfly, typically with deep overhangs; large windows, often aluminum framed; and non-traditional exterior finishes including vertical wood siding, concrete block, stucco, flagstone and mullion-free glass. The style is characterized secondarily by angular massing; sun shades, screens or shadow block accents; attached garages or carports for homes; split-level design, especially on sloped residential sites; horizontally oriented commercial buildings; distinctive triangular, parabolic, or arched forms; "eyebrow" overhangs on commercial buildings; and integrated, stylized signage on commercial buildings. The subject building exhibits all of the primary and most of the secondary character defining features of a Contemporary style commercial building.

Significance Statement: The subject building continues to convey the historic significance of the Modern Contemporary style for commercial buildings by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style; including horizontal orientation, strong flat roof form, angular massing, large aluminum framed storefront glazing, varied non-traditional exterior materials, distinctive gridded trellis shade element, and integrated rooftop display element. 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.*

According to original construction drawings, permit history, and the Notice of Completion, the property's original owner Packard Properties, Inc. contracted with Frank L. Hope and Associates and M.H. Golden Construction Company to design and build the subject property. According to an interview with F. Leland Hope (Frank Hope Sr.'s grandson) conducted by the applicant, the architect responsible for the design of the subject property was Howard Irwin Shaw, a longtime employee of Frank L. Hope and Associates. Neither Howard Irwin Shaw nor M.H. Golden Construction Company has been established by the Historical Resources Board as a Master Architect, Designer or Builder, and there is insufficient information to designate either 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 3554-3590 Kettner Boulevard, 1949 West Walnut Avenue and 3553-3595 California Street 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 3554-3590 Kettner Boulevard, 1949 West Walnut Avenue and 3553-3595 California Street is not located within a designated historic district. Therefore, the property is not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion F.

#### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

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 Arts & Crafts Press Building located at 3554-3590 Kettner Boulevard, 1949 West Walnut Avenue and 3553-3595

California Street be designated with a period of significance of 1963 under HRB Criterion C as a resource that embodies the distinctive characteristics of Modern Contemporary style commercial buildings. The designation excludes the 1982 addition within the lower level rear parking lot. 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.



Camille Pekarek  
Associate Planner



Kelley Stanco  
Senior Planner/HRB Liaison

CP/ks

Attachments:

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A  
ADOPTED ON 8/25/2016

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 8/25/2016, to consider the historical designation of the **Arts & Crafts Press Building** (owned by CALFA Holdings Five LLC, 1350 Columbia Street #900, San Diego, CA 92101) located at **3554-3590 Kettner Blvd, 1949 West Walnut Avenue and 3553-3595 California Street, San Diego, CA 92101**, APN: **451-690-17-00**, further described as BLK 156 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 Arts & Crafts Press 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 Modern Contemporary style commercial building and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1963 date of construction and period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits horizontal orientation, strong flat roof form, angular massing, large aluminum framed storefront glazing, varied non-traditional exterior materials, distinctive gridded trellis shade element, and integrated rooftop display element. 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 designation shall exclude the 1982 addition within the lower level rear parking lot.

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: \_\_\_\_\_  
COURTNEY ANN COYLE, Chair  
Historical Resources Board

APPROVED: JAN I. GOLDSMITH,  
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
CORRINE NEUFFER,  
Deputy City Attorney