



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: January 9, 2014 REPORT NO. HRB-14-004

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board
Agenda of January 23, 2014

SUBJECT: **ITEM #10 – The American Federation of Labor Building**

APPLICANT: Holman Family Trust represented by Marie Burke Lia

LOCATION: 2323 Broadway, 92102, Greater Golden Hill Community, Council District 3

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the American Federation of Labor Building located at 2323 Broadway as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the American Federation of Labor Building located at 2323 Broadway as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1948 under HRB Criteria A and C. The designation excludes the 1958 addition at the east side of the property. This recommendation is based on the following finding:

1. The resource is a special element of Greater Golden Hill's post war development and retains integrity. Specifically, the resource reflects the diversification of the neighborhood with the increase in working class families moving to the area post World War II.
2. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Art Deco style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1948 period of significance. Specifically, the resource maintains its smooth wall surfaces, symmetrical design, repeating window pattern, vertical columns, multi-light metal windows, a central slightly raised roof-line to create a tower effect, and a projecting entrance roof with chevron-like detail.

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 property is located within the

Greater Golden Hill area on a major arterial street. The surrounding properties include single and multi-family as well as commercial.

The historic name of the resource, the American Federation of Labor Building has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of the original use of the building.

ANALYSIS

A historical resource research was prepared by Marie Burke Lia which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria A and C 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.

The consultant has stated that the property is significant under HRB Criterion A as an example of the economic and social aspects of the Golden Hill community in the mid-twentieth century. The property was constructed in 1948 as a Union Hall during a time when building trades were expanding due to the economic impact of World War II and the post war years. The surrounding area was once home to large single family mansions, but during the war years many of the large houses were converted to multi-family units. The area soon diversified to include commercial entities as well and became known as a working class neighborhood. The establishment of the Union Hall within a once exclusive neighborhood details the movement of working class families into the area and is reflective of the economic impact of post World War II. Therefore staff recommends designation of the property under HRB Criterion A.

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 1948 in the Art Deco style. The building features a concrete foundation, a reinforced concrete frame and walls with a barrel and flat roof. The exterior walls are brightly painted and smooth. The fenestration is a mixture of multi-light fixed and awning metal windows.

The front façade features three main bays with a centrally located entrance. The entrance includes a small projecting roof with a chevron-like edge. The original entrance area featured three sets of wood and glass doors that were replaced with a modern aluminum storefront door and two fixed windows in the original openings. The central section of the front façade is recessed and raised slightly. Decorative shields above the main entrance indicate the original affiliation of the building (A F of L). The flanking portions of the façade mimic the central portion with vertical elements that create a solid/void appearance creating interest in the plane.

The west façade features a symmetrical pattern of windows and doors. The first floor has four retail suites with a single entrance door and transom above with a large display window immediately adjacent to it. The second floor features metal windows in a repeating pattern of narrow/wide.

The south façade, at the rear of the building is essentially flat with windows evenly spaced on the façade. The windows on this elevation match the multi-light metal windows used throughout. The east façade features an addition that was constructed in 1958. The original construction consisted of a one story 9'x 53' wall projection that allowed for an uncovered balcony. The 1958 alteration added 1,343 SF. The modification created a one story, flat roofed addition with multi-light metal windows and smooth surfaced walls.

The Art Deco style was first evidenced at the Exposition Internationale des Artes Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes in Paris, France in 1925 to celebrate the coming of the machine and technology age. Among the distinctive characteristics of the Art Deco style that are employed in the structures are: smooth stucco wall surfaces; vertical pilasters and columns with vertical striations, located at the corners and intermittently throughout the facades; stylized keystone elements between the vertical columns and pilasters; projecting porches with vertical chevron ornamentation and Art Deco design balustrades; and concrete stairs with Art Deco design metal railings, as well as articulated treads and risers that project on the sides of the stair, creating a zigzag motif.

The subject property exhibits many of the character defining features of simplified Art Deco style such as the smooth wall surfaces, vertical columns, a central slightly raised roof-line to create a tower effect, and a projecting entrance roof with chevron-like detail. There have been some modifications to the building which include paint on the originally unpainted concrete, an east side addition, modification of the front entrance doors and removal of the letters from the shields on the front façade. Overall, the modifications do not detract from the historic character of the building and it continues to convey the historic significance of the Art Deco style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style. Therefore, staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion C.

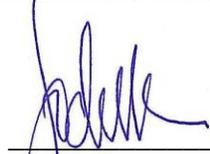
OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

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.

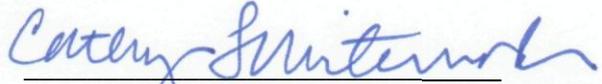
CONCLUSION

Based on the information submitted and staff's field check, it is recommended that the American Federation of Labor Building at 2323 Broadway be designated with a period of significance of 1948 under HRB Criterion A reflecting the diversification of the Greater Golden Hill neighborhood and HRB Criterion C as a good example of the Art Deco style retaining its character defining features, which include the smooth wall surfaces, a symmetrical design, repeating window pattern, vertical columns, multi-light metal windows, a central slightly raised

roof-line to create a tower effect, and a projecting entrance roof with chevron-like detail. The designation excludes the 1958 addition at the east side of the property. 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.



Jodie Brown, AICP
Senior Planner



Cathy Winterrowd
Deputy Director/HRB Liaison

JB/cw

Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON 1/23/2014

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 1/23/2014, to consider the historical designation of the **American Federation of Labor Building** (owned by Holman Family Trust 04-15-92, 640 A Avenue, Coronado, CA 92118) located at **2323 Broadway, San Diego, CA 92102**, APN: **534-383-01-00**, further described as BLK E LOTS 1 & 2 BLK ADJ DB 14/641 & 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 American Federation of Labor Building on the following findings:

(1) The property is historically significant under CRITERION A as a resource that is a special element of Greater Golden Hill's post war development and retains integrity. Specifically, the resource reflects the diversification of the neighborhood with the increase in working class families moving to the area post World War II. 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 Art Deco style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1948 period of significance. Specifically, the resource maintains its smooth wall surfaces, symmetrical design, repeating window pattern, vertical columns, multi-light metal windows, a central slightly raised roof-line to create a tower effect, and a projecting entrance roof with chevron-like detail. 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 1958 addition at the east side of the property.

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: _____
JOHN LEMMO, Chair
Historical Resources Board

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND
LEGALITY: JAN I. GOLDSMITH,
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: _____
CORRINE NEUFFER,
Deputy City Attorney