



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: August 13, 2015 REPORT NO. HRB-15-029

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board
Agenda of August 27, 2015

SUBJECT: **ITEM #6 – 4118-4122 University Avenue**

APPLICANT: City of San Diego represented by Marie Burke Lia

LOCATION: 4118-22 University Avenue, 92105, City Heights, Council District 9

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the properties located at 4118-4122 University Avenue as historical resources.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Do not designate the property located at 4118-4122 University Avenue under any adopted HRB Criteria.

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 located on the north side of University Avenue, just west of 41st Street in the City Heights area of San Diego. The subject resource is one-story Vernacular style commercial building, built in 1924. The building is located on APN 454-763-16. The property was identified in the 1996 Historical Greater Mid-City San Diego Preservation Strategy and given a Status Code 5S3, “Appears to be individually eligible for local listing or designation through survey evaluation.”

ANALYSIS

A Technical Report was prepared by Wendy L. Tinsley Becker in 2009, which states that the resource is significant under HRB Criterion A, C and F. A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Marie Burke Lia in 2013, 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.

Planning Department

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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 4118-4122 University Avenue did not reveal any information to indicate that the property exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's or City Heights' historical, archaeological, cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, landscaping or architectural development.

The Becker Report found that this commercial property is historically significant under Criterion A because it was constructed during the time when this area of the City was incorporated as East San Diego, 1912-1924. However according to Lia report, there are at least forty examples of similar style and types of commercial buildings along the University Avenue commercial corridor within eight blocks of the of the subject property still in place that represent the early development of this section of University Avenue's business district during this period. Furthermore, in order for a property to be found significant under Criterion A, the resource must be "distinct among others of its kind" or "surpass the usual in significance." The subject property does not meet this test when compared to its many neighbors from the same time period. 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 properties at 4118-4122 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 is a one-story, Commercial Vernacular style building addressed as 4118, 4120, and 4122 University Avenue. The building has a concrete foundation, stucco over brick exterior and a barrel roof with a canted parapet. The parapet area contains coping and three separate flat spaces for signage. The building contains three separate retail units. The front (south) elevation shows three entries to each separate address separated by four corbelled brick pilasters covered in stucco. A recessed entry with a single metal and glass door, flanked by plate glass display storefront windows is on front (south) elevation of 4118 University Avenue. Large, fixed pane plate glass windows flank the single entry doors at 4120 and 4122 University Avenue. Multi-lite transoms are located above all separate storefronts. The side (west) elevation shares a wall with the adjacent building. The rear (north) elevation shows exposed brick with two corbelled brick pilasters. A large central door, single door, and window have been boarded up. On the east (side) elevation, there are three corbelled brick pilasters. The window and large door opening on this elevation have been boarded up.

The Becker Report states that 4118-4122 University Avenue is a part of an intact grouping of One-and-Two-Part Commercial Block buildings, each with a different revival style parapet or cornice design. The One-and Two Part Commercial block building type is characterized by a horizontal division of two distinct zones. The large street level windows indicate public spaces for commercial use, while the upper smaller openings indicate more private spaces. This building possesses no essential physical features demonstrating specific purpose or function. It was constructed for common uses of any nature: retail, light manufacturing, office, residential, etc. and as indicated in by the City Directory research, they were used by a variety of uses, such as a light industrial, wholesale distribution, restaurants, and dance studio. The parapet and cornice design is the closest recognized features that the Becker associates with revival style. These buildings are missing a majority of the identifying features of the Mission Revival such as tile roof covering, shaped parapets, quatrefoil windows, and arched openings. The architectural style is Vernacular Commercial construction, which by definition acknowledges the absence of a recognized architectural style. These buildings are simple, unadorned, standard commercial buildings without the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship.

The subject building does not embody the distinctive characteristics of a recognized architectural style, type of construction, or method of construction from the period and is not an example of the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship. Therefore, 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.

No architect or contractor was identified as responsible for the design and construction of the building at 4118-4122 University Avenue. Therefore, the subject building is not representative of the work of a master builder, designer, architect, engineer, landscape architect, interior designer, artist, or craftsman.

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 4118-4122 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 4118-4122 University Avenue is not located within a designated historic district. Therefore, the properties are not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion F.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

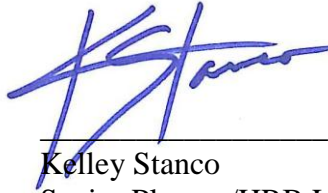
If the property is designated by the HRB, conditions related to restoration or rehabilitation of the resource may be identified by staff during the Mills Act application process, and included in any future Mills Act contract.

CONCLUSION

Based on the information submitted and staff's field check, it is not recommended that the property located at 4118-4122 University Avenue be designated under any HRB Criteria. Designation brings with it the responsibility of maintaining the buildings 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.



Joseph P. Castro, RA
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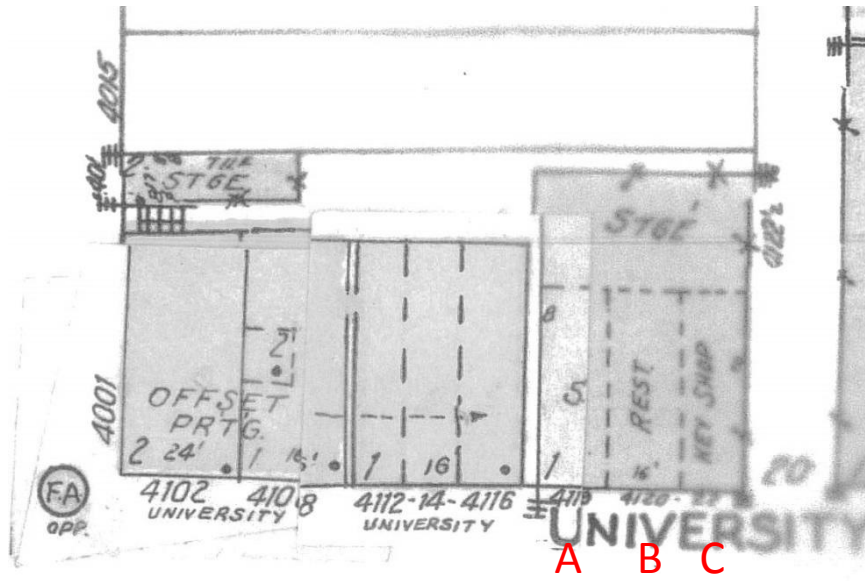
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Attachment:

1. Photo Exhibit showing Interior of Boarded Storefronts
2. Historical Report prepared by Marie Burke Lia dated 2013, under separate cover
3. Historical Report prepared by Urbana Preservation & Planning dated 2009, under separate cover

Interior Photos of Storefronts

4118-4122 University Avenue



A. 4118



B. 4120 – No Photo – Access Not Available

C. 4122

