



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: February 14, 2013 REPORT NO. HRB-13-007

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board
Agenda of February 28, 2013

SUBJECT: **ITEM #5 – 372 Fourth Avenue**

APPLICANT: Bosa Development Company represented by Marie Burke Lia

OWNED BY: Williams Family Trust / Elizabeth W. Awes Separate Property Trust

LOCATION: 372 Fourth Avenue, Downtown Community, Council District 3

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the property located at 372 Fourth Avenue as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Do not designate the property located at 372 Fourth Avenue under any adopted HRB Criteria, due to a lack of integrity.

BACKGROUND

This item is being brought before the Historical Resources Board by a potential buyer 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 commercial warehouse building was constructed in 1924 on the southwest corner of Fourth Avenue and J Street by the Spreckels Brothers Commercial Company. The property was identified in the 2005 Warehouse Thematic Historic District Survey as a contributing resource to the potential district. The Board adopted the Warehouse Thematic Historic Survey but did not designate a local district. Subsequently, Save Our Heritage Organization (SOHO), the proponent of the historic district, withdrew the application from the Historical Resources Board and submitted an application to the State Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) to consider State and/or Federal eligibility of the proposed historic district. In 2007, OHP determined there was not sufficient integrity to establish a district, as proposed. Therefore, this building is coming before the Board for designation consideration as an individual resource.

ANALYSIS

A historical resource research report was prepared by Kathleen Crawford of the office of Marie Burke Lia, which concludes that the building is not significant under any HRB Criteria, and staff concurs with that determination. 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.

There is no information available to suggest that the subject building exemplifies or reflects a special element of the City's or the Marina District's historical, archaeological, cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, landscaping or architectural development. It was constructed as a standard commercial warehouse, and does not embody and distinct or unique significance apart from other commercial warehouse buildings. 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.

The subject property was owned by several entities and individuals, and has been occupied by a number of different tenants since its construction in 1924. The only entity or individual of note is the Spreckels Brothers Commercial Company, who owned and occupied the building from its construction in 1924 until 1932. Owned by John D. Spreckels and his brother Adolph, the Spreckels Brothers Commercial Company was one of many in the Spreckels empire, and appears to have focused on sale and distribution of a variety of goods, including coal, construction supplies and agricultural products. There is no indication that this Company was of particular historic significance. In addition, the property is associated with the Company and was used as a warehouse, and is not directly associated with John D. Spreckels either personally or professionally (i.e. home or office). Therefore, staff does not recommend 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 located at 372 Fourth Avenue was constructed in 1924 as a commercial warehouse building type, displaying no particular stylistic influences. The building measures approximately 100 feet by 200 feet in size and is constructed of reinforced concrete. The medium-pitch front gable roof features a monitor (a raised structure running along the ridge of a double-pitched roof, with its own roof running parallel with the main roof) and is clad in red standing seam roofing. A pair of horizontal slatted vents is present in the gable ends. Historic photographs provided in the applicant's addendum and this staff report (Attachment 1), as well as evidence remaining in the building illustrate that the building originally featured only a few roll-up bay doors, as well as minor access doors and windows on the east façade.

In 1985, the building was substantially altered to accommodate a change to commercial use. Alterations included the following: elimination of the access doors and small windows on the east façade; elimination of the single roll-up door of the east façade; introduction of a large 3-part storefront system on the east façade; framing-in of the 4 roll-up doors on the south façade and introduction of windows within the reduced openings; elimination of the loading dock on the south façade; framing-in of 1 roll-up door of the west façade and introduction of a window within the reduced opening; framing-in of 3 roll-up doors on the north façade and introduction of windows within the reduced openings; framing-in of 1 roll-up door on the north façade and introduction of a window and access door within the reduced opening; and introduction of awnings on all 4 elevations. The modifications have significantly impacted and impaired the integrity of the original warehouse design by eliminating key character defining features, such as the roll-up doors, and introducing non-historic commercial storefront and window systems not historically found on warehouse buildings. As a result, integrity of design, materials and feeling have been directly compromised. In addition, integrity of setting has been adversely impacted by redevelopment of the surround block and adjacent intersection. 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.

The subject building was constructed by R.A. Jackson, according to the Notice of Completion filed in December 1924. City directory listings confirm that R.A. Jackson was a contractor; however, he has not been established by the Board as a Master Builder. In addition, there is no information available to indicate the involvement of an architect in the design of the building. 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 subject property located at 372 Fourth Avenue has not been listed on or determined eligible for listing on the National Register or the State Register of Historical Resources. 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 subject property located at 372 Fourth Avenue is not located within a locally designated historic district. Therefore, the property is not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion F.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

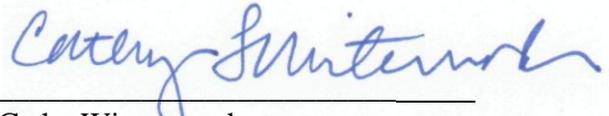
If the property is designated by the HRB, conditions related to restoration or rehabilitation of the resource may be identified by staff during the Mills Act application process, and included in any future Mills Act contract.

CONCLUSION

Based on the information submitted and staff's field check, it is recommended that the property located at 372 Fourth Avenue not be designated under any HRB Criteria due to a lack of integrity. 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.



Kelley Stanco
Senior Planner



Cathy Winterrowd
Assistant Deputy Director/HRB Liaison

KS/cw

Attachment:

1. Historic Photo dated November 1979, from Gaslamp Survey
2. Applicant's Historical Report and Addendum under separate cover



Strickman & Sons

372 4th AVE.



GASLAMP QUARTER DISTRICT

Building Address: 4TH AVE WESTSIDE
San Diego, CA. 92109 BETWEEN ISLAND

Photographer: Steve Leinow AND J

Location of Negative:

City Administration Building

202 "C" street

San Diego, CA. 92109

View of Photograph: SW

Number of Photo: 140 of 163

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