



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: May 12, 2016 REPORT NO. HRB-16-031

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board
Agenda of May 26, 2016

SUBJECT: **ITEM #9 – Silverado Ballroom**

APPLICANT: Lotus Equity Group LLC represented by Marie Burke Lia

LOCATION: 4007 Euclid Avenue and 4750-4756 University Avenue, City Heights
Community, Council District 9

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Silverado Ballroom located at 4007 Euclid Avenue and 4750-4756 University Avenue as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Silverado Ballroom located at 4007 Euclid Avenue and 4750-4756 University Avenue as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1932 - ca. 1965 under HRB Criteria A and C. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

1. The resource is a special element of City Heights' cultural and social development and retains integrity to the 1932 – ca. 1965 period of significance. Specifically, the resource provided for the community an accessible, eye-catching venue along a major thoroughfare for social gatherings, music and dancing during a period of continued commercial and residential growth in the area.
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 1932 date of construction and period of significance. Specifically, the resource features smooth stucco wall surfaces; copious geometric detailing; narrow horizontal bands; vertical pilasters; multi-pane metal casement, fixed and pivot windows; and a stylized, projecting tower element marking the main entrance to the ballroom.

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 subject property is a two-story commercial retail store and ballroom building located at the northeast corner of Euclid Avenue and University Avenue in the Fairmount Addition of the City Heights Community.

The building is located on APN 471-501-13-00. The property was identified in the 1996 Mid-City Survey as a potentially individually significant structure due to its architecture and its historical background regarding the development of the community.

The historic name of the resource, the Silverado Ballroom, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name established by the original owner, subsequent owners, or community, and the site's known name since its period of significance.

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report 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 report indicates that the property is significant under HRB Criterion A as a special element of the cultural and social development of the City Heights community. The property was built in 1932 and featured the Silverado Ballroom, an expansive dance studio and music hall on the second floor of the building. According to many personal accounts from long-time members of the community documented in the report, the Silverado Ballroom was regularly used, from the time of its construction and into the 1960s, for social gatherings, community dances, live music events, and as a private dance studio for local instructors. The Silverado Ballroom played host to a variety of events, including classes and recitals for many styles of dance and acrobatics, and catered to community members both young and old. In the years during World War II, City Heights saw brisk population increase as more military and war production centers cropped up around San Diego. After the war, residential and commercial growth continued despite the removal of the City Heights street car line and the advent of new regional shopping centers. The Silverado Ballroom continued to serve the community as a social and cultural gathering place during this time.

The period of significance of 1932 to circa 1965 identified by staff is based on the limited information provided in the report. Most of the personal anecdotes from community members provided in the report describe times within this period. The City directory listings for the subject property provided in Attachment B.2 of the applicant's report show the Silverado Ballroom listed at 4756 University Avenue until 1962 and at 4752 University Avenue until 1980. Further research on the history of the Silverado Ballroom may yield additional information to merit expansion of the period of significance at a later time.

Significance Statement: As a significant community landmark reflecting the cultural and social development of City Heights by providing for the community an accessible venue along a major thoroughfare for social gatherings, music and dancing during a period of continued commercial and residential growth in the area, staff recommends designation of the subject 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 1932 as a large, two-story commercial retail store and ballroom building in the Art Deco architectural style. The building occupies the northeast corner of University Avenue and Euclid Avenue just across the street from other unique landmarks such as the Silver Tower building and the Egyptian Garage. The building features a reinforced concrete foundation, brick walls and pilasters, and a flat and barrel wood truss roof. The exterior walls are clad in smooth stucco, and fenestration consists primarily of multi-pane metal casement, fixed and pivot windows.

The southwest corner of the building at the primary elevation is curved and presents a projecting, curved canopy element over the corner entrance. Narrow, horizontal bands along the smooth stucco surface wrap around the building's corner and onto the University Avenue elevation, to a distinct tower element. The tower element contains geometric detailing, narrow horizontal bands, and the recessed entrance to the ballroom at the street level. Additional geometric details are both horizontally and vertically oriented, repeating along the wall surface, roofline and pilasters on the south elevation.

Overall, alterations to the subject property are minor, and do not significantly impair character defining features or integrity as it relates to the 1932 date of construction and period of significance. In 2015, the building underwent rehabilitation deemed consistent with the US Secretary of the Interior's Standards by City staff. As part of the recent rehabilitation, non-historic elements, such as various signage and canopies were removed. In addition, the non-historic storefront systems were removed and replaced with new storefronts in original openings that are both compatible and distinguishable as not original.

The Art Deco style was first evidenced at the Exposition Internationale de 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 façades; 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 riser that project on the sides of the stair, creating a zigzag motif.

Significance Statement: The resource continues to convey the historic significance of the Art Deco style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style; including smooth stucco wall surfaces; copious geometric detailing; narrow horizontal bands; vertical pilasters; multi-pane metal casement, fixed and pivot windows; and a stylized, projecting tower element marking the main entrance to the ballroom. Therefore, staff recommends designation of the subject property 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 Silverado Ballroom located at 4007 Euclid Avenue and 4750-4756 University Avenue be designated under HRB Criterion A with a period of significance of 1932 – ca. 1965 as a special element of San Diego's and City Heights' cultural and social development; and HRB Criterion C with a period of significance of 1932 as a resource that embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Art Deco style of architecture. 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 5/26/2016

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 5/26/2016, to consider the historical designation of the **Silverado Ballroom** (owned by Lotus Equity Group LLC, 7200 Grable Street, La Mesa, CA 91942) located at **4007 Euclid Avenue and 4750-4756 University Avenue, San Diego, CA 91942**, APN: **471-501-13-00**, further described as BLK 21 LOTS 23 & 24 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 Silverado Ballroom on the following findings:

(1) The property is historically significant under CRITERION A as a special element of City Heights' cultural and social development and retains integrity to the 1932 – ca. 1965 period of significance. Specifically, the resource provided for the community an accessible, eye-catching venue along a major thoroughfare for social gatherings, music and dancing during a period of continued commercial and residential growth in the area. 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 1932 date of construction and period of significance. Specifically, the resource features smooth stucco wall surfaces; copious geometric detailing; narrow horizontal bands; vertical pilasters; multi-pane metal casement, fixed and pivot windows; and a stylized, projecting tower element marking the main entrance to the ballroom. 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 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: JAN I. GOLDSMITH,
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: _____
CORRINE NEUFFER,
Deputy City Attorney