

# PRIMARY RECORD

Primary # \_\_\_\_\_

HRI # \_\_\_\_\_

Trinomial \_\_\_\_\_

NRHP Status Code \_\_\_\_\_

Other Listings \_\_\_\_\_

Review Code \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**P1. Resource Name(s) or Number:** The Fresno-Klette Medical Arts Center (Dr. Earl R. Meyers Sr. and Mrs. Mattie B Meyers Fresno Street Medical Arts Center)

**\*P2. Location:** \*a. County: Fresno

\*b. USGS 7.5' Quad: Fresno South, 1963 Photorevised 1981

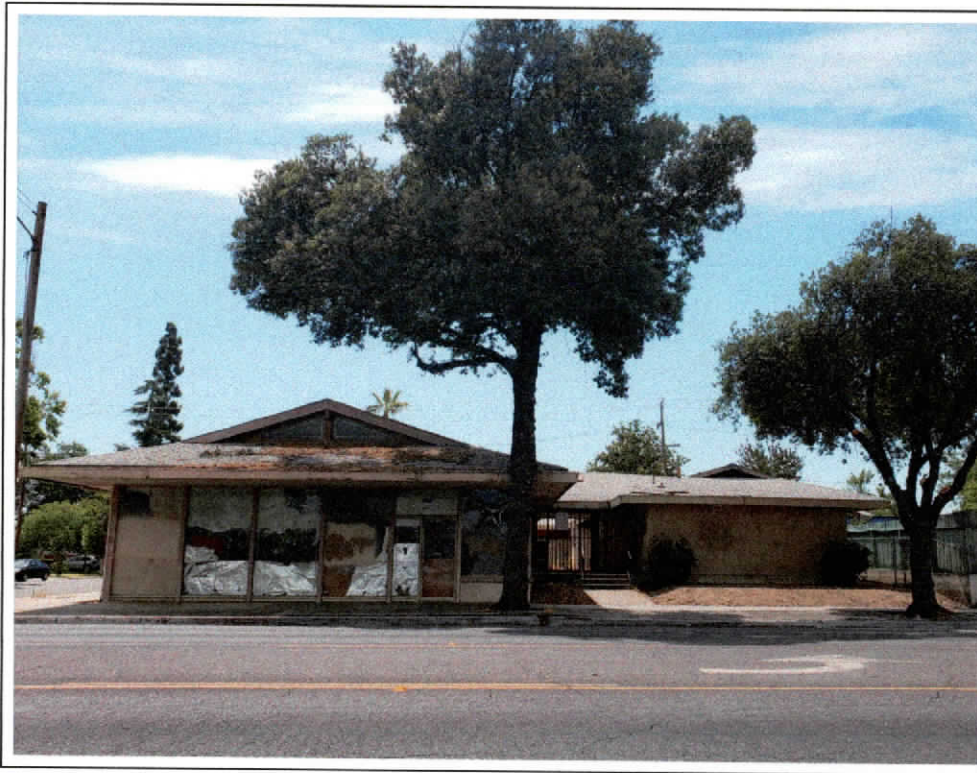
c. Address: 444 Fresno Street, Fresno 93706

d. Assessor's Parcel Number: 467-255-01

**\*P3a. Description:** This former Medical Arts Center is a complex of two one-story buildings which are connected by a small open courtyard and a side gabled breezeway. The buildings are located on the southwest corner of Fresno Street and Klette Avenue in West Fresno and face north onto Fresno Street. The building on the west side of the parcel has a nominal "L" plan, is stucco clad and is set back from the street on a raised concrete foundation. Two small clerestory windows on the facade are now boarded over. The gabled roof (thus a hip to a gable) has a wide overhang with a simple board fascia and boxed cornice. The entrance to the complex is now through a wrought iron security gate. The building on the east side of the parcel has a shallower set back from the street and a nominal rectangular plan. A series of plate glass windows, floor to ceiling, are located across the facade. The front entrance is offset and is a single glass panel door with glass sidelight and transom. The Klette Avenue elevation includes two doors, now boarded. The gabled roof on this building has a more pronounced overhang with a simple fascia board trim and boxed cornice. The front facing gable peak has glass. The west wall of this building has a decorative cladding of brick in a common bond.

**\*P3b. Resource Attributes:** HP6 (1-story office buildings)

**\*P4. Resources Present:** ●Building



**P5b Photo date:** 27 June 2023

**\*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources:** 1959, Certificate of Occupancy, City of Fresno

**\*P7. Owner and Address:**  
Faith in God's Healing Touch  
Inc.  
P.O. Box 129 04 Fresno 93779

**\*P8. Recorded by:**  
Karana Hattersley-Drayton,  
M.A. Architectural Historian  
Adjunct Faculty  
Lyles College of Engineering  
CSU Fresno

**\*P9. Date Recorded:** 27 June 2023

**\*P10. Survey Type:** Intensive

**\*P11. Report Citation:** "Historic Review of 444 Fresno Street, California for Fresno's Local Register of Historic Resources."

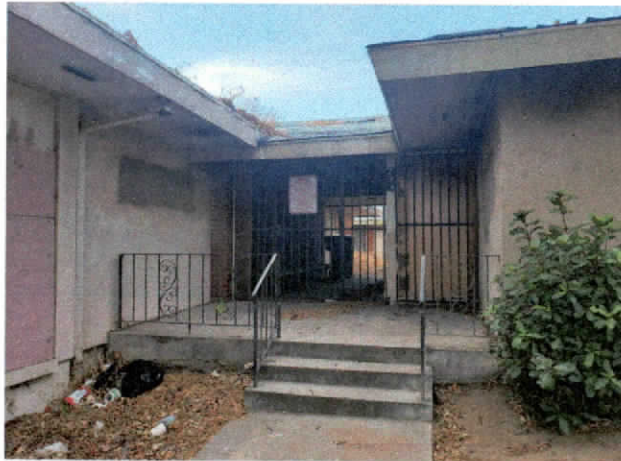
**\*Attachments:** ●Building, Structure and Object Report; ●Continuation Sheet

\*Recorded by: Karana Hattersley-Drayton, M.A.

\*Date: 27 June 2023

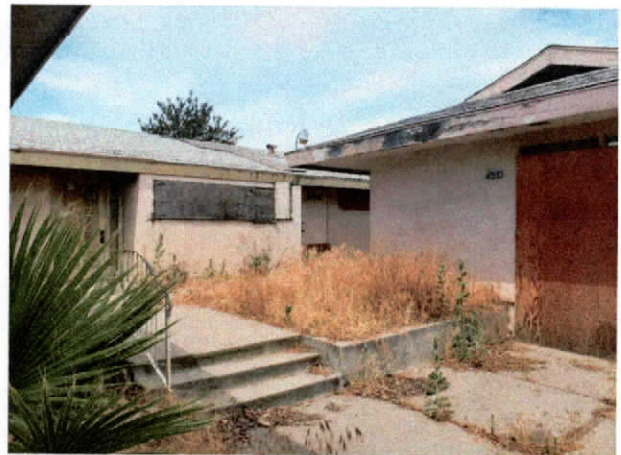
■ Continuation

*Facade of building (now addressed as 452) on west side of parcel)*



*Main entrance into complex; courtyard looking northwest.*

*Principle elevation of 444 Fresno Street, LoopNet, accessed 6.27.23. No date for photo.*



**BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD**

\*NRHP Status Code: 5S2

\*Resource Name: The Fresno-Klette Medical Arts Center (Dr. Earl R. Meyers Sr. and Mrs. Mattie B Meyers Fresno Street Medical Arts Center)

**B3. Original Use:** Medical Center complex

**B4. Present Use:** Vacant

\***B5. Architectural Style:** Mid-Century Modern Commercial

\***B6. Construction History:** 11.7.57 Application for building permit, Horn and Mortland architects, 444 Fresno Street; 11.16.59 application of certificate of occupancy 444 Fresno Street units #444, 448, 452, lab is 442, \$50,000 addition to medical building; 3.21.61 Building Permit, 444, Finish Unit #3; 1.30.68 Building Permit for 452 Fresno temporary partition for drugstore/medical office, interior work; final approval 7.18.68; 1970 Interior alterations, 444 Fresno Street Fresno West Development.

\***B7. Moved?**  No

\***B8. Related Features:** The complex is located in what is primarily an African-American neighborhood of pre-World War II homes. The single-family residences in the immediate area have been carefully maintained.

**B9a. Architect:** Horn and Mortland

**B9b. Builder:** Unknown

\***B10. Significance: Theme:** African-American history and commerce **Area:** Fresno's Westside Neighborhood  
**Period of Significance:** 1959-1970 **Property Type:** Mid-Century Modern Medical Complex **Applicable Criteria:** (i, ii, iii)

The former Fresno-Klette Medical Arts Center, located at 444 Fresno Street, was conceived by Dr. Earl Randolph Meyers and his first wife Mattie (Burton) Meyers as a comprehensive and accessible facility to serve the medical needs of the predominantly black and Hispanic residents of West Fresno (Article 3: Who Was Dr. Earl R. Meyers, MD? nd). Although a building permit for the complex was issued to the architectural firm of Horn and Mortland on November 7, 1957, the certificate of occupancy was not issued for the complex until 2 years later, on November 16, 1959 (City of Fresno Building permits). The Polk's Fresno City Directories note that the building was under construction in 1958.

Dr. Meyers was born on September 23, 1919 in Alexandria, Louisiana ([Fresno Bee October 2014](#)). He moved to Fresno with his family a few months later  
(continued)

\***B12. References:** Eryn Baldrice-Guy, "Fresno's 'father of black medicine' dies at 95, [Fresno Bee](#) October 2014; Von Eckardt, Wolf, editor. [Mid-Century Architecture in America: Honor Awards of the American Institute of Architects, 1949-1961](#). Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1961; Planning Resource Associates, Inc., "mid-Century Modernism Historic Context," September 2008; Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1906, 1918-1919, 1963, 1968-70; "Polk's Fresno City Directories, 1959-1969"; City of Fresno Building Permits (as noted above); Dr. Meyers Sr. history, submitted by family members; "Instructions for Recording Historical Resources" Office of Historic Preservation, March 1995; personal communications, Dr. Kris Clark, Joe Moore and Scott Vincent 3 July 2023.



\***B14. Evaluator:** Karana Hattersley-Drayton, M.A.  
4110 N. Maroa Avenue Fresno, CA 93704

\***Date of Evaluation:** 4 July 20223

(This space reserved for official comments.)

**CONTINUATION SHEET**

\*Recorded by: Karana Hattersley-Drayton, M.A.

\*Date: 27 June 2023

■ Continuation

**BSO continued**

where his father opened a grocery-store and restaurant on E Street and later, during the Depression, a lucrative junk business ("Who Was Dr. Earl Randolph Meyers, MD" nd). As a child, Earl Meyers was inspired to become a doctor when he watched the only African-American physician in Fresno, Dr. Henry C. Wallace, heal his mother and alleviate her pain (Fresno Bee October 2014). Meyers transferred from Edison High School to Fresno High, in order to take the classes he needed for pre-med ("Who Was Dr. Earl Randolph Meyers, MD" The Grapevine, n.d.) and graduated from Fresno High in 1937. He attended Fresno State and received his M.D. from Meharry Medical College in Tennessee. He completed his internship and residency at Lincoln Hospital in Durham, North Carolina (Fresno Bee October 2014). In Durham he met his future wife and business partner, Mattie Burton ("Who Was Dr. Earl Randolph Meyers, MD" The Grapevine, n.d.).

Dr. Meyers was encouraged to return to Fresno by his father and other community members after Dr. Wallace left Fresno in the late 1940s. Dr. Wallace's departure left the community with no black doctor at a time when racial prejudice and segregation were rampant and hospitals were segregated. His father Louis Meyer, purchased a building at 1246 F Street for his son's practice and Dr. Meyers and family returned to Fresno in August 1947. Meyers also opened a dispensary at his F Street office with medications and prescriptions available at wholesale prices. For ten years Dr. Meyers was the only black physician in Fresno, working as much as 20 hours a day and often receiving no pay or just produce as compensation (Fresno Bee October 2014).

Dr. Meyers went to Denver to encourage a young black doctor with ties to Fresno to establish a practice in the community. With help and encouragement from his wife Mattie, the Meyers purchased a parcel at 444 Fresno Street and in November 1959 the Fresno-Klette Medical Arts Center opened with eventually three African-American physicians in residence, a pharmacy (with a black pharmacist), a clinical laboratory and x-ray facility. Dr. Meyer's tireless devotion to the betterment of the West Fresno community earned him the moniker, "Fresno's father of black medicine" (Fresno Bee October 2014). Dr. Meyers was also active in the civil rights movement of the 1950s and early 1960s. He became the first black to hold public office in Fresno when he was elected to the Board of Freeholders to draft a new city charter in 1953. The medical center complex closed in 1970 and Dr. Meyers left Fresno in 1975. He died on October 1, 2014, after serving in various medical capacities in California and Oregon (Fresno Bee October 2014).

In addition to the buildings' association with Dr. (and Mrs. Meyers), 444 Fresno Street, designed by David Horn (1905-1997) and Marshall Dey Mortland (1903-1982) is a fine example of commercial Mid-Century Modernism. Horn and Mortland designed numerous commercial, school and residential buildings in the area and they received an Award of Merit in 1952 from the AIA (American Institute of Architects) for the Sunshine School for Cerebral Palsied, (now Jefferson Elementary, 130 N. Mariposa, Fresno). Other Fresno commissions included Fire Station #4, 3065 East Iowa (1948) and the Fresno County Administration Building (1951). (Von Eckardt, Mid-Century Architecture in America 1961; and Getty Research Library, accessed 3 July 2023). David Horn's impact on Fresno architecture was significant as numerous architects got their start working for him, including Allen Lew, Bob Stevens, Gay McCline, James Oaks and Bob Dyers ("mid-century Modernism Historic Context," 2008)

In conclusion, the complex located at 444 Fresno Street, built as the Fresno-Klette Medical Arts Center (Fresno Bee October 2014; "Who Was Dr. Earl Randolph Meyers, MD, Grapevine, nd) appears eligible to Fresno's Local Register of Historic Resources under Criterion (i) for its significance to the West Fresno Community, under Criterion (ii) for its association with Dr. Earl R. Meyers, "Fresno's Father of Black Medicine," and Criterion (iii) as an example of the the work of Horn and Mortland, whose firm played a significant role in the development of Mid-Century Modern architecture in Fresno. Although now vacant the building's integrity to its period of significance of 1959-1970 remains high.