



REPORT TO THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

AGENDA ITEM NO. VIC
HPC MEETING: 06/27/2016

June 27, 2016

FROM: DAN ZACK, AICP, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Development and Resource Management

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APPROVED BY

DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR

BY: KARANA HATTERSLEY-DRAYTON, M.A.
Historic Preservation Project Manager
Secretary, Historic Preservation Commission

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SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF REQUEST BY THE PROPERTY OWNER
TO DESIGNATE THE CALIFORNIA BAPTIST FOUNDATION BUILDING
LOCATED AT 1441 FULTON STREET AS A HERITAGE PROPERTY
PURSUANT TO FMC 12-1612.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission designate the California Baptist Foundation Building as a Heritage Property pursuant to FMC 12-1612.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The property owner, the Cornerstone Assembly of God, has requested that 1441 Fulton Street, the "California Baptist Foundation Building," be considered for designation as a Heritage Property. The building was constructed prior to 1948 as a 1-story commercial brick building with up to three separate small businesses. A building permit was issued in 1959 to the California Baptist Foundation for a major alteration which led to the new Corporate Modern style façade of glass, metal and mosaic tiles. If designated as a Heritage Property the property owner will be able to immediately use the California Historical Building Code pursuant to FMC 12-1619(e). Additionally, the church will be able to apply for an exemption from the property development standards to allow for a new addition to extend into the 3-foot rear property setback.

BACKGROUND

The (former) office building for the California Baptist Foundation was modified from its original one story brick construction in 1959 to include a 20 foot deep 2 story façade of glass, metal and mosaics in the Corporate Modern style of architecture. Of additional interest is that the building is set back within a concrete cantilevered frame of concrete. Commissioner Paul Halajian AIA has rightly referred to the design as "simple and elegant" although also noting that the building needs some upkeep (Halajian personal communication 20 June 2016). In design the 1959 façade is a simple expression of modernism as developed beginning in the 1930s by architects such as the German-born Mies van der Rohe. Miesian architecture was modular with horizontal bands of windows within a steel frame. His architectural philosophy was reductionist, thus "less is more." This philosophy as well as the reliance on modern materials strongly influenced the work of architects such as Philip Johnson and Skidmore Owings and Merrill. The Corporate Modern style in Fresno was mostly applied to larger commercial buildings in the downtown area including the Del Webb complex and the Bank of the West, both of which have been evaluated

as eligible for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources (*Mid-Century Modernism Context* 2008:77; *Fulton Corridor Historic Resources Survey* 2011).

Fresno's Historic Preservation Ordinance identifies several possible strategies and categories for landmarking a property: individually as a historic resource on the Local Register, designation of multiple properties as a local historic district, and individual listing as a "heritage property." "Heritage Property" is defined in the Historic Preservation Ordinance as a "resource which is worthy of preservation because of its historical, architectural or aesthetic merit but which is not proposed for and is not designated as a Historic Resource..." (FMC 12-1603(n)).

The Heritage Property category was established for resources that have historic merit but which may have problems with integrity (such as the Josiah Royce Hall) or which may be a contributor to a proposed historic district but which lack significance as an individual resource. Most recently, Heritage Property status has been granted to resources which clearly are eligible for the Local Register but which may need expedient use of the California Building Code. Unlike the historic resource protocol, heritage properties may only be nominated by the owner or an authorized agent of the owner. A listing of a heritage property may also be rescinded more easily by the owner (FMC 12-1612(d)). There is no requirement to publish a public notice in a local newspaper and the nomination is not automatically forwarded to the City Council for consideration. Additionally, there is no age, significance or integrity requirements for this designation.

CONCLUSION

Staff recommends that the Commission find that the (former) California Baptist Foundation Building is "worthy of preservation" as a modest but important example of Corporate Modern architecture in Fresno and designate it as a Heritage Property. The Fulton-Lowell Design Review Committee, on a 5-0 vote at their June 20th meeting, also recommended that the Commission approve the designation of the building as a Heritage Property.

Attachments: Exhibit A - State of California Primary and BSO Forms for the California Baptist Foundation Building Prepared by Karana Hattersley-Drayton 22 June 2016.

PRIMARY RECORD

Primary # _____

HRI # _____

Trinomial _____

NRHP Status Code _____

Other Listings _____

Review Code _____ Reviewer _____ Date _____

P1. Resource Name: California Baptist Foundation Building

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

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

c. Address: 1441 Fulton Street, Fresno

d. Assessor's Parcel Number: 466-202-02

***P3a. Description:** This rectangular plan 6,250 sf building faces east onto Fulton Street. The 20-foot deep two story façade is an addition to a prior existing one story masonry brick commercial building. The structural system includes (according to the Sanborn Map) a reinforced concrete bond beam. The 1959 facade is a modest but interesting example of Corporate Modern architecture, a style which evolved out of the Bauhaus school in Germany through architects such as Mies van der Rohe . The enframed window type has a modular plan with two rows of panels set into aluminum frames along the top with 1 inch ceramic tiles in a peach color set into the middle row. On the lowest level, the pattern is broken by the insertion of two sets of glass doors. The façade is probably concrete masonry units with a concrete stucco application. Tiles are also inset into both the cantilevered overhang as well as the side walls. The John Newton hymn, "Amazing Grace," is painted on the south elevation of the building and although only applied to the building in 1994 is considered a contributor to the historic significance of this property.



***P3b. Resource Attributes:** HP6 (1-3 story commercial building)

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



P5b Photo date: 20 June 2016

***P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources:** circa 1930s/1959

***P7. Owner and Address:**
Cornerstone Assembly of God,
Fresno, P.O. Box 12347
Fresno, CA 93777

***P8. Recorded by:**
Karana Hattersley-Drayton, M.A.
Historic Preservation Project
Manager, City of Fresno

***P9. Date Recorded:** June 20,
22, 2016

***P10. Survey Type:** Intensive

***P11. Report Citation:** Review of the California Baptist Foundation Building Located at 1441 Fulton Street for the Local Register of Historic Resources (Heritage Property).

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

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

*NRHP Status Code: 5S3

*Resource Name: The California Baptist Foundation Building

B3. Original Use: Office building for religious organization **B4. Present Use:** Vacant

***B5. Architectural Style:** Corporate Modern

***B6. Construction History:** The original construction date for the one story commercial masonry brick building is unknown, but it is depicted on the 1948 Sanborn Map. A building permit for a "Major Alteration" was pulled in 1959 by Larsen-Ratto for the California Baptist Foundation.

***B7. Moved?** ■No

***B8. Related Features:** The building is located on a street with three major historic buildings: the Wilson Theater (to the "north"), the San Joaquin Power and Light Building, to the "south," and the Warnor's Theater diagonally across the street .

B9a. Architect: Façade plans prepared by David L. Mitchell **B9b. Builder:** Larsen-Ratto (façade 1959)

***B10. Significance: Theme:** Fresno's 20th Century Development

Area: Fresno Downtown

Period of Significance: 1959

Property Type: Enframed Window Wall/Commercial

Applicable

Criteria: Heritage Property

The building at 1441 Fulton Street is located on a .17 acre parcel on lot 7 and portions of lot 6 and 8 of Block 68 of Fresno's parent grid. The original commercial one-story building is masonry brick, to which a Corporate Modern two-story façade of modular glass and aluminum frame panels was added in 1959. Two character defining features of this building are its placement within a cantilevered frame of concrete/stucco and the application on both the façade, the interior side walls of the frame and the cantilevered roof of 1 inch square mosaic tiles. The building is a simple but elegant expression of modernism as it was interpreted for a tenant improvement for the former California Baptist Foundation. The modular design was inspired by the work of architect Mies van der Rohe (and others) who created buildings in the 1950s and 1960s that reflected Miesian aesthetics of "less is more." Thus ornament, as in even the earlier Streamline Modern style of the 30s and early 40s, was stripped away for a box of glass, aluminum and small decorative tiles. The building appears to be eligible for designation as a Heritage Property as one "worthy of preservation" for its place in Fresno's architectural heritage.

***B12. References:** Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps 1948, 1963; Building permits on file in the Planning Department; G.E. Kidder Smith, Sourcebook of American Architecture; Mies van der Rohe Society, www.miessociety.org.legacy accessed 20 June 2016; "Mid-Century Modernism Historic Context" Prepared for the City of Fresno September 2008; "City of Fresno Broadway Row Historical Resource Survey" 2 April 2004; Richard Longstreth, The Buildings of Main Street; personal communication Paul Halajian AIA 20 June 2016.

***B14. Evaluator:** Karana Hattersley-Drayton, M.A.
Historic Preservation Project Manager Fresno, CA

***Date of Evaluation:** 22 June 2016

(This space reserved for official comments.)



