



CITY OF
**PALO
ALTO**

City Council Staff Report

From: City Manager

Report Type: CONSENT CALENDAR

Lead Department: Planning and Development Services

Meeting Date: June 17, 2024

Report #:2404-2910

TITLE

CONSENT: Approval of a Record of Land Use Action to Upgrade the Property Located at 271 University Avenue From a Category 3 Resource on the Local Historic Inventory to a Category 2 Resource.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends Council reclassify 271 University Avenue, a one-story commercial building with a mezzanine at the rear, from Historic Inventory Category 3 Resource ('Contributing Building') to a Category 2 Resource ('Major Building') as recommended by the Historic Resources Board (HRB).

BACKGROUND

This report and Record of Land Use Action (Attachment A) provide background and support for the HRB's April 11, 2024 recommendation to upgrade the one-story commercial building from Historic Inventory Category 3 ('Contributing Building') to Category 2 ('Major Building'). The HRB staff report¹ included the consultant's assessment and inventory form. These documents are also available on the project webpage.

271 University Avenue is located in the Downtown North neighborhood and provides retail space. The subject building was designed by Carl I. Warnecke of Miller & Warnecke in Art Deco style with Zig-Zag Moderne characteristics and completed in 1930 for use as a clothing store. The building is currently listed on the City's local Historic Resources Inventory as a Category 3 "Contributing Building."

The building at 271 University Avenue was first evaluated and added to the local historic inventory in 1978 as a Category 3 resource for its "zig-zag moderne" architectural style created in concrete.

ANALYSIS

On April 11, 2024, the Historic Resources Board (HRB) reviewed the applicant's proposal to reclassify the subject building from the current "Contributing Building" designation of Category

¹ Link to April 11, 2024 HRB staff report with consultant assessment and inventory form
<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/files/assets/public/v/1/agendas-minutes-reports/agendas-minutes/historic-resources-board/2024/hrb-4.11-271-university.pdf>

3 on the Historic Inventory to Category 2 “Major Building.” The evaluation indicated the building has retained its historic integrity and is outstanding and regionally important architecture consistent with the definition of resource Category 2. The Historic Resource Board (HRB) voted unanimously to recommend that the City Council reclassify 271 University Avenue to a Category 2 resource. The applicant and the property owner participated in the review of the proposed reclassification and support this request; no members of the public spoke to the item. The Record of Land Use Action (Attachment B) contains the findings for the category upgrade.

FISCAL/RESOURCE IMPACT

There is no significant fiscal or resource impact associated with this project. The City’s consultant cost to prepare the Historic Resource Evaluation was covered by the property owner.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

As of the writing of this report, no project-related, public comments were received.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Maintenance of historic designation of a property or reclassification of historic designation of a property is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act and CEQA Guidelines Section 21065 because it will not cause a direct change to the physical environment nor a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Location Map

Attachment B: Draft Record of Land Use Action

Attachment C: Project Webpage with Plan Set

APPROVED BY:

Jonathan Lait, Planning and Development Services Director