



City of Palo Alto

Historic Resources Board Staff Report

(ID # 6248)

Report Type:

Meeting Date: 3/10/2016

Summary Title: 355 University Avenue

Title: 353-355 University Avenue/ 451-461 Florence Street [15PLN-00237]: Request by Hayes Group Architects, on behalf of Palo Alto Masonic Temple Association, for Historic Review of an Architectural Review application, Sign Exception, and Seismic Rehabilitation Floor Area Bonus for new façades and signage on University Avenue and Florence Street, new ground floor parking accessed from the adjacent public alley, new partial second story with outdoor rooftop display area, and interior modifications. Environmental Assessment: Categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per Guideline Section 15301 Existing Facilities, Section 15304 Minor Alterations to Land, and Section 15311 Accessory Structures. Zoning District: Downtown Commercial (CD-C(GF)(P)).

From: Matthew Weintraub

Lead Department: Planning and Community Environment

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Historic Resources Board (HRB) recommend to the Architectural Review Board (ARB) that:

- The proposed project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); and
- The proposed project site is not located within an area possessing a unified historical character pursuant to Municipal Code Section 18.76.020 (d).

Background

The applicant proposes to make improvements to the existing commercial buildings at 353 University Avenue/461 Florence Street and 355 University Avenue, including: construction of a new partial second story at 355 University Avenue; renovation of the existing building façade at 355 University Avenue; remodel and seismic rehabilitation of 355 University Avenue; installation of a new super-graphic sign on the second story of 461 Florence Street; and creation of a series of covered on-site parking spaces with access off of Florence Street and the public alley.

The existing buildings on the project site were not previously designated or evaluated as historical resources. In the vicinity of the project site, there are several existing designated and evaluated historic buildings, including the property immediately adjacent to the project site at 367 University Avenue (Historic Inventory Category 4). There are no identified historic districts in the vicinity of the project site.

353 University Avenue/461 Florence Street, also known as the Masonic Temple Building, was constructed in 1973. It is located at the corner of University Avenue and Florence Street. It is a tall two-story commercial building with a compact rectangular plan. It replaced an earlier lodge building that was constructed in 1909 and which was destroyed by fire in 1971. It is not considered to be a potential historical resource because it is less than 45 years old.

355 University Avenue is an L-shaped, two-story commercial structure that wraps around the north and west elevations of the Masonic Temple Building, with separate frontages on University Avenue and Florence Street. The two legs of the L-shaped structure originated as separate buildings which were constructed at different times, and which are now connected at the rear elevations. The building that faces Florence Street, which includes a covered driveway, was constructed in approximately 1925, apparently as an addition to the old lodge on the corner site (no longer extant). The building that faces University Avenue was constructed as a commercial storefront in approximately 1934. By 1955, the structures appear to have been physically connected.

ARB Review

On March 3, 2016, the proposed project was reviewed by the ARB. A more detailed description of the project and additional analysis is contained within the ARB staff report which can be viewed on the following webpage: <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/51266>. At the March 3 meeting, the ARB continued the application to the April 7 meeting, at which time the proposed project will be heard for formal recommendation by the ARB, and at which time the ARB may consider any HRB comments.

Discussion

A project that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment. The California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) has established that any physical evidence over 45 years old may be recorded for the purposes of inclusion in OHP's filing system of resources.¹ Staff finds that there are no historical resources located on the project site; furthermore, staff finds that the project would not have a significant impact on historical resources located in the vicinity of the project site, as further discussed below.

¹ OHP's *Instructions for Recording Historical Resources*, p. 2.

Historic Resource Evaluation

The applicant's architectural historian consultant submitted a Historic Resource Evaluation (Attachment A) for 355 University Avenue, which is the only structure on the project site that is 45 years old or more. According to the consultant, the existing structure at 355 University Avenue is not eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources. Specifically, the buildings that originally comprised the existing structure, and which were constructed more than 45 years ago, are not able to convey historical significance because they have been physically altered such that they do not retain historic integrity, as discussed further below.

355 University Avenue was constructed in 1934 as a one-story-with-mezzanine, reinforced concrete building with the exterior appearance of a two-story building. Historical photographs indicate that the original elevation on University Avenue was heavily ornamented according to the Mediterranean Revival style with a decorative cornice, multi-light wood casement windows, elaborate window shutters, and wrought iron balconettes at the mezzanine level; and a pair of matching storefronts at the street level with glazed wood doors, decorative tiled bulkheads, and vestibules. Since its original construction, alterations that have occurred to 355 University Avenue include: the removal of nearly all of the historic stylistic elements, leaving extant only the roof tiles and the balconette bases; the blinding of two mezzanine window openings and the installation of two non-compatible windows at the mezzanine; and the replacement of the historic tiled storefronts with a modern, metal frame storefront.

The "ell" structure that is currently attached to 355 University, with frontage on Florence Street, was constructed in 1925 as a two-story, reinforced concrete commercial building. It contained offices at the first floor and a lodge hall at the second floor. At the Florence Street elevation, the first story contained a pedestrian entrance and a driveway, while the second story featured a row of windows and a cornice. Since its original construction, alterations that have occurred to the building include: exterior and interior connections at the rear elevations to the building at 355 University Avenue; removal of the first story pedestrian entrance and replacement with a second automobile entrance; removal of the first floor office space and replacement with automobile parking; covering and/or removal of the second floor windows and cornice on Florence Street; and complete façade renovation and modernization at the Florence Street elevation in approximately 1973, concurrent with construction of the new Masonic Temple.

The previous alterations to the original buildings that currently comprise 355 University Avenue have resulted in a loss of integrity with respect to historic materials, workmanship, design, feeling and association, which has rendered the existing building unable to convey historical significance, as further described and analyzed in the consultant's report (Attachment A). The loss of integrity and inability to convey historical significance results in the existing property at 355 University Avenue being not

eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources.

Analysis of Potential Impacts to Historical Resources

There are no historical resources located on the project site, as discussed above. Therefore, it is found that there are no potential impacts to historical resources on site.

The applicant's architectural historian has submitted a CEQA Analysis (Attachment A), which analyzed potential off-site impacts to historical resources within the vicinity of the project site. The consultant defined a study area of potential effects, which included properties located directly adjacent to, across streets from, and within visual proximity of the project site. The consultant identified two historical resources located within the study area: 367 University Avenue (Historic Inventory Category 4), a commercial building located directly to the north of the project site; and 420 Florence Street (Historic Inventory Category 2), built as a residence and located across the street and down the block from the project site. The consultant did not identify any historic districts in the vicinity of the project site.

According to the consultant, the proposed retention of the existing basement and foundation walls would minimize the potential impacts of construction-related activities, which could include vibrations, settling, etc. on the adjacent historic building at 367 University Avenue. In addition, mandatory compliance with building codes would avoid potential impacts from standard construction activities to the adjacent historic building.

In addition to analyzing potential direct physical impacts, the consultant analyzed the potential indirect impacts of the project on the settings of the nearby historical resources. According to the consultant, the historic setting in the vicinity of the project site has changed substantially over time, with demolitions and modifications of older buildings common in the commercial district. The massing, scale, and façade pattern of the proposed project would be compatible with the existing patterns of two- to four-story buildings and rhythmic storefronts in the area. Therefore, the project would not result in an impact to the settings of existing buildings in the area, including historical resources.

Staff has reviewed the information in the consultant's report and agrees with the analysis and the findings.

Architectural Review and Downtown Urban Design Guideline conformance

According to the Municipal Code, Architectural Review approval shall not be granted unless it is found that, in areas considered by the board as having a unified design character or historical character, the design is compatible with such character.² The subject property is located within the University Avenue district and the Florence Street secondary district of the Downtown Urban Design Plan. According to the Plan,

² Section 18.76.020 (d) (4).

University Avenue is characterized by vibrant and eclectic architecture, buildings generally ranging in height from two to four stories, and storefronts with mixed architectural character.³ Based on this description, which are verified by field observations, staff finds that the greater University Avenue corridor does not possess a unified design character or historical character. Also, the project appears to be compatible with those patterns of development that are consistently exhibited on University Avenue, including a general pattern of 25-50 foot wide storefronts (the existing and proposed University Avenue storefront is approximately 36 feet wide), no setbacks to the street, and parapet walls without distinct roofs. Furthermore, the proposed three-story height would be compatible with the existing two-story to four-story streetscape on University Avenue, and the proposed modernist design would not conflict with the existing eclectic character of the immediate area, which includes buildings and styles spanning nearly a hundred years, from the early twentieth century to the present twenty-first century.⁴

According to the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines, the Florence Street secondary district extends along Florence Street for approximately one block in each direction from the intersection with University Avenue. The secondary district is identified as containing significant historic architecture and development patterns.⁵ This is evidenced by the presence of two individual historical resources at the west end of the secondary district: the historic residence at 420 Florence, and the historic church at 401 Florence Street, which are separated by the full length of the block from the project site. The historic buildings, which are located across the street from each other, comprise only two of the eight buildings located along the street segment; furthermore, the character of the block is dominated by larger, newer structures (including on the project site) and by a large parking lot. Therefore, staff finds that the Florence Street secondary district does not possess a unified design character or historical character. According to the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines, building elevations that face Florence Street north of University Avenue (including the project site) should be “vitalized” as a path to the existing parking garage, which would be accomplished by the proposed installation of super-graphics on the existing second-story façade, which is currently blank and featureless.

Therefore, for the reasons stated above, the project is not located within an area possessing a unified design character or historical character that would be subject to special design considerations in regards to compatibility per the Municipal Code.

Environmental Review

The project is exempt from review according to the California Environmental Quality Act

³ *Downtown Urban Design Guidelines*, p. 26.

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 26.

⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 28-29.

(CEQA) under Guidelines Sections 15301 (Existing Facilities), 15304 (Minor Alterations), and 15311 (Accessory Structures).

Summary

Staff finds that the proposed project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to CEQA; and that it is not located within an area possessing a unified design character or historical character pursuant to Municipal Code Section 18.76.020 (d).

Attachments:

- Attachment A - Historic Evaluation (PDF)

P A S T
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October 23, 2015

Terrence Murphey, AIA
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Re: Historic Resource Evaluation/ CEQA Analysis for 353 - 355 University Ave./451 – 461
Florence St., Palo Alto, California (APN. 120-15-045; 15PLN-00237)

Dear Mr. Murphey:

This letter provides findings of historic significance and a CEQA analysis of the proposed project located at 353 - 355 University Ave./451 – 461 Florence St., in Palo Alto, California. PAST Consultants, LLC (PAST) attended a site visit to the subject property on June 2, 2015 to photograph the subject buildings and assess their existing conditions. Subsequent site visits occurred in July and August 2015 to assess the built environment in the vicinity of the subject property for purposes of the CEQA analysis. Research in local repositories was conducted in June, July, August and September 2015 to determine the historic significance of the buildings on the subject property and to determine potential impacts to historic resources within the vicinity of the property.

This report also addresses potential impacts to off-site historic resources as part of a CEQA analysis recommended by the Palo Alto City Council and addressed in a memorandum titled *Historic Resources Memorandum: 429 University Avenue*, by Carey & Company Architecture, dated August 14, 2015. The methodology of addressing both on-site and off-site impacts to historic resources was established in this memorandum and adopted for this Historic Resource Evaluation and CEQA Analysis.

Introduction and Summary of Findings

The proposed project impacts the building at 355 University Avenue/451 Florence Street and proposes a seismic retrofit, second story addition and partial replacement of the existing structure at 355 University Avenue in conjunction with a seismic rehabilitation floor area bonus; and the installation of super graphics onto the facade at 451 Florence Street and visible parking on the ground floor of 451 Florence Street. Design drawings by Hayes Group Architects, titled *Design Within Reach, 355 University Avenue/451 Florence Street, Palo Alto, CA 94301, Revision 2* dated 10/6/2015 were reviewed for this evaluation. The proposed project is located at the northeast corner

of University Avenue and Florence Street, in Palo Alto, California. Two buildings are included within the property's APN:

- 353 University Avenue/461 Florence Street: This building is located at the corner of University Avenue and Florence Street and was constructed in 1973 as the Masonic Temple, replacing the former Masonic Temple Building (constructed 1909 - 1910), which was destroyed by fire in 1971. This two-story commercial building with a compact rectangular plan is less than 50 years old and is not on the National or California Registers; nor is on the City of Palo Alto's historic inventory. No exterior work is proposed on this building.
- 355 University Avenue/451 Florence Street: The proposed project impacts this building. The building is an L-shaped, two-story building that wraps around the Masonic Temple building with separate frontages at 355 University Avenue and 451 Florence Street.

The two legs of the L-shaped building originally were constructed at two different time periods. The building that faces 451 Florence Street was constructed circa-1925 as an addition to the circa-1909 Masonic Temple Building that was destroyed by fire in 1971. The building that faces 355 University Avenue was constructed circa-1934 as a Mediterranean Revival, two-unit storefront. The structures were physically connected at their rear elevations by 1955.

Based on the findings of this report, the L-shaped building located at 355 University Avenue and 451 Florence Street is not historically significant under National Register Criteria, California Register Criteria or the City of Palo Alto's Historic Inventory (*PAMC Chapter 16.49*). The building fronting 355 University Avenue was constructed circa-1934 as a two-unit, Mediterranean Revival storefront. Subsequent alterations to the building were installed in the 1960s through the 1990s that substantially altered the 355 University Avenue facade. The modifications have removed the historic integrity of materials, workmanship, design, feeling and association.

Constructed circa-1925, the building fronting 451 Florence Street was a reinforced concrete commercial building containing offices at the first floor, with the Masonic Lodge hall located on the second floor. The façade contained a pedestrian entrance at the first floor, with a row of windows and cornice above on the second floor. The left side of the building provided a covered driveway where the present covered driveway is located. Alterations to 451 Florence Street include removal of the first floor offices and pedestrian entrance and replacement with automobile parking on the east side of the building; and removal of the second story windows and cornice when the façade was completely renovated circa-1973. These modifications have removed the historic integrity of materials, workmanship, design, feeling and association.

Because of the integrity loss, the L-shaped building is not historic. The proposed project will not have any direct impacts to historic resources on the subject parcel, as the L-shaped building is not eligible for listing on the National Register, the California Register or the City of Palo Alto's Historic Inventory.

The CEQA Study Area identified 2 nearby historic buildings. Of these only one building is immediately adjacent to the proposed project and is located at 367 University Avenue. This

building is a single story structure with a shallow foundation. The Construction Documents for the proposed project should require that the proposed scope of work be carried out in a manner to prevent impacts, excessive vibration, or other conditions that could cause settlement of or damage to the adjacent historic building. The proposed design does maintain the existing basement and foundation walls, thus minimizing the potential for such damage.

The proposed project's design, mass, scale and materials will not have any direct impacts to the two historic buildings located in the CEQA Study Area; nor would it change the setting of buildings within the study area that encompasses the intersection of University Avenue and Florence Street. The proposed project is not within a historic district.

Property Description

The subject property encompasses the northeast corner of University Avenue and Florence Street. Two buildings exist on the subject property. The Masonic Temple Building is located at the corner of University Avenue and Florence Street with addresses at 353 University Avenue and 461 Florence Street. Constructed in 1973, the three-story façade consists of a solid wall clad with masonry that contains arched entrances on University Avenue and Florence Street. The University Street façade has no windows. The Florence Street façade contains a bank of narrow windows in the upper story (**Figures 1 & 2**).



Figures 1 and 2. Left image shows the subject buildings at 353-355 University Avenue. Right image shows the subject buildings at 451-461 Florence Street, with the 1973 Masonic Lodge to the right of the image.

The building at 355 University Avenue/451 Florence Street is an L-shaped, two-story building that wraps around the Masonic Temple. The University Avenue facade (circa-1934) was originally constructed in the Mediterranean Revival style. The present facade contains a circa-1960 storefront that replaced the original two-store configuration, with a central entrance flanked by plate-glass fenestration supported by a decorative Roman-brick base course (**Figures 1 and 3**). Remaining historic character-defining features are minimal, but include stucco exterior wall cladding, a cornice band, and cement plaster sills with bracket supports. The building originally had wood casement windows with decorative shutters on the second story (**Figure 8, page 5**).

The circa-1925 Florence Street façade was highly modified when the new Masonic Lodge was constructed in 1973 and the original façade was completely altered. The present façade is flat concrete above two arched entrances. The left arch continues to span the alley connecting Florence and Waverley streets. These 1973 modifications made to the building have removed substantial historic integrity from the circa-1925 façade, making the building not historic (**Figures 2 and 4**).



Figures 3 and 4. Left image details the 355 University Avenue façade of the L-shaped building. The two right-hand original window openings are blocked from the outside, but the openings are visible when viewed from the inside of the building. Right image details the 451 Florence Street façade of the L-shaped building.

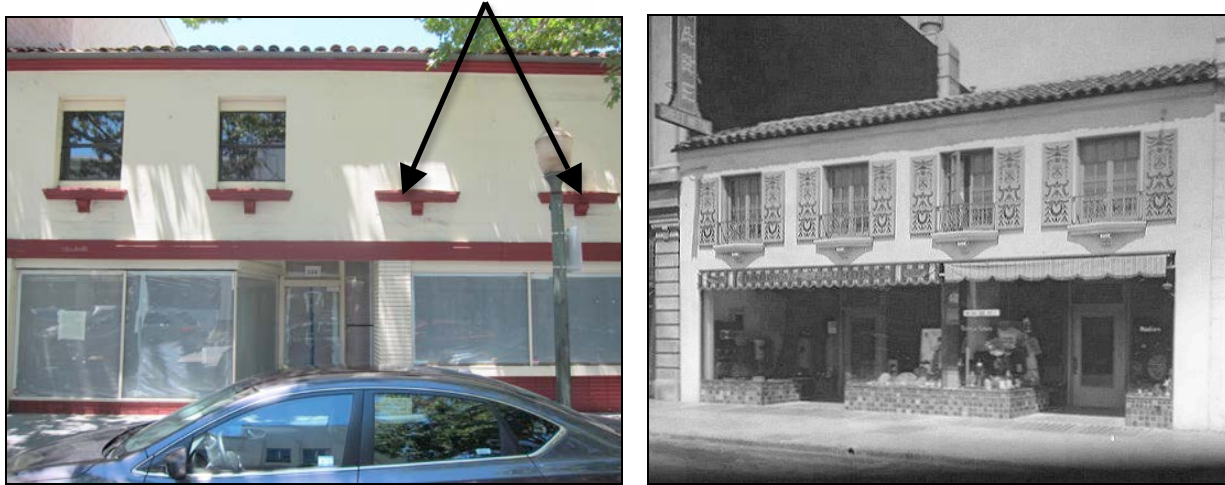
355 University Avenue: Building Alterations

Modifications include replacement of the Mediterranean Revival-style storefront with aluminum-framed plate glass windows and a Roman-brick base course. Given the type of materials used in the storefront modification, it is likely that the storefront was modified in the 1960s, because of the use of Roman brick and the aluminum-framed plate glass fenestration (**Figures 5 and 6**).



Figures 5 and 6. Left image shows the building's modified first-floor storefront. Right image details the entrance with replaced door and Roman Brick base course and column (arrows). The entry door was likely installed in the 1990s.

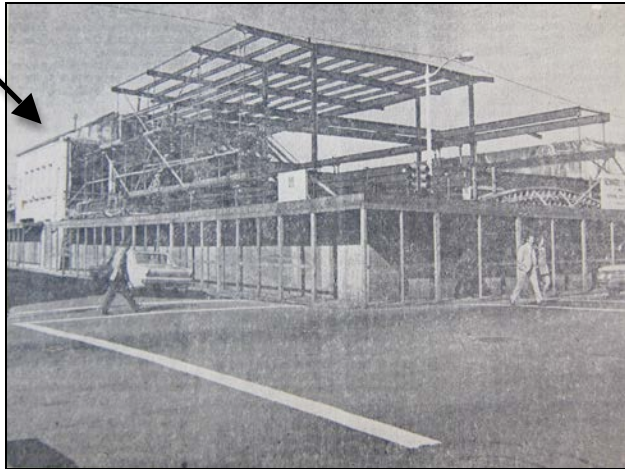
Additional modifications include removal of original casement windows, replacement of two windows with black anodized aluminum sash and infilling of two of the second-story windows with cement plaster. The single existing permit found at the Palo Alto Design Center (*Permit #95-ARB-160*) indicates that the newer upper-story windows were installed in 1995 (**Figure 7**). Compare this with a view of the original façade, taken shortly after construction (**Figure 8**).



Figures 7 and 8. Left image shows the University Avenue elevation showing infilled windows (arrows). The two right-hand original window openings (arrows) are blocked from the outside, but the openings are visible when viewed from the inside of the building. Right image shows the original two-unit 355 University Avenue storefront (circa-1934) configuration and decorative façade (*Courtesy: Palo Alto Historical Association*).

451 Florence Street: Building Alterations

Constructed circa-1925 as a two-story reinforced concrete commercial building, 451 Florence Street contained a pedestrian entrance at the first floor and a row of windows with cornice at the second floor. Newspaper articles covering the construction of the 1973 Masonic Lodge occupying the corner provide an image of the Florence Street elevation (**Figure 9 – next page**). The building was completely modified as part of the circa-1973 Masonic Temple construction. Modifications include removal of the first floor offices and pedestrian entrance; removal of the second floor windows and cornice and replacement with the present two-bay composition, with the left bay spanning an alley that connects Florence and Waverley streets. This alley once contained access to a drive-up window for the First National Bank that occupied the first floor of the Masonic Temple building (**Figure 10 – next page**). A rendering of the completed 1973 Masonic Temple building appears as shows the two-bay façade (**Figure 11 – next page**).



Figures 9 and 10. Left image is a copy of a photograph appearing in the *Palo Alto Times* (1/24/73), showing the Masonic Temple under construction (Courtesy: Palo Alto Historical Association). An arrow indicates the 451 Florence Street façade. Right image shows the present condition of 451 Florence Street.

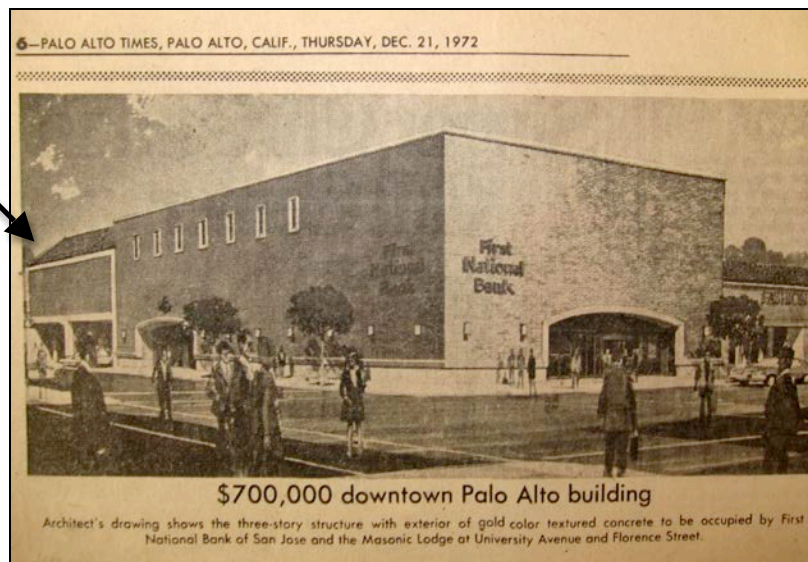


Figure 11. Scan of a 1972 *Palo Alto Times* article showing a rendering of the proposed Masonic Temple building. The 451 Florence Street façade is shown with an arrow. Note that both structural bays of 451 Florence Street are open (Courtesy Palo Alto Historical Association).

Property History

The L-shaped building analyzed for this report does not appear on the 1924 Sanborn Map (**Figure 12**).

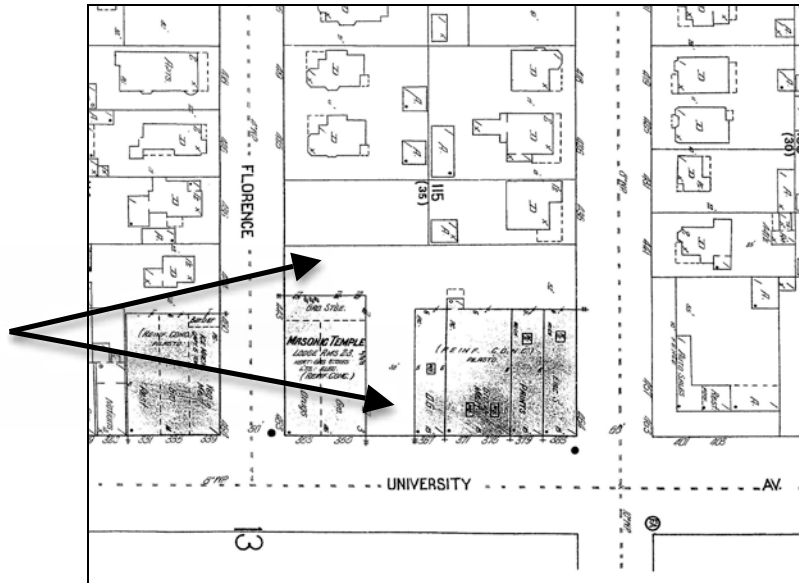


Figure 12. 1924 Sanborn Map showing an empty lot (arrows), indicating the building at 355 University Avenue/451 Florence Street was not constructed by 1924.

The 1924 map (1955 update) shows the parcel with the subject building completed (**Figure 13**).

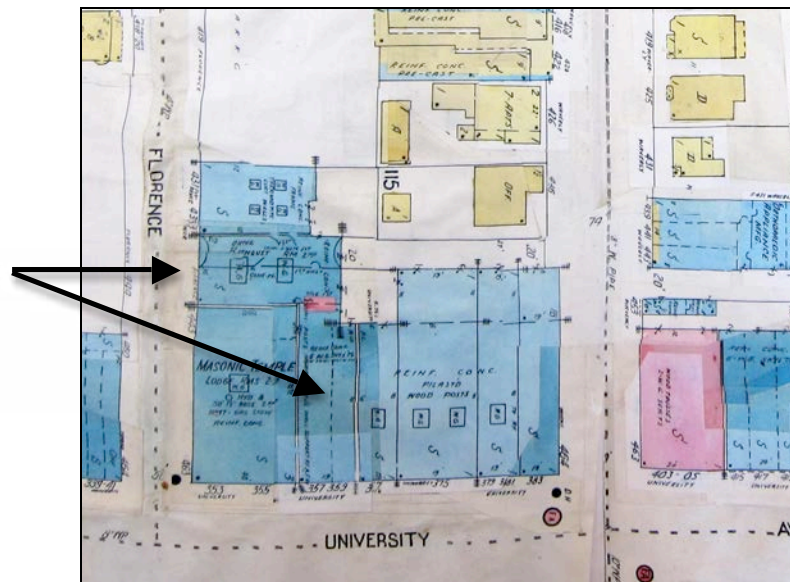


Figure 13. 1924 (with 1955 update) Sanborn Map showing the lot occupied by the subject building (arrows).

The Sanborn map analysis indicates that the L-shaped building was constructed between 1924 and 1955; however, corroboration of the Sanborn Map data, City of Palo Alto assessment records and City Directories (*Polk's Palo Alto City Directories: 1925 - 1965*) indicates that the 451 Florence Street façade was constructed circa-1925 and the 355 University Avenue façade building was constructed circa-1934. The first City Directory listing indicates that Cardinal Hardware Company and Western Auto Supply Company first occupied the building. Cardinal Hardware Company remained at this location until 1936, when a new tenant, Young Drug Company, replaced them. Western Auto Supply Company remained until 1940, when Personality Beauty Supply replaced them. These two operations remained in the building until 1953.

City directories indicate the building was vacant from 1953 – 1957, which is not surprising given the opening of the Stanford Shopping Center, which caused the relocation of many downtown businesses to the new retail center. Westbrook Department Store then occupied the building in 1957, and remained at this location until the end of the historic analysis period, 1965.

Based on the City Directory analysis, it is evident that a variety of tenants occupied the building and that the tenants changed regularly. None of the individual tenants are significant historically, as they were common retail business uses in the Palo Alto area.

The original Masonic Temple building that occupied the northeast corner of University Avenue and Florence Street was completed in 1910 (*Palo Alto Masonic Temple, 1973 Brochure*, Masons Clippings File, Palo Alto Historical Association). The building succumbed to fire on January 29, 1971. The present Masonic Temple was under construction in 1972 and completed in 1973 (*Palo Alto Times, 1/30/71, 12/21/72 and 1/24/73*, Masons Clippings File, Palo Alto Historical Association). As was typical with Masons Temple buildings, the ground floor was leased to commercial enterprises, while the Masons occupied the upper floor. In this case, the First National Bank occupied the first floor of the 1973 building. The building at 451 Florence Street contained a drive-up window that once fronted the alley that runs between Florence and Waverley Streets. The left bay shown on **Figure 10** served as the access to the bank drive-up window from Florence Street. Evidence of the bank windows remains on the north wall of the 451 Florence Street building, if one walks the alley beneath the left arch (**Figure 14**).



Figure 14. View along alley showing north wall of 451 Florence Street and the bank teller window infilled (arrow).

Historic Resource Evaluation

The substantial alterations to the subject building have removed sufficient historic integrity to make the building ineligible under National Register, California Register and the City of Palo Alto's Historic Inventory criteria.

According to National Register Criteria as elucidated in *Code of Federal Regulations, Title 36, Part 60*, and explained in *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*:

For a property to qualify for the National Register it must meet one of the National Register Criteria for Evaluation by:

- Being associated with an important historic context *and*
- Retaining historic integrity of those features necessary to convey its significance.¹

The subject property does not retain sufficient historic integrity and is not eligible under any National- or California-Register criteria because it does not retain sufficient historic integrity. According to *National Register Bulletin 15*, no other eligibility considerations are required because the property lacks sufficient historic integrity. However, an analysis of National- and California-register eligibility appears below, followed by an integrity analysis.

Evaluation of National Register Significance

The National Register Criteria appear below, with an evaluation of the subject property:

A. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or

The subject property is not eligible under this criterion because it is not associated with any events that have made a significant contribution to local, California, or National history. The subject building is a highly altered commercial building originally constructed circa-1928 and within the City's commercial district. The building is not within a historic district. According to *National Register Bulletin 15*:

A property can be associated with either (or both) of two types of events:

- A specific event marking an important moment in American prehistory or history and
- A pattern of events or a historic trend that made a significant contribution to the development of a community, a State, or a nation.²

Regarding the first bullet point above, the subject property is not associated with a specific event of importance in Palo Alto history. Regarding the second bullet point, the subject property is not associated with a pattern of events that made a significant contribution to the development of Palo Alto. The property was constructed as a commercial property for the City of Palo Alto's

¹ *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Criteria for Evaluation* (1998 revised edition), 3.

² *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Criteria for Evaluation* (1998 revised edition), 12.

commercial district. The property was developed to serve the growing retail demand of the City of Palo Alto, a demand common to nearly every city in the United States in the 1920s and before the onset of the Great Depression. Thus, there is no significant pattern of events in which this property would be associated.

B. That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or

The subject property was the location of a changing variety of retail tenants throughout the historic analysis period (1928 – 1965). The individual tenants have not made any significant contributions to local, California, or National history. The property is not eligible under this Criterion.

C. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or

First, the subject property is not eligible under this criterion because it is not designed by a master architect. In addition, the building alterations have removed the distinctive characteristics of the Mediterranean Revival-period of construction. The circa-1960 storefront modification and second-story window modifications to the 355 University Avenue façade, and the circa-1973 modifications to the 461 Florence Street façade have obscured the original design of the circa-1928 commercial building.

D. That have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

The property does not contain any archaeological sites, or other site characteristics that would potentially yield information important to prehistory or history.

Evaluation of California Register Significance

It should be noted that the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) uses the same criteria as the National Register of Historic Places, with one exception: the criteria are numbered 1 through 4, rather than lettered A through D. Thus, the quotes taken from *National Register Bulletin 15* appearing below apply to the California Register criteria.

The California Register Criteria appear below, with an evaluation of the subject property:

1. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage.

The subject property is not eligible under this criterion because it is not associated with any events that have made a significant contribution to local, California, or National history. The subject building is a highly altered commercial building originally constructed circa-1928 and within the City's commercial district. The building is not within a historic district. According to *National Register Bulletin 15*:

A property can be associated with either (or both) of two types of events:

- A specific event marking an important moment in American prehistory or history and

- A pattern of events or a historic trend that made a significant contribution to the development of a community, a State, or a nation.³

Regarding the first bullet point above, the subject property is not associated with a specific event of importance in Palo Alto history. Regarding the second bullet point, the subject property is not associated with a pattern of events that made a significant contribution to the development of Palo Alto. The property was constructed as a commercial property for the City of Palo Alto's commercial district. The property was developed to serve the growing retail demand of the City of Palo Alto, a demand common to nearly every city in the United States in the 1920s and before the Depression. Thus, there is no significant pattern of events in which this property would be associated.

2. Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past.

The subject property was the location of a changing variety of retail tenants throughout the historic analysis period (1928 – 1965). The individual tenants have not made any significant contributions to local, California, or National history. The property is not eligible under this Criterion.

3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values.

The subject property is not eligible under this criterion because it is not designed by a master architect. In addition, the building alterations have removed the distinctive characteristics of the Mediterranean Revival-period of construction. The circa-1960 storefront modification and second-story window modifications to the 355 University Avenue façade, and the circa-1973 modifications to the 461 Florence Street façade have obscured the original design of the circa-1928 commercial building.

4. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

The property does not contain any archaeological sites, or other site characteristics that would potentially yield information important to prehistory or history.

City of Palo Alto Historic Inventory Significance

According to Chapter 16.49: Historic Preservation of the *Palo Alto Municipal Code (PAMC Chapter 16.49)*, buildings are evaluated for potential historic significance according to the following criteria, with an evaluation of the subject building listed below each criterion:

1. The structure or site is identified with the lives of historic people or with important events in the city, state or nation;

Research did not reveal any historic people occupying the subject property, nor did it reveal any pattern of significant historic events for which the subject property would be associated. The highly modified commercial building is not connected with important events in the city, state or nation.

³ *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Criteria for Evaluation* (1998 revised edition), 12.

2. *The structure or site is particularly representative of an architectural style or way of life important to the city, state or nation;*

Substantial modifications to the circa-1928 commercial building have obscured the style of the original structure on both the 355 University Avenue and 461 Florence Street facades, making the present building no longer representative of this style.

3. *The structure or site is an example of a type of building which was once common, but is now rare;*

The highly modified commercial building is not rare. Many Mediterranean-revival styled commercial buildings remain in the Palo Alto area.

4. *The structure or site is connected with a business or use which was once common, but is now rare;*

The structure is a commercial building, which contained a variety of retail clients, none of whom represent a business that was once common, but is now rare.

5. *The architect or building was important.*

The architect of the building is unknown.

6. *The structure or site contains elements demonstrating outstanding attention to architectural design, detail, materials or craftsmanship.*

Because of the substantial building alterations, the structure does not retain sufficient elements demonstrating outstanding attention to architectural design, detail, materials or craftsmanship as the original commercial building.

In conclusion, the subject property is not eligible under *PAMC Chapter 16.49*. It should be noted that the building is not located in an established or eligible historic district.

Historic Integrity

The building has undergone numerous alterations impacting its historic integrity substantially. An evaluation of the seven aspects of integrity appears below:

- **Location.** The building retains integrity of location in its original location on the site.
- **Setting.** The building retains integrity of setting among the commercial and retail operations lining University Avenue.
- **Design.** The building retains no remaining integrity of design as a Mediterranean Revival-style commercial building because of the alterations made to the building on both the University Avenue and Florence Street elevations.
- **Materials.** The building retains none or minimal integrity of materials from the Mediterranean Revival design period, particularly, due to the installation of the circa-1960 storefront and window modifications that removed the original Mediterranean-Revival storefront on University Avenue; and the concrete façade that covered the earlier façade on 461 Florence Street.

- **Workmanship.** The building retains minimal to no integrity of workmanship, given the alterations made to the building that have obscured its original design.
- **Feeling.** The building retains no integrity of feeling as a Mediterranean Revival-style commercial building because of the building modifications.
- **Association.** The building retains no integrity of association as a Mediterranean Revival-style commercial building because of the building modifications.

CEQA Study Area

For purposes of analyzing the potential impacts to neighboring historic buildings, a CEQA study area was determined. This study area appears below as **Figure 15**.

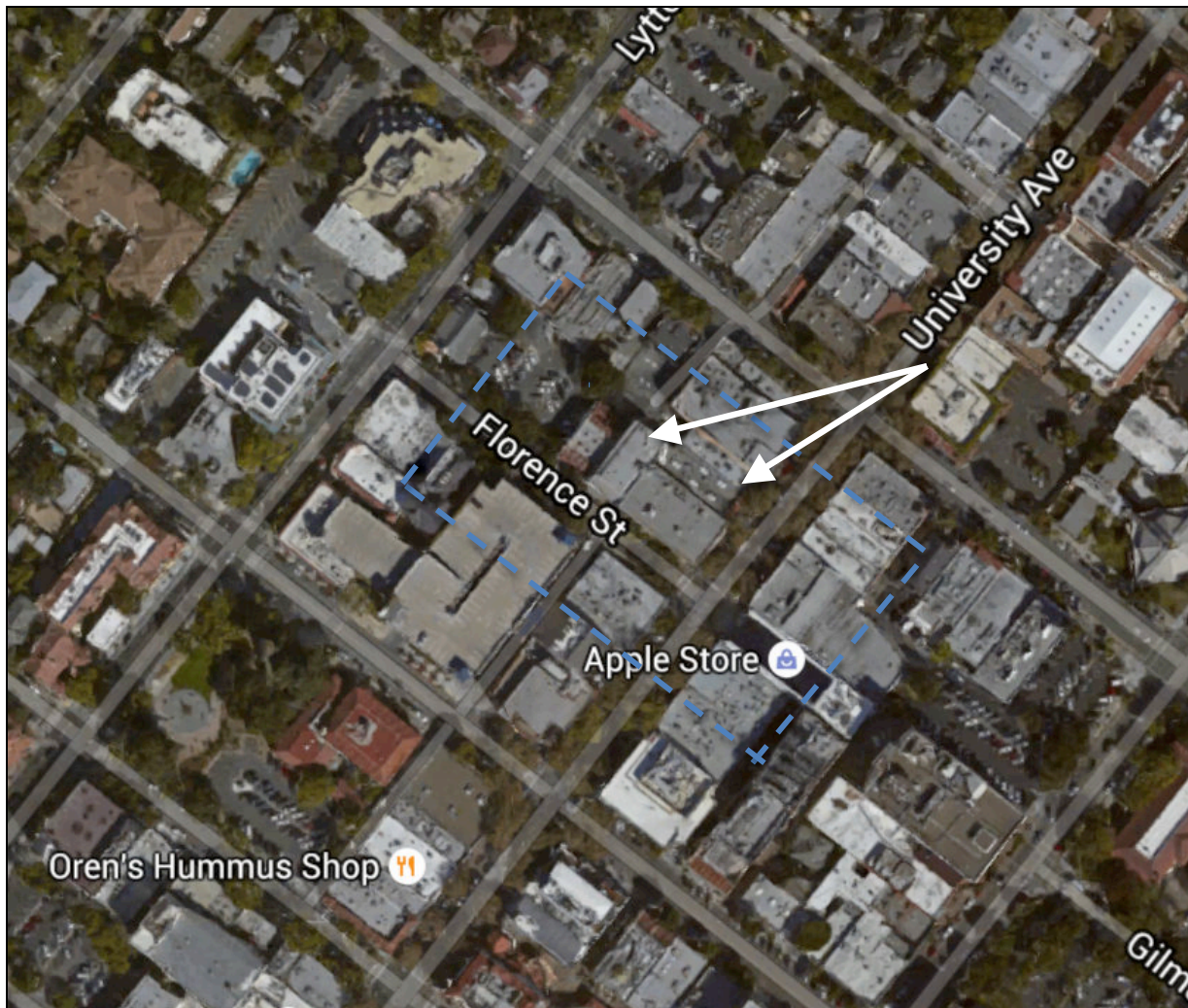


Figure 15. CEQA Study Area outlined in a dashed blue line, with white arrows indicating the subject project at the northeast corner of University Avenue and Florence Street (*Courtesy Google Maps*).

The CEQA Study Area encompasses the areas of University Avenue and Florence Street within view of the proposed project and is sufficient to determine effects of the proposed project's construction on neighboring historic resources.

The CEQA study area encompassing the subject property contains a mix of newer buildings that are not historic; highly altered, older buildings modified for the changing needs of retail establishments over time that are not historic; and two historic buildings on the City of Palo Alto's Historic Inventory. This area contains no collection of historic resources that would be linked thematically or architecturally to form a potential future historic district. The proposed project is not located in a designated historic district recognized by the National- or California-Registers; nor listed on the City of Palo Alto's Historic Inventory.

Potential Impacts of the Proposed Project

The CEQA Study Area identified two historic buildings. None of these buildings are listed on the National Register. The buildings are shown below with their level of local and California Register (CR) eligibility indicated.

- 367 University Avenue: Single-story, Mid-Century, Category 4 building, **(Figure 16)**
- 420 Florence Street: 2-story, wood-framed, Queen Anne, Category 2 building, CR-eligible **(Figure 17)**



Figures 16 and 17. Left image shows the highly modified Category 4 building at 367 University Avenue. Right image shows the front elevation of 420 Florence Street.

The only building adjacent to the proposed project is located at 367 University Avenue, a highly altered Category 4 building with an entirely modified front façade (**Figure 16 - Crepevine Restaurant**). This building is a single story structure with a shallow foundation. The Construction Documents for the proposed project should require that the proposed scope of work be carried out in a manner to prevent impacts, excessive vibration, or other conditions that could cause settlement of or damage to the adjacent historic building. The proposed design does maintain the existing basement and foundation walls, thus minimizing the potential for such damage.

The building at 420 Florence Street is on the west side of Florence Street, across the street and mid-block between Lytton and University avenues. The proposed project will not impact this building because the construction site is separated by the street and all construction activity would take place on the northeast side of the corner of University Avenue and Florence Street.

The setting along this area of University Avenue represents the retail center of Palo Alto and consists of two- to four-story buildings with the first floor serving as retail and/or restaurant establishments. As storefront tenants change over time, many of these buildings have modified or replaced storefronts to meet the needs of the new tenant. This is a common theme among commercial neighborhoods – the changing use of storefronts – that affects the design, materials and workmanship of many earlier storefronts and can impact the historic significance of a building due to loss of integrity. The changes made to both façades of the subject building illustrate this phenomenon. The circa-1928 storefront at 355 University Avenue was modified in the 1960s to accommodate a change in tenancy. Similarly, the façade at 451 Florence Street was completely modified for the combined project of the Masonic Temple and First National Bank in 1973.

As summarized in the *City of Palo Alto Downtown Urban Design Guidelines*, dated October 1993 (the Guidelines), the University Avenue District exhibits the following building patterns and characteristics:

University Avenue contains a general 25-50 foot wide pattern of storefronts, and similar sized structural bays at larger buildings. This pattern creates a pleasing rhythm and allows a variety of building facades within a single block face. Generally buildings are two, three or four stories with a few exceptions. Most buildings have no setback to the street and rise to a parapet wall without a distinct roof. The architectural style of the retail storefronts is mixed. Many corner stores front only to University Avenue while ignoring the side streets. This limits the opportunity to continue retail vitality onto the side streets. Landmarks within the district include the Palo Alto Office Center at 525 University, the Varsity Theater and the Stanford Theater (page 26).

The subject building is within the University Avenue District, which contains a relatively regular pattern of storefronts and structural bays of varying facades and vintages. The proposed modifications to 355 University Avenue do not modify the storefront width or structural bay width of the existing building and maintains the eclectic character of the University Avenue District.

The Guidelines consider Florence Street a Secondary District and state:

Two secondary districts overlap and are related to the University Avenue District, Florence Street and Kipling Street. These areas are singled out as secondary districts because they have their own distinct characteristics making them of special note. Efforts should be made to unify and complement each of the secondary districts through the use of appropriate building design, landscaping and public amenities... Both districts contain significant historic architecture and development patterns, and the Palo Alto Historic Resources Board is an important resource in consulting for future development of these areas (page 28).

The proposed addition of super graphics to 451 Florence Street and the opening of the right-hand structural bay for parking do not change the storefront and bay widths of the existing building. The super graphics offer a modern application to the existing building that is in keeping with the eclectic pattern of the Florence Street Secondary District. The graphics are applied to the building and could be removed in the future leaving the present façade intact.

The blocks adjacent to the proposed project at 355 University Avenue/451 Florence Street have similar features to what is stated above and taken from the 1993 Design Guidelines. Both sides of University Avenue between Bryant and Waverley streets contain a mixture of modified early 20th Century and Mid-century Modern buildings that have highly modified front facades. Because of this eclectic mix of newer and older buildings, as well as the few historic buildings within the CEQA Study Area, this area of University Avenue would not likely contain enough historic resources to qualify as a future historic district. The only historic building within this study area is located at 367 University Avenue, a highly modified Category 4 building (**Figure 16**).

On Florence Street, the parking garage on the west side and across the street from the subject project dominates the streetscape. Adjacent and north of the parking garage is the only other historic building located within the CEQA Study Area, at 420 Florence Street (**Figure 17**). On the east side of Florence Street and north of the proposed project, the streetscape is characterized by highly modified buildings of similar scale, massing and level of modifications as the aforementioned blocks on University Avenue within the CEQA Study Area. Intrusions such as the parking garage, and building modifications with incompatible materials have compromised the historic character of Florence Street making it unlikely that it would be a future historic district.

The proposed project will not have any direct impacts to the individual historic resources within the study area. However, the overall setting of the resources within the study area should be analyzed. *National Register Bulletin 15* defines setting as:

Setting is the physical environment of a historic property. Whereas location refers to the specific place where a property was built or an event occurred, setting refers to the character of the place in which the property played its historical role. It involves *how*, not just where, the property is situated and its relationship to surrounding features open space.⁴

Two locally designated historic resources exist within the study area. The study area is not within a previously designated district, nor would its highly eclectic mix of buildings be likely designated as a historic district in the future. The setting within the CEQA Study Area has changed substantially over time, with selective demolitions of older buildings and façade modifications to extant older buildings that is common to the changing demands of a commercial district. The proposed modifications to the non-historic facades of the building at 355 University Avenue/451 Florence Street will not change the existing setting or character of the historic buildings within the CEQA Study Area.

⁴ *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Criteria for Evaluation* (1998 revised edition), 45.

The proposed project consists of façade and interior improvements within existing buildings, with a modest increase in façade height at 355 University Avenue. However, this increased height is within the scale and massing of the present historic and newer buildings within the study area, which contains buildings between two and four stories in height. For this reason, the proposed project's design is within the massing and scale of the existing historic or newer buildings on University Avenue.

The proposed façade improvements to 451 Florence Street include the addition of super graphics of Design Within Reach furniture applied to the façade and visible parking spaces within the right-hand building arch. The façade designs for the proposed Florence Street facade are within the modern character of newer building designs, such as the Apple Store located within the CEQA Study Area at 340 University Avenue. The open parking area removes the roll-up door of the right-hand arch of the Florence Street façade, which was formerly a drive-through area for the 1973 bank modifications made to the building. Since the right-hand structural bay was open when the façade was modified in 1973, opening up this bay is in keeping with the scale, massing and design scheme of the 1973-modified building (**Figure 11**). In addition, the Florence Street façade's design is similar in design and materials to other University Avenue buildings that have had their older facades replaced or modernized.


Conclusion

The proposed project will not have any direct impacts to historic resources on the subject parcel, as the L-shaped building on the property with addresses at 355 University Avenue/451 Florence Street is not eligible for listing on the National or California registers; nor is the building eligible for inclusion on Palo Alto's Historic Inventory. The 1973 Masonic Temple building at 353 University Avenue/461 Florence Street will not be impacted by the proposed project as no improvements are proposed for this building; and the building is also not any local, state or national registers.

The proposed project would not have any direct impacts on the two historic buildings within the CEQA Study Area. The proposed project's design, mass, scale and materials will not have any direct impacts to the historic buildings; nor would it change the eclectic setting of historic and newer buildings within the study area that encompasses the intersection of University Avenue and Florence Street. The proposed project does not impact the integrity of a historic district, as the subject project is not within a historic district.

Please contact me if you have any questions about this evaluation.

Sincerely,



Seth A. Bergstein
Principal

cc: Chai Chen, Senior Designer, DFA; City of Palo Alto Planning Department