



Historic Resources Board Staff Report

From: Planning and Development Services Director
Lead Department: Planning and Development Services

Meeting Date: April 11, 2024
Report #: 2403-2767

TITLE

PUBLIC HEARING / QUASI-JUDICIAL. 271 University Avenue [24PLN-00039]: Request for Historic Designation Reclassification, From a Local Historic Resource Category 3 to a Category 2. Environmental Assessment: No project under California Environmental Quality Act and CEQA Guidelines per Section 21065. Zone District: CD-C (GF)(P) - Downtown Commercial with Ground Floor and Pedestrian Shopping Combining District. For More Information Contact Kristina Paulauskaite at Kristina.Paulauskaite@CityofPaloAlto.org.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Historic Resources Board (HRB) take the following action(s):

1. Recommend the City Council reclassify the building from a 'Contributing Building' Category 3 resource to a 'Major Building' Category 2 resource on the Palo Alto Historic Resources Inventory.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is to support the HRB review of a requested reclassification of 271 University Avenue, one-story building with a mezzanine at the rear, one-unit commercial property, located in Palo Alto's Downtown North neighborhood.

The building at 271 University Avenue is listed as a Category 3 resource on the City's local Historic Resources Inventory (HRI). The owner is requesting a reclassification and designation as a Category 2 resource on the City's Historic Inventory (Attachment A).

On November 1, 2023, the City's consultant, Page & Turnbull, prepared a Historic Resource Evaluation (HRE) (Attachment B). The evaluation report was prepared directly for the City of Palo Alto at the applicant's expense. The evaluation found 271 University Avenue individually eligible for listing on the California Register of Historic Resources (CRHR) under Criterion 2 (The structure is particularly representative of an architectural style or way of life important to the city, state or nation), Criterion 5 (The architect or building was important), and Criterion 6 (The structure or site contains elements demonstrating outstanding attention to architectural design, detail, materials or craftsmanship).

On February 7, 2024, Mark Sterns, on behalf of Hayes Group Architects, requested the HRB consider a reclassification of 271 University, designed by Carl I. Warnecke of Miller & Warnecke in the Art Deco style completed in 1930, from a 'Contributing Building' Category 3 resource to a 'Major Building' Category 2 resource on the Palo Alto Historic Inventory.

The HRB is requested to recommend the reclassification. Specifically, the HRB may affirm that the building retains its integrity and determine the building's consistency with the definition of a Category 2 historic resource as a 'Major Building'. The HRB's purview, as set forth in PAMC Section 16.49.040, includes recommending the reclassification to the City Council for approval, disapproval, or modification.

BACKGROUND

Property Description

271 University Avenue is located within Downtown Commercial Community (CD-C) zone district with Ground Floor (GF) and Pedestrian Combining District (P). The subject property is a one-story building with a mezzanine at the rear, one-unit commercial property in Palo Alto's Downtown North neighborhood. It is situated on a flat, rectangular parcel that is 25 feet wide and 100 feet deep.

The subject building was designed by Carl I. Warnecke of Miller & Warnecke in the Art Deco style and completed in 1930 for use as a clothing store. The building at 271 University Avenue is rectangular in plan and is constructed of reinforced concrete. It has a flat roof with a continuous, flat parapet along the primary façade and a stepped parapet along the rear façade. The two side facades fully abut the adjacent buildings. The building has no setback and fronts directly along the city sidewalk of University Avenue to the southeast and Paulsen Lane to the northwest.

The future location of 271 University Avenue in 1924 was occupied by a building that was used as a music store and owned by the original owner of the subject building, Georgina Ostrander. 271 University Avenue original address prior to 1930 was 271-273 University Avenue but appears to have been shortened to 271 when the current building was completed with a single unit.

On August 13, 1929, an article in the *Daily Palo Alto Times* announced plans for construction of a one-story reinforced concrete commercial building located at 271-273 University Avenue by owner Georgina Ostrander. The article indicated that an existing two-story building on the site would be razed, and the new building would be designed by Birge Clark in the Spanish style to house a women's apparel company. In early October 1929, another article was published in the *Daily Palo Alto Times* that implied the prior plans had been abandoned, and architect Carl I. Warnecke had replaced Birge Clark to design the building. George Peterson of Oakland was hired as the contractor.

From the building's construction in 1930 to 1946 apart from the storefront system, a large commercial sign above the entryway, and smaller panels applied to the pilasters on the edges of the façade at the street level, the façade has retained most of its original ornamentation. In 1946

a fabric awning was added over the storefront system. Permit records indicate that in 1965 the original storefront system was replaced with a new aluminum roll up and swing glass storefront door system followed by replacement of the entryway at the rear façade in 1968.

271 University Avenue building retained a fabric awning over the storefront system until the mid 1980s, at which point the primary façade was also covered by vines. In 1994 the former aluminum roll up and swing storefront door system was replaced with the glazed wood bi-folding swing doors that exist currently, and the vine coverage had been removed. In 2015 awning to the front door system and several landscape features to the front sidewalk area were added. No other major alterations have been made since 2015.

Art Deco Style

271 University Avenue was designed in the Art Deco style and built in 1930. Art Deco first appeared in France just before World War I and began flourishing internationally in the 1920s and 1930s. It is an eclectic style that combines rich colors and bold geometric shapes with Machine Age imagery and materials such as aluminum, stainless steel, plastics, lacquer, and inlaid wood. The style emphasizes vertical lines and rectilinear shapes and angles, with imagery such as stepped facades and ornament, zigzags, chevrons, sunbursts, and floral abstractions. It also features planarity, symmetry, and repetition of elements. Art Deco was a common design style for hotels, since at its height of popularity, its aesthetic represented luxury, glamour, exuberance, and faith in technological progress, pushing the notion that modernity could be achieved through decoration.

Those architects who sought to capture more of the energy and sensuality of the Jazz Age turned to Art Deco. Americans imported this style from Europe with enthusiasm. For many, it perfectly captured the mood of the age, expressing modernity and freedom from convention without succumbing to the socialist Modernist movement. Businesses and corporations liked the style because it expressed progress and modern efficiency.

Architect Carl I. Warnecke of Miller and Warnecke

The architecture firm of Miller and Warnecke, active from 1917 to 1951, consisted of partners Carl Ingomar Warnecke (1891-1971) and Chester Herbert Miller (1890-1953). Warnecke, born in Montreal, moved with his family to California in 1901. He began his career in architecture as a draftsman working for Bakewell and Brown, Chester H. Miller, and John J. Donovan before establishing his partnership with Miller in 1917. Though he pursued courses at l'Ecole des Beaux Arts in 1914, this formal education was curtailed by the wartime evacuation of many Americans from France. Chester H. Miller was a native of Oakland whose training in architecture was acquired vocationally rather than through formal education.

ANALYSIS

HRB Purview of Resources in the Downtown and Historic District

Reclassification of 271 University Ave from a Category 3 to a Category 2 resource would not change the current historic review process and standards for exterior alterations, since the property is within the Downtown. Exterior alterations are not proposed at this time (Attachment

E). Exterior modifications to the building or land use changes would be subject to meeting the CD-C (GP)(P) development standards in PAMC Chapter 18.18 and Historic Preservation Ordinance in PAMC Chapter 16.49.

Benefits of Historic Listing and Reclassification

Reclassification from a Category 3 to a Category 2 resource at the local level would allow for participation in the Floor Area Bonus/Transfer of Development Rights program, which is only available for local inventory Category 1 and 2 resources. The applicant's request to upgrade the local inventory category based on the attached evaluation does not ask for transfer of development rights (TDR) or a floor area bonus. On-site use of bonus area would require review for compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards (SOIS) and Architectural Review findings. PAMC Section 18.18.080 governs the process to transfer bonus floor area to eligible non-historic receiver site(s) in the Downtown area.

Per Palo Alto Municipal Code Section 18.18.070, building that is in Historic Category 2 is eligible for the following bonuses:

- (a) Available Floor Area Bonuses
 - (2) Seismic Rehabilitation Bonus

A building that is in Seismic Category I, II, or III, and is undergoing seismic rehabilitation, but is not in Historic Category 1 or 2, shall be allowed to increase its floor area by 2,500 square feet or 25% of the existing building, whichever is greater, without having this increase count toward the FAR, subject to the restrictions in subsection (b). Such increase in floor area shall not be permitted for buildings that exceed a FAR of 3.0:1 in the CD-C subdistrict.

- (3) Historic Rehabilitation Bonus

A building that is in Historic Category 1 or 2, and is undergoing historic rehabilitation, but is not in Seismic Category I, II, or III, shall be allowed to increase its floor area by 2,500 square feet or 25% of the existing building, whichever is greater, without having this increase count toward the FAR, subject to the restrictions in subsection (b). Such increase in floor area shall not be permitted for buildings that exceed a FAR of 3.0:1 in the CD-C subdistrict.

- (4) Combined Historic and Seismic Rehabilitation Bonus

A building that is in Historic Category 1 or 2, and is undergoing historic rehabilitation, and is also in Seismic Category I, II, or III, and is undergoing seismic rehabilitation, shall be allowed to increase its floor area by 5,000 square feet or 50% of the existing building, whichever is greater, without having this increase count toward the FAR, subject to the restrictions in subsection (b). Such increase in floor area shall not be permitted for buildings that exceed a FAR of 3.0:1 in the CD-C subdistrict.

- (5) Historic Bonus for Over-Sized Buildings

A building in Historic Category 1 or 2 that is undergoing historic rehabilitation and that currently exceeds a FAR of 3.0:1 if located in the CD-C subdistrict or 2.0:1 if located in the

CD-S or CD-N subdistricts shall nevertheless be allowed to obtain a floor area bonus of 50% of the maximum allowable floor area for the site of the building, based upon a FAR of 3.0:1 if in the CD-C subdistrict and a FAR of 2.0:1 in the CD-S and CD-N subdistricts, subject to the restrictions in subsection (b) and the following limitation:

(A) The floor area bonus shall not be used on the site of the Historic Category 1 or 2 building, but instead may be transferred to another property or properties under the provisions of Section 18.18.080.

California Historical Resource Status Codes

271 University Avenue is listed in the BERD database for Santa Clara County with a status code of 5S2, meaning it is “Recognized as Historically Significant by Local Government” and within that categorization, it is considered “Individually eligible for local listing or designation.” The most recent update to the BERD database was in March 2020.

1978 Palo Alto Historic Inventory

271 University Ave is currently listed in the City of Palo Alto Historic Inventory as a Category 3: “Contributing Building.” It was surveyed for the Historic Resources Inventory in 1978 (Attachment C) and added to the local register in 1979 when the Palo Alto Historic Inventory was first adopted by the City Council.

Historic Resource Evaluation

The City’s historic consultant, Page & Turnbull, prepared a Historic Resource Evaluation (HRE) (Attachment B), considered the current historic status, provided a building description, and included a summary of historic context for the property at 271 University Avenue. Specifically, the HRE included an evaluation of the property’s individual eligibility for listing on the California Register of Historic Resources (CRHR). The HRE report, dated November 1, 2023, found 271 University Avenue individually eligible for CRHR listing under Criterion 2, Criterion 5, and Criterion 6:

- **Criterion 2** (The structure or is particularly representative of an architectural style or way of life important to the city, state or nation)

271 University Avenue is an excellent and rare commercial example of the Art Deco style in Palo Alto. The defining style of Palo Alto throughout its commercial and residential areas is by far the Spanish Colonial Revival (also called Spanish Eclectic or Mediterranean Revival), as well as other predominant styles, including Queen Anne, Craftsman, and Midcentury Modern. Overall, there are only a handful of buildings built in the Art Deco style in the area, the most notable being the Hoover Pavilion at Stanford University and a few others that would be considered Streamline or “Nautical” Moderne

style. Research uncovered no other commercial buildings in Palo Alto designed in the Art Deco style specifically with Zig-Zag Moderne characteristics, which include zigzags and chevron motifs, molded ornamentation, decorative parapets and cornice, and metal window hardware. 271 University Avenue is an important extant example of commercial Art Deco with Zig-Zag Moderne characteristics that retains its character-defining features such as original metal casement windows, stepped parapet walls, molded chevron cornice and floral medallion ornamentation, reeded pilasters, and zigzag structural motifs. Despite alterations to the storefront system, the building has retained the majority of its original Art Deco characteristics and has been a stately and elegant presence on University Avenue for nearly the last century.

- **Criterion 5** (The architect or building was important)

Carl I. Warnecke is an architect of merit who contributed a rich legacy to the architectural field, and specifically to the East Bay where he predominantly worked in Oakland and Piedmont through the partnership of Miller and Warnecke. Throughout his career and partnership, Warnecke designed largely in the Tudor Revival style, and was also known mostly for his residential and later civic and institutional designs. Research uncovered no other examples of buildings by Warnecke located in Palo Alto, regionally in the South Bay, or overall designed in the Art Deco style. The subject building is therefore important as both a rare example of work by Carl I. Warnecke locally and regionally in Palo Alto and the South Bay, and also stylistically as a unique variation of the commercial Art Deco Zig-Zag Moderne style.

- **Criterion 6** (The structure or site contains elements demonstrating outstanding attention to architectural design, detail, materials or craftsmanship)

The primary façade of the subject building features excellent examples of Art Deco ornamentation that is not only unique within the architectural context of Palo Alto, but also showcases the high level of craftsmanship and architectural design implemented by architect of merit Carl I. Warnecke. Elements of the façade that meet the definition of Criterion 6 include the stepped parapet walls, the molded chevron cornice and floral medallion ornamentation, reeded pilasters, and zigzag structural motifs.

Criteria for Designation and Historic Resource Category Definitions

271 University Avenue currently meets the criteria for designation that are set forth in the City's historic preservation ordinance, Palo Alto Municipal Code (PAMC) Chapter 16.49.040 (b) (Attachment D).

PAMC Section 16.49.020 (b) provides definitions for the four inventory Categories. A Category 3 building is defined as follows:

Category 3 or 4: "Contributing building" means any building or group of buildings which are good local examples of architectural styles and which relate to the character of a neighborhood grouping in scale, materials, proportion or other factors. A contributing building may have had extensive or permanent changes made to the original design,

such as inappropriate additions, extensive removal of architectural details, or wooden facades resurfaced in asbestos or stucco.

A Category 2 building is defined in the PAMC Section 16.49.020(b) as follows:

Category 2: "Major building" means any building or group of buildings of major regional importance, meritorious works of the best architects or an outstanding example of an architectural style or the stylistic development of architecture in the state or region. A major building may have some exterior modifications, but the original character is retained.

Seven Aspects of Integrity

271 University retains a high degree of all seven aspects of integrity, which effectively explain why, where, when and how this property is significant. The seven aspects that define integrity are location, setting design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The integrity assessment is outlined as follows¹:

Location

271 University Avenue retains integrity of location. The subject building has remained situated at its location of original construction since 1930.

Setting

271 University Avenue retains integrity of setting. The subject building retains its historic relationship with the street. While numerous buildings on the adjacent blocks along University Avenue have been replaced with newer infill since construction of the subject building in 1930, the subject block remains remarkably intact with mostly early twentieth century architectural styles and a few dating to midcentury. From historic photographs, it appears that the neighboring building to the south was either replaced or severely altered at some point prior to 1946. However, the replacement building retains the massing and scale of the original building to a degree that does not compromise the subject building. For these reasons, the subject building retains integrity of setting regarding surrounding urban commercial fabric.

Design

271 University Avenue retains integrity of design. While there have been repeated alterations to the storefront window and door system, these changes have arguably been necessitated by the change in use throughout the building's lifetime from a clothing store and smaller commercial businesses to a donut and longtime coffee shop, ending with its most recent use as a restaurant and café. The primary and rear facades otherwise retain the majority of their character-defining features, including original casement windows, Art Deco façade ornamentation, and the stepped parapet wall. The overall composition of the design, including the fenestration pattern, roofline, cornice, and decorative detailing all remain intact and contribute to the Art Deco stylistic elements designed by Carl I. Warnecke.

¹ Excerpt from the Historic Resource Evaluation conducted by Page and Turnbull, Inc. on November 1, 2023, page 28-30.

Materials

271 University Avenue retains integrity of materials. Aside from the original storefront system and the rear entryway, very few of the original features have been altered, removed, or replaced over the years. The primary exterior building materials include original reinforced concrete and concrete masonry unit cladding, cast cement ornamentation throughout the façade, and original windows with metal casing and muntins.

Workmanship

271 University Avenue retains integrity of workmanship. Features providing evidence of period workmanship and construction methods include original metal casement windows with multi-light panes, molded Art Deco ornamentation to the façades, and reeded pilasters. The high level of workmanship in the decorative detailing of the building reflects early twentieth century construction methods in prominent high style Art Deco commercial buildings and architect-designed buildings.

Feeling

271 University Avenue retains integrity of feeling. The building retains the feeling of its original design by Carl I. Warnecke as constructed in 1930, as its design, materiality, and workmanship remain highly representative of its original Art Deco Zig-Zag Moderne aesthetic. Alterations to the original storefront system and rear entryway have not diminished the residence's form, height, massing, or materiality such that its feeling is impaired.

Association

271 University Avenue retains integrity of association. While the building is not significant in association with an event or a past owner or occupant, its association to architect of merit Carl I. Warnecke continues to be represented through its retention of the building's original Art Deco materials and design characteristics.

Staff recommendations

Staff concurs with the findings of the Page and Turnbull, Inc. evaluation. Therefore, staff supports 271 University Avenue owners in their request to upgrade the Local Inventory classification from a Category 3: "Contributing Building" to a Category 2: "Major Building" of regional importance. 271 University is a meritorious work of a Bay Area architect of merit, Carl I. Warnecke, and is an outstanding example of the Art Deco Zig-Zag Moderne style.

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 per Section 21065 because it will not cause a direct change to the physical environment nor a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment. Although reclassification

will make the property eligible for a historic rehabilitation floor area bonus under PAMC 18.18.070, there is no such application on file and any future project will be separately analyzed under CEQA.

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION, OUTREACH & COMMENTS

Notice of this HRB hearing appeared in the Daily Post on March 27, 2024, which is 13 days in advance of the meeting.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS

In addition to the recommended action, the HRB may:

1. Continue the reclassification request for further discussion
2. Deny the reclassification request and the property will remain a Category 3 building

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – 271 University Ave Location Map and Request Letter

Attachment B – 271 University Ave HRE by Page & Turnbull

Attachment C – 271 University Ave DPR Form

Attachment D – PAMC Section 16.49.040 (b)

Attachment E – 271 University Ave Project Plans

AUTHORS

Report Author & Contact Information

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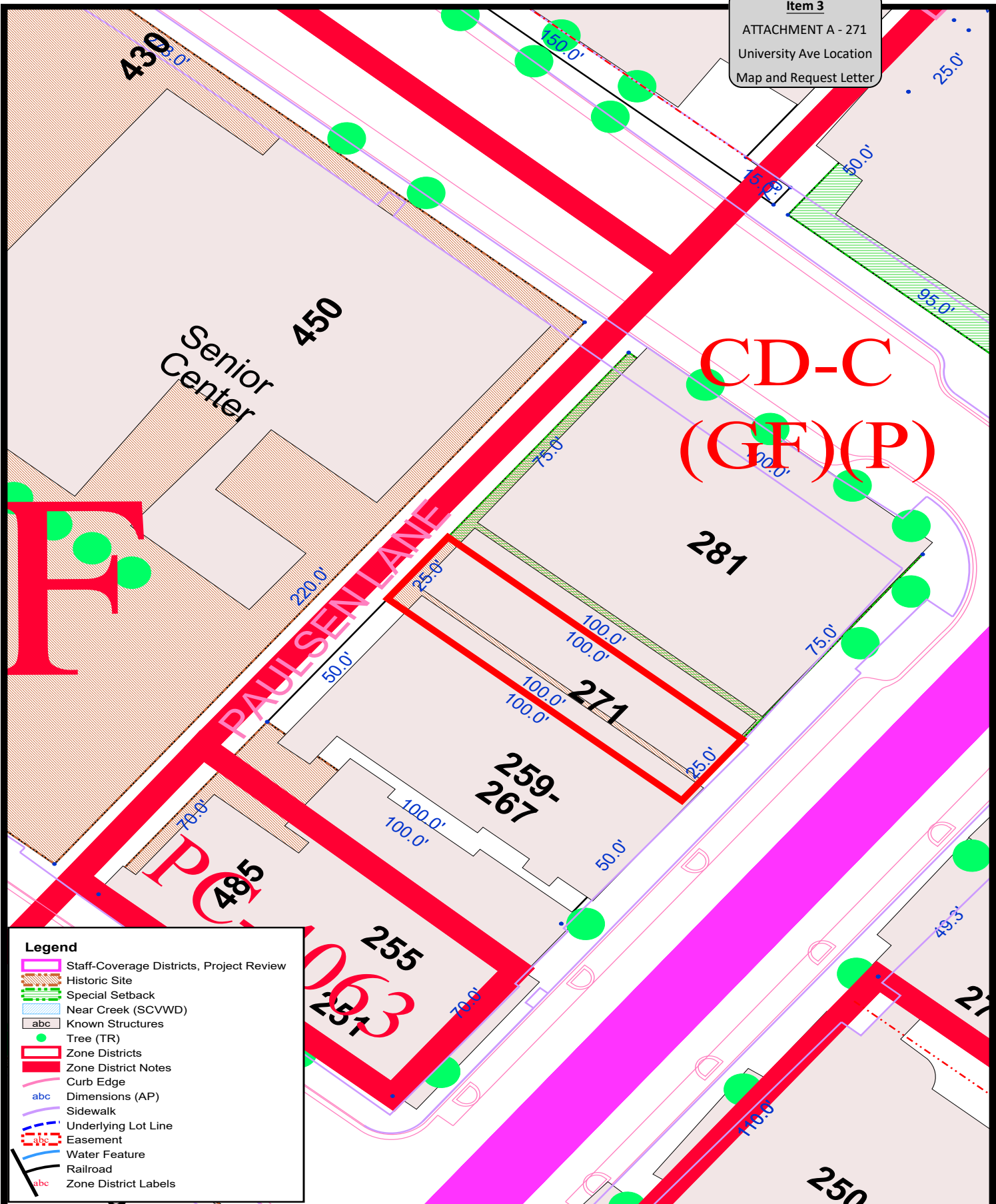
Kristina.Paulauskaite@CityofPaloAlto.org

HRB² Liaison & Contact Information

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(650) 329-2336

Amy.French@CityofPaloAlto.org

² Emails may be sent directly to the HRB using the following address: hrb@cityofpaloalto.org



Legend

- Staff-Coverage Districts, Project Review
- Historic Site
- Special Setback
- Near Creek (SCVWD)
- Known Structures
- Tree (TR)
- Zone Districts
- Zone District Notes
- Curb Edge
- Dimensions (AP)
- Sidewalk
- Underlying Lot Line
- Easement
- Water Feature
- Railroad
- Zone District Labels



The City of
Palo Alto



ATTACHMENT A
271 University
Location Map

This map is a product of the
City of Palo Alto GIS



The logo for Hayes Group Architects is a black square with the words "HAYES", "GROUP", "ARCHI", and "TECTS" stacked vertically in white, all-caps, sans-serif font.

December 19, 2023

City of Palo Alto
Department of Planning & Community Environment
250 Hamilton Avenue, 5th floor
Palo Alto, CA 94303

Re: 271 University Avenue Project Description

To Planning Staff and HRB Members:

Attached is Hayes Group Architect's submittal package for 271 University Avenue for a request to elevate the local historic listing classification. The project applicant is Hayes Group Architects on behalf of our client, Thoits Bros.

This package includes an electronically submitted plan set, including the site plan, floor plan, roof plan, elevations and photos of the existing building. Also included is a Historic Resource Evaluation prepared by the city's consultant, Page & Turnbull.

1. EXISTING CONDITIONS

The building site is midblock on University Avenue, in downtown Palo Alto, in the CD-C(P)(GF) zoning district, adjacent to other commercial properties of similar scale. Paulsen Lane, a public alley, runs along the rear of the property. The building, constructed in 1930, was designed by Carl I. Warnecke of Miller Warnecke, a prominent Bay Area architectural firm, in the Art Deco style and is listed as a Category 3 ("contributing building") Historic Resource in the local historic inventory. The building's original use was as a clothing store and has continued over time with other commercial uses.

2. PROPOSED PROJECT

We are proposing to elevate the historic status on the local inventory from Category 3, "contributing building" to Category 2, "major building". According to the city commissioned Page & Turnbull Historic Resource Evaluation, dated November 1, 2023, 271 University Avenue appears eligible for elevation to Category 2: A "Major Building" of regional importance in the Palo Alto Historic Resources Inventory. The subject building meets Criterion 2, 5 and 6 of the seven Criteria for Designation.

In addition, in order for a building or landscape to qualify for listing under any local, state or national historic registry it must possess significance under at least one of the criteria described above and retain integrity. Page & Turnbull has concluded that the subject property retains integrity of Location, Setting, Design, Materials, Workmanship, Feeling and Association.

**HAYES
GROUP
ARCHI
TECTS**

We look forward to a staff review and scheduling of an HRB hearing for the elevation of this major building.

Please call me at (650) 365-0600x115 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Ken Hayes, AIA
Principal

encl: Page & Turnbull HRE dated 11/1/2023

cc: John Shenk, Thoits Bros

271 UNIVERSITY AVENUE HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION (HRE)

PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA
[16252B.26]

PREPARED FOR THE CITY OF PALO ALTO
November 1, 2023



Item 3

ATTACHMENT B - 271

University Ave HRE by

Page & Turnbull

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Item 3

ATTACHMENT B - 271

University Ave HRE by

Page & Turnbull

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Figure 1: City of Palo Alto parcel map. Subject property indicated by blue outline.
Source: City of Palo Alto, Online Parcel Reports, 2023.

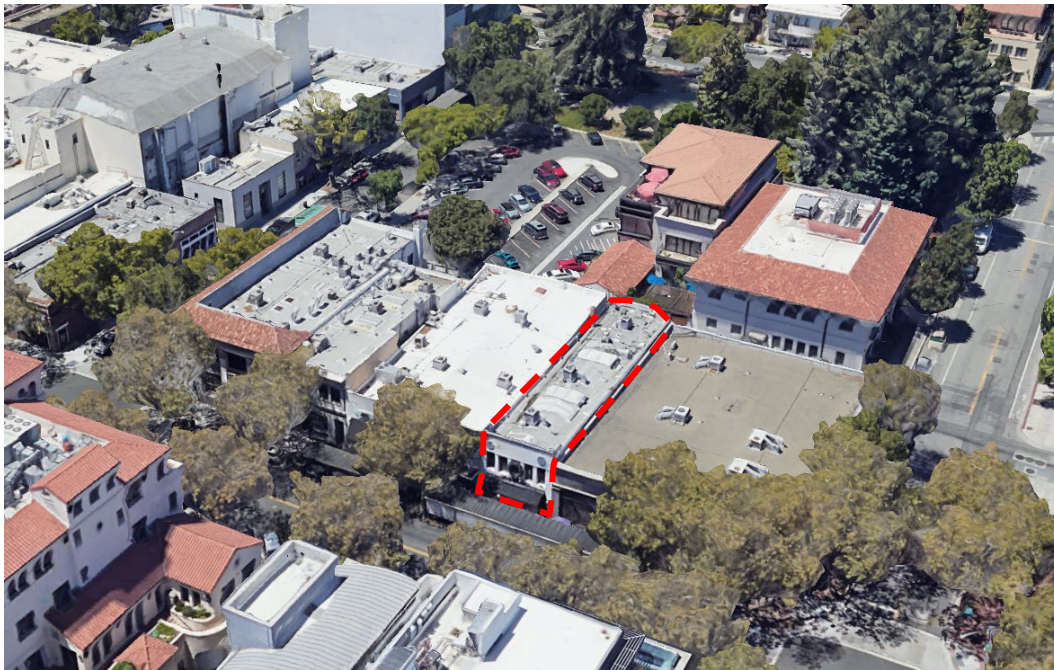


Figure 2. Bird's-eye view of 271 University Avenue, indicated by red dashed outline.
Source: Google Maps, 2023. Edited by Page & Turnbull.

Methodology

This report follows a standard outline used for Historic Resource Evaluation reports, and provides a summary of the current historic status, a building description, and a historic context for 271 University Avenue. The report includes an evaluation of the property's individual eligibility for elevation to a Category 2: "Major Building" in the Palo Alto Historic Inventory.

Page & Turnbull prepared this report using research collected at various local repositories, including the Palo Alto Development Services and the Palo Alto Historical Association (PAHA), as well as online sources including Ancestry.com and Newspapers.com. Key primary sources consulted and cited in this report include Palo Alto building permit applications, city and county directories, and historical newspapers.

Page & Turnbull staff conducted a site visit to 271 University Avenue on September 29, 2023. All photographs within this report were taken at that time, unless otherwise noted.

Summary of Findings

271 University Avenue is currently listed on the local Palo Alto Historic Inventory, but not currently listed on any federal or state register of historic resources. The property is eligible for elevation

within the local Palo Alto Historic Inventory from a Category 3: “Contributing Building” to a Category 2: “Major Building” of regional importance.

II. EXISTING HISTORIC STATUS

The following section examines the national, state, and local historic status currently assigned to the commercial building at 271 University Avenue.

National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places (National Register) is the nation’s most comprehensive inventory of historic resources. The National Register is administered by the National Park Service and includes buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts that possess historic, architectural, engineering, archaeological, or cultural significance at the national, state, or local level.

271 University Avenue is not currently listed in the National Register.

California Register of Historical Resources

The California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) is an inventory of significant architectural, archaeological, and historical resources in the State of California. Resources can be listed in the California Register through a number of methods. State Historical Landmarks and National Register-listed properties are automatically listed in the California Register. Properties can also be nominated to the California Register by local governments, private organizations, or citizens. The evaluative criteria used by the California Register for determining eligibility are closely based on those developed by the National Park Service for the National Register of Historic Places.

271 University Avenue is not currently listed in the California Register.

California Historical Resource Status Codes

Properties listed or under review by the State of California Office of Historic Preservation are listed within the Built Environment Resource Directory (BERD) and are assigned a California Historical Resource Status Code (Status Code) of “1” to “7” to establish their historical significance in relation to the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) or California Register of Historical Resources (California Register).¹ Properties with a Status Code of “1” or “2” are either eligible for listing in the California Register or the National Register, or are already listed in one or both of the registers. Properties assigned Status Codes of “3” or “4” appear to be eligible for listing in either

¹ California State Office of Historic Preservation, Built Environment Resource Directory (BERD), Santa Clara County, updated March 2020.

register, but normally require more research to support this rating. Properties assigned a Status Code of “5” have typically been determined to be locally significant or to have contextual importance. Properties with a Status Code of “6” are not eligible for listing in either register. Finally, a Status Code of “7” means that the resource has not been evaluated for the National Register or the California Register, or needs reevaluation.

271 University Avenue is listed in the BERD database for Santa Clara County with a status code of 5S2, meaning it is “Recognized as Historically Significant by Local Government” and within that categorization, it is considered “Individually eligible for local listing or designation.” The most recent update to the BERD database was in March 2020.

Palo Alto Historic Inventory

The City of Palo Alto’s Historic Inventory lists noteworthy examples of the work of important individual designers and architectural eras and traditions as well as structures whose background is associated with important events in the history of the city, state, or nation. The inventory is organized under the following four categories:

- **Category 1:** An “Exceptional Building” of pre-eminent national or state importance. These buildings are meritorious works of the best architects, outstanding examples of a specific architectural style, or illustrate stylistic development of architecture in the United States. These buildings have had either no exterior modifications or such minor ones that the overall appearance of the building is in its original character.
- **Category 2:** A “Major Building” of regional importance. These buildings are meritorious works of the best architects, outstanding examples of an architectural style, or illustrate stylistic development of architecture in the state or region. A major building may have some exterior modifications, but the original character is retained.
- **Category 3 or 4:** A “Contributing Building” which is a good local example of an architectural style and relates to the character of a neighborhood grouping in scale, materials, proportion or other factors. A contributing building may have had extensive or permanent changes made to the original design, such as inappropriate additions, extensive removal of architectural details, or wooden façades resurfaced in asbestos or stucco.

271 University Avenue is currently listed in the City of Palo Alto Historic Inventory as a Category 3: “Contributing Building.” It was surveyed for the Historic Resources Inventory in 1978 and added to the local register in 1979 when the Palo Alto Historic Inventory was first adopted by the City Council.

Palo Alto Historic Survey Update

Between 1997 and 2000, a comprehensive update to the 1979 Historic Inventory was undertaken by historic preservation firm Dames & Moore.² The goal of this update was to identify additional properties in Palo Alto that were eligible to the National Register. This effort began with a reconnaissance survey of approximately 6,600 properties constructed prior to 1947. The reconnaissance survey produced two Study Priority lists. Approximately 600 properties were identified as Study Priority 1, indicating they appeared individually eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C (Architecture). Approximately 2,700 properties were identified as Study Priority 2, representing those properties that did not appear individually eligible to the National Register under Criterion C (including common local building types) but retained high integrity.³

The reconnaissance survey was followed by an intensive-level survey of all Study Priority 1 and 2 properties. Historic research was conducted on the owners, architects/builders, and past uses of the Study Priority 1 properties. Research also informed the preparation of historic context statements on topics such as local property types, significant historical themes, and prolific architects and builders, in order to identify any potential significant associations of Study Priority 2 properties.

In January 1999, Dames & Moore prepared an interim findings report that listed preliminary evaluations of the National Register and California Register eligibility of Study Priority 1 and 2 properties. 291 properties were found potentially eligible as individual resources to the National Register and California Register. 1,789 further properties were found potentially eligible to the California Register only. Because the survey focused on determining National Register eligibility, the project did not finalize the preliminary evaluations regarding potential California Register eligibility.

271 University Avenue is not listed with the Palo Alto Historic Survey Update.

² Dames & Moore, Michael Corbett, and Denise Bradley. "Final Survey Report – Palo Alto Historic Survey Update: August 1997-August 2000." Prepared for the City of Palo Alto Planning Division, February 2001.

³ Ibid., 2-5.

III. PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

The subject property at 271 University Avenue is a one-story building with a mezzanine at the rear, one-unit commercial property in Palo Alto's Downtown North neighborhood. It is situated on a flat, rectangular parcel that is 25 feet wide and 100 feet deep. The subject building was designed by Carl I. Warnecke of Miller & Warnecke in the Art Deco style and completed in 1930 for use as a clothing store. The building is rectangular in plan and is constructed of reinforced concrete. It has a flat roof with a continuous, flat parapet along the primary façade and a stepped parapet along the rear façade. The two side facades fully abut the adjacent buildings. The building has no setback and fronts directly along the city sidewalk of University Avenue to the southeast and Paulsen Lane to the northwest.

Primary Façade

The primary southeast façade of 271 University Avenue is a one-story building with a mezzanine at the rear and fronts University Avenue (**Figure 3**). The fenestration is symmetrical and consists of a commercial folding panel storefront system at the lower floor beneath a set of five casement windows at the upper floor, and medallion motifs beneath a decorative cornice along a parapet roofline.



Figure 3: Primary façade of 271 University Avenue.

The first floor of 271 University Avenue features a non-original commercial storefront system with wood casing and glazed bifold door panels (**Figure 4**). There is a large central hinged front door with horizontal ogee brass handles, and the door is flanked on either side by a set of four bi-fold door panels that collapse to the outer edges of the façade, creating an open-air throughway from the sidewalk to the interior of the restaurant (**Figure 5**).



Figure 4: Storefront doors closed prior to business operating hours.

Above the storefront openings are a full-width motorized black fabric awning and wood signage with up-lighting. Flanking the outermost edges of the facade are concave reeded pilasters that extend up to the lintels of the second-floor windows. The upper-floor features five identical recessed openings, each with a vertical eight light casement window embedded within a fixed 24 light glazed panel (**Figure 6**). Each window has a broad lintel, simple sill, and metal casing. Between the windows are square pilasters with a concave surface.



Figure 5: Bifold door panels opened along the street front.



Figure 6: Casement windows, medallions, and cornice at the upper floor level of the primary façade.

The set of windows are capped by saw-tooth or zigzag molded concrete sections that continue to a large, smooth concrete panel that covers the remaining portion of the upper façade (**Figure 7**). In this uppermost section, there are two molded floral medallions, each situated above the outermost window on either side of the façade. The cornice features a stepped simple band above a geometric chevron pattern (**Figure 8**).



Figure 7: Detail view of casement windows at the second-floor level.



Figure 8: Detail view of medallions and cornice.

Rear West Façade

The rear west façade is one story with an upper mezzanine level and is clad with painted concrete masonry units. The roofline is a short, stepped parapet. At the first floor, there is a recessed entryway with a non-original glazed metal at the southern side of the facade (**Figure 10**).

At the upper floor, there are two large industrial windows aligned to the south with 40 lights each and embedded with a set of smaller vertical eight light casement windows (**Figure 11 and Figure 12**). Aligned to the north at the mezzanine level are two smaller windows: one ten light casement windows, and an eight light fixed window with screen covering (**Figure 13**).



Figure 9. Oblique view of the rear façade, looking south.



Figure 10. Entryway of the rear façade, facing southeast.



Figure 11. Detail view of casement windows at the upper floor of the rear façade, facing east.



Figure 12: Detail view of casement windows at the upper floor of the rear façade, facing east.



Figure 13: Detail view of smaller casement windows at the upper floor of the rear façade, facing east.

Site Features

Along the sidewalk in front of the building's University Avenue façade are temporary outdoor dining structures. Constructed along the sidewalk in front of the building's University Avenue façade is a temporary outdoor dining structure supported by wood posts and a shed roof. **Figure 14 and Figure 15).**



Figure 14: Temporary outdoor dining structure along University Avenue.



Figure 15: Bistro tables and outdoor dining features along the primary façade fronting University Avenue.

Surrounding Neighborhood

The subject property is located in the Downtown North neighborhood and fronts the commercial corridor of University Avenue. Buildings along University Avenue include mixed-use retail, offices, hotels, restaurants, and a theater, among others. Buildings are between one and six stories in height and represent a range of architectural styles and construction eras from the early 20th century to the 21st century.



Figure 16. Commercial corridor along the east side of University Avenue.



Figure 17. Hotel President at the corner of University Avenue and Cowper Street.

IV. HISTORIC CONTEXT

Palo Alto History

The earliest known settlement of the Palo Alto area was by the Ohlone people. The region was colonized in 1769 as part of Alta California. The Spanish and Mexican governments carved the area into large ranchos which contained portions of land that became Palo Alto including Rancho Corte Madera, Rancho Pastoria de las Borregas, Rancho Rincon de San Francisquito, and Rancho Riconada del Arroyo de San Francisquito.⁴ These land grants were honored in the cession of California to the United States, but parcels were subdivided and sold throughout the nineteenth century.

The current city of Palo Alto contains the former township of Mayfield, which was located just southwest of Alma Street, and was established in 1855. Starting in 1876, the railroad magnate and California politician Leland Stanford began to purchase land in the area for his country estate, and in 1882 he purchased an additional 1,000 acres adjacent to Mayfield for his horse farm.⁵ Stanford's

⁴ Ward Winslow and Palo Alto Historical Association, *Palo Alto: A Centennial History* (Palo Alto, CA: Palo Alto Historical Association, 1993), 12-17.

⁵ Ibid, 35.

vast holdings became known as the Palo Alto Stock Farm. On March 9, 1885, Stanford University was founded on land of the Palo Alto Stock Farm through an endowment act by the California Assembly and Senate.

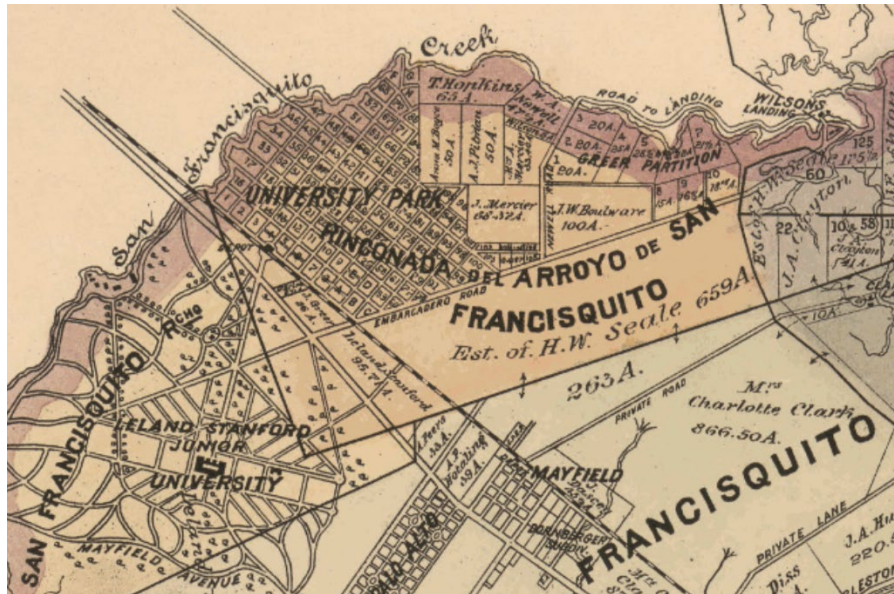


Figure 18. Detail of "Official Map of Santa Clara, California" by Herrmann Brothers, 1890. Note that University Park on this map is present day Palo Alto. Source: Library of Congress.

Originally looking to connect Stanford University as a part of the already established town of Mayfield, Stanford asked residents of Mayfield to make the town a temperance town. Their refusal in 1886 caused Stanford to found the town of Palo Alto with aid from his friend, Timothy Hopkins of the Southern Pacific Railroad. Hopkins purchased and subdivided 740 acres of private land, that was known initially as University Park (or the Hopkins Tract) (**Figure 18**).⁶ This land was bounded by the San Francisquito Creek to the north and the railroad tracks and Stanford University campus to the south. A new train stop was created along University Avenue and the new town flourished in its close connection with the university. University Park, under its new name of Palo Alto, was incorporated in 1894.

In its early years, Palo Alto was a temperance town where no alcohol could be served. The residents were mostly middle and working class, with a pocket of University professors clustered in the neighborhood deemed Professorville. The development of a local streetcar in 1906, and the interurban railway to San Jose in 1910, facilitated access to jobs outside the city and to the

⁶ City of Palo Alto, *Comprehensive Plan 2030* (adopted by City Council, November 13, 2017), 16, accessed online November 30, 2020, <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/62915>.

University, encouraging more people to move to Palo Alto.⁷ In July 1925, Mayfield was officially annexed and consolidated into the city of Palo Alto.⁸

Like the rest of the nation, Palo Alto suffered through the Great Depression in the 1930s and did not grow substantially. World War II brought an influx of military personnel and their families to the Peninsula; accordingly, Palo Alto saw rapid growth following the war as many families who had been stationed on the Peninsula by the military, or who worked in associated industries, chose to stay. Palo Alto's population more than doubled from 16,774 in 1940 to 52,287 in 1960.⁹

Palo Alto's city center greatly expanded in the late 1940s and 1950s, gathering parcels that would house new offices and light industrial uses and lead the city away from its "college town" reputation. Palo Alto annexed a vast area of mostly undeveloped land between 1959 and 1968. This area, west of the Foothill Expressway, has remained protected open space. Small annexations continued into the 1970s, contributing to the discontinuous footprint of the city today. Palo Alto remains closely tied to Stanford University; it is the largest employer in the city. The technology industry dominates other sectors of business, as is the case with most cities within Silicon Valley. Palo Alto consciously maintains its high proportion of open space to development and the suburban feeling and scale of its architecture.¹⁰

Downtown North Neighborhood

271 University Avenue is located in the Downtown North neighborhood. The current Downtown North neighborhood is located in the northern portion of the original University Park tract platted by Timothy Hopkins. It was the core part of the early city, along with today's University South neighborhood. The neighborhood is bounded by Alma Street to the south, San Francisquito Creek to the west, Middlefield Road to the north, and University Avenue to the east. University Avenue, which has historically been the main commercial corridor in Palo Alto, divides the Downtown North and University South neighborhoods. The 1895 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map illustrates that stores were located along University Avenue and were particularly concentrated at its southwestern end, near the railroad, where a large lumberyard stood (**Figure 19**). Residences were scattered along the street just east and west of University Avenue on Hamilton and Lytton Avenues. A few churches, hotels, and boarding houses also stood among many vacant lots.

⁷ Dames & Moore, "Palo Alto Historic Survey Update," 1-4.

⁸ City of Palo Alto, *Comprehensive Plan 2030*, 16.

⁹ "City of Palo Alto, Santa Clara County," Bay Area Census, accessed August 27, 2019, <http://www.bayareacensus.ca.gov/cities/PaloAlto50.htm>.

¹⁰ City of Palo Alto, *Comprehensive Plan 2030*, 11-20.



Figure 19. 1895 Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. map of Palo Alto showing the street layout within the core of the city. The future location of the subject property is marked by the red star.
Source: Digital Sanborn Maps, San Francisco Public Library

By 1901, Palo Alto had grown beyond its original core. Houses filled the lots on the blocks around the railroad, while scattered residential development extended up to and beyond Middlefield Road. Institutions, such as schools and Palo Alto's first public library, had been built in the area. As noted earlier, the development of the streetcar in 1906 and later the interurban rail in 1910 along University Avenue helped spur commercial development. The relocation of displaced San Francisco residents following the 1906 earthquake to surrounding towns such as Palo Alto also resulted in increased residential and commercial development. During the first decade of the 20th century, the residential area of Downtown North appears to have been built out with one- and two-story residences, but as the downtown commercial area prospered and expanded, and the University Avenue corridor became a desirable location for the growth of Palo Alto's commercial interests.¹¹

In the post-World War II period, Palo Alto's population boomed and the city annexed more land, resulting in the construction of additional smaller commercial hubs which dissipated some of the concentration of commercial activity on University Avenue and Downtown North. During this period, some of the commercial development along University Avenue spread out onto perpendicular streets toward Lytton, replacing earlier residential buildings.

¹¹ The 1924 Sanborn Map shows a variety of uses including a mixture of dwellings, stores, institutional, and light industrial uses.

Art Deco Style

271 University Avenue was designed in the Art Deco style and built in 1930. Art Deco first appeared in France just before World War I and began flourishing internationally in the 1920s and 1930s. The style went out of fashion during World War II. It took its name, short for Arts Décoratifs, from the Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes (International Exposition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts) held in Paris in 1925.¹² It is an eclectic style that combines rich colors and bold geometric shapes with Machine Age imagery and materials such as aluminum, stainless steel, plastics, lacquer, and inlaid wood.¹³ The style emphasizes vertical lines and rectilinear shapes and angles, with imagery such as stepped facades and ornament, zigzags, chevrons, sunbursts, and floral abstractions. It also features planarity, symmetry, and repetition of elements. Art Deco was a common design style for hotels, since at its height of popularity, its aesthetic represented luxury, glamour, exuberance, and faith in technological progress, pushing the notion that modernity could be achieved through decoration.¹⁴

Those architects who sought to capture more of the energy and sensuality of the Jazz Age turned to Art Deco. The distinctive style developed first in Europe, as an amalgam of several sources. From the pre-war Viennese Secession movement, it took the idea of simplified Classical forms as a basic armature; from Italian Futurism and German Expressionism it acquired a repertoire of visually dynamic shapes like zigzags, sunbursts, and dramatic angles; and from the frivolous mood of the period it acquired a taste for opulent and glittery materials, and a desire to create buildings as atmospheric as theatrical stage sets. Between the wars, most people referred to it as the modern or jazz modern style. Americans imported this style with enthusiasm. For many, it perfectly captured the mood of the age, expressing modernity and freedom from convention without succumbing to the socialist Modernist movement. Businesses and corporations liked the style because it expressed progress and modern efficiency. The style began to filter down the social scale and into builders' vernacular, eventually shaping a number of modest building types, from inexpensive apartment buildings to diners.¹⁵

Carl I. Warnecke of Miller and Warnecke, Architect

The architecture firm of Miller and Warnecke, active from 1917 to 1951, consisted of partners Carl Ingomar Warnecke (1891-1971) and Chester Herbert Miller (1890-1953). Warnecke, born in Montreal, moved with his family to California in 1901. He began his career in architecture as a draftsman working for Bakewell and Brown, Chester H. Miller, and John J. Donovan before

¹² Marcus Whiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles*, Rev. Ed. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), 235.

¹³ "Art Deco," *Encyclopedia of Art*. <http://www.visual-arts-cork.com/history-of-art/art-deco.htm>

¹⁴ Whiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles*, Rev. Ed. 236.

¹⁵ Mark Gelernter, *A History of American Architecture: Buildings in Their Cultural and Technological Context*, (Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England, 1999), 241-243

establishing his partnership with Miller in 1917.¹⁶ Though he pursued courses at l'Ecole des Beaux Arts in 1914, this formal education was curtailed by the wartime evacuation of many Americans from France. Chester H. Miller was a native of Oakland whose training in architecture was acquired vocationally rather than through formal education.¹⁷

A 1937 feature in the *Architect and Engineer* highlighted the firm's East Bay residential commissions, which included early Ranch, Mission Revival, Colonial Revival, and Tudor Revival styles.¹⁸ Also noted were mortuary and commercial buildings in Oakland, the East Oakland High School (completed in 1929, now known as Castlemont High School), and the individually National Register-eligible Hill Castle Apartments at 1431 Jackson Street, Oakland (1930) (**Figure 20**). As a partnership, Miller and Warnecke designed numerous private residences as well as civic and institutional buildings such as three branches of the Oakland Public Library: the Piedmont (1931-32), the Lakeview branch (1949), and Downtown (1949-1951) branches (**Figure 21**). Miller and Warnecke also designed the Hayward Public Library, completed in 1951.¹⁹

After Miller's 1951 retirement, Carl I. Warnecke partnered with his son, architect John Carl Warnecke Sr., in the firm of Warnecke and Warnecke.



Figure 20: East Oakland High School (now Castlemont) date unknown. Source: Oakland Public Library through Calisphere.



Figure 21: Oakland Public Library, 1951. Source: Oakland Public Library, Oakland History Center and Online Archive of California.

¹⁶ Pacific Coast Architectural Database, "Carl Ingomar Warnecke," electronic resource at <http://pcad.lib.washington.edu/person/3366/>, accessed December 5, 2020.

¹⁷ Pacific Coast Architectural Database, "Chester Herbert Miller (Architect)," electronic resource at <http://pcad.lib.washington.edu/person/1656/>, accessed December 5, 2020.

¹⁸ Harris C. Allen, "Toward a Contemporary Type – A Modern Development of the California Tradition," *Architect and Engineer*, September 1937, 19-30.

¹⁹ "Libraries" portfolio, ca. 1964-1965, collection of the Warnecke Archives.

V. SITE HISTORY

Site Development

In 1901, at the time a Sanborn Fire Insurance map was produced, the subject block was mostly undeveloped apart from four wood frame buildings, and the subject parcel was vacant. The subject block was part of a larger block that was bounded by Ramona Street, Bryant Street, and Lytton Avenue (**Figure 22**). By 1924, Paulsen Lane had been constructed and the larger block was subdivided into the two smaller blocks that exist today, with the subject parcel eventually occupying the smaller of the two. The future location of the subject parcel in 1924 was occupied by a building that was used as a music store and owned by the original owner of the subject building, Georgina Ostrander (**Figure 23**). The subject parcel's original address prior to 1930 was 271-273 University Avenue but appears to have been shortened to 271 when the current building was completed with a single unit.

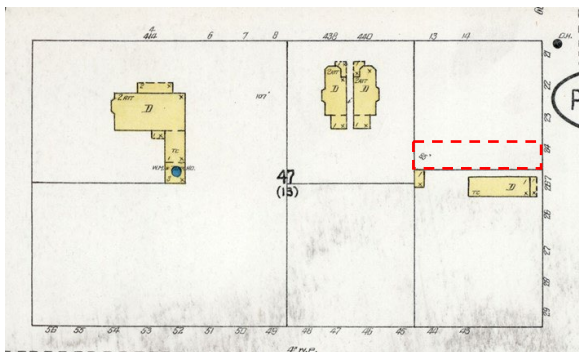


Figure 22: Sanborn Perris Map Company fire insurance map of Palo Alto, 1901. Page 11. The future location of the subject property is outlined in red. Source: Historical Information Gatherers. Edited by Page & Turnbull.

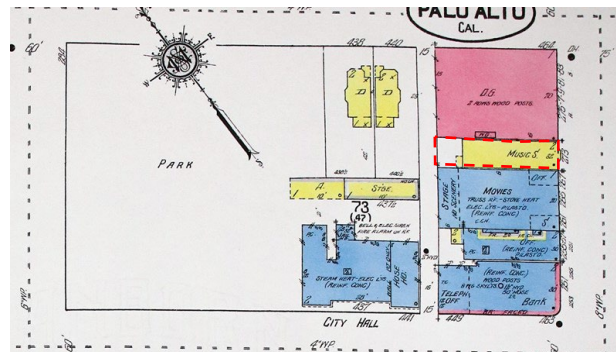


Figure 23: Sanborn Map Company fire insurance map of Palo Alto, 1924. Page 3. The future location of the subject property is outlined in red. Source: Historical Information Gatherers. Edited by Page & Turnbull.

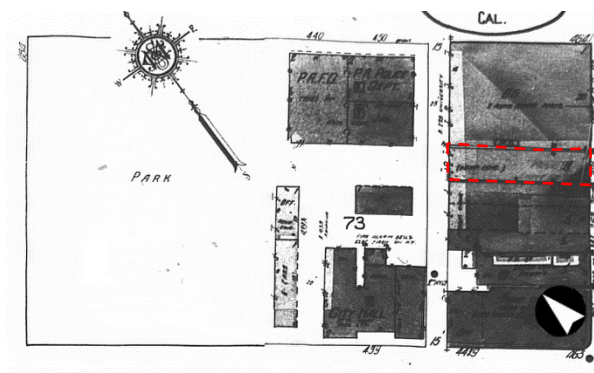


Figure 24: Sanborn Perris Map Company fire insurance map of Palo Alto, 1948. Page 12. The

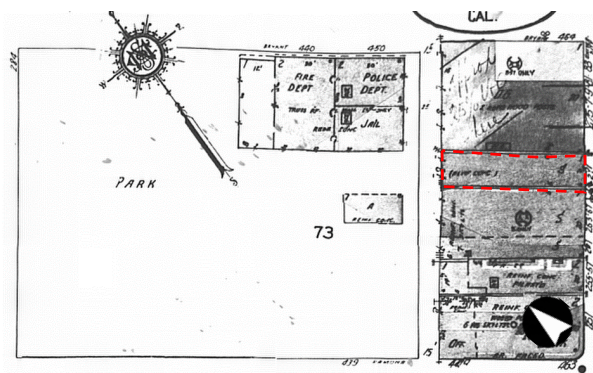


Figure 25: Sanborn Map Company fire insurance map of Palo Alto, 1956. Page 3. The subject

subject property is outlined in red. Source:
HistoricallInfo.com. Edited by Page & Turnbull.

property is outlined in red. Source:
HistoricallInfo.com. Edited by Page & Turnbull.

On August 13, 1929, an article in the *Daily Palo Alto Times* announced plans for construction of a one-story reinforced concrete commercial building located at 271-273 University Avenue by owner Georgina Ostrander. The article indicated that an existing two-story building on the site would be razed, and the new building would be designed by Birge Clark in the Spanish style to house a women's apparel company. In early October 1929, another article was published in the *Daily Palo Alto Times* that implied the prior plans had been abandoned, and architect Carl I. Warnecke had replaced Birge Clark to design the building. George Peterson of Oakland was hired as the contractor, and new plans were approved for a reinforced concrete commercial building. The building was projected to cost \$12,500 and would be one story in height with large display store-front windows, marble details, and a rear mezzanine floor.



Figure 26. The subject building on opening night, 1930.
Source: Daily Palo Alto Times, Newspapers.com.

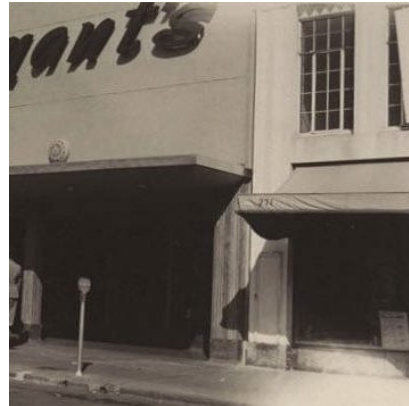


Figure 27. Bryant's Clothing Store at left, and the subject building shown at right, c.1946. Source: Palo Alto Historical Association.

Photographs from 1930 and 1946 show elements of the façade, including the overall form of building's original storefront system, which appears to consist of recessed glass sections with a stone or concrete bulkhead that curved inward towards a central entryway. Apart from the storefront system, a large commercial sign above the entryway, and smaller panels applied to the pilasters on the edges of the façade at the street level, the façade has retained most of its original ornamentation.

From the building's construction in 1930 to approximately the 1940s when original owner Georgina Ostrander died and ownership transferred to her daughter-in-law Leora and granddaughter Nanette, very few alterations to the subject building were documented. A 1946 photograph shows that a fabric awning was added over the storefront system. In 1959, ownership transferred to William H. Breur, who owned the building until 1972. Permit records indicate that in 1965, Breuer replaced the original storefront system with a new aluminum roll up and swing glass storefront door

system, followed by replacement of the entryway at the rear façade in 1968. Photographs from 1978 and 1985 give an idea of the storefront system from this period that was deeply recessed and had more of a rectilinear open space between the sidewalk and the storefront, departing from the formerly curved glass wall panels of the previous storefront system.



Figure 28: Historic Resources Inventory photograph of 271 University Avenue, 1978. Source: Palo Alto Historical Association.



Figure 29. Subject building, 1985. Source: Palo Alto Historical Association.

Around 1972, ownership transferred from William Breuer to Thoits Bros Inc., who have retained ownership through the current day. Photographs dating from 1978 and 1985 show that the building retained a fabric awning over the storefront system until the mid 1980s, at which point the primary façade was also covered by vines (**Figure 28 Figure 29**). In 1994, Thoits Bros Inc. replaced the former aluminum roll up and swing storefront door system with the glazed wood bi-folding swing doors that exist currently, and a photograph from 1999 shows that the vine coverage had been removed (**Figure 30**). In 2015, Thoits Bros Inc. added an awning to the front door system and several landscape features to the front sidewalk area. It appears that no other major alterations have been made since 2015.



Figure 30. Subject building, 1999. Source: Palo Alto Historical Association.

CONSTRUCTION CHRONOLOGY

The following table provides a timeline of construction activity at 271 University Avenue, based on building permit applications on file with the Palo Alto Development Services and the Palo Alto Historical Association. Cancelled, expired, and temporary permits are not included.

TABLE 1. PERMIT HISTORY FOR 271 UNIVERSITY AVENUE.

Date Filed	Permit App. #	Owner	Contractor/ Architect	Work
10/14/1929	-	Georgina Ostrander	Carl Warnecke (architect) and George Peterson (builder)	Class C store building, \$12,180
8/15/1946	Unknown	Nannette and Leora Ostrander	Remmet Construction Company	Repair
5/7/1965	A-24782	William H. Breuer	Acme Glass Co.	- Remove existing doors and install new aluminum and glass doors. ¾ hour fire door at rear. Label door, max 1,200 sq. foot window area.

Date Filed	Permit App. #	Owner	Contractor/ Architect	Work
7/9/1968	A-27693	William H. Breuer	William H. Breuer	Install new entrance on alley and new restrooms.
5/8/1972	A-30764	Thoits Bros	Sergio Sandoval	Relocate 10' of non-bearing wall less than ¾ of height of room in which placed.
1987	87-ARB-267 870115	Macheesmo Mouse	Carrasco and Associates	Added signage to the façade.
1/26/1988	87-3482	Macheesmo Mouse	Carrasco and Associates	Neon signage to façade slide-up door panels.
10/21/1994	94-2825	Thoits Bros	Thompson Planning and Design/Terra Nova Industries	• Replace sign, new with raised letters • New glazed bi-folding swing doors with all-natural wood. • New accent up-lights for columns • New accent lights throughout • New awning fabric to rear above door. • Replace existing storefront system: remove existing aluminum roll up and swing doors.
4/28/2015	15000-01041	Thoits Bros	Unknown	Facade improvements, including new signage, an awning, paint colors, electric door openers, heaters, illuminated menu boxes, and sidewalk tables and chairs

Known Ownership and Occupant History

The following tables provide a summary of the ownership and occupancy history of 271 University Avenue, beginning with the year of construction, compiled building permit applications and plans from the Palo Alto Department of Building Inspection, Palo Alto Historical Association, newspaper articles, city directories, and other public records available through Ancestry.com.

TABLE 2. OWNERSHIP HISTORY FOR 271 UNIVERSITY AVENUE

Date(s)	Owner(s)	Occupation
c.1930-1941	Georgina Ostrander	Real estate developer
c.1946	Nanette and Leora Ostrander	Unknown
1959-1972	William H. Breuer	Business owner
1972-present	Thoits Bros.	Development company

TABLE 3. OCCUPANT HISTORY FOR 271 UNIVERSITY AVENUE

Date(s)	Occupant(s)	Occupation
1930-1935	Donnell's	Women's clothing store
c.1935	Mrs. N.M. Agnew's Beauty Shop	Beauty shop
c.1935-1945	Joseph Magnin	Women's clothing store
c.1940	L A Cramer Beauty Shop	Beauty shop
1942	Bryant's	Clothing Store
c.1946	Mary Woods Limited	Unknown
1937-1953	The Colony	Women's clothing store
1956-1957	Mann's	Women's clothing store
1958-c.1960	Mission Pak Co.	Fruit packing company
c.1960	Vacant	-
c.1966	Congdon and Crome	Stationers
1965-1970	Breuer's Donut and Coffee Shop	Coffee shop
1971-1975	Sergio's Restaurant	Restaurant
1986	Le Normandie Restaurant	Restaurant
1987-1988	Macheesmo Mouse	Mexican fast-food restaurant chain
1994-c.2003	SF Coffee Roasting Co. (University Coffee Café)	Coffee shop
c.2003-2014	University Cafe	Cafe
2014-present	Local Union 271	Restaurant

SELECT OWNER AND OCCUPANT BIOGRAPHIES

The following biographies provide information about the original owner and long-time owner prior to the last 50 years, Georgina Ostrander and William Breuer, as well as the best-known occupant, the Joseph Magnin clothing store.

Georgina Ostrander (owner, 1930-c.1944)

Georgina Ostrander (1865-1941) was the original owner of 271 University Avenue. Ostrander was born in Ontario, Canada and immigrated to California as a young child. In 1893, she settled in Palo Alto, at which point she was already widowed from her husband Frank Ostrander, who had been the Merced County District Attorney. From 1893-1905 she owned and operated numerous buildings on University Avenue, including a popular confectionary and then a dry goods store from 1905

onwards. These early business ventures earned her a reputation as a capable businesswoman. Ostrander owned the property until her death in 1941.²⁰

Joseph Magnin (occupant, 1935-1945)

Joseph Magnin of the eponymous Joseph Magnin ("JM") clothing store was a son of Isaac and Mary Ann Magnin, who founded the I. Magnin department store in San Francisco that catered to the high-end market.²¹ Joseph left the family business in 1913 and bought into a local store called Newman & Levinson. By 1918, the store was Newman-Magnin, and in 1919, Joseph bought out his partners and the Joseph Magnin Company was established. Prior to the 1940s, the Joseph Magnin store focused on the mid-range market in clothing and millinery (hats). This is the period in which the store was located at 271 University Avenue.

After World War II, the company rebranded and expanded under the guidance of Joseph's son, Cyril Magnin. It was at this time that the JM name became a common element of the company's branding. Cyril chose to focus on the trends of the youth market, capitalizing on shopping as a fun experience and taking advantage of the growing wealth of the post-war period. It became known as a "'hip' department store, that was responding to, if not helping to create, the mod, young, post-war, baby-boomer consumer."²² While primarily located in California, JM was also found in Nevada, Colorado, Utah, and Hawaii.²³ In keeping with the growing popularity of the company, it saw significant expansion in the 1950s and 1960s to 50 stores. The company filed for bankruptcy and closed its remaining branches in 1984.

William H. Breuer (owner, 1959-1972)

William H. "Bill" Breuer (1926 -1987) was the third owner of the subject property from 1959-1972. Breuer was born in Texas and raised in Eatonville, Washington, where he resided until joining the Navy in 1944. After World War II ended, Breuer opened a donut shop in San Francisco, which became the first of around 25 businesses he owned throughout his lifetime. Breuer operated restaurants in other parts of California including Fresno, Sacramento, Palo Alto, and further north in locations including Seattle. Breuer was an avid amateur pilot and died in 1987 at age 60 while flying his private plane from Everett Washington to Palo Alto.²⁴

²⁰ "Deaths: Ostrander," *Redwood City Tribune*, September 6, 1941, 8.

²¹ History of the Joseph Magnin department store is summarized from "Chapter 6: Joseph Magnin, 1913-1984," in Anne Evers Hitz, *Lost Department Stores of San Francisco* (Charleston, South Carolina: The History Press, 2020).

²² Louise Sandhaus, *Earthquakes, Mudslides, Fires & Riots: California Graphic Design, 1936-1986*, (New York: Metropolis Books, 2014), 348.

²³ "Joseph Magnin [ad]," *Los Angeles Times*, April 23, 1979.

²⁴ Diane Whipple and Thelma Barclay, "Closing Chord," *Theatre Organ* 29, no. 03 (May/June 1987): 33.

VI. EVALUATION

Palo Alto Historic Inventory

The Palo Alto Historic Inventory is the official list of sites, structures and districts designated by the City Council as possessing significant historical and/or architectural value. Originally adopted in 1979, the Inventory has been updated and added to over time. Any individual or group may propose designating a historic structure, site or district to the Inventory according to the procedure found in the Historic Preservation Ordinance (Municipal Code Section 16.49.040). Properties nominated for designation are recommended by the HRB and decided upon by the City Council. The following Criteria for Designation, along with the definitions of historic categories and districts in Section 16.49.020, is used to designate historic structures, sites and districts to the historic inventory:

1. The structure or site is identified with the lives of historic people or with important events in the city, state or nation;
2. The structure or is particularly representative of an architectural style or way of life important to the city, state or nation;
3. The structure or site is an example of a type of building which was once common, but is now rare;
4. The structure or site is connected with a business or use which was once common, but is now rare;
5. The architect or building was important;
6. The structure or site contains elements demonstrating outstanding attention to architectural design, detail, materials or craftsmanship.

Properties listed in the Palo Alto Historic Inventory are organized under the following Historic Categories:

- **Category 1:** An "Exceptional Building" of pre-eminent national or state importance. These buildings are meritorious works of the best architects, outstanding examples of a specific architectural style, or illustrate stylistic development of architecture in the United States.
- **Category 2:** A "Major Building" of regional importance. These buildings are meritorious works of the best architects, outstanding examples of an architectural style, or illustrate stylistic development of architecture in the state or region.
- **Category 3 or 4:** A "Contributing Building" is a good local example of an architectural style and relates to the character of a neighborhood grouping in scale, materials, proportion or other factors.

271 University Avenue appears eligible for elevation to Category 2: A "Major Building" of regional importance in the Palo Alto Historic Resources Inventory. The subject building meets the following Criteria for Designation:

- **Criterion 2** (The structure or is particularly representative of an architectural style or way of life important to the city, state or nation);

271 University Avenue is an excellent and rare commercial example of the Art Deco style in Palo Alto. The defining style of Palo Alto throughout its commercial and residential areas is by far the Spanish Colonial Revival (also called Spanish Eclectic or Mediterranean Revival), as well as other predominant styles, including Queen Anne, Craftsman, and Midcentury Modern. Overall, there are only a handful of buildings built in the Art Deco style in the area, the most notable being the Hoover Pavilion at Stanford University and a few others that would be considered Streamline or "Nautical" Moderne style. Research uncovered no other commercial buildings in Palo Alto designed in the Art Deco style specifically with Zig-Zag Moderne characteristics, which include zigzags and chevron motifs, molded ornamentation, decorative parapets and cornice, and metal window hardware. 271 University Avenue is an important extant example of commercial Art Deco with Zig-Zag Moderne characteristics that retains its character-defining features such as original metal casement windows, stepped parapet walls, molded chevron cornice and floral medallion ornamentation, reeded pilasters, and zigzag structural motifs. Despite alterations to the storefront system, the building has retained the majority of its original Art Deco characteristics and has been a stately and elegant presence on University Avenue for nearly the last century.

- **Criterion 5** (The architect or building was important)

Carl I. Warnecke is an architect of merit who contributed a rich legacy to the architectural field, and specifically to the East Bay where he predominantly worked in Oakland and Piedmont through the partnership of Miller and Warnecke. Throughout his career and partnership, Warnecke designed largely in the Tudor Revival style, and was also known mostly for his residential and later civic and institutional designs. Research uncovered no other examples of buildings by Warnecke located in Palo Alto, regionally in the South Bay, or overall designed in the Art Deco style. The subject building is therefore important as both a rare example of work by Carl I. Warnecke locally and regionally in Palo Alto and the South Bay, and also stylistically as a unique variation of the commercial Art Deco Zig-Zag Moderne style.

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

The primary façade of the subject building features excellent examples of Art Deco ornamentation that is not only unique within the architectural context of Palo Alto, but also showcases the high level of craftsmanship and architectural design implemented by architect of merit Carl I. Warnecke. Elements of the façade that meet the definition of Criterion 6 include the stepped parapet walls, the molded chevron cornice and floral medallion ornamentation, reeded pilasters, and zigzag structural motifs.

270 University Avenue does not appear to meet Criterion 1, as the building was part of a period of commercial development in downtown Palo Alto but is not significant within this context or individually representative of this broader development trend. The building has also been home to many businesses, including the well-known Joseph Magnin's clothing store, but the subject building did not serve an essential function to the overall operations of Joseph Magnin and was not purpose-built for this corporation. The subject building also does not appear to meet Criterion 3, as the building is an example of the Art Deco style with Zig-Zag Moderne characteristics, which would not have been considered common at the time of construction. Lastly, the subject building does not appear to meet Criterion 4, as its early use as a women's department store would not be considered rare today.

In conclusion, 271 University Avenue meets Criteria 2, 5 and 6 in consideration for eligibility as a Category 2: "Major Building."

Integrity

While the Palo Alto Historic Register does not specifically discuss the concept of integrity, typically to qualify for listing in any local, state, or national historic register, a property or landscape must possess significance under at least one evaluative criterion and retain integrity. Integrity is defined by the California Office of Historic Preservation as "the authenticity of an historical resource's physical identity evidenced by the survival of characteristics that existed during the resource's period of significance," or more simply defined by the National Park Service as "the ability of a property to convey its significance."²⁵

In order to evaluate whether the subject property retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic significance, Page & Turnbull used established integrity standards outlined by the *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. Seven variables, or aspects, that define integrity are used to evaluate a resource's integrity—location, setting, design, materials,

²⁵ California Office of Historic Preservation, *Technical Assistance Series No. 7: How to Nominate a Resource to the California Register of Historical Resources* (Sacramento: California Office of State Publishing, September 4, 2001), 11; and National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1995), 44.

workmanship, feeling, and association. A property must possess most, or all, of these aspects in order to retain overall integrity. If a property does not retain integrity, it can no longer convey its significance and is therefore not eligible for listing in local, state, or national registers.

The seven aspects that define integrity are defined as follows:

Location is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred;

Setting addresses the physical environment of the historic property inclusive of the landscape and spatial relationships of the building(s);

Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of the property;

Materials refer to the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form the historic property;

Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory;

Feeling is the property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time; and

Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and the historic property.

LOCATION

271 University Avenue retains integrity of location. The subject building has remained situated at its location of original construction since 1930.

SETTING

271 University Avenue retains integrity of setting. The subject building retains its historic relationship with the street. While numerous buildings on the adjacent blocks along University Avenue have been replaced with newer infill since construction of the subject building in 1930, the subject block remains remarkably intact with mostly early twentieth century architectural styles and a few dating to midcentury. From historic photographs, it appears that the neighboring building to

the south was either replaced or severely altered at some point prior to 1946. However, the replacement building retains the massing and scale of the original building to a degree that does not compromise the subject building. For these reasons, the subject building retains integrity of setting regarding surrounding urban commercial fabric.

DESIGN

271 University Avenue retains integrity of design. While there have been repeated alterations to the storefront window and door system, these changes have arguably been necessitated by the change in use throughout the building's lifetime from a clothing store and smaller commercial businesses to a donut and longtime coffee shop, ending with its most recent use as a restaurant and café. The primary and rear facades otherwise retain the majority of their character-defining features, including original casement windows, Art Deco façade ornamentation, and the stepped parapet wall. The overall composition of the design, including the fenestration pattern, roofline, cornice, and decorative detailing all remain intact and contribute to the Art Deco stylistic elements designed by Carl I. Warnecke.

MATERIALS

271 University Avenue retains integrity of materials. Aside from the original storefront system and the rear entryway, very few of the original features have been altered, removed, or replaced over the years. The primary exterior building materials include original reinforced concrete and concrete masonry unit cladding, cast cement ornamentation throughout the façade, and original windows with metal casing and muntins.

WORKMANSHIP

271 University Avenue retains integrity of workmanship. Features providing evidence of period workmanship and construction methods include original metal casement windows with multi-light panes, molded Art Deco ornamentation to the façades, and reeded pilasters. The high level of workmanship in the decorative detailing of the building reflects early twentieth century construction methods in prominent high style Art Deco commercial buildings and architect-designed buildings.

FEELING

271 University Avenue retains integrity of feeling. The building retains the feeling of its original design by Carl I. Warnecke as constructed in 1930, as its design, materiality, and workmanship remain highly representative of its original Art Deco Zig-Zag Moderne aesthetic. Alterations to the original storefront system and rear entryway have not diminished the residence's form, height, massing, or materiality such that its feeling is impaired.

ASSOCIATION

271 University Avenue retains integrity of association. While the building is not significant in association with an event or a past owner or occupant, its association to architect of merit Carl I. Warnecke continues to be represented through its retention of the building's original Art Deco materials and design characteristics.

VII. CONCLUSION

This HRE finds that 271 University Avenue does appear eligible for elevation within the Palo Alto Historic Inventory from a Category 3: “Contributing Building” to a Category 2: “Major Building” of regional importance. The subject building is a meritorious work of a Bay Area architect of merit, Carl I. Warneke, and is an outstanding example of the Art Deco Zig-Zag Moderne style.

VIII. REFERENCES

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https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/2469/images/3519147?treeid=&personid=&rc=&usePUB=true&_phsrc=LdJ12&_phstart=successSource&pId=1412580043.

IX. APPENDICES

Appendix A – Preparer Qualifications

This Historic Resource Evaluation was prepared by Page & Turnbull of San Francisco, California. Page & Turnbull staff responsible for this report include: Ruth Todd, FAIA, Principal-in-charge; Christina Dikas, Associate Principal, project manager; and Samantha Purnell, Cultural Resources Planner, primary author, all of whom meet or exceed the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards for Historic Architecture, Architectural History, or History.

Appendix B – Building Permit Applications

Front and back pages of building permit applications currently on file with the Palo Alto Department of Building Inspection. Cancelled and expired permits are not included.



PAGE & TURNBULL

Imagining change in historic environments through
design, research, and technology

170 MAIDEN LANE, 5TH FLOOR SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94108 TEL 415-362-5154
523 WEST 6TH STREET, SUITE 1013 LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, 90014 TEL 213-221-1200
2600 CAPITOL AVENUE, SUITE 120 SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA, 95816 TEL 916-930-9111
75 EAST SANTA CLARA STREET, SUITE 900 SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA 95113 TEL 408-326-7911

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

IDENTIFICATION Cat. III

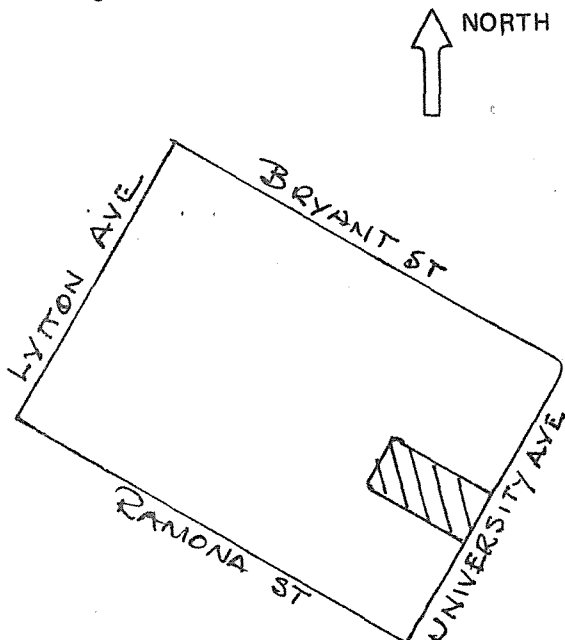
1. Common name: _____
2. Historic name, if known: _____
3. Street or rural address 271 University Avenue
City: Palo Alto ZIP: _____ County: Santa Clara
4. Present owner, if known: Thoits Bros. Inc. Address: PO Box 21
City: Palo Alto, Ca ZIP: 94302 Ownership is: Public ☐ Private ☒
5. Present Use: Restaurant Original Use: Shop
- Other past uses: _____

DESCRIPTION

6. Briefly describe the present physical appearance of the site or structure and describe any major alterations from its original condition:

Although its original interior has been completely remodeled and the enclosed area is recessed, this building retains its original facade. Underneath the foliage are the stylistic features of the "zig-zag moderne," a style that is rare in Palo Alto.

7. Locational sketch map (draw and label site and surrounding streets, roads, and prominent landmarks):



8. Approximate property size:

Lot size (in feet) Frontage 25
Depth 100
or approx. acreage _____

9. Condition: (check one)

a. Excellent ☒ b. Good ☐ c. Fair ☐
d. Deteriorated ☐ e. No longer in existence ☐

10. Is the feature a. Altered? ☒ b. Unaltered? ☐

11. Surroundings: (Check more than one if necessary)

a. Open land ☐ b. Scattered buildings ☐
c. Densely built-up ☐ d. Residential ☐
e. Commercial ☒ f. Industrial ☐
g. Other ☐

12. Threats to site:

a. None known ☒ b. Private development ☐
c. Zoning ☐ d. Public Works ☐
e. Vandalism ☐ f. Other ☐

13. Date(s) of enclosed photograph(s): _____

Item 3

ATTACHMENT C- 271

University Ave DPR Form

Ser _____ Site _____ Yr. _____
UTM _____ Q _____ NR _____ SHL _____
Lat _____ Lon _____ Era _____ Sig _____
Adm _____ T2 _____ T3 _____ Cat _____ HABS _____ HAER _____ Fed _____

NOTE: The following (Items 14-19) are for structures only.

14. Primary exterior building material: a. Stone ☐ b. Brick ☐ c. Stucco ☐ d. Adobe ☐ e. Wood ☐
f. Other ☒ Concrete
15. Is the structure: a. On its original site? ☒ b. Moved? ☐ c. Unknown? ☐
16. Year of initial construction 1929 This date is: a. Factual ☒ b. Estimated ☐
17. Architect (if known): John Carl Warnecke (Miller and Warnecke, Oakland)
18. Builder (if known): George Peterson
19. Related features: a. Barn ☐ b. Carriage house ☐ c. Outhouse ☐ d. Shed(s) ☐ e. Formal garden(s) ☐
f. Windmill ☐ g. Watertower/tankhouse ☐ h. Other ☐ i. None ☐

SIGNIFICANCE

20. Briefly state historical and/or architectural importance (include dates, events, and persons associated with the site when known):

Mrs. Georgina Ostrander (see 228 Byron) razed the old building she owned at this site and commissioned one of the Bay Area's leading architects, then completing plans in the same "zig-zag moderne" style for the Shell Co. building in San Francisco, to replace it with a structure suitable for a high-style women's clothing store. (The older building had been used for her music store and then partly as a public meeting hall). It was first occupied by Donnell's Women's shop, then, in the 1940s, by J. Magnin and a beauty parlor. In recent years it has been remodeled and occupied by restaurants.

21. Main theme of the historic resource: (Check only one): a. Architecture ☒ b. Arts & Leisure ☐
c. Economic/Industrial ☐ d. Exploration/Settlement ☐ e. Government ☐ f. Military ☐
g. Religion ☐ h. Social/Education ☐

22. Sources: List books, documents, surveys, personal interviews, and their dates: P.A. City Directories;
P.A. Times 12/13/09, 11/12/26, 8/13/29, 10/7, 10/14/29

23. Date form prepared: 1978, 1985 By (name): Historic Resources Board; P.A. Hist. Assn.
Address: 250 Hamilton Ave City Palo Alto, Ca 94301 ZIP:
Phone: Organization:

(State Use Only)

16.49.040 Designation of historic structures/sites.

(a) Procedure for Designation of Historic Structures/Sites or Districts. Any individual or group may propose designation as a historic structure/site or district. Such proposals shall be reviewed by the historic resources board, which will make its recommendation to the council. Designation of a historic structure/site or district must be approved by the city council. The procedure for such designation is as follows:

(1) Any proposal for designation shall be filed with the department of planning and development services and shall include the following data:

- (A) The address and assessor's parcel number of the site or boundaries of the proposed district;
- (B) A description detailing the structure/site or district's special aesthetic, cultural, architectural, or engineering interest or value of a historic nature;
- (C) A description of the historical value of the structure/site or district;
- (D) A description of the current condition of and any known threats to the structure/site or district;
- (E) What restoration, if any, would be necessary to return the structure/site or district to its original appearance;
- (F) Sketches, drawings, photographs or other descriptive material;
- (G) Other supporting information.

(2) Each proposal shall be considered by the historic resources board at a public hearing within sixty days of the receipt of the proposal. In any case where an application for a planning or building permit affecting the exterior of a building is pending concurrently with a proposal for designation, the recommendation of the historic resources board shall be made within twenty days of receipt of the proposal.

(3) Notice of the time, place and purpose of the hearing shall be given at least twelve days prior to the date of the hearing by publication at least once in a newspaper of general circulation, or by mail to the applicant, to the owner or owners of the property, and to the owners of property within three hundred feet of the site.

(4) The historic resources board shall recommend to the city council approval, disapproval or modification of an application for designation.

(5) The city council may approve, disapprove or modify a recommendation for designation and, in any case where an application for a planning or building permit is pending concurrently with the proposal for designation, such decision shall be made within thirty days of the recommendation, if any, of the historic resources board.

(6) After approval of the designation of a structure/site or district, the city clerk shall send to the owners of the property so designated, by mail, a letter outlining the basis for such designation and the regulations which result from such designation. Notice of this designation shall also be filed in the building department and the department of planning and development services files.

(b) Criteria for Designation. The following criteria, along with the definitions of historic categories and districts in Section 16.49.020, shall be used as criteria for designating additional historic structures/sites or districts to the historic inventory:

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

(2) The structure or site is particularly representative of an ar
important to the city, state or nation;

- (3) The structure or site is an example of a type of building which was once common, but is now rare;
- (4) The structure or site is connected with a business or use which was once common, but is now rare;
- (5) The architect or building was important;
- (6) The structure or site contains elements demonstrating outstanding attention to architectural design, detail, materials or craftsmanship.

(Ord. 5494 § 3, 2020: Ord. 3721 § 1 (part), 1986)

Attachment E

Directions to review Project plans online:

1. Go to: <https://palalto.buildingeye.com/planning>
2. Search for "271 University Ave" and open record by clicking on the blue dot
3. Review the record details on the left side and open the "more details" option
4. Use the "Records Info" drop down menu and select "Attachments"
5. Open the attachment named "**C1_271 University_Plans(Drawing Set).pdf**" and dated 02/08/24 to review the plan set.