



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: January 21, 2016 REPORT NO. HRB-16-001

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board
Agenda of January 28, 2016

SUBJECT: **ITEM #7 – May Company/William Lewis, Jr. Building**

APPLICANT: MVC Buyer LLC represented by Robin Madaffer and Marie Burke Lia

OWNER: Mission Valley Shoppingtown LLC <LF> Macy's California Inc

LOCATION: 1702 Camino Del Rio North, Mission Valley Community, Council District 7

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the May Company/William Lewis, Jr. Building located at 1702 Camino Del Rio North as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the May Company/William Lewis, Jr. Building located at 1702 Camino Del Rio North as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1959-1961 under HRB Criteria A, C and D. The designation excludes the storefronts added within the recessed walkway on the north end of the west elevation. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

1. The resource is a special element of Mission Valley and San Diego's economic development and retains integrity. Specifically, the resource – which was the largest department store south of Los Angeles when constructed in 1959-1961 – reflected national trends that concentrated shopping experiences in regional malls readily accessible by major infrastructure. Additionally, the construction of the subject building by the May Company laid the foundation for further economic growth of the Mission Valley Shopping Center and helped to further spur development in Mission Valley.
2. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Contemporary style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits including the angular massing; flat roof; pre-cast concrete panels with decorative, hexagonal pattern at the second and third floors; pre-cast pebble tile cladding at the first floor; two-story element with wrap-around, full-height plate glass windows and projecting folded plate roof supported on slender columns; covered walkways; pop-out display windows; and exterior pendant lighting fixtures.

Planning Department

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3. The resource is representative of a notable work of Master Architect William Lewis, Jr., a fellow of the American Institute of Architects recognized and awarded for his large portfolio of distinctive commercial architecture, and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the resource was designed early in his architectural career, and established him as a young, popular commercial architect; it represented a new, successful model that changed commercial design work, which ultimately transformed the design of subsequent commercial development in San Diego; and it represented a new phase in the evolution of shopping center design.

BACKGROUND

This item is being brought before the Historical Resources Board in conjunction with a preliminary review application to determine whether or not the building is historically significant as part of a constraints analysis for future development. The building is currently owned by Mission Valley Shoppingtown LLC <LF> Macy's California Inc. The applicant for the preliminary review is MVC Buyer LLC, who is currently in escrow to purchase the building. It is anticipated that escrow will close shortly prior to the Historical Resources Board hearing on January 28th. All parties have been noticed of the hearing.

The building is located on APN 438-030-06-00, as shown on the map provided in Attachment 2. The building anchors the east end of Mission Valley Mall, on its own parcel. The remainder of the mall has been determined not historic by staff due to extensive alterations, and is not under consideration as part of this action. To the west, the building opens up to the mall; to the south, the building faces the parking lot and Interstate 8 beyond; to the east, the building faces the larger parking lot at the east end of the mall; to the north, the building faces the expanded mall area, and Camino de la Reina beyond. The property has not been identified in any historic surveys, as the subject area has not been previously surveyed.

The historic name of the resource, the May Company/William Lewis, Jr. Building, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of the original commercial owner and tenant, and the name of William Lewis, Jr. a Master Architect.

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Kathleen Crawford of the Office of Marie Burke Lia, which concludes that the resource would be eligible under HRB Criteria A, C and D, were it not for modifications which have resulted in a lack of integrity. Staff finds that despite the modifications discussed below, the building retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance under HRB Criteria A, C and D. This determination is consistent with the *Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria*, as follows.

CRITERION A - Exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's, a community's or a neighborhood's historical, archaeological, cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, landscaping or architectural development.

According to the applicant's report, "the construction of the subject building in the 1950s was directly linked to the larger national trends and the impact of these trends on the economic development of San Diego during this period. The May Company was the first department store constructed in Mission Valley, and according to newspaper articles, the 'largest department store south of Los Angeles.' The beach and inland communities did not have the population numbers or level of economic development necessary to support an enterprise of that size. However, the city of San Diego did have the economic capacity and population growth in the post-war era to make it a viable economic investment for the May Company corporation.

"The May Company served as the anchor store for the development of the Mission Valley Shopping Center. It was sited immediately adjacent to the new freeway system close to the connection of Highways 8 and 163 so it was instantly visible from Highway 8. It was located close to the hotel/motels that were beginning to dot Mission Valley with their potential customers. Due to the freeway system, it was easily accessible from Hillcrest, North Park, Downtown San Diego, La Mesa, El Cajon, and the beach communities- all sources of customers, enough to create a strong economic return on the May Company's investment. Future stores and further development of the adjoining properties into the newly popular "malls" was part of the long-range plan."

The applicant's report concludes that "the construction of the anchor May Company department store in 1959 in Mission Valley is considered to be a "special element" of the economic development of Mission Valley and San Diego. The construction of the "largest department store south of Los Angeles" laid the foundation for further economic growth of the Mission Valley Shopping Center into a major shopping mall in the city of San Diego at the present time. In addition, the success of the shopping center drew customers and their spending power away from the retail areas of downtown San Diego, Hillcrest and North Park in large measure, causing an economic decline in these areas, as well as other parts of the city and county. Therefore, the construction of the May Company department store is considered to meet the criteria for Criterion A: as a "special element" of San Diego and Mission Valley's economic development. However, the building's major alterations have deprived it of the "integrity" required for historical designation."

Staff concurs with the conclusion that the subject building is significant as a special element of the economic development of Mission Valley and San Diego. However, staff disagrees with the ultimate conclusion that the building no longer retains sufficient integrity to convey that significance. As detailed in the discussion of Criterion C below, the building retains the most predominant, distinctive and character-defining features of the original design dating to the 1959-1961 period of significance; and the modifications do not singularly or cumulatively detract from the design, materials, workmanship or feeling to the extent that the building can no longer convey its significance. Additionally, the building's location and setting within Mission Valley Mall remains intact, although the aesthetics of that setting has evolved over time.

Significance Statement: The subject building, the largest department store south of Los Angeles when constructed in 1959-1961, reflected national trends that concentrated shopping experiences in regional malls readily accessible by major infrastructure. Additionally, the construction of the subject building by the May Company laid the foundation for further economic growth of the

Mission Valley Shopping Center and helped to further spur development in Mission Valley. Therefore, staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion A as a special element of Mission Valley and San Diego's economic development.

CRITERION B - Is identified with persons or events significant in local, state or national history.

Research into the owners and tenants of the property at 1702 Camino Del Rio North did not reveal any individuals who could be considered historically significant in local, state or national history. Furthermore, no events of local, state or national significance are known to have occurred at the subject property. Therefore, the property is not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion B.

CRITERION C - Embodies distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period or method of construction or is a valuable example of the use of natural materials or craftsmanship.

The subject building located at 1702 Camino Del Rio North is a 383,000 square foot commercial structure constructed in 1959-1961 in the Contemporary style. The irregularly shaped, flat-roofed reinforced concrete building contains three floors over a basement. The ground floor consists primarily of a pre-cast stone exterior comprised of 4"x8" sections that resemble bricks with a pebble surface. The upper two floors, which project out over the first floor creating a covered walkway, are windowless and feature a highly distinctive pre-cast concrete screen consisting of continuous rows of hexagonal shaped, raised decorative panels. A two-story section with a folded plate roof and expansive use of glass is present at the southeast corner of the building.

The features of each elevation and the modifications that have occurred, summarized here, are detailed in the narrative of the report and in the annotated elevations included in Attachment E.1. The west elevation fronting the mall features an aluminum frame glass storefront with entry door generally centered on the facade, and two pop-out display windows to the south end of the facade. To the north end of the facade, the recessed area at the ground floor was in-filled with new construction to accommodate additional mall tenants. This infill, which spans a little under half of the length of the ground floor on this elevation, is the most significant modification that has occurred.

The north elevation features an aluminum frame glass storefront with entry door generally centered on the facade. The original covered walkway has been removed to facilitate a service area. The entry was accentuated with a canopy, glazed tile and flanking planters. The east elevation fronting the large parking lot features an aluminum frame glass storefront with entry door generally centered on the facade. Original pendant lighting remains across the recessed facade. Pop-out display windows that originally flanked the entry have been in-filled with solid plaster walls and planters.

The south elevation fronting the parking area and Interstate 8 beyond is the most elaborate of the four facades. An aluminum frame glass storefront with entry door is generally centered on the facade. The distinctive two-story folded plate roof section with full-height, wrap-around plate glass at the upper floor sits at the east end of the facade. The folded plate roof extends out over the walkway below and is supported by slender columns. A one-story element clad in pebble tile sits just to the east. At the west end of the facade, the covered walkway extends beyond the

footprint of the building out toward and then parallel to the parking lot. The covered walkway originally encircled two outdoor planters in a rectangular configuration. The southwest corner of the covered walkway was removed to accommodate the new detached retail buildings and clock tower. Four pop-out display windows across the façade have been removed and in-filled. Original signage across the building has been removed and replaced.

As discussed in the San Diego Modernism Historic Context Statement, the Modern Contemporary sub-style was a popular design style for tract communities in the 1950s and 1960s, and was widely used in commercial applications as well. The style is primarily characterized by strong roof forms, typically with deep overhangs; large windows, often aluminum framed; and non-traditional exterior finishes. Secondary characteristics include angular massing; sun shades, screens or shadow block accents; horizontally oriented commercial buildings; distinctive triangular, parabolic or arched forms; “eyebrow” overhangs on commercial buildings; and integrated, stylized signage.

With flat and folded plate roofs the subject building displays strong roof forms. While the flat roof itself does not have a deep overhang, the second and third floors overhang the first, creating a covered walkway. In addition, the folded plate roof at the south façade projects off the building, overhanging the walkway below. Aluminum frame windows and doors were present throughout the ground floor, but have been reduced in number. The building exhibits a number of non-traditional exterior finishes, including pre-cast pebble stone tile and pre-cast concrete panels with a hexagonal pattern. The flat roof and square corners, hexagonal patterned concrete panels, and folded plate roof all contribute dynamic, angular massing and geometric patterns. The concrete panels also serve as decorative screens to the otherwise plain second and third floors.

Despite the modifications identified in the report and summarized above, the building retains the most predominant, distinctive and character-defining features of the original design, including the angular massing; flat roof; pre-cast concrete panels with decorative, hexagonal pattern at the second and third floors; pre-cast pebble tile cladding at the first floor; two-story element with wrap-around, full-height plate glass windows and projecting folded plate roof supported on slender columns; and covered walkways. The main entries on all four facades remain in their original locations. While some of the pop-out display windows have been in-filled, their location is clearly distinguished by the use of non-original materials, thereby avoiding a false sense of history. The most significant modifications – the storefront additions on the north end of the west façade; the removal of the covered walkway and enhancements at the entryway on the north façade; and the removal of the southwest corner of the covered walkway at the south elevation – do not detract from the design, materials, workmanship or feeling to the extent that the building can no longer convey its significance as a distinctive Contemporary style building. Additionally, the buildings location and setting within Mission Valley Mall remains intact, although the aesthetics of that setting has evolved over time.

Significance Statement: The subject building continues to convey the historic significance of the Contemporary style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style; including the angular massing; flat roof; pre-cast concrete panels with decorative, hexagonal pattern at the second and third floors; pre-cast pebble tile cladding at the first floor; two-story element with wrap-around, full-height plate glass windows and projecting folded plate roof supported on

slender columns; covered walkways; pop-out display windows; and exterior pendant lighting fixtures. Therefore, staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion C.

CRITERION D - Is representative of a notable work of a master builder, designer, architect, engineer, landscape architect, interior designer, artist or craftsman.

Architect William Lewis, Jr. designed the subject building for the May Company in 1959. William (Bill) Sperry Lewis, Jr., was active in A.C. Martin & Associates as well as the firm of Deems Lewis (of which he was a principal). Lewis's partner, Ward Deems, joined the Los Angeles firm of AC Martin in 1953 upon graduation from USC. Lewis, who graduated from USC's architecture program the same year, joined the firm shortly thereafter. In 1958, Deems was appointed Associate of the firm Lewis served as lead designer on several projects. In 1958-1959, Deems explored the potential of opening an office in San Diego, which was then considered to be a cheaper, slower-paced city which survived on tourism funds and military spending. When Deems advised the AC Martin firm of his plan to move south, they saw an opportunity to expand their operation. Together, they all decided to open a San Diego office. In April 1959, a corporate agreement was signed to launch "Deems-Martin Associates." At the time, Lewis was completing the design of the May Company store in Mission Valley and agreed to join Deems in launching the new company.

Embracing the city-wide motto "Try San Diego First" they and other firms worked to keep clients from heading to Los Angeles to have their projects designed. The firm watched San Diego grow larger and more sophisticated. The firm's design for the Mission Valley Shopping Center represented the future of retail as it shifted from downtown to Mission Valley during the time frame that private automobiles replaced street cars, taking away patrons from Walker Scott and Marston's. In 1983, Lewis was inducted as a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects.

In regard to Lewis, the applicant's report states "An examination of Mr. Lewis' work over the years has resulted in the determination that he can be considered a figure of generally recognized greatness in the field of architecture. This is the definition of a master architect. Over the years, Mr. Lewis and his firms have received over 60 design awards, largely for commercial design work. Mr. Lewis has indicated that he and his firms were noted for the commercial, rather than the residential designs that were created.

"With respect to the commercial design for the 1702 Camino Del Rio North building, Mr. Lewis has indicated that the structure represents a "notable" example of his work due to the fact that it was (1) designed early in his architectural career, and established him as a young, popular commercial architect, (2) it represented a new, successful model that changed commercial design work, which ultimately transformed the design of subsequent commercial development in San Diego, and (3) represented a new phase in the evolution of shopping center design. For these reasons, Mr. Lewis is eligible for master architect status, and the property once represented a notable example of Mr. Lewis' commercial work as a master architect. Therefore, had the property not been substantially altered, it would qualify under HRB Criterion D."

Staff concurs with the conclusion that William Lewis Jr. should be considered a Master Architect, and that the subject building reflects his notable work – a belief held by Lewis

himself. However, staff disagrees with the ultimate conclusion that the building no longer retains sufficient integrity to convey that significance. As detailed in the discussion of Criterion C above, the building retains the most predominant, distinctive and character-defining features of Lewis' original design dating to the 1959-1961 period of significance; and the modifications do not singularly or cumulatively detract from the design, materials, workmanship or feeling to the extent that the building can no longer convey its significance. Additionally, the buildings location and setting within Mission Valley Mall remains intact, although the aesthetics of that setting has evolved over time.

Significance Statement: The subject building reflects the notable work of Master Architect William Lewis, Jr., a fellow of the American Institute of Architects recognized and awarded for his large portfolio of distinctive commercial architecture. Specifically, the May Company building was designed early in his architectural career, and established him as a young, popular commercial architect; it represented a new, successful model that changed commercial design work, which ultimately transformed the design of subsequent commercial development in San Diego; and it represented a new phase in the evolution of shopping center design. Therefore, staff recommends establishment of William Lewis, Jr. as a Master Architect, and designation of the subject property under HRB Criterion D.

CRITERION E - Is listed or has been determined eligible by the National Park Service for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or is listed or has been determined eligible by the State Historical Preservation Office for listing on the State Register of Historical Resources.

The property at 1702 Camino Del Rio North has not been listed on or determined eligible for listing on the State or National Registers. Therefore, the property is not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion E.

CRITERION F - Is a finite group of resources related to one another in a clearly distinguishable way or is a geographically definable area or neighborhood containing improvements which have a special character, historical interest or aesthetic value or which represent one or more architectural periods or styles in the history and development of the City.

The property at 1702 Camino Del Rio North is not located within a designated historic district. Therefore, the property is not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion F.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

If the property is designated by the HRB, conditions related to restoration or rehabilitation of the resource may be identified by staff during the Mills Act application process, and included in any future Mills Act contract.

CONCLUSION

Based on the information submitted and staff's field check, it is recommended that the May Company/William Lewis, Jr. Building located at 1702 Camino Del Rio North be designated with a period of significance of 1959-1961 under HRB Criterion A as a special element of Mission

Valley and San Diego's economic development; Criterion C as a good example of Contemporary style architecture; and Criterion D as a resource reflective of the notable work of Master Architect William Lewis, Jr. The designation excludes the storefronts added within the recessed walkway on the north end of the west elevation. Designation brings with it the responsibility of maintaining the building in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The benefits of designation include the availability of the Mills Act Program for reduced property tax; the use of the more flexible Historical Building Code; flexibility in the application of other regulatory requirements; the use of the Historical Conditional Use Permit which allows flexibility of use; and other programs which vary depending on the specific site conditions and owner objectives.



Kelly Stanco
Senior Planner/HRB Liaison

KS

Attachments:

1. Draft Resolution
2. Assessor's Parcel Map
3. Applicant's Historical Report under separate cover

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON 1/28/2016

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 1/28/2016, to consider the historical designation of the **May Company/William Lewis, Jr. Building** (owned by MVC Buyer LLC, 2049 Century Park East, 41st Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90067) located at **1702 Camino Del Rio North, San Diego, CA 92108**, APN: **438-030-06-00**, further described as LOT 4 in the City of San Diego, County of San Diego, State of California; and

WHEREAS, in arriving at their decision, the Historical Resources Board considered the historical resources report prepared by the applicant, the staff report and recommendation, all other materials submitted prior to and at the public hearing, inspected the subject property and heard public testimony presented at the hearing; and

WHEREAS, the property would be added to the Register of Designated Historical Resources as **Site No. 0**, and

WHEREAS, designated historical resources located within the City of San Diego are regulated by the Municipal Code (Chapter 14, Article 3, Division 2) as such any exterior modifications (or interior if any interior is designated) shall be approved by the City, this includes but is not limited to modifications to any windows or doors, removal or replacement of any exterior surfaces (i.e. paint, stucco, wood siding, brick), any alterations to the roof or roofing material, alterations to any exterior ornamentation and any additions or significant changes to the landscape/site.

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED, the Historical Resources Board based its designation of the May Company/William Lewis, Jr. Building on the following findings:

(1) The property is historically significant under CRITERION A as a special element of Mission Valley and San Diego's economic development and retains integrity. Specifically, the resource – which was the largest department store south of Los Angeles when constructed in 1959-1961 – reflected national trends that concentrated shopping experiences in regional malls readily accessible by major infrastructure. Additionally, the construction of the subject building by the May Company laid the foundation for further economic growth of the Mission Valley Shopping Center and helped to further spur development in Mission Valley. This finding is further supported by the staff report, the historical research report, and written and oral evidence presented at the designation hearing.

(2) The property is historically significant under CRITERION C as a resource that embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Contemporary style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits including the angular massing; flat roof; pre-cast concrete panels with decorative, hexagonal pattern at the second and third floors; pre-cast pebble tile cladding at the first floor; two-story element with wrap-around, full-height plate glass windows and projecting folded plate roof supported on slender columns; covered walkways; pop-out display windows; and exterior pendant lighting fixtures. This finding is further supported by the staff report, the historical research report, and written and oral evidence presented at the designation hearing.

(3) The property is historically significant under CRITERION D as a notable work of Master Architect William Lewis, Jr., a fellow of the American Institute of Architects recognized and awarded for his large portfolio of distinctive commercial architecture, and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the resource was designed early in his architectural career, and established him as a young, popular commercial architect; it represented a new, successful model that changed commercial design work, which ultimately transformed the design of subsequent commercial development in San Diego; and it represented a new phase in the evolution of shopping center design. This finding is further supported by the staff report, the historical research report, and written and oral evidence presented at the designation hearing.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, in light of the foregoing, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego hereby approves the historical designation of the above named property. The designation includes the parcel and exterior of the building as Designated Historical Resource **Site No. 0**.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the designation shall exclude...the storefronts added within the recessed walkway on the north end of the west elevation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Secretary to the Historical Resources Board shall cause this resolution to be recorded in the office of the San Diego County Recorder at no fee, for the benefit of the City of San Diego, and with no documentary tax due.

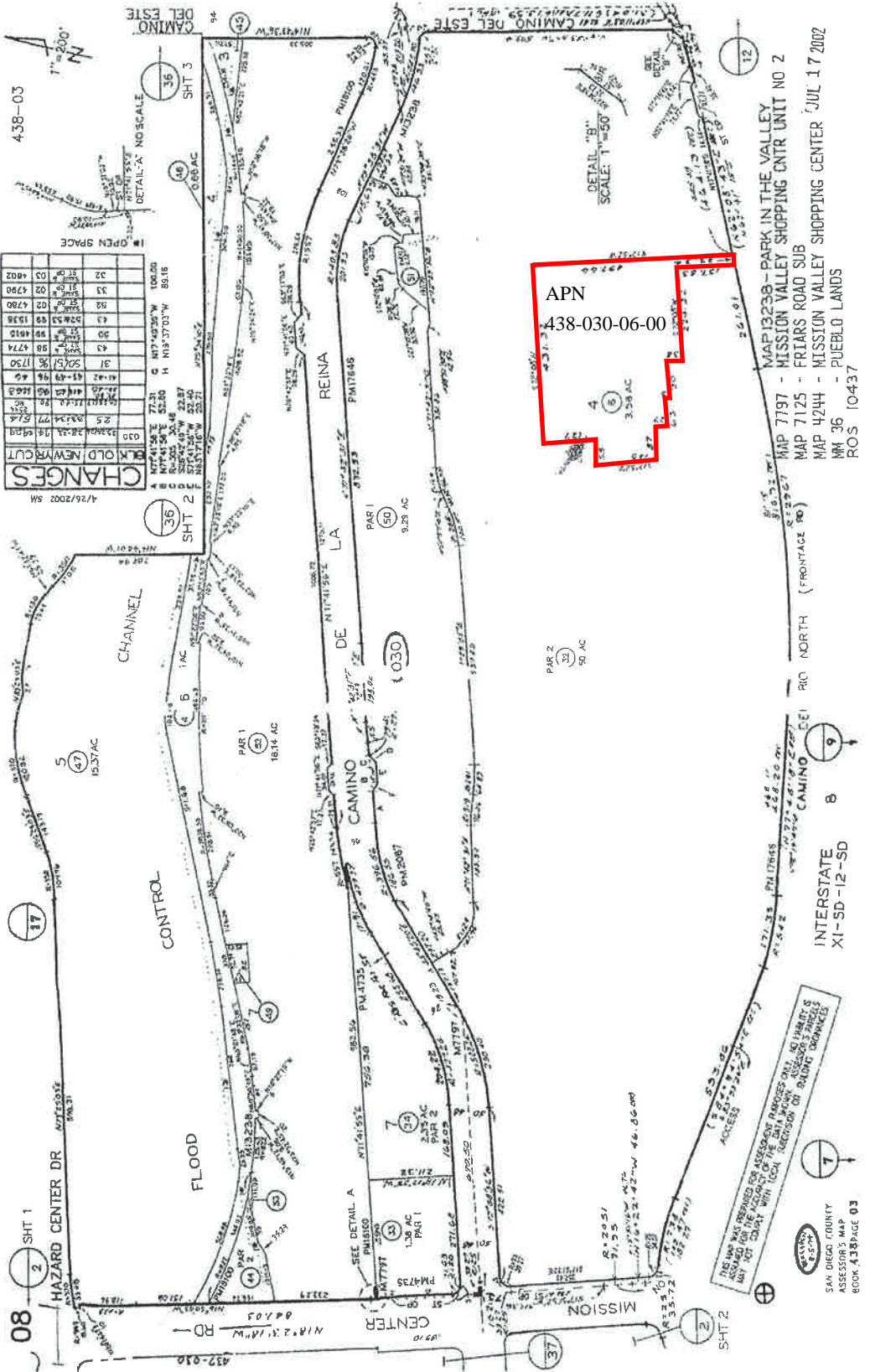
Vote: N/A

BY: _____
JOHN LEMMO, Chair
Historical Resources Board

APPROVED: JAN I. GOLDSMITH,
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: _____
CORRINE NEUFFER,
Deputy City Attorney

DRAFT



APN
438-030-06-00

MAP 13228 - PARK IN THE VALLEY
MAP 7797 - MISSION VALLEY SHOPPING CNTR UNIT NO 2
MAP 7125 - FRIARS ROAD SUB
MAP 4244 - MISSION VALLEY SHOPPING CENTER
MM 36 - PUEBLO LANDS
ROS 10437

INTERSTATE XI-SD-12-SD
CAMINO DEL RIO NORTH (FRONTAGE RD)
HAZARD CENTER DR
MISSION CENTER RD
CAMINO DEL RIO
CAMINO DEL ESTE

CONTROL
CHANNEL
FLOOD

PAR 1 18.14 AC
PAR 2 1.38 AC
PAR 3 1.38 AC
PAR 4 1.38 AC
PAR 5 1.38 AC
PAR 6 1.38 AC
PAR 7 1.38 AC
PAR 8 1.38 AC
PAR 9 1.38 AC
PAR 10 1.38 AC

HAZARD CENTER DR
MISSION CENTER RD
CAMINO DEL RIO
CAMINO DEL ESTE

HAZARD CENTER DR
MISSION CENTER RD
CAMINO DEL RIO
CAMINO DEL ESTE

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SAN DIEGO COUNTY
ASSESSOR'S MAP
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