

State of California - The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
PRIMARY RECORD

Primary #
HRI #
Trinomial
NRHP Status Code 5D1

Other Listings
Review Code

Reviewer

Date

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*Resource Name or #: 818 First Street

P1. Other Identifier: N/A

*P2. Location: Unrestricted

*a. County Solano and

*b. USGS 7.5' Quad Benicia, Calif. Date 1959 T 2N; R 3W; NE ¼ of Sec 2 M.D.B.M

c. Address 818 First Street City Benicia Zip 94510

d. UTM: Zone 10S, 573911 mE/ 4211786 mN

e. Other Locational Data: APN 0089-052-190

*P3a. Description:

The property at 818 First Street consists of a one-story commercial building with a basement (see photographs 1-4). The building has a rectangular shaped ground plan and unreinforced brick masonry structural system. The exterior brick appears to be original. The northwest façade displays original wood-framed picture windows with arched transom windows. The façade entry displays a replacement glazed wood door and side lights with original arched transom windows. A 1986 photograph of the building displays double, carved wood doors in the entry which appear to date to circa 1970 and were also replacements to the original entry door (see photograph 5). The entry is recessed behind a double arched façade supported on a low brick planter bed and column. Lastly, the façade displays an arched parapet.

The southwest elevation displays an original, fixed, wood-framed picture window and two wood-framed, double-hung basement windows. A replacement wood and glazed door dating to circa 1970 leads to an outdoor patio area covered by a recently added pergola. A window on the southwest elevation was removed at an unknown date and enclosed with brick. A brick staircase leads to the basement entry located on the southwest elevation. The roof is flat and clad with asphalt. The building was built circa 1935.

*P3b. Resource Attributes: HP6. 1-3 Story Commercial Building

*P4. Resources Present: Building

P5a. Photograph or Drawing (Photograph required for buildings, structures, and objects.)



P5b. Description of Photo:
Photograph 1: View east of northwest façade of 818 First Street. Taken June 7, 2016.

P6. Date Constructed/Age and Source:

Historic
Circa 1935 (Sanborn 1942)

*P7. Owner and Address:

Loera Agapito & ML JT
272 Sparrow Street
Vacaville, CA 95687

*P8. Recorded by:

Margo Nayyar
Michael Baker International
2729 Prospect Park Drive, #220
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

*P9. Date Recorded:

June 7, 2016

*P10. Survey Type: Intensive

*P11. Report Citation:

None.

*Attachments: Location Map Continuation Sheet Building, Structure, and Object Record

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

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*NRHP Status Code 5D1
*Resource Name or # 818 First Street

- B1. Historic Name: N/A
- B2. Common Name: N/A
- B3. Original Use: Commercial
- B4. Present Use: Commercial
- *B5. Architectural Style: Folk
- *B6. Construction History:

The commercial building was built circa 1935. According to City of Benicia building permit records alterations include:

1. An interior wall addition in 1962.
2. Wood paneling additions to the interior of the building in 1970.
3. Bathroom additions in 1984.
4. Removal of a non-load-bearing wall in 1984.
5. Hot-mop reroofing in 1997 and again in 2008.

*B7. Moved? No Yes Unknown Date: N/A Original Location: N/A

*B8. Related Features: N/A

B9a. Architect: Unknown b. Builder: Unknown

*B10. Significance: Theme Community Planning and Development Area: Benicia
Period of Significance 1935 Property Type Commercial Applicable Criteria A and C

The property at 818 First Street was built circa 1935 after the original wood, two-story, commercial building at the site was destroyed by fire in 1932. The additional four buildings on the block, including the Palace Hotel, were also destroyed during the fire. The block was redeveloped with brick and concrete buildings. The Benicia Herald office building to the north at 820 First Street, at the original location of the Palace Hotel, was redeveloped with brick, and the properties south were developed with reinforce concrete. The property at 818 First Street was redeveloped as an unreinforced brick building and has maintained commercial use since (Sanborn 1942; Benicia Historical Museum 2016).

The 1932 fire served as an impetus for development in Benicia. New commercial construction was rare between 1914 and 1939, and because of the decline in business due to the Great Depression most buildings were of modest construction. Buildings were no more than one or two stories, typically brick or reinforced concrete, and roofs were generally flat concealed behind a simple parapet. The block south of 818 First Street was also redeveloped during this time (Page & Turnbull 2010: 123-137).

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: N/A

*B12. References: See continuation sheet.

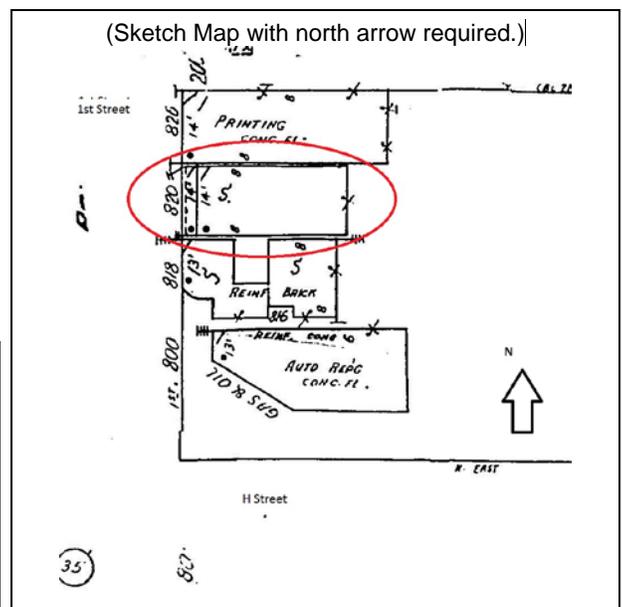
B13. Remarks: N/A

*B14. Evaluator:

Margo Nayyar, Architectural Historian
Michael Baker International
2729 Prospect Park Drive, #220
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

*Date of Evaluation: June 10, 2016

(This space reserved for official comments.)



***B10. Significance (continued):**

The first known owners of the property were Max P. and Betty M. Reed. They owned the property by at least 1962 until 1982 (Solano County Recorder 2016). Max was born in Salt Lake City, Utah, on July 1, 1916. He joined the Army Medical Corps during World War II where he served in Australia and New Guinea. He and Betty married on July 10, 1946, in Utah. Max was an optometrist with practices in Napa and Benicia. He retired in 1981. He was a member of the Napa Rotary Club and the California Optometric Association. Max was an active member of the L.D.S. church throughout his life and served as bishop, high councilman, missionary, and temple worker. He died on April 11, 2005 (Deseret News 2016). The property at 818 First Street was used as part of his Benicia optometry office.

Architecturally, the folk-style commercial building is a good example of its style which was commonly constructed throughout California during the early twentieth century and Depression era. Stylistically, the folk style includes reserved elements of more extravagant styles such as the Colonial Revival style. Recreating simple elements of more extravagant styles was less expensive. The building at 818 First Street displays a simple arched and recessed entry, brick columns with cornices, a low parapet, and arched transom windows, which are simplistic details of the Colonial Revival style.

Structurally, this unreinforced brick building is uncommon for the time in which it was built. Unreinforced brick buildings were commonly constructed prior to the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, but were not illegal until 1952. Masonry buildings were typically more expensive to construct, but were often utilized after destructive fires such as the 1932 downtown Benicia fire which destroyed four businesses (Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board 1990). The building at 818 First Street is a good example of the era and represents the historic circumstances during which it was built.

The property at 818 First Street is located within the Benicia Downtown Historic Overlay District (Historic District). The Historic District, originally identified in 1986, is significant for the historic buildings that represent the development of Benicia's central business district (Cannon Design Group and Woodridge 1990). A later study identified that Benicia's downtown development was more complex and "was driven by a variety of factors including land speculation, government, transportation, industrial processing, immigration, and religious and ethnic influences" (Page & Turnbull 2010: 178). The study also stated that the Historic District's buildings "as a group...illustrate clear patterns in the evolution of the city prior to the whirlwind changes of World War II. They are thus collectively significant under the theme of community planning and development" (Page & Turnbull 2010: 178). The Historic District has a period of significance of 1847 to 1940, the year Benicia was platted and the year prior to the dramatic changes brought by World War II. Dramatic changes included the breakdown of the original city grid and suburban development.

Previous Documentation

The Benicia Historic District was first identified in 1986. The original boundary and contributing buildings are depicted in the 1990 *Downtown Historic Conservation Plan* (Cannon Design Group and Woodridge 1990), which does not depict the property at 818 First Street as a contributor to the Historic District.

In 2004, a survey of the Historic District was conducted to update the 1986 survey and prepare new DPR 523 forms for all eligible buildings. During the 2004 survey, the property at 818 First Street was not surveyed or evaluated (Rowland-Nawi 2004; City of Benicia 2009).

A 2010 study of the Historic District did not reevaluate eligibility of properties previously identified as city landmarks or contributors to the Historic District; however, the study noted that buildings located along First Street built within the Historic District's period of significance had not been previously documented. The study also noted that previous survey efforts favored Victorian and early twentieth century architecture, and many buildings constructed between 1920 and 1939 located within the boundaries of the Historic District were not formally documented. The property at 818 First Street appears to be one of these properties neglected in the original surveys.

Benicia Municipal Code (BMC) Evaluation

Chapter 17.54.040 of the BMC describes the criteria for establishment of a historic district and landmark buildings. Historic districts and individual buildings must meet one or more of the criteria below.

1. The area possesses character, interest, or value as part of the heritage of the city.

The property at 818 First Street was developed after the 1932 fire which destroyed four businesses. The fire prompted the redevelopment of the block with brick and concrete commercial buildings during a time of scant development. The building is representative of the city's character and heritage relating to commercial development during the later dates of the Historic District's period of significance; therefore, the property appears eligible under Criterion 1 of Chapter 17.54.040 of the BMC as a contributor to the Historic District.

***B10. Significance (continued):**

2. The area is the location of a significant historical event.

The building is not significant for association with a significant historical event. The 1932 fire occurred before the building's construction; therefore, the building does not appear eligible under Criterion 2 of Chapter 17.54.040 of the BMC either individually or as a contributor to the Historic District.

3. The area is identified with a person or group that contributed significantly to the culture and development of the city.

Research does not suggest that Max P. or Betty M. Reed contributed significantly to the culture and development of the city. Most of Reed's life activities appear to be associated with his residency in Napa; therefore, the property does not appear eligible under Criterion 3 of Chapter 17.54.040 of the BMC either individually or as a contributor to the Historic District.

4. Structures within the area exemplify a particular architectural style or way of life important to the city.

The building appears to exemplify folk-style commercial architecture within Benicia. The building displays brick detailing common to folk-style buildings built during the Great Depression. Therefore, the building appears eligible under Criterion 4 of Chapter 17.54.040 of the BMC as a contributor to the Historic District.

5. Structures within the area are the best remaining examples of an architectural style in a neighborhood.

The building appears to be one of few remaining folk-style, brick commercial buildings along First Street in the Historic District. Many of the other remaining brick commercial buildings are simpler in design. The arched and recessed entry is a unique feature of 818 First Street. Furthermore, the building displays good integrity as it maintains its original form, roofline, fenestration, and brick ornamentation. Alterations to the building have been minimal, and the replacement entry door is similar to historic storefronts of the period. Therefore, the property appears eligible under Criterion 5 of Chapter 17.54.040 of the BMC as a contributor to the Historic District.

6. The area or its structures are identified as the work of a person or group whose work has influenced the heritage of the city, the state, or the United States.

Research did not suggest the building is associated with the work of a person or group whose work has influenced the heritage of the city, state, or the United States; therefore, the property does not appear eligible under Criterion 6 of Chapter 17.54.040 of the BMC either individually or as a contributor to the Historic District.

7. The area or its structures embody elements of outstanding attention to architectural or landscape design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship.

The building appears to be one of few remaining folk-style, brick commercial buildings along First Street in the Historic District. The arched and recessed entry is a unique feature of 818 First Street that displays outstanding craftsmanship. Therefore, the property appears eligible under Criterion 7 of Chapter 17.54.040 of the BMC as a contributor to the Historic District.

8. The area is related to a designated historic building or district in such a way that its preservation is essential to the integrity of the building or district.

The building was built within the period of significance (1847-1940) of the Historic District. It exemplifies the commercial development of Benicia, and therefore, appears eligible under Criterion 8 of Chapter 17.54.040 of the BMC as a contributor to the Historic District.

9. The area's unique location or singular physical characteristics represent an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood.

Research did not suggest the building at 818 First Street represents a familiar visual feature of the Historic District. The building itself was never identified in the 1986, 2004, and 2010 studies of the Historic District. Therefore, the building does not appear eligible under Criterion 9 of Chapter 17.54.040 of the BMC either individually or as a contributor to the Historic District.

10. The area has potential for yielding information of archaeological interest.

Research did not suggest that the building has the potential to yield archaeological information; therefore, it does not appear eligible under Criterion 10 of Chapter 17.54.040 of the BMC either individually or as a contributor to the Historic District.

11. The area's integrity as a natural environment strongly contributes to the well-being of the people of the city.

Research did not suggest that the building is within a natural environment that contributes to the well-being of people in the city; therefore, the property does not appear eligible under Criterion 11 of Chapter 17.54.040 of the BMC either individually or as a contributor to the Historic District.

*Recorded by: Margo Nayyar, Michael Baker International *Date: 6/7/2016

Continuation

***B10. Significance (continued):**

In conclusion, the property at 818 First Street appears eligible under Criteria 1, 4, 5, 7, and 8, of Chapter 17.54.040 of the BMC, as a contributor to the Benicia Downtown Historic Overlay District. It is not individually eligible as a Benicia landmark.

***B12. References (continued):**

Benicia Historical Museum

2016 Online photo archives. http://benicia.pastperfectonline.com/photo?utf8=%E2%9C%93&search_criteria=Palace+Hotel&searchButton=Search, accessed multiple.

Cannon Design Group and Sally Woodridge

1990 *Downtown Historic Conservation Plan*. Amended March 17, 2009 Resolution No. 09-26. On file at the City of Benicia.

City of Benicia

2009 "Designations of Historic Properties within The Downtown Historic H Overlay District." Adopted by City Council - March 17, 2009 by Resolution No. 09-26. Document on file at the City of Benicia.

2016 Building Permit Records for APN 0089-052-190. On file at the City of Benicia.

Deseret News

2016 Obituary for Max P. Reed. Electronic document, <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/deseretnews/obituary.aspx?n=max-petersen-reed&pid=3412862>, accessed June 10, 2016.

Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board

1990 *A Context Statement and Architectural/Historical Survey of Unreinforced Masonry Building (UMB) Construction in San Francisco From 1850 to 1940*. San Francisco Department of City Planning.

Page & Turnbull

2010 *City of Benicia Historic Context Statement*. Prepared for the City of Benicia Department of Public Works and Community Planning. Electronic document, <http://ohp.parks.ca.gov/pages/1054/files/benicia%20context%20.pdf>, accessed multiple.

Rowland-Nawi, Carol

2004 "Survey Summary and Recommendations." Report on file at the City of Benicia.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map

1942 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Benicia, California.

Solano County Recorder

2016 Property records for APN 0089-052-190. On file at the Solano County Recorder's Office.

P5a. Photographs (continued):



Photograph 2: View south of northwest façade of 818 First Street.



Photograph 3: View northwest of southeast elevation of 818 First Street.

P5a. Photographs (continued):



Photograph 4. Detail view of basement entry on southeast elevation.



Photograph 5. 1986 view of northwest façade. Note the circa 1970 wood panel door and sidelight.

P5a. Photographs (continued):



Photograph 6. 1932 photograph after a fire destroyed the 800 block of First Street.
Photo courtesy of the Benicia Historical Museum.