



## 800-840 South Fairfax Avenue Historical Resources Assessment Report

### *Prepared for:*

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## **Attachments**

- A. Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) 523 Series Forms (prepared by ARG, 2020)
- B. Resumes

# 1. Introduction

At the request of Armbruster, Goldsmith & Delvac, LLP, Architectural Resources Group (ARG) has prepared this Historical Resources Assessment Report related to a proposed development project (referred to herein as “the Project”) at 800-840 South Fairfax Avenue, Los Angeles (“Project Site” or “Site”). The Project Site is currently developed with three buildings that are located on two legal parcels:

- The parcel at 800-830 South Fairfax Avenue contains two multi-family residential buildings that are designed in a modest Mid-Century Modern style and were constructed in 1951. The building at the north end of the parcel is identified as 800 South Fairfax Avenue; the building at the south end of the parcel is identified as 830 South Fairfax Avenue.
- The parcel at 840 South Fairfax Avenue contains a one-story commercial restaurant building that is designed in the Tudor Revival style and was constructed in 1949. The building has been occupied by an Irish-themed restaurant and tavern called Tom Bergin’s on a near-continuous basis since its construction. The building occupies the south section of the parcel; the north section of the parcel contains a surface parking lot that services the adjacent business.

The two residential buildings, 800 South Fairfax Avenue and 830 South Fairfax Avenue, have not been previously evaluated for historical significance, and neither building has been identified in a historic resource survey. The commercial building at 840 South Fairfax Avenue (Tom Bergin’s) was identified as eligible for local listing in SurveyLA, Los Angeles’s citywide historic resources survey, in 2015. The building was subsequently designated as Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) No. 1182 in June 2019; the HCM designation includes two freestanding pole signs adjacent to the building, but does not include the surface parking lot to the north of the building.<sup>1</sup>

The Project includes the demolition of the two multi-family residential buildings at 800 South Fairfax Avenue and 830 South Fairfax Avenue, and construction of a new multi-story, mixed-use commercial and residential building on the Project Site. The new building will consist of 209 residential units over three levels of parking and 2,653 square feet of commercial space, in accordance with the Tier 4 requirements of the City of Los Angeles’s Transit Oriented Communities (TOC) ordinance. The designated Tom Bergin’s building will remain extant and will be incorporated into the Project. More information about the Project is included in *Section 2: Project Summary* of this report.

The purpose of this report is to fulfill the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as they relate to historical resources. CEQA states that “a project that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment.”<sup>2</sup> An evaluation of potential impacts under CEQA includes both a determination of whether, and the extent to which, historical resources as defined by CEQA are present at the Project Site and, if so, the identification of potential impacts to historical resources caused by the Project. Toward these ends, this report includes an evaluation of each building on the Project Site against federal (National Register of Historic Places), state (California Register of Historical Resources), and local (Los

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<sup>1</sup> Los Angeles City Clerk, Council File: 19-0293, received Mar. 26, 2019, last changed Jun. 19, 2019.

<sup>2</sup> California Public Resources Code, Section 21084.1.

Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument) designation criteria, and includes an analysis of project impacts to historical resources.

In summary, ARG, arrives at the following conclusions:

- The multi-family residential buildings at 800 South Fairfax Avenue and 830 South Fairfax Avenue do not meet eligibility criteria for listing in the National Register, the California Register, or as Los Angeles HCMs. Therefore, these buildings are not historical resources for purposes of CEQA.
- The commercial building at 840 South Fairfax Avenue (Tom Bergin's) is a locally designated HCM. It is also eligible for listing under state and federal criteria. Therefore, the building and its associated signage are historical resources for purposes of CEQA.
- The Project meets the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* (the Standards), specifically as they relate to its adjacency to the designated Tom Bergin's building. Therefore, the Project will not result in a substantial adverse change in the significance of the historical resource.
- The Project will not have an indirect impact on adjacent historical resources, including the Carthay Circle Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ) to the west and the Miracle Mile HPOZ to the east.

The following sections provide a detailed discussion of how these determinations were made.

## 2. Assessment Methodology

### 2.1. Field and Research Methods

Preparation of this report included the following tasks related to research, documentation, and analysis:

- Reviewed documentation related to the previous evaluation of 840 South Fairfax Avenue, including materials related to its designation as a Los Angeles HCM (2019);
- Reviewed pertinent federal and state technical bulletins, local ordinances, and other reference materials related to the evaluation of historical resources;
- Reviewed applicable historical building permits for the subject properties;
- Conducted a search in the California Historic Resources Inventory (HRI) database for previous survey and evaluation data;
- Conducted supplemental research to glean additional information about each building's development history, design, occupancy, and potential historical significance;
- Identified applicable historic contexts and themes;
- Evaluated each building against eligibility criteria for the National Register, the California Register, and as a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM); and
- Reviewed the Project and evaluated its potential to impact historical resources under CEQA.

Research materials were culled from the following sources: the Los Angeles Public Library; the archives of the *Los Angeles Times* and other local periodicals; building permits obtained from the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety; historic Los Angeles city directories; technical assistance bulletins published by the National Park Service (NPS) and the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP); online image collections of the California State Library and USC Library; various online repositories; and ARG's in-house collection of architectural books and reference materials. A complete list of sources is included in *Section 10: Bibliography* of this report.

In addition to archival research, ARG conducted a site visit on December 11, 2019 to assess and document existing conditions. During the site visit, each property in the Project Site was documented with written notes and digital photographs.

### 2.2 Preparer Qualifications

This report was prepared by Katie E. Horak, Principal; Andrew Goodrich, AICP, Associate; and Rosa Lisa Fry. Project support was provided by ARG intern Krista Gelev. Ms. Horak, Mr. Goodrich, and Ms. Fry are Architectural Historians and Preservation Planners who meet the *Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards*, 36 CFR Part 61, in the discipline of Architectural History.

### 3. Previous Evaluations and Designations

The residential buildings at 800 South Fairfax Avenue and 830 South Fairfax Avenue are not currently designated under federal, state, or local registration programs. Neither building is listed in the HRI database for Los Angeles County (last updated 2012).

In 2015, the commercial property at 840 South Fairfax Avenue was identified in a historic resource survey of the Wilshire Community Plan Area, completed as part of SurveyLA in 2015. The property was identified as potentially eligible for local listing as a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) under the Commercial Development 1850-1980/Commercial Identity 1850-1980 context/theme combination as the long-time location of Tom Bergin's, a business with a significant association with the commercial identity of Los Angeles.<sup>3</sup> The property was assigned the corresponding California Historical Resource Status Code of 5S3: "appears to be individually eligible for local listing or designation through survey evaluation."<sup>4</sup>

In June 2019, 840 South Fairfax Avenue was designated as Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) No. 1182. Consistent with the SurveyLA findings, the property was designated under local Criterion 1, "exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city, or community," as the long-time location of Tom Bergin's, a business that bears a significant association with the commercial identity of Los Angeles.<sup>5</sup> Its period of significance was identified as 1949-2018. The HCM designation that was approved by the City Council applies to exterior features and finishes, interior features and finishes in front-of-house spaces, and two freestanding pole signs near the west property line. It does not include the adjacent surface parking lot, which was found to be "not a significant character defining feature of the monument."<sup>6</sup> The building is not currently designated under federal (National Register) or state (California Register) programs.

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<sup>3</sup> An excerpt from the SurveyLA report for the Wilshire Community Plan Area is included as an appendix to this report.

<sup>4</sup> Refer to California Office of Historic Preservation *Technical Assistance Bulletin 8: User's Guide to the California Historical Resources Status Codes*, or more information about status codes and their application.

<sup>5</sup> Los Angeles City Clerk, Council File: 19-0293, received Mar. 26, 2019, last changed Jun. 19, 2019.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.



## 4. Property History

### 4.1. General Setting

The Project Site encompasses two adjacent parcels that are located on the east side of Fairfax Avenue, at the cusp of the Mid-Wilshire/Miracle Mile and Carthay neighborhoods of central Los Angeles. Located at the southeast corner of Fairfax Avenue and 8<sup>th</sup> Street, the Site is located in the vicinity of the Miracle Mile commercial district, which is concentrated along Wilshire Boulevard, and sits about a block south of a future station for the under-construction Metro Purple Line subway extension at Wilshire Boulevard and Fairfax Avenue. This stretch of Fairfax Avenue is developed with a somewhat eclectic assortment of property types of various scales and ages; as a result, there is little continuity with respect to aesthetics and use in the vicinity of the Site. Institutional uses including the Petersen Automotive Museum and Shalhevet High School are located to the north and south of the Site, respectively; at the far south end of the block is a large mixed-use development that was constructed in 2017. Blocks to the west of the Site comprise single-family houses that date to the 1920s and '30s and are a part of the Carthay Circle Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ); those to the east are developed with a mix of single-family and multi-family residences that also largely date to the 1920s and '30s and are part of the Miracle Mile HPOZ. Properties on the west side of this block of Fairfax Avenue are included in the Carthay Circle HPOZ, while properties on the east side of Fairfax Avenue are not included in the Miracle Mile HPOZ.

The area around the Site is flat and generally oriented around a modified street grid that is slightly askew of the cardinal directions. Fairfax Avenue is an arterial street that serves as a major north-south vehicular corridor through central Los Angeles. 8<sup>th</sup> Street is a collector street that provides a connection between Fairfax Avenue and adjacent residential neighborhoods to the east. The regularity of the street grid is interrupted by San Vicente Boulevard, which transects the area at a sharp angle.



*Location Map. The general location of the Project Site is marked in yellow (Google Maps).*



Two of the three subject buildings, 800 South Fairfax Avenue and 830 South Fairfax Avenue, occupy a single parcel at the southeast corner of Fairfax Avenue and 8<sup>th</sup> Street. This parcel is trapezoidal in shape and is one of very few residential parcels in the vicinity that fronts directly onto Fairfax Avenue. It is much longer than it is deep. Because of its corner location, the parcel also has frontage on 8<sup>th</sup> Street. The third subject building, 840 South Fairfax Avenue, occupies a separate parcel. This parcel is zoned for commercial use, is rectangular in shape, and is much smaller in size than the adjacent residential parcel.



*Parcel map. The two parcel boundaries are marked in red; building footprints are marked in yellow and labeled accordingly (Google Maps).*

## 4.2. 800-830 South Fairfax Avenue

### 800 South Fairfax Avenue: Architectural Description

800 South Fairfax Avenue is a two-story apartment building that was constructed in 1951.<sup>7</sup> The building is located at the southeast corner of Fairfax Avenue and 8<sup>th</sup> Street and has frontage on both streets. Both street-facing façades (north, west) are slightly set back from the public-right-of-way. The building has a trapezoidal footprint that corresponds to the shape of the parcel on which it sits, and is oriented inward toward an open interior courtyard. It is constructed of wood frame and sits on a poured concrete

<sup>7</sup> Construction date obtained from the Los Angeles County Office of the Assessor.

foundation. The building is designed in a modest Mid-Century Modern style, though it includes some architectural features associated with the Late Moderne style that was popular in the early postwar era.

The building is capped by a flat roof with projecting eaves. The roof was not visible at the time of ARG's site visit, but based on aerial photos and permit records it appears to be sheathed in a composition membrane. Exterior walls are clad with a lightly textured stucco finish, with vertical wood siding used as an accent material. Some of the exterior walls are angled, creating a sense of depth and dimension.

Since the building is arranged around a courtyard, many of its elevations are oriented inward. Ingress to individual units is provided via the courtyard. The courtyard is accessed on the west façade, via a breezeway that is approached by concrete steps and framed by slatted wood supports with articulated brick bases. Access to the courtyard is restricted by a metal security gate that is installed over the breezeway. There is also an exterior stair to the north of the breezeway, the access point to which has been partially infilled. Entrances to units consist of single, unarticulated wood doors. Upper-story units are also accessed through the courtyard, via exterior stairs. The stair landings are framed by metal rails. Within the courtyard, fenestration consists of tall, narrow wood casement windows that are arranged in groups and have operable transoms. There are also sliding wood windows. "Egg-crate" style grilles, comprising wood grids with squared voids, are used as a decorative element, particularly around doors.

The two street-facing (north, west) façades are somewhat less articulated than those that face inward toward the courtyard. These façades are devoid of entrances, aside from the breezeway leading to the courtyard, and are fenestrated with casement, sliding, and hopper wood windows. Some windows are set within vertical channels; others exhibit the same floor-to-ceiling configuration that is used within the courtyard. A small number of windows have either been infilled to accommodate air conditioning units or have been replaced with vinyl windows. One window on the west façade features security bars.

The east and south façades are less publicly visible and far less articulated. These façades both feature cantilevered upper stories and are fenestrated with sliding and double-hung wood windows. The north façade features rear entrances; those on the upper story are accessed by exterior stairs with metal rails.

## 800 South Fairfax Avenue: Photos

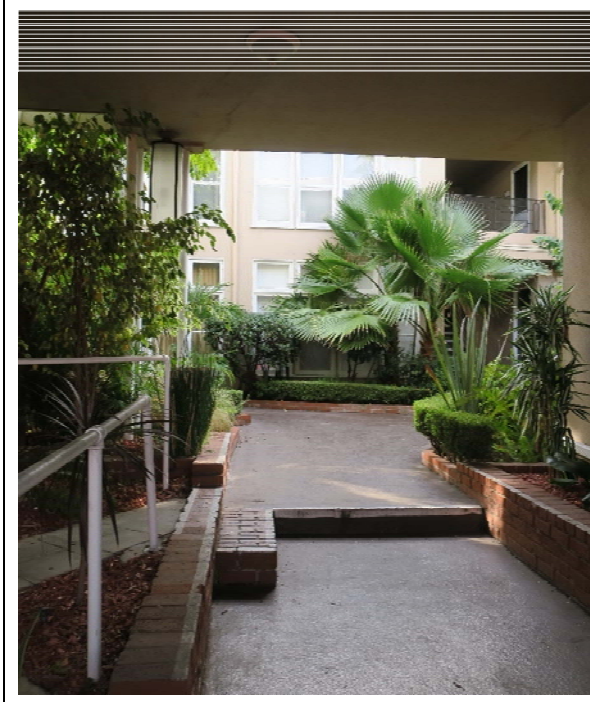


*North façade, view southwest (ARG, 2019)*

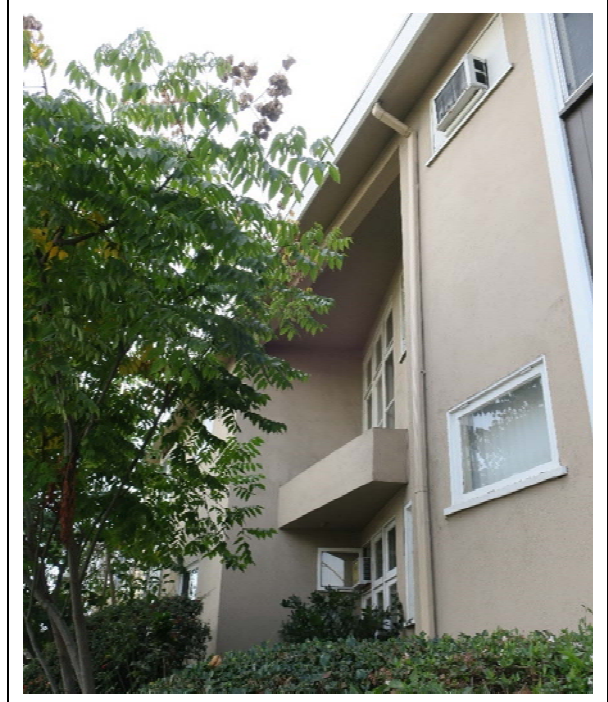


*West façade, view northeast (ARG, 2019)*





*Courtyard interior as seen from breezeway, view east (ARG, 2019)*



*North façade, detail of angled exterior walls (ARG, 2019)*



*East façade, view southwest. Note detached carport structure at left (ARG, 2019)*



*South façade, view northeast (ARG, 2019)*

## 830 South Fairfax Avenue: Architectural Description

830 South Fairfax Avenue is also a two-story apartment building that was constructed in 1951.<sup>8</sup> It occupies the same legal parcel as 800 South Fairfax Avenue, and is very similar – but not identical – to its northern counterpart in plan and appearance. The street-facing (west) façade of 830 South Fairfax Avenue is slightly set back from the public-right-of-way. The building is rectangular in plan and oriented

<sup>8</sup> Construction date obtained from the Los Angeles County Office of the Assessor.

inward toward an interior courtyard. It is constructed of wood frame and sits on a poured concrete foundation. The building is designed in a modest Mid-Century Modern style, though it includes some architectural features associated with the Late Moderne style that was popular in the early postwar era.

The building is capped by a flat roof with projecting eaves. Portions of the eaves are pierced. The roof was not visible at the time of ARG's site visit, but based on aerial photos it appears to be sheathed in a composition membrane. Exterior walls are clad with a lightly textured stucco finish, with vertical wood siding used as an accent material. On the west façade, the base of the building is clad with painted brick.

Since the building is arranged around a courtyard, many of its elevations are oriented inward. Ingress to individual units is provided via the courtyard. The courtyard is accessed on the west façade, via a breezeway that is approached by concrete steps and framed by slatted wood supports with articulated brick bases. Access to the courtyard is restricted by a metal security gate that is installed over the breezeway. There is also an exterior stair to the south of the breezeway, the access point to which has been partially infilled. Entrances to units consist of single, unarticulated wood doors. Upper-story units are also accessed through the courtyard, via exterior stairs. The stair landings are framed by metal rails. Within the courtyard, fenestration consists of tall, narrow wood casement windows that are arranged in groups and have operable transoms. There are also sliding wood windows. "Egg-crate" style grilles, comprising wood grids with squared voids, are used as a decorative element, particularly around doors.

The street-facing (west) façade is somewhat less articulated than those that face inward toward the courtyard. This façade is devoid of entrances, aside from the breezeway leading to the courtyard, and is fenestrated with casement and sliding wood windows. Some of these windows are set within vertical channels. A small number of windows on this façade have been replaced with vinyl windows.

The north, south, and east façades are less publicly visible and far less articulated. These façades feature cantilevered upper stories and are fenestrated with sliding and double-hung wood windows; a few of the windows have been infilled to accommodate air conditioning units. The north and south façades have rear entrances; those on the upper story are accessed by exterior stairs with metal rails.

### 830 South Fairfax Avenue: Photos



*West façade, view northeast (ARG, 2019)*

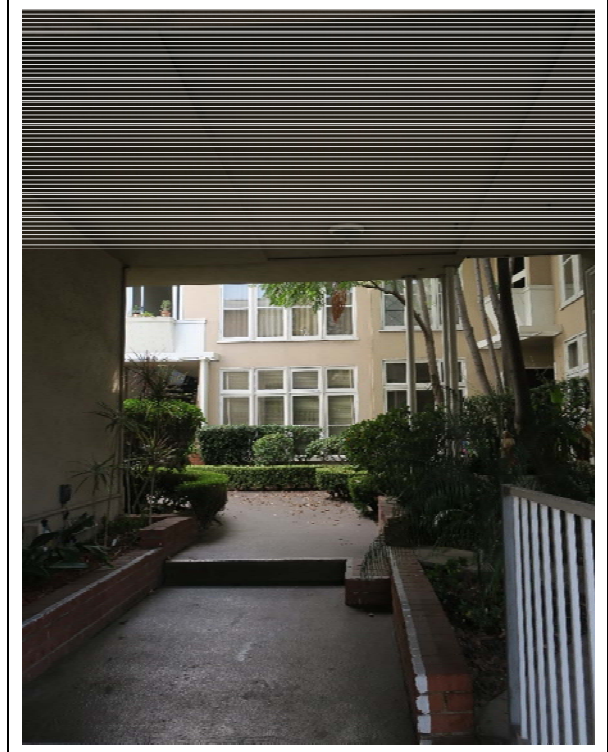


*Detail of pierced eave (ARG, 2019)*





*West façade, detail of breezeway entrance, view southeast (ARG, 2019)*



*Interior courtyard as seen from breezeway, view east (ARG, 2019)*



*North façade, view southeast (ARG, 2019)*



*South façade, view northeast (ARG, 2019)*

## Site and Landscape Features

Spanning the east property line, to the rear of the two residential buildings, are two detached carport structures that also date to 1951.<sup>9</sup> The carports are constructed of wood, capped by flat roofs and parapets, and clad with stucco. They are vernacular structures and lack the characteristics of an

<sup>9</sup> Construction date gleaned from building permit records.

architectural style, though their appearance is generally consistent with the apartment buildings with which they are associated. The carports are accessed via two concrete driveways: one is approached from the north via 8<sup>th</sup> Street, and the other is approached from the west via Fairfax Avenue and occupies a narrow space between the two residential buildings. Each driveway is secured by a metal access gate.

Landscape features are generally located within the courtyards of each building. The courtyards are compact spaces that are planted with a variety of mature trees and manicured shrubs and transected by curved footpaths. Elsewhere on the parcel, landscaping is confined to the shallow north and west setbacks and consists of various buffer plantings. The setbacks feature low brick accent walls. There are multiple species of mature and semi-mature street trees in the parkway space along Fairfax Avenue.

### 4.3. 840 South Fairfax Avenue

#### Architectural Description: Exterior

840 South Fairfax Avenue is a one-and-a-half story restaurant building that was constructed in 1949 and is the longtime location of an Irish-themed restaurant and tavern called Tom Bergin's. It occupies a separate parcel to the immediate south of the residential buildings at 800-830 South Fairfax Avenue.

The building is a low-slung, two story building that abuts the south property line and is minimally set back from the street. The building sits on a poured concrete foundation and is constructed of wood frame. It is rectangular in plan and spans the depth of the parcel. Architecturally, the building is a modest interpretation of the Tudor Revival style. Most of the building is capped by a steeply pitched, cross-gabled roof that is clad with composition shingles and features shallow eaves, bargeboards, and glazed dormers. A weathervane is affixed to its ridge, near the west end of the building. The west elevation is capped by a shed roof, which is also steeply pitched and clad with composition shingles. The south elevation, most of which is obscured from public view, is capped by a flat roof that is likely sheathed in a composition membrane. Mechanical equipment is installed atop the flat section of roof.

Exterior walls are clad with various materials including textured stucco, wood lap siding, wood board-and-batten siding, and clinker bricks that are laid in a running bond pattern. Generally, clinker brick is used as the primary cladding material on the street-facing (west) façade, and is also used as an accent material; wood siding is applied to gable ends, dormers, and other exposed elements on the building's upper appurtenances; and other exterior surfaces are clad with stucco. This variety of materials helps to provide the building with its characteristically rusticated, hand-hewn appearance.

The primary façade faces north. Features on this façade are asymmetrically composed. Near the center of this façade is a jettied projection that features a prominent front gable and is framed by decorative wood brackets. This projection is offset slightly to reinforce the building's prevailing sense of asymmetry. Within the gable end are three tall, narrow multi-light wood hopper windows that are surmounted by transoms. These windows are set within a wood frame with a bracketed sill and a bracketed hood. Elsewhere on this façade, fenestration consists of multi-light wood hopper windows, all of which feature stained glass and metal grilles. Windows located to the east of the center gable are arranged singularly; those to the west are arranged in pairs and are framed by a continuous sill course.



What is now the building's main entrance is located on the primary (north) façade, beneath the center gable. It consists of a single, flush-mounted wood door with a vision panel, and is surmounted by an overhead fabric awning that is fastened to metal posts. This entrance is not original to the building; it was added ca. 2012 to improve access between the restaurant/tavern and its adjacent parking lot. The entrance is approached by brick planters that extend into the parking lot; these bricks are also applied to a low wall that delineates a walkway and patio, and to a buffer planter that spans the east volume of the primary elevation. The brick wall and planters were also added ca. 2012.

Features on the west (street-facing) façade are also arranged asymmetrically. This façade is dominated by a large, jettied gable with decorative wood brackets. At the north end of this elevation is another entrance, consisting of a single, unarticulated wood door that is surmounted by a small hood. This entrance was originally the primary means of ingress to the restaurant/tavern, but was converted into a secondary entrance ca. 2012. It is framed by a non-original brick perimeter wall. Fenestration on the west façade consists of paired wood casement windows, all of which are glazed with stained rondel glass. Windows on the ground level feature metal grilles and brick sills; those that are located up above, in the gable, are framed by a wood surround. Sconces are affixed to the brick walls along this façade.

The south and east façades are obscured from public view and are more utilitarian in appearance. The south façade is punctuated by steel hopper windows with wired safety glass. These windows were originally operable, but their frames have since been painted shut to comply with modern building codes. The south façade also features two glazed dormers that align with those on the primary (north) façade; while the north-facing dormers are original to the building, the south-facing dormers were added ca. 2014. Features on the east façade include rear exit doors that open onto a service patio, and a brick chimney that projects past the roofline. The service patio is enclosed by a stucco wall and wood gates. Appended to the east façade is a small, 335-square-foot addition that was constructed in 2012 to accommodate walk-in coolers and back-of-house equipment.

### Architectural Description: Interior

In addition to the building exterior, the HCM designation for 840 South Fairfax Avenue also addresses character-defining spaces, features, and finishes within the building. Much of the building's significance is derived from these interior spaces; thus, a brief discussion of interior features is included herein.

Front-of-house operations within the building are divided between three principal spaces: (1) the tavern, (2) the main dining area, and (3) a private dining room. The primary entrance leads into the tavern. Floors in the tavern are finished with brick; the ceiling is spanned by exposed, bracketed wood tie beams that have a hand-hewn appearance and resemble heavy timbers. Interior walls are composed of burnished wood panels with extensive wood trim. The irrefutable focal point of the tavern is a large, horseshoe-shaped cocktail bar that wraps around the room in a 360-degree configuration. The bar is constructed of paneled wood and is capped with copper. A metal foot rail is affixed to its base. Wood casework is located behind the bar and is used to store and display liquor bottles, glassware, and other accoutrements. The casework is surmounted by decorative molding and a wall-mounted sign that reads "HOUSE OF IRISH COFFEE." Three wood-and-vinyl banquettes are built into the west wall. Four wood doors (two on the south wall and two on the east wall) lead to restrooms and other back-of-house

spaces. The south wall also features glazed doors that originally led to a phone booth (the phone booth itself has been removed; the doors remain extant, though they are no longer operable).

The main dining area is located adjacent to the tavern. These spaces generally flow into one another, but are separated by an L-shaped partition that frames the primary entrance. The partition is composed of stained wood, rondel glass, and embossed upholstered panels. The main dining area is located to the west of the partition. It is a long, narrow space that features brick floors, burnished wood wall panels and wood trim, and a coved plaster ceiling. Wood-and-vinyl banquettes are built into the north and south walls; the single banquette on the south wall is horseshoe-shaped. Next to this banquette, on the south wall, are two wood doors with small textured vision panels and large metal kick plates. These doors lead to back-of-house spaces. A third wood door, which features a horseshoe-shaped knocker and a small inset panel with quatrefoil details, leads to the partial second story. Other features in the main dining area (all on the south wall) include integral wood casework, a wet bar that is framed by scalloped wood trim, and a cashier station with wood casework that occupies a niche near the primary entrance.

The private dining room is located to the west of the main dining area and is accessed by a pair of glazed, paneled, multi-light wood doors. The dining room is a large, voluminous space, with a vaulted ceiling that is supported by exposed wood rafters and bracketed wood tie beams. A metal ring chandelier is suspended from each tie beam. Floors are finished with contemporary carpet; walls are finished with a combination of burnished wood panels and textured stucco. The east wall is dominated by a fireplace that features a clinker brick firebox, stone hearth, and bracketed wood mantel. Next to the fireplace is a single wood door that acts as an emergency exit. A small cocktail bar is located at the southwest corner of the room. Several small metal sconces are affixed to the north and south walls.

These front-of-house spaces, and especially the tavern, are replete with various types of ephemera. Photographs, certificates of commendation, newspaper clippings, menus, sports memorabilia, plaques, horseshoes, and other appurtenances that bear an association with the business and its history are affixed to the walls. What is generally considered to be the building's most iconic ephemeral element is a collection of cardboard shamrocks affixed to the ceiling of the tavern and main dining area. These shamrocks were installed over the course of the business's history to memorialize its favored patrons.

Additional spaces within the building are not character-defining. Other spaces on the ground level are occupied by various back-of-house operations. These spaces are utilitarian and lack distinctive features. Off the main dining area, behind a door, is a set of stairs that leads to a partial upper story. Tucked into the eaves, the upper story originally served as additional back-of-house space, but in 2017 it was repurposed into a lounge. None of the features and finishes on the second story appear to be original.

## Site and Landscape Features

The restaurant/tavern is serviced by a surface parking lot that is located to the north of the building. The parking lot is framed by a brick perimeter wall, which is largely original but was augmented ca. 2012 to include a buffer planter and brick piers that are capped by horse head busts. A non-original trash enclosure and non-original brick accent wall are located at the east end of the parking lot. Landscaping is minimal and consists of hedges and shrubs, which are generally confined to the building's perimeter.

Four signs are associated with the property. Two are affixed to the building's north and west façades and read "COCKTAILS." The other two signs are freestanding. Adjacent to the parking lot is a pole sign that reads "TOM BERGIN STEAKS CHOPS" on its upper face and "PUBLIC HOUSE" on its lower face. A second pole sign is located to the south of the building; this sign is styled in the shape of a shamrock and reads "HOUSE OF IRISH COFFEE." All of the signs appear to be illuminated with neon.

The signs were included in the 2019 HCM designation for 840 South Fairfax Avenue; the parking lot was excluded from the designation as it was deemed not to be a character-defining feature of the property.

### 840 South Fairfax Avenue: Photos



*West façade, view southeast (ARG, 2019)*



*West façade, view northeast (ARG, 2018)*



*North façade, view southwest (ARG, 2018)*



*North façade, detail of entry, view south (ARG, 2018)*





*South façade, view northeast (ARG, 2018)*



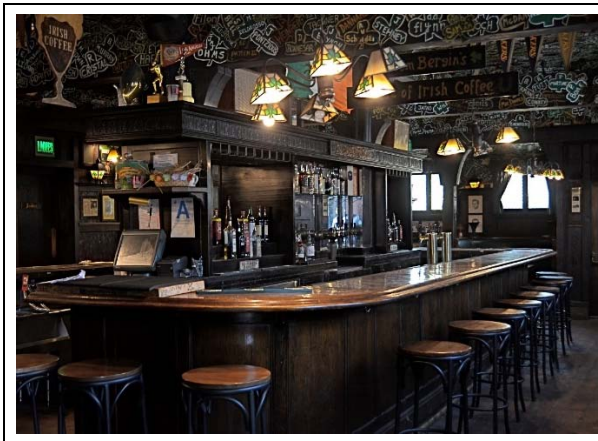
*Detail of jettied gable and decorative brackets on west façade (ARG, 2018)*



*Detail of textured stucco and clinker brick wall cladding on north façade (ARG, 2018)*



*Detail of freestanding pole signs at west property line (ARG, 2018)*



*Building interior, tavern, view southwest (ARG, 2018)*



*Building interior, tavern, view east (ARG, 2018)*



*Detail of U-shaped banquettes in tavern, view southwest (ARG, 2018)*



*Building interior, dining area, view east (ARG, 2018)*



*Building interior, dining room, view east (ARG, 2018)*



*Detail of fireplace in dining room, view east (ARG, 2018)*

## 4.4. Chronology of Development and Use

The following sections chart the development history of each of the two legal parcels comprising the Project Site over time. This is organized in two sub-sections: (1) a chronology of development and use for each property, and (2) a list of alterations that have been made to each property. Alterations are generally limited to building exteriors; however, since 840 South Fairfax Avenue includes interior spaces that are included as part of the HCM designation, interior alterations to that building are also addressed.

The chronologies herein reference material changes that have modified the appearance of the properties in a consequential way. Additional permits have been issued over the years for minor modifications including tenant improvements, the installation of new HVAC units, electrical upgrades, and other nominal endeavors that did not affect the exterior of the buildings. Source materials include online building permits obtained from the City of Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, historical newspaper articles from the *Los Angeles Times* and other local publications, historic photographs and historic aerial images, and other pertinent archival materials.



Alterations were noted and inventoried on a site visit conducted by ARG on December 11, 2019. Whenever possible, these alterations were corroborated by building permits listed herein, Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, historic images, property data from the Los Angeles County Office of the Assessor, and other archival sources. For alterations that are reflected in the permit record and/or other sources, the year that the alteration occurred is listed parenthetically. It is not always known when the alterations below took place.

### Development Chronology: 800-830 South Fairfax Avenue

<b>1950</b>	<p>Permit issued to construct a two-story, 19-unit apartment building at 830 S Fairfax Ave. No architect is listed on the permit; Albert Rothenberg is listed as the contractor and owner.<sup>10</sup></p> <p>Permit issued to construct a private garage to the rear of the apartment building at 830 S Fairfax Ave. No architect is listed on the permit; Albert Rothenberg is listed as the contractor and owner.<sup>11</sup></p>
<b>1951</b>	<p>Permit issued to construct a two-story, 21-unit apartment building at 800 S Fairfax Ave. Sam Reisbord is listed as the architect; Westside Building Company is listed as the contractor and owner.<sup>12</sup></p> <p>Permit issued to construct a private garage to the rear of the apartment building at 800 S Fairfax Ave. Sam Reisbord is listed as the architect; Westside Building Company is listed as the contractor and owner.<sup>13</sup></p> <p>Certificates of Occupancy issued for all buildings on the parcel: the apartment house and garage at 800 S Fairfax Ave, and the apartment house and garage at 830 S Fairfax Ave.<sup>14</sup></p>
<b>1988</b>	<p>Permit issued to remove the existing rock roof and install a new roof on the apartment buildings at 800 S Fairfax Ave and 830 S Fairfax Ave. Fisher Roofing Company, Inc. is listed as the contractor; Westside Building Company is listed as the owner.<sup>15</sup></p>
<b>1990</b>	<p>Permit issued to remove the existing roof and install a new built-up roof on the garage structures at 800 S Fairfax Ave and 830 S Fairfax Ave. Fisher Roofing is listed as the contractor; Westside Building Company is listed as the owner.<sup>16</sup></p>

<sup>10</sup> Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, Permit No. LA28616, issued Dec. 1950. The permit lists the site address as 840 S Fairfax Ave; however, the address was changed 830 S Fairfax Ave when the Certificate of Occupancy was issued in 1951.

<sup>11</sup> Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, Permit No. LA28617, issued Dec. 1950.

<sup>12</sup> Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, Permit No. LA00163, issued Jan. 1951.

<sup>13</sup> Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, Permit No. LA00164, issued Jan. 1951.

<sup>14</sup> Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, Certificates of Occupancy for Permit Nos. LA00163, LA00164, LA28616, and LA28617, issued Oct. 1951.

<sup>15</sup> Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, Permit No. LA96272, issued Apr. 1988.

<sup>16</sup> Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, Permit No. LA51415, issued Feb. 1990.



## Alterations: 800-830 South Fairfax Avenue

The following alterations pertain to both apartment buildings on the property, 800 S Fairfax Ave and 830 S Fairfax Ave, unless otherwise noted:

- A limited number of original wood windows have been replaced with vinyl windows
- A limited number of window openings have been infilled to accommodate air conditioning units
- The original rock roof was replaced with a built-up roof (1988)
- Security gates have been added to the courtyard entrances and driveways
- Security bars have been added to some windows on 800 N Fairfax Ave
- A low wall has been added to the base of an exterior stair on the west façade of each building, restricting access to the stairwell from the sidewalk
- Planter walls abutting the west property line have been augmented

## Development Chronology: 840 South Fairfax Avenue

<b>1947</b>	Permit issued to construct a two-story restaurant building at 840 South Fairfax Avenue. No architect is listed on the permit; Tom Bergin is listed as the contractor and owner. <sup>17</sup>
<b>1949</b>	Certificate of Occupancy issued for the new restaurant building. The building was identified as a 2-story, Type I restaurant that could house 125 occupants. <sup>18</sup>
<b>1983</b>	Permit issued to repair unspecified fire damage, valued at \$2,000. <sup>19</sup>
<b>2012</b>	Permit issued to remove and replace roof shingles. <sup>20</sup>  Permit issued to construct a 335-square-foot addition at the rear (east) of the building. The addition was associated with an order issued by the Health Department to enclose a walk-in cooler and back-of-house storage. <sup>21</sup>  Certificate of Occupancy issued for the rear addition. <sup>22</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, Permit No. LA29354, issued Dec. 1947.

<sup>18</sup> Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, Certificate of Occupancy for Permit No. LA29354, issued Mar. 1949.

<sup>19</sup> Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, Permit No. LA76383, issued Nov. 1983.

<sup>20</sup> Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, Permit No. 12016-30000-03488, issued Feb. 2012.

<sup>21</sup> Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, Permit No. 11016-10000-20201, issued Mar. 2012.

<sup>22</sup> Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, Certificate of Occupancy for Permit No. 11016-10000-20201, issued Jun. 2012

## Alterations: 840 South Fairfax Avenue

- A 335-square-foot addition was appended to the east façade (2012)
- The west (original) entrance was repurposed into a secondary entrance; its glazed double doors were replaced with a single, unarticulated door (ca. 2012)
- The primary entrance was relocated to the north façade. A new opening was inserted into the face of the building, and consists of a single wood door with a vision panel (ca. 2012)
- A fabric awning and metal support posts were installed above the north entrance (ca. 2012)
- Two glazed dormers were added to the south elevation. These new dormers were oriented to align with the original dormers on the north elevation (ca. 2014)
- Diamond-paned glazing in the west-facing windows was replaced with stained rondel glass (ca. 2012)
- Minor modifications were made to signage. The wall-mounted sign on the west façade was added; the lower face on the north pole sign was modified to read “PUBLIC HOUSE” (ca. 2012)
- A wood trash enclosure was constructed at the east end of the parking lot (ca. 2012)
- Brick accent walls and planters were added to the parking lot; the original brick perimeter wall at the parking lot was augmented to include piers with horse head busts; a brick walkway and patio were added to the north façade; and a brick wall was added in front of the west entrance, presumably to denote its reconfiguration from a primary to a secondary entrance (ca. 2012)
- Improvements were made to some interior spaces. While the tavern and dining rooms generally retain their original fabric, various upgrades were made to restrooms, kitchen facilities, and other back-of-house spaces. The partial second floor, which historically housed storage spaces, offices, and other utilitarian functions, was repurposed into a modern, speakeasy-style lounge.

Nearly all of the above-listed alterations date to circa 2012, shortly after the restaurant/tavern was sold and new ownership undertook a series of minor alterations.

## 5. Historical Background and Context

### 5.1. Development of the Mid-Wilshire and Carthay Neighborhoods

The Project Site is located on the cusp of the Mid-Wilshire and Carthay communities, two predominantly residential districts in central Los Angeles that were largely developed between the 1920s and 1940s.<sup>23</sup>

Very generally speaking, Fairfax Avenue serves as the dividing line between these two communities; neighborhoods comprising the Mid-Wilshire area are located to the east of Fairfax, and those comprising Carthay are located to the west. Both communities are parsed into a number of smaller neighborhoods, each with its own visual character and sense of identity. Mid-Wilshire is transected by the Miracle Mile district, a dense, linear concentration of commercial development along the Wilshire Boulevard corridor.

These neighborhoods are located in proximity to what was historically one of the most lucrative sites for oil production in all of Los Angeles. In 1902, a vast natural oil reservoir known as the Salt Lake Oil Field was discovered near the La Brea Tar Pits, which eventually yielded millions of barrels of crude.<sup>24</sup> By the early twentieth century, the area was dotted with oil derricks and other pieces of infrastructure that were used to extract crude from the ground. As Los Angeles witnessed considerable growth in the early decades of the twentieth century, the Gilmore and Hancock families, who together owned most of the area, saw the economic value of real estate as more and more people arrived in Los Angeles, seeking to set down roots. It became clear that real estate development had the potential to be just as, if not more, profitable than oil extraction. By the 1930s, the Gilmores and Hancocks had subdivided almost all of the land to the north of Wilshire Boulevard, which pushed the trajectory of Los Angeles's development west and gave way to new communities like Beverly Grove, Fairfax, and Hancock Park.<sup>25</sup>

New development in the area consisted largely of residential neighborhoods, which consisted of both single-family and multi-family dwellings. Generally, these neighborhoods were marketed as discrete subdivisions and consisted of modest houses that were designed in a variety of Period Revival styles. Developed at the cusp of the automobile's ascent as the preferred mode of travel in Los Angeles, many of these neighborhoods feature garages, curb cuts, driveways, streetlights, and other physical attributes that are explicitly geared toward the car. Most of the houses in the vicinity of the Project Site were constructed between the 1920s and 1940s. By World War II, the neighborhood was largely built out.<sup>26</sup>

Similar efforts were also taking place to the south of Wilshire Boulevard. In 1922, J. Harvey McCarthy subdivided 136 acres to the south of Wilshire on which to develop a planned community with a distinctive sense of place. He named the new community Carthay Center, a variation of his surname.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> "SurveyLA Historic Resources Survey Report: Wilshire Community Plan Area," prepared by Architectural Resources Group, Inc. for the City of Los Angeles (2015), 6-7; "Mapping L.A.," *Los Angeles Times*, accessed Mar. 2020.

<sup>24</sup> N.H. Darton, et al., "Guidebook of the Western United States," bulletin published by the United States Geological Survey, Department of the Interior (1916), 95.

<sup>25</sup> "SurveyLA Historic Resources Survey Report: Wilshire Community Plan Area," 18.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. Additional information relating to broad development patterns in the area was gleaned through the analysis of historic aerial images and Sanborn fire insurance maps.

<sup>27</sup> City of Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources, "Carthay Circle," accessed Mar. 2020.

McCarthy envisioned Carthay Center as eventually developing into a complete community “with a church, elementary school, hotel, theater, commercial center, and a variety of housing opportunities.”<sup>28</sup> Captivated by California’s history, streets in Carthay Center were named for prominent figures in the California Gold Rush, and the Spanish Colonial Revival style was McCarthy’s architectural idiom of choice. Carthay Center was also the first in Los Angeles to be planned with underground utilities, an effort to retain an unfettered streetscape and keep the community free of unsightly poles and wires.<sup>29</sup>

From its inception, Carthay Center (later re-named Carthay Circle) was a desirable subdivision dominated by one-story, Period Revival style dwellings and smaller amounts of multi-family housing. The neighborhood was oriented around an irregular street grid that deviated from the orthogonality of adjacent neighborhoods and underscored McCarthy’s desire to render his development truly unique. By the early 1930s, the Carthay neighborhood had expanded to the south to also include the areas now known as South Carthay and Carthay Square, which carried forward the prevailing development pattern and architectural character as Carthay Circle but were associated with different developers. All sections of the Carthay community were largely built out by the onset of World War II.

Residential growth in central Los Angeles was accompanied by other types of development that arose to serve the day-to-day needs of those who lived nearby. Starting in the 1930s, commercial blocks began to coalesce along many of the area’s major streets: La Brea and Fairfax avenues and Pico, Olympic, and San Vicente boulevards. They were developed with a mix of retail stores, restaurants, markets, theaters, and other commercial uses, sowing the seeds for the commercial arteries that punctuate the area today.

Commercial development along Wilshire Boulevard played an important role in steering the growth of these neighborhoods. In 1921, A.W. Ross acquired land along a peripheral stretch of Wilshire Boulevard between La Brea and Fairfax avenues, which at the time was a dirt road surrounded by little more than grain farms and oil fields. Ross foresaw this stretch of Wilshire as eventually developing into a teeming shopping district that would rival the Downtown business district – an idea that was initially written off as quixotic, but became a reality as the proliferation of the car hastened the decentralization of the city and strung new development outward along these axial, car-oriented boulevards.

Ross’s prescience was validated in 1929 when Desmond’s, a prominent department store, opened a branch at Wilshire Boulevard and La Brea Avenue, miles west of the central business district.<sup>30</sup> Other retailers soon followed suit and opened stores in the area. By the 1930s, what had once been sardonically referred to as “Ross’s Folly” had rapidly evolved into the Miracle Mile, one of Los Angeles’s premier shopping destinations.<sup>31</sup> The Miracle Mile shopping district signified affluence, newness, and convenience, and embraced the advent of the automobile. It contrasted with the aging Downtown commercial core, and symbolized how the automobile could – and would – reshape the urban fabric.

Most of the neighborhoods in and around the Mid-Wilshire, Carthay, and Miracle Mile areas witnessed most of their development between the 1920s and 1940s, and were largely built out by World War II. Both first improved in the early postwar period, the two parcels comprising the Project Site – 800-830

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> City of Los Angeles, “Carthay Circle Preservation Plan,” adopted Dec. 9, 2010, 17.

<sup>30</sup> Aaron Betsky, “Miracle Mile’s Desmond Building Designed to Rise Above the Rest,” *Los Angeles Times*, Feb. 28, 1991.

<sup>31</sup> Ruth Wallach, *Miracle Mile in Los Angeles: History and Architecture* (Charleston: The History Press, 2013).

South Fairfax Avenue (1951) and 840 South Fairfax Avenue (1949) – are representative of how remaining undeveloped properties in this area of Los Angeles were filled in with postwar development in subsequent years.

## 5.2. Courtyard Apartments

Both residential buildings on the Project Site – 800 South Fairfax Avenue and 830 South Fairfax Avenue – are examples of courtyard apartments, a common type of multi-family housing in Los Angeles for much of the twentieth century that emerged in the 1910s and remained popular through the 1960s.

Courtyard apartments have their origins in the bungalow court, an architectural type which began appearing in Southern California in the 1910s. The typical bungalow court is composed of a series of small, detached single-family dwellings arranged around a common central courtyard. They were designed to emphasize shared outdoor spaces that leveraged Southern California’s temperate climate and provided residents with access to air and light – a departure from the dense, cramped apartment houses and tenements that were common in New York and other Eastern cities.<sup>32</sup> Bungalow courts were typically designed by contractors, not architects, and were modest in scale and accoutrement. They provided an affordable and attractive alternative to apartment living to households of modest means.

In the late 1910s and early 1920s, Los Angeles was amid a period of unprecedented population growth, and multi-family housing became a more popular and widely accepted option for living. Bungalow courts continued to be constructed at this time, but their low density was a shortcoming; the heightened demand for more housing at this time led architects and contractors to take existing building forms and transpose them into new architectural types that could better accommodate the needs of a rapidly-growing city without sacrificing access to the out-of-doors.<sup>33</sup> These factors lent impetus to the emergence of the courtyard apartment, a regionally distinctive multi-family type that was rooted in the form of the bungalow court and represented an attempt to balance the goals of privacy and density.

Courtyard apartments were distinguished from bungalow courts in several key ways. In contrast to bungalow courts – which tended to be low-slung and single-story – courtyard apartments were denser and noted by their multi-story massing, which could accommodate twice as many units and make more efficient use of a residential lot. Whereas bungalow courts most often comprised multiple freestanding buildings, courtyard apartments contained their residential units in a single building, or sometimes a pair of buildings, again with the intent of maximizing density. And finally, while bungalow courts were geared toward those of modest means, courtyard apartments targeted the growing middle class and were marketed as a somewhat more dignified type of urban housing.<sup>34</sup> As such, courtyard apartments tended to include more articulation and detail than their forebears, and often incorporated elements of Mediterranean-inspired architectural styles that were immensely popular at this time.

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<sup>32</sup> SurveyLA, Citywide Historic Context Statement, “Context: Residential Development and Suburbanization, 1880-1980, Theme: Multi-Family Residential Development, 1895-1970,” Dec. 2018, 40-48.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 52.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 52-53.

The earliest courtyard apartments in Los Angeles began appearing in the 1910s, but it was not until the 1920s that this variant of multi-family housing truly came of age. By this time, myriad examples of courtyard apartments could be found in and around Los Angeles, contributing to the scale and form of residential neighborhoods and becoming an ever-more-ubiquitous part of the region's urban fabric. The zenith of the courtyard apartment type is typically identified as the 1920s and early 1930s. Examples of courtyard apartments that were built at this time frequently featured a U-shaped plan, contained between four and twenty units, and rarely exceeded two stories in height. They "had no need to advance or radically depart from common building technologies of the period from 1910 to 1930," and were typically designed in the various Period Revival styles that were popular at the time.<sup>35</sup> Some architects, including brothers F. Pierpont and Walter Davis and husband-and-wife Arthur and Nina Zwebell, designed elaborate courtyard apartment that became important examples of this housing type.

The articulated courtyard apartments of the 1920s and early 1930s were supplanted by more stripped-down, vernacular versions in the Depression era. Reflective of the austerity of the era, the developers of courtyard apartments moved away from the elaborate courts of previous years and instead erected complexes that were less festooned and were designed in the more chaste American Colonial Revival or Minimal Traditional styles. Architects were rarely involved in their design.

The courtyard apartment type evolved again in the early postwar era in response to the unprecedented demand for new housing. For many young families just starting out, a single-family house was financially out of reach, and so suitable multi-family alternatives were needed in order to accommodate this surging demographic. Drawing upon mass production techniques that had been honed during the war, builders of courtyard housing were able to erect complexes that were larger and denser, often reaching three stories in height instead of two and sprawling across two or more residential lots. Postwar-era courtyard apartments continued to exhibit the basic form and program of their forebears – configuration around a central courtyard and access to open space – but instead of lush gardens these communal spaces were often occupied by concrete patios and swimming pools. Postwar-era courtyard apartments are also distinguished by their use of the Mid-Century Modern, Ranch, and other architectural styles that were befitting of the modern era. Most were vernacular, and forfeited quality of materials and design for stucco and wood forms which prioritized efficiency above architectural merit.<sup>36</sup>

### 5.3. Commercial Identity

The commercial building on the Project Site – 840 South Fairfax Avenue – has been occupied on a near-continuous basis by an Irish-themed restaurant and tavern called Tom Bergin's. In business since 1936 and operating at this location since 1949, Tom Bergin's is a legacy business that is associated with the commercial identity of Los Angeles.

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<sup>35</sup> Stephanos Polyzoides, et al., *Courtyard Housing in Los Angeles: A Typological Analysis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 9-10.

<sup>36</sup> SurveyLA, Citywide Historic Context Statement, "Context: Residential Development and Suburbanization, 1880-1980, Theme: Multi-Family Residential Development, 1895-1970," Dec. 2018, 57-61.



In Los Angeles and elsewhere, well-established and long-lived businesses take on important social qualities and often, over time, they organically mature into iconic and revered cultural institutions. Their endurance becomes ingrained into a community's collective memory and plays an integral role in defining a community's sense of cultural and commercial identity. Businesses such as these "have the power to bring people together, provide a sense of continuity with the past, and lend [cities] a rich and layered identity" that is rooted in aspects of their history.<sup>37</sup> Though the reasons belying their significance are typically rooted in tradition, culture, and other intangible qualities, these businesses are important because they build a very tangible bridge linking the present with the past.

Eminent urban sociologist Ray Oldenburg studied these venerable establishments at length, paying particular attention to the impact that these establishments had on community and social capital. From his research he concluded that to be healthy, members of a society must strike a balance between three key social realms: home life (called the "first place"), the workplace (the "second space"), and an intrinsically sociable setting that he named the "third place."<sup>38</sup> Third places, as defined by Oldenburg, included environments such as churches, restaurants, clubs, libraries, parks, and bars. These third places play an important social function by providing a space where one can relax in public, encounter familiar faces, and make new acquaintances and cultivate new relationships.<sup>39</sup> Oldenburg argues that these third places are not only desirable, but are essential to maintaining a civil society. They act as anchors of community life by facilitating friendly interaction and fostering a sense of belonging.

Drawing on Oldenburg's pioneering body of research, other sociologists subsequently set out to enumerate what defines a third place. Very generally speaking, third places tend to have a low profile and are notably absent of extravagance, or pretense. They are patronized by regulars who set the tone of the establishment and also help to recruit and induct newcomers. All patrons, irrespective of any socioeconomic qualifier, are treated as equals. The mood is playful and lighthearted. Patrons often experience the same feelings of warmth, possession, and belonging as they would in their own home or amid their own family and friends.<sup>40</sup> These third spaces are ones where people can brush their stresses and concerns to the side "and simply enjoy the company and conversation around them."<sup>41</sup>

For generations, bars and taverns have been fixtures of American neighborhoods and have stood as quintessential examples of how third places operate. They are democratic spaces where community members from all walks of life congregate, sit shoulder to shoulder without pulling rank, and engage in a common practice – drinking – most often over some lighthearted conversation and perhaps a televised sports game. These bars are regarded as enduring institutions that are there when one feels the need to escape the humdrum of life, decompress, and sit amongst a like-minded crowd.

Taverns produced a particular type of public sphere in America...In taverns people could mix together: you see men drinking alongside the people they work for...And once you add alcohol

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<sup>37</sup> San Francisco Heritage, "Sustaining San Francisco's Living History: Strategies for Conserving Cultural Heritage Assets," Sept. 2014, 3.

<sup>38</sup> "Ray Oldenburg, *The Great Good Place: Cafes, Coffee Shops, Bookstores, Bars, Hair Salons at the Heart of a Community* (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 1999), ix-xii.

<sup>39</sup> Rebekah White, "A Third Place," *New Zealand Geographic* 152 (Jul-Aug 2018), 6.

<sup>40</sup> Christopher Peterson, "Happy Places: Third Places," *Psychology Today*, Dec. 1, 2009, accessed Mar. 2020.

<sup>41</sup> Project for Public Spaces, "Ray Oldenburg," Dec. 21, 2008, accessed Mar. 2020.

in there, it changes the way everyone relates to each other. You end up with accelerated relationships – and occasionally cantankerous ones. People become more willing to go out and raise hell over things that they might have let go when sober.<sup>42</sup>

In addition to fostering community and belonging, bars and other third places also evince a strong and palpable sense of familiarity, continuity, and nostalgia and are regarded as valued cultural assets. They are physical expressions of culture and traditions that are passed along from generation to generation, and foster a sense of pride for the area or community in which one lives.

## 5.4. Tom Bergin's

Tom Bergin's was the eponymous establishment of Tom Bergin (1894-1978). Born and reared in Massachusetts, he was the progeny of a prominent Bostonian family who had immigrated to the United States from the County Kerry in Ireland. The Bergin family operated a number of drinking dens throughout Boston, including the Commercial Brewery and the Old Horseshoe Tavern in Haymarket Square. After serving as a naval aviator in World War I, Bergin matriculated at Boston University and earned a law degree. He subsequently moved to Los Angeles, where he represented those in the entertainment industry and cultivated close friendships with prominent figures including Bing Crosby.

Bergin shelved his legal career in pursuit of other opportunities. Census data from 1930 enumerate that by this time, he was employed as a sales manager at a furniture company.<sup>43</sup> By the mid-1930s he had set his sights on the service sector and aspired "to create an authentic pub, defined by warmth, great food, and exceptional hospitality" – a nod to his Irish heritage, and reminiscent of the bars that his family had owned and operated in Boston when he was a child.<sup>44</sup> In 1936, the entrepreneurial ex-lawyer secured a liquor license – purported to be the second oldest in Los Angeles – and subsequently opened a tavern known as Tom Bergin's Old Horseshoe Tavern and Thoroughbred Club. The business originally occupied a commercial storefront at 6110 Wilshire Boulevard, just a few blocks from 840 South Fairfax Avenue.<sup>45</sup>

The original name of Bergin's eponymous enterprise underscores the fact that he was an avid horseracing fan. Not long after opening, his tavern earned a reputation as a popular gathering place among horseracing and sports enthusiasts. In 1937, allegedly at the behest of friend Bing Crosby, Bergin was hired to preside over concessions and fine dining operations at the newly opened Del Mar Racetrack; however, his tenure at Del Mar was short-lived, as he soon returned to Los Angeles so that he could direct more energy toward his Old Horseshoe Tavern and Thoroughbred Club on Wilshire.<sup>46</sup>

Bergin's tavern proved to be a remarkable success, so much so that it quickly outgrew its modest quarters. By the 1940s, it had become evident that a larger, permanent location was needed so that the business could continue to grow and thrive. Toward this end, Bergin acquired a nearby parcel on a sparsely-developed stretch of Fairfax Avenue – just a stone's throw from the tavern's original location

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<sup>42</sup> Christine Sismondo, quoted in Rebecca Dalzell, "The Spirited History of the American Bar," *Smithsonian*, Aug. 2, 2011.

<sup>43</sup> 1930 United States Federal Census Records, accessed Aug. 2018 via Ancestry.com.

<sup>44</sup> Tom Bergin's, "History," accessed Aug. 2018.

<sup>45</sup> The business's original location was gleaned from historic City Directories, which list its address as 6110 Wilshire Blvd.

<sup>46</sup> Danny Jensen, "Photos: The Legends Behind Tom Bergin's Public House, Celebrating 80 Years," *LAist*, Feb. 10, 2016.

on Wilshire Boulevard – and constructed a new, purpose-built tavern and restaurant on the site. Completed in 1949, this new building embodied characteristics of the Tudor Revival style, loosely evincing a visual sense of the rural European countryside that corresponded with the tavern’s prevailing Irish theme. The new site was located slightly off the beaten path of Wilshire Boulevard, but since the building and its signage were oriented to the north they were visible to motorists who were passing by on the Miracle Mile, as well as to those who traveled along the busy Fairfax Avenue corridor.

The business relocated to 840 South Fairfax Avenue in 1949. By this time, its name appears to have been abbreviated to “Tom Bergin’s Old Horseshoe Tavern,” though it is not known precisely when the additional verbiage “Thoroughbred Club” was purged from the name. It had also evolved from a tavern into an establishment that also became known for food, as evidenced by the fact that banquettes, a dining room, and kitchen facilities were incorporated into the larger space. Rumor has it that a cadre of Bergin’s most loyal patrons chose “to disassemble the massive oak, horseshoe-shaped bar and carried it down Fairfax on poles to the new location,” rather than leave it behind at the Wilshire Boulevard site.<sup>47</sup> Bergin’s decision to relocate to Fairfax Avenue proved to be a keen business move. The new location could much better accommodate the droves of patrons who came to Bergin’s to eat, imbibe, and fraternize, which built a devoted clientele and rendered the business a beloved community institution. And indeed, the business thrived at its new site, drawing in old regulars and new customers alike and fostering the sense of inclusion and camaraderie that Bergin himself so strongly espoused.

Over time, as the business matured, it became steeped in a bevy of traditions that came to define the Tom Bergin’s experience and rendered the tavern one of Los Angeles’s most iconic institutions. Since the early 1950s, for instance, Tom Bergin’s has been inextricably tied to the Irish coffee, a rich, saccharine cocktail comprising coffee, sugar, and Irish whiskey topped with a layer of cream. “The hot coffee is meant to be sipped through the cold cream and the two are never, ever stirred together.”<sup>48</sup> It is accepted that the cocktail was conceived in an Ireland airport by chef and bar hand Joe Sheridan, but its introduction to the United States has long been embroiled in debate as two iconic West Coast establishments – Tom Bergin’s in Los Angeles and the Buena Vista Cafe in San Francisco – both claim to have been the first to have faithfully replicated the libation.<sup>49</sup> Whatever its origin, Irish Coffee quickly became a staple at Tom Bergin’s, and was arguably the single-most iconic cocktail that the tavern offered. Visiting Tom Bergin’s and ordering an Irish coffee became a right-of-passage among Angelenos and visitors who wanted to soak in the local culture. References to Tom Bergin’s were eventually accompanied by the tagline “The House of Irish Coffee,” by which the tavern became informally known.

Tom Bergin’s was also well known for its association with Saint Patrick’s Day, owing to its cultural identity as an Irish-themed pub and restaurant. On March 17 of every year between its opening in 1936 and its closure in 2018 (except for 2012, when interior renovations were being carried out), Bergin’s threw a boisterous celebration that was well known in Los Angeles as one of the most spirited places to celebrate the Saint Patrick’s Day holiday. “Bergin’s is not merely crowded on St. Patrick’s Day,” once remarked a veteran bartender, “it’s a madhouse. You just put your head down in the ice, as we say, and

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Patrick Mott, “A Great Day for the Irish at Tom Bergin’s,” *Los Angeles Times*, Mar. 14, 1987.

<sup>49</sup> Charles Perry, “Bergin’s Endures,” *Los Angeles Times*, Aug. 26, 1999.

serve, serve, serve. People are so crowded together, they can't even fight."<sup>50</sup> It was common for lines to wind down the block as droves of thirsty patrons eagerly waited to partake in the festivities over a Guinness (Irish stout), a Harp (Irish lager), or one of Bergin's signature Irish coffees and a plate of corned beef and cabbage. On Saint Patrick's Day of 1987, bartenders expected to serve 5,000 Irish coffees, some 1,500 cases of Harp, and "enough Guinness and Bass ale to float a team of horses out the door."<sup>51</sup> Crowds that year were so large that the Fire Marshal shut the bar down for surpassing its capacity.<sup>52</sup>

However, what was arguably the tavern's most storied tradition was the impromptu manner by which it honored its most loyal patrons. In the 1950s, so the story goes, Bergin scribbled the name of one of his steadfast regulars (named "Bud Wiser") on a shamrock cut from a cardboard box and then affixed it to the ceiling.<sup>53</sup> The practice quickly caught on. Shamrocks commemorating Bergin's friends and family were tacked onto the walls in the dining area, "and many of them only have last names, assuming, possibly, that everyone knew who they were."<sup>54</sup> Earning a shamrock at Tom Bergin's evolved into a rite of passage, as the cardboard cutouts memorialized one's loyalty and were seen as akin to belonging to a close-knit club. By the time it closed in 2018, some 6,000 cardboard cutouts adorned the building's walls and ceiling.<sup>55</sup> The older shamrocks were identified by their weathered appearance and a brown patina – vestiges of an era in which smoking was allowed inside of bars and restaurants – whereas newer shamrocks exhibited a greener hue. Most, if not all of these shamrocks appear to be extant and in situ.

From the start, Tom Bergin's earned a reputation as a favorite haunt among Hollywood celebrities in search of reprieve from the bustle of the studio environment. Like many of Los Angeles's most perdurable establishments, it organically evolved into an informal, *de facto* gathering place where actors and others involved in the entertainment business could imbibe and decompress. Renowned film actors Bing Crosby and Pat O'Brien, both personal friends of Bergin, were known to patronize the bar, as did many other celebrities across multiple generations, including actors Cary Grant, John Wayne, Lee Majors, Glenn Ford, Kiefer Sutherland, and Julia Roberts.<sup>56</sup> In 1960, the *Los Angeles Times* interviewed actress Vivian Vance at Bergin's over a cup of Irish coffee.<sup>57</sup> Many of these celebrity patrons were memorialized with a shamrock bearing their name, most of which can be found amid the cacophony of cardboard cutouts adorning the building's walls and ceiling. Cary Grant purportedly had his own reserved booth in the establishment, above which his shamrock now prominently hangs. In 1983, President Ronald Reagan, once an actor himself, famously received one of Bergin's signature shamrocks in the Oval Office.<sup>58</sup>

Tom Bergin's is also one of myriad bars across the nation that is believed by many to have been the inspiration for the hit television sitcom *Cheers*. While it is likely impossible, and most certainly futile, to

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<sup>50</sup> Patrick Mott, "A Great Day for the Irish at Tom Bergin's," *Los Angeles Times*, Mar. 14, 1987.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Gary Baum, "Legendary Hollywood Pub Where Kiefer Sutherland Once Romanced Julia Roberts Gets a Rebirth," *The Hollywood Reporter*, May 23, 2012.

<sup>53</sup> Danny Jensen, "Photos: The Legends Behind Tom Bergin's Public House, Celebrating 80 Years," *LAist*, Feb. 10, 2016.

<sup>54</sup> Rachel Olivier, "Irish Eyes Crying With Closing of Historic Pub, Tom Bergin's," *Larchmont Chronicle*, Jan. 25, 2018.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Gary Baum, "Legendary Hollywood Pub Where Kiefer Sutherland Once Romanced Julia Roberts Gets a Rebirth," *The Hollywood Reporter*, May 23, 2012.

<sup>57</sup> Cecil Smith, "The TV Scene: Bob, Natalie Favor Video Apartness," *Los Angeles Times*, Mar. 3, 1960.

<sup>58</sup> Julie Grist, "The New Faces Behind Tom Bergin's on Fairfax," *Larchmont Buzz*, Nov. 18, 2013.

either prove or refute that assertion, “it is true that John Ratzenberger, who played Cliff Clavin, and George Wendt, who played Norm Peterson, would often belly up to the bar” when they were off-set.”<sup>59</sup>

Bergin, a well-connected figure with friends in many realms, also cultivated relationships with professional athletes and sports franchises. In turn, many athletes and sports figures, seeking reprieve from the public eye and the demanding nature of their professional lives, became regular fixtures at Bergin’s tavern. Tommy Lasorda, the renowned baseball pitcher and longtime Dodger’s manager, could often be found imbibing and kibitzing amid the Bergin’s crowd.<sup>60</sup> And when Dan Reeves, Sr. moved his football franchise, the Rams, from Cleveland to Los Angeles in 1946, Tom Bergin’s emerged as the team’s off-field home base. Bergin’s tavern was a logical place for the team to meet, explained former Rams quarterback Jim Hardy, not only because Reeves and Bergin were good friends, but also because “most of the Rams lived in that part of town, the team offices were up on Beverly Boulevard and we practiced at Gilmore Stadium, which is where the CBS network is now. [It] was the closest place.”<sup>61</sup> Since athletes did not earn the exorbitant salaries that they do today and would often take civilian jobs in the off-season, some of the Rams helped out behind the bar at times that they were not on the field. Many of the players also drank at the tavern and played on the fastpitch softball team that Bergin sponsored.<sup>62</sup>

Many pieces of sports memorabilia and ephemeral elements have been tacked onto the tavern’s walls over time, memorializing the close relationship that Tom Bergin’s maintained with the world of professional sports. Notably, in 1951 Bergin hosted the Rams team at the tavern for a celebratory dinner after their surprise victory against the Cleveland Browns in the NFL Championship Game. As a display of gratitude, Reeves gave Bergin the team’s coveted World Championship Banner, an invaluable piece of memorabilia that was rediscovered during a recent remodel and is now prominently displayed inside.<sup>63</sup>

In spite of being one of the city’s oldest bars and restaurants, Tom Bergin’s remarkably only passed through four sets of owners over the course of its 82 years in operation. This stability in ownership most certainly played an instrumental role in maintaining the tavern’s unique character, and ensuring that its rich culture and storied traditions remained alive and well for generations of Angelenos to enjoy.

Tom Bergin presided over his eponymous establishment for 37 years. In 1973, after announcing his retirement, he sold the tavern to Mike Mandekic and T.K. Vodrey. “Both were dedicated regulars, and their varied backgrounds meshed perfectly with the tavern’s operational needs.”<sup>64</sup> Cognizant of the business’s legacy and the devoted clientele that Bergin had built, Mandekic and Vodrey vowed that their stewardship of Tom Bergin’s would not amount to any substantive changes, and that the tavern would continue to be a cherished local haunt where beer taps flowed and memories thrived. To assuage any lingering doubts toward this end, they assured the *Los Angeles Times* shortly after purchasing the business “that their attitude is reverent and they intend no changes in the hallowed haunt of the Irish,”

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<sup>59</sup> George Ramos, “When Crowds Exceed L.A.’s Posted Limits, Part’s Over,” *Los Angeles Times*, Apr. 10, 1988.

<sup>60</sup> Michael Darling, “Bergin’s Boys,” *Larchmont Ledger*, Aug. 30, 2017.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> John Rabe, “Toast the Return of the LA Rams at the Original Rams Bar, Under a Piece of Rams History,” *Off-Ramp (KPCC)*, Aug. 12, 2016.

<sup>63</sup> Rachel Olivier, “Irish Eyes Crying With Closing of Historic Pub, Tom Bergin’s,” *Larchmont Chronicle*, Jan. 25, 2018.

<sup>64</sup> Tom Bergin’s, “History,” accessed Aug. 2018.

save the fact that it would now be open for lunch.<sup>65</sup> Mandekic stepped down in the late 1990s; Vodrey remained at the helms until 2011, at which point he sold it after a tenure that spanned some 39 years.

In 2011, Tom Bergin's was sold to restaurateur Warner Ebbink and executive chef Brandon Boudet, an acclaimed duo who were best known for their "carefully calibrated nostalgia-infused endeavors" including Domenick's (a classic Italian restaurant and celebrity haunt in West Hollywood), Little Dom's (Los Feliz), and the 101 Coffee Shop (Hollywood Hills).<sup>66</sup> Ebbink and Boudet temporarily closed Bergin's in the summer of 2011 to carry out a considerable number of renovations, mostly to the interior, which amounted to seven months of work. They built an addition at the rear (east) to house a walk-in cooler and also extensively refurbished interior spaces, staying true to the tavern's distinctively weathered and hand-hewn ambiance. "We just replaced and repaired what needed to be replaced and repaired, then distressed them so people wouldn't even know," remarked Ebbink about the renovation work.<sup>67</sup> The main entrance was relocated from the west to the north elevation, the iconic horseshoe-shaped bar was provided a new copper top, and the thousands of shamrocks tacked onto the ceiling were removed, cleaned, and then very carefully reinstalled over a fresh coat of paint.<sup>68</sup> Dining facilities were also refreshed in this same vein, and various improvements were made to modernize back-of-house spaces.

When Tom Bergin's re-opened in the spring of 2012, it had clearly been freshened up, but because of Ebbink and Boudet's scrupulous attention to detail it appeared almost exactly as it always had. The most obvious (and welcome) changes pertained to the food; specifically, Boudet crafted a "new contemporary Irish menu" in which pub staples and classic Irish comfort dishes were elevated with quality ingredients and a modern flair.<sup>69</sup> Seasoned mixologists were also brought in to stock the bar with a carefully curated selection of Irish whiskeys and imported beers, though the tavern continued to offer pub staples such as Guinness, Harp, and, of course, unadulterated cups of its signature Irish coffee.

Though it re-opened to great fanfare, the refreshed Tom Bergin's did not attract enough customers to remain profitable and closed its doors in the summer of 2013, its fate unknown. Not long after its closure, renowned food critic Jonathan Gold penned a review that eulogized the establishment and the indelible impact it had on cultivating a sense of community during its nearly eighty years in business:

[Tom] Bergin's has always been decent, comforting and most of all *there*...it was a restaurant that Irish coffee-pounding revelers on St. Patrick's Day may not have realized was a restaurant at all, but which had nourished its community in so many ways since it opened in 1936...in the bar's lifetime, the neighborhood had gone from a low-rise Art Deco residential district to a high-density area of museums and skyscrapers; the famous Carthay Circle theater, site of so many glamorous premieres, had been demolished in favor of a generic office complex; and the Miracle Mile had boomed, fallen out of favor, and boomed again. The cool darkness of Bergin's was one of the few constants. It was home.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Lois Dwan, "Irish Haunt Unchanged," *Los Angeles Times*, Jul. 22, 1973.

<sup>66</sup> Gary Baum, "Legendary Hollywood Pub Where Kiefer Sutherland Once Romanced Julia Roberts Gets a Rebirth," *Hollywood Reporter*, May 23, 2012.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> August Brown, "Tom Bergin's Gets Set for a New Round of Drinks, Dining," *Los Angeles Times*, Apr. 13, 2012.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Jonathan Gold, "Goodbye to Tom Bergin's and the Best Colcannon in L.A.," *Los Angeles Times*, Jul. 5, 2013.



Just months after it closed, Tom Bergin's was purchased by Derek Schreck, an actor who had been a steadfast Bergin's patron since moving to the neighborhood. Schreck re-opened the iconic establishment in January 2014, keeping the interior largely intact but making some modifications to the menu (which focused more on pub staples than fine dining) and drinks selection (bottled beers were replaced with a tap system). The name was also augmented, slightly, to "Tom Bergin's Public House." As did previous owners, Schreck took great care in preserving the historical ephemera and décor that have long provided the tavern with its distinctive ambiance. Notably, he converted an attic niche that was previously used as an office into an intimate, members-only whiskey bar, Vestry, which offered an extensive collection of rare bourbons and ryes and featured "antique, rare, unavailable, or discontinued distillations by some of the most renowned makers in the business."<sup>71</sup> Vestry opened in July 2017.

However, business at Tom Bergin's continued to fall short of expectations, even under new ownership and a revamp of food and drink offerings. Many new, large-scale edifices hemmed in the modest commercial building and rendered it hard to see; frequent construction associated with Metro's subway extension beneath Wilshire Boulevard have resulted in numerous road closures; and, as Schreck noted in an 2018 interview with the *Los Angeles Times*, the overhead associated with running a business of this size stood in the way of its ability to turn a profit.<sup>72</sup> In early 2018, the kitchen was closed and hours were substantially reduced; by summer of 2018, Tom Bergin's closed once again. It reopened in early 2020.

## 5.5. Architecture and Design

### Mid-Century Modern Architecture

The residential buildings on the Project Site – 800 and 830 South Fairfax Avenue – are designed in a modest dialect of the Mid-Century Modern style, which was popular in the period after World War II.

"Mid-Century Modern" is a broad term that is used to describe the various derivatives of Modern architecture that flourished in the post-World War II period. These include post-war adaptations of the chaste and machined International Style, the rational aesthetic associated with post-and-beam construction, and more organic and expressive interpretations of the Modern architectural movement. Mid-Century Modernism was popular between the mid-1940s and early 1970s.<sup>73</sup> It proved to be a remarkably versatile idiom that was expressed through a wide variety of property types ranging from single residences, to large-scale housing tracts, to commercial buildings, and to institutional properties and college campuses. Its aesthetic was deftly incorporated into both high-style buildings and the local vernacular, and was employed by architects, developer-builders, and lay contractors alike.

Various experiments in Modern architecture that were introduced in the early twentieth century lent impetus to the Mid-Century Modern style. The International Style, which came out of Europe in the

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<sup>71</sup> Oren Pelig, "Vestry is the New Whiskey Lover's Hideaway at Tom Bergin's," *LAist*, Jul. 21, 2017.

<sup>72</sup> Jenn Harris, "Tom Bergin's Irish Pub Is Not Closing. It's Just Reducing its Hours and Closing its Kitchen," *Los Angeles Times*, Jan. 16, 2018.

<sup>73</sup> SurveyLA, Citywide Historic Context Statement Summary Tables, "Architecture and Engineering, 1850-1980."

1920s, introduced a cogent, straightforward approach to design that was characterized by simple geometries, smooth wall surfaces, the honest expression of structure and materials, and the absence of superfluous ornament.<sup>74</sup> International Style buildings were characteristically lithe, airy, “gleaming and seemingly machine-made.”<sup>75</sup> At about the same time, a group of maverick American architects including Frank Lloyd Wright and Irving J. Gill were also working with experimental new forms, methods, and materials in their quest to develop a truly indigenous style of American architecture.<sup>76</sup>

Mid-Century Modernism draws upon these earlier paradigms, and is emblematic of how the Modern movement was adapted to the conditions of post-World War II life. Over time, architects took the basic tenets of the International Style and similar experiments in domestic Modernism and transposed them into new dialects of Modernism that were both rational and sensitive to their respective physical and cultural contexts. In Southern California, this was manifest in an architectural vocabulary defined by structural and material expression, wide expanses of glass, and open, free-flowing interior plans.<sup>77</sup> Some architects, captivated by the movement’s emphasis on freedom of form and structural innovation, also incorporated sweeping forms and expressionistic elements into Mid-Century Modern design, referencing the organic and sculptural tendencies of architects like Frank Lloyd Wright and John Lautner.

Arguably more than anywhere else, Southern California was a locus of innovation with respect to post-war Modernism. In large part, this can be attributed to the advent of *Arts & Architecture* magazine’s Case Study House Program, an internationally recognized showcase of residential design that was commissioned by the magazine’s forward-reaching editor, John Entenza. Commencing in 1945 and continuing until 1966, the program publicized a total of thirty-six prototypical dwellings that were designed by a cadre of progressive architects, many of whom who would go on to become some of the region’s foremost exponents of postwar Modernism.<sup>78</sup> Entenza foresaw the extraordinary demand for new housing that affected American society after World War II, and intended for the program to showcase, in real time, how modern materials and methods could be applied to produce high-quality dwellings that were suited to mass production and attainable to the burgeoning middle class.<sup>79</sup>

Still, the Case Study House program was predicated upon home ownership, which was unattainable for many newcomers to mid-century Los Angeles, where costs of living rapidly outpaced the national average. Increasingly, commercial corridors were being zoned for multifamily development; the relatively uncomplicated volumes and minimal ornamentation associated with the Mid-Century Modern style made it a dependable style for maximizing lot lines on a modest budget. The developers of middle-income multi-family complexes, including those at 800 and 830 South Fairfax Avenue, favored the style for its aesthetic appeal as much as its cost-efficiency and versatility.<sup>80</sup> In addition, the style was adapted

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<sup>74</sup> Natalie W. Shivers, “Architecture: A New Creative Medium,” in *LA’s Early Moderns: Art/Architecture/ Photography* (Los Angeles: Balcony Press, 2003), 132.

<sup>75</sup> Mark Rozzo, “Architect Dion Neutra, Who Fought to Save His Father’s Iconic Buildings, Dies,” *Los Angeles Times*, Nov. 25, 2019.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, 124.

<sup>77</sup> SurveyLA, Citywide Historic Context Statement Summary Tables, “Architecture and Engineering, 1850-1980.”

<sup>78</sup> “National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, The Case Study House Program: 1945-1966,” prepared Dec. 2012, revised Mar. 2013.

<sup>79</sup> John Entenza, “Announcement: The Case Study House Program,” *Arts and Architecture* (Jan. 1945), 37-39.

<sup>80</sup> “Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement: Residential Development and Suburbanization, 1880-1980 – Multi-Family Residential Development 1895-1970,” 71.

to almost every other property type including commercial buildings, institutional campuses, industrial properties, and entire subdivisions. The Mid-Century Modern style was popular through the mid-1970s.

In SurveyLA, significant examples of Mid-Century Modern architecture are addressed in the “Architecture and Engineering/L.A. Modernism” context/subcontext combination. The following are identified as character-defining features of the Mid-Century Modern style:

- Direct expression of the structural system, often wood or steel post and beam
- Flat roof, at times with wide overhanging eaves
- Floor-to-ceiling windows, often flush-mounted metal framed
- Horizontal massing
- If Expressionistic: sculptural forms intersecting with geometric volumes
- If Expressionistic: curved, sweeping wall surfaces
- If Expressionistic: dramatic roof forms, such as butterfly, A-frame, hyperbolic paraboloid, folded plate, or barrel vault
- Simple, geometric volumes
- Unornamented wall surfaces

## Tudor Revival Architecture

840 South Fairfax Avenue is designed in a vernacular dialect of the Tudor Revival style (sometimes known as English Revival), an idiom that was popular in Southern California between approximately 1930 and 1950.

Tudor Revival style architecture is a derivative of the broader Period Revival movement, which flourished after World War I and heavily influenced Southern California’s architectural character in the interwar years. Broadly speaking, the Period Revival movement appropriated and reinterpreted – often loosely and eclectically – elements of historical architecture. To an extent, referencing past architectural styles represented a reaction against the machine age by evoking imagery of a romanticized past; in many places, and particularly in the rapidly growing region of Southern California, it also represented a search for identity. By visually referencing established forms and idioms, architects were able to infuse a sense of authenticity and perpetuity in a region that was conscious about its relative youth.<sup>81</sup>

The Tudor Revival style was among the myriad Period Revival idioms that were popular during the first half of the twentieth century. The style is an eclectic synthesis of early English building traditions that ranged from “thatch-roofed folk cottages to grand manors.”<sup>82</sup> In Los Angeles it represented something of a middle ground between the authentic roots of the Arts and Crafts movement and the whimsy and fantasy that often typified revivalist architecture. Architects used the Tudor Revival style because it was perceived as exemplifying tasteful restraint. Buildings designed in the Tudor Revival style “were

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<sup>81</sup> SurveyLA, Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement, “Context: Architecture and Engineering, Theme: Period Revival, 1919-1950,” Jan. 2016, accessed Mar. 2020.

<sup>82</sup> Virginia McAlester and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009), 358.

supposed to recall a pre-modern, pre-industrial, pre-urban and pre-class and ethnic-conflict period,” and evinced “a quiet country lifestyle and the picturesque cottages of old England.”<sup>83</sup>

Given its eclectic roots, the Tudor Revival style was interpreted by different architects in myriad ways, but in the most general of terms Tudor Revival buildings were designed to mimic the architectural traditions of Medieval England. It was most often applied to middle-class dwellings but was sometimes adapted to other types of properties including small-scale commercial buildings, churches, and schools.

SurveyLA distinguishes between two discrete periods of the Tudor Revival movement: Early Tudor Revival (1895-1929), which is associated with the Arts and Crafts movement, and Late Tudor Revival (1930-1950), which is associated with the Period Revival movement and its penchant for reinterpreting past traditions in somewhat freeform and whimsical ways. Constructed in 1949, 840 South Fairfax Avenue falls into the Late Tudor Revival category. In SurveyLA, significant examples of Late Tudor Revival architecture are addressed in the “Architecture and Engineering/Period Revival” theme/subtheme combination. The following are identified as character-defining features of the Late Tudor Revival style:

- Decorative half-timbering
- Entrance vestibules with arched openings
- Massive chimneys that are a prominent visual element
- Predominantly brick or stucco exteriors, or a combination
- Steeply-pitched, usually multi-gabled roofs
- Tall, narrow multi-paned casement windows arranged in groups
- Usually two stories in height

## 5.6. Architects and Builders

### Samuel Reisbord, Architect

Permit records indicate that one of the residential buildings on the Project Site, 800 South Fairfax Avenue, was designed by architect Samuel Reisbord.<sup>84</sup>

Samuel “Sam” Reisbord (1904-1985) was born in Kiev, which was then part of the Russian Empire, in 1904. Reisbord and his family immigrated to the United States when he was a child. After earning his baccalaureate degree in Architecture from the University of Pennsylvania in 1929, Reisbord practiced architecture in Philadelphia offices. In 1931, he married Jeanette Markowitz, a journalist and daughter of Russian immigrants.<sup>85</sup> The couple moved together to the Soviet Union later that year, where Jeannette worked for the Moscow bureau of the *New York Times* while Sam took a role under Albert Kahn, consulting architect to the State Industrial Design Trust in Moscow, helping design the Moscow

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<sup>83</sup> Steve Carney, “Architecture Spotlight: Tudor Revival a European Fantasy Fit for the Dream Factory,” *Los Angeles Times*, Jan. 20, 2018.

<sup>84</sup> Though the adjacent residential building at 830 South Fairfax Avenue was constructed at the time same and is nearly identical in design, Reisbord’s name is not listed on the original building permit for that building.

<sup>85</sup> “Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Marriage Index, 1885-1951” [database online], accessed Mar. 2020 via Ancestry.com.



subway and an automobile factory.<sup>86</sup> At the outbreak of the Second World War, the Reisbords fled Russia for Hawaii, where Sam worked at the U.S. military bases Hickam Field and Pearl Harbor.<sup>87</sup> He subsequently worked as an architect for the Canol Project, “a sub-Arctic pipeline and refinery project for [the construction firm of] Bechtel-Price-Callahan and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.”<sup>88</sup>

By the mid-1940s, Reisbord had relocated to Los Angeles with his family, and worked in the office of renowned architect Paul R. Williams from 1944 to 1946.<sup>89</sup> The Reisbords chose to reside in the Echo Park neighborhood, then a magnet for leftist activists which was seen as somewhat secure from anti-Communist sentiment that was widespread in the city at the time. Though not members of the Communist party, the couple sought to avoid suspicion due to their time in Moscow in the 1930s.<sup>90</sup>

Reisbord branched out to form his own architectural practice in 1946, just as Southern California was entering into a period marked by rapid growth and suburban expansion. In the early postwar period he built a reputation as a prolific local architect, designing a number of buildings in neighborhoods in central Los Angeles and Westside neighborhoods. The majority of Reisbord’s commissions consisted of mid-scale apartment buildings, though he also designed a lesser number of low-rise office buildings and small hotels. Among Reisbord’s more notable commissions were the Beverly Carlton Hotel (9600 Olympic Boulevard), a residential hotel in Beverly Hills where Marilyn Monroe once resided; the Crocker Citizens Building (now the Corporate Center, 251 South Lake Avenue), a mid-rise commercial office complex in Pasadena; public schools in Culver City; and the Wilshire Twilighter Motor Hotel (now the Dunes Inn, 4300 West Wilshire Boulevard) in the Park Mile district of Los Angeles. Reisbord designed almost exclusively in the Mid-Century Modern style, employing the simple geometries and economical material palettes that were popular at the time. Most of his designs were modest examples of the style.

For a brief period between 1965 and 1969, Reisbord worked in partnership with fellow architect Jerrold M. Caris and operated under the name of Reisbord and Caris. It is not known when he retired, but references to Reisbord and his firm are scant after the late 1960s. Reisbord died in Los Angeles in 1985.<sup>91</sup>

## Albert Rothenberg, Builder

Permit records indicate that the residential building at 830 South Fairfax Avenue was designed and constructed by Albert Rothenberg, and that the residential building at 800 South Fairfax Avenue was constructed by the Westside Building Company, of which Rothenberg served as President.

Abraham Albert Rothenberg (ca. 1888-1977) was born to a Jewish family in Russia, and emigrated to the United States in 1904. Little is known about Rothenberg’s early life and education; he is alternatively

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<sup>86</sup> “Reisbord, Jeannette (95),” *Los Angeles Times*, Sept. 16, 2001.

<sup>87</sup> Jillian O’Connor et al, “Finding Aid for the Samuel Reisbord papers, 1923-circa 1976,” Architecture and Design Collection, Art, Design, and Architecture Museum, University of California, Santa Barbara, accessed Mar. 2020.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Daniel Hurewitz, *Bohemian Los Angeles and the Making of Modern Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 160-1, 320.

<sup>91</sup> “U.S., Social Security Death Index, 1935-2014” [database online], accessed Mar. 2020 via Ancestry.com.

referred to as an architect, builder, and developer, but it is not known if he had training or licensure in architecture or if he was involved in the design-build approach to development. City directories and other documentary records indicate that Rothenberg arrived in Los Angeles in the mid-1920s, initially residing in the multi-ethnic Boyle Heights neighborhood and eventually settling in the Los Feliz area.<sup>92</sup>

There is relatively little mention of Rothenberg in newspapers and other sources, but he appears to have been involved in the real estate industry by designing and building single-family houses on speculation. One of his better-known commissions dates to 1934, when he designed and built a house in Westwood at 763 Malcolm Avenue called the Florentine Mansion – though it more closely resembled a typically scaled suburban dwelling. The residence was promoted by the Janss Investment Company and was described in the *Los Angeles Times* as a “spacious ten-room, two-story structure...[with a] large studio window from which may be seen metropolitan Los Angeles and the far distant mountains.”<sup>93</sup> The Florentine Mansion appears to have typified Rothenberg’s business model where he purchased land, designed and built a speculative house, and then put it up for sale upon its completion. Rothenberg also designed and built his own family residence, which is still standing, at 2162 Talmadge Street in Los Feliz.

Rothenberg was also involved in the construction and management of multi-family complexes throughout Los Angeles. By the early postwar period, he had associated with a property management company called the Westside Building Company, of which he was president. Utilizing a similar business model that he had used in previous ventures, Rothenberg and the Westside Building Company erected income-producing apartment complexes and then managed them – which is how the buildings at 800 and 830 South Fairfax Avenue were conceived in 1951. The company operated other apartments in the same vein, most of which appear to have been located in central Los Angeles and on the Westside.

In the early 1970s, the Westside Building Company and Rothenberg were the defendants in a lawsuit, in which the company was accused of refusing to rent to tenants of Japanese American and African American heritage. The company entered into a consent decree, which enjoined it from further discriminatory acts and required it to provide staff with sensitivity training. The case was noteworthy as “the first suit in which the Department of Justice alleged that Japanese Americans have been victims of racial discrimination in housing” under the federal Fair Housing Act of 1968.”<sup>94</sup> The company operated a total of 329 units, including the two buildings on the Project Site at 800 South Fairfax Avenue and 830 South Fairfax Avenue, when the consent decree was issued.<sup>95</sup> Rothenberg died in Los Angeles in 1977.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Gleaned from city directories (various dates), accessed Mar. 2020 via the Los Angeles Public Library.

<sup>93</sup> “Many Charming Items Seen in New Residence,” *Los Angeles Times*, Jul. 1, 1934.

<sup>94</sup> “Two Firms Agree to End Housing Discrimination,” *Los Angeles Valley News*, Jul. 7, 1973.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> “U.S., Social Security Death Index, 1935-2014” [database online], accessed Mar. 2020 via Ancestry.com.

## 6. Regulatory Framework

### 6.1. National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places (National Register) is the nation's master inventory of known historic resources. Established under the auspices of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Register is administered by the National Park Service (NPS) and includes buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts that possess historic, architectural, engineering, archaeological, or cultural significance at the national, state, or local level. Eligibility for in the National Register is addressed in National Register Bulletin (NRB) 15: *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. NRB 15 states that in order to be eligible for the National Register, a resource must both: (1) be historically significant, and (2) retain sufficient integrity to adequately convey its significance.

Significance is assessed by evaluating a resource against established eligibility criteria. A resource is considered significant if it satisfies any one of the following four National Register criteria:<sup>97</sup>

- Criterion A (events): associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
- Criterion B (persons): associated with the lives of significant persons in our past;
- Criterion C (architecture): embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represents the work of a master, or that possesses high artistic values, or that represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction;
- Criterion D (information potential): has yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Once significance has been established, it must then be demonstrated that a resource retains enough of its physical and associative qualities – or *integrity* – to convey the reason(s) for its significance. Integrity is best described as a resource's "authenticity" as expressed through its physical features and extant characteristics. Generally, if a resource is recognizable as such in its present state, it is said to retain integrity, but if it has been extensively altered then it does not. Whether a resource retains sufficient integrity for listing is determined by evaluating the seven aspects of integrity defined by NPS:

- Location (the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred);
- Setting (the physical environment of a historic property);
- Design (the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property);

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<sup>97</sup> Some resources may meet multiple criteria, though only one needs to be satisfied for National Register eligibility.

- Materials (the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular manner or configuration to form a historic property);
- Workmanship (the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory);
- Feeling (a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time);
- Association (the direct link between an important historic event/person and a historic property).

Integrity is evaluated by weighing all seven of these aspects together and is ultimately a “yes or no” determination – that is, a resource either retains sufficient integrity, or it does not.<sup>98</sup> Some aspects of integrity may be weighed more heavily than others depending on the type of resource being evaluated and the reason(s) for the resource's significance. Since integrity depends on a resource's placement within a historic context, integrity can be assessed only after it has been concluded that the resource is in fact significant.

## 6.2. California Register of Historical Resources

The California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) is an authoritative guide used to identify, inventory, and protect historical resources in California. Established by an act of the State Legislature in 1998, the California Register program encourages public recognition and protection of significant architectural, historical, archeological, and cultural resources; identifies these resources for state and local planning purposes; determines eligibility for state historic preservation grant funding; and affords certain protections under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The structure of the California Register program is similar to that of the National Register, though the former more heavily emphasizes resources that have contributed specifically to the development of California. To be eligible for the California Register, a resource must first be deemed significant under one of the following four criteria, which are modeled after the National Register criteria listed above:

- Criterion 1 (events): associated with events or patterns of events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States;
- Criterion 2 (persons): associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history;
- Criterion 3 (architecture): embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values;
- Criterion 4 (information potential): has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, state, or the nation.

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<sup>98</sup> Derived from NRB 15, Section VIII: “How to Evaluate the Integrity of a Property.”



Mirroring the National Register, the California Register also requires that resources retain sufficient integrity to be eligible for listing. A resource's integrity is assessed using the same seven aspects of integrity used for the National Register. However, since integrity thresholds associated with the California Register are generally less rigid than those associated with the National Register, it is possible that a resource may lack the integrity required for the National Register but still be eligible for listing in the California Register.

Certain properties are automatically listed in the California Register, as follows:<sup>99</sup>

- All California properties that are listed in the National Register;
- All California properties that have formally been determined eligible for listing in the National Register (by the State Office of Historic Preservation);
- All California Historical Landmarks numbered 770 and above; and
- California Points of Historical Interest which have been reviewed by the State Office of Historic Preservation and recommended for listing by the State Historical Resources Commission.

Resources may be nominated directly to the California Register. State Historic Landmarks #770 and forward are also automatically listed in the California Register. There is no prescribed age limit for listing in the California Register, although guidelines state that sufficient time must have passed to obtain a scholarly perspective on the events or individuals associated with a resource.

### 6.3. City of Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Ordinance

The local designation programs for the City of Los Angeles include Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) designation for individual resources and the adoption of Historic Preservation Overlay Zones (HPOZs) for concentrations of buildings, commonly known as historic districts.

The City of Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Ordinance (Chapter 9, Section 22.171 *et seq.* of the Los Angeles Administrative Code) defines an HCM as any site (including significant trees or other plant life located thereon), building, or structure of particular historic or cultural significance to the City of Los Angeles, meaning that it meets one or more of the following criteria:

1. It is identified with important events of national, state, or local history, or exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city, or community; or
2. It is associated with the lives of historic personages important to national, state, city, or local history; or

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<sup>99</sup> California Public Resources Code, Division 5, Chapter 1, Article 2, § 5024.1.

3. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction; or represents a notable work of a master designer, builder, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age.

Local historic preservation ordinances often include standards for determining whether a resource retains sufficient integrity to merit local historic designation, and this language can vary widely from municipality to municipality. Some local ordinances do not mention integrity at all. The Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Ordinance does not include language about integrity. When evaluating historic resources in municipalities where the historic preservation ordinance does not provide guidance for assessing integrity, in accordance with best professional practices it is customary to use the National Register seven aspects of integrity to assess whether or not a resource retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance at the local level.

As with the National and California Registers, in assessing integrity at the local level, some aspects may be weighed more heavily than others depending on the type of resource being evaluated and the reason(s) for its significance. For example, if a property is significant as an excellent example of an architectural style, integrity of design, workmanship and materials may weigh more heavily than integrity of setting. In contrast, if a property is significant for its association with an important event or person, integrity of setting, feeling, and association may weigh more heavily than integrity of design.

## 6.4. City of Los Angeles Historic Preservation Overlay Zone Ordinance

Historic districts in Los Angeles are regulated by the Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ) Ordinance. The City of Los Angeles established the HPOZ ordinance in 1979. The ordinance was revised in 1997, 2000, 2004, and 2017. According to §12.20.3.B.17 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC), an HPOZ is “any area of the City of Los Angeles containing buildings, structures, landscaping, natural features or lots having historic, architectural, cultural or aesthetic significance.”<sup>100</sup> The ordinance describes the procedures for the creation of new HPOZs, the powers and duties of HPOZ boards, and the review process for development projects within HPOZs. New HPOZ designations are typically initiated by the City Council through a motion of the Councilmember of the district, though the Director of Planning, the Cultural Heritage Commission, the City Planning Commission, or the owners and renters of properties within the district may also initiate an HPOZ designation. Once the designation is initiated, a historic resource survey of the district is completed by a qualified professional and reviewed for completeness and accuracy by City staff; public workshops and hearings are conducted; the survey is certified by the Cultural Heritage Commission; and the zoning changes associated with the HPOZ are ultimately adopted by the City Planning Commission and City Council.

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<sup>100</sup> City of Los Angeles, Ordinance No. 184903, amending Section 12.20.3 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code, Jun. 17, 2017.

## 6.5. CEQA and Historical Resources

### CEQA Thresholds

Enacted in 1970, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is the principal statute mandating environmental assessment of land use and development projects in California. The primary goal of CEQA is to (1) evaluate a project's potential to have an adverse impact on the environment, and (2) minimize these impacts to the greatest extent feasible through the analysis of project alternatives and, if needed, implementation of mitigation measures.

Historical resources are considered to be a part of the environment and are thereby subject to review under CEQA. Section 21084.1 of the California Public Resources Code states that for purposes of CEQA, "a project that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment."<sup>101</sup> This involves a two-part inquiry. First, it must be determined whether the project involves a historical resource. If it does, then the second part involves determining whether the project may result in a "substantial adverse change in the significance" of the historical resource.

To address these issues, guidelines relating to historical resources were formally codified in October, 1998 as Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines. The guidelines state that for purposes of CEQA compliance, a "historical resource" shall be defined as any one of the following:<sup>102</sup>

1. A resource listed in, or determined to be eligible by the State Historical Resources Commission for listing in, the California Register of Historical Resources.
2. A resource included in a local register of historical resources, or identified as significant in a qualified historical resource survey, shall be presumed to be historically or culturally significant. Public agencies must treat any such resource as significant unless the preponderance of evidence demonstrate that it is not historically or culturally significant.
3. Any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript which a lead agency determines to be historically significant or significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California may be considered to be a historical resource, provided the lead agency's determination is supported by substantial evidence in light of the whole record. Generally, a resource shall be considered by the lead agency to be "historically significant" if the resource meets the criteria for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources.

Once it has been determined that a historical resource is present, it must then be determined whether the project may result in a "substantial adverse change" to that resource. Section 5020.1. of the California Public Resources Code (PRC) defines a substantial adverse change as the "demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration such that the significance of an historical resource would be

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<sup>101</sup> California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15064.5.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

impaired.” Furthermore, according to Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR), the significance of a historical resource is materially impaired when a project:

- A. Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics of an historical resource that convey its historical significance and that justify its inclusion in, or eligibility for, inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources; or
- B. Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics that account for its inclusion in a local register of historical resources pursuant to section 5020.1(k) of the Public Resources Code or its identification in an historical resources survey meeting the requirements of section 5024.1(g) of the Public Resources Code, unless the public agency reviewing the effects of the project establishes by a preponderance of evidence that the resource is not historically or culturally significant; or
- C. Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics of a historical resource that convey its historical significance and that justify its eligibility for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources as determined by a lead agency for purposes of CEQA.

Generally, a project that follows the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* (1995), Weeks and Grimmer, shall be considered as mitigated to a level of less than a significant impact on the historical resource.<sup>103</sup>

## Secretary of the Interior's Standards

As stated above, projects that conform to the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* (“the Standards”) are generally treated as projects that will not result in a substantial adverse change to historical resources. The Standards are widely used to guide federal, state, and local agencies as they carry out their historic preservation programs and responsibilities.

The Standards are:

- 1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or to be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the buildings and its site and environment.
- 2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property will be avoided.
- 3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.

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<sup>103</sup> 14 CCR 15064.5



4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archaeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

## 7. Evaluation of Eligibility

### 7.1. Evaluation of Significance

#### 800-830 South Fairfax Avenue

ARG concludes that neither 800 South Fairfax Avenue nor 830 South Fairfax Avenue is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register of Historical Resources, as a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM), or part of a historic district/Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ), as follows.

***National Register Criterion A:*** associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

***California Register Criterion 1:*** associated with events or patterns of events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.

***Local (HCM) Criterion 1:*** is identified with important events of national, state, or local history, or exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city, or community.

Built in 1951, the buildings at 800 South Fairfax Avenue and 830 South Fairfax Avenue are loosely associated with broad patterns of residential development in central Los Angeles in the early postwar period. Specifically, their construction demonstrates how in neighborhoods like Mid-Wilshire and Carthay, both of which were well-established and largely built out by World War II, the few parcels that remained undeveloped were acquired and subsequently improved as infill projects, rounding out patterns of development in these neighborhoods and filling in gaps in the streetscape. Moreover, these buildings are demonstrative of how multi-family residential buildings became larger and denser during this period, as Los Angeles was amid a period marked by extraordinary population growth and a heightened demand for new, quality housing options that were affordable to a growing middle class. These buildings are representative of the scale, type, and character of multi-family development that was woven into Los Angeles's established neighborhoods in the early postwar years.

However, the subject buildings are more representative of these development patterns than they are exemplary. Numerous examples of multi-family residential properties, similar in bulk, scale, and general appearance, were constructed throughout Los Angeles in the period after World War II, and many of these comparable properties are extant and intact. Due to their ubiquity, the subject buildings are associated with broad patterns of development in a way equally represented by the numerous other post-World War II-era multi-family properties in the City that bear similar visual and contextual qualities.

There is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that the property is associated with an event that is considered singularly significant to history. Research did not indicate that either property functioned as anything more than a typical rental property over the course of its history.

For the reasons stated above, neither 800 South Fairfax Avenue nor 830 South Fairfax Avenue are associated with events or patterns of events that have made a significant contribution to history. Thus, neither building satisfies National Register/California Register Criterion A/1, or local Criterion 1.

***National Register Criterion B: associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.***

***California Register Criterion 2: associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history.***

***Local (HCM) Criterion 2: associated with the lives of historic personages important to national, state, city, or local history.***

Typical of rental properties, both 800 South Fairfax Avenue and 830 South Fairfax Avenue have been home to many individuals since their construction in 1951. Research did not reveal much information about the lives of these individuals, but based on what little information was available, it appears to have largely catered to single, middle-income renters. Absent any information about these people and their productive lives, there is no evidence to indicate that any one of them made notable contributions to local, state, or national history in the spirit of this criterion.

Permit records indicate that both buildings were constructed and managed by the Westside Building Company; the company continued to appear on permit records for both buildings through at least March 2019. The company was associated with builder and developer Albert Rothenberg. Research into the life and career of Rothenberg reveals that he was a successful builder, developer, and property manager who found success in the construction of single-family dwellings and rental residential properties in greater Los Angeles. However, he was one of numerous individuals who were involved in real estate development and constructed properties for the purpose of generating income through resale or rental agreements. There is insufficient evidence to distinguish Rothenberg from other real estate developers of his era, or to demonstrate that his contributions to his vocation yielded any historical contributions.

For the reasons stated above, neither 800 South Fairfax Avenue nor 830 South Fairfax Avenue is associated with the lives of significant persons. Therefore, neither building satisfies National Register/California Register Criterion B/2 or local Criterion 2.

***National Register Criterion C: embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represents the work of a master, or that possesses high artistic values, or that represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.***

***California Register Criterion 3: embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values.***

***Local (HCM) Criterion 3:*** *it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction; or represents a notable work of a master designer, builder, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age.*

Both 800 South Fairfax Avenue and 830 South Fairfax Avenue exhibit some characteristics of the Mid-Century Modern style, a popular choice for residential architecture in the post-World War II era. Common character-defining features of the Mid-Century Modern style that are expressed in the design of the subject buildings include horizontal massing, simple geometric volumes, flat roofs with overhanging eaves, floor-to-ceiling wood framed windows, and chaste, unornamented wall surfaces.

Given its immense popularity for nearly three decades, between the mid-1940s and mid-1970s, the Mid-Century Modern style is an extremely common architectural style in Los Angeles and was applied to many of the residential buildings that were constructed in the city at this time. When compared against the broader pool of Mid-Century Modern residential buildings in Los Angeles, the two subject buildings read as relatively vernacular buildings that are more typical of the style than they are exemplary. They lack the complexity of form, incorporation of new materials and methods, and level of articulation and detail that are found on comparable examples of the style. In contrast, these buildings demonstrate how the basic vocabulary of the Mid-Century Modern style was transposed into a vernacular idiom that could be applied to everyday construction. Their Mid-Century Modern styling adds some visual interest to otherwise-plainspoken structures but do not make a bold architectural statement. These buildings, then, do little in the way of showcasing the key tenants of the Mid-Century Modern style and the Modern movement with which it is derived: clarity of form, material and structural expression, experimentation with methods and materials, and a blurring of lines delineating indoors and outdoors.

Similarly, both buildings are examples of courtyard apartments, a common type of multi-family housing in Los Angeles between the 1910s and 1960s. While the buildings demonstrate how residential complexes were often oriented inward toward courtyards, both as a means of providing privacy and as a means of maintaining access to open space without sacrificing density, they are not notable examples of this housing type. They are not early examples of the type, nor do they appear in any published literature about the topic. The courtyards are relatively compact and lack many of the distinguishing characteristics – large scale construction, paved courtyards, and integral swimming pools – that typify the evolution of courtyard apartments in the postwar period.

Neither building is notable on account of its method of construction. Both are typical, frame-and-stucco buildings that were constructed using common methods and materials of the day. There is nothing particularly unusual or noteworthy about the manner in which either building was constructed.

Neither building represents the notable work of a master. 800 South Fairfax Avenue was designed by Samuel Reisbord. Reisbord was an accomplished architect who is credited with designing a number of low and mid-rise apartment houses, commercial office buildings, and a handful of other properties including motels during the postwar period, all generally executed in the Mid-Century Modern style. 830 South Fairfax Avenue was designed by Albert Rothenberg, a building contractor and real estate developer who designed, built, and managed residential properties for profit. Both buildings were constructed by Rothenberg and managed by his property management company, the Westside Building Company. Both Reisbord and Rothenberg look to have been successful in their respective lines of work,



but there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that either warrants recognition as a master. Neither is mentioned in any of the standard literature on the topics of Modern architecture and construction, and neither building possesses high artistic values. There does not exist a significant enough concentration of buildings in the immediate area to constitute a historic district, so the buildings do not represent a significant entity whose components lack individual distinction.

For these reasons, neither 800 South Fairfax Avenue nor 830 South Fairfax Avenue is significant for reasons related to architecture or physical design. Therefore, neither building satisfies National Register/California Register Criterion C/3 or local Criterion 3.

***National Register Criterion D.*** *Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.*

***California Register Criterion 4.*** *Has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, state, or the nation.*

As an archaeological assessment was not conducted as part of this study, the property's potential for containing subsurface archaeological resources is unknown.

### ***Historic District/HPOZ Evaluation***

800-830 South Fairfax Avenue are straddled by HPOZs both to the west and east: Carthay Circle HPOZ and Miracle Mile HPOZ, respectively. Both of the HPOZs are generally characterized by their preponderance of single- and multi-family dwellings dating to the 1920s, '30 and '40s, and representing Period Revival styles popular during this period. The periods of significance for the HPOZs are 1922-1944 (Carthay Circle) and 1921-1953 (Miracle Mile). Although 800-830 South Fairfax Avenue were constructed in 1951, which falls within the period of significance for the adjacent Miracle Mile HPOZ, these buildings are visually and geographically incongruous with the rest of the HPOZ, which starts on the east side of Orange Grove Avenue, a block east of Fairfax Avenue.

Furthermore, the stretch of Fairfax Avenue on which these buildings sit has extremely varied visual character, with buildings representing different periods of development and use. The parcels to the north of the subject buildings, across 8<sup>th</sup> Street, contain a three-story parking structure for the Petersen Automotive Museum. To the south, the block contains (from north to south) Tom Bergin's Restaurant (1949), the Jean and Jerry Friedman Shalhevet High School (2015), and a five-story, mixed-use project called "Vinz on Fairfax" (2017). Across the street, on the west side of Fairfax Avenue, the side elevations of pre-World War II dwellings in the Carthay Circle HPOZ are visible. Due to the varied visual character of this stretch Fairfax Avenue, it does not appear that the subject buildings are part of a potential HPOZ, or that they should be included in either of the adjacent HPOZs.

## 840 South Fairfax Avenue

In June 2019, 840 South Fairfax Avenue was designated as Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) No. 1182. The property was designated under local Criterion 1, “exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city, or community,” as the long-time location of Tom Bergin’s, a business that bears a significant association with the commercial identity of Los Angeles.<sup>104</sup> Its period of significance is 1949-2018.

The building is not currently designated at the federal (National Register) or state (California Register) levels. According to research and analysis conducted as part of this study, ARG finds that it is eligible for listing in the National Register and California Register under criterion A/1.

Following is a discussion of how this determination was made.

***National Register Criterion A:*** *associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.*

***California Register Criterion 1:*** *associated with events or patterns of events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.*

840 South Fairfax Avenue is associated with broad patterns of history related to the social and cultural development of Los Angeles because of its longstanding association with Tom Bergin’s, an important legacy business with deep ties to the fabric of the local community. Tom Bergin’s is demonstrative of how longstanding local businesses can serve as “third places” – as defined by urban sociologists – and as such, foster a sense of collective identity among members of the communities in which they are located.

In business since 1936, and in near-continuous operation at this location since 1949, Tom Bergin’s is notable as one of the most iconic and enduring local businesses in Los Angeles. Over the course of its nearly eight decades in operation, Tom Bergin’s served its signature Irish coffee, other libations, and Irish-derived cuisine to scores of patrons, fostering a sense of community and camaraderie and rightfully earning a reputation as one of the most iconic and beloved local establishments in Los Angeles. It became – and continues to be – an invaluable cultural asset and an integral part of Angelenos’ sense of cultural and commercial identity. Generations of Angelenos shared the common experience of patronizing Tom Bergin’s, indulging in an Irish coffee or other signature libation or dish, and fraternizing among a like-minded clientele. Tom Bergin’s was patronized by customers from all walks of life – which ran the gamut from noted celebrities and athletes, to local residents, to affluent individuals and working class citizens – and exemplified the democratic precepts of third places by providing all patrons with the same shared experience and sense of camaraderie and belonging, providing a sense of respite – however fleeting – from the race, class, and socioeconomic barriers that have long stratified the City.

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<sup>104</sup> Los Angeles City Clerk, Council File: 19-0293, received Mar. 26, 2019, last changed Jun. 19, 2019.

For these reasons, 840 South Fairfax Avenue is associated with patterns of events that have made significant contributions to patterns of the social and cultural history of Los Angeles. Thus, the building is eligible for listing under National Register/California Register Criterion A/1.

***National Register Criterion B:*** *associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.*

***California Register Criterion 2:*** *associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history.*

By virtue of its use as commercial building, 840 South Fairfax Avenue has been accessible to the public since its construction in 1949, aside from a few brief periods during which it was temporarily closed for business. As such, many people have visited the building to patronize Tom Bergin's, including a number of celebrities, athletes, and other individuals of note.

It is typical for commercial buildings to be loosely associated with an array of people, as they are generally intended to be accessible to the public at large. However, there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that any one of the individuals associated with the subject building is historically significant in a manner that would merit consideration under this criterion. The tavern and restaurant's namesake and longtime owner, Tom Bergin, was a successful lawyer-turned-restaurateur with a big personality and a colorful biography, but there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that he made significant contributions to history. That he opened and operated a successful local business does not, in and of itself, provide sufficient evidence toward this end. The same can be said for subsequent owners Mike Mandekic and T.K. Vodrey, Warner Ebbink and Brandon Boudet, and Derek Schreck. While these individuals found success in their respective lines of work, there is insufficient evidence that any one of them made notable contributions to history in the spirit of this criterion.

Over the years, Tom Bergin's has been patronized by numerous actors, athletes, and other prominent individuals. Regular customers are said to have included Bing Crosby, Pat O'Brien, Cary Grant, John Wayne, Glenn Ford, Kiefer Sutherland, and Julia Roberts. While these figures are indisputably significant in the context of entertainment, there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that this building bears an association with any of their productive lives. Rather, it was a place where they, as well as many others sans celebrity status, would periodically patronize to drink, eat, and unwind from the rigors of daily life.

For these reasons, 840 South Fairfax Avenue does not appear to be associated with the lives of persons important to local, state, or national history. Thus, the building does not satisfy National/California Register Criterion B/2.

***National Register Criterion C:*** *embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represents the work of a master, or that possesses high artistic values, or that represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.*

***California Register Criterion 3:*** *embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values.*

840 South Fairfax Avenue exhibits some characteristics of the Tudor Revival style, a popular choice for neighborhood commercial architecture at its time of construction. The aesthetic of the Tudor Revival style also corresponded with the prevailing Irish theme of Tom Bergin's and evinced stereotypical imagery of the Irish countryside. Common character-defining features of the Tudor Revival style that are expressed in the design of the subject building include its steeply pitched, multi-gabled roof; brick, stucco, and wood exterior walls; prominent chimney; and tall, narrow casement windows arranged in groups. However, compared against the broader pool of Tudor Revival style buildings in Los Angeles, the building is more typical of the style than it is exemplary. It represents how the tenets of Tudor Revival architecture were transposed to the vocabulary of vernacular commercial buildings, to make loose reference to the prevailing Irish theme of the business that was housed within its four walls.

As a typical wood-frame building that was constructed using common methods and materials, there is nothing particularly unusual or noteworthy about the manner in which the building was constructed.

The building does not represent the notable work of a master. No architect is listed on the original building permit; the owner, Tom Bergin, is listed as the contractor. As previously noted, Bergin was an attorney-turned-restaurantier; he does not appear to have had an association with the building and construction trade. The building is a vernacular edifice and does not possess high artistic values. There does not exist a significant enough concentration of buildings in the immediate area to constitute a historic district, so the building does not represent a significant entity whose components lack individual distinction.

For these reasons, 840 South Fairfax Avenue is not significant for reasons related to architecture or physical design. Therefore, it does not satisfy National Register/ California Register Criterion C/3.

***National Register Criterion D.*** *Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.*

***California Register Criterion 4.*** *Has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, state, or the nation.*

As an archaeological assessment was not conducted as part of this study, the property's potential for containing subsurface archaeological resources is unknown.

## 7.2. Evaluation of Integrity

Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance, and is defined by the National Park Service (NPS) as the "authenticity of a property's historic identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the property's prehistoric or historic period."<sup>105</sup> NPS identifies seven aspects of integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

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<sup>105</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, *National Register Bulletin 16A: How to Complete the National Register Registration Form* (Washington D.C.: National Park Service, 1997), 4.

## 800-830 South Fairfax Avenue

For a property to be eligible for listing in the National and California Registers, or as a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument, it must first meet one or more eligibility criteria and also retain sufficient integrity to convey its historic significance. As stated in *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, “only after significance is fully established can you proceed to the issue of integrity.”<sup>106</sup> In accordance with best professional practices, it is customary to apply this same methodology when evaluating resources under state and local eligibility criteria. Since the buildings at 800 South Fairfax Avenue and 830 South Fairfax Avenue are not eligible for federal, state, or local listing, an analysis of integrity was not completed.

## 840 South Fairfax Avenue

The building at 840 South Fairfax Avenue was deemed to have sufficient integrity when it was listed as an HCM in 2019. Following is a summary of integrity for the building, as stated in the HCM designation:

- **Location:** the business was originally located nearby on Wilshire Boulevard, but the building, which was purpose-built for Tom Bergin’s, has remained on its original site since its construction in 1949. The building thus retains integrity of location.
- **Design:** while some minor alterations have been made to the building, they have not collectively resulted in substantive changes to its overall design. Its essential form, plan, massing, configuration, and vocabulary remain intact and legible. The building retains integrity of design.
- **Setting:** Sanborn maps and historic images indicate that when it was constructed, the building occupied a stretch of Fairfax Avenue that was sparsely developed. The surrounding area was primarily developed with low-scale residences, and Art Deco-style commercial buildings dominated the nearby Miracle Mile commercial district. Over time, development in the area has become much larger, denser, and evocative of contemporary modes of architecture. Originally a complement to the area’s prevailing development patterns and aesthetic character, the building, over time, has become anomalous as the context of the immediate area has changed and evolved. To the north of the building, the Petersen Automotive Museum was recently renovated (2015) with a new façade treatment comprising stainless steel ribbons and a bold color palette, a sharp visual deviation from existing buildings in the vicinity. The construction of the Jean and Jerry Friedman Shalhevet High School campus to the immediate south of the Tom Bergin’s building (2015), and the Vinz on Fairfax mixed-use development on the next parcel to the south (2017), further altered the setting of 840 South Fairfax Avenue by introducing buildings that were considerably larger and bulkier to this stretch of Fairfax Avenue, which was previously occupied by low-slung buildings. The construction of these large new developments has rendered this stretch of Fairfax Avenue much more varied and eclectic with respect to scale and visual character. That these large new developments were erected in such close proximity

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<sup>106</sup> National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of the Interior, 1990, revised 1991, 1995, 1997), 45.



to the Tom Bergin's buildings has had the effect of making the Tom Bergin's building appear more diminutive, though it retains its essential setting of being a commercial building set along a commercial corridor and flanked by residential neighborhoods. The building's integrity of setting has thus been compromised.

- Materials: with the exception of some new materials that were introduced during renovation and remodel projects, almost all of the building's original materials remain intact. It thus retains integrity of materials.
- Workmanship: distinguishing characteristics that provide the building with its distinctive visual character remain intact. The building thus retains integrity of workmanship.
- Feeling: the building retains its essential character-defining features and appearance from its historic periods. It therefore retains integrity of feeling.
- Association: though it is currently closed, the building retains the distinctive look, feel, and appearance of an Irish-themed pub and restaurant. It is accompanied by signage that connotes its historical use and occupancy. The building therefore retains integrity of association.

## 8. Impacts Analysis

### 8.1. Summary of Historical Resource Findings

The Project Site encompasses two legal parcels that are developed with the following three buildings:

- 800 South Fairfax Avenue (apartment building constructed 1951)
- 830 South Fairfax Avenue (apartment building constructed 1951)
- 840 South Fairfax Avenue (Tom Bergin's, commercial building constructed 1949)

In addition, the Project Site includes a surface parking lot that is located to the north of the commercial building at 840 South Fairfax Avenue and serves the Tom Bergin's restaurant and tavern; and two carports that are sited to the rear/east of the apartment buildings at 800 South Fairfax Avenue and 830 South Fairfax Avenue.

All three buildings on the Project Site, as well as their associated features, were evaluated for potential historical significance herein. This evaluation arrived at the following conclusions:

- 800 South Fairfax Avenue is not eligible for listing in the National Register or California Register, or as a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument.
- 830 South Fairfax Avenue is not eligible for listing in the National Register or California Register, or as a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument.
- 840 South Fairfax Avenue (Tom Bergin's) is locally designated as a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument. The designation includes exterior features and finishes, interior features and finishes in front-of-house spaces, and two freestanding pole signs. The designation excludes the surface parking lot that is located to the north of the building. In addition, the building is eligible for listing in the National Register and California Register under Criterion A/1.

Pursuant to Section 15064.5(a)(2) of the State CEQA Guidelines (CEQA Guidelines), the term "historical resource" includes a resource listed in a local register of historical resources or identified as significant in a historical resources survey meeting the requirements in Section 5024.1(g) of the Public Resources Code (PRC). As 840 South Fairfax Avenue is listed in Los Angeles's local register and is eligible for listing in the California Register and the National Register, it satisfies the definition of a historical resource as enumerated by the CEQA Guidelines. Using these same guidelines, no other buildings or improvements on the Project Site qualify as historical resources for purposes of CEQA.

### 8.2. Significance Threshold

According to the CEQA Guidelines, a project has the potential to impact a historical resource when the project involves a "substantial adverse change" in the resource's significance. Substantial adverse change is defined as "physical demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource or its

immediate surroundings such that the significance of an historical resource will be materially impaired.”<sup>107</sup>

The significance of a historical resource is materially impaired when a project:

- a) Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics of an historical resources that convey its historical significance and that justify its inclusion in, or eligibility for, the California of Historical Resources; or
- b) Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics that account for its inclusion in a local register of historical resources pursuant to section 5020.1(k) of the Public Resources Code (PRC) of its identification in an historical resources survey meeting the requirements of section 5024.1(g) of the PRC, unless the public agency reviewing the effects of the project established by a preponderance of evidence that the resource is not historically or culturally significant; or
- c) Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics of a historical resource that convey its historical significance and that justify its eligibility for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources as determined by a lead agency for the purposes of CEQA.

A project that has been determined to conform with the *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* (the Standards) shall generally be considered to be a project that will not cause a significant impact on a historical resource (Title 14 CCR, Section 15064.5(b)(3)).

### 8.3. Character-Defining Features

Character-defining features are those physical elements of a resource that define its historic character and help to convey its significance. In instances of future change to a historic resource, character-defining features should be retained to the greatest extent feasible in order to ensure that a resource can continue to physically represent its historical period.

The following are character-defining features for 840 South Fairfax Avenue, as enumerated in the 2019 HCM designation for the property:

#### Building Exterior

- Minimal setback from the street
- Rectangular footprint that spans the depth of the parcel
- Tudor Revival style and characteristics, recalling the vernacular architecture of Ireland
- Asymmetrical façades
- Steeply pitched cross-gable and shed roofs sheathed in composition shingles

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<sup>107</sup> Title 14 CCR, Section 15064.5

- Roof features include shallow eaves, bargeboards, glazed dormers, and a weathervane
- Brick chimney (east elevation)
- Combination of wall cladding materials including textured stucco, wood lap siding, wood board-and-batten siding, and clinker bricks
- Simple, understated entrances that are flush with the face of the building
- Jettied gables with decorative wood brackets
- Multi-light wood hopper and casement windows; some are glazed with stained or rondel glass
- Continuous sill course beneath windows on the north elevation
- Freestanding pole signs (2) with neon illumination (west property line)
- Wall-mounted signs (2) with neon illumination (north elevation, west elevation)

#### *Building Interior*<sup>108</sup>

- General configuration and circulation pattern of front-of-house spaces (tavern, dining area, rear dining room)
- Brick floors (tavern, dining area)
- Vaulted ceiling (dining room)
- Exposed wood rafters and wood tie beams (tavern, dining room)
- Burnished wood wall panels, trim, and doors
- Built-in, burnished wood casework
- Standard and U-shaped banquettes (tavern, dining area)
- Horseshoe-shaped bar with wood panels and casework, a copper top, and a metal rail (tavern)
- Brick fireplace (dining room)

The HCM designation approved by the City Council excludes the surface parking lot to the north of the building, which was found to be “not a significant character defining feature of the monument.”<sup>109</sup>

## 8.4. Project Description

The Project includes the partial demolition of existing improvements on the Site, including two apartment buildings (located at 800-830 S. Fairfax Avenue) and a surface parking lot, and the construction of a new mixed-used project with 209 dwelling units, including 28 Extremely Low Income affordable housing units, and approximately 2,653 square feet of new commercial uses. The existing Tom Bergin’s restaurant and tavern, located at 840 S. Fairfax Avenue and containing approximately 3,829 square feet of floor area, will remain. The Project includes construction of an eight-story building with a maximum height of approximately 94 feet and a total floor area of approximately 189,115 square

<sup>108</sup> Interior character-defining features are limited to publicly accessible front-of-house spaces, and those that convey the building’s historic use. Back-of-house spaces and areas that play a purely ancillary role are not included.

<sup>109</sup> Los Angeles City Clerk, Council File: 19-0293, received Mar. 26, 2019, last changed Jun. 19, 2019.

feet. The Project will include a total of 239 vehicular parking spaces, 146 bicycle parking spaces, and a minimum of 18,356.25 square feet of open space.

## 8.5. Analysis of Project Impacts

The Project will not have a significant impact on historical resources. As previously described, the Tom Bergin's building at 840 South Fairfax Avenue is a designated Los Angeles HCM, and is also eligible for listing for the National Register and California Register under Criterion A/1. A stated goal of the Project is the preservation of the Tom Bergin's building, and the building will be isolated from development activities taking place in the northern portions of the Project Site. No excavation activities will take place within 25 feet of the north elevation of the Tom Bergin's building, and as described in the noise and vibration analysis prepared for the Project, vibration impacts during construction would be less than significant without mitigation for the Tom Bergin's building.

The Project includes demolition of existing conditions on the northern majority of the Project Site in order to accommodate the new mixed-used building; however, as stated above, demolition activities will be confined to areas of the Project Site that do not contain historical resources. Specifically, demolition will be limited to the two existing multi-family residential buildings at 800 South Fairfax Avenue and 830 South Fairfax Avenue – neither of which meets eligibility criteria for federal, state, or local listing – and the surface parking lot to the north of the Tom Bergin's building, which the City Council excluded from the 2019 HCM designation because it was considered to not be a character-defining feature. The designated Tom Bergin's building will remain fully intact and in situ.

None of the character-defining features associated with the designated Tom Bergin's building will be removed or altered as a result of the Project. Character-defining exterior features and finishes, and character-defining interior features, finishes, and spaces will not be modified in any way by the construction of the new adjacent mixed-use building. There are two character-defining features that are physically separated from the building envelope: the first is a freestanding pole sign near the west property line that reads "TOM BERGIN STEAKS CHOPS" on its upper face and "PUBLIC HOUSE" on its lower face, and the second is a freestanding pole sign near the west property line that is styled in the shape of a shamrock and reads "HOUSE OF IRISH COFFEE." Both signs will be retained in situ by the Project.

The Project includes development of a new 189,000-sf mixed-use residential and commercial building, including one level of below-grade parking and eight stories above grade. The new building will be separated from Tom Bergin's by a landscaped courtyard averaging 25'6" in width, which will be constructed in place of the southern half of the existing parking lot (currently approximately 60' in width). The northern half of the existing parking lot will be occupied by the new building. The new courtyard will narrow at the rear (east end) of the Project Site, which is least visible from public view. At this end, the new building will be located nearer to the historic building but will maintain a distance of 5'. The new courtyard will include a combination of landscape and hardscape features; it will retain existing patterns of ingress and egress to Tom Bergin's, whose primary entrance is located on that building's north façade. The new courtyard will ensure that there is sufficient physical separation



between the historic building and the new building as to where the long, low-slung north façade of Tom Bergin's and its character-defining features remain visible from the public-right-of-way.

The portions of the new building closest to Tom Bergin's on the Project site include, from west to east: the lobby to the new residential building, the elevator and stair core, and parking-related program such as a valet office, valet drop off area, and bicycle parking. This area also includes back of house areas such as the electrical room and trash receptacle area. The volume of the new building that contains the lobby reaches a maximum height of 26', which is lower than the gable peak of the Fairfax Avenue-facing gable of the Tom Bergin's building. The new building steps up incrementally toward the rear of the parcel, up to 82' at 25' from the Fairfax Avenue frontage, and then 90' at the very rear. The small volume nearest the Tom Bergin's building, located at the rear of the Project Site, is 14' at its highest point and 5' away from the back portion of the Tom Bergin's building.

## Compliance With The Secretary of the Interior's Standards

The *Secretary the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* generally guide the treatment of a historic building's significant spaces, features, and materials. Because the Project will not include development activities at the Tom Bergin's building itself, Standards 1-8 do not apply to the Project. However, Standards 9 and 10 relate specifically to adjacent new construction and are thus applicable to the Project.

The Project will comply with Standards 9 and 10 as follows:

9. *New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.*

The Project does not include any construction activities on the Tom Bergin's building itself, and therefore it will not destroy any historic materials that characterize the property. The historic building will retain all of its exterior and interior character-defining features, including two freestanding signs.

The new building will be differentiated from the historic resource such that it does not replicate any of the historic elements or features of the historic building, or attempt to appear as related historic construction. Rather, the new building will have a contemporary aesthetic typical of the 2020s, rather than the 1940s.

The new development, though much larger in scale than the Tom Bergin's building, is designed in such a way that it will be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and features of the historic building. Specifically, the new building has been designed so that its southwest volume, at 22' tall, is considerably lower than the rest of the building and a little bit lower than the top of the front gable of the Tom Bergin's building, helping to soften the transition in scale between the one-and-a-half story historic building and the new eight-story building. Stepping back the massing of the new building in this way also has the effect of preserving views of the Tom Bergin's building as it is being approached from the north.

In addition to its stepped massing, the new building also strategically incorporates glazing and other materials to further soften the transition between the Tom Bergin's building and the adjacent new construction. The new building will incorporate a variety of materials and textures into its design; its southern volumes, which are nearest Tom Bergin's, are extensively glazed, resulting in façades that are generally lighter, tauter, and less visually impactful than the rest of the new building. This will further ease the visual transition between the historic building and the proposed new construction.

For these reasons, the Project meets Standard no. 9.

- 10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*

The Project includes new construction adjacent to the Tom Bergin's building, including a new 189,000-sf mixed-use building and a landscaped courtyard. The Project does not include any additions or modifications to the Tom Bergin's building itself, or any related new construction.

If the new building and courtyard were to be removed in the future, the Tom Bergin's building would remain unchanged. It would retain its essential form and integrity. All of its character-defining features, including detached exterior features like the two freestanding signs, would be unimpaired. Although the Project would remove the building's surface parking lot and other site features, such as perimeter walls and other landscaping, the surface parking lot is not a character-defining feature of the historic property, and walls and landscape features associated with the parking lot are not historic (most date to modifications made to the property circa 2012 when the property changed hands).

For these reasons, the Project meets Standard no. 10.

## 8.6. Summary of Continued Eligibility

As described above, the Project meets the Standards as they apply to related and adjacent new construction to the Tom Bergin's building, a historical resource.

Furthermore, upon completion of the Project, the building will continue to be eligible for its designation as a Los Angeles HCM. It will also continue to be eligible for listing in the National Register and California Register.

The building is locally designated, and is also eligible under state and federal programs, because of its significant associations with the commercial identity of Los Angeles by virtue of its identity as the long-term location of the Tom Bergin's restaurant. Since the Project will not impose any changes to the building itself, the building will continue to appear as it did historically and retain its ability to materially convey its significant associations. It will retain all of its interior and exterior character-defining features, as well as character-defining site features such as the two freestanding pole signs.

Furthermore, the Project will not diminish the building's current integrity. As described in *Section 7.2: Evaluation of Integrity* of this report, the Tom Bergin's building currently retains integrity of Location,

Design, Materials, Workmanship, Feeling, and Association. Due to extensive contemporary development to the south of the building in recent years, it does not retain integrity of Setting.

As part of the Project, the Tom Bergin's building will retain all aspects of integrity it currently does:

It will not be moved as part of the Project and will therefore retain its integrity of **Location**.

Because the Project does not include any construction activities at the Tom Bergin's building, it will continue to retain its integrity of **Design, Materials, and Workmanship**.

The building will remain unaltered and will retain all of its exterior and interior character-defining features, and therefore it will retain its integrity of **Feeling and Association**. The building's original parking lot will be removed as part of the Project and a new landscaped courtyard will be constructed in its southern half, providing separation between the new building and Tom Bergin's. However, pedestrians will still approach the Tom Bergin's building in the same way – via the main entrance at the western edge of the north façade – and the appearance of Tom Bergin's from the street, including its two freestanding signs, will remain unchanged.

Tom Bergin's integrity of **Setting**, already compromised, will be further diminished by the Project through the loss of its adjacent surface parking lot and development of an eight-story building to the north. However, this further loss of integrity of setting will not diminish the building's overall integrity in such a way that it no longer retains eligibility for listing as an HCM and in the California Register and National Register.

For these reasons, the Tom Bergin's building will remain eligible for local, state, and federal listing upon completion of the Project.

## 8.7. Analysis of Indirect Impacts

The Project will not have an indirect impact on any adjacent historical resources. As previously described, the project is located adjacent to two designated HPOZs: Carthay Circle to the west, and Miracle Mile to the east.



*Project site (indicated with red border) location adjacent to the Carthay Circle and Miracle Mile HPOZs (Google Maps).*

The Carthay Circle HPOZ is located generally between Fairfax Avenue to the east, Warner Drive to the north, Olympic Blvd. to the south, and Schumacher Drive to the west. On Fairfax Avenue, it includes only the parcels on the west side of the street, which are primarily single-family residences that are oriented toward the side streets of Warner Drive, Del Valle Drive, and Barrows Drive. The exceptions are 915 and 925 S. Fairfax, which are the only two HPOZ contributors that face eastward onto Fairfax Avenue. Warner, Del Valle, and Barrows Drives are blocked to incoming vehicular traffic from Fairfax Avenue.

The Carthay Circle parcels with adjacency to the Project site are 6106 W. Del Valle Drive and 6103 W. Barrows Drive; these single-family residences, both contributors to the HPOZ, are located directly across Fairfax Avenue from the Project site. 6101 W. Del Valle Drive is located diagonal from the Project site, to the northwest, and 6106 W. Barrows Drive to the southwest. Both of these properties are also contributors to the HPOZ. None of these properties are oriented to face Fairfax Avenue; rather, they are oriented toward their respective streets and have side elevations, perimeter walls, and garages that face Fairfax Avenue. In this way, these contributors (and the Carthay Circle HPOZ, broadly) do not have a direct, interactive relationship with Fairfax Avenue, such that their primary façades or points of entry face onto the avenue.

The properties located within the Carthay Circle HPOZ are generally a mix of one- and two-story, single-family and multi-family residences. In contrast, the current character of the east side of Fairfax Avenue from Wilshire Blvd. to Olympic Blvd varies widely, including the four-story Petersen Automotive Museum and parking structure, two-story multi-family apartments, one-story Tom Bergin's restaurant, three-story educational building, and five-story mixed use building. Because of the varied existing character, use pattern, and development chronology of the east side of Fairfax Avenue, it does not have a visual connection to or relationship with the HPOZ to the west. It also does not have any bearing on the setting of the Carthay Circle HPOZ, since the experience of the HPOZ is generally limited to the

streets within its boundaries; only secondary elevations of HPOZ contributors are visible from Fairfax Avenue, and some minimally so due to perimeter walls and hedges. Further changes to the character of the 800 block of Fairfax Avenue proposed by the Project, which will include construction of an eight story multi-family building, will not constitute a change to the setting of the Carthay Circle HPOZ such that its significance is impaired. In addition, due to its location on the east side of Fairfax Avenue, the Project will not block any views of the Carthay Circle HPOZ, or any of its contributing features, from any public right of way.

## Miracle Mile HPOZ

The Miracle Mile HPOZ is located generally between La Brea Avenue to the east, 8<sup>th</sup> Street and Wilshire Boulevard to the north, San Vicente Blvd. to the south, and Orange Grove Avenue to the west. On Orange Grove Avenue, it includes only the parcels on the east side of the street, and only between 8<sup>th</sup> Street to the north and Olympic Boulevard to the south. The HPOZ's northern boundary is irregular generally due to the omission of some later construction (outside of the period of significance) adjacent to Wilshire Boulevard.

The Miracle Mile HPOZ contributors with the closest adjacency to the Project site are those on the east side of the 800 block of South Orange Grove Avenue, about 160 feet from the Project. These properties are separated from the Project site by the parcels on the west side of South Orange Grove, which are improved with single-family and multi-family dwellings that are generally one and two stories in height. Although the Project will be visible from properties on the 800 block of South Orange Grove that are within the HPOZ boundary, it is far enough separated from the HPOZ that it will not impact its setting in such a way that its significance is impaired. Furthermore, due to its location on an adjacent street, the Project will not block any views of the Miracle Mile HPOZ, or any of its contributing features, from any public right of way.

For all of these reasons, the Project will not have an indirect impact on either the adjacent Carthay Circle HPOZ or Miracle Mile HPOA.

## 8.8. Project Recommendations

To ensure the appropriate treatment of the designated Tom Bergin's building during construction of the Project, ARG makes the following recommendations:

1. Photo document the Tom Bergin's building and its current site conditions before commencement of construction activities on the Project Site. Documentation should include the surface parking lot and all site features on the property, in addition to the building itself and its two freestanding signs. Photographic documentation should follow the guidelines of the Historic American Building Survey (HABS) Level III, although it is not required that they be submitted to the Library of Congress. Photographic documentation should be submitted to local repositories including (and not limited to) the Los Angeles Public Library and the Los Angeles Conservancy.
2. The condition of the Tom Bergin's building should be monitored during excavation and construction activities by a historic architect meeting the *Secretary of the Interior's Professional*



*Qualification Standards*, to ensure it is protected from vibration and other construction-related disturbances.

## 9. Conclusion

The Project will not have a significant impact on any historical resources on or adjacent to the Project site. In summary, ARG arrives at the following conclusions:

The multi-family residential buildings at 800 South Fairfax Avenue and 830 South Fairfax Avenue do not meet eligibility criteria for listing in the National Register, the California Register, or as Los Angeles HCMs. These buildings are not historical resources for purposes of CEQA.

The commercial building at 840 South Fairfax Avenue (Tom Bergin's) is a locally designated HCM. It is also eligible for listing in the National Register and California Register under Criterion A/1. The building and its associated signage are historical resources for purposes of CEQA. The Project will not cause a substantial adverse change to significance of the Tom Bergin's building. The Project meets the Standards, and the historical resource will continue to retain sufficient integrity to convey its significance following completion of the Project.

Finally, the Project will not have an indirect impact on the Carthay Circle HPOZ or Miracle Mile HPOZ, located west and east of the Project site, respectively.

## 10. Bibliography

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