

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

Primary #

HRI #

Trinomial

NRHP Status Code

Other Listings

Review Code _____ Reviewer _____ Date _____

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*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder): 343 N. Montgomery Street

P1. Other Identifier: _____

*P2. Location: Not for Publication Unrestricted

*a. County Santa Clara and (P2c, P2e, and P2b or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

*b. USGS 7.5' Quad _____ Date _____ T ____; R ____; ____ of ____ of Sec ____; _____ B.M.

c. Address 343 N. Montgomery Street City San José Zip 95110

d. UTM: (Give more than one for large and/or linear resources) Zone ____, _____ mE/ _____ mN

e. Other Locational Data: APN 259-27-014

*P3a. Description: (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)

This one-story industrial building features elements of the Streamline Moderne style. The rectangular-in-plan building is finished with smooth stucco cladding with speedlines on its primary (east) façade; its lateral facades have been built up with additions and adjacent construction and are not visible from the public right-of-way. It features a hipped roof clad in sheet metal and screened by a stepped parapet on the primary façade. The main entrance, which is centered in the primary façade, is a single-leaf, fully-glazed metal door flanked by canted, wood-sash, multi-light sidelights. Multi-light, wood-sash storefront windows flank the entrance, and a series of multi-light wood-sash awning windows form a transom that runs the length of the façade.

*P3b. Resource Attributes: HP8. Industrial building

*P4. Resources Present: Building Structure Object Site District Element of District Other (Isolates, etc.)

P5b. Description of Photo: View of the east façade (September 16, 2019)



*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Source:
 Historic Prehistoric Both
ca. 1941, San José City Directories, PBS&J, "California High-Speed Train Project EIR/EIS: San Francisco to San Jose Section, Historic Architectural Survey Report, Technical Report."

*P7. Owner and Address:

To be provided by the City of San José.

*P8. Recorded by: Architectural Resources Group, Pier 9, The Embarcadero, Suite 107, San Francisco, CA, 94111

*P9. Date Recorded: September 16, 2019

*P10. Survey Type: Intensive

*P11. Report Citation: Architectural Resources Group, "Downtown West Mixed-Use Plan Historical Resources Technical Report," Draft January 2019.

*Attachments: NONE Location Map Continuation Sheet Building, Structure, and Object Record
 Archaeological Record District Record Linear Feature Record Milling Station Record Rock Art Record
 Artifact Record Photograph Record Other (List): _____

State of California & The Resources Agency Primary #
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION HRI#
BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

*Resource Name or # 343 N. Montgomery Street

*NRHP Status Code 5S3

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B1. Historic Name: _____

B2. Common Name: _____

B3. Original Use: Industrial B4. Present Use: Industrial *B5. Architectural Style: Streamline Moderne

*B6. Construction History: (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)

ca. 1941 – initial date of construction

1949 – office addition constructed

*B7. Moved? No Yes Unknown Date: _____ Original Location: _____

*B8. Related Features:

B9a. Architect: Unknown b. Builder: Unknown

*B10. Significance: Theme World War II-Era Industrial Development Area Downtown West San José

Period of Significance ca. 1941 Property Type Industrial Applicable Criteria 2a, 2e (Candidate City Landmark)
(Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity.)

See Continuation Sheet.

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes)

*B12. References:

See Continuation Sheet.

B13. Remarks:

*B14. Evaluator: Architectural Resources Group

*Date of Evaluation: January 2020

(This space reserved for official comments.)

(Sketch Map with north arrow required.)



CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: 343 N. Montgomery Street

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Property History

Sanborn Fire Insurance maps indicate that the subject property was developed with a small cabin as early as 1884 and with worker housing by 1891. The immediate area was largely residential in character through the early twentieth century, but industrial development began to appear along nearby Cinnabar Street in the mid-1910s. By the 1940s, with the entry of the United States into World War II, heavy industry had expanded and the surrounding neighborhoods were decidedly mixed-use in character. The subject property, which was developed ca. 1941 and expanded in the early postwar period, is reflective of this development trend.

Although the original building permit for the subject property could not be located, previous recording of the subject property suggests that it was constructed as early as 1941.¹ The property first appears in the San José City Directory in 1943 as the location of Somers, O’Rear & Stephan Steel Fabricators and Engineers, a heavy manufacturing firm that specialized in structural steel fabrication and large storage and pressure tanks.² City directories and local advertising indicate that Somers, O’Rear & Stephan occupied the property through at least 1955.³ In 1949, they are credited with furnishing and installing a 48-foot by 60-foot movie screen for the Encina Drive-In Theatre.⁴

Also in 1949, a drafting office was constructed as an addition to the subject property.⁵ This building permit indicates that the property was owned by Edwin B. Pray, who also owned and developed the properties to either side of the subject property. (These properties, which include a heavily altered machine shop at 341 N. Montgomery Street and an office/industrial building at 345 N. Montgomery Street, are recorded in separate DPR 523 forms associated with this report.) Pray was a local machinist and business owner whose company produced ship components, including “giant line shaftings, fitted with mammoth prepellers [*sic*] for troop and hospital ships” and “the bow sections for amphibious tanks,” for the war effort.⁶ Pray was involved in multiple business ventures after the war, including a bowling alley and a clothing store and in 1947, he opened a forge plant with Frank Welsch at the 341 N. Montgomery Street location.⁷

San José City Directories indicate that Somers, O’Rear & Stephan ended its period of tenure at the subject property in the mid-1950s; contemporary reporting suggests that the company constructed a new steel fabrication plant at 1160 Richard Avenue in Santa Clara in 1955.⁸ The subject property appears to have sat vacant for up to five years afterward.⁹ From at least 1960 through at least 1979, San José City Directories identify the property’s occupant as Advance Metal Spinning.¹⁰

¹ PBS&J, “California High-Speed Train Project EIR/EIS: San Francisco to San Jose Section, Historic Architectural Survey Report, Technical Report.”

² “Structural Steel & Tanks...,” *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, April 10, 1946; “Somers, O’Rear & Stephan...,” *The California* (Salinas, CA), December 2, 1946.

³ San José City Directories, 1943, 1947, 1949, 1954, 1955.

⁴ “Grand Opening,” *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, May 27, 1949.

⁵ San José Building Permit No. 3282; San José Building Permit No. 8593.

⁶ Hal Martin, “Huge Propellers Fitted by Local Machine Works,” April 20, 1944, Vertical File “Pray, E.B.,” History San José, San José, CA.

⁷ “Drop Forge Plant to Operate Here,” January 23, 1944, Vertical File “Pray, E.B.,” History San José, San José, CA.

⁸ “S.C. Gets Steel Fabrication Plant,” February 17, 1955, Vertical File, “Somers O’Rear & Stephan,” History San José, San José, CA; “Fabricating Fi[...] Exercises Loc[...],” April 12, 1965, Vertical File, “Somers O’Rear & Stephan,” History San José, San José, CA.

⁹ San José City Directories, 1956, 1957.

¹⁰ San José City Directories, 1960, 1961, 1965, 1970, 1975, 1979; “Metal Spinner [Hiring Announcement],” *The Los Angeles Times*, May 27, 1969.

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Evaluation

In 2011, PBS&J evaluated the subject property as part of the Historic Architectural Survey Report (HASR) prepared for the San Francisco to San José section of the California High-Speed Train Project (S-48738a).¹¹ The study determined that the property was ineligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) or California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) “due to common construction type.” ARG agrees that the subject property does not rise to the level of significance recognized by the National or California Registers but concluded that 343 N. Montgomery Street is eligible for listing in the City of San José Historic Resources Inventory as a San José Candidate City Landmark.

National Register/California Register Criteria

National Register Criterion A/California Register Criterion 1

The industrial building at 343 N. Montgomery Street was constructed as part of larger trend of World War II-era industrial development to the west of the Guadalupe River in San José. However, research did not conclude that the subject property played a significant role in this development, and it is one of several extant resources that speak to this context. Research did not reveal significant associations with historical events or broad patterns of local, state, or nation history, and it does not meet the threshold for significance under this criterion.

National Register Criterion B/California Register Criterion 2

Research did not identify persons associated with the subject property who would be considered historically significant at the local, state, or national levels. Although Edwin B. Pray was a longtime owner of the property and appears to have been involved in multiple business ventures, he was not found to have made any notable contributions to the history of industrial or business development in San José. Similarly, research did not indicate that any persons associated with Somers, O’Rear & Stephan Steel Fabricators and Engineers or Advance Metal Spinning made a significant impact in local, state, or national history during their period of occupancy or afterward. As such, the property does not meet the threshold for significance under this criterion.

National Register Criterion C/California Register Criterion 3

The subject property is a relatively intact example of a World War II-era industrial building with elements of the Streamline Moderne style (e.g., smooth stucco cladding, speedlines). Despite these features, however, the buildings features do not embody high architectural or artistic value that would render the building architecturally distinct, and it does not exhibit the use of innovative construction materials or engineering methods. Finally, research did not yield any information that would indicate that the building is a work of a master architect. As such, the property does not meet the threshold for significance under this criterion.

National Register Criterion D/California Register Criterion 4

National Register Criterion D/California Register Criterion 4 is generally applied to archaeological resources, and the evaluation of the property for eligibility under this criterion was beyond the scope of this architectural resources investigation.

San José Historic Resources Inventory – Candidate City Landmark Criteria

The City of San José’s Historic Preservation Ordinance, contained in Chapter 13.48 of the San José Municipal Code, states that a property qualifies for listing on the City of San José Historic Resources Inventory if it has “special historical, architectural, cultural, aesthetic or engineering interest or value of an historical nature” as determined by a number of factors. The subject property at

¹¹ PBS&J, “California High-Speed Train Project EIR/EIS: San Francisco to San Jose Section, Historic Architectural Survey Report, Technical Report.”

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343 N. Montgomery Street satisfies Candidate City Landmark Factors 2a and 2e, as it is a distinctive example of Streamline Moderne industrial architecture within the immediate area and conveys the physical landscape of the neighborhood as it was during World War II and in the early postwar era. As such, 343 N. Montgomery Street is recommended eligible for listing on the City of San José Historic Resources Inventory as a Candidate City Landmark. The evaluation of the property is as follows.

1. *Identification or association with persons, eras or events that have contributed to local, regional, state or national history, heritage or culture in a distinctive, significant or important way.*

As described above, research did not reveal that the subject property maintained meaningful associations with any persons, eras, or events of significance to local, regional, state, or national history. As such, it is not recommended eligible under this factor.

2. *Identification as, or association with, a distinctive, significant or important work or vestige:*

- a. *Of an architectural style, design or method of construction.*

Although the subject property does not represent a work of particularly high architectural or artistic merit, it is a relatively intact example of World War II-era industrial development and maintains many distinctive architectural features of the Streamline Moderne style within its immediate local context. While it does not rise to the level of significance for listing in the National and California Registers, the subject property is recommended eligible under this factor.

- b. *Of a master architect, builder, artist or craftsman.*

The subject property is not the work of a master architect or builder, and it is not recommended eligible under this factor.

- c. *Of high artistic merit.*

Although the subject property is a good example of an industrial building with elements of the Streamline Moderne Style, it does not rise to the level of "high artistic merit" and is not recommended eligible under this factor.

- d. *The totality of which comprises a distinctive, significant or important work or vestige whose component parts may lack the same attributes.*

The subject property remains intact and meets the threshold for designation under other factors such that it does not merit consideration under this factor.

- e. *That has yielded or is substantially likely to yield information of value about history, architecture, engineering, culture or aesthetics, or that provides for existing and future generations an example of the physical surroundings in which past generations lived or worked.*

As an architecturally distinctive industrial building with a relatively high degree of integrity, the subject property provides an example of the physical surroundings that characterized this neighborhood during World War II and the immediate postwar era. In its current context, which includes contemporary industrial buildings at 357 N. Montgomery Street and 345 N. Montgomery Street, the subject property is significant for its ability to convey the character of the neighborhood in the 1940s. For this reason, it is recommended eligible under this factor.

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Property Name: 343 N. Montgomery Street
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- f. *That the construction materials or engineering methods used in the proposed landmark are unusual or significant or uniquely effective.*

While the subject property is good example of the Streamline Moderne style, it does not exhibit the notable or innovative use of construction materials or engineering methods, and it is not recommended eligible under this factor.

3. *The factor of age alone does not necessarily confer a special historical, architectural, cultural, aesthetic or engineering significance, value or interest upon a structure or site, but it may have such effect if a more distinctive, significant or important example thereof no longer exists.*

The subject property is not of unusual age for this particular location, which was originally developed in the mid- to late nineteenth century, and it is not the only extant example of its type in the area. As such, this factor is not applicable.

Integrity Assessment

Through the retention of the building's original form, cladding, and fenestration, the building maintains integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. Although the greater vicinity of the property has been largely redeveloped since the property's period of significance, it is situated within proximity of several extant, contemporary industrial resources (e.g., 345 and 357 N. Montgomery Street) and remains in its original location at 343 N. Montgomery Street; in this way, the subject property retains integrity of location and setting. Finally, because the property retains many original materials and architectural features as well as a semblance of its original setting, it also maintains integrity of feeling and association with the World War II-era industrialization of this San José neighborhood.

Conclusion

The subject property at 343 N. Montgomery Street appears to be eligible for listing on the City of San José Historic Resources Inventory as a Candidate City Landmark, because it is a local example of industrial architecture with Streamline Moderne elements and conveys the physical landscape of the neighborhood as it was during World War II and in the early postwar era. Accordingly, the building should be considered a historical resource for purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

References

California Office of Historic Preservation. *California Register and National Register: A Comparison (for the purposes of determining eligibility for the California Register), Technical Assistance Series #6* (Sacramento: California Department of Parks and Recreation, n.d.). Accessed January 2, 2020.

<http://ohp.parks.ca.gov/pages/1069/files/technical%20assistance%20bulletin%206%202011%20update.pdf>.

"Drop Forge Plant to Operate Here." January 23, 1944. Vertical File "Pray, E.B.," History San José, San José, CA.

"Fabricating Fi[...] Exercises Loc[...]" April 12, 1965, Vertical File, "Somers O'Rear & Stephan," History San José, San José, CA.

"Grand Opening." *Santa Cruz Sentinel*. May 27, 1949.

Martin, Hal. "Huge Propellers Fitted by Local Machine Works." April 20, 1944. Vertical File "Pray, E.B.," History San José, San José, CA.

"Metal Spinner [Hiring Announcement]." *The Los Angeles Times*. May 27, 1969.

National Park Service. *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. Accessed January 2, 2020.

http://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb15/nrb15_8.htm.

PBS&J. "California High-Speed Train Project EIR/EIS: San Francisco to San Jose Section, Historic Architectural Survey Report, Technical Report." March 2011.

San José Building Permit No. 3282

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San José Building Permit No. 8593.

San José City Directories. 1943, 1947, 1949, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1960, 1961, 1965, 1970, 1975, 1979.

"S.C. Gets Steel Fabrication Plant," February 17, 1955, Vertical File, "Somers O'Rear & Stephan," History San José, San José, CA.

"Somers, O'Rear & Stephan..." *The California* (Salinas, CA). December 2, 1946.

"Structural Steel & Tanks..." *Santa Cruz Sentinel*. April 10, 1946.



Resource #16323:

Address/APN#: 343 Montgomery St., San Jose / 25927014

Property Type: Industrial

Construction Date: 1941

Substantial Alterations: None visible

Eligibility: Ineligible due to common construction type.

Date Surveyed: September 29, 2010

Reviewer: Amber Grady, November 2, 2010



Resource #16324:

Address/APN#: 341 Montgomery St., San Jose / 25927014

Property Type: Industrial

Construction Date: 1941

Substantial Alterations: Façade reclad

Eligibility: Ineligible due to lack of integrity.

Date Surveyed: September 29, 2010

Reviewer: Amber Grady, November 2, 2010



Resource #16325:

Address/APN#: 333 N. Montgomery St., San Jose / 25927016

Property Type: Commerce/Trade

Construction Date: 1963

Substantial Alterations: N/A

Eligibility: Ineligible due to age.

Date Surveyed: September 29, 2010

Reviewer: Amber Grady, November 2, 2010