

SIGNIFICANCE WORK SHEET

TYPE OR HAND PRINT IN ALL CAPITAL BLOCK LETTERS

Complete One or Both of the Upper and Lower Portions of This Page

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

THE 800 S. ROBERTSON BLVD. OFFICE BUILDING IS AN IMPORTANT EXAMPLE OF
NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT

MID-CENTURY MODERN ARCHITECTURE
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE (SEE LINE 8)

AND MEETS THE CULTURAL HERITAGE ORDINANCE BECAUSE OF THE HIGH QUALITY OF ITS DESIGN AND THE RETENTION
OF ITS ORIGINAL FORM, DETAILING AND INTEGRITY.

AND/OR

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

THE 800 S. ROBERTSON BLVD. OFFICE BUILDING WAS BUILT IN 1954
NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT YEAR BUILT

EDWARD H. FICKETT, F.A.I.A. WAS IMPORTANT TO THE
NAME OF FIRST OR SIGNIFICANT OTHER

DEVELOPMENT OF LOS ANGELES BECAUSE PLEASE SEE ATTACHED.

**HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT
APPLICATION**

TYPE OR HAND PRINT IN ALL CAPITAL BLOCK LETTERS

IDENTIFICATION

1. NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT 800 S. ROBERTSON BLVD. OFFICE BUILDING
2. STREET ADDRESS 800 S. ROBERTSON BLVD.
CITY LOS ANGELES ZIP CODE 90035 COUNCIL DISTRICT CD 5
3. ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NO. 4333-015-001
4. COMPLETE LEGAL DESCRIPTION: TRACT TRACT # 8313 LOTS 1, 2 AND LOT 3
BLOCK NONE LOT(S) 1, 2, and 3 ARB. NO. _____
5. RANGE OF ADDRESSES ON PROPERTY 800 S. ROBERTSON BLVD.

6. PRESENT OWNER JAMES AND JOYCE CORAZZA
STREET ADDRESS 1650 CARLA RIDGE E-MAIL ADDRESS: N/A
CITY BEVERLY HILLS STATE CA ZIP CODE 90210 PHONE (310) 276-2298
OWNERSHIP: PRIVATE YES PUBLIC NO
7. PRESENT USE OFFICE BUILDING ORIGINAL USE OFFICE BUILDING FOR L.H.I. CORP.

DESCRIPTION

8. ARCHITECTURAL STYLE MID-CENTURY MODERN
(SEE STYLE GUIDE)
9. STATE PRESENT PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE OR STRUCTURE (SEE OPTIONAL DESCRIPTION WORK SHEET. 1 PAGE MAXIMUM)
- PLEASE SEE ATTACHED
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

**HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT
APPLICATION**

NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT 800 S. ROBERTSON BLVD. OFFICE BUILDING

10. CONSTRUCTION DATE: 11 INE 1954 FACTUAL: ☒ ESTIMATED: ☐

11. ARCHITECT, DESIGNER, OR ENGINEER EDWARD H. FICKETT, F.A.I.A.

12. CONTRACTOR OR OTHER BUILDER BARNETT B. POLES, GENERAL CONTRACTOR

13. DATES OF ENCLOSED PHOTOGRAPHS NOVEMBER 18, 2013 & JANUARY 25, 2014

(1 8X10 BLACK AND WHITE GLOSSY AND 1 DIGITAL E-MAILED TO CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION@LACITY.ORG)

14. CONDITION: ☐ EXCELLENT ☒ GOOD ☐ FAIR ☐ DETERIORATED ☐ NO LONGER IN EXISTENCE

15. ALTERATIONS RISERS OF THE STRINGER STAIRCASE IN ATRIUM/LOBBY HAVE BEEN PAINTED

16. THREATS TO SITE: ☒ NONE KNOWN ☐ PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT ☐ VANDALISM ☐ PUBLIC WORKS PROJECT

☐ ZONING ☐ OTHER _____

17. IS THE STRUCTURE: ☒ ON ITS ORIGINAL SITE ☐ MOVED ☐ UNKNOWN

SIGNIFICANCE

18. BRIEFLY STATE HISTORICAL AND/OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE: INCLUDE DATES, EVENTS, AND PERSON ASSOCIATED

WITH THE SITE (SEE ALSO SIGNIFICANCE WORK SHEET. 750 WORDS MAXIMUM IF USING ADDITIONAL SHEETS)

PLEASE SEE ATTACHED

19. SOURCES (LIST BOOKS, DOCUMENTS, SURVEYS, PERSONAL INTERVIEWS WITH DATES) PLEASE SEE ATTACHED

20. DATE FORM PREPARED 1/22/2014 PREPARER'S NAME STEVEN WARD

ORGANIZATION MODERNHOMESLOSANGELES STREET ADDRESS 2438 N. BEACHWOOD DRIVE

CITY LOS ANGELES STATE CA ZIP CODE 90068 PHONE (213)305-8537

E-MAIL ADDRESS: steve.ward.la@gmail.com

DESCRIPTION WORK SHEET

TYPE OR HAND PRINT IN ALL CAPITAL BLOCK LETTERS

THE 800 S. ROBERTSON BLVD. OFFICE BUILDING IS A 2-STORY,
NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT NUMBER OF STORIES

MID-CENTURY MODERN

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE (SEE LINE 8 ABOVE)

9. Irregular

PLAN SHAPE (Click to See Chart)

OFFICE BUILDING

STRUCTURE USE (RESIDENCE, ETC.)

WITH A BRICK, STEEL, GLASS AND STUCCO FINISH AND TRIM.
MATERIAL (WOOD SLIDING, WOOD SHINGLES, BRICK, STUCCO, ETC.) MATERIAL (WOOD, METAL, ETC.)

IT'S FLAT ROOF IS COMPOSITE
ROOF SHAPE (Click to See Chart) MATERIAL (CLAY TILE, ASPHALT OR WOOD SHINGLES, ETC.) WINDOW MATERIAL

PLEASE SEE ATTACHED

WINDOWS ARE PART OF THE DESIGN.
WINDOW TYPE [DOUBLE-HUNG (SLIDES UP & DOWN), CASEMENT (OPENS OUT), HORIZONTAL SLIDING, ETC.]

THE ENTRY FEATURES A PLEASE SEE ATTACHED
DOOR LOCATION (RECESSED, CENTERED, OFF-CENTER, CORNER, ETC.)

6. Single Panel

ENTRY DOOR STYLE (Click to See Chart)

DOOR. ADDITIONAL CHARACTER DEFINING ELEMENTS

OF THE STRUCTURE ARE PLEASE SEE ATTACHED
IDENTIFY ORIGINAL FEATURES SUCH AS PORCHES (SEE CHART); BALCONIES; NUMBER AND SHAPE OF DORMERS (Click to See Chart)

NUMBER AND LOCATION OF CHIMNEYS; SHUTTERS; SECONDARY FINISH MATERIALS; PARAPETS; METAL TRIM; DECORATIVE TILE OR CAST STONE; ARCHES;

ORNAMENTAL WOODWORK; SYMMETRY OR ASYMMETRY; CORNICES; FRIEZES; TOWERS OR TURRETS; BAY WINDOWS; HALFTIMBERING; HORIZONTALLY;

VERTICALLY; FORMALITY OR INFORMALITY; GARDEN WALLS, ETC.

SECONDARY BUILDINGS CONSIST OF A N/A
IDENTIFY GARAGE, GARDEN SHELTER, ETC.

SIGNIFICANT INTERIOR SPACES INCLUDE PLEASE SEE ATTACHED
IDENTIFY ORIGINAL FEATURES SUCH AS WOOD PANELING; MOLDINGS AND TRIM; SPECIAL GLASS WINDOWS;

ORNATE CEILINGS; PLASTER MOLDINGS; LIGHT FIXTURES; PAINTED DECORATION; CERAMIC TILE; STAIR BALUSTRADES; BUILT-IN FURNITURE, ETC.

IMPORTANT LANDSCAPING INCLUDES SEE ATTACHED
IDENTIFY NOTABLE MATURE TREES AND SHRUBS

800 S. Robertson Blvd. Office Building (1954), 800 S. Robertson Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90035

Edward H. Fickett, F.A.I.A., architect

9. Physical Description

"I remember getting out of my car on Robertson having seen this sinuous brick wall slotted into a sweep of delicate glass wondering 'who designed this building?' ... and was lucky to spot the plaque indicating it was one of Ed's!"

- Stephen H. Kanner, F.A.I.A.¹

The **800 S. Robertson Office Building** is an irregular L-shaped plan, two-story, 10,934 square-foot office building including nine interior office suites and located on the southeast corner of Robertson Boulevard and Gregory Way with its entrance off of Gregory Way. There is also a second entrance through a single-story vestibule at the northeast corner of the building. The slab-on-grade structure utilizes materials such as glass, stucco, brick and steel. Edward H. Fickett's design features the basic forms of a rectangle (interior offices and hallways), square (elevator and public facilities), and circle (two-story curvilinear wall in the lobby/atrium area abutting the stairway half-landing) to create the design footprint, anchored by a flat roof, which provides an imbining harmonic juxtaposition of mass, light, solid and void, rough and smooth textures, thus creating architectural patterns. The design is fresh looking and of modest elegance in a simple, understated way. The building is void of ornamentation, instead, provides clean unobstructed expanses of the building's envelope. The building's vernacular speaks to the Mid-century modern style and to the Southern California environment. Through his use of a skylight, walls of glass, brick walls and planter that extend from the outside and go through glass and into the interior, along with private patios, Fickett was able to achieve his architectural philosophy of seamlessly "bringing the outdoors-in".

The building features several fenestrations, which exemplify the Mid-Century Modern style and Fickett's vernacular, such as, walls of glass, jalousie windows, plate glass, fixed glass and sliding glass doors and windows. Glass walls meet at a 90° angle at the northeast corner of the building. The west and north brick walls have a parapet extending above the roofline. Deep overhanging eaves on the east and south façades cantilever and provide shade with the underside having stucco application. The two-story wall of glass on the north façade is flush with the roofline and features steel mullions that extend above the roofline.

The orientation of the building provides optimal protection from solar gain while providing maximum efficiency in natural light. Fickett takes advantage of the northern exposure and utilizes a two-story glass wall on the northern façade, allowing natural light to filtrate the lobby/atrium and main hallway. The west façade has minimal windows to help reduce solar gain with the use of the Brise-Soleil over the upper and lower fenestrations. The south façade features walls of sliding glass doors which lead to the individual enclosed patios on the 1st-story and strip fenestration on the 2nd-story, allowing for maximum solar gain to provide ample natural light. The 2nd-story fenestration on the south façade features large single-light sliding windows, fixed glass and jalousie windows.

With this office building, we see Fickett's ability to seamlessly bring the outdoors in through his use of glass and architectural features such as extending the exterior brick wall of the Facilities area, through glass slotted into the brick, and into the lobby/atrium area. The curvilinear wall also features a two-story "peek-a-boo" glass window, to "tickle the imagination of what may lie within as it slots seamlessly into the brick creating an undisturbed line allowing for as much outdoors to envelop the interior space. Nestled under the stringer-staircase, his indoor planter in the lobby/atrium extends seamlessly through glass from the exterior landscape providing a fluid invitation in "bringing the outdoors-in".

¹ Stephen Kanner, F.A.I.A., *Letter to Joycie Fickett*, July 14, 2008.

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Edward H. Fickett, F.A.I.A., architect

A plaque is found on the exterior brick wall to the east of the entry door notating "Edward H. Fickett, A.I.A., architect / Barnett B. Poles, general contractor / 1954". Fickett won the Los Angeles Business Council Urban Beautification Award for Low-Rise Commercial Building for the **800 S. Robertson Blvd. Office Building** in 1955.

The building's entry is of a single-light glass panel door with custom metal frame and handle. The interior consists of nine separate office suites featuring clear and obscure glass paneled walls along the lobby/atrium area and the main hallway. The glass walls provide ambient light into the interior office space through their floor-to-ceiling glass walls and northern solar gain. Within the main entry you find yourself enveloped in natural light through the two-story wall of plate glass on the north façade, the skylight and two-story glass "peek-a-boo" window "bringing the outdoors-in".

The two-story lobby/atrium features a custom designed open-string staircase abutting the curvilinear brick wall at its half-landing. The staircase features beveled concrete risers that extend over the indoor planter and up to the 2nd-floor cantilevered platform. The risers featured red pigment in the concrete to contrast the greenery of the indoor/outdoor planter. The risers have since been painted red. The open-string staircase also features custom handrails and angled balusters made of steel. Fickett continues the use of the steel handrail for the upper platform hand railing of the lobby/atrium. The northeast stairwell also features custom steel handrails with balusters at an angle. We see the use of this steel on the exterior northern façade as it is used as mullions, which extend above the roofline of the two-story glass window walls.

The building is characterized by the use of regional materials, such as brick, stucco, steel and plate glass along with architectural elements such as floor-to-ceiling plate glass allowing for maximum natural light while "bringing the outdoors-in", a flat roof, two-story atrium, skylight, curvilinear brick wall, "peek-a-boo" window, indoor planter for greenery, ground-level patios, and a custom staircase and hand rails.

The parcel includes simple well-kept landscaping. Parking spaces are located on the northeast and east sides of the parcel.

Character defining features of this Mid-Century Modern style office building include:

- A two-story plate glass window wall on the north-facing façade
- A two-story curvilinear wall made of troweled joint brick on the west-facing façade
- A two-story "peek-a-boo" glass window slotted in between the curvilinear brick wall and the west-facing façade
- Private outdoor patio areas along the south façade off of every lower level office suite
- Two-story lobby/atrium with cantilevered 2nd-story platform
- Brick walls extending from the outside through glass walls and into the interior, "bringing the outdoors-in"
- Flat roof
- Deep overhanging eaves cantilevered over southern and eastern façades
- Troweled joint brick exterior walls
- Steel mullions on the north-facing plate glass window walls
- A moveable Brise-Soleil on the upper and lower windows on the west façade
- 1st-floor floor-to-ceiling glass walls with sliding doors on the southern façade
- The upper fenestration on the south façade includes plate glass, sliding glass and Jalousie windows
- The east façade includes upper level sliding glass windows and lower lever privacy glass sliding windows
- A single light glass main entry door with custom frame and handle on the north façade flush with the window wall
- A vestibule with a single light glass door entry with custom frame and handle on the east façade
- Minimal use of applied ornament, creating a streamline and industrial appearance

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Edward H. Fickett, F.A.I.A., architect

- Architect / Builder plaque on north façade by main entry door
- A skylight above lobby/atrium
- Interior lobby planter extending through plate glass from the exterior planter of the north façade and into the lobby atrium, "bringing the outdoors-in"
- Custom steel stairway hand railings with angled steel balusters in the main lobby/atrium
- Open-string stairway with beveled risers and a stair half-landing which meets at the curvilinear wall in the lobby/atrium
- Custom-designed steel railing and upright balusters of the upper lobby/atrium platform
- Northeast stairwell's custom steel handrails and angled balusters

800 S. Robertson Blvd. Office Building (1954), 800 S. Robertson Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90035

Edward H. Fickett, F.A.I.A., architect

17. Statement of Significance

The **800 S. Robertson Blvd. Office Building** is an important example of the work by master architect, Edward H. Fickett, F.A.I.A. The building is an exceptional example of the Mid-Century Modern school of architecture. The 9-unit office building was commissioned by L.H.L. Corporation in 1953 and completed in 1954. The building meets two of the criteria for the designation as a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument. Specifically, the building:

- is a notable work of a master builder, designer or architect whose individual genius influenced their age; and
- embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period style or method of construction.

EDWARD H. FICKETT, F.A.I.A., ARCHITECT

A fourth generation Los Angeleno born in 1916, Edward Hale Fickett, F.A.I.A. was the recipient of unequaled array of local, national and international awards for both residential and commercial designs, including American Institute of Architects (AIA) Honor Awards, City Beautification Awards, and four years as recipient of the National Progressive Architectural Design Award. Fickett devoted his lifetime to architecture. His contemporaries repeatedly elected Fickett to serve the profession, including the presidency of the Southern California chapter of the AIA (1962), National Chairman of the Committee for the Home Building Industry of the AIA (1958-1961), and his long tenure as National Chairman of the AIA Ethics Committee. He was planning commissioner in Beverly Hills, a member of Gov. Edmund G. Brown's Housing Board, an architectural advisor to the U.S. Government on housing and building codes for the VA, FHA and HUD, as well as the architectural advisor to U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

While attending the School of Architecture at the University of Southern California (1934-1938), Fickett worked as a draftsman (1935-1938) for Sumner Spaulding, F.A.I.A. He also worked at Kirby Ferguson Structural Engineer as a draftsman (1938-1940) and for Stephan A. Stepanian, A.I.A., as a designer (1939-1940). While serving his country in the United States Navy as a Lt. Commander, Fickett worked with the Navy's Civil Engineering Corps. and Sea Bees designing and building bases throughout the Pacific Rim (1941-1945). Upon his return to California from the war, he partnered with Francis J. Heusel, A.I.A. to create an architectural firm (1945-1949). Fickett opened his private practice, Edward H. Fickett Architect in 1949, continuing his practice until he died in May 1999. He had devoted his life to architecture. Fickett was admitted into the American Institute of Architects (A.I.A.) in 1950 and received his Fellowship from the A.I.A. in 1966, which is the highest professional honor an architect can receive.

Qualities of the architect's design, which are considered to have contributed notably to the advancement of the profession, were his excellence of design, proportion and scale, usage of regional materials, usage of color and his ability to seamlessly "bring the outdoors-in", which was his most essential philosophy of design. Fenestration was key in Fickett's architectural vocabulary. Fickett's work often features floor-to-ceiling window walls of glass, "peek-a-boo" windows, raised ceiling heights featuring transom and clerestory windows along with skylights allowing a seamless flow in design while "bringing the outdoors-in" through private patios and garden areas including interior planters. There is also a playfulness in his work, which was a reflection of his own personality, with his usage of trellises creating shade and light patterns, color to contrast nature and design patterns to invigorate the eye, while providing the client an economically efficient design with the usage of indigenous building materials.

Fickett was the first to add pigment into cement, thus creating less maintenance and cost-savings for his client. The lobby/atrium staircase of the **800 S. Robertson Office Building** is an example of his usage of

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Edward H. Fickett, F.A.I.A., architect

red pigment in the cement risers. They have since been painted red. Edward A. Killingsworth, F.A.I.A. notes, "Ed had a fine sense of design and color. It was always possible to pick out a Fickett building on any street from its very form and color. His buildings had an individual character."² Common colors Fickett would use on his designs were turquoise, red, peach and yellow to enable pops of color to contrast nature and design.

Fickett was "the most influential and most sought after architect of our time, and yet, he was the most modest person I had ever met", Killingsworth notes.³ Amongst Fickett's many contributions to the Los Angeles landscape and to the Southern California region of architecture was through his association with the Merchant Builders of the post-war era that brought affordable housing to the G.I.'s returning home from war. The Merchant Builders who would provide a new architectural landscape to the southern California landscape during this period would seek out Fickett to work with them in master-planning areas and designing tract homes. "Much of his work was in housing when it was necessary for him to achieve good design, which could be mass-produced. In all Ed's work he was able to give it a personal touch; which made the living space special, with an individual character."⁴ Fickett would provide a Merchant Builder with a multitude of design options to create individuality amongst the tract houses he would design for them. Another of Fickett's achievements was designing single-family homes with a palatial impact by raising the ceiling heights, thus providing more air space, flow and natural light in the home. He convinced the Merchant Builders to go with more contemporary designs while saving the developer money in its construction. The results provided creative methods to achieve building economies, as well as livable home plans that would serve both owners and the builder.

Through his skills as an Urban Planner/Master Planner, along with his architectural designs for commercial buildings, multi-family and single-family homes, Fickett was sought after by a multitude of major building developers of Southern California during the post-war period. One of George Alexander's development partners, Ronald S. Dunas recalls, "He was truly the forerunner and pioneer of a new form of contemporary architecture. Countless architects thereafter copied the designs of Edward H. Fickett. Although most unfair, it shows what an impact he had on the world of architecture. He was the most sought after architect of the 40's, 50's, and 60's because his designs were so unique, prolific, creative, and beautiful." He continued, "His architectural designs had a flow and peacefulness about them. They were interesting with clean lines and rooms juxtaposed to rooms in a way that no one would expect."⁵ No other architect was as prolific as Fickett with his multitude of master plans, luxury homes, tract homes, museums, libraries, office buildings, government buildings, military bases, civic buildings, schools, shopping centers, restaurants, hotels, banks and apartment houses, many of which were award-winning designs.

While a charter member of the Architectural Guild at USC, Fickett was responsible for convincing many important architects and leaders of the building trades to support the School of Architecture at USC and to join the Architectural Guild. "He was not only one of the kindest, most generous and most ethical human beings, but he was also the most creative, visionary and prolific architect who was loved, respected, and admired by all his colleagues"⁶, noted Killingsworth.

It was through his appointment and participation with the Federal Housing Advisory Board, Washington, D.C., in 1958 that we see the national impact of his contributions through his collaboration with the Advisory Board, responsible for creating and requiring the Minimum Property Requirements of the Federal

² Edward A. Killingsworth, F.A.I.A., *Letter to Joycie Fickett*, August 2, 2000.

³ Killingsworth, F.A.I.A., *Letter to Joycie Fickett*, August 2, 2000.

⁴ Killingsworth, F.A.I.A., *Letter to Joycie Fickett*, August 2, 2000.

⁵ Ronald S. Dunas, developer, *Letter to Joycie Fickett*, June 11, 2003.

⁶ Killingsworth, F.A.I.A., *Letter to Joycie Fickett*, August 2, 2000.

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Housing Administration (FHA), the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), which are still being used throughout the United States and by lending institutions as a guide for home building commitments.

Fickett's tireless efforts to improve the quality of building and the quality of life of those who lived or worked in his designs came through numerous radio and television programs in an effort to make the public aware of the importance of the architect and the part he must play in the creation of our residential communities, as well as his work on commercial buildings, industrial designs and civic architecture. Not only was the public receiving education from Fickett, but also his colleagues and peers through his numerous lectures and interviews. Fickett was repeatedly invited to be the guest speaker at architectural and building industry conventions worldwide, as well as being invited to be guest professor at architectural universities throughout the United States.

The architect was the recipient of an unparalleled amount of international, national, regional and local architectural awards for his excellence of design and original planning concepts. His participation with the Merchant Builders resulted in achieving economies in residential design suitable for large-scale developments. Fickett is responsible for the planning and design of over 60,000 single-family dwellings with a multitude of the developments he designed cited by the AIA, NAHB, and numerous trade and professional magazines for their excellence in design.

The **800 S. Robertson Blvd. Office Building** embodies the distinguishing characteristics of Fickett's work, and thus meets the criteria of Sec. 22.130 of the Los Angeles Administrative code. The building is an example of the Mid-Century Modern style, which was often exemplified by his work.

Notable works by the architect include:

- The Port of Los Angeles, (Los Angeles Harbor Passenger and Cargo Terminals) (1953), Los Angeles, CA
- Edwards Air Force Base (1958), Los Angeles, CA
- Norton Air Force Base (1950), San Bernadino, CA
- Historic and seismic renovation of Los Angeles City Hall Tower (Phase I) (1991), Los Angeles, CA
- Los Angeles Police Academy, Los Angeles, CA
- West Hollywood Park buildings, including West Hollywood Library (1960), West Hollywood, CA
- Fire Station No. 99 (1960), Los Angeles, CA
- Fire Station No. 30 – (Historic restoration & conversion into the Afro-American Firefighter Museum), Los Angeles, CA
- American Savings and Loan bank buildings (numerous) (1977) & Headquarters (1974)
- California Federal Savings & Loans (1947 & 1950), Los Angeles, CA
- La Jolla Fashion Center (1969), San Diego, CA
- The Riviera Hotel & Casino (1955), Las Vegas, NV
- The Sands Hotel & Casino (1952), Las Vegas, NV
- La Costa Resort (1964), Carlsbad, CA
- Ocotillo Lodge Hotel (1957), Palm Springs, CA
- Mammoth Mountain Inn & Ski Lodge (1957), Mammoth, CA
- Highland Gardens (Formerly "The Landmark") (1956), Hollywood, CA
- Hollywood Riviera (HCM) (1954), West Hollywood, CA
- George Alexander Residence (May Residence) (1951), Palm Springs, CA
- Kay Residence (1960), Manhattan Beach, CA
- Jacobson Residence (HCM) (1964), Los Angeles, CA
- Grier Residence (HCM) (1954), Los Angeles, CA
- 60,000+ Residential homes, Los Angeles, Ventura and San Diego Counties

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Fickett was also cited in numerous trade and commercial publications including, *AIArchitect*, *American Home* magazine, *Architectural Digest* magazine, *Architecture and Interior Design* magazine, *Better Homes and Gardens* magazine, *Good Housekeeping* magazine, *House & Home* magazine, *Los Angeles* magazine, *Los Angeles Sentinel* newspaper, *Los Angeles Times* newspaper, *Los Angeles Times HOME* magazine, *Parents* magazine, *Practical Builder* magazine, *Progressive Architecture* magazine, and *Sunset Magazine*.

Fickett received numerous awards from the cities of Los Angeles, Beverly Hills, Reno and Seattle, Recognized with the Presidential Merit of Honor Award (the first to an American architect), The American Institute of Architects, The American Arbitration Association, The California Masonry Association, Federal Housing Administration, The National Association of Home Builders, and The Pacific Coast Builders Association.

MID-CENTURY MODERN (ca. 1945-1969)

To fully understand the Mid-Century Modern movement in architecture, you have to go back to its early predecessor, the International Style. Much of what is found in the Mid-Century movement was based on the ideals of the International Style. Taking into account its particular environment and new technologies, Mid-Century Modern was a central force in architectural design throughout the post-war era (1945-1969). Mid-Century Modern was about space and spatial relationships with its environment: space-making, space-defining, how light falls into the space, how materials define space, forms that define space with a larger emphasis on how the space relates to the human.

The International Style is characterized by an emphasis on function combined with a rejection of traditional decorative motifs and regional characteristics, thus creating purely functional forms. The International Style was further characterized by flat roofs, smooth and uniform surfaces, large expanses of windows and projecting or cantilevered upper floors. The complete absence of ornamentation is typical, and cubist shapes were fashionable. Horizontality was emphasized with windows that continued around corners. Windows were set flush to the wall and the sliding window became popular. There were fixed panes of glass from floor to ceiling, and curtain-like walls of glass were a common characteristic. Popular building materials were reinforced concrete, steel frames, and an unprecedented use of prefabricated parts, since the style had its roots in industrial architecture.⁷

It was in 1932 at the International Exhibition of Modern Architecture held at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City that the term International Style was coined, as common purpose and common distinctive trends defined this school of design. Developed during the 1920s and 1930s and originating in Western Europe prior to World War II, the world-wide influence of the school of the International Style made an impact on American architecture as we saw many Europeans escape the political upheaval in Europe. Thus, many would come to the United States and reside. Western European architects who fled Europe prior to WWII adopted the International Style philosophy, including Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1886-1969), Germany; Le Corbusier (Charles-Édouard Jeanneret) (1887-1965), Switzerland; Walter Adolph Georg Gropius (1883-1969), Germany; Rudolph Michael Schindler (1887-1953), Vienna and Richard Joseph Neutra (1892-1970), Austria, who played an important role in bringing the International style philosophy to America, as well as to the Southern California landscape.

Mid-century modern architecture was adopted in America in the mid-1940s and lasted through the late 1960s. It was a trend in American modern architecture and industrial design, which was sleek and sexy with a strong influence from the earlier coined movement known as the International Style. Architects

⁷ Ernest Burden, *Illustrated Dictionary of Architecture*, (MacGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., Third Edition, 2012), p. 282.

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incorporated rhythm, balance and scale within their themes for design, which sought the clarity of form and geometry in design. As with the earlier International Style, which was stark and void of ornamentation, the Mid-Century Modern movement was a manifestation of the future, with no thoughts of the past. It was an optimistic time, when the sky was the limit with the usage of new technologies and building materials. It was a period that embraced the "new." People wanted buildings that not only represented people's social and community life and to provide more than functional fulfillment, but also of their aspirations for the future.

The International Style is the first movement in modern architecture that embraced functionality, simple forms, clean lines and open spaces, inspired by modern materials such as steel, reinforced concrete and glass. Mid-Century Modern architecture used innovations and technologies in building materials such as new curtain-wall materials, glare-and heat-resistant glass, automatic elevators, heating and air conditioning systems, and a host of other technical innovations and improvements, which gave meaning to the new architecture.

Modern architecture, in general, came as a response or a revolt of earlier architecture movements and honed their themes with a use of proper building materials and the articulation of the use of materials to create a design, which directly related to construction methods. Exterior and interior forms were conceived and expressed as a single entity. The Mid-Century Modern movement was streamline and clear, with a tightening of its planning and formal execution.

Mid-Century Modern was stark and bare in comparison of early styles of architecture. Taking up the fundamental tenets of the earlier 'modern', a new modified modern with three basic characteristics developed. These Mid-Century Modern characteristics are:

- 1.) A totally new emphasis on the interior spaces of a building in terms of their usefulness, comfort and beauty and their inter-relationship. They open and flow into one another in a dynamic rather than static relationship.
- 2.) A new indoor-outdoor relationship through the use of glass which made it possible to bring nature's plants and greenery into the building, and extend the building out into nature. Planted plazas, interior courts and terraces brought nature indoors and even into the urban working environment.
- 3.) Buildings appear lighter, often buoyant, which rest lightly on the ground as though to disturb it as little as possible.

Mid-Century Modern architecture was about "liveability", with a new concern for the amenities and aesthetics of comfortable living and working conditions. The designs reflected a new emphasis on "human scale," with the intent to meet man's emotional and spiritual needs as well as his physical ones. This movement emphasized the indoors merging with the outdoors through the use of glass walls and a flowing openness towards outdoor patios, giving the design a feeling of spaciousness. There was a new emphasis on the garden and the natural setting brought with this new thoughtfulness to nature. The orientation of the building was paramount and the environment was equally important. Careful orientation also makes the most of existing trees, rocks, topography and solar gain. The design of a garden, whether indoor or outdoor, became as important as that of the living room or a building's lobby area.

Office buildings of this period generally followed the Miesian formula of curtain-wall design. Some designs went further and found completely new forms and shapes, along with the spanning of large spaces without columns or other interior obstructions, which were made through the advancement of technology and new building materials. It broke away from the age-old structure of compressive strength to a new structure of tension. During this Mid-century period in America, reinforced concrete became fully into its

800 S. Robertson Blvd. Office Building (1954), 800 S. Robertson Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90035

Edward H. Fickett, F.A.I.A., architect

own. Steel gave tenacity to stone and concrete gave mass to steel. Together, they resisted tension in accordance with the existing network of stresses to reach out and span space of fantastic proportions.

Experimentation was paramount to Mid-Century Modern architecture and began with the use of steel, reinforced concrete and glass. Looking for something fresh and new, the materials, construction methods and forms varied from building to building. Buildings stood out from one another as they had their own identities and were no longer looking the same, block after block. Flat roofs and low-slung rooflines were other features of the movement. Buildings were designed to serve a variety of functional purposes, as well as mindful of the client's needs and pocketbook. This new movement gave new freedom to architects through technology. Architects became artists and not just sophisticated engineers, as they created livable and attractive environments. Architect, Louis Sullivan's quote, "Form follows function,"⁸ was never more a theme in design than it was throughout the Mid-Century Modern movement in architecture.

The **800 S. Robertson Blvd. Office Building** is a Mid-Century Modern type of design, following the dictates of Mid-Century Modern with influences of the International Style. This Mid-Century Modern building takes into consideration its environment, the climate and harsh solar gain attributed to its locale in Southern California. It shares characteristics and influences of the International Style designs of "The Bauhaus" (1925-1926), Dessau, Germany, designed by Walter Adolph Georg Gropius, architect and the "S.R. Crown Hall, College of Architecture, Illinois Institute of Technology" (1956), Chicago, Illinois, by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, architect, as well as the local, "Lovell Health House" (1929), Los Angeles, CA by Richard J. Neutra, architect.

It was during the period of Fickett's education at the University of Southern California (1934-1938) the young architect was influenced by the International Style of architecture. Due to this influence, the Mid-Century Modern movement became a central design theme throughout his lengthy career. Other prominent building designs Fickett created in the Mid-Century Modern aesthetic include:

- Edward H. Fickett Ancillary Office (c.1958) – 9026 Melrose Ave, West Hollywood (Fair Condition)
- Franklyn Medical Plaza (1967), 8760 W Sunset Blvd, West Hollywood (Good Condition)
- Larry Worchell Office Building (1959) – 8105 W 3rd Street, Los Angeles (Good Condition)
- Ocotillo Lodge Hotel (1957) – 1111 E Palm Canyon Dr, Palm Springs (Good Condition)
- Rapport International Furniture Store (1958 & 1961), 435 N La Brea, Los Angeles (Good Condition)
- Sunset Capri Apartments (1952), 8341 W Sunset Blvd, Los Angeles (Good Condition)
- Fire Station No. 99, (1960), 14145 Mulholland Dr, Los Angeles (Good Condition)
- West Hollywood Park Library (1960); (Demolished in 2011)

The **800 S. Robertson Blvd. Office Building** (1954) is one of Fickett's earliest office buildings designed in the Mid-Century Modern style. In close comparison to the CBS Television Center designed by Pereira & Luckman (1952), but in modest scale, both office buildings share clean planes and sharp corners in their designs with a major emphasis on the usage of glass façades. Fickett's fenestration adapts the Mid-Century Modern philosophy for the harsh solar environment the Southern California climate creates. The architect has stated, "We are now reaching new heights in the use of natural daylight as a design or architectural element. We are beginning to control light and we are balancing it."⁹ With the building's orientation, Fickett took into consideration the use of natural light with the use of plate glass, jalousie windows, sliding

⁸ Wolf Von Eckardt, *"Mid-Century Architecture in America"*, (The Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1961), p. 24.

⁹ Edward H. Fickett, *"A Glass House is a 'Modern' Fable: Effective control for daylight"*, (Los Angeles Times, August 4, 1957), p. K20.

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Edward H. Fickett, F.A.I.A., architect

glass doors, skylight, Brise-Soleil and his often found Fickett feature, the “peek-a-boo” window in the lobby/atrium area.

Further, the placement of windows and use of glass was of the utmost importance in the design of the office building. Fickett took into consideration the Southern California climate. “Ideally, from the compass standpoint, an architect will choose north light as the main source of natural light because its steady balance.”¹⁰ Both the interior and exterior northern elevations utilize glass. The clear and privacy floor-to-ceiling and partial glass walls used on the interior northern office walls take advantage of the balanced daylight exposure to allow diffused light to filtrate into the interior office space off the main hallway, as well as privacy through the usage of etched glass. The usage of skylights was an important element of design to Fickett. He stated, “Skylights provide the right ‘light climate’ for indoor plants.”¹¹ The skylight was placed in the **800 S. Robertson Blvd Office Building** due to the atrium’s planter directly below.

800 S. Robertson Blvd Office Building can also be compared to the award-winning Killingsworth, Brady, Smith and Associates 1960 design for their Office Building for a Development Firm, Long Beach, CA. Including floor-to-ceiling walls of glass, a flat roof, use of local resources with a simple geometry and scale to their designs. The post-war era offered economic optimism, new technologies and a new approach to design in Southern California. Fickett utilized brick and stucco walls, which are synonymous with the Mid-Century Modern movement. Fickett would take the philosophy into the post-war era with his use of brick for the exterior walls, which was readily on hand as it was a regional resource and more affordable. Utilizing these regional resources, Fickett was able to design with economic restraint to provide his client with cost-saving materials and provide the occupants with a feeling of grandeur without compromising architectural integrity.

Fickett’s curved entry wall at the **800 S. Robertson Blvd. Office Building** is reminiscent of Neutra’s von Sternberg House (1935) featuring its curvilinear privacy wall. Instead of the convex enclave Neutra designed, Fickett, instead, provides a concave position, as if to greet the public with open arms. The exterior elevations adhere to the minimalist style of simplification and the elimination of ornament true to the Mid-Century Modern style of architecture. The clean lines and simple patterns suggest the coming of a new age in architecture. A moveable Brise-Soleil on the upper and lower windows on the west façade exemplify the effects from the mechanical industrial age, while providing protection from the Southern California environment and the influx of natural light.

The deep cantilevered eaves on the East and South façade provided needed shade for the sun’s direct exposure and helps softened the light source while instilling the Mid-Century Modern philosophy of design. Under the deep eave on the South façade, you find continuous bands of windows, which are shaded by the eave, but allow diffused light to infiltrate the upper interior office space. At ground level, the walls of glass with sliding glass doors, which lead to individual exterior garden patio areas, allow flow from the outdoors-in. Due to the harsh sun and western light in the afternoons, Fickett utilizes the mechanical and industrial Brise-Soleil for privacy and shade.

The **800 S. Robertson Blvd. Office Building** is a study of Mid-Century Modern architecture and the influences of the post-war period; taking into consideration it’s location in Southern California. It is unique due to the fact it was an earlier example of Fickett’s influence of the movement as well as adapting the style for the local environment and utilizing the readily accessible resources from the region. The building imbibes functionality while providing style and substance.

¹⁰ Fickett, “A Glass House is a ‘Modern’ Fable: Effective control for daylight”, p. K20.

¹¹ Edward H. Fickett, “Glass Overhead: An architect speaks on skylights”, (Los Angeles Times, March 12, 1961), p. C8.

800 S. Robertson Blvd. Office Building (1954), 800 S. Robertson Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90035

Edward H. Fickett, F.A.I.A., architect

18. Sources

- Numerous conversations with Joycie Fickett
- Letters written to Joycie Fickett
- Edward H. Fickett, USC Archives
- The American Institute of Architects, *Nomination for Fellowship by Chapter Application*

Los Angeles Department of City Planning

RECOMMENDATION REPORT

CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION**CASE NO.: CHC-2014-1708-HCM
ENV-2014-1709-CE**

HEARING DATE: July 10, 2014
TIME: 10:00 AM
PLACE: City Hall, Room 1010
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA
90012

Location: 800 S. Robertson Blvd.
Council District: 5
Community Plan Area: Wilshire
Area Planning Commission: Central
Neighborhood Council: South Robertson
Legal Description: TR 8313, Lots 1, 2, 3

PROJECT: Historic-Cultural Monument Application for
800 S. ROBERTSON BLVD. OFFICE BUILDING

REQUEST: Declare the property a Historic-Cultural Monument

OWNER: James and Joyce Corazza
1650 Carla Ridge
Beverly Hills, CA 90210

**OWNER'S
REPRESENTATIVE:** Steven Ward
2438 N. Beachwood Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90068


RECOMMENDATION That the Cultural Heritage Commission:

1. **Declare the property** a Historic-Cultural Monument per Los Angeles Administrative Code Chapter 9, Division 22, Article 1, Section 22.171.7.
2. **Adopt** the staff report and findings.

MICHAEL J. LOGRANDE
Director of Planning



Ken Bernstein, AICP, Manager
Office of Historic Resources



Lambert M. Giessinger, Preservation Architect
Office of Historic Resources

Attachments: Historic-Cultural Monument Application

FINDINGS

- The building “embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period style or method of construction” as an example of the Mid-Century Modern commercial style.
- The building is “a notable work of a master builder, designer or architect whose individual genius influenced his age” as a work by master architect Edward H. Fickett.

CRITERIA

The criterion is the Cultural Heritage Ordinance which defines a historical or cultural monument 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, such as historic structures or sites in which the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, State or community is reflected or exemplified, or which are identified with historic personages or with important events in the main currents of national, State or local history or which embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period style or method of construction, or a notable work of a master builder, designer or architect whose individual genius influenced his age.

SUMMARY

Built in 1954, this two-story commercial office building exhibits character defining features of the Mid-Century Modern style. The subject building has a flat roof and an L-shaped floor plan; materials are brick, stucco, steel and glass. The principal mass of a large rectangular box containing office space is joined to two projections on the north-west corner of the structure. The west and north elevations face Robertson Blvd. and Gregory Way, respectively. The west façade is set back slightly from Robertson and consists of a concave wall of white brick with a long, flat wall of the same material emerging from behind it. The concave wall has a thick hedge growing within the curved pocket it creates and the number 800 applied on a floating mount in the upper-right corner. The flat wall is unadorned except for two small banks of louvered windows near its southern edge. The north elevation is broken into three portions. The first portion near the street corner consists of a glass-walled atrium built behind the concave wall, set back a few feet from the sidewalk. Steel mullions support the two rows of floor-to-ceiling windows that make up the wall, and a single glass swinging door provides entry. A steel staircase, interior landscaping, and office fronts are visible behind the glass. The second portion is a white brick rectangular mass without windows or ornamentation built up to the property line. This contains the elevator and restrooms. The third portion is set back to provide parking spaces and consists of two long banks of floor-to-ceiling windows, identical to the atrium face in configuration. Office windows and doors are visible behind the glass. There is a secondary entrance and staircase behind the plate glass at the north-east corner. The east elevation, which fronts an alley, consists of white brick with four small banks of windows, and a large, overhanging eave.

The subject building was designed by Edward H. Fickett, FAIA, a renowned and prolific Los Angeles-based architect. Fickett is recognized as a key influence within modernist architecture and a major force in the dissemination of modernist design into mass housing. Fickett is credited with designing over 50,000 single-family homes, including at least 10,000 in the San Fernando Valley. Notable works include the Jacobson House (HCM #674), the Port of Los

Angeles Passenger and Cargo Terminals, Dodger Stadium, Sunset Patios in West Hollywood, and an addition to the Los Angeles Police Academy.

The known alterations to the subject building are painting over of previously unpainted stairs in the atrium, linoleum flooring over the original concrete pads, and replacement interior glass partitions and doors.

DISCUSSION

The 800 S. Robertson Blvd. Office Building historic property successfully meets two of the specified Historic-Cultural Monument criteria: 1) "embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period style or method of construction" and 2) is "a notable work of a master builder, designer or architect whose individual genius influenced his age." The open floor plan, use of materials running from the interior to the exterior, exposed structural elements, lack of ornamentation, intersecting flat planes, cantilevered stairs, flat roof with deep, overhanging eaves, and extensive use of glass make the subject building an archetype of the Mid-Century Modern style. Edward H. Fickett is widely considered an influential modernist architect and is recognized as a master.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT ("CEQA") FINDINGS

State of California CEQA Guidelines, Article 19, Section 15308, Class 8 "*consists of actions taken by regulatory agencies, as authorized by state or local ordinance, to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of the environment where the regulatory process involves procedures for protection of the environment.*"

State of California CEQA Guidelines Article 19, Section 15331, Class 31 "*consists of projects limited to maintenance, repair, stabilization, rehabilitation, restoration, preservation, conservation or reconstruction of historical resources in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic buildings.*"

The designation of the 800 S. Robertson Blvd. Office Building property as a Historic-Cultural Monument in accordance with Chapter 9, Article 1, of The City of Los Angeles Administrative Code ("LAAC") will ensure that future construction activities involving the subject property are regulated in accordance with Section 22.171.14 of the LAAC. The purpose of the designation is to prevent significant impacts to a Historic-Cultural Monument through the application of the standards set forth in the LAAC. Without the regulation imposed by way of the pending designation, the historic significance and integrity of the subject property could be lost through incompatible alterations and new construction and the demolition of irreplaceable historic structures. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards of Rehabilitation are expressly incorporated into the LAAC and provide standards concerning the historically appropriate construction activities which will ensure the continued preservation of the subject property.

The use of Categorical Exemption Class 8 in connection with the proposed designation is consistent with the goals of maintaining, restoring, enhancing, and protecting the environment through the imposition of regulations designed to prevent the degradation of Historic-Cultural Monuments.

The use of Categorical Exemption Class 31 in connection with the proposed designation is consistent with the goals relating to the preservation, rehabilitation, restoration and reconstruction of Historic buildings in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings.

BACKGROUND

On May 29th, 2014 the Cultural Heritage Commission took the property under consideration. On June 19th, 2014, Commissioners Barron and Louie inspected the site with Lambert Giessinger of the Office of Historic Resources (OHR) staff. Later on June 19th, 2014, Commissioner Irvine inspected the site with Nels Youngborg of the OHR staff.

CITY OF LOS ANGELES

SIGNIFICANCE WORK SHEET

TYPE OR HAND PRINT IN ALL CAPITAL BLOCK LETTERS

Complete One or Both of the Upper and Lower Portions of This Page

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

THE 800 S. ROBERTSON BLVD. OFFICE BUILDING IS AN IMPORTANT EXAMPLE OF
NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT

MID-CENTURY MODERN ARCHITECTURE
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE (SEE LINE 8)

AND MEETS THE CULTURAL HERITAGE ORDINANCE BECAUSE OF THE HIGH QUALITY OF ITS DESIGN AND THE RETENTION
OF ITS ORIGINAL FORM, DETAILING AND INTEGRITY.

AND / OR

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

THE 800 S. ROBERTSON BLVD. OFFICE BUILDING WAS BUILT IN 1954
NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT YEAR BUILT

EDWARD H. FICKETT, F.A.I.A. WAS IMPORTANT TO THE
NAME OF FIRST OR SIGNIFICANT OTHER

DEVELOPMENT OF LOS ANGELES BECAUSE PLEASE SEE ATTACHED.

**HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT
APPLICATION**

TYPE OR HAND PRINT IN ALL CAPITAL BLOCK LETTERS

IDENTIFICATION

1. NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT 800 S. ROBERTSON BLVD. OFFICE BUILDING
2. STREET ADDRESS 800 S. ROBERTSON BLVD.
CITY LOS ANGELES ZIP CODE 90035 COUNCIL DISTRICT CD 5
3. ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NO. 4333-015-001
4. COMPLETE LEGAL DESCRIPTION: TRACT TRACT # 8313 LOTS 1, 2 AND LOT 3
BLOCK NONE LOT(S) 1, 2, and 3 ARB. NO. _____
5. RANGE OF ADDRESSES ON PROPERTY 800 S. ROBERTSON BLVD.
6. PRESENT OWNER JAMES AND JOYCE CORAZZA
STREET ADDRESS 1650 CARLA RIDGE E-MAIL ADDRESS: N/A
CITY BEVERLY HILLS STATE CA ZIP CODE 90210 PHONE (310) 276-2298
OWNERSHIP: PRIVATE YES PUBLIC NO
7. PRESENT USE OFFICE BUILDING ORIGINAL USE OFFICE BUILDING FOR L.H.L CORP.

DESCRIPTION

8. ARCHITECTURAL STYLE MID-CENTURY MODERN
(SEE STYLE GUIDE)
9. STATE PRESENT PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE OR STRUCTURE (SEE OPTIONAL DESCRIPTION WORK SHEET, 1 PAGE MAXIMUM)
PLEASE SEE ATTACHED
- _____

**HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT
APPLICATION**

NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT 800 S. ROBERTSON BLVD. OFFICE BUILDING

10. CONSTRUCTION DATE: LINE 1054 FACTUAL: ☒ ESTIMATED: ☐

11. ARCHITECT, DESIGNER, OR ENGINEER EDWARD H. FICKETT, F.A.I.A.

12. CONTRACTOR OR OTHER BUILDER BARNETT B. POLES, GENERAL CONTRACTOR

13. DATES OF ENCLOSED PHOTOGRAPHS NOVEMBER 18, 2013 & JANUARY 25, 2014

(1 8X10 BLACK AND WHITE GLOSSY AND 1 DIGITAL E-MAILED TO CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION@LACITY.ORG)

14. CONDITION: ☐ EXCELLENT ☒ GOOD ☐ FAIR ☐ DETERIORATED ☐ NO LONGER IN EXISTENCE

15. ALTERATIONS RISERS OF THE STRINGER STAIRCASE IN ATRIUM/LOBBY HAVE BEEN PAINTED

16. THREATS TO SITE: ☒ NONE KNOWN ☐ PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT ☐ VANDALISM ☐ PUBLIC WORKS PROJECT
☐ ZONING ☐ OTHER _____

17. IS THE STRUCTURE: ☒ ON ITS ORIGINAL SITE ☐ MOVED ☐ UNKNOWN

SIGNIFICANCE

18. BRIEFLY STATE HISTORICAL AND/OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE: INCLUDE DATES, EVENTS, AND PERSON ASSOCIATED
WITH THE SITE (SEE ALSO SIGNIFICANCE WORK SHEET. 750 WORDS MAXIMUM IF USING ADDITIONAL SHEETS)

PLEASE SEE ATTACHED

19. SOURCES (LIST BOOKS, DOCUMENTS, SURVEYS, PERSONAL INTERVIEWS WITH DATES) PLEASE SEE ATTACHED

20. DATE FORM PREPARED 1/22/2014 PREPARER'S NAME STEVEN WARD

ORGANIZATION MODERNHOMESLOSANGELES STREET ADDRESS 2438 N. BEACHWOOD DRIVE

CITY LOS ANGELES STATE CA ZIP CODE 90068 PHONE (213) 305-8537

E-MAIL ADDRESS: steve.ward.la@gmail.com

DESCRIPTION WORK SHEET

TYPE OR HAND PRINT IN ALL CAPITAL BLOCK LETTERS

THE 800 S. ROBERTSON BLVD. OFFICE BUILDING IS A 2-STORY,
NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT NUMBER OF STORIES

MID-CENTURY MODERN
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE (SEE LINE 8 ABOVE)

9. Irregular
PLAN SHAPE (Click to See Chart)

OFFICE BUILDING
STRUCTURE USE (RESIDENCE, ETC.)

WITH A BRICK, STEEL, GLASS AND STUCCO FINISH AND TRIM.
MATERIAL (WOOD SLIDING, WOOD SHINGLES, BRICK, STUCCO, ETC.) MATERIAL (WOOD, METAL, ETC.)

IT'S FLAT ROOF IS COMPOSITE
ROOF SHAPE (Click to See Chart) MATERIAL (CLAY TILE, ASPHALT OR WOOD SHINGLES, ETC.) WINDOW MATERIAL

PLEASE SEE ATTACHED WINDOWS ARE PART OF THE DESIGN.
WINDOW TYPE (DOUBLE-HUNG (SLIDES UP & DOWN), CASEMENT (OPENS OUT), HORIZONTAL SLIDING, ETC.)

THE ENTRY FEATURES A PLEASE SEE ATTACHED
DOOR LOCATION (RECESSED, CENTERED, OFF-CENTER, CORNER, ETC.)

6. Single Panel DOOR. ADDITIONAL CHARACTER DEFINING ELEMENTS
ENTRY DOOR STYLE (Click to See Chart)

OF THE STRUCTURE ARE PLEASE SEE ATTACHED
IDENTIFY ORIGINAL FEATURES SUCH AS PORCHES (SEE CHART); BALCONIES; NUMBER AND SHAPE OF DORMERS (Click to See Chart)

NUMBER AND LOCATION OF CHIMNEYS; SHUTTERS; SECONDARY FINISH MATERIALS; PARAPETS; METAL TRIM; DECORATIVE TILE OR CAST STONE; ARCHES;

ORNAMENTAL WOODWORK; SYMMETRY OR ASYMMETRY; CORNICES; FRIEZES; TOWERS OR TURRETS; BAY WINDOWS; HALFTIMBERING; HORIZONTALLY;

VERTICALLY; FORMALITY OR INFORMALITY; GARDEN WALLS, ETC.

SECONDARY BUILDINGS CONSIST OF A N/A
IDENTIFY GARAGE, GARDEN SHELTER, ETC.

SIGNIFICANT INTERIOR SPACES INCLUDE PLEASE SEE ATTACHED
IDENTIFY ORIGINAL FEATURES SUCH AS WOOD PANELING; MOLDINGS AND TRIM; SPECIAL GLASS WINDOWS;

ORNATE CEILINGS; PLASTER MOLDINGS; LIGHT FIXTURES; PAINTED DECORATION; CERAMIC TILE; STAIR BALUSTRADES; BUILT-IN FURNITURE, ETC.

IMPORTANT LANDSCAPING INCLUDES SEE ATTACHED
IDENTIFY NOTABLE MATURE TREES AND SHRUBS

800 S. Robertson Blvd. Office Building (1954), 800 S. Robertson Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90035

Edward H. Fickett, F.A.I.A., architect

9. Physical Description

"I remember getting out of my car on Robertson having seen this sinuous brick wall slotted into a sweep of delicate glass wondering 'who designed this building?' ... and was lucky to spot the plaque indicating it was one of Ed's!"

- Stephen H. Kanner, F.A.I.A.¹

The **800 S. Robertson Office Building** is an irregular L-shaped plan, two-story, 10,934 square-foot office building including nine interior office suites and located on the southeast corner of Robertson Boulevard and Gregory Way with its entrance off of Gregory Way. There is also a second entrance through a single-story vestibule at the northeast corner of the building. The slab-on-grade structure utilizes materials such as glass, stucco, brick and steel. Edward H. Fickett's design features the basic forms of a rectangle (interior offices and hallways), square (elevator and public facilities), and circle (two-story curvilinear wall in the lobby/atrium area abutting the stairway half-landing) to create the design footprint, anchored by a flat roof, which provides an imbining harmonic juxtaposition of mass, light, solid and void, rough and smooth textures, thus creating architectural patterns. The design is fresh looking and of modest elegance in a simple, understated way. The building is void of ornamentation, instead, provides clean unobstructed expanses of the building's envelope. The building's vernacular speaks to the Mid-century modern style and to the Southern California environment. Through his use of a skylight, walls of glass, brick walls and planter that extend from the outside and go through glass and into the interior, along with private patios, Fickett was able to achieve his architectural philosophy of seamlessly "bringing the outdoors-in".

The building features several fenestrations, which exemplify the Mid-Century Modern style and Fickett's vernacular, such as, walls of glass, jalousie windows, plate glass, fixed glass and sliding glass doors and windows. Glass walls meet at a 90° angle at the northeast corner of the building. The west and north brick walls have a parapet extending above the roofline. Deep overhanging eaves on the east and south façades cantilever and provide shade with the underside having stucco application. The two-story wall of glass on the north façade is flush with the roofline and features steel mullions that extend above the roofline.

The orientation of the building provides optimal protection from solar gain while providing maximum efficiency in natural light. Fickett takes advantage of the northern exposure and utilizes a two-story glass wall on the northern façade, allowing natural light to filtrate the lobby/atrium and main hallway. The west façade has minimal windows to help reduce solar gain with the use of the Brise-Soleil over the upper and lower fenestrations. The south façade features walls of sliding glass doors which lead to the individual enclosed patios on the 1st-story and strip fenestration on the 2nd-story, allowing for maximum solar gain to provide ample natural light. The 2nd-story fenestration on the south façade features large single-light sliding windows, fixed glass and jalousie windows.

With this office building, we see Fickett's ability to seamlessly bring the outdoors in through his use of glass and architectural features such as extending the exterior brick wall of the Facilities area, through glass slotted into the brick, and into the lobby/atrium area. The curvilinear wall also features a two-story "peek-a-boo" glass window, to "tickle the imagination of what may lie within as it slots seamlessly into the brick creating an undisturbed line allowing for as much outdoors to envelop the interior space. Nestled under the stringer-staircase, his indoor planter in the lobby/atrium extends seamlessly through glass from the exterior landscape providing a fluid invitation in "bringing the outdoors-in".

¹ Stephen Kanner, F.A.I.A., *Letter to Joycie Fickett*, July 14, 2008.

800 S. Robertson Blvd. Office Building (1954), 800 S. Robertson Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90035

Edward H. Fickett, F.A.I.A., architect

A plaque is found on the exterior brick wall to the east of the entry door notating "Edward H. Fickett, A.I.A., architect / Barnett B. Poles, general contractor / 1954". Fickett won the Los Angeles Business Council Urban Beautification Award for Low-Rise Commercial Building for the **800 S. Robertson Blvd. Office Building** in 1955.

The building's entry is of a single-light glass panel door with custom metal frame and handle. The interior consists of nine separate office suites featuring clear and obscure glass paneled walls along the lobby/atrium area and the main hallway. The glass walls provide ambient light into the interior office space through their floor-to-ceiling glass walls and northern solar gain. Within the main entry you find yourself enveloped in natural light through the two-story wall of plate glass on the north façade, the skylight and two-story glass "peek-a-boo" window "bringing the outdoors-in".

The two-story lobby/atrium features a custom designed open-string staircase abutting the curvilinear brick wall at its half-landing. The staircase features beveled concrete risers that extend over the indoor planter and up to the 2nd-floor cantilevered platform. The risers featured red pigment in the concrete to contrast the greenery of the indoor/outdoor planter. The risers have since been painted red. The open-string staircase also features custom handrails and angled balusters made of steel. Fickett continues the use of the steel handrail for the upper platform hand railing of the lobby/atrium. The northeast stairwell also features custom steel handrails with balusters at an angle. We see the use of this steel on the exterior northern façade as it is used as mullions, which extend above the roofline of the two-story glass window walls.

The building is characterized by the use of regional materials, such as brick, stucco, steel and plate glass along with architectural elements such as floor-to-ceiling plate glass allowing for maximum natural light while "bringing the outdoors-in", a flat roof, two-story atrium, skylight, curvilinear brick wall, "peek-a-boo" window, indoor planter for greenery, ground-level patios, and a custom staircase and hand rails.

The parcel includes simple well-kept landscaping. Parking spaces are located on the northeast and east sides of the parcel.

Character defining features of this Mid-Century Modern style office building include:

- A two-story plate glass window wall on the north-facing façade
- A two-story curvilinear wall made of troweled joint brick on the west-facing façade
- A two-story "peek-a-boo" glass window slotted in between the curvilinear brick wall and the west-facing façade
- Private outdoor patio areas along the south façade off of every lower level office suite
- Two-story lobby/atrium with cantilevered 2nd-story platform
- Brick walls extending from the outside through glass walls and into the interior, "bringing the outdoors-in"
- Flat roof
- Deep overhanging eaves cantilevered over southern and eastern façades
- Troweled joint brick exterior walls
- Steel mullions on the north-facing plate glass window walls
- A moveable Brise-Soleil on the upper and lower windows on the west façade
- 1st-floor floor-to-ceiling glass walls with sliding doors on the southern façade
- The upper fenestration on the south façade includes plate glass, sliding glass and Jalousie windows
- The east façade includes upper level sliding glass windows and lower lever privacy glass sliding windows
- A single light glass main entry door with custom frame and handle on the north façade flush with the window wall
- A vestibule with a single light glass door entry with custom frame and handle on the east façade
- Minimal use of applied ornament, creating a streamline and industrial appearance

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Edward H. Fickett, F.A.I.A., architect

- Architect / Builder plaque on north façade by main entry door
- A skylight above lobby/atrium
- Interior lobby planter extending through plate glass from the exterior planter of the north façade and into the lobby atrium, "bringing the outdoors-in"
- Custom steel stairway hand railings with angled steel balusters in the main lobby/atrium
- Open-string stairway with beveled risers and a stair half-landing which meets at the curvilinear wall in the lobby/atrium
- Custom-designed steel railing and upright balusters of the upper lobby/atrium platform
- Northeast stairwell's custom steel handrails and angled balusters

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Edward H. Fickett, F.A.I.A., architect

17. Statement of Significance

The **800 S. Robertson Blvd. Office Building** is an important example of the work by master architect, Edward H. Fickett, F.A.I.A. The building is an exceptional example of the Mid-Century Modern school of architecture. The 9-unit office building was commissioned by L.H.L. Corporation in 1953 and completed in 1954. The building meets two of the criteria for the designation as a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument. Specifically, the building:

- is a notable work of a master builder, designer or architect whose individual genius influenced their age; and
- embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period style or method of construction.

EDWARD H. FICKETT, F.A.I.A., ARCHITECT

A fourth generation Los Angeleno born in 1916, Edward Hale Fickett, F.A.I.A. was the recipient of unequaled array of local, national and international awards for both residential and commercial designs, including American Institute of Architects (AIA) Honor Awards, City Beautification Awards, and four years as recipient of the National Progressive Architectural Design Award. Fickett devoted his lifetime to architecture. His contemporaries repeatedly elected Fickett to serve the profession, including the presidency of the Southern California chapter of the AIA (1962), National Chairman of the Committee for the Home Building Industry of the AIA (1958-1961), and his long tenure as National Chairman of the AIA Ethics Committee. He was planning commissioner in Beverly Hills, a member of Gov. Edmund G. Brown's Housing Board, an architectural advisor to the U.S. Government on housing and building codes for the VA, FHA and HUD, as well as the architectural advisor to U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

While attending the School of Architecture at the University of Southern California (1934-1938), Fickett worked as a draftsman (1935-1938) for Sumner Spaulding, F.A.I.A. He also worked at Kirby Ferguson Structural Engineer as a draftsman (1938-1940) and for Stephan A. Stepanian, A.I.A., as a designer (1939-1940). While serving his country in the United States Navy as a Lt. Commander, Fickett worked with the Navy's Civil Engineering Corps. and Sea Bees designing and building bases throughout the Pacific Rim (1941-1945). Upon his return to California from the war, he partnered with Francis J. Heusel, A.I.A. to create an architectural firm (1945-1949). Fickett opened his private practice, Edward H. Fickett Architect in 1949, continuing his practice until he died in May 1999. He had devoted his life to architecture. Fickett was admitted into the American Institute of Architects (A.I.A.) in 1950 and received his Fellowship from the A.I.A. in 1966, which is the highest professional honor an architect can receive.

Qualities of the architect's design, which are considered to have contributed notably to the advancement of the profession, were his excellence of design, proportion and scale, usage of regional materials, usage of color and his ability to seamlessly "bring the outdoors-in", which was his most essential philosophy of design. Fenestration was key in Fickett's architectural vocabulary. Fickett's work often features floor-to-ceiling window walls of glass, "peek-a-boo" windows, raised ceiling heights featuring transom and clerestory windows along with skylights allowing a seamless flow in design while "bringing the outdoors-in" through private patios and garden areas including interior planters. There is also a playfulness in his work, which was a reflection of his own personality, with his usage of trellises creating shade and light patterns, color to contrast nature and design patterns to invigorate the eye, while providing the client an economically efficient design with the usage of indigenous building materials.

Fickett was the first to add pigment into cement, thus creating less maintenance and cost-savings for his client. The lobby/atrium staircase of the **800 S. Robertson Office Building** is an example of his usage of

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red pigment in the cement risers. They have since been painted red. Edward A. Killingsworth, F.A.I.A. notes, "Ed had a fine sense of design and color. It was always possible to pick out a Fickett building on any street from its very form and color. His buildings had an individual character."² Common colors Fickett would use on his designs were turquoise, red, peach and yellow to enable pops of color to contrast nature and design.

Fickett was "the most influential and most sought after architect of our time, and yet, he was the most modest person I had ever met", Killingsworth notes.³ Amongst Fickett's many contributions to the Los Angeles landscape and to the Southern California region of architecture was through his association with the Merchant Builders of the post-war era that brought affordable housing to the G.I.'s returning home from war. The Merchant Builders who would provide a new architectural landscape to the southern California landscape during this period would seek out Fickett to work with them in master-planning areas and designing tract homes. "Much of his work was in housing when it was necessary for him to achieve good design, which could be mass-produced. In all Ed's work he was able to give it a personal touch, which made the living space special, with an individual character."⁴ Fickett would provide a Merchant Builder with a multitude of design options to create individuality amongst the tract houses he would design for them. Another of Fickett's achievements was designing single-family homes with a palatial impact by raising the ceiling heights, thus providing more air space, flow and natural light in the home. He convinced the Merchant Builders to go with more contemporary designs while saving the developer money in its construction. The results provided creative methods to achieve building economies, as well as livable home plans that would serve both owners and the builder.

Through his skills as an Urban Planner/Master Planner, along with his architectural designs for commercial buildings, multi-family and single-family homes, Fickett was sought after by a multitude of major building developers of Southern California during the post-war period. One of George Alexander's development partners, Ronald S. Dunas recalls, "He was truly the forerunner and pioneer of a new form of contemporary architecture. Countless architects thereafter copied the designs of Edward H. Fickett. Although most unfair, it shows what an impact he had on the world of architecture. He was the most sought after architect of the 40's, 50's, and 60's because his designs were so unique, prolific, creative, and beautiful." He continued, "His architectural designs had a flow and peacefulness about them. They were interesting with clean lines and rooms juxtaposed to rooms in a way that no one would expect."⁵ No other architect was as prolific as Fickett with his multitude of master plans, luxury homes, tract homes, museums, libraries, office buildings, government buildings, military bases, civic buildings, schools, shopping centers, restaurants, hotels, banks and apartment houses, many of which were award-winning designs.

While a charter member of the Architectural Guild at USC, Fickett was responsible for convincing many important architects and leaders of the building trades to support the School of Architecture at USC and to join the Architectural Guild. "He was not only one of the kindest, most generous and most ethical human beings, but he was also the most creative, visionary and prolific architect who was loved, respected, and admired by all his colleagues"⁶, noted Killingsworth.

It was through his appointment and participation with the Federal Housing Advisory Board, Washington, D.C., in 1958 that we see the national impact of his contributions through his collaboration with the Advisory Board, responsible for creating and requiring the Minimum Property Requirements of the Federal

² Edward A. Killingsworth, F.A.I.A., *Letter to Joycie Fickett*, August 2, 2000.

³ Killingsworth, F.A.I.A., *Letter to Joycie Fickett*, August 2, 2000.

⁴ Killingsworth, F.A.I.A., *Letter to Joycie Fickett*, August 2, 2000.

⁵ Ronald S. Dunas, developer, *Letter to Joycie Fickett*, June 11, 2003.

⁶ Killingsworth, F.A.I.A., *Letter to Joycie Fickett*, August 2, 2000.

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Housing Administration (FHA), the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), which are still being used throughout the United States and by lending institutions as a guide for home building commitments.

Fickett's tireless efforts to improve the quality of building and the quality of life of those who lived or worked in his designs came through numerous radio and television programs in an effort to make the public aware of the importance of the architect and the part he must play in the creation of our residential communities, as well as his work on commercial buildings, industrial designs and civic architecture. Not only was the public receiving education from Fickett, but also his colleagues and peers through his numerous lectures and interviews. Fickett was repeatedly invited to be the guest speaker at architectural and building industry conventions worldwide, as well as being invited to be guest professor at architectural universities throughout the United States.

The architect was the recipient of an unparalleled amount of international, national, regional and local architectural awards for his excellence of design and original planning concepts. His participation with the Merchant Builders resulted in achieving economies in residential design suitable for large-scale developments. Fickett is responsible for the planning and design of over 60,000 single-family dwellings with a multitude of the developments he designed cited by the AIA, NAHB, and numerous trade and professional magazines for their excellence in design.

The **800 S. Robertson Blvd. Office Building** embodies the distinguishing characteristics of Fickett's work, and thus meets the criteria of Sec. 22.130 of the Los Angeles Administrative code. The building is an example of the Mid-Century Modern style, which was often exemplified by his work.

Notable works by the architect include:

- The Port of Los Angeles, (Los Angeles Harbor Passenger and Cargo Terminals) (1953), Los Angeles, CA
- Edwards Air Force Base (1958), Los Angeles, CA
- Norton Air Force Base (1950), San Bernadino, CA
- Historic and seismic renovation of Los Angeles City Hall Tower (Phase I) (1991), Los Angeles, CA
- Los Angeles Police Academy, Los Angeles, CA
- West Hollywood Park buildings, including West Hollywood Library (1960), West Hollywood, CA
- Fire Station No. 99 (1960), Los Angeles, CA
- Fire Station No. 30 – (Historic restoration & conversion into the Afro-American Firefighter Museum), Los Angeles, CA
- American Savings and Loan bank buildings (numerous) (1977) & Headquarters (1974)
- California Federal Savings & Loans (1947 & 1950), Los Angeles, CA
- La Jolla Fashion Center (1969), San Diego, CA
- The Riviera Hotel & Casino (1955), Las Vegas, NV
- The Sands Hotel & Casino (1952), Las Vegas, NV
- La Costa Resort (1964), Carlsbad, CA
- Ocotillo Lodge Hotel (1957), Palm Springs, CA
- Mammoth Mountain Inn & Ski Lodge (1957), Mammoth, CA
- Highland Gardens (Formerly "The Landmark") (1956), Hollywood, CA
- Hollywood Riviera (HCM) (1954), West Hollywood, CA
- George Alexander Residence (May Residence) (1951), Palm Springs, CA
- Kay Residence (1960), Manhattan Beach, CA
- Jacobson Residence (HCM) (1964), Los Angeles, CA
- Grier Residence (HCM) (1954), Los Angeles, CA
- 60,000+ Residential homes, Los Angeles, Ventura and San Diego Counties

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Fickett was also cited in numerous trade and commercial publications including, *AIArchitect*, *American Home* magazine, *Architectural Digest* magazine, *Architecture and Interior Design* magazine, *Better Homes and Gardens* magazine, *Good Housekeeping* magazine, *House & Home* magazine, *Los Angeles* magazine, *Los Angeles Sentinel* newspaper, *Los Angeles Times* newspaper, *Los Angeles Times HOME* magazine, *Parents* magazine, *Practical Builder* magazine, *Progressive Architecture* magazine, and *Sunset Magazine*.

Fickett received numerous awards from the cities of Los Angeles, Beverly Hills, Reno and Seattle, Recognized with the Presidential Merit of Honor Award (the first to an American architect), The American Institute of Architects, The American Arbitration Association, The California Masonry Association, Federal Housing Administration, The National Association of Home Builders, and The Pacific Coast Builders Association.

MID-CENTURY MODERN (ca. 1945-1969)

To fully understand the Mid-Century Modern movement in architecture, you have to go back to its early predecessor, the International Style. Much of what is found in the Mid-Century movement was based on the ideals of the International Style. Taking into account its particular environment and new technologies, Mid-Century Modern was a central force in architectural design throughout the post-war era (1945-1969). Mid-Century Modern was about space and spatial relationships with its environment: space-making, space-defining, how light falls into the space, how materials define space, forms that define space with a larger emphasis on how the space relates to the human.

The International Style is characterized by an emphasis on function combined with a rejection of traditional decorative motifs and regional characteristics, thus creating purely functional forms. The International Style was further characterized by flat roofs, smooth and uniform surfaces, large expanses of windows and projecting or cantilevered upper floors. The complete absence of ornamentation is typical, and cubist shapes were fashionable. Horizontality was emphasized with windows that continued around corners. Windows were set flush to the wall and the sliding window became popular. There were fixed panes of glass from floor to ceiling, and curtain-like walls of glass were a common characteristic. Popular building materials were reinforced concrete, steel frames, and an unprecedented use of prefabricated parts, since the style had its roots in industrial architecture.⁷

It was in 1932 at the International Exhibition of Modern Architecture held at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City that the term International Style was coined, as common purpose and common distinctive trends defined this school of design. Developed during the 1920s and 1930s and originating in Western Europe prior to World War II, the world-wide influence of the school of the International Style made an impact on American architecture as we saw many Europeans escape the political upheaval in Europe. Thus, many would come to the United States and reside. Western European architects who fled Europe prior to WWII adopted the International Style philosophy, including Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1886-1969), Germany; Le Corbusier (Charles-Édouard Jeanneret) (1887-1965), Switzerland; Walter Adolph Georg Gropius (1883-1969), Germany; Rudolph Michael Schindler (1887-1953), Vienna and Richard Joseph Neutra (1892-1970), Austria, who played an important role in bringing the International style philosophy to America, as well as to the Southern California landscape.

Mid-century modern architecture was adopted in America in the mid-1940s and lasted through the late 1960s. It was a trend in American modern architecture and industrial design, which was sleek and sexy with a strong influence from the earlier coined movement known as the International Style. Architects

⁷ Ernest Burden, *Illustrated Dictionary of Architecture*, (MacGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., Third Edition, 2012), p. 282.

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incorporated rhythm, balance and scale within their themes for design, which sought the clarity of form and geometry in design. As with the earlier International Style, which was stark and void of ornamentation, the Mid-Century Modern movement was a manifestation of the future, with no thoughts of the past. It was an optimistic time, when the sky was the limit with the usage of new technologies and building materials. It was a period that embraced the "new." People wanted buildings that not only represented people's social and community life and to provide more than functional fulfillment, but also of their aspirations for the future.

The International Style is the first movement in modern architecture that embraced functionality, simple forms, clean lines and open spaces, inspired by modern materials such as steel, reinforced concrete and glass. Mid-Century Modern architecture used innovations and technologies in building materials such as new curtain-wall materials, glare-and heat-resistant glass, automatic elevators, heating and air conditioning systems, and a host of other technical innovations and improvements, which gave meaning to the new architecture.

Modern architecture, in general, came as a response or a revolt of earlier architecture movements and honed their themes with a use of proper building materials and the articulation of the use of materials to create a design, which directly related to construction methods. Exterior and interior forms were conceived and expressed as a single entity. The Mid-Century Modern movement was streamline and clear, with a tightening of its planning and formal execution.

Mid-Century Modern was stark and bare in comparison of early styles of architecture. Taking up the fundamental tenets of the earlier 'modern', a new modified modern with three basic characteristics developed. These Mid-Century Modern characteristics are:

- 1.) A totally new emphasis on the interior spaces of a building in terms of their usefulness, comfort and beauty and their inter-relationship. They open and flow into one another in a dynamic rather than static relationship.
- 2.) A new indoor-outdoor relationship through the use of glass which made it possible to bring nature's plants and greenery into the building, and extend the building out into nature. Planted plazas, interior courts and terraces brought nature indoors and even into the urban working environment.
- 3.) Buildings appear lighter, often buoyant, which rest lightly on the ground as though to disturb it as little as possible.

Mid-Century Modern architecture was about "liveability", with a new concern for the amenities and aesthetics of comfortable living and working conditions. The designs reflected a new emphasis on "human scale," with the intent to meet man's emotional and spiritual needs as well as his physical ones. This movement emphasized the indoors merging with the outdoors through the use of glass walls and a flowing openness towards outdoor patios, giving the design a feeling of spaciousness. There was a new emphasis on the garden and the natural setting brought with this new thoughtfulness to nature. The orientation of the building was paramount and the environment was equally important. Careful orientation also makes the most of existing trees, rocks, topography and solar gain. The design of a garden, whether indoor or outdoor, became as important as that of the living room or a building's lobby area.

Office buildings of this period generally followed the Miesian formula of curtain-wall design. Some designs went further and found completely new forms and shapes, along with the spanning of large spaces without columns or other interior obstructions, which were made through the advancement of technology and new building materials. It broke away from the age-old structure of compressive strength to a new structure of tension. During this Mid-century period in America, reinforced concrete became fully into its

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own. Steel gave tenacity to stone and concrete gave mass to steel. Together, they resisted tension in accordance with the existing network of stresses to reach out and span space of fantastic proportions.

Experimentation was paramount to Mid-Century Modern architecture and began with the use of steel, reinforced concrete and glass. Looking for something fresh and new, the materials, construction methods and forms varied from building to building. Buildings stood out from one another as they had their own identities and were no longer looking the same, block after block. Flat roofs and low-slung rooflines were other features of the movement. Buildings were designed to serve a variety of functional purposes, as well as mindful of the client's needs and pocketbook. This new movement gave new freedom to architects through technology. Architects became artists and not just sophisticated engineers, as they created livable and attractive environments. Architect, Louis Sullivan's quote, "Form follows function,"⁸ was never more a theme in design than it was throughout the Mid-Century Modern movement in architecture.

The **800 S. Robertson Blvd. Office Building** is a Mid-Century Modern type of design, following the dictates of Mid-Century Modern with influences of the International Style. This Mid-Century Modern building takes into consideration its environment, the climate and harsh solar gain attributed to its locale in Southern California. It shares characteristics and influences of the International Style designs of "The Bauhaus" (1925-1926), Dessau, Germany, designed by Walter Adolph Georg Gropius, architect and the "S.R. Crown Hall, College of Architecture, Illinois Institute of Technology" (1956), Chicago, Illinois, by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, architect, as well as the local, "Lovell Health House" (1929), Los Angeles, CA by Richard J. Neutra, architect.

It was during the period of Fickett's education at the University of Southern California (1934-1938) the young architect was influenced by the International Style of architecture. Due to this influence, the Mid-Century Modern movement became a central design theme throughout his lengthy career. Other prominent building designs Fickett created in the Mid-Century Modern aesthetic include:

- Edward H. Fickett Ancillary Office (c.1958) – 9026 Melrose Ave, West Hollywood (Fair Condition)
- Franklyn Medical Plaza (1967), 8760 W Sunset Blvd, West Hollywood (Good Condition)
- Larry Worchell Office Building (1959) – 8105 W 3rd Street, Los Angeles (Good Condition)
- Ocotillo Lodge Hotel (1957) – 1111 E Palm Canyon Dr, Palm Springs (Good Condition)
- Rapport International Furniture Store (1958 & 1961), 435 N La Brea, Los Angeles (Good Condition)
- Sunset Capri Apartments (1952), 8341 W Sunset Blvd, Los Angeles (Good Condition)
- Fire Station No. 99, (1960), 14145 Mulholland Dr, Los Angeles (Good Condition)
- West Hollywood Park Library (1960); (Demolished in 2011)

The **800 S. Robertson Blvd. Office Building** (1954) is one of Fickett's earliest office buildings designed in the Mid-Century Modern style. In close comparison to the CBS Television Center designed by Pereira & Luckman (1952), but in modest scale, both office buildings share clean planes and sharp corners in their designs with a major emphasis on the usage of glass façades. Fickett's fenestration adapts the Mid-Century Modern philosophy for the harsh solar environment the Southern California climate creates. The architect has stated, "We are now reaching new heights in the use of natural daylight as a design or architectural element. We are beginning to control light and we are balancing it."⁹ With the building's orientation, Fickett took into consideration the use of natural light with the use of plate glass, jalousie windows, sliding

⁸ Wolf Von Eckardt, *"Mid-Century Architecture in America"*, (The Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1961), p. 24.

⁹ Edward H. Fickett, "A Glass House is a 'Modern' Fable: Effective control for daylight", (Los Angeles Times, August 4, 1957), p. K20.

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glass doors, skylight, Brise-Soleil and his often found Fickett feature, the “peek-a-boo” window in the lobby/atrium area.

Further, the placement of windows and use of glass was of the utmost importance in the design of the office building. Fickett took into consideration the Southern California climate. “Ideally, from the compass standpoint, an architect will choose north light as the main source of natural light because its steady balance.”¹⁰ Both the interior and exterior northern elevations utilize glass. The clear and privacy floor-to-ceiling and partial glass walls used on the interior northern office walls take advantage of the balanced daylight exposure to allow diffused light to filtrate into the interior office space off the main hallway, as well as privacy through the usage of etched glass. The usage of skylights was an important element of design to Fickett. He stated, “Skylights provide the right ‘light climate’ for indoor plants.”¹¹ The skylight was placed in the **800 S. Robertson Blvd Office Building** due to the atrium’s planter directly below.

800 S. Robertson Blvd Office Building can also be compared to the award-winning Killingsworth, Brady, Smith and Associates 1960 design for their Office Building for a Development Firm, Long Beach, CA. Including floor-to-ceiling walls of glass, a flat roof, use of local resources with a simple geometry and scale to their designs. The post-war era offered economic optimism, new technologies and a new approach to design in Southern California. Fickett utilized brick and stucco walls, which are synonymous with the Mid-Century Modern movement. Fickett would take the philosophy into the post-war era with his use of brick for the exterior walls, which was readily on hand as it was a regional resource and more affordable. Utilizing these regional resources, Fickett was able to design with economic restraint to provide his client with cost-saving materials and provide the occupants with a feeling of grandeur without compromising architectural integrity.

Fickett’s curved entry wall at the **800 S. Robertson Blvd. Office Building** is reminiscent of Neutra’s von Sternberg House (1935) featuring its curvilinear privacy wall. Instead of the convex enclave Neutra designed, Fickett, instead, provides a concave position, as if to greet the public with open arms. The exterior elevations adhere to the minimalist style of simplification and the elimination of ornament true to the Mid-Century Modern style of architecture. The clean lines and simple patterns suggest the coming of a new age in architecture. A moveable Brise-Soleil on the upper and lower windows on the west façade exemplify the effects from the mechanical industrial age, while providing protection from the Southern California environment and the influx of natural light.

The deep cantilevered eaves on the East and South façade provided needed shade for the sun’s direct exposure and helps softened the light source while instilling the Mid-Century Modern philosophy of design. Under the deep eave on the South façade, you find continuous bands of windows, which are shaded by the eave, but allow diffused light to infiltrate the upper interior office space. At ground level, the walls of glass with sliding glass doors, which lead to individual exterior garden patio areas, allow flow from the outdoors-in. Due to the harsh sun and western light in the afternoons, Fickett utilizes the mechanical and industrial Brise-Soleil for privacy and shade.

The **800 S. Robertson Blvd. Office Building** is a study of Mid-Century Modern architecture and the influences of the post-war period; taking into consideration it’s location in Southern California. It is unique due to the fact it was an earlier example of Fickett’s influence of the movement as well as adapting the style for the local environment and utilizing the readily accessible resources from the region. The building imbibes functionality while providing style and substance.

¹⁰ Fickett, “A Glass House is a ‘Modern’ Fable: Effective control for daylight”, p. K20.

¹¹ Edward H. Fickett, “Glass Overhead: An architect speaks on skylights”, (Los Angeles Times, March 12, 1961), p. C8.

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18. Sources

- Numerous conversations with Joycie Fickett
- Letters written to Joycie Fickett
- Edward H. Fickett, USC Archives
- The American Institute of Architects, *Nomination for Fellowship by Chapter Application*



City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning

8/14/2013

PARCEL PROFILE REPORT

PROPERTY ADDRESSES

800 S ROBERTSON BLVD

ZIP CODES

90035

RECENT ACTIVITY

None

CASE NUMBERS

CPC-1986-823-GPC

CPC-19234

ORD-65811

ORD-63279

ORD-165331-SA2300

ORD-133523

AFF-14651

Address/Legal Information

PIN Number	135B169 184
Lot/Parcel Area (Calculated)	3,761.4 (sq ft)
Thomas Brothers Grid	PAGE 632 - GRID J2
Assessor Parcel No. (APN)	4333015001
Tract	TR 8313
Map Reference	M B 92-12
Block	None
Lot	1
Arb (Lot Cut Reference)	None
Map Sheet	135B169

Jurisdictional Information

Community Plan Area	Wilshire
Area Planning Commission	Central
Neighborhood Council	South Robertson
Council District	CD 5 - Paul Koretz
Census Tract #	2164.02
LADBS District Office	Los Angeles Metro

Planning and Zoning Information

Special Notes	None
Zoning	[Q]C2-1-O
Zoning Information (ZI)	None
General Plan Land Use	Limited Commercial
General Plan Footnote(s)	Yes
Hillside Area (Zoning Code)	No
Baseline Hillside Ordinance	No
Baseline Mansionization Ordinance	No
Specific Plan Area	None
Special Land Use / Zoning	None
Design Review Board	No
Historic Preservation Review	No
Historic Preservation Overlay Zone	None
Other Historic Designations	None
Other Historic Survey Information	None
Mills Act Contract	None
POD - Pedestrian Oriented Districts	None
CDO - Community Design Overlay	None
NSO - Neighborhood Stabilization Overlay	No
Streetscape	No
Sign District	No
Adaptive Reuse Incentive Area	None
CRA - Community Redevelopment Agency	None
Central City Parking	No
Downtown Parking	No
Building Line	None
500 Ft School Zone	No
500 Ft Park Zone	No

This report is subject to the terms and conditions as set forth on the website. For more details, please refer to the terms and conditions at zimas.lacity.org
(*) - APN Area is provided "as is" from the Los Angeles County's Public Works, Flood Control, Benefit Assessment.

Assessor Information

Assessor Parcel No. (APN)	4333015001
APN Area (Co. Public Works)*	0.223 (ac)
Use Code	1700 - Office Building
Assessed Land Val.	\$192,642
Assessed Improvement Val.	\$232,275
Last Owner Change	01/02/76
Last Sale Amount	\$79,000
Tax Rate Area	67
Deed Ref No. (City Clerk)	5-148
	5-143
	2-643-49
	2-634-49
	1-499

Building 1

Year Built	1954
Building Class	C9B
Number of Units	0
Number of Bedrooms	0
Number of Bathrooms	0
Building Square Footage	10,934.0 (sq ft)

Building 2 No data for building 2

Building 3 No data for building 3

Building 4 No data for building 4

Building 5 No data for building 5

Additional Information

Airport Hazard	None
Coastal Zone	None
Farmland	Area Not Mapped
Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone	No
Fire District No. 1	No
Flood Zone	None
Watercourse	No
Hazardous Waste / Border Zone Properties	No
Methane Hazard Site	Methane Zone
High Wind Velocity Areas	No
Special Grading Area (BOE Basic Grid Map A-13372)	No
Oil Wells	None

Seismic Hazards**Active Fault Near-Source Zone**

Nearest Fault (Distance in km)	1.92044504097745
Nearest Fault (Name)	Newport - Inglewood Fault Zone (Onshore)
Region	Transverse Ranges and Los Angeles Basin
Fault Type	B
Slip Rate (mm/year)	1
Slip Geometry	Right Lateral - Strike Slip
Slip Type	Poorly Constrained
Down Dip Width (km)	13
Rupture Top	0
Rupture Bottom	13
Dip Angle (degrees)	90
Maximum Magnitude	7.1
Alquist-Priolo Fault Zone	No
Landslide	No

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 (*) - APN Area is provided "as is" from the Los Angeles County's Public Works, Flood Control, Benefit Assessment.

Liquefaction	Yes
Tsunami Inundation Zone	No
Economic Development Areas	
Business Improvement District	None
Renewal Community	No
Revitalization Zone	None
State Enterprise Zone	None
State Enterprise Zone Adjacency	No
Targeted Neighborhood Initiative	None
Public Safety	
Police Information	
Bureau	West
Division / Station	West Los Angeles
Reporting District	849
Fire Information	
Division	1
Batallion	18
District / Fire Station	58
Red Flag Restricted Parking	No

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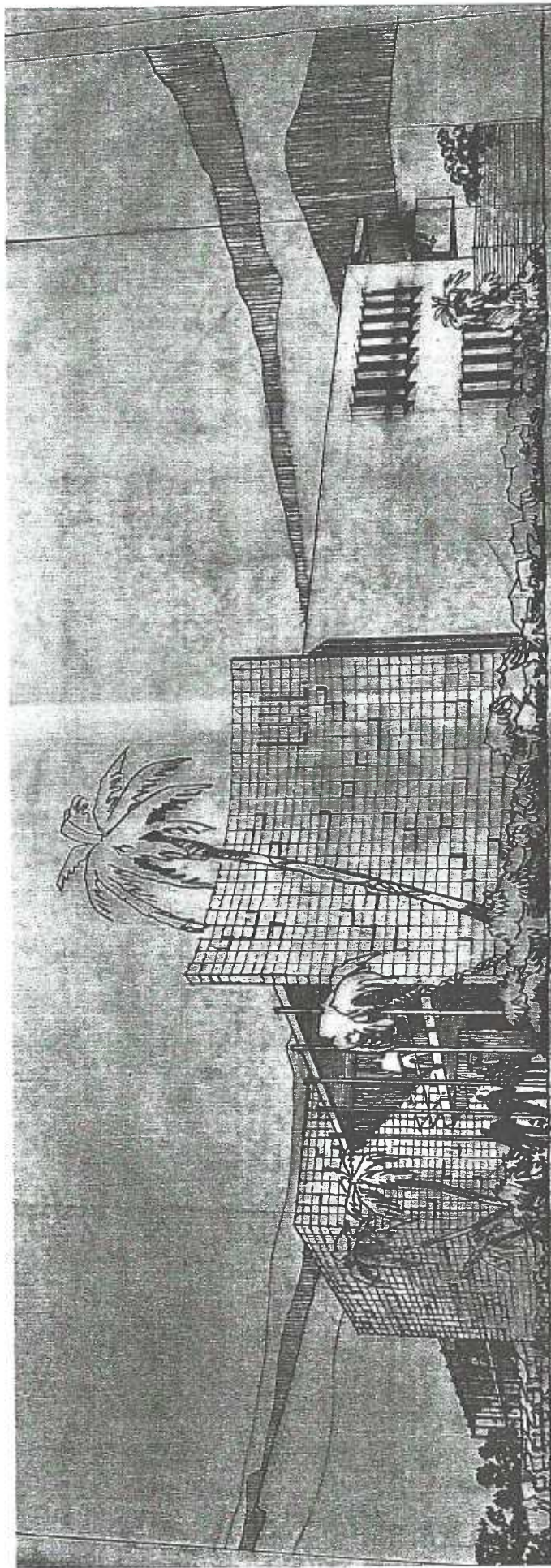
CASE SUMMARIES

Note: Information for case summaries is retrieved from the Planning Department's Plan Case Tracking System (PCTS) database.

Case Number: CPC-1986-823-GPC
Required Action(s): GPC-GENERAL PLAN/ZONING CONSISTENCY (AB283)
Project Descriptions(s): AB-283 PROGRAM - GENERAL PLAN/ZONE CONSISTENCY - WILSHIRE AREA- COMMUNITY WIDE ZONE CHANGES AND COMMUNITY PLAN CHANGES TO BRING THE ZONING INTO CONSISTENCY WITH THE COMMUNITY PLAN. INCLUDES CHANGES OF HEIGHT AS NEEDED. REQUIRED BY COURT AS PART OF SETTLEMENT IN THE HILLSIDE FEDERATION LAWSUIT

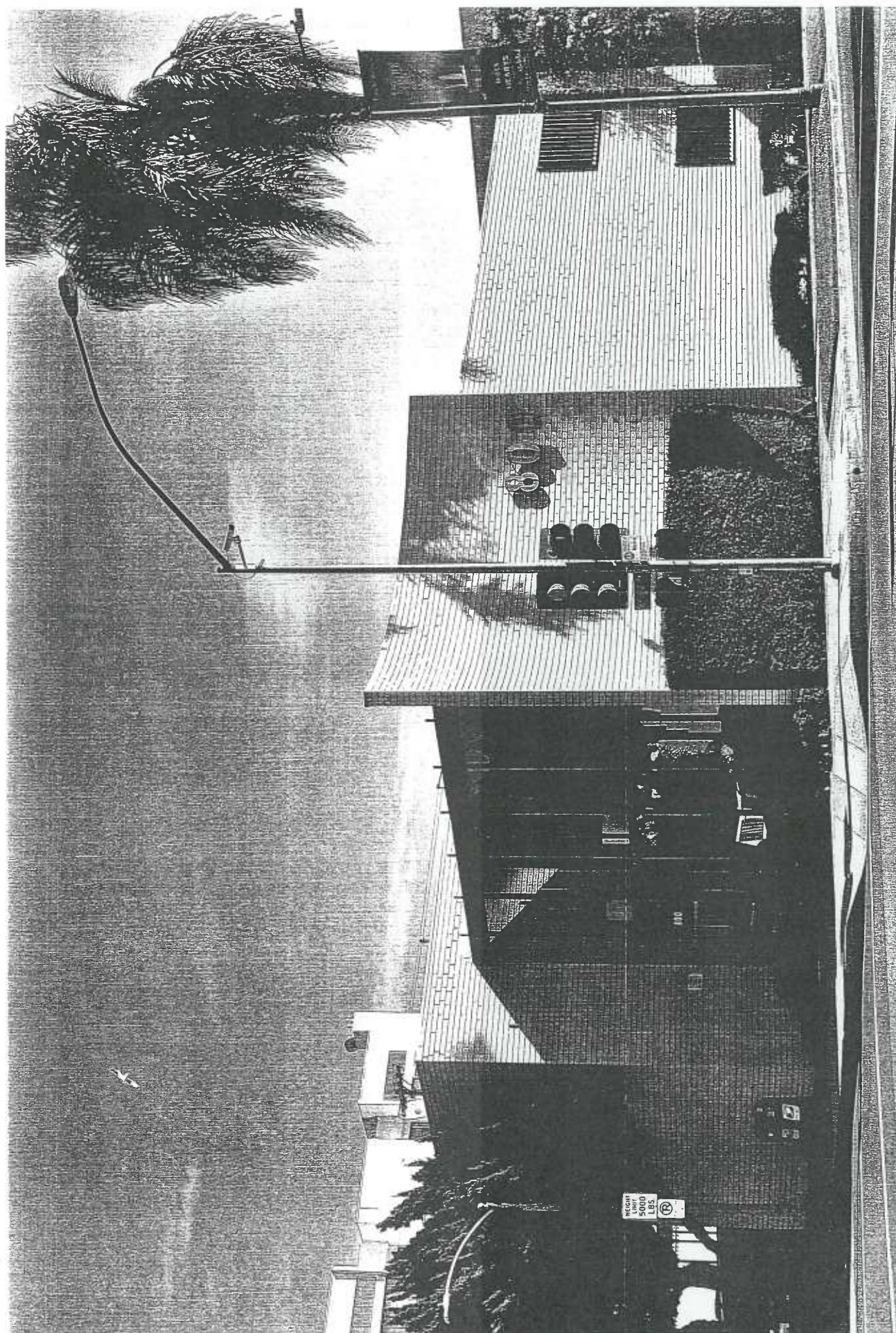
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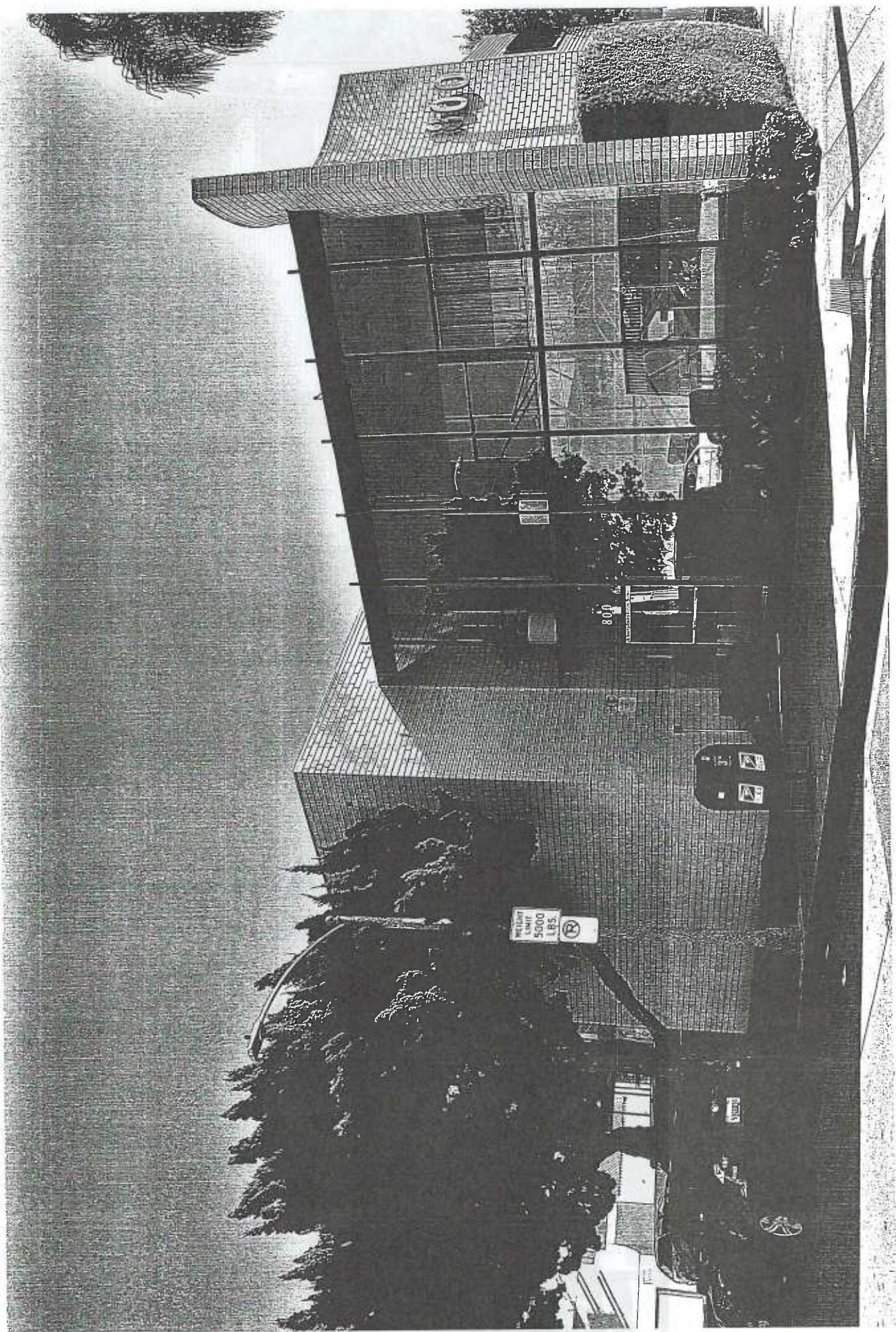
CPC-19234
ORD-65811
ORD-63279
ORD-165331-SA2300
ORD-133523
AFF-14651



OFFICE BUILDING FOR FOL-L-H-L CORPORATION

edward h. fickett, a. i. a. architect
1437 wilshire blvd. los angeles 24, calif. telephone 7472





Case Number:

CHC-2014-1708-HCM

Declaration Letter Mailing List

MAILING DATE: **Jul 18, 2014**

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