

Los Angeles Department of City Planning

RECOMMENDATION REPORT

CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

CASE NO.: CHC-2007-1831-HCM

HEARING DATE: May 17, 2007
TIME: 10:00 AM
PLACE: City Hall, Room 1010
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA
90012

Location: 1850 Industrial Street
Council District: 14
Community Plan Area: Central City North
Area Planning Commission: Central
Neighborhood Council: Historic Cultural
Legal Description: Lot 1 of MB 1325-18/19

PROJECT: Historic-Cultural Monument Application for the
NATIONAL BISCUIT COMPANY BUILDING

REQUEST: Declare the building a Historic-Cultural Monument

**APPLICANT &
OWNER:** Linear City LLC/ 673 Mateo LLC
1855 Industrial Street #12
Los Angeles, CA 90021

**OWNER'S
REPRESENTATIVE:** Pam O'Connor/David Kaplan
Kaplan Chen Kaplan
2526 Eighteenth Street
Santa Monica, CA 90405

RECOMMENDATION **That the Cultural Heritage Commission:**

1. **Take the building under consideration** as a Historic-Cultural Monument per Los Angeles Administrative Code Section 22.125 because the application and accompanying photo documentation suggest the submittal may warrant further investigation.
2. **Adopt** the report findings.

S. GAIL GOLDBERG, AICP
Director of Planning

[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]

Ken Bernstein, Manager
Office of Historic Resources

[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]

Lambert M. Giessinger
Historic Preservation Officer

Prepared by:

[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]

Edgar Garcia, Preservation Planner
Office of Historic Resources

Attachments: April 5, 2007 Historic-Cultural Monument Application
ZIMAS Report

SUMMARY

Built in 1925, this seven-story industrial building exhibits character-defining features of Classical Revival-Beaux Arts architecture. The subject building is rectangular in plan and located on the southwest corner of Industrial and San Mateo Street. The side entrance is surrounded by decorative terra-cotta pediments and ornamental light fixtures. The building is divided into three horizontal sections by terra-cotta string courses, with the ground floor serving as a visual base for the middle and upper sections. The first story façade is articulated with a brick pattern creating horizontal bands. The middle section has brick work and is defined by the regular spacing of sets of three windows separated by slightly projecting piers. The upper section includes a parapet with a corner tower. Windows are groupings of metal fixed and double-hung windows with cream-colored terra cotta sills and lintels.

The proposed National Biscuit Company Building historic monument was designed by the architectural firm of Eckel & Aldrich of St. Joseph, Missouri and constructed by the Emil Pozzo Construction Company. Eckel & Aldrich designed several buildings in the state of Missouri.

The subject building was built to house the National Biscuit Company (later known as Nabisco), created in 1895 with the merger of several large baking companies in the United States. As one of the premier national food production companies in the country, the building served as their production facility for the Western United States.

Later alterations to the subject property include the replacement of original windows with compatible type and the addition of an enclosed area on the roof. The building has been most recently rehabilitated into residential loft units.

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.

FINDINGS

Based on the facts set forth in the summary and application, the Commission determines that the application is complete and that the property is significant enough to warrant further investigation as a potential Historic-Cultural Monument.

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 National Biscuit Company Building IS AN IMPORTANT EXAMPLE OF
NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT

Art Deco / Classical Revival 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.

A N D / O R

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

THE National Biscuit Company Building WAS BUILT IN 1925
NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT YEAR BUILT

National Biscuit Company Building WAS IMPORTANT TO THE
NAME OF FIRST OR SIGNIFICANT OTHER

DEVELOPMENT OF LOS ANGELES BECAUSE The building was important to the development of Los Angeles because:
Civic boosters, such as the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce worked in the early 1920s for economic
development focusing on the emerging industrial areas of the City. As a result of the specific efforts of the Chamber
of Commerce, the National Biscuit Company constructed its flagship plant for the western U.S. at Industrial and
Mateo Streets. The baking plant was designed by the noted architectural firm of Eckel and Aldrich from St. Joseph,
Missouri.

**HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT
APPLICATION**

TYPE OR HAND PRINT IN ALL CAPITAL BLOCK LETTERS

IDENTIFICATION

1. NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT National Biscuit Company Building
2. STREET ADDRESS 1850 Industrial Street
CITY Los Angeles ZIP CODE 90021 COUNCIL DISTRICT 14
3. ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NO. 5164-021-003
4. COMPLETE LEGAL DESCRIPTION: TRACT Industrial Tract
BLOCK C & D LOT(S) 3 & portion 11 ARB. NO. _____
5. RANGE OF ADDRESSES ON PROPERTY 1850 Industrial Street
6. PRESENT OWNER 673 Mateo LLC
STREET ADDRESS 1855 Industrial Street, #12 E-MAIL ADDRESS: paul@linear-city.com
CITY Los Angeles STATE CA ZIP CODE 90021 PHONE (213) 622-2152
OWNERSHIP: PRIVATE _____ PUBLIC _____
7. PRESENT USE Residential and Commercial ORIGINAL USE Industrial

DESCRIPTION

8. ARCHITECTURAL STYLE Art Deco / Classical Revival
(SEE STYLE GUIDE)
9. STATE PRESENT PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE OR STRUCTURE (SEE OPTIONAL DESCRIPTION WORK SHEET. 1 PAGE MAXIMUM)
(see attached)
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

**HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT
APPLICATION**

NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT National Biscuit Company Building

10. CONSTRUCTION DATE: 1925 FACTUAL: ESTIMATED:

11. ARCHITECT, DESIGNER, OR ENGINEER Eckel & Aldrich

12. CONTRACTOR OR OTHER BUILDER Pozzo Construction

13. DATES OF ENCLOSED PHOTOGRAPHS 2006-2007
(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 Compatible alterations include added enclosed area on roof of 7-story tower and setback area on roof of one-story wing as well as metal windows replaced with similar type and profile on two elevations and misc. interior work for loft conversion.

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)
(see attached)

19. SOURCES (LIST BOOKS, DOCUMENTS, SURVEYS, PERSONAL INTERVIEWS WITH DATES) (see attached)

20. DATE FORM PREPARED 02/09/2007 PREPARER'S NAME Pam O'Connor/David Kaplan

ORGANIZATION Kaplan Chen Kaplan STREET ADDRESS 2526 Eighteenth Street

CITY Santa Monica STATE CA ZIP CODE 90405 PHONE (310) 452-7505

E-MAIL ADDRESS: dkaplan@kckarchitects.com

DESCRIPTION WORK SHEET

TYPE OR HAND PRINT IN ALL CAPITAL BLOCK LETTERS

THE National Biscuit Company Building IS A seven-STORY,
NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT NUMBER OF STORIES

Art Deco / Classical Revival, rectangular PLAN originally Industrial use
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE (SEE LINE 8 ABOVE) PLAN SHAPE (Click to See Chart) STRUCTURE USE (RESIDENCE, ETC.)

WITH A brick tower & granite base FINISH AND terra-cotta TRIM.
MATERIAL (WOOD SLIDING, WOOD SHINGLES, BRICK, STUCCO, ETC.) MATERIAL (WOOD, METAL, ETC.)

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

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

THE ENTRY FEATURES A off-center classically framed doorways and,
DOOR LOCATION (RECESSED, CENTERED, OFF-CENTER, CORNER, ETC.)

2 panel DOOR. ADDITIONAL CHARACTER DEFINING ELEMENTS
ENTRY DOOR STYLE (Click to See Chart)

OF THE STRUCTURE ARE Brick piers and pilasters, corner tower, decorative lights and one-story wing
IDENTIFY ORIGINAL FEATURES SUCH AS PORCHES (SEE CHART); BALCONIES; NUMBER AND SHAPE OF DORMERS (Click to See Chart)

along with terra-cotta window trim and string courses that divide the building into base/middle/top.
NUMBER AND LOCATION OF CHIMNEYS; SHUTTERS; SECONDARY FINISH MATERIALS; PARAPETS; METAL TRIM; DECORATIVE TILE OR CAST STONE; ARCHES;

Classic building base with ornamental exterior lights
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 _____
IDENTIFY GARAGE, GARDEN SHELTER, ETC.

SIGNIFICANT INTERIOR SPACES INCLUDE None
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 Industrial site - no landscape
IDENTIFY NOTABLE MATURE TREES AND SHRUBS

9. Building description

The Biscuit Building is a three-part vertical block with Art Deco and Classical Revival influences. It is seven stories high with an exterior sheathed in brown mottled bricks. The façade is divided into three major horizontal zones. The lower zone, one-story, creates a visual base for the dominant shaft of the upper zone. A cream-colored terra cotta header stringcourse separates the first floor "base" from the upper stories. This terra cotta course continues to the one-story western wing of the structure. The middle zone contains most of the floors and is defined by the regular spacing of windows separated by slightly projecting piers.

The upper zone includes a parapet with a tower corner that contained an additional story. The corner tower is located at the corner of the building where the streets intersect. Each of the other ends of the street-facing facades are defined by a double bay that pops up slightly above the parapet.

Both street-facing facades are similar in design. The focal point of the building is the corner. On each side this element is defined by three window bays, set with single windows that appear slightly recessed. This imparts a vertical thrust that contrasts with the horizontality of the structure. Each of the street-facing façade ends has a similar design, but with only two window bays and an element that slightly pops up above the parapet. Cream-color terra cotta is used for window sills and lintels.

The middle bays are defined by sets of three windows. On the north façade there are three bays of windows; on the east façade there are five bays of windows.

The first story façade is articulated with the brick pattern creating horizontal bands. On the north side, a one-story wing is located to the west. Doors are located on both street facing facades with classical revival features such as terra cotta and granite frame and pediment supported by corbels.

The west and south elevations are similar to the other elevations but there are no windows in the piers at the street ends of the elevations. Unlike the street facing facades there is not special feature at the southwest corner of the building.

Although all the windows on two facades were replaced years ago (with similar metal windows), the building retains a very good level of architectural integrity with all exterior materials in good condition.

According to the architects (in Prawl, p. 404) "...the building's steel skeleton is faced with brick, enhanced by granite and terra cotta trim."

The building is seven stories high, with an exterior sheathed in brown mottled bricks and granite base, relieved with cream-colored terra-cotta cornices and sills to give the impression of stability.

18. Significance

The Biscuit Building was originally constructed for the National Biscuit Company (later known as Nabisco) in 1925 in an emerging industrial area southeast of downtown Los Angeles. In 1898, the National Biscuit Company was created by a merger of the American Biscuit and Manufacturing Company (created in 1890 from a merger of 40 Midwestern bakeries) combining with the United States Baking Company and the New York Biscuit Company.

With the City of Los Angeles' residential growth in the first two decades of the 20th Century there was a need for industry and jobs. The Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce undertook a multi-year project that surveyed industrial potential and contacted industrial leaders throughout the U.S. They showed officials of the National Biscuit Company "how they could profitably operate such a plant here, distributing their products to the entire western territory from Los Angeles more economically than from any other point on the Coast." (Los Angeles Times, January 11, 1925, p. E12) The company's executives responded and according to an undated Los Angeles newspaper article believed that "the purpose of the National Biscuit Company when it first projected this Los Angeles enterprise [was] to erect on the property selected one of the finest and best-equipped bakery plants in the world." There were two bakery plants within the building, one for the range of sweetened and unsweetened biscuits and another on the seventh floor dedicated to varieties of sugar wafers.

The architects selected to design the new baking plant was Eckel & Aldrich of St. Joseph, Missouri. Their work on an addition to the company's St. Joseph factory led to the Los Angeles Commission. The architectural firm opened temporary offices in the Lincoln Building. Construction was by (Emil) Pozzo Construction Company.

According to the Los Angeles Times article the proposal structure "when completed the plant will be the most modern and up to date of its kind in the West." (June 28, 1925) The plant was to be of steel frame construction, 150 feet high - seven stories and a basement - with a frontage on Mateo Street of 152 feet and a frontage on Industrial street of 202 feet at an estimated investment of \$2,000,000. The plant was constructed to serve their entire western territory comprising 11 states.

The senior principal of the firm was Edmund Jacques Eckel, FAIA, who was born in France in 1845. His early schooling took place at the Gymnase Protestant in Strasbourg where he also studied under the city architect. In 1864 he entered the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, where he studied architecture for four years. Upon his graduation he moved to the U.S. On a trip to Kansas City his train was delayed in St. Joseph, Missouri and Eckel decided to make the city his home, living and working there from 1869 until his death in 1934.

In 1880 he established an architectural firm, Eckel and Mann, with George R. Mann, that lasted until 1892. In 1910 he was joined by his son, George R. Eckel and Will S. Aldrich of New York City which operated as Eckel & Aldrich. Eckel was a member of the Western Association of Architects in 1885 and then the American Institute of Architects and became a Fellow of the AIA. George R. Eckel studied at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Will S. Aldrich, also studied at MIT and studied in Rome and Paris and worked in New York with McKim, Mead & White. Aldrich remained a partner with the firm until his death in 1947. George Eckel died in 1959.

According to his biographer, Eckel's proven reputation, combined with his young son's potential and Aldrich's impressive eastern background, created a union of talents like no other architectural establishment in the prominent city [St. Joseph, MO] ... From the firm's origin, Eckel, Aldrich, and the younger Eckel worked jointly on most projects. Even when one principal may be more involved in a particular design than another, credit for the project went to the firm." (Prawl, p. 400)

Both George and E.J. Eckel participated in the design and development of the Los Angeles building, with George in Los Angeles during the first part of design and construction and E.J. overseeing the last six months of construction. The NABISCO commission was one of Eckel's largest and most expensive projects, thus it was a substantial business concern to the firm's members. Constructed in 1925 at an estimated cost of nearly \$2,000,000 the bakery was considered "the finest structure of this [its] type on the Pacific Coast". (Prawl, p. 403)

Eckel & Aldrich's designs were published in The Architectural Forum and the American Architect. According to the St. Joseph Historical Society, the firm of Eckel & Aldrich designed hundreds of residential and non-residential buildings including 17 large and 201 smaller business buildings as well as auto dealerships, hospitals and doctors offices, bridges, memorials, parks, municipal buildings, and armories. Specific projects by Eckel & Aldrich include: (in St. Joseph, MO) City Hall, State Hospital No. 2, Central High School, News-Press Building, State Primary School and Dormitory, Missouri School for the Deaf (Fulton, MO), DeKalp County Court House (Maysville, MO), Municipal Building (Columbia, MO), and Trachoma Hospital, Rolla, MO.

The Biscuit Company Building is significant as a major multi-story plant building constructed in the emerging industrial zone of the City of Los Angeles in the 1920s. The building has a high level of architectural integrity retaining its original form and exterior materials including terra cotta detailing. It was designed by an accomplished Midwestern architectural firm for one of the premiere national food production companies in the U.S. to be the National Biscuit Company's Western production facility.

