

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

Primary #
HRI #
Trinomial
NRHP Status Code 3S

Other Listings
Review Code

Reviewer

Date

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*Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) American Railway Express

P1. Other Identifier: Swedberg Furniture

*P2. Location: Not for Publication Unrestricted
and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

*a. County Alameda

*b. USGS 7.5' Quad Oakland West Date 1993 Township & Range No data

c. Address 2040-2070 Addison St. City Berkeley Zip 94704

d. UTM: (Give more than one for large and/or linear resources) Zone 10S; 564287mE/ 4191732mN

e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, etc., as appropriate)

Assessor's Parcel Number: 57-2023-24;

South side of Addison Street between Shattuck Avenue and Milvia Street.

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

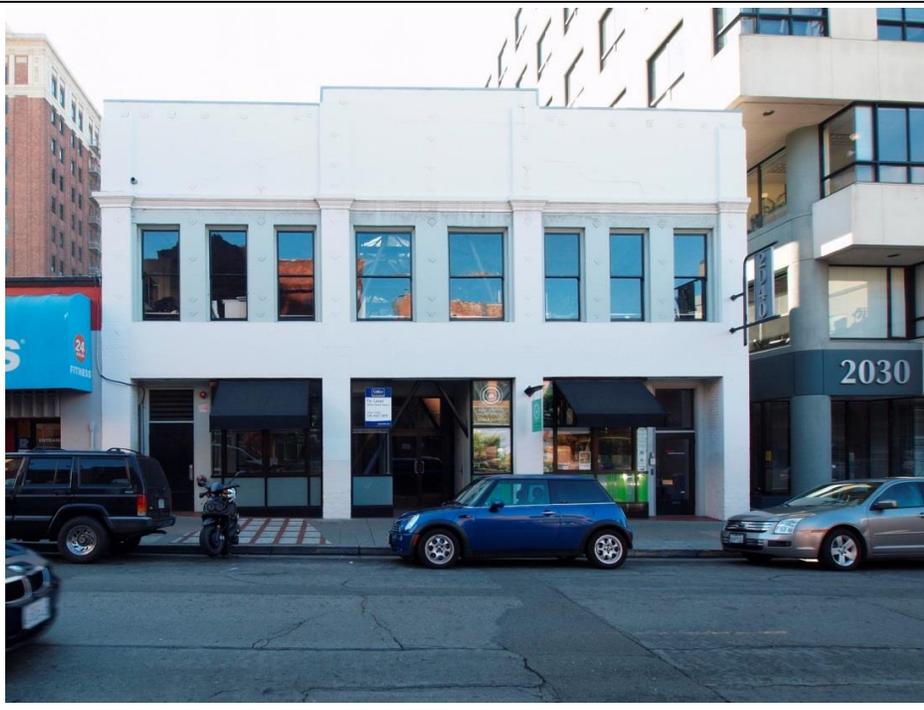
Although altered at the storefront level, the American Railway Express building at 2040-2070 Addison St. is a Contributor to the Shattuck Avenue Downtown Historic District. It continues today to represent one of the earliest remaining commercial buildings in the downtown core. The two-story brick structure is of vernacular construction with limited historic decoration, indicative of its utilitarian past; the brick walls and interior timber framing were common construction materials in the Bay Area at the end of the nineteenth century and in the early twentieth century.

The building sits within a historic setting of mostly older buildings that are secondary to the primary corridor of commercial buildings that line Shattuck Avenue and the transit center that connects the city with the University of California campus.

(Continued on next page)

*P3b. Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) HP6. 1-3 story commercial building

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



P5b. Description of Photo: (View, date, accession #)

View facing south, January 2015.

*P6. Date Constructed/Age & Sources:
 Historic Prehistoric Both

Ca. 1895, abt. 120 years old, Sanborn maps and City directories.

*P7. Owner and Address:

Rilco Addison LLC
1143 Crane St. 200
Menlo Park, CA 94025

*P8. Recorded by: (Name, affiliation, and address)

F. Maggi, L. Dill, & S. Winder
Archives & Architecture, LLC
PO Box 1332
San Jose CA 95109-1332

*P9. Date Recorded: March 2, 2015

*P10. Survey Type: (Describe)

Intensive

*P11. Report Citation: (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none".)

Archives & Architecture LLC: Shattuck Avenue Commercial Corridor Historic Context and Survey, 2015.

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

DPR523A

*Required information

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The large double-hung one-over-one-lite second-story windows, placed individually within the brick bays, were a common design feature of commercial storefront buildings of the late nineteenth-century period. The only original ornamentation includes the four pilaster capitals at the intermediate level of the front façade, and the stepped parapet wall (that also serves to conceal the roof gable). The three recessed storefronts have been altered with aluminum display windows and entry doors. There are two wood paneled doors that might be from an earlier period in the building's history, but each is placed within a new frame, so they also could have been salvaged from another location.

Character-defining features include: false-front and party-wall rectilinear commercial building form; stepped parapet; brick wall structure, including four continuous pilasters that curve into the upper parapet; original (or early) wood window sash with thin rails and stiles, as well as dog ears at the upper sash; and wood window casings recessed within the brick openings. Alterations include the seismic anchors, spaced and of a scale to be compatible with the original design, and new storefronts. Structural glass facing was applied in the 1940s and removed in the 1970s; the bottom level is currently faced in contemporary stucco finish. Scars at the top of the first-floor brick indicate that there may have been another row of capitals prior to the 1940s remodeling.



2040-2070 Addison St., viewed looking southeastward, 2015.

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The storefronts of this building serve pedestrian traffic that flows from the primary commercial strip along Shattuck Avenue to related downtown urban uses in the buffer area between the historic Civic Center Historic District along Milvia Street and the more dispersed commercial corridor that extends along University Avenue from the University campus to the bay. The building width is 50 feet, which provides for three storefront spaces. The depth of the parcel is 134.62 feet, which the building fills to the rear property line.

The building is connected at the second level to the taller seven-story office building to the west. This adjacent building is connected internally, and both buildings, although on separate parcels, are under the same ownership.

The building is in excellent condition.

*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) American Railway Express

B1. Historic Name: American Railway Express/Armory Hall/Swedberg's Furniture

B2. Common Name: ELS Architecture and Urban Design

B3. Original use: Commercial/social hall B4. Present Use: Commercial

*B5. Architectural Style: Late Nineteenth-Century Commercial

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

Original construction ca. 1895. Façade remodel ca. 1940s. Façade and interior renovated 1979, including removal of 1940s Moderne façade features and interior surface finishes.

*B7. Moved? No Yes Unknown Date: n/a Original Location: n/a

*B8. Related Features:

None.

B9a Architect: unknown

b. Builder: unknown

*B10. Significance: Theme Commerce and Architecture Area Downtown Berkeley

Period of Significance 1895-1958 Property Type Commercial Applicable Criteria A (1)

(Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity.)

The two-story vernacular commercial building that incorporates the address range of 2040-2070 Addison St. is one of the oldest surviving structures in Berkeley's downtown core. Constructed of brick, it is known historically for its association with the early railroad station at Berkeley Station. As the site of American Railway Express, it served as a mail distribution center for packages arriving at and departing from the local railroad depot. The large open upstairs room also provided meeting space for local social groups. The building structure remains intact today, although it was modified about 36 years ago by a prominent local architectural firm for use as their design studio.

When first surveyed in 1979, the building renovation was in progress. In 1986, the adjacent property to the west was developed as a seven-story office building. The new building, under the same ownership as the subject property, was designed to respond to the scale and forms of the older building, with a stepped-back entry adjacent to the adjacent brick walls. A second-level pedestrian connection ties the two buildings together. At the time of this survey, the building was partially occupied on the ground floor.

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B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) hp13. Community center/social hall

*B12. References:

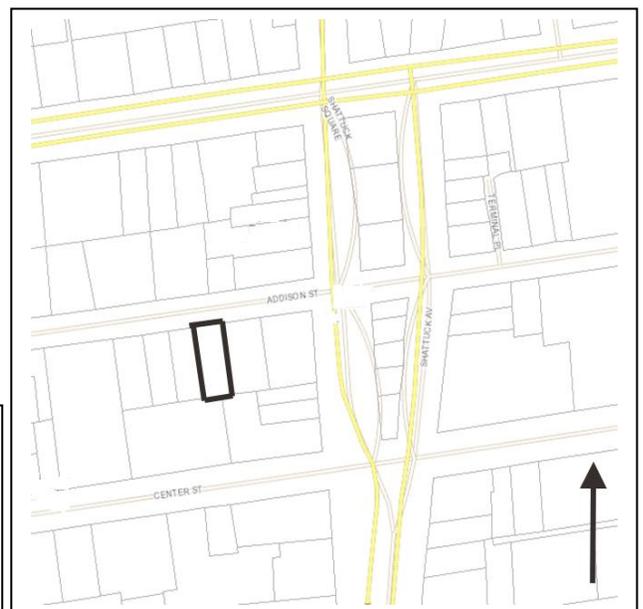
Berkeley Block Books, 1910s-1930s.
Marvin, Betty. Historic Resources Inventory, 3/1979.
Polk-Husted Directories,
Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, 1894, 1911, 1917, 1926,
1928, and 1950.

B13. Remarks: Proposed historic district

*B14. Evaluator: Franklin Maggi

*Date of Evaluation: March 2, 2015

(This space reserved for official comments.)



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First built around 1895, the American Railway Express building's original (exact) construction date remains unknown at the time of this survey. According to Block Books and Sanborn maps, it was sometime between 1894 and 1911.

The first known occupation of the building located at 2040 Addison St. was the American Railway Express, a package company whose business it was to ship express packages nationally by railway, and to pick up and deliver them locally. This meant that the operating locations of the company were often near train stations to permit them the most efficiency and dependability. Until 1926, Addison Street served as an alleyway access point to the Southern Pacific Train Station located just off of Addison Street where it terminated into Shattuck Avenue, and the street was utilized for the various transport loading and unloading operations for several decades.

Parcel express agencies first appeared in the United States in 1839, and soon other agencies sprang up with the introduction of the railroads at the mid-nineteenth century. Wells Fargo & Co. was founded in 1853, soon followed by others such as Southern Express Company, Adams Express Company, and Butterfield. By 1900, there were four principal companies nationwide who transported packages either by horseback, stage, or rail. The United States Post Office introduced its Parcel Post service in 1913, and although the private companies continued to expand in the teens, World War I saw temporary consolidation as American Railway Express under the United States Railroad Administration, which took over the railroads during the war. In 1929, American Railway Express Inc. was transferred to Railway Express Agency (REA), which was then owned by 86 of the American railroad companies. REA eventually became REA Express until sold in 1969 to five of its directors, filing for bankruptcy in 1975.

According to the City's Block Books, the owner of the subject lot was J. G. Wright from the 1910s through the 1930s. Wright owned the Golden Sheaf Bakery, located across the street on the north side of Addison Street. City Polk directories show the American Railway Express company occupying the downstairs of the two-story building, while the upstairs served as a social hall. In the 1910s, the State Armory and Armory Hall are listed as occupying the building's upper floor.

The Paul T. Swedberg Furniture Company, owned and operated by several generations of the Swedberg family (their primary store was located at 2160 University Ave.), began its occupancy of the building in 1943, where it remained for the next three decades. During this period, it served as a secondary location for their primary (pioneering) store, before the family closed the business in 1978 after 71 years in operation in Berkeley. The motto of the store at 2070 Addison St. was "go upstairs to save," referring to the store's location on the second floor of the building.

In the late 1970s, the building was bought to house the recently formed architectural firm, ELS Architecture and Urban Design. ELS, founded by graduate students at Berkeley's College of Environmental Design, has had a long history of working with older historic buildings and within historic urban environments. ELS remodeled the building in 1978-1979 into the form that exists today at this location.

Prior Surveys

The property was first surveyed in 1979 was found eligible for the National Register and given a status code of 3S by the State Historic Preservation Officer (appears eligible - criteria not identified).

Integrity

The American Railway Express Building has integrity of location and setting in Downtown Berkeley, integrity to its vernacular design, brick and timber materials and workmanship, and visual associations with the commercial architecture of early downtown Berkeley. It continues to be readily identifiable as an historic building within the greater downtown core as the design studio of ELS Architecture.

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Evaluation

The building is historically significant due to its association with important patterns of development in the downtown core. The property has previously been found individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, and therefore the California Register of Historical Resources.

The property is a contributor to the establishment of a commercial historic district in the greater Shattuck Avenue area. The building continues to represent, at the street, commercial forms and materials that were prominent in the downtown during the period of historical significance for this building; from the late 1890s-1956. The form of detailing of the façade maintains an important link to the past of downtown Berkeley.