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Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment
LGBTQ+ Historic Context Statement

City of San Diego
Department of City Planning

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Introduction

Purpose

The City of San Diego (City) is preparing a focused amendment to the existing Uptown Community Plan for the Hillcrest neighborhood as part of the City's planning efforts. The Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment (FPA) is intended to "enhance Hillcrest in partnership with the community by focusing additional housing near transit stops, improving pedestrian and bicycle mobility, providing public and recreational space, and celebrating and protecting Hillcrest's unique LGBTQ+ history and heritage."¹ As part of the Hillcrest FPA, the City is expanding its existing documentation on LGBTQ+ history in Hillcrest, including preparing this historic context statement (HCS). This HCS focuses specifically on Hillcrest and LGBTQ+ history in the neighborhood and provides a framework for the identification, evaluation, and designation of built historic resources. To that end, this document also includes a list of eligible resources in support of a Multiple Property Listing (MPL) that will facilitate designation of individual properties within Hillcrest that have a significant association to the community's LGBTQ+ history and heritage.

Document Scope

This document builds upon the San Diego Citywide LGBTQ+ Historic Context Statement (Citywide HCS), completed in 2016. It is tailored to the Hillcrest area and City of San Diego Register of Historical Resources criteria. It includes a historical overview of Hillcrest prior to 1970 for background and an examination of its transition to San Diego's primary LGBTQ+ neighborhood from 1970 to 1990. The overview is followed by a series of focused themes that discuss specific property types or subjects in Hillcrest in more detail. Additional historical context and information about the LGBTQ+ community in San Diego at large can be found in the 2016 Citywide HCS.

The themes in the Citywide HCS have been carried over into this focused Hillcrest HCS, apart from the Religion theme, which is not represented by any known extant built resources in Hillcrest, and the Political Activism theme, which has been incorporated into the Community Organizations theme based on the histories of the related extant resources in Hillcrest. One new theme, LGBTQ+ Business and Commerce, has been added to this document to address the role of Hillcrest as a business district and the importance of businesses in drawing and anchoring the LGBTQ+ community in the area.

The period of study for this HCS ends in 1990. Although the City does not have an age threshold for potentially eligible historical resources, events occurring within the last 25 to 30 years are considered very recent within the broad scope of history. As historical perspective and understanding are still developing, detailed themes and evaluation criteria for resources with LGBTQ+ associations after 1990 were not included in this

¹ City of San Diego, Long Range Planning Efforts: Historic Preservation Planning Section, accessed April 20, 2020, <https://www.sandiego.gov/planning/programs/historicpreservationplanning/long-range>.

document. The report section **Recommendations for Future Studies** at the end of the HCS identifies information that emerged in research regarding important LGBTQ+ events, groups, and individuals in Hillcrest during the post-1990 period. The section also includes a list of known sources and repositories to support the future expansion of the themes and information established in this HCS.

In addition to the historical overview and theme narratives, this document lays out eligibility standards for evaluating resources for listing in the San Diego Register of Historical Resources under each theme. Using the eligibility standards, a list of eligible resources related to each theme has been prepared and is included as Appendix A. The list includes data for populating the City's historical resources database and is intended to facilitate the future designation of resources associated with the LGBTQ+ community in Hillcrest. In certain cases, there may be properties in Hillcrest that warrant inclusion on the list of eligible resources for having exceptional historical significance to the community in more recent years. In these instances, National Register guidance for Criteria Consideration G: Properties Achieving Significance Within the Past Fifty Years is a valuable resource.

The limitation of historic designation is that it is "place based." Because the built environment only reflects certain aspects of the importance a community, space, or neighborhood may have, many established registration programs are not equipped to fully or accurately capture history that may be intangible or lost. Careful consideration of the concepts of eligibility and integrity requirements on a case-by-case basis may bridge this gap.

In October 2016, the National Park Foundation produced a comprehensive document titled *LGBTQ America: A Theme Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer History*. The study includes an overview of LGBTQ+ history and related historic preservation efforts to date, in-depth exploration of lesser-known intersectional narratives, themes covering a range of LGBTQ+ history topics, as well as case studies and guidance for interpreting and nominating sites associated with LGBTQ+ heritage. In her chapter titled "Preserving LGBTQ History," Dr. Gail Dubrow, Professor of Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Public Affairs & Planning, and History at the University of Minnesota writes:

"The standards of significance and integrity that guided the designation of [landmarks] were set at a time when the activities and accomplishments of elite white men of a propertied class were at the center of historical scholarship. Now that history includes not only those who were significantly disadvantaged, but also dispossessed, or considered property themselves, notions about the integrity of the places associated with them merit reexamination. In this sense, many underrepresented groups share a common cause for reform of standard preservation policies and practices that a focus on a particular identity may obscure. For that reason, building alliances among groups whose histories have been marginalized and supporting the development of emerging leaders inclined to build bridges

between them is critical to realizing a progressive vision for historic preservation.”²

Historic preservation planning is just one of many tools for recognizing social, cultural, and historical value. Other strategies to employ may include historical markers, mapping programs, oral history projects, public art, events, walking tours, and close collaboration with advocacy groups.

Methodology

To prepare this HCS, the project team employed the following methodology:

- Reviewed existing information on the subject, including the Citywide HCS, publications on the history of Hillcrest, and the National Park Foundation theme study, *LGBTQ America*. See Bibliography for all sources consulted.
- Conducted additional research to supplement existing information (see note below).
- Mapped lists of related resources in the Citywide HCS to determine which are located within the geographic boundary of the Hillcrest FPA.
- Prepared a preliminary outline, including determining relevant themes based on mapped extant resources in the Hillcrest FPA boundary.
- Developed the narrative text presented herein.
- Evaluated the extant resources using the eligibility standards presented herein to determine a preliminary list of eligible resources.
- Compiled data for each eligible resource to populate the fields in the City's historical resources database.

This historic context statement was completed during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, standard methods of research and plans for public meetings had to be modified in light of unforeseen circumstances, including repository closures and restrictions on gathering. GPA coordinated with archivists at the Lambda Archives of San Diego to gain remote access to documents, interviews, and ephemera within the archive's physical holdings to supplement online research.

² Gail Dubrow, "The Preservation of LGBTQ Heritage," in *LGBTQ America: A Theme Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer History* (Washington, DC: National Park Foundation, 2016) 05-68, accessed June 2021, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/lgbtqtheme-preservation.htm>.

Designation Criteria

City of San Diego Register of Historical Resources³

The City of San Diego's Land Development Manual identifies the criteria under which a resource may be historically designated by the City of San Diego Historical Resources Board (HRB). These criteria are based on the preservation practices established by the Federal regulations outlined in *National Register Bulletin #15*. A historical resource can be any improvement, building, structure, sign, interior element and fixture, site, place, district, area or object.

Criteria

The criteria for designation in the City of San Diego include:

- A. [The resource] exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's, a community's, or a neighborhood's, historical, archaeological, cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, landscaping or architectural development;
- B. [Is] identified with persons or events significant in local, state or national history;
- C. Embodies distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction or is a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship;
- D. Is representative of the notable work of a master builder, designer, architect, engineer, landscape architect, interior designer, artist or craftsman;
- E. Is listed or has been determined eligible by the National Park Service for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or is listed or has been determined eligible by the State Historical Preservation Office for listing on the State Register of Historical Resources; or
- F. Is a finite group of resources related to one another in a clearly distinguishable way or is a geographically definable area or neighborhood containing improvements which have a special character, historical interest or aesthetic value or which represent one or more architectural periods or styles in the history and development of the City.

The resource must be evaluated for the above criteria within the appropriate historic context(s). The City's "Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria" do not mention a specific age threshold for potentially eligible properties. Similar to the California Register of Historical Resources, resources less than 50 years of age may be eligible for designation if it can be demonstrated that sufficient time has passed to understand their historical importance.

³ Based on the City of San Diego Historical Resources Board, "Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria," revised February 24, 2011.

Integrity

To be eligible for designation in the City of San Diego, a property must retain sufficient integrity to convey its historic significance. The City recognizes the same seven aspects of integrity as the National Register of Historic Places: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.⁴

Terminology

Human sexuality and gender identity exists on a broad spectrum, the terms and definitions of which continue to evolve. The acronym LGBTQ+ is a collective term that refers to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning individuals, and the “+” is representative of those whose identity is not reflected by LGTBQ. Throughout this HCS, the term “LGBTQ+” is used to broadly describe the entire community of un-straight people, particularly when the way in which groups or individuals self-identify is not known. Terms such as gay, lesbian, and transgender are used when discussing individuals or groups with known orientations and identities. Terms that are now considered offensive, outdated, or largely clinical have been avoided herein, unless quoting a source or person directly.

⁴ For more information on how to apply the City’s designation criteria, review the “Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria” here: <https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/legacy//planning/programs/historical/pdf/201102criteriaguidelines.pdf>

Historical Overview: Hillcrest through 1970

The area that became the neighborhood of Hillcrest is located on land that is within the traditional and unceded territory of the Kumeyaay Native Americans and later was within the jurisdiction of the Mission San Diego de Alcalá, founded by the Spanish in 1769. The area remained largely undeveloped for approximately a century. With the announcement of San Diego as the terminus for the transcontinental Memphis, El Paso, and Pacific Railroad, in the late 1860s, San Diego at large experienced a development boom. Although the railroad line was not ultimately constructed, the interest it generated was enough to fuel a wave of construction and speculation. Among those arriving to the growing town was Alonzo Horton, a merchant and land speculator who had most recently lived in San Francisco. He purchased 800 acres of land which became known as Horton's Addition and was located within what is now Uptown. Horton began promoting his new land, ultimately attracting other developers to the area.⁵ Over the next five years, speculators established more than 15 new subdivisions around Horton's tract which now comprise Hillcrest, Sherman Heights, Golden Hill, Logan Heights, North Park, Mission Hills, and University Heights.⁶

San Diego at large experienced a second real estate boom in the early 1870s after the Texas and Pacific Railroad announced its own transcontinental line to San Diego, though it was not realized due to economic downturn in 1873. The city's population, which had grown to approximately 4,000, dropped back down to around 1,500. A decade of slow but steady development followed, and agriculture became a firmly rooted aspect of the area's economy.⁷

After the failure of the Texas and Pacific Railroad to construct a rail line to San Diego, developers put their hopes in the construction of a Santa Fe Railroad line. Ultimately, the California Southern Railroad connected San Diego with the Santa Fe Railroad in San Bernardino. The completion of the railroad line in 1882 touched off a period of steady growth in San Diego. Between 1880 and 1885, the city's population grew from around 2,600 to approximately 5,000. Growth in the latter half of the decade continued at a similarly fast rate, and numerous towns were platted, though not all of these "paper towns" were realized.⁸ Among the towns laid out at this time was Hillcrest, though it would not develop in earnest until after the turn of the 20th century.

In 1888, public transportation arrived in the Uptown area with the completion of the Park Belt Motor Road. The route connected present-day Hillcrest, University Heights, Balboa Park (then known as City Park), and downtown.⁹ It was also known as the University

⁵ IS Architecture, Vonn Marie May, and Walter Enterprises, *Uptown Historic Context Statement and Oral History Report*, prepared for the City of San Diego, November 2003, B.12 – B.13.

⁶ IS Architecture, B.13.

⁷ IS Architecture, B.14.

⁸ IS Architecture, B.17-18.

⁹ "Hillcrest History," Hillcrest History Guild, accessed March 23, 2020, <https://www.hillcresthistory.org/timelines/hillcrest-timeline/>.

Heights Motor Road.¹⁰ Hillcrest was subdivided along the area's developing trolley lines, though it saw minimal construction during this period.¹¹ By 1890, the boom had slowed though growth continued at a steady rate, and suburban areas outside of downtown began to develop, including nearby University Heights.¹² Hillcrest, in contrast, remained predominately rural.

After the turn of the 20th century, San Diego began to grow as a tourist and health-related destination.¹³ Between 1900 and 1910, the city's population increased from 17,700 to 39,578. With the completion of the Panama Canal on the horizon, investors and city leaders foresaw San Diego as an important shipping point.¹⁴ During this period, suburban neighborhoods outside of downtown began to develop in earnest, including Hillcrest.¹⁵ This new trend was allowed by the expansion of the city's streetcar system. In 1908, the *San Diego Union* noted that the "extension of the streetcar service is not merely keeping pace with the up building of the city, but is powerfully stimulating it. Localities that only recently were regarded as almost out in the country have been thickly built up during the past year, largely because rapid transit to the business district was afforded."¹⁶

Among the earliest buildings in Hillcrest was the County Hospital (now UCSD Medical Center). It opened in 1904.¹⁷ Concerted, intentional construction in the area did not begin until a few years later. In 1906, William Wesley Whitson purchased 40 acres of land roughly bounded by First, Sixth, and Lewis Streets, and University Avenue for \$115,000 and soon thereafter filed a map for the Hillcrest Subdivision.¹⁸ He formed the Hillcrest Company, which had offices downtown and at Fifth and University Avenues. The Hillcrest Company constructed many of the early homes in the area as well as a sawmill. The area's housing was aimed at families, but Hillcrest also developed with a substantial amount of single-occupancy bungalow courts, cottages, and small homes.¹⁹ This type of development, aimed at single residents and young couples working downtown, became unique to Hillcrest. Soon, other businesses were constructed in the area's growing business district, including a bank and post office. In 1908, Florence Elementary School was constructed at University and Second Avenues.

The opening of the Panama-California Exposition in 1915 touched off another wave of development in Uptown, including Hillcrest – much of it residential. By 1921, the density of

¹⁰ "Hillcrest History," Hillcrest History Guild, accessed March 23, 2020, <https://www.hillcresthistory.org/timelines/hillcrest-timeline/>.

¹¹ IS Architecture, B.19.

¹² IS Architecture, B.21.

¹³ IS Architecture, B.23.

¹⁴ IS Architecture, B.24.

¹⁵ IS Architecture, B.24.

¹⁶ Sharon Gehl qtd. in Uptown HCS B.30.

¹⁷ "Hillcrest History," Hillcrest History Guild, accessed March 23, 2020, <https://www.hillcresthistory.org/timelines/hillcrest-timeline/>.

¹⁸ IS Architecture, B.32.

¹⁹ IS Architecture, B.32.

residential development of Hillcrest was increasing.²⁰ As residential construction increased during the 1910s and 1920s, commercial corridors emerged “along the Fifth Avenue, University Avenue, Washington Street and Park Boulevard streetcar lines.”²¹ Much of this new construction rose along or near streetcar lines, though some occurred in outlying areas, reflecting the growing popularity of the automobile during this period. Hillcrest’s burgeoning business district was centered around the intersection of University and Fifth Avenues.

Though San Diego’s population nearly doubled between 1920 and 1930, this prosperity came to a halt with the onset of the Great Depression in 1929.²² By this time, Hillcrest was a well-established residential neighborhood and one of the largest in San Diego. Many of its residents were young families, while its single-occupancy homes were occupied by single people and couples, which comprised a larger percentage of the population here than elsewhere in the city.²³ Its business district was substantially developed, and the County’s two largest medical facilities, Mercy and County Hospitals, were located there.²⁴ The Hillcrest neighborhood (and larger Uptown area) was largely built out by this time, and much of the construction after this period consisted of infill and redevelopment.²⁵

The beginning of World War II shaped the trajectory and landscape of San Diego in significant ways. Although the Navy had been an important presence in the city since the late 1910s, that presence increased when the United States entered World War II.²⁶ The aerospace industry also became a significant contributor to the city’s economy during this period, beginning with the establishment of Consolidated Aircraft’s factory at Lindbergh Field in the late 1930s. The city’s economy was made prosperous by military defense projects and contracts, a trend which continued into the 1980s.²⁷

The city’s population grew rapidly during and after World War II. Between 1940 and 1950, San Diego’s population boomed from approximately 203,000 to 334,000 as people moved to the city for work in the military and aerospace industry and then as servicemen returned from the war. Wartime restrictions on building materials limited construction and change in the built environment.²⁸ The shortage of housing that resulted from this population influx was often solved by the conversion of single-family residences into multi-family residences. Numerous residences in Hillcrest were converted during this period.

²⁰ City of San Diego, Uptown Community Plan Update, June 2015, HP-141.

²¹ City of San Diego, HP-141.

²² City of San Diego, HP-141.

²³ Michael E. Dillinger, “Hillcrest: From Haven to Home,” *Journal of San Diego History*, Vol 46, 4 (2000), 148.

²⁴ IS Architecture, B33.

²⁵ City of San Diego, HP-142.

²⁶ IS Architecture, B.28-29.

²⁷ IS Architecture, B.42.

²⁸ City of San Diego, HP-142.

In the postwar period, San Diego's downtown district entered a period of economic decline, as was the fate of many downtown districts during the time. The city became increasingly decentralized with the construction of suburban shopping centers and the freeways that made these new areas more easily accessible.²⁹ This included the construction of Mission Valley Shopping Mall, which opened in 1961.

Hillcrest's business district was sustained in the postwar period in part because of the presence of the County and University Hospitals and its proximity to Balboa Park. It did not see the same degree of economic decline in the 1950s that downtown did, as evidenced by the construction of a new Sears department store at Cleveland Avenue and Vermont Street (demolished).³⁰ Hillcrest's business district remained pedestrian-oriented with Fifth Avenue serving as the main thoroughfare.³¹

Though the business district remained vibrant, the area's population had transitioned to one that was predominately elderly. Many of the residents who had moved to Hillcrest in the 1920s and 1930s remained in the area into the 1960s. At the same time, younger residents left for new suburbs, and older residents passed away and were not immediately replaced. This resulted in higher vacancy rates, which in turn translated into lower housing costs.

Prior to this period, San Diego's LGBTQ+ community was mostly dispersed. At a time when members of the gay community faced frequent harassment from both police and the general public and LGBTQ+-oriented support groups did not yet exist, they tried to call as little attention to themselves as possible.³² Any interactions that occurred had to be conducted carefully and in places that would not be detected. Bars and clubs in the downtown area were the primary social venues for the community until this time. However, the economic decline of downtown in the postwar period made it increasingly unsafe. As they searched for a safer place to meet, they turned to Hillcrest.³³ Because much of the area's population was elderly, there was less pedestrian and vehicular traffic, lowering the likelihood of confrontation.³⁴ Hillcrest provided a place in which the LGBTQ+ community could find a sense of safety and anonymity. In addition, the area's proximity to Balboa Park, a popular meeting place for gay men in the 1960s and 1970s, made it an attractive and convenient place to live and congregate.³⁵ This multitude of factors made Hillcrest the center of the LGBTQ+ community in San Diego from the 1970s through the remainder of the 20th century.

²⁹ IS Architecture, B.42.

³⁰ IS Architecture, B.43.

³¹ IS Architecture, B-44.

³² Dillinger, 154-155.

³³ Dillinger, 154.

³⁴ Dillinger, 154.

³⁵ Dillinger, 156.

The LGBTQ+ Community in Hillcrest, 1970-1990

A convergence of factors was responsible for the rise of Hillcrest as the center of San Diego's LGBTQ+ community. As people discovered that Hillcrest provided a safe haven, businesses and institutions that had been concentrated downtown began slowly moving into the area. Among the earliest businesses to move into Hillcrest were bars and clubs, followed by restaurants, coffee shops, and bookstores.³⁶ The transition of the LGBTQ+ community to Hillcrest took place over a relatively long period of time, with many establishments remaining downtown; into the 1970s, there were still more gay bars and bathhouses on downtown's India Street than there were in Hillcrest.³⁷

Hillcrest's emerging gay-friendly business district drew people to the area on a temporary basis, and the affordable housing led them to stay.³⁸ The area's higher than usual concentration of single-occupancy housing was perfect for single people and couples looking for affordable housing. Public transit in the area made it unnecessary to own a car, and Hillcrest remained pedestrian-oriented, reinforcing a strong sense of community that could be found "as one walks through the home-town atmosphere of shaded streets, tiny old houses, large old houses, [and] the artery of the community: Fifth Avenue."³⁹ Contemporary accounts report a business district that continued to thrive and many of the businesses that had been in the area for decades remained, reaching the status of community institutions.

As the demographics of the neighborhood began to shift, Hillcrest residents noticed the opening of new LGBTQ+ -oriented businesses. Betty Soloff, speaking in 1977, remembered that although the neighborhood remained mostly inactive at night, there were a few standouts: "A 'happening' for even the offbeat Fifth Avenue of Hillcrest would have to be the parade of female impersonators on Halloween. Possibly from the Show Biz Supper Club on nearby University Avenue?"⁴⁰ She was referring to the Show Biz Supper Club, which opened in 1968 and was the first female impersonation show in San Diego.⁴¹ By the 1980s, Hillcrest was firmly at the center of San Diego's LGBTQ+ community.⁴² As late as 1988, it was described as:

"a haven by the many older folks who live here, some of whom have called Hillcrest home for 50 years. [...] Upscale folks go to Hillcrest to check out the restaurants that have made the area the critic's choice for dining in San Diego. [...] The artsy intellectual crowd goes to Hillcrest to browse through

³⁶ Dillinger, 156.

³⁷ GPA Consulting, *San Diego Citywide LGBTQ Historic Context Statement*, prepared for the City of San Diego Department of City Planning, September 2016, 33-34.

³⁸ Dillinger, 157.

³⁹ Betty Soloff, "Hillcrest," 1977, p.1.

⁴⁰ Soloff, p.6.

⁴¹ "Hillcrest History," Hillcrest History Guild, accessed April 16, 2020, <https://www.hillcresthistory.org/timelines/hillcrest-timeline/>.

⁴² City of San Diego, HP-144.

rare and used tomes in the community's several bookstores [...and] Homophobes and homosexuals alike think of Hillcrest as San Diego's gay community. Everyone in the neighborhood knows the Brass Rail is a gay bar and the Crest Café is a gay restaurant."⁴³

The *San Diego Union* reported on a similar feeling in the area, noting that "Hillcrest is a blend. The population is diverse and the different kinds of people who chose to live or visit here co-exist very well."⁴⁴ It was not merely San Diego's gay community, according to those who lived and did business there. It had an identity that was "far more encompassing than that."⁴⁵

An increase in commercial and multi-family residential construction beginning in the late 1980s led to changes in the area.⁴⁶ The mixed-use commercial and residential Uptown District project on University Avenue near Sixth Avenue opened in 1989 on what had been the site of the Sears department store. Its construction touched off a wave of commercial redevelopment.⁴⁷ This pattern continued into the 1990s, and rising rents drove some longtime businesses out. Despite this, Hillcrest remained a diverse place to live, "at once a small-town village, where longtime shopkeepers know their customers by name, and a chic urban enclave, with its upscale eateries, coffee houses, and artsy cinemas. Not least of all, it is the San Diego neighborhood that many gays have long embraced as their own."⁴⁸

⁴³ *The Citizen*, February 24, 1988, qtd. in IS Architecture, B.47-B.48.

⁴⁴ *San Diego Union*, August 14, 1988, qtd. in IS Architecture, B.48.

⁴⁵ Lori Weisberg and Roger M. Showley, "Community takes pride in its eclectic mix," *San Diego Union Tribune*, July 27, 1997, A-19.

⁴⁶ IS Architecture, B.47.

⁴⁷ Weisberg and Showley, A-19.

⁴⁸ Weisberg and Showley, A-19.

Theme 1 – LGBTQ+ Social Life in Hillcrest

In the decades before the gay liberation movement, social life remained highly sequestered out of necessity. LGBTQ+ people were targets of discrimination, violence, police raids, and harassment, and had to be extremely careful when meeting socially. Venues including bars, clubs, and coffeehouses provided a place for LGBTQ+ people to truly be themselves among their peers and played an important role in early community activism and protest.

During this time, one of the primary social venues for the LGBTQ+ community were bars and clubs. Although most were not exclusively known as either “gay” or “straight,” they were considered “the only central institutions of the gay community.”⁴⁹ Initially, many of these bars and clubs in San Diego were located downtown, but were among the first LGBTQ+ institutions to move into Hillcrest. One of the earliest was the Brass Rail. The bar opened around 1934 just outside downtown San Diego and evolved into a gay-friendly bar with its largely military clientele during World War II. Lou Arko, who purchased the business in 1958, openly served gays at a time when the city would not issue licenses to bars catering to gays and lesbians.⁵⁰ The Brass Rail moved out of downtown San Diego to the corner of Fifth Avenue and Robinson in 1963 and then again to 3796 Fifth Avenue, and is only gay bar from the original downtown concentration still in operation.

Another notable Hillcrest bar was located at 1421 University Avenue. Now a venue called Baja Betty’s, it was a famous drag club called Show Biz Supper Club from 1972 to 1984.⁵¹ This is where Clint Johnson, a key member of the Hillcrest LGBTQ+ community and co-founder of The Center, introduced San Diego’s first female impersonation show. Tourists from Mission Valley were bused to the club three nights a week until the stage went dark in 1982.⁵² One of the most iconic sights in Hillcrest is the bright neon sign for the Flame at 3780 Park Boulevard. The original restaurant on the site, the Garden of Allah, burned in 1954. In 1955, it was remodeled as the Flame Supper Club, with the addition of the now-famous sign. After Hillcrest’s emergence as an LGBTQ+ community, it was a lesbian bar from 1984 to 2004.⁵³ Although the interior is slated to become condos, the façade and the neon sign will stay intact.

Adult movie theaters fulfilled a role similar to the bathhouses and private clubs, as one of few places for gay men to have discreet sexual encounters in relative safety. The Guild Theater at 3825 Fifth Avenue started as a 1920s movie house and “later evolved into having the ‘Lavender Theater at midnight on weekends showing soft-core adult films and eventually became a fulltime adult theater.”⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Dillinger, 155.

⁵⁰ GPA Consulting, 19-20.

⁵¹ “Hillcrest History Walking Tour Script,” Lambda Archives of San Diego, San Diego CA, 7.

⁵² “Hillcrest History,” Hillcrest History Guild, accessed April 16, 2020, <https://www.hillcresthistory.org/timelines/hillcrest-timeline/>.

⁵³ Excerpted from GPA Consulting, 33-34.

⁵⁴ Excerpted from GPA Consulting, 35; *Walking Tour Script*, 4.

The early bar and club scene in the United States was generally dominated by white, cisgender gay men, due to their relative privilege in society.⁵⁵ This nationwide pattern holds true in San Diego; according to the Lambda Archives' *Hillcrest History Walking Tour*, San Diego has always hosted many more gay bars for men than for women. In fact, they state that there have never been more than three lesbian bars open at any one time. However, San Diego's gay women tended to gravitate towards another setting: the coffeehouse. Like bars, coffeehouses provided a place for LGBTQ+ persons not just to meet and socialize, but also to organize, share resources, and create a sense of community. The Lambda walking tour mentions the coffeehouse Euphoria at 104 University Avenue as being "frequented by young LGBT people who weren't old enough to get into bars. And before there was any kind of gay youth center."⁵⁶

Discussions that began at bars, clubs, and coffeehouses evolved into the creation of dedicated community organizations and events, which contributed to the growing (and increasingly visible) sense of community.⁵⁷ This solidarity would aid the community as it mobilized to push for greater acceptance and access to healthcare during the AIDS epidemic that began in the early 1980s. During the epidemic, groups organized at bars to raise money for AIDS research, and bars hosted shows to raise money to help those affected by the disease. Susan Jester notes in the documentary "San Diego's Gay Bar History" that "the focus in our community became totally about raising money for people with HIV, and the only place to do so was in the bars."⁵⁸ In the late 1980s, the number of bars and other social establishments began to decrease in San Diego in general. The Lambda Archives suggest that "Perhaps as AIDS started taking its toll, it reduced the number of patrons."⁵⁹ However, LGBTQ+ persons in Hillcrest increasingly had new opportunities to meet one another and feel safe socializing in public, even in straight bars and restaurants, not to mention the increased freedom brought about by the internet.

Eligibility Standards

The following eligibility standards provide guidelines for evaluating property types associated with LGBTQ+ social life in Hillcrest. Mere association with a trend or individual is not a qualifier for historical significance, and not all properties that are associated with this theme will meet the eligibility standards. For example, an establishment would not be significant if the only justification for significance is that it served members of the LGBTQ+ community or that members of the LGBTQ+ community socialized there. The association itself must be demonstrably important and documented through research. This research

⁵⁵ Christina B. Hanhardt, "Making Community: The Places and Spaces of LGBTQ Collective Identify Formation," in *LGBTQ America: A Theme Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer History* (Washington, DC: National Park Foundation, 2016) 15-13, accessed June 2021, <https://nps.gov/articles/lgbtqtheme-community.htm>.

⁵⁶ "Hillcrest History Walking Tour Script," 6.

⁵⁷ Dillinger, 158.

⁵⁸ Paul Detwiler, *San Diego's Gay Bar History* (San Diego, CA: Northside Pictures, 2018), accessed May 14, 2020, https://video.kpbs.org/video/san-diegos-gay-bar-history-tgoue6/?_ga=2.246724100.1438943694.1589412097-157649828.1587180324.

⁵⁹ Walking Tour Script, 1.

will more than likely require looking past or thoughtfully interpreting “conventional” sources of information that may omit, obscure, or misrepresent LGBTQ+ history and seeking out sources such as, but not limited to, contemporary ephemera (newsletters, fliers, letters, etc.) and oral histories, as well as carefully considered input from community members and stakeholders.⁶⁰

When conducting a comparative analysis of similar properties, those that emerge as superlative through research—such as the earliest known examples, the longest in operation, the most widely recognized—will likely be those that possess significance under this theme. Certain businesses or institutions may have occupied multiple locations over the course of their history. In these instances, the significance of the association at each location should be considered; if subsequent locations represent a continuation of the same historical trend, the earliest or best-known location may be the most significant. However, if the business or institution achieved new prominence at a later location, that location may also be significant.

Properties that best represent the productive life and historical contributions of a significant individual are generally an office, studio, or workplace. However, if that property no longer remains or if the location moved frequently, their place of residence during the time they made their significant contributions may be eligible instead.

Theme: LGBTQ+ Social Life in Hillcrest

Associated Property Type(s): Commercial and Residential

Property Type Description: Associated property types may include commercial buildings such as restaurants, bars, nightclubs, coffee shops, bathhouses, and theaters that were important gathering places for LGBTQ+ persons, or residential buildings converted to such commercial uses. They may also include residences if they served as important social gathering spaces or are residences of important persons within the social life theme.

Property Type Significance: Significant properties under this theme will have a direct and important association with the history of the LGBTQ+ social scene in Hillcrest, or a direct and important association with significant individuals who were instrumental in the community’s social life, such as prominent owners of social venues and leaders of important social events.

Area(s) of Significance: Social History

Criteria: San Diego HRB A or B

Period of Significance: 1963-1990

⁶⁰ Leisa Meyer and Helis Sikk, “Introduction to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) History in the United States,” in *LGBTQ America: A Theme Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer History* (Washington, DC: National Park Foundation, 2016) 03-2, accessed June 2021, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/lgbtqtheme-history.htm>.

Period of Significance Justification: The period of significance begins in 1963, when research indicates the earliest bars catering to the LGBTQ+ community began opening in Hillcrest. The year 1990 is the end of the period of study for this historic context statement.

Eligibility Standards:

- Has an important association with the social life of the LGBTQ+ community in Hillcrest; and/or
- Has an important association with an individual who has been proven to have played an important role in the social life of the LGBTQ+ community in Hillcrest; and
- Dates from the period of significance; and
- Retains the essential aspects of integrity necessary for the property to convey its historic significance under this theme.

Eligibility Considerations:

- May be the first or long-time location of an important social venue
- May be located in a building originally used for another purpose, or used for multiple purposes over time
- Multiple locations of the same business or institution may represent separate significant events or trends, but not all locations will be significant within this context; the best representative example should be considered for significance
- A business must have occupied the property, or the event must have occurred during a period of time in which the property gained its significance
- For properties associated with important individuals, the property must be directly associated with the individual's productive life during a period in which they achieved significance and must be representative of their important contributions to this theme
- Must retain most of the essential character-defining features from the period in which the business occupied the property or in which the individual was directly associated with the property

Integrity Considerations:

- Integrity is based on the period during which the significant LGBTQ+ social venue occupied the property or during which the significant individual was directly associated with the property
- Should retain integrity of Location, Feeling, and Association from the period of significance; integrity of Design should be sufficiently intact to convey the property's historic function and use
- Some original materials may have been altered, removed, or replaced, which may have a resulting impact on integrity of Materials and Workmanship
- Setting may have been altered by changes in surrounding development patterns and infill

Theme 2 – LGBTQ+ Community Organizations and Political Activism in Hillcrest⁶¹

Due to the social stigma and danger of being “out” in the mid-twentieth century, support organizations for the LGBTQ+ community in San Diego were nearly nonexistent prior to the 1970s. It was during that decade that the first formal organizations created by and for the LGBTQ+ community in San Diego began to emerge. One of the earliest forms of support available was via telephone, allowing callers to maintain their anonymity while seeking help. In 1970, two hotlines were created in San Diego, including one started by the Gay Information Center and one by Gays United for Liberty and Freedom (GULF). Then in 1971, a man named Jess Jessop set up an answering machine in a closet in his home that would eventually lead to the creation of one of San Diego’s most important and longest-lived LGBTQ+ resources: The Center for Social Services.⁶²

In October 1972, Jessop, Bernie Michels, the first openly LGBTQ+ student in San Diego State University’s School of Social Work, Thomas Carey, a civil rights activist, and several others met in Weichel Hall, a shed behind the Chollas View United Methodist Church at 906 47th Street, to begin planning an LGBTQ+ social services center.⁶³ The Center opened in October 1973, in a ten-room house in the Golden Hill neighborhood, east of Downtown and south of Balboa Park. Jessop served as the first Executive Director.⁶⁴ According to Michels, “We wanted to locate in Hillcrest, but the rent in that neighborhood was much too high... We knew we wanted to help people who were just beginning to come out of the closet, along with others who were struggling with their sexual orientation.” He also points out the group’s lack of experience; Michels continues, “Essentially we began to train ourselves as ‘Rap-group’ leaders and peer counselors by meeting together regularly and participating in our own self-development group.”⁶⁵ The Center has continued to provide an ever-expanding variety of programs and services. In 1980, The Center moved to 1447 North 30th Street, also in Golden Hill, then to 3766 Fifth Avenue,⁶⁶ and then closer

⁶¹ Much of this section has been excerpted from GPA Consulting, 34-35, 47-55. This section focuses on organizations within known locations in Hillcrest. For information on the numerous other organizations formed elsewhere in San Diego during this period, please see the *Citywide LGBTQ Historic Context Statement*.

⁶² “History,” The San Diego LGBT Community Center, accessed April 17, 2020, <https://thecentersd.org/about/history/>.

⁶³ The full Planning Committee included Patricia Byers, Thom Carey, Patricia Cluchey, Peggy Heathers, Jess Jessop, Clint Johnson, Bernie Michels, George Murphy, Jerry Peterson, Gary Rees, John Senter, Jerry White, John Eberly, Gary Gulley and Cynthia Lawrence. “History,” The San Diego LGBT Community Center.

⁶⁴ “History,” The San Diego LGBT Community Center.

⁶⁵ “Beginnings of the San Diego LGBT Community Center,” Bernard Michel, *Lambda Archives of San Diego*, 3.

⁶⁶ Based on written correspondence to the City from Richard Burhenne, The Center was located behind the main building at this address before moving to Centre Street. The exact period of time when The Center was located here is unknown.

to Hillcrest, to 3910 Normal Street in 1992, then finally to its present location in Hillcrest at 3909 Centre Street in 1998.⁶⁷

Many of the founders of The Center would go on to participate in the creation of other resources for the San Diego LGBTQ+ community over the next decade, a number of which were located in Hillcrest. Jessop was the founder of the Lesbian and Gay Archives of San Diego, which eventually became the Lambda Archives; he helped organize San Diego's first unofficial Pride parade in 1974; and he was a charter member of the Gay Alliance for Equal Rights in 1979.⁶⁸ The Center founder John Eberly started the Metropolitan Community Church's Video Ministry in 1980 and was active in local politics through the San Diego Democratic Club, while Jeri Dilno, The Center's first female Executive Director, was also editor of the *Gay and Lesbian Times*, co-founder of San Diego's first Pride march to be sanctioned by the city in 1975, and a three-time delegate to the Democratic National Convention.⁶⁹

The San Diego Pride events continued to take place regularly through the 1970s and 1980s, organized by various groups over the years, including the Lesbian/Gay Men's Pride Alliance and the Lambda Pride Association. In the late 1980s, the Pride committee was formed under the non-profit umbrella of The Center. Although it post-dates the study period, the 1990s was a pivotal decade for San Diego Pride. In 1990, San Diego Lesbian & Gay Pride was established as a permanent organization to manage planning and coordinating the event under the supervision of a Board of Directors. The board included activists and community leaders Larry Baza and Vertex Burks, the first two people of color to serve on the board, and LGBTQ+ activist and California State Senator Christine Kehoe. In 1993, the Pride parade route was changed to its present route, traveling through Hillcrest along University Avenue, which attracted larger crowds and contributed to the event's growing popularity. In 1994, San Diego Pride was incorporated as its own non-profit organizations.⁷⁰

Mutual support and political activism went hand-in-hand, and as communities began congregating more and found increased support, they spoke out against discrimination and pushed for equal rights.⁷¹ This momentum in the mid- and late 1970s was evident by the number of political organizations founded during the period. These included the

⁶⁷ "History," The San Diego LGBT Community Center, accessed April 17, 2020, <https://thecentersd.org/about/history/>.

⁶⁸ Michael Granberry, "Jess Jessop, Leader in the Gay Community, Dies at 50," *Los Angeles Times*, February 22, 1990, accessed May 31, 2016, http://articles.latimes.com/1990-02-22/local/me-1434_1_san-diego; "Jess Jessop," *The 2004 San Diego LGBT Community Wall of Honor*, accessed April 17, 2020, <https://thecentersd.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/2004.pdf>, 18.

⁶⁹ "John Eberly," 2004 Wall of Honor, accessed April 17, 2020, <https://thecentersd.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/2004.pdf>; "Jeri Dilno," *The 2005 San Diego LGBT Center Wall of Honor*, accessed April 17, 2020, <https://thecentersd.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/2005.pdf>.

⁷⁰ San Diego Pride, "About," accessed June 2021, <https://sdpride.org/about/>; San Diego Pride, "History of Pride," accessed June 2021, <https://sdpride.org/history-of-pride/>.

⁷¹ Remainder of this section excerpted from GPA Consulting, 68-73, 76.

Teddy Roosevelt Republican Club by Nicole Murray-Ramirez in 1974, the San Diego Democratic Club (SDDC) in 1975, the Gay Students Union at San Diego State College by Gary Gulley in 1975, and the Gay Activists of San Diego (GASD) in 1976.⁷² The Gay Rights National Lobby, now Human Rights Campaign, was founded in 1976.

The SDDC was founded by Robert (Bob) Lynn and located in Hillcrest. Lynn was a local attorney and served as the first president of the SDDC, a “predominantly homosexual organization of men and women.”⁷³ In 1977, it was noted as the “most powerful gay political organization” in San Diego and the second largest Democratic organization in San Diego County.⁷⁴ In 1979, the San Diego Democratic Club’s headquarters were located in Hillcrest at 3719 Sixth Avenue, Suite A. Meeting places also included 246 West Washington Street in Hillcrest as well as other locations around San Diego.⁷⁵

The SDDC had numerous prominent members and officers, including Gloria Johnson, Jeri Dilno, and Dr. Brad Truax. Gloria Johnson became the second president of SDDC in 1980 and was often the only woman at meetings until Jeri Dilno joined in 1977.⁷⁶ In addition to being active in women’s political issues, Johnson was one of the first social workers to work with people inflicted by AIDS in the AIDS Case Management Program. She began her 30-year career as a social worker in 1970, primarily for elderly patients, at the County Welfare Department of San Diego.⁷⁷ In 1976, Johnson was the first openly gay person elected to the San Diego Democratic Central Committee, and she was co-chair of the California Democratic Party LGBT Caucus.⁷⁸ Jeri Dilno was an engineering technician, longtime spokeswoman for the lesbian community, and director of The Center.⁷⁹ Dilno would take over the presidency of the SDDC in the late 1980s, following Doug Scott.⁸⁰

During the AIDS epidemic that began in the early 1980s, the fatal illness disproportionately affected gay men, leading to stigma, fear, and discrimination that created an urgent need for social services. Members of San Diego’s LGBTQ+ communities responded by creating a variety of healthcare resources. Activist and Hillcrest resident Albert Bell, who had founded the first Gay Liberation group in San Francisco in 1970, established “Our House,” the first residential living facility for people with AIDS, in the mid-1980s. Bell was a student activist in San Francisco before moving to San Diego and becoming one of the

⁷² Nancy Skelton, “San Diego Gays Moving Into the Mainstream,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 26, 1981; Mark Gabrish Conlan, “Power Politics: The Rise of the San Diego Democratic Club,” *Gay and Lesbian Times*, March 24, 1993, 30.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ Carla A. De Dominicis, “Sexual Politics,” *CLGR Newslines* magazine (Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights), November 16, 1977.

⁷⁵ “San Diego Democratic Club” pamphlet; San Diego Democratic Club meeting announcement postcards, 1979.

⁷⁶ Conlan, “Power Politics,” 30-31.

⁷⁷ Caroline Dipping, “LGBT activist Gloria Johnson dies at 76,” *San Diego Union-Tribune*, September 24, 2013; San Diego City Directory, 1979.

⁷⁸ Dipping, “LGBT activist,” 2013.

⁷⁹ Skelton, “San Diego Gays,” 1981.

⁸⁰ Conlan, “Power Politics,” 31.

early directors of The Center.⁸¹ He also helped create the AIDS Assistance Fund and produced the city's first AIDS Walk for Life. The AIDS Assistance Fund later became the San Diego AIDS Foundation.⁸² Bell also organized the first local chapter of the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACTUP) in 1987 to bring help to AIDS victims and direct political action in the AIDS crisis. He died of AIDS in 1993 at his home at 3815 Vermont Street.⁸³

The Priority Pharmacy was established in Hillcrest in 1984 at 3935 First Avenue. It is said to have filled the city's first prescription for AIDS-fighting drug AZT in 1987 and was a pillar of the city's gay community, thanks to the business and charitable efforts of founder and pharmacist David C. Zeiger.⁸⁴ It moved to 3940 Fourth Avenue sometime after 1995.⁸⁵ In December 2005, Priority Pharmacy was sold and became a Mom's Pharmacy. In 2014, it joined the AHF (AIDS Healthcare Foundation) chain as a "full-service pharmacy where 96 cents of every dollar earned through filling any prescription supports AHF's specialized HIV/AIDS medical services," continuing the legacy of Priority Pharmacy.⁸⁶

Dr. A. Brad Truax was a gay service member turned political activist. He joined the Navy in 1975, serving as a flight surgeon and a diving medical officer, but was honorably discharged two years into his tour because of suspicions about his sexual orientation.⁸⁷ He joined the SDDC in 1977, when its membership totaled 15 and served as its third president six years later; he stepped down in 1984 to concentrate on AIDS work.⁸⁸ Dr. Truax also founded the United San Diego Elections Council, a non-partisan organization dedicated to political action for the LGBTQ+ community, in 1980. He supported the campaign for Mayor Roger Hedgecock, who would form a task force on AIDS in 1983, and helped form the Human Relations Commission in 1985.⁸⁹ He died in 1988 at age 42 due to complications associated with AIDS.⁹⁰ The year after his death, the City of San Diego Housing Commission donated the Truax House, located at 2513-2515 Union Street in Banker's Hill, as a residential hospice "to provide a secure, homelike setting for victims of AIDS and ARC. Here, they don't have to worry about being kicked out. They won't be

⁸¹ "Albert Bell," 2005 *San Diego LGBT Community Wall of Honor*, accessed April 17, 2020, <https://thecentersd.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/2005.pdf>.

⁸² The San Diego AIDS Foundation later moved to the corner of Centre Street and Polk Avenue in Hillcrest, and then bought a building near UCSD Medical Center.

⁸³ San Diego LGBT Community Wall of Honor, 2005.

⁸⁴ "Hillcrest Walking Tour."

⁸⁵ Priority Pharmacy Advertisement, *The Advocate*, January 24, 1995.

⁸⁶ "AHF Opens New Specialized HIV Healthcare Center in San Diego," *Business Wire*, September 9, 2014, accessed June 16, 2016, <http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20140909005305/en/AHF-Opens-Specialized-HIV-Healthcare-Center-San>.

⁸⁷ Mark Sullivan, "Gay activist Brad Truax dies at 42," *The Washington Blade*, December 9, 1988.

⁸⁸ Sullivan, "Gay activist Brad," 1988; Gina Lubrano, "Gays aren't afraid and may be a force," *The San Diego Union*, March 4, 1984; Conlan, "Power Politics," 30-31.

⁸⁹ Sullivan, "Gay activist Brad," 1988; Lubrano, "Gays aren't afraid," 1984.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

evicted because of their sickness, or because they're gay."⁹¹ Though Truax never lived there, the facility was named in his honor. Dennis Wilson, the housing director of the AIDS Assistance Fund in 1989, spoke of its importance in reflecting the spirit of Truax, "a leader in the gay community and the Democratic Party, a 'man who cared about decency and human rights.'" ⁹²

Although it post-dates the period of study for this HCS, the early 1990s became a flashpoint for transgender activism and awareness. The term transgender was first widely used (in place of other terms for gender variance) beginning in 1992 with a pamphlet titled *Transgender Liberation: A Movement Whose Time Has Come*.⁹³ Over time, the prevailing attitude in western society has generally been that gender variance outside the binary was something immoral or "in need of correction," and the struggle for acceptance has continued into the twenty-first century. The concept of gender-affirming treatments and practices were explored in Europe as early as the turn of the century but did not reach the United States until after World War II. Despite the tireless work of transgender activists in the postwar era, particularly transgender women of color, the community was treated with discrimination and hostility. Within this climate, transgender people sought to present or "pass" as cisgender for safety, acceptance, and admittance into social spaces.⁹⁴ Treatments were inaccessible and largely considered "cosmetic" or "experimental" by medical professionals during the 1970s and 1980s, and many transgender people were pushed to the fringes of society, and forced to sell drugs or engage in survival sex work, putting them at increased risk for violence, arrest, and in some cases deportation. Transgender women of color were also among the most vulnerable populations for infection with HIV. A number of activist organizations were founded around the United States to provide crucial resources and care in response to the AIDS epidemic and "[lay] the foundation for a new generation of legal activism in the decades ahead."⁹⁵

Eligibility Standards

The following eligibility standards provide guidelines for evaluating property types associated with LGBTQ+ community organizations and political activism. Mere association with a trend or individual is not a qualifier for historical significance, and not all properties that are associated with this theme will meet these eligibility standards. That is, an organization would not be significant if the only justification for significance is that it served members of the LGBTQ+ community during the study period. The association itself

⁹¹ Michael Granberry, "AIDS Patient Finds a Haven at Truax House," *Los Angeles Times*, April 5, 1989, accessed May 14, 2020, http://articles.latimes.com/1989-04-05/local/me-823_1_center-for-aids-patients. The Truax House is designated HRB #1225.

⁹² Granberry, "AIDS Patient," 1989.

⁹³ Susan Stryker, "Transgender History in the US and the Places that Matter," in *LGBTQ America: A Theme Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer History* (Washington, DC: National Park Foundation, 2016) 10-31, accessed June 2021, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/lgbtqtheme-transgender.htm>.

⁹⁴ Name Withheld, interview by Ethan Lopez, Lambda Archives, April 16, 2021, transcript.

⁹⁵ Interview by Ethan Lopez; Stryker, 10-33.

must be demonstrably important and documented through research. This research will more than likely require looking past or carefully interpreting “conventional” sources of information that may omit, obscure, or misrepresent LGBTQ+ history to sources such as, but not limited to, contemporary ephemera (newsletters, fliers, letters, etc.) and oral histories, as well as carefully considered input from community members and stakeholders.⁹⁶

When conducting a comparative analysis of similar properties, those that emerge as superlative through research—such as the earliest known examples, the longest in operation, the most widely recognized—will likely be those that possess significance under this theme. Certain organizations may have occupied multiple locations over the course of their history. In these instances, the significance of the work that occurred at each location should be considered; if the overall mission has remained generally the same at multiple locations, the earliest or best-known location may be the most significant. However, if their work achieved new prominence at a later location, that location may also be significant.

Properties that best represent the productive life and historical contributions of a significant individual are generally an office, studio, or workplace. However, if that property no longer remains or if the location moved frequently, their place of residence during the time they made their significant contributions may be eligible instead.

Theme: LGBTQ+ Community Organizations and Political Activism in Hillcrest

Associated Property Types: Institutional, Commercial, Residential, and Sites

Property Type Description: Associated property types may include community centers, healthcare centers, commercial buildings, and other buildings used for institutional purposes. Properties associated with LGBTQ+ organizations may or may not have been built for the organizations’ purposes originally. They may also include residences that were the homes of prominent community or political leaders or those used as early meeting places, as well as sites of important political marches and demonstrations.

Property Type Significance: Properties significant under this theme have a direct and important association with significant LGBTQ+ community organizations and/or political activism. They may also be directly associated with persons who played an important role in developing important community organizations or in local, state, or national politics and the liberation movement. Sites may not include any buildings or structures; they may consist of plazas, parade routes, parks, and other outdoor spaces. Significant properties under this theme may also be significant under other themes, such as social life.

Area(s) of Significance: Institutional Development, Social History

⁹⁶ Meyer and Sikk, 03-2.

Criteria: San Diego HRB A or B

Period of Significance: 1970-1990

Period of Significance Justification: Research did not reveal any institutions or known resources associated with this theme dating prior to 1970.⁹⁷ In Hillcrest, political activism and mutual support within the LGBTQ+ community became more visible in the early 1970s with the creation of several new organizations. The year 1990 is the end of the period of study for this historic context statement.

Eligibility Standards:

- Has an important association with an institution or organization that has played a demonstrably significant role in the institutional development of the LGBTQ+ community or the political scene and/or the gay liberation movement; and/or
- Has an important association with an individual who has played a demonstrably important role in the development of important LGBTQ+ institutions or politics; and/or
- Has an important association with a significant political event; and/or Association dates from within the period of significance; and
- Retains the essential aspects of integrity.

Eligibility Considerations:

- May be located in a building originally used for another purpose, or used for multiple purposes over time
- Institution/organization must have occupied the property during a period of time in which it gained significance
- Multiple locations of the same organization may represent separate significant events or trends, but not all locations of LGBTQ+ organizations will be significant within this context
- Individual must have lived in or worked at the property during the period in which they achieved significance, i.e. the period in which they did their significant work
- Event must have occurred at the specific location
- Must retain most of the essential character-defining features from the period the institution, organization, or individual occupied the property

Integrity Considerations:

- Integrity is based on the period during which the significant institution, organization, or individual occupied the property
- Should retain integrity of Location, Feeling, and Association from the period of significance; integrity of Design should be sufficiently intact to convey the property's historic function and use

⁹⁷ This context statement is a living document that may change and be updated in the future as more information is uncovered through further research and analysis. Research did not reveal any known extant resources associated with this theme from before 1970; however, this does not definitively mean that none exist. If such resources are discovered in the future, this document should be amended accordingly.

- Some original materials may have been altered, removed or replaced, which may have a resulting impact on integrity of Materials and Workmanship
- Setting may have been altered by changes in surrounding development patterns and infill

Theme 3 – The LGBTQ+ Media in Hillcrest

In the mid-20th century, periodicals such as magazines, newspapers, and newsletters became an important medium for LGBTQ+ communities. More than just reading material, they became a source of valuable information, ranging from social networking and personal ads to business advertisements and legal advice.⁹⁸ They also communicated details about political events and community organizations. From major San Diego publications such as *San Diego Sun* and *Pacific Coast Times* to smaller ones that catered to niche groups within the LGBTQ+ community, the media became crucial to fostering connection, highlighting community news, and reporting on current events relevant to the LGBTQ+ community.

Initially, many of the earliest LGBTQ+ publications were newsletters and magazines written and distributed by organizations located outside Hillcrest, in the downtown or Ocean Beach areas. The Metropolitan Community Church San Diego (MCCSD) and Dignity San Diego, both progressive religious organizations, published newsletters that included church announcements and more general news. *Prodigal*, the MCCSD newsletter, began publication in 1970, while Dignity San Diego's newsletter (eventually called *Hummingbird*) began publication two years later.

By the mid-1970s, the momentum of the gay liberation movement moved gay rights into the public consciousness, and groups that previously would have feared retribution for publishing any type of overtly gay-oriented media began making themselves and their mission known. More LGBTQ+ publications were in circulation, connecting the LGBTQ+ community further. One of the earliest periodicals based out of Hillcrest was a newspaper first published in 1972 by the lesbian social organization Tres Femme that had an office at 2250 B Street. *This Way Out* was a newsletter that informed readers about events that were happening at the Center.

Whereas most LGBTQ+ publications of the 1970s sprang from the counterculture of the Ocean Beach neighborhood, the 1980s saw the rise of a well-established LGBTQ+ community that flourished in Hillcrest, independent of other activist groups. The *San Diego Gayzette* was started by publisher Carla Coshow, with Lair Davis as executive editor, Nick Marzan as arts editor and business manager, John Ciaccio as advertising director, Paula Valentine as photographer, Jim Cain and Rob Andreasen as graphics artists, and Nicole Murray-Ramirez in charge of the social column, among others.⁹⁹ Many of the founders of the *Gayzette* were recent transplants from the *San Diego Update* staff. The first issue of the *Gayzette*, dated September 2, 1982, shows the staff standing in front of their offices at 3780 Fifth Avenue, which still stands today. The *Gayzette* became the paper of record for the LGBTQ+ community soon after it began publishing. The paper distributed 10,000

⁹⁸ Adapted and excerpted from GPA Consulting, 91-92, 94-95.

⁹⁹ "Gayzette Issues Published In 1982 and 1983," *HillQuest*, accessed April 17, 2020, <https://www.hillquest.com/hillquest/entertainment-old/gayzette/1982/index.htm>.

copies of its first issue. The *Gayzette* closed in 1986, ten months after advertising director and community activist John Ciaccio passed away from AIDS complications.

The advent of the internet has revolutionized the way that information is distributed around the world. The anonymity that was formerly achieved through pen names and P.O. boxes when publishing paper copies is now the general mode of operation online. LGBTQ+ communities online connect people from across the world without having to leave their homes. However, the importance of local journalism and community news is still relevant, with a number of in-print and online periodicals persisting that speak to the LGBTQ+ community of San Diego today.

Eligibility Standards

The following eligibility standards provide guidelines for evaluating property types associated with the LGBTQ+ media in Hillcrest. Mere association with a trend or individual is not a qualifier for historical significance, and not all properties that are associated with this theme will meet these eligibility standards. The association itself must be demonstrably important and documented through research. This research will more than likely require looking past or carefully interpreting “conventional” sources of information that may omit, obscure, or misrepresent LGBTQ+ history to sources such as, but not limited to, contemporary ephemera (newsletters, fliers, letters, etc.) and oral histories, as well as carefully considered input from community members and stakeholders.¹⁰⁰

When conducting a comparative analysis of similar properties, those that emerge as superlative through research—such as the earliest known examples, the longest in operation, the most widely recognized—will likely be those that possess significance under this theme. Certain publications may have occupied multiple locations over the course of their history. In these instances, the significance of the events that occurred at each location should be considered; if the reach and content of the publication remained generally the same at multiple locations, the earliest or best-known location may be the most significant. However, if the publication achieved new prominence at a later location, that location may also be significant.

Properties that best represent the productive life and historical contributions of a significant individual are generally an office, studio, or workplace. However, if that property no longer remains or if the location moved frequently, their place of residence during the time they made their significant contributions may be eligible instead.

Theme: The LGBTQ+ Media in Hillcrest

Associated Property Type: Institutional, Commercial, Residential

Property Type Description: Associated property types include offices in commercial buildings and offices, institutions, or residential buildings occupied by important LGBTQ+

¹⁰⁰ Meyer and Sikk, 03-2.

publications in Hillcrest. They may or may not have been built for the publications' purposes originally.

Property Type Significance: Significant properties under this theme will have a direct association with publications or individuals that made significant contributions to the LGBTQ+ print media such as newspapers, journals, and magazines. Under this theme, the length of time during which a publication was distributed does not necessarily coincide with or dictate significance; a periodical that was only published for a relatively short time may be equally as significant to a community as those with long-term readership. Properties may also be significant under other themes, such as community organizations and political activism or social life.

Area(s) of Significance: Communications

Criteria: San Diego HRB A

Period of Significance: 1982-1990

Period of Significance Justification: The earliest identified LGBTQ+ publication in Hillcrest was created in 1982. The year 1990 is the end of the period of study for this historic context statement.

Eligibility Standards:

- Has an important association with a publication that has played a demonstrably important role in LGBTQ+ media in the Hillcrest area;
- Association dates from within the period of significance; and
- Retains the essential aspects of integrity.

Eligibility Considerations:

- May be located in a building designed for another use originally
- Publications must have occupied the property during a period in which it achieved significance
- Must retain most of the essential character-defining features from the period of significance

Integrity Considerations:

- Integrity is based on the period during which the significant business or media organization occupied the property
- Should retain integrity of Location, Feeling, and Association from the period of significance; integrity of Design should be sufficiently intact to convey the property's historic function and use
- Some original materials may have been altered, removed or replaced, which may have a resulting impact on integrity of Materials and Workmanship
- Setting may have been altered by changes in surrounding development patterns and infill

Theme 4 – LGBTQ+ Arts and Culture in Hillcrest

The theme of arts and culture refers to performing arts, visual arts and design, and literature. It encompasses not only the works created by LGBTQ+ persons but also the venues in which works were shared, displayed, bought, sold, and performed. The arts served as a means of expressing tolerance for sexual diversity and as a platform for LGBTQ+ persons to tell their stories. The venues are crucial to understanding the significance of arts and culture to the LGBTQ+ community. They served as meeting places and access points for literature, poetry, plays, and other works banned elsewhere. In addition, they helped form a communal network and facilitated political organization.¹⁰¹ Though LGBTQ+ persons have been part of the recorded San Diego arts and culture scene since the late 19th century, it was risky for them to express their sexuality or identity in their work. In the socially and politically conservative climate of the immediate post-World War II period, not even the traditionally liberal art world was a safe place. Any expressions of nonconforming sexual or gender behavior before the 1960s were largely relegated to the underground or had to be extremely subtle.¹⁰² Theater and the performing arts have been used for educational and political purposes since their origins. More than just entertainment, it is a highly effective tool for reaching audiences on a personal level. As a result, it has been an important method for LGBTQ+ persons to share their histories and experiences. Many of the first theater companies in San Diego, such as Diversionary Theatre and Beautiful Lesbian Thespians (BLT)/Labrys Productions, performed in a variety of venues outside Hillcrest. As Hillcrest became the nexus of San Diego's LGBTQ+ community, the arts were increasingly visible there. The Fritz Theatre at 3387 Seventh Avenue hosted performances by Diversionary Theatre, founded in 1986 by Thomas Vegh to produce "plays and musicals and develop new works that explore the issues, characters and stories of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community in all its complexity and diversity."¹⁰³ It is recognized as the third oldest continually producing LGBT theater in the United States.¹⁰⁴ Its early shows were performed at a variety of other local venues, as well, including the bar Mr. Dillon's in Hillcrest.

The arts in Hillcrest also encompassed the written word, which allows LGBTQ+ persons to tell their stories. The physical venues most closely associated with literature are bookstores that not only sell written works but also host readings by authors and poets. Historically, they have become recognized as a critical component of the lesbian feminist movement. In San Diego, LGBTQ+-friendly and LGBTQ+-owned bookstores have had an

¹⁰¹ This context statement is a living document that may change and be updated in the future as more information is uncovered through further research and analysis. While research did not reveal any known extant galleries associated with this theme from before 1970; however, this does not definitively mean that none exist. If such resources are discovered in the future, this document should be amended accordingly.

¹⁰² James M. Saslow, *Pictures and Passions: A History of Homosexuality in the Visual Arts* (New York, NY: Viking, 1999), 243-244.

¹⁰³ "History," *Diversionary Theatre*, accessed May 31, 2016, <http://diversionary.org/history/>.

¹⁰⁴ "History," *Diversionary Theatre*, accessed May 31, 2016, <http://diversionary.org/history/>.

important place in the community's artistic and cultural life since at least the early 1960s when William Peccolo opened the Blue Door Bookstore in the Hillcrest neighborhood.¹⁰⁵ A seller of used books, it opened in 1961 and specialized in theater, poetry, gay and lesbian literature, as well as talented but lesser known authors of the 20th century.¹⁰⁶ It also featured books about the works of local artists such as Tim Grummon, who designed the early logo for the Lambda Archives. It was part of what became unofficially known as Book Row on Fifth Avenue and was one of the only bookstores in San Diego to stay open at night, and a little later still for crowds from the Guild Theatre.¹⁰⁷ The establishment closed its doors in 2001.¹⁰⁸

Eligibility Standards

The following eligibility standards provide guidelines for evaluating property types associated with the LGBTQ+ arts and culture. Mere association with a trend or individual is not a qualifier for historical significance, and not all properties that are associated with this theme will meet the eligibility standards. The association itself must be demonstrably important and documented through research. This research will more than likely require looking past or thoughtfully interpreting "conventional" sources of information that may omit, obscure, or misrepresent LGBTQ+ history and seeking out sources such as, but not limited to, contemporary ephemera (newsletters, fliers, letters, etc.) and oral histories, as well as carefully considered input from community members and stakeholders.¹⁰⁹

When conducting a comparative analysis of similar properties, those that emerge as superlative through research—such as the earliest known examples, the longest in operation, the most widely recognized—will likely be those that possess significance under this theme. Certain venues may have occupied multiple locations over the course of their history. In these instances, the significance of the association at each location should be considered; if subsequent locations represent a continuation of the same historical trend, the earliest or best-known location may be the most significant. However, if the venue achieved new prominence at a later location, that location may also be significant.

Properties that best represent the productive life and historical contributions of a significant individual are generally an office, studio, or workplace. However, if that

¹⁰⁵ "Peccolo, 59, Bookstore Owner, Dies," *Los Angeles Times*, October 10, 1987.

¹⁰⁶ Mike Granberry, "5 Little Bookstores All in a Row," *Los Angeles Times*, April 19, 1982; "Peccolo."

¹⁰⁷ Book Row is described as an informal, self-styled business cooperative formed from a concentration of independent bookstores along Fifth Avenue in Hillcrest. Each store offered something slightly different and generated business for its counterparts. Research did not indicate that the establishment of Book Row was specifically associated with the LGBTQ+ community. Granberry, "5 Little Bookstores."

¹⁰⁸ Tony Perry, "Door Closes on a Literary Tradition in San Diego," *Los Angeles Times*, February 13, 2001, <http://articles.latimes.com/2001/feb/13/news/mn-24747>. Excerpted from GPA Consulting, 106.

¹⁰⁹ Meyer and Sikk, 03-2.

property no longer remains or if the location moved frequently, their place of residence during the time they made their significant contributions may be eligible instead.

Theme: LGBTQ+ Arts and Culture in Hillcrest

Associated Property Types: Commercial and Residential

Property Type Description: Associated property types may include commercial buildings used as artists' studios, galleries, theaters, and performance venues. Associated properties may also include residential buildings used as artists' studios or writers' primary workplaces.

Property Type Significance: Significant properties under this theme will have a direct and important association LGBTQ+ organizations or businesses who made significant contributions to the history of visual arts, literature, and performing arts in Hillcrest, or a direct and important association with persons who played a significant role in the artistic and cultural development of LGBTQ+ people in Hillcrest. Properties significant under this theme may also be significant under other themes, such as community organizations/political activism or social life.

Area(s) of Significance: Art, Literature, Performing Arts

Criteria: San Diego HRB A or B

Period of Significance: 1961 -1990

Period of Significance Justification: The period of significance begins in 1961, when the earliest business related to LGBTQ+ arts and culture opened in Hillcrest. The year 1990 is the end of the period of study for this historic context statement.

Eligibility Standards:

- Has an important association with an organization or business that made a demonstrably important contribution to the history of the visual arts, performing arts, or literature as it relates to LGBTQ+ culture in Hillcrest, and/or;
- Has an important association with an Individual who has made a demonstrably important contribution to the history of the visual arts, performing arts, or literature as it relates to LGBTQ+ culture in Hillcrest; and
- Dates from the period of significance; and
- Retains the essential aspects of integrity.

Eligibility Considerations:

- May be the first or long-time location of an important venue
- May be located in a building originally used for another purpose, or used for multiple purposes over time
- Venues, galleries, theaters, etc., must have occupied the property during a period of time in which they gained significance

- Individual must have lived or worked in the property during a period in which they achieved significance, i.e. the period in which they did their significant work
- Must retain most of the essential character-defining features from the period in which the venue or individual occupied the property

Integrity Considerations:

Integrity is based on a period during which the significant organization, business, or individual occupied the property

- Should retain integrity of Location, Feeling, and Association from the period of significance; integrity of Design should be sufficiently intact to convey the property's historic function and use
- Some original materials may have been altered, removed, or replaced, which may have a resulting impact on integrity of Materials and Workmanship
- Setting may have been altered by changes in surrounding development patterns and infill

Theme 5 – LGBTQ+ Business and Commerce

As Hillcrest transitioned to the center of the LGBTQ+ community in San Diego, its business district also transformed. Fifth Avenue continued to serve as the neighborhood's main thoroughfare, but in the late 1960s, more businesses began catering to the incoming LGBTQ+ population or at least accepting them, though this was not always the case. As discussed under Theme 1, the first LGBTQ+-oriented businesses to open in Hillcrest were bars and clubs, followed soon after by establishments such as restaurants, coffeeshops, and bookstores. The comparatively low rents in Hillcrest made it easier for small businesses owned by, operated by, and friendly to the LGBTQ+ community to establish themselves in the area. Many became centers for social life and contributed to the sense of Hillcrest as a unique place.

As more of these businesses opened, it became clear that Hillcrest not only offered a sense of safety, but also a sense of community reinforced by LGBTQ+-owned and -friendly businesses. Though speaking later, Nicole Murray-Ramirez's thoughts on the importance of gay-owned businesses in Hillcrest applies to the 1970s and 1980s:

Like any other minority, people like to be among their own. Gays and lesbians have the luxury in many ways of being able to fit into any neighborhood they want, [but] it's a choice that I think a lot of them want to go in and create a gay friendly neighborhood. It's ... an attitude of being part of a neighborhood, being comfortable, knowing that you can go into any restaurant that's gay-owned, go into a travel agency that you know is gay-owned, go into a coffee shop that you know is gay-owned ... Being able to go in and be reminded of your culture, and being able to share it.¹¹⁰

Hillcrest's LGBTQ+-oriented business district grew in the 1970s, and throughout San Diego, the presence of LGBTQ+-owned and -oriented businesses increased. In 1979, several gay businessmen, including Ron Umbaugh, owner of the Crypt, Frank Stiriti, owner of the Vulcan Steam & Sauna (located outside Hillcrest), and Fred Acheson, owner of several bars, founded the Greater San Diego Business Association (GSDBA). This was a major step towards integrating newly emerging LGBTQ+ businesses into the general San Diego business community. In 2000, it was the first LGBTQ+ chamber in the nation to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the U.S. Small Business Administration, recognizing the GSDBA's status as a minority business association.¹¹¹ The GSDBA changed its name to

¹¹⁰ Matthew Lickona, "Hillcrest, Homosexuality, History," *San Diego Reader*, June 10, 1999, accessed April 15, 2020, <https://www.sandiegoreader.com/news/1999/jun/10/cover-pay-rent/>.

¹¹¹ Excerpted from GPA Consulting, 56.

the San Diego Equality Business Association in May 2018.¹¹² Today, it remains the second largest gay and lesbian chamber in the country.

By the early 1980s, the LGBTQ+ community was firmly established in Hillcrest. Population growth during the decade accelerated, jumping from 12,687 in 1980 to 14,076 in 1990 and reflecting “the neighborhood’s renaissance and the rediscovered popularity of central city living.”¹¹³ Likely in response to the growing population, commercial and residential construction in Hillcrest also increased in the 1980s.¹¹⁴ Area residents could walk, bike, or take public transit to Hillcrest’s business district, a trend uncommon in the automobile-focused landscape found in much of San Diego. A number of businesses that became institutions in the LGBTQ+ community opened during the 1980s, including the Flame (a supper club that reopened as a lesbian bar, see Theme 1), #1 Fifth Avenue, and the Crest Café.¹¹⁵

In 1983, community activist and organizer Joyce Beers led a petition drive to urge City Council to form the Hillcrest Business Improvement District (BID). The Hillcrest Business Improvement Association (HBIA) or Hillcrest Business Association (HBA) was formed the next year, with Beers as the first executive director. Beers brought together the heterosexual and LGBTQ+ business communities in this role. Her daughter Robin noted, “She was able to bring together gay and non-gay business owners, getting them to see that they had common goals and interests. There were some ‘old-school’ business owners at that time who thought that the increasing number of gay and lesbian business owners meant that the neighborhood was going straight to hell in a handbag. Mom got them all to sit down together and realize that arguing about who sleeps with whom was irrelevant.”¹¹⁶ The HBA continues to function to the present day and offers promotional services for its members, security patrols in the commercial area, and pays the electricity bills for the Hillcrest sign.¹¹⁷

The same year that Beers petitioned for the formation of the HBID, she also spearheaded an effort to refurbish the Hillcrest sign. The sign was taken down for repairs, and area volunteers rallied to raise money for its repair. They eventually raised more than \$4,000. The sign was officially lit about a year later in August 1984, with the ceremony attended by the mayor and local officials. The corner at Fifth and University Avenues was closed

¹¹² “About Us,” *San Diego Equality Business Association*, accessed April 10, 2020, <https://www.sdeba.org/pages/AboutUs>; “Frequently Asked Questions,” *San Diego Equality Business Association*, accessed April 10, 2020, <https://www.sdeba.org/pages/FAQS>.

¹¹³ Susan Pamela Mains, “There’s No Place Like Home: Social Diversity and the Evolution of Housing in Hillcrest, San Diego” (Master’s Thesis, San Diego State University, 1990), 118-119.

¹¹⁴ IS Architecture, B.47.

¹¹⁵ “Hillcrest History,” *Hillcrest History*, accessed April 16, 2020, <https://www.hillcresthistory.org/timelines/hillcrest-timeline/>.

¹¹⁶ “Joyce Beers,” *Hillcrest History*, accessed April 17, 2020, <http://www.hillcresthistory.org/people/joyce-beers/>.

¹¹⁷ “Hillcrest Business Association,” Hillquest, accessed April 10, 2020, <http://www.hillquest.com/hba/>.

down, and a street fair was held, attracting more than 3,000 attendees.¹¹⁸ With the help of the HBA, Tony Kopas and Bob Walker organized a similar event the next year – the first “CityFest,” a two-day festival which included a juried art show. However, after overzealous participants painted the streets and the HBA was held responsible for the costly paint removal, it canceled the street fair. A committee of volunteers stepped forward to organize a second event in August 1985. The HBA returned as a sponsor the next summer.¹¹⁹

In more recent years, Hillcrest has experienced continued waves of redevelopment, with the construction of new housing and mixed-use buildings. Rising rents led some older businesses to move or close. However, despite these changes, Hillcrest’s business district continued to thrive, and newer gay-owned businesses have moved in. At the same time, several longtime gay-owned or -friendly businesses remain in Hillcrest, including the Brass Rail (now called simply the Rail), the Blue Door Bookstore, and the Crest Café. In other cases, the businesses have changed but remain gay-owned or -oriented, including Show Biz Supper Club (later Margarita Mary’s, now Baja Betty’s), and Mr. Dillon’s (now Rich’s). Although it post-dates the period discussed in this HCS, Hamburger Mary’s is worth noting as it is one of the mainstays of the business district in Hillcrest. It opened in 1992 at 308 University Avenue. Hamburger Mary’s was considered a “hub” of the Hillcrest neighborhood and often hosted charitable and community events.¹²⁰ The restaurant is owned by San Diego native Chris Shaw, who has been involved in the LGBTQ+ business world since 1979 when he co-owned the dance club West Coast Production Company. Shaw and his partner Doug Snyder also own and operate Baja Betty’s and Gossip Grill, which both opened after the period highlighted in this study. Shaw is known in the area for his longtime support of Hillcrest and helped found the Greater San Diego Business Association Charitable Foundation.¹²¹

Eligibility Standards

The following eligibility standards provide guidelines for evaluating property types associated with the LGBTQ+ business and commerce. Mere association with a trend or individual is not a qualifier for historical significance, and not all properties that are associated with this theme will meet the eligibility standards. For example, an establishment would not be significant if the only justification for significance is that it was owned by or served members of the LGBTQ+ community. The association itself must be demonstrably important and documented through research. This research will more than likely require looking past or thoughtfully interpreting “conventional” sources of

¹¹⁸ “HillQuest’s CityFest Timeline,” Hillquest, accessed April 10, 2020, <http://www.hillquest.com/hba/cityfesttimeline.htm>.

¹¹⁹ “HillQuest’s CityFest Timeline,” Hillquest, accessed April 10, 2020, <http://www.hillquest.com/hba/cityfesttimeline.htm>.

¹²⁰ Ben Cartwright, “Urban Mo’s Celebrates 20 Years TONIGHT,” *San Diego Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender News*, April 19, 2012, accessed April 19, 2020, <https://sdgln.com/entertainment/2012/04/19/urban-mos-celebrate-20-years-tonight>.

¹²¹ “Mo’s Main Man – Chris Shaw,” Hillcrest History, accessed April 19, 2020, <https://www.hillcresthistory.org/people/mos-main-man-chris-shaw/>.

information that may omit, obscure, or misrepresent LGBTQ+ history and seeking out sources such as, but not limited to, contemporary ephemera (newsletters, fliers, letters, etc.) and oral histories, as well as carefully considered input from community members and stakeholders.¹²²

When conducting a comparative analysis of similar properties, those that emerge as superlative through research—such as the earliest known examples, the longest in operation, the most widely recognized—will likely be those that possess significance under this theme. Certain businesses or institutions may have occupied multiple locations over the course of their history. In these instances, the significance of the association at each location should be considered; if subsequent locations represent a continuation of the same historical trend, the earliest or best-known location may be the most significant. However, if the business or institution achieved new prominence at a later location, that location may also be significant.

Properties that best represent the productive life and historical contributions of a significant individual are generally an office, studio, or workplace. However, if that property no longer remains or if the location moved frequently, their place of residence during the time they made their significant contributions may be eligible instead.

Theme: LGBTQ+ Business and Commerce in Hillcrest

Associated Property Types: Commercial, Residential

Property Type Description: Associated property types may include commercial buildings including but not limited to restaurants, bars, coffeehouses, and stores, as well as residential buildings converted to such uses. These will include businesses owned by LGBTQ+ persons and those friendly to or oriented toward them, as well as widely recognized gathering places.

Property Type Significance: Significant properties under this theme will have a direct and important association with LGBTQ+ businesses that made significant contributions to the history of business and commerce in Hillcrest. Properties significant under this theme may also be significant under other themes, such as community organizations and political activism, or social life.

Area(s) of Significance: Commerce

Criteria: San Diego HRB A or B

Period of Significance: 1961 -1990

¹²² Meyer and Sikk, 03-2.

Period of Significance Justification: The period of significance begins in 1961, when the earliest LGBTQ+-friendly business opened in Hillcrest. The year 1990 is the end of the period of study for this historic context statement.

Eligibility Standards:

- Has a direct association with a business that made a demonstrably important contribution to the history of LGBTQ+ business and commerce in Hillcrest; and/or
- Has a direct association with an individual that made a demonstrably important contribution to the history of LGBTQ+ business and commerce in Hillcrest; and
- Dates from the period of significance; and
- Retains the essential aspects of integrity.

Eligibility Considerations:

- May be the first, most well-known of its type, or long-time location of an important business
- May be located in a building originally used for another purpose, or used for multiple purposes over time
- Businesses must have occupied the property during a period of time in which they gained significance
- Individual must have worked in the property during a period in which they achieved significance, i.e. the period in which they did their significant work
- Must retain most of the essential character-defining features from the period in which the significant business or individual occupied the property

Integrity Considerations:

- Integrity is based on the period during which the significant business or individual occupied the property
- Should retain integrity of Location, Feeling, and Association from the period of significance; integrity of Design should be sufficiently intact to convey the property's historic function and use
- Some original materials may have been altered, removed, or replaced, which may have a resulting impact on integrity Materials and Workmanship
- Setting may have been altered by changes in surrounding development patterns and infill

Recommendations for Future Study

So many of the very important works and achievements of the LGBTQ community have occurred in what is considered in the field of historic preservation to be the very recent past—within the last 25 years. These events, many of which are certainly historic, are not covered in this document due to the limited scope of this project, as well as the basic principles of professional historic preservation planning. Technical historic context statements such as this typically establish an end to their periods of study at around 40 years prior to the study date. This is based on the National Register principle that an eligible property should be at least 50 years of age, unless exceptionally important, in order to be sure that there is enough scholarly information about the property and its related themes to evaluate it, as well as to be sure that society has adequate historical perspective. An event that occurred recently or person who is still active in the community may not seem significant right now, but over time, such significance may be realized through adequate study and unanticipated ripple effects, and vice versa; a recent event that seems really important at present might prove to be less so or to have been misunderstood or misinterpreted in the first place. Thus, the “50-year rule,” as it is sometimes called by practitioners, is designed to protect against these potential pitfalls. Historic context statements often use a 40-year cut-off, rather than 50, to ensure that they are useful to city governments for a ten-year period without over-reaching too far forward into the recent past.

For this study, the project team covered up to 1990, just over 25 years ago, or half of the 50-year rule. The intent was to include the important events of the AIDS crisis, as well as the emergence of many new local clubs and organizations during the 1980s. It was also designed to be consistent with other similar documents in the state. The City of Los Angeles’s SurveyLA LGBT Historic Context Statement, for example, only extends to 1980, while San Francisco’s extends through the 1980s. Based on the basic standards of professional historic preservation practice and the precedents set by these other studies, carrying the study even further into the future was determined to be infeasible at this time.

As a result, there are a number of topics that are only touched upon in this document and some that are not discussed at all, but will require thorough study in the future, when sufficient time has passed to do so. Like this document, to be a technical historic context statement for historic preservation purposes, and not a general historical narrative, future studies must be centered on themes for which extant associated properties exist. Some of the areas for future study include, but are certainly not limited to:

- **LGBTQ rights activism in the post-1990 period.** Examples include the fight to legalize gay marriage and for overturn cross-dressing laws, the election of LGBTQ people to public office.
- **Significant transgender events, groups, and individuals related to the themes herein or to new themes that emerge.** This document contains limited information about transgender history in San Diego, but more scholarly sources and texts are

expected to emerge over time. In addition, the transgender community has become increasingly vocal, organized, and politically active since 1990. For example, activist Tracie Jada O'Brien founded the first transgender support group in San Diego, TransAction, in the mid-1990s. Transgender awareness and services in San Diego and Hillcrest have continued to develop from the 1990s to the present, including the important TransStories and Trans Narratives projects seeking to document the history of the transgender community in San Diego.

- **Significant bisexual events, groups, and individuals related to the themes herein or to new themes that emerge.** This document contains limited information about bisexual history in San Diego, but more scholarly sources and texts are expected to emerge over time.
- **Significant queer events, groups, and individuals related to the themes herein or to new themes that emerge.** The history of the queer community in San Diego as a group entirely separate from the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender communities has not been specifically addressed in this document. The term "queer" was not reappropriated until the late 1980s and early 1990s. New scholarly sources and texts are expected to emerge over time.
- **Significant individuals of color and events and groups associated with LGBTQ people of color related to the themes herein or to new themes that emerge.** This document contains some information about LGBTQ people of color in San Diego, but more scholarly sources and texts are expected to emerge over time. Many of the groups discussed in this document were formed late in the 1980s, so while their founding dates might be mentioned, detailed information on their activities and growth in the following decades was outside the period of study. LGBTQ organizations specifically for people of color increased and diversified after 1990.

At this time, a sampling of known resources on the topics listed above includes:

- *Trans Narratives* website, edited by Meredith Vezina:
<http://www.transnarratives.org/>
- *A Gender Variance Who's Who* website: <https://zagria.blogspot.com/>
- Fritz Klein Bisexual Archives, housed at the Lambda Archives'
<http://www.lambdaarchives.us>
- Newsletters and other documents published by local groups and individuals, many on file at the Lambda Archives: <http://www.lambdaarchives.us>
- "San Diego LGBT History Timeline," especially for the post-1990 period, published by the Lambda Archives:
<http://www.lambdaarchives.us/timelines/lgbt/timeline%20pre%201970.htm>

- San Diego files at the ONE Archives in Los Angeles and West Hollywood, especially for the post-1990 period: <https://one.usc.edu/>
- San Diego LGBTQ Weekly website: <http://lgbtweekly.com/>
- San Diego Union-Tribune website: <http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/>

The National Park Service *LGBTQ Heritage Theme Study*, published in 2016, is a comprehensive and invaluable source for historical context as well as historic preservation-specific guidance on topics including interpreting, evaluating, nominating, and preserving resources associated with LGBTQ+ history:

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/tellingallamericansstories/lgbtqthemestudy.htm>

As a concluding thought, it should be noted that technical planning documents such as this context statement are not the only, or often even the best ways of documenting and recognizing a community's history. Project types with broader scopes and less rigid structures may be more valuable for documenting the recent past. Examples might include oral history projects, museum exhibits, formal publications, creations of dedicated websites, developing mobile apps, and the like. Tools like these tend to reach a larger audience and have fewer content restrictions, if any. The exploration of alternative public history projects is strongly encouraged.

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