

Significance Work Sheet

TYPE OR HAND PRINT IN ALL CAPITAL BLOCK LETTERS

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

Architectural Significance

THE JOHNIE'S COFFEE SHOP RESTAURANT
NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT

IS AN IMPORTANT EXAMPLE OF

GOOGIE STYLE
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE (SEE LINE 8)

ARCHITECTURE

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

Historical Significance

JOHNIE'S COFFEE SHOP RESTAURANT

WAS BUILT IN 1956

NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT

YEAR BUILT

ARMET & DAVIS, ARCHITECTS,

NAME OF FIRST OR SIGNIFICANT
OTHER

WAS IMPORTANT TO

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOS ANGELES BECAUSE _____

- a. IT EXPRESSES THE CULTURAL, ECONOMIC, AND SOCIAL HISTORY OF LOS ANGELES AND THE NATION WHEN SUBURBANIZATION AND THE AUTOMOBILE RESHAPED THE NATURE OF AMERICAN CITY PLANNING AND ARCHITECTURE IN THE POST-WORLD WAR II DECADES.
- b. IT IS AN EXCELLENT EXAMPLE OF THE CALIFORNIA COFFEE SHOP ARCHITECTURAL TYPE, AND OF THE GOOGIE ARCHITECTURAL STYLE, EXPRESSING SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA MODERN DESIGN.
- c. AS A MAJOR EXAMPLE OF A MASTER ARCHITECT, ARMET & DAVIS, WHO HELPED TO DEFINE AND PROMULGATE THIS IMPORTANT SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ARCHITECTURAL TYPE THROUGHOUT THE NATION.

Historic-Cultural Monument Application

TYPE OR HAND PRINT IN ALL CAPITAL BLOCK
LETTERS

Identification

1. NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT JOHNIE'S COFFEE SHOP AND RESTAURANT
2. STREET ADDRESS 6101 WILSHIRE BLVD.
- CITY LOS ANGELES ZIP CODE 90048 COUNCIL DISTRICT CD-5
3. ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NO. 5510027035
4. COMPLETE LEGAL DESCRIPTION: TRACT TR 7555
- BLOCK 1 LOT(S) FR 41 ARB. NO NONE MAP SHEET NO. 135B177
5. RANGE OF ADDRESSES ON PROPERTY 6101 WILSHIRE BLVD./651 S. FAIRFAX AVE.
6. PRESENT OWNER AU ZONE INVESTMENTS NO. 2 L P CO.
- ST. ADDRESS 4000 UNION PACIFIC AVE.
- CITY CITY OF COMMERCE STATE CA ZIP CODE 90023 PHONE (____) _____
- OWNERSHIP: PRIVATE YES PUBLIC _____
7. PRESENT USE CLOSED ORIGINAL USE RESTAURANT

Description

8. ARCHITECTURAL STYLE GOOGIE STYLE
(SEE STYLE GUIDE)
9. STATE PRESENT PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE OR STRUCTURE (SEE OPTIONAL DESCRIPTION WORK SHEET. 1 PAGE MAXIMUM)
- JOHNIE'S RETAINS THE ORIGINAL CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES OF GOOGIE STYLE CALIFORNIA COFFEE SHOPS: A PROMINENT ROOF, THE STRUCTURE IS EXPRESSED, THE USE OF NATURAL STONE PYLONS, NEON SIGNAGE, GLASS EXTERIOR WALLS, INTERIOR COUNTER AND SEATING CONFIGURATION, AN UPSWEPT CEILING, AND THE SOFFIT AND KITCHEN EQUIPMENT BEHIND THE COUNTER.

CONTINUED ON ATTACHED DESCRIPTION WORK SHEET.

DESCRIPTION WORK SHEET

CONTINUED

JOHNIE'S COFFEE SHOP (ORIGINALLY ROMEO'S TIMES SQUARE) WAS A CUSTOM DESIGN USING MODERN DESIGN PRINCIPLES BY ARCHITECTS LOUIS ARMET AND ELTON DAVIS. THE RECTANGULAR PLAN ON A TRAPEZOIDAL LOT INCLUDES A KITCHEN CORE ON THE NORTHWEST SIDE WITH A DINING AREA WRAPPING AROUND THE SOUTH AND EAST SIDES OF THE CORE. THE KITCHEN CORE (INCLUDING BATHROOMS) IS CONCRETE BLOCK CONSTRUCTION; GLASS WALLS ENCLOSE THE DINING AREAS FACING WILSHIRE AND FAIRFAX, INCLUDING THE ENTRIES OFF WILSHIRE AND THE NORTH SIDE PARKING LOT. A PARKING LOT WRAPS AROUND THE NORTH AND WEST SIDES.

THE ROOF IS THE MOST PROMINENT FEATURE OF THE DESIGN. IT IS A LARGE ASYMMETRICAL BUTTERFLY WING FORM WITH WIDE CANTILEVERED EAVES. IT IS SUPPORTED AT THE FRONT BY ANGLED PYLONS CLAD IN NATURAL STONE, AT ITS CENTER AND REAR BY THE KITCHEN CORE'S CONCRETE WALLS, AND ALONG THE GLASS-WALLED EAST SIDE BY STEEL COLUMNS INTEGRATED INTO THE GLASS WALL FRAME. A LOW SCREEN WALL HIDES MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT AT THE CENTER OF THE ROOF.

AT ITS NORTH AND SOUTH ENDS, THE ROOF FOLDS DOWN AND THEN RETURNS IN A "KNUCKLE" SHAPE. THIS FOLD PROVIDES SHADE AND A BROAD PLANE FOR INTEGRATED SIGNAGE. FIVE RAISED STRIPES, DELINEATED BY METAL IMPRESSED WITH A MODIFIED "EGG-CRATE" TEXTURE, GIVE DEFINITION TO THE ROOF FORM; THE "EGG-CRATE" TEXTURE ITSELF WAS A MODERN TECHNOLOGY TO GIVE RIGIDITY TO A FLAT PLANE OF METAL. PANELS OF SMALL, SCINTILLATING INCANDESCENT LIGHTBULBS FILL THE SPACE BETWEEN THE FIVE RAISED STRIPES.

MODERN DESIGN CONCEPTS THROUGHOUT THE DESIGN CREATE A STRUCTURE THAT APPEARS VISUALLY LIGHT, UNITING INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR. THE SLENDER STEEL COLUMNS INTEGRATED INTO THE WINDOW WALL FRAME ARE DE-EMPHASIZED, CREATING THE EFFECT OF A LARGELY FREE-FLOATING ROOF ABOVE A COLUMN-FREE INTERIOR SPACE. THE WIDE EXTERIOR EAVES CONTINUE THE FLUSH INTERIOR CEILING OUTSIDE, UNINTERRUPTED VISUALLY BY THE PLANE OF GLASS WINDOW; THIS UNITES THE INTERIOR AND THE EXTERIOR.

ANOTHER MODERN DESIGN CONCEPT CAN BE SEEN IN THE INTEGRATION OF NEON SIGNAGE INTO THE DESIGN. ADVERTISING TO MAKE THE RESTAURANT VISIBLE AND APPEALING TO POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS DRIVING ON WILSHIRE OR FAIRFAX IS ONE OF THE DESIGN'S FUNCTIONS EXPRESSED IN ITS FORM. ARMET AND DAVIS INTEGRATED SIGNAGE THEY DESIGNED INTO THE ROOF'S BROAD SUNSHADES ON THE SOUTH AND NORTH. THE NAME IS SPREAD IN LARGE FREE-FORM LETTERING (REFLECTING 1950S GRAPHICS) ACROSS THE SOUTH ROOF EDGE; "JOHNIE'S" IS OUTLINED IN NEON TUBING SET WITHIN CHANNEL LETTERS; THE "COFFEE SHOP RESTAURANT" LETTERING IS OUTLINED IN NEON TUBING. A "JOHNIE'S" SIGN OF NEON TUBING IN CHANNEL LETTERS IS

ATTACHED TO THE NORTHERN ROOF EDGE. ANOTHER "COFFEE SHOP RESTAURANT" SIGN OF NEON TUBING IN CHANNEL LETTERS IS ATTACHED TO THE EAST ROOF EDGE, ALONG WITH THE SAME SMALL, SCINTILLATING INCANDESCENT LIGHTBULB GRID SEEN ON THE SOUTH AND NORTH ROOF EDGES.

A FREESTANDING BILLBOARD STRUCTURE (ADDED CIRCA 1966) STANDS AT THE SOUTHWEST CORNER. THOUGH NOT PART OF THE BUILDING'S STRUCTURE, IT PASSES THROUGH THE EDGE OF THE ROOF OVERHANG. ANOTHER FREESTANDING SIGN POLE DESIGNED TO ADVERTISE FOR JOHNNIE'S STANDS AT THE NORTHEAST CORNER, WITH A SERPENTINE ARROW NEON AND INCANDESCENT SIGN.

ALSO REFLECTING MODERN DESIGN CONCEPTS, ARMET & DAVIS' COFFEE SHOPS INTEGRATED ARCHITECTURAL LIGHTING INTO THE DESIGN IN SEVERAL WAYS: EXTERIOR NEON SIGNAGE; EXTERIOR CAN LIGHTS ON THE EAST SIDE EAVE; INTERIOR FLUORESCENT CEILING PANELS AND CAN LIGHTS REFLECTING LIGHT OFF THE ACOUSTIC TILE CEILING (VISIBLE TO MOTORISTS THROUGH THE GLASS WALLS); UPLIGHTING ON THE EXTERIOR LOW STONE WALL BELOW THE EAST SIDE WINDOW WALL HIGHLIGHTED THE NATURAL STONE TEXTURE.

LANDSCAPING IS ALSO INTEGRAL TO THE MODERN CALIFORNIA DESIGN, CREATING THE EFFECT OF AN OUTDOOR PATIO IN THE INTERIOR DINING AREA. PLANTERS LINE THE LOW STONE WALL ALONG THE EAST SIDE, IMMEDIATELY ADJACENT TO THE INTERIOR SEATING BOOTHS. (THE STONE PYLONS ON THE SOUTH SIDE ALSO ROSE OUT OF PLANTERS, NOW CEMENTED OVER EMPHASIZING THE DESIGN'S CONNECTION TO NATURE.) RECTANGULAR CONCRETE EXTERIOR PAVERS WITH AGGREGATE STONE INLAYS (APPROXIMATELY 18X36 INCHES) AT THE FRONT AND BACK DOORS ARE ORIGINAL, THOUGH SEVERAL HAVE BEEN PATCHED.

INSIDE, FIXED BOOTHS AND COUNTERS WITH STOOLS PROVIDE SEATING. THE STOOLS ARE CANTILEVERED FROM THE RAISED TERRAZZO CURB WHICH SERVES AS A FOOTREST. THE DINING AREA CEILING IS TALL AT THE FRONT, MATCHING THE UPWARD SLOPE OF THE BUTTERFLY ROOF. THE ROOF SLOPES DOWNWARD TOWARD THE CENTER, AND THEN SLOPES UPWARD AGAIN A SHORT DISTANCE PAST THE REAR ENTRY FROM THE PARKING LOT, WHERE IT FORMED A CANOPY OVER THE REAR ENTRY. THE EAST WALL, FACING FAIRFAX, IS GLAZED WITH WINDOWS RISING FROM A LOW WALL (CLAD IN STONE ON THE EXTERIOR) UP TO THE SLOPING CEILING. THE FLOOR IS TERRAZZO, A LONG LASTING AND EASILY MAINTAINED MATERIAL WHICH COULD BE EMBEDDED WITH CHIPS OF COLOR TO COORDINATE WITH THE ARCHITECTURE.

THOUGH IT WAS A MODERN DESIGN, THE CLIENT ASKED THE ARCHITECTS TO INCORPORATE A NEW YORK THEME WITH A DECORATIVE MOTIF BASED ON THE STORY OF ROMEO AND JULIET, REFERENCING THE ORIGINAL NAME "ROMEO'S TIMES SQUARE." THE DROPPED SOFFIT OVER THE COUNTER AND EXHIBITION FOOD PREPARATION AREAS CONTAIN REAR LIGHTED TRANSLUCENT PLASTIC PANELS SEPARATED BY "EGG- CRATE" METAL PANELS WHICH REPEAT THE SAME MATERIAL USED ON THE EXTERIOR. ON THE SOFFIT BENEATH THE ARTWORK ARE ORIGINAL ALUMINUM CAN LIGHTS.

THE KITCHEN IS LOCATED IN THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF THE STRUCTURE. IN COMMON WITH MANY CALIFORNIA COFFEE SHOPS, HOWEVER, SOME OF THE PREPARATION FUNCTIONS ARE OPEN TO VIEW BEHIND THE L-SHAPED COUNTER (VENEERED IN MODERN WOOD-GRAIN FORMICA PLASTIC.) THIS WAS A COMMON FEATURE OF MODERN CALIFORNIA COFFEE SHOPS TO

ASSURE CUSTOMERS OF THE CLEANLINESS OF FOOD PREPARATION. THE FIXTURES INCLUDE STAINLESS STEEL PREPARATION COUNTERS, FOOD DISPLAY CASES, AND STORAGE CABINETS; HANGING "HEAT" LAMPS; INTEGRATED MENU HOLDERS; AND A CASH REGISTER. PINK 4-INCH CERAMIC TILES FEATURING A "ROMEO" CARICATURE STRUMMING A LUTE ARE RANDOMLY DISPERSED AMONG THE OTHER TILES. BY CUSTOM-DESIGNING THESE FOOD PREPARATION FIXTURES, AND INTEGRATING THEM INTO THE DESIGN AND THEME OF THE BUILDING, THE RESTAURANT'S DESIGN EXPRESSES ITS FUNCTION, A MODERN ARCHITECTURAL CONCEPT.

CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES OF GOOGIE SEEN IN JOHNIÉ'S:

THE BUTTERFLY ROOFLINE EXPRESSES ITS MODERN "FLOATING"
CANTILEVERED ROOF STRUCTURE
CUSTOM DESIGNED NEON SIGNAGE INTEGRATED WITH THE
ARCHITECTURE
LARGE GLASS WINDOW WALLS CONNECT INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR
USE OF NATURAL MATERIALS (STONE VENEER ON PYLONS AT FRONT, LOW
WALL ON EAST) CONTRASTING WITH MODERN TECHNOLOGICAL
MATERIALS (NEON SIGNS, FORMICA COUNTERS, STAINLESS STEEL
KITCHEN CABINETRY, PLASTIC AND "EGGCRATE" PRESSED METAL
PANELS ON DROPPED SOFFIT, ETC.)
"GARDENLIKE" LANDSCAPING SURROUNDING STONE WALLS AND
PYLONS CONNECT MODERN STRUCTURE TO THE EARTH
MODERN IMAGERY OF CLEAN LINES REFLECTING RESTAURANT
FUNCTIONS WITHOUT HISTORICAL REFERENCES
SEMI-EXHIBITION KITCHEN PUTS THE FUNCTION OF THE RESTAURANT ON
DISPLAY AS PART OF THE ARCHITECTURE

Historic-Cultural Monument Application

Name of Proposed Monument JOHNNIE'S COFFEE SHOP AND RESTAURANT

10. CONSTRUCTION DATE: 1956 FACTUAL: X ESTIMATED:
11. ARCHITECT, DESIGNER, OR ENGINEER ARMET & DAVIS
12. CONTRACTOR OR OTHER BUILDER _____
13. DATES OF ENCLOSED PHOTOGRAPHS _____
(1 8X10 BLACK AND WHITE GLOSSY AND 1 DIGITAL E-MAILED TO CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION@LACITY.ORG)
14. CONDITION: ■ EXCELLENT GOOD ■ FAIR ■ DETERIORATED ■ NO LONGER IN EXISTENCE
15. ALTERATIONS SEE ATTACHED ALTERATIONS WORK SHEET
16. THREATS TO SITE: ■ NONE KNOWN ■ PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT ■ VANDALISM PUBLIC WORKS PROJECT
■ ZONING ■ OTHER _____
17. IS THE STRUCTURE: ON ITS ORIGINAL SITE ■ MOVED ■ UNKNOWN

SIGNIFICANCE

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

SEE ATTACHED SIGNIFICANCE WORK SHEET

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

REYNER BANHAM, LOS ANGELES: THE ARCHITECTURE OF FOUR ECOLOGIES (PENGUIN, 1971)
ALAN HESS, GOOGIE REDUX: ULTRAMODERN ROADSIDE ARCHITECTURE (CHRONICLE BOOKS, 2004)
ALAN HESS, GOOGIE: FIFTIES COFFEE SHOP ARCHITECTURE (CHRONICLE BOOKS, 1985)
LOS ANGELES TIMES, JULY 10, 1955 P E17
LOS ANGELES TIMES, AUGUST 5, 1956 P M6
LOS ANGELES TIMES, JULY 15, 2004
LOS ANGELES TIMES, JUNE 19, 2000
LOS ANGELES TIMES, APRIL 1, 1993, P B4
LOS ANGELES INDEPENDENT, JUNE 19, 2000
LA WEEKLY, JANUARY 5-11, 1996 P 19
SUNSET MAGAZINE, OCTOBER 1992, P 32

20. DATE FORM PREPARED APRIL 11, 2013 PREPARER'S NAME ALAN HESS
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ALTERATIONS WORK SHEET

CONTINUED

JOHNNIE'S (ORIGINALLY ROMEO'S TIMES SQUARE) COFFEE SHOP DISPLAYS A HIGH DEGREE OF ARCHITECTURAL INTEGRITY AS AN EARLY AND REPRESENTATIVE EXAMPLE OF GOOGIE, AND ARMET & DAVIS' WORK. THE ALTERATIONS LISTED BELOW ARE COSMETIC OR REVERSIBLE. THE STRUCTURE, SPACES, AND MAJOR MATERIAL ELEMENTS ARE INTACT.

ALTERATIONS INCLUDE:

- A. PAINT ON EXTERIOR, INCLUDING THE NATURAL STONE PYLONS AT THE FRONT.
- B. ORIGINAL INTERIOR WAS EXPANDED TO PROVIDE MORE INDOOR SEATING IN 1971 TO THE NORTH (REMOVING PARTS OF THE LOW STONE WALL, AND ENCLOSING THE EXTERIOR SPACE BENEATH CANOPY AT REAR DOOR) AND TO THE SOUTH (REMOVING PARTS OF THE LOW STONE WALL AND MOVING THE SOUTH GLASS WALL OUT TO THE EDGE OF THE ROOF CANOPY.) THE SOUTH WALL WAS LATER MOVED BACK TO ITS ORIGINAL POSITION, THOUGH A FOYER FOR THE FRONT DOOR REMAINS FROM THE ALTERATION. A WOOD FRAME WALL WITH PANELING AND WINDOWS REPLACED THE ORIGINAL FLOOR TO CEILING GLASS WALL. AN ORIGINAL FRONT DOOR TO FAIRFAX WAS REPLACED WITH FIXED GLASS, AND A DOOR TO THE PARKING LOT AT THE SOUTHWEST CORNER HAS BEEN CLOSED. SOME ORIGINAL EAST WALL GLASS WAS REPLACED WITH SMALLER PANES AND ADDITIONAL MULLIONS ADDED. A HORIZONTAL LINE HAS BEEN PAINTED ON THE EAST-FACING GLASS WALL TO SIMULATE A FLAT CEILING.
- C. CHANGES TO SIGNAGE, THOUGH THE AESTHETIC CHARACTER OF THEIR FONT, NEON, SIZE, POSITION RELATIVE TO THE ARCHITECTURE, AND INCANDESCENT LIGHTING HAVE REMAINED CONSISTENT. THE ORIGINAL 36- FOOT LONG "ROMEO'S TIMES SQUARE" NEON SIGN WAS SPREAD IN LARGE FREE-FORM SCRIPT LETTERING ACROSS TWO THIRDS OF THE SOUTH ROOF EDGE. THE LETTERS WERE OUTLINED IN RED AND BLUE NEON TUBING, AND THE MAIN "ROMEO'S" SIGN WAS FILLED WITH A SLANTING GRID OF MINIATURE INCANDESCENT LIGHTBULBS (ECHOING THE SIGNS OF NEW YORK'S TIMES SQUARE) WHICH FLASHED IN A SCINTILLATING PATTERN. THE SIGN WAS REWORKED AS A SIMILAR "RAM'S" SIGN IN 1957, AND THEN WITH A "JOHNNIE'S" SIGN, AS OWNERSHIP CHANGED. FREESTANDING VERTICAL POLE SIGNS AT THE SOUTHWEST CORNER WERE ADDED IN 1957 AND IN 1967 (FEATURING THE NEW "FAT BOY" CHARACTER, REMOVED IN 1994); IN 1966 AT THE SOUTHEAST CORNER; AT THE NORTHEAST CORNER (AN ANIMATED SERPENTINE ARROW, IDENTICAL TO A SIGN INSTALLED AT THE JOHNNIE'S IN DOWNEY.) A LARGE FREESTANDING BILLBOARD STRUCTURE (PASSING THROUGH THE EAVE'S EDGE) WAS ADDED ON THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF THE STRUCTURE BETWEEN AND 1966 AND 1971.
- D. PANELS OF INCANDESCENT LIGHTBULBS WERE ADDED BETWEEN THE ORIGINAL DECORATIVE PRESSED METAL PANELS ON THE FRONT AND REAR FACADES, AND TO THE EDGE OF THE EAST AND WEST ROOF FACIAS, IN 1967.
- E. INTERIOR: ORIGINAL NEW YORK-THEMED GRAPHICS ON THE WEST WALL AND ON THE SOFFIT OVER THE COUNTER ARE COVERED OR REMOVED; THE SOFFIT PANELS HAVE BEEN REPLACED WITH TRANSLUCENT PLASTIC PANELS. THE ORIGINAL TAN LEATHERETTE UPHOLSTERY OF THE COUNTER STOOLS HAS ALSO BEEN REPLACED. THE ORIGINAL BOOTHS ON THE WEST SIDE OF THE DINING ROOM (OFFERING FOUR SEATS OR 2+2 SEATS WHEN A DIVIDER WAS INSERTED BETWEEN THEM) AND THE WINDOW WALL REMAIN. THE CURRENT SPANISH-STYLE CHANDELIER LIGHTS ARE NOT ORIGINAL. THE ORIGINAL "SEMI-EXHIBITION" KITCHEN AREA, PARTIALLY VISIBLE BEHIND THE FOOD DISPLAY CASES AND COUNTER, HAS BEEN ENCLOSED WITH A WALL. STEEL AND CHROME TRIM WERE ADDED TO THE COUNTER AT THE ENTRANCE BENEATH THE CASH REGISTER. THE

WOOD PANELING ON THE WALL BEHIND THE COUNTER ABOVE THE DROPPED SOFFIT HAS BEEN ADDED. THE CERAMIC TILE BACK WALL BEHIND THE COUNTER HAS BEEN PAINTED; SOME OF THE ORIGINAL PINK TILE WITH THE "ROMEO" GRAPHIC MOTIF REMAIN. THE UPPER PORTIONS OF THE GLASS WINDOW WALL ALONG FAIRFAX WERE PAINTED OUT.

F. ALSO REFLECTING MODERN DESIGN CONCEPTS, ARMET & DAVIS' COFFEE SHOPS WERE DESIGNED TO BE AS NOTICEABLE BY NIGHT AS BY DAY. ARCHITECTURAL LIGHTING IS INTEGRATED INTO THE DESIGN IN SEVERAL WAYS. DECORATIVE ARCHITECT-DESIGNED SCONCES BOUNCED INDIRECT LIGHT OFF THE WINDOWLESS, BRICK WEST WALL FACING THE PARKING LOT, AND OFF THE STONE WALL AT THE REAR ENTRY, HAVE BEEN REMOVED. UPLIGHTING ON THE EXTERIOR STONE PYLONS TO HIGHLIGHT THE NATURAL STONE TEXTURE HAVE BEEN REMOVED.

G. A WOOD FRAME UTILITY YARD ENCLOSURE AT REAR WAS REPLACED WITH SIMILAR CONSTRUCTION C.2005.

SIGNIFICANCE WORK SHEET

CONTINUED

THE RESTAURANT WAS BUILT IN 1956 AS ROMEO'S TIMES SQUARE, A 5316 SQ. FT. RESTAURANT FOR 130 DINERS, COSTING \$150,000. IT WAS OWNED BY MONTGOMERY HOLDING CO., AND OPERATED BY HAROLD S. AHRENS (A NATIVE OF NEW YORK) AND A. B. LEVINE. IT WAS DESIGNED BY ARCHITECTS ARMET AND DAVIS, WHO CONTRIBUTED SIGNIFICANTLY TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CALIFORNIA COFFEE SHOP. AS AN EXCELLENT EXAMPLE OF GOOGIE MODERN ARCHITECTURE, JOHNIE'S STANDS ON THE CORNER OF WILSHIRE AND FAIRFAX NEXT TO TWO OTHER NOTABLE EXAMPLES OF MODERN ARCHITECTURE: THE MAY CO. (A.C.MARTIN, 1939) AND SEIBU DEPARTMENT STORE (WELTON BECKET & ASSOC., 1962.) THE RESTAURANT OPENED AUGUST 7, 1956.

UNDER NEW OWNERSHIP IN 1957, ROMEO'S TIMES SQUARE WAS RENAMED RAMS AND SIGNAGE WAS MODIFIED. IN 1967 IT WAS PURCHASED BY FRANK AND MARIE JOHNSON AND BECAME JOHNIE'S. IN 1982 IT WAS BOUGHT BY THE MEDENAS FAMILY, WHICH ALSO OPERATED A JOHNIE'S RESTAURANT (FORMERLY HARVEY'S BROILER) IN DOWNEY, CA. IN 1994 OR 1995 IT WAS PURCHASED BY THE GOLD FAMILY, FOUNDERS OF BARGAIN WHOLESALE, THE PARENT COMPANY OF THE 99 CENTS ONLY STORE. AS OF 2013, THIS FAMILY STILL OWNS THE PROPERTY. JOHNIE'S CLOSED AS A RESTAURANT IN 2000. SINCE THEN, IT HAS BEEN USED AS A FILM LOCATION FOR MANY MOVIES.

FROM 1945-1965, A NEW RESTAURANT TYPE AND A NEW ARCHITECTURAL STYLE DEVELOPED IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA IN RESPONSE TO THE RETURN OF PROSPERITY, THE GROWTH OF POPULATION, AND THE SPREAD OF SUBURBIA FOLLOWING WORLD WAR II. THE CALIFORNIA COFFEE SHOP WAS A BUILDING TYPE DESIGNED TO SERVE THE REGION'S GROWING CAR-MOBILE POPULATION AS SUBURBANIZATION BECAME THE DOMINANT MODEL. ARMET & DAVIS HELPED TO DEFINE THE CALIFORNIA COFFEE SHOPS IN THIS PERIOD BY CONTRIBUTING SIGNIFICANTLY TO DEVELOPING THE GOOGIE STYLE OF ARCHITECTURE; IT WAS A MODERN STYLE EMPHASIZING NEW MATERIALS, SPACES, IMAGERY, LANDSCAPING, STRUCTURES, AND DETAILS IN EXPRESSING THE FUNCTIONS OF COMMERCE AND ADVERTISING RESPONDING TO THE WIDESPREAD USE OF THE AUTOMOBILE IN THIS PERIOD. INFLUENCES FROM THE ORGANIC MODERN CONCEPTS OF FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT ARE SEEN IN ASPECTS OF THE DESIGN: THE CONTRASTS OF RUGGED NATURAL MATERIALS WITH SLEEK TECHNOLOGICAL MATERIALS, AND THE SPACES AND LANDSCAPING THAT FLOW EASILY FROM INTERIOR TO EXTERIOR BECAUSE OF THE USE OF LARGE GLASS WALLS. THE ORIGINAL GLASS CORNERS ON THE SOUTHWEST AND SOUTHEAST (ALTERED WHEN THE INTERIOR SPACE WAS EXPANDED) HELPED TO DESTROY THE FEELING OF A SOLID TRADITIONAL ENCLOSURE.

THE DESIGN WAS CRAFTED TO ITS ROADSIDE AND COMMERCIAL FUNCTIONS. IN DAYLIGHT, JOHNIE'S LARGE ROOF ACTED AS A SIGN TO GRAB MOTORISTS' ATTENTION IN THE COMMERCIAL STRIP ENVIRONMENT; AT NIGHT, THE NEON SIGN LETTERING, THE SCINTILLATING PANELS OF INCANDESCENT LIGHTBULBS, AND THE WELL-LIGHTED INTERIOR VISIBLE THROUGH THE GLASS WALLS WERE ALL INTENTIONAL ELEMENTS OF THE DESIGN TO ATTRACT CUSTOMERS AND CREATE PLEASANT DINING SPACES.

THE INTERIOR DESIGN ALSO REFLECTED THESE MODERN PRINCIPLES. THE ORIGINAL CLIENT ASKED THE ARCHITECT TO INTEGRATE A NEW YORK ITALIAN THEME INTO THIS MODERN COFFEE SHOP. ITALIAN FOOD ITEMS WERE ON THE MENU. THE INTERIOR'S WESTERN WALL WAS A LARGE STYLIZED GRAPHIC MURAL DEPICTING FAMOUS SIGNS OF TIMES SQUARE, WITH ABSTRACTED STARS AGAINST DEEP NIGHT-BLUE COLORS. THE STYLIZED SIGNS INCLUDING FLASHING LIGHTS AND ANIMATION FOR VERISIMILITUDE. THE DROPPED SOFFIT OVER THE COUNTER AND EXHIBITION FOOD PREPARATION AREAS ALSO CONTAINED CUSTOM-DESIGNED REAR-LIGHTED PLASTIC RESIN GRAPHICS DEPICTING THE ABSTRACTED ARCHITECTURAL SKYLINE OF NEW YORK. SEPARATING

THESE PANELS ARE "EGG- CRATE" METAL PANELS WHICH REPEAT THE SAME MATERIAL USED ON THE EXTERIOR.

WHILE EARLY EXAMPLES WERE CUSTOM ARCHITECTURAL DESIGNS, COMMON ELEMENTS BEGAN TO EMERGE, ESPECIALLY IN THE WORK OF ARMET & DAVIS. THESE INCLUDED A LARGE, STRUCTURALLY EXPRESSIVE ROOF SHAPE THAT WOULD MAKE THE BUILDING NOTICEABLE TO PASSING MOTORISTS; AN INTEGRATED SIGN PYLON OR BILLBOARD DESIGNED TO COMPLEMENT THE ARCHITECTURE; LARGE GLASS WINDOWS TO DISPLAY THE COLORFULLY DESIGNED INTERIOR TO MOTORISTS; AN INTERIOR MIXING NATURAL MATERIALS (STONE, EXPOSED BRICK, WOOD) WITH MODERN MATERIALS (PLASTIC LIGHT FIXTURES, STAINLESS STEEL, COLORFUL FORMICA) IN A LANDSCAPED SETTING; THE USE OF MODERN DESIGN AND INDOOR-OUTDOOR SPACE IN ARCHITECTURE AND FURNISHINGS.

COMPARED TO THE DINERS AND DRIVE-INS OF THE PRE-WAR PERIOD, THE CALIFORNIA COFFEE SHOP WAS A LARGER, MORE COMFORTABLE YET STILL REASONABLY PRICED RESTAURANT WITH INDOOR SEATING, LARGER MENU, AND A STYLISH CONTEMPORARY DESIGN. BOTH THE CALIFORNIA COFFEE SHOP TYPE AND THE GOOGIE STYLE WERE SUCCESSFULLY EXPORTED FROM SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA TO THE REST OF THE COUNTRY. THEY REFLECTED MANY OF THE THEMES OF CALIFORNIA IN A TIME OF EXPANSION, PROSPERITY, AND OPTIMISM. JOHNNIE'S IS AN EXCELLENT AND NOW RARE EXAMPLE, WITH A HIGH DEGREE OF INTEGRITY, OF THIS SIGNIFICANT TYPE. ARMET & DAVIS BUILT MORE THAN TWENTY-FIVE CUSTOM DESIGNED COFFEE SHOPS IN LOS ANGELES, PLUS MULTIPLE PROTOTYPE COFFEE SHOPS FOR BOB'S AND NORM'S. OTHER ARCHITECTS SUCH AS MARTIN STERN, JR., WAYNE MCALLISTER, JOHN LAUTNER, SMITH AND WILLIAMS, DOUGLAS HONNOLD, AND A. QUINCY JONES BUILT MANY MORE GOOGIE COFFEE SHOPS IN THE AREA.

ONCE WIDESPREAD IN LOS ANGELES, ROUGHLY A HALF DOZEN (AND ONLY THREE BY ARMET & DAVIS) REMAIN TODAY IN THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES IN A CONDITION SIMILAR TO JOHNNIE'S (NORM'S ON LA CIENEGA, PANN'S ON LA TIJERA, ASTRO'S ON FLETCHER.) OTHER STILL-RECOGNIZABLE EXAMPLES REMAINING IN LOS ANGELES INCLUDE CORKY'S ON VAN NUYS, HOLIDAY BOWL ON CRENSHAW, KERRY'S ON VENTURA, AND THE WICH STAND ON SLAUSON.

ARCHITECT

THE ARCHITECTURE FIRM OF LOUIS ARMET (1914-1981) AND ELTON DAVIS (1917-2011) WAS HIGHLY INFLUENTIAL IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GOOGIE STYLE AND THE CALIFORNIA COFFEE SHOP.

ARMET (BORN IN ST. LOUIS, MO) AND DAVIS (BORN IN ANACONDA, WA) MET AS STUDENTS AT THE USC SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE; ARMET GRADUATED IN 1939, DAVIS IN 1942. USC HAD A STRONG MODERNIST CURRICULUM AT THIS TIME, AND EMPLOYED SUCH WELL KNOWN MODERNISTS AS RICHARD NEUTRA, CALVIN STRAUB, AND WHITNEY SMITH AS TEACHERS

AFTER WORLD WAR II, BOTH ARCHITECTS WORKED WITH SPAULDING AND REX, A NOTABLE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA FIRM, AS WELL AS WITH OTHER ARCHITECTS. THEY FORMED THEIR PARTNERSHIP IN 1947. THE FIRM (TODAY KNOWN AS ARMET, DAVIS & NEWLOVE) DESIGNED A WIDE VARIETY OF BUILDINGS, INCLUDING SCHOOLS, CHURCHES, BANKS, CUSTOM RESIDENCES, APARTMENTS, MOTELS, SHOPPING CENTERS, AND BOWLING ALLEYS. THEY PUBLICIZED THEIR WORK IN INSTITUTIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL MAGAZINES, AND THIS ATTENTION HELPED THEM BECOME WELL ESTABLISHED. THE FIRM BECAME WIDELY IDENTIFIED WITH THE CALIFORNIA COFFEE SHOP TYPE THROUGH SUCH ARTICLES IN THE JOURNALS OF THE RESTAURANT INDUSTRY.

THE TWO PARTNERS DIVIDED DESIGN AND SUPERVISION OF THEIR PROJECTS BETWEEN THEMSELVES, AND HIRED A LARGE AND TALENTED STAFF TO DESIGN THEIR PROJECTS. AMONG THEIR LONG-TIME EMPLOYEES WERE HELEN LIU FONG, LEE LINTON, AND VICTOR NEWLOVE.

ARMET & DAVIS' FIRST COFFEE SHOP IN THE MODERN STYLE WAS CLOCK IN INGLEWOOD IN 1951. THEY HAD BEEN TRAINED IN MODERN ARCHITECTURE AT USC ARCHITECTURE SCHOOL; NOW THEY APPLIED THOSE CONCEPTS TO THE DEMANDS OF COMMERCIAL RESTAURANTS. WITH NORM'S AT 8511 FIGUEROA IN 1954, THEY LAUNCHED A SERIES OF CUSTOM DESIGNED RESTAURANTS FOR SEVERAL LOS ANGELES RESTAURATEURS, A CLOSE-KNIT FRATERNITY. ROMEO'S TIMES SQUARE (LATER RENAMED JOHNIE'S) AT WILSHIRE AND FAIRFAX WAS BUILT IN 1956, FOLLOWED BY SEVERAL MORE NORMS, HOLLY'S (1956), STANLEY BURKE'S (1957), PANN'S (1958), WICH STAND (1958), CONRAD'S (1958), PENGUIN (1959), SHIPS LA CIENEGA (1967), SEVERAL HUDDLE RESTAURANTS, AND OTHERS. BY 1960, THE SUCCESS OF SUCH COFFEE SHOPS ACROSS THE NATION ENCOURAGED TWO OF THE GROWING RESTAURANT CHAINS, DENNY'S AND "BIG BOY," TO HIRE ARMET & DAVIS TO DEVELOP PROTOTYPE RESTAURANT DESIGNS WHICH COULD BE BUILT, WITH MINIMAL CHANGES TO THE PLAN, IN MANY LOCATIONS AT A COST SAVINGS. THESE TWO CHAINS HELPED SPREAD ARMET & DAVIS' ARCHITECTURE ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

CRITIC/HISTORIAN REYNER BANHAM SPECIFICALLY DISCUSSED JOHNIE'S IN HIS SEMINAL BOOK *LOS ANGELES: THE ARCHITECTURE OF FOUR ECOLOGIES* (1971, P 118). BANHAM'S INCLUSION OF A PHOTOGRAPH OF JOHNIE'S AS AN EXAMPLE OF GOOGIE ARCHITECTURE IS SINGULAR PROOF OF ITS SIGNIFICANCE. JOHNIE'S WAS LATER INCLUDED AS A NOTABLE EXAMPLE OF ARCHITECT ARMET & DAVIS IN *GOOGIE: FIFTIES COFFEE SHOP ARCHITECTURE* (CHRONICLE BOOKS, 1985) BY ALAN HESS, A BOOK WHICH HELPED LAUNCH A REASSESSMENT OF THE ROLE OF THE CALIFORNIA COFFEE SHOP IN THE HISTORY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA MODERN ARCHITECTURE. EXAMPLES OF ARMET & DAVIS' GOOGIE COFFEE SHOPS ARE INCLUDED IN THE GETTY MUSEUM'S EXHIBIT "LOS ANGELES ARCHITECTURE 1940-1990" IN 2013. JOHNIE'S USE IN SEVERAL MOVIES (*VOLCANO*, *MIRACLE MILE*), COMMERCIALS, AND TELEVISION INDICATES ITS ROLE IN POPULAR LOS ANGELES CULTURE.

Description Work Sheet

TYPE OR HAND PRINT IN ALL CAPITAL BLOCK LETTERS

THE JOHNIE'S COFFEE SHOP AND RESTAURANT

IS A ONE -STORY,

NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT

NUMBER OF STORIES

GOOGIE STYLE

RECTANGULAR

RESTAURANT

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE (SEE LINE 8 ABOVE)
Chart

PLAN

PLAN SHAPE (Click to See

STRUCTURE USE (RESIDENCE, ETC))

WITH A STUCCO, NATURAL ROCK, AND GLASS

FINISH AND METAL AND WOOD TRIM.

MATERIAL (WOOD SLIDING, WOOD SHINGLES, BRICK, STUCCO, ETC.)

MATERIAL (WOOD, METAL, ETC.)

ITS BUTTERFLY

ROOF ROLLED ASPHALT

METAL FRAMED GLASS

ROOF SHAPE (Click to See Chart)

MATERIAL (CLAY TILE, ASPHALT OR WOOD SHINGLES, ETC.)

WINDOW MATERIAL

FLOOR TO CEILING WINDOW WALLS

WINDOWS ARE PART OF THE DESIGN.

WINDOW TYPE [DOUBLE-HUNG (SLIDES UP & DOWN), CASEMENT (OPENS OUT), HORIZONTAL SLIDING, ETC.]

THE ENTRY FEATURES OFF-CENTER

DOOR LOCATION (RECESSED, CENTERED, OFF-CENTER, CORNER, ETC.)

GLASS SINGLE PANEL

ENTRY DOOR STYLE (Click to See Chart)

DOOR. ADDITIONAL CHARACTER DEFINING ELEMENTS

OF THE STRUCTURE ARE NATURAL STONE PILLARS. NEON AND INCANDESCENT SIGNAGE. DOWNTURNED ROOF EDGE

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

FOR SUN SHADE, LANDSCAPING PLANTERS

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

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

VERTICALLY; FORMALITY OR INFORMALITY; GARDEN WALLS, ETC.

SECONDARY BUILDINGS CONSIST OF A _____

IDENTIFY GARAGE; GARDEN SHELTER, ETC.

SIGNIFICANT INTERIOR SPACES INCLUDE

TERRAZZO FLOORS, FORMICA VENEERED COUNTERS, FIXED SEATING

IDENTIFY ORIGINAL FEATURES SUCH AS WOOD PANELING; MOLDINGS AND TRIM; SPECIAL GLASS WINDOWS;

BOOTHES, COUNTER STOOLS, HIGH ACOUSTIC TILE CEILING, KITCHEN AND SERVING FIXTURES

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

IMPORTANT LANDSCAPING INCLUDES PLANTING BEDS AROUND STONE PILLARS AND WALLS

IDENTIFY NOTABLE MATURE TREES AND SHRUBS

ATTACHMENT: IMAGES
Johnie's Coffee Shop Restaurant
Historic-Cultural Monument Application



1. Johnie's Coffee Shop Restaurant, view looking northwest, front and east elevation. (Photo by John Eng, 2005)



2. Johnie's Coffee Shop Restaurant, view looking north, front elevation. (Photo by Los Angeles Conservancy, 1995)