# Community Development Department Planning Division 

City of Arts \& Innovation

## Certificate of Appropriateness (CR) Staff Report

AGENDA ITEM NO.: 2

WARD: 4
MEETING DATE: February 15, 2012

## PLANNING CASE P11-0711:

Proposal by Joe Marca of Marcatects on behalf of Richard Michaelson for a certificate of appropriateness to make modifications to the Helgeson Buick Building, eligible for the State Register in the April 2009 Modernist Context Statement. Modifications are proposed for the northerly side of the building located at 8001 Auto Drive, on the northwesterly corner of the intersection of Auto Drive and Detroit Drive in the Riverside Auto Center, Ward \#4

## BACKGROUND:

The Helgeson Buick Building by J.D. Diffenbaugh, was identified in the 2009 Modernism Context Statement for the City of Riverside and is eligible for listing in the California Register. The building which housed offices and the main showroom for Buick was built in 1965 in the International Style of Architecture. It is one story in height and is laid out on a square-plan with central interior space and four open, rectangular wings on each side. The main glass portion of the structure is composed of thin steel beams spread apart from each other as supports for the flat winged roof sections that start just below the large central roof with exposed and recessed beams. The rear portion of the building includes a large, featureless rectangular block building and a small flat roofed wing section attached to the central roof.

The main showroom portion of the Helgeson Building retains a high level of integrity as the character defining elements of the structure have seen little change since its construction in 1965. The rear section of the structure containing the large block building, identified in 1967 aerials, is most likely original; however, unlike the front of the structure, where most of the character defining elements exist, the rear of the structure has seen modifications over the years and does not feature the character defining elements of the showroom portion. The most visible modification came in 2006 when Acura built a new showroom to accommodate its growing fleet of vehicles. Due to size limitations on the property, modifications were made to portions of the rear of the building which included the removal of the westerly most rectangular wing, used for service drop off, to make way for the new showroom service drop off area.

## Riverside Auto Center

In 1965, seven of the City's automobile dealerships moved from their downtown quarters to a jointly owned Auto Center along the 91 freeway at Adams Street. It was one of the first centers of its type in the United States. The idea for the center originated in a discussion among five dealers. Of the original Auto Center buildings, the Helgeson Buick dealership is the most distinctive.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

## Background:

The applicant is proposing to make modifications to the Helgeson Buick Building, eligible for the State Register in the April 2009 Modernist Context Statement. Modifications to take place include the removal of the large block structure to provide additional parking and refurbishment of the remainder of the building to be used as a vehicle showroom, office area and lounge. The Helgeson Buick Building is located at 8001 Auto Drive on the north easterly corner of Auto Drive and Detroit Drive in the Riverside Auto Center Specific Plan.

Proposed modifications to the northerly side of the building include the removal of the taller block structure, while adding a small section of the block wall to serve as the rear wall of the Helgeson Buick Building. The block for the rear wall will be the same style as that which currently exists on the buildings easterly and westerly elevations. In addition, the plane of the rear block wall will extend slightly beyond the envelope of the structure to meet Standard \#9 of the Secretary of the Interiors Standards for Rehabilitation, which indicates, new additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment. Based upon the standard, the removal of the block structure will not affect the historical features nor the character of the building as a whole, while the expansion of the rear block wall shall serve to differentiate the new from the old.

## ANALYSIS:

## Compliance with section 20.30.030 of the City of Riverside Municipal Code:

Staff supports the overall project concept as proposed. Staff has met with the applicant and expressed that the proposed modifications to the northerly side of the building will not pose a significant negative implication for the Helgeson Buick Building in keeping with the historic guidelines. As such, staff supports the modifications to the Helgeson Buick Building as submitted by the applicant, including the configuration of the northerly wall.

## FACTS FOR FINDINGS: (From Section 20.30.060 of the Riverside Municipal Code)

FINDINGS: The proposed undertaking is consistent or compatible with the architectural period and the character-defining elements of the historic building.

FACTS: As conditioned, the project complies with this finding. Since the project is not impacting historical materials nor the character-defining elements of the building, the design is generally supportable. The applicant has shown that the character defining portions of the International Style of the building will not be altered, thus making the project compatible with the architectural period.

FINDINGS: The proposed undertaking is compatible with existing adjacent or nearby landmark structures and preservation district structures and their character-defining elements.

FACTS: As conditioned, the project complies with this finding. The Helgeson Buick Building is the only International Style Building located within the Riverside Auto Center that maintains this level of integrity. Since its construction in 1965 the building has
maintained a high level of integrity with minor alterations on the rear. The removal of the block structure on the northern side will not affect the integrity of the character defining elements nor openness that the International Style typically represents. Thus this project will not affecting the character defining elements of the building.

FINDINGS: The colors, textures, materials, fenestration, decorative features and details, height, scale, massing and methods of construction proposed are consistent with the period and/or compatible with adjacent structures.

FACTS: As conditioned, the project complies with this finding. The removal of the block structure leaves intact the character defining elements and the transparency and openness the building style lends itself to. Additionally, the block wing wall on the northerly elevation will be compatible with the style, color and material of the existing structure.

FINDINGS: The proposed change does not destroy or adversely affect an important architectural, historical, cultural or archaeological feature or features.

FACTS: As proposed, the project complies with this finding. While a portion of the structure is being modified, the portion that is being modified is not that which encompasses the character defining architectural features of the building. As such the Helgeson Buick Building will retain its main character defining elements and exterior integrity and will not be adversely affected by this project.

## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:

The project is categorically exempt per Section 15331, Historical Resource Restoration/Rehabilitation of the CEQA Guidelines.

## RECOMMENDATION:

That the Cultural Heritage Board APPROVE a certificate of appropriateness for Planning Case P110711 based upon the following conditions;

## EXHIBITS:

1. Location Map
2. Aerial Photo
3. Project Plans
4. Current Photos

## CULTURAL HERITAGE BOARD

RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL
Case Number: P11-0711 (Certificate of Appropriateness)
Meeting Date: February 15, 2012

## Case Specific

1. The brick wall on the northerly side of the building shall be the same style, brick/block size and shall be painted the same color as the existing brick/block on the building.
2. The design shall indicate extension of the rear brick wall a few feet both horizontally and vertically in both directions to meet the Secretary of Interiors Standards showing that the rear wall has been added onto the structure at a different time period;
3. Glass window frames and aluminum channel systems shall match existing in style, material and color if replaced and shall be indicated on revised plans.
4. The design shall provide provisions for the screening of roof mounted equipment shall that equipment become visible with the modifications to the structure.
5. ADVISORY: Landmark Designation will be a condition of approval if a more intensive use is proposed for the Helgeson Buick Building at any point in the future.

## Standard Conditions of Approval

6. The project must be complete per the Cultural Heritage Board's approval, including all conditions listed below. Any subsequent changes to the project must be approved by the Cultural Heritage Board or the Cultural Heritage Board staff. Upon completion of the project, a Cultural Heritage Board staff inspection must be requested to ensure that the approved plans have been executed and that all conditions have been implemented before OCCUPANCY hold can be released.
7. There is a ten calendar-day appeal period that will lapse at 5:00 p.m. on February 27, 2012. Appeals of the Board's action will not be accepted after this time.
8. This approval will expire in one year on February 15, 2013.

## APPEAL INFORMATION

The Cultural Heritage Board's decision or any conditions of approval can be appealed to the City Council by the applicant or any interested person within ten days of this action. To appeal this decision, submit a letter stating what you wish to appeal and why, the General Application form and a check in the amount of $\$ 1,531.2$, made payable to the City of Riverside to cover the appeal fee. The Planning Division offers a packet on filing an appeal that you might find helpful. Appeals may be delivered in person or mailed. The Planning Division's address is:

City of Riverside
Community Development Department
Planning Division
3900 Main Street, 3rd Floor
Riverside, CA 92522
Appeals will be considered by the City Council within thirty days of the end of the appeal period.





3D View 5



(3) HERITAGE 3 (2) HERITAGE 2 (BACK OF BLDG. AFTER MASONRY AREA REMOVED)


P11-0711, Exhibit 3 - Project Plans


P11-0711, Exhibit 4
Current Photos


P11-0711, Exhibit 4
Current Photos


P11-0711, Exhibit 4 Current Photos

