ORDINANCE NO. 2022-0013

An Ordinance Listing 2911 Riverside Boulevard as a Landmark on the Sacramento Register of Historic and Cultural Resources

BACKGROUND

A. The city council has found “that significant aspects of the city’s rich and diverse historic resources deserve recognition and preservation to foster an understanding of our heritage, and to promote the public health and safety and the economic and general welfare of the people of the city. The preservation and continued use of historic resources are effective tools to sustain and revitalize neighborhoods and business districts within the city, enhance the city's economic, cultural and aesthetic standing, its identity and its livability, marketability and urban character.” (Sacramento City Code section 17.604.100.A.)

B. To this end, the city code provides a mechanism for listing landmarks, historic districts, and contributing resources on the Sacramento Register of Historic and Cultural Resources (“Sacramento register”).

C. On February 24, 2022, the Preservation Director reviewed a statement of nomination and determined that the property located at 2911 Riverside Boulevard is eligible for listing on the Sacramento Register of Historic and Cultural Resources a landmark. On March 16, 2022, the Preservation Commission concurred with the findings of the Preservation Director and recommended the City Council list the property at 2911 Riverside Boulevard as a landmark in the Sacramento register.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SACRAMENTO:

SECTION 1.

A. 2911 Riverside Boulevard meets the criteria for listing on the Sacramento register provided within City Code section 17.604.210.A.1.a.iii and iv.

i. The building at 2911 Riverside Boulevard embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction (Sacramento City Code Section 17.604.210.A.1.a.iii)

The Starks-Saucerman House is a fine example of Spanish Revival design. The 1937 residential duplex building reflects an eclectic collection of Spanish Revival style elements with its textured white masonry walls and multiple low-pitched hipped roof sections covered with red clay Mission tile. The asymmetrical façade
of mixed horizontal and vertical forms highlighted with the red tile over white walls provide a colorful interplay. Additional significant features and characteristics of the Spanish Revival style include the building’s form and massing, which evoke rural Spanish vernacular dwellings, the “skittled” brick-laying technique that suggests the heavy adobe finish of original Spanish Colonial buildings, narrow recessed windows, the vertical patterns of vents, multi-paned metal-sashed windows, small entry gardens enclosed by low walls, and the use of wood lintels above windows and doors that suggests the traditional methods and materials of early Spanish Colonial buildings. With consideration of these features and characteristics, the house meets criteria for listing in the Sacramento Register of Historic and Cultural Resources under criteria of City Code 17.604.210(A)1.a.iii, as the embodiment of distinctive characteristics of Spanish Revival architectural design of the early 20th century.

ii. The building at 2911 Riverside Boulevard represents the work of an important creative individual or master (City Code 17.604.210.A.1.a.iv).

The residential duplex building at 2911 Riverside Boulevard was designed and built in 1937 by the influential Sacramento architect Leonard Starks to serve as his own residence. The Spanish Revival style building provides distinctive evidence of Starks’ work as a locally influential and nationally-recognized planner and builder with its masterful composition of masonry forms of varied heights and shapes blanketed with strikingly contrasting tiled hip roofs. The forms are visually interesting while celebrating the variety of images possible within the general expressions of the style. The length of the building is interrupted by roof and wall features to vary potentially repetitive features, resulting in a visually interesting composition.

Leonard Stark’s architectural legacy in Sacramento began with his work on the Fox Senator Theater, which opened in 1926. Starks designed and built several other landmark buildings in Sacramento and the greater Sacramento area throughout the subsequent decades, including the Alhambra Theater in 1927, the Blue Anchor/California Fruit Exchange Building and U.S. Post Office, Sacramento in 1932, and C.K. McClatchy High School in 1937. Starks retired in 1965 and lived in the building at 2911 Riverside Boulevard until his death in 1986.

With these considerations of the building at 2911 Riverside Boulevard’s history as a the work of an influential architect during his peak period of productivity, the building meets criteria for listing in the Sacramento Register of Historic and Cultural Resources under criteria of City Code 17.604.210(A)1.a.iv as a significant representation of master architect Leonard F. Starks’ work in Sacramento.

iii. 2911 Riverside Boulevard has integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and association. Integrity shall be judged with reference to the
particular criterion or criteria specified in subsection A.1.a of section 17.604.210.A.1.b.

The building retains an extremely high degree of historic integrity of all six aspects.

Location: Location is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred. The subject property retains its original location on 2911 Riverside Boulevard, and therefore retains historic integrity of location.

Design: Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property. The residential building at 2911 Riverside Boulevard retains essential physical features related to Spanish Revival style architecture. The building has an asymmetrical façade and is composed of several horizontal and vertical masonry forms of various heights and shapes, has clay-tiled hip roofs, an exterior “skitted” brick-laying technique that evokes the adobe walls of original Spanish Colonial buildings, narrow recessed windows, a vertical pattern of vents, multi-paned metal-sashed windows, small entry gardens enclosed by low walls, and wooden lintels above windows and doors. There are no significant design alterations to the property, and thus, the building at 2911 Riverside Boulevard retains a high level of historic integrity of design.

Setting: Setting is the physical environment of a historic property. The building at 2911 Riverside Boulevard retains integrity of its setting because it is located in the historic Land Park residential neighborhood that contains houses in a variety of historical design styles, including other Spanish Revival houses as well as Tudor Revival.

Materials: Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property. The building contains nearly all of its original materials, therefore it retains its historic integrity of materials.

Workmanship: Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory. There have not been any new elements added to the building outside of its period of significance with the exception of a small, 50 sq. ft. addition on the east elevation built in 1962, during Starks' lifetime and occupancy of the building. The design and materials match those of the original construction. Therefore, the building retains a high level of historic integrity of workmanship.

Association: Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property. The building at 2911 Riverside Boulevard is strongly associated with the architectural work of master architect Leonard Starks who designed and built the building in 1937, during the interwar era in which he
designed or contributed to the design of several significant buildings in Sacramento, such as the Senator Theater (1924), the Alhambra Theater (1927), the Blue Anchor/California Fruit Exchange Building (1932), the U.S. Post Office, Sacramento (1932), and C.K. McClatchy High School (1937). The building retains the defining characteristics and features of Starks’ design, and therefore retains a high level of integrity of association.

iv. 2911 Riverside Boulevard has significant historic or architectural worth, and its designation as a landmark is reasonable, appropriate and necessary to promote, protect and further the goals and purposes of this chapter. (17.604.210.A.1.c) The building at 2911 Riverside Boulevard has significant architectural and historical worth. It has been well-maintained and retains a high level of integrity with regards to its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and association. It is a significant example of the work of architect Leonard F. Starks, who was an important planner and builder in Sacramento, particularly throughout the 1920s and 1930s when he designed and built the Fox Senator and Alhambra Theaters, and during which time he also designed and built the house at 2911 Riverside Boulevard to serve as his personal residence. Furthermore, the building at 2911 Riverside Boulevard is a fine example of Spanish Revival design.

v. The city has considered the factors set forth City Code Section 17.604.210.A.2 and determined those factors do not apply.

TABLE OF CONTENTS:
Exhibit A – Significant Features and Characteristics

Adopted by the City of Sacramento City Council on May 24, 2022, by the following vote:

Ayes: Members Ashby, Guerra, Harris, Jennings, Loloe, Schenirer, Valenzuela, and Vang

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Mayor Steinberg

Attest: Mindy Cuppy, City Clerk

08/25/2022

The presence of an electronic signature certifies that the foregoing is a true and correct copy as approved by the Sacramento City Council.

Passed for Publication: May 10, 2022
Published: May 13, 2022
Effective: June 23, 2022
**Resource Name or #:** 2911 Riverside Blvd. 

**Other Identifier:** Starks-Saucerman House 

**Location:** Sacramento 

**USGS 7.5' Quad:** Sacramento West 

**Other Locational Data:** APN#: 012-0113-020 

**Description:** 

The property contains a duplex on the corner with two residential units containing both one story and two-story segments. The structure is an accumulation of block-like masonry forms of varied heights and shapes, covered with hipped roofs of clay tiles. The building reflects variations of Spanish Revival styles with its white masonry walls and clay tile roofs. The duplex is divided into two portions, the division occurring at about midway through the two-story portion of the segment containing the two garages. Windows are primarily metal sash, casement type and multi-paned. 

A major focal point of the duplex is the tall rectangular window on the southern end of the building. It is multi-paned with metal sash, surrounded on the exterior with a series of projecting bricks, like dentils in the entablature of a Greek Temple. The wing containing this large window projects slightly to the south from the main body of the building overlooking a small, door garden. There is a small open porch on the east adjacent to a small square wing that extends from the two-story exterior and holds a large, almost square, multi-paned window. This wing was added by the owner and contains an interior art studio. A small remaining segment of the one-story wing on the east contains a window that connects the studio to the two-story form. 

(See continuation sheet)
NRHP Status Code: 3S, 3CS

Resource Address: 2911 Riverside, Blvd., Sacramento, CA  95818

B1. Historic Name: Starks Residence
B2. Common Name: Saucerman House
B3. Original Use: Duplex Residence
B4. Present Use: Duplex Residence
B5. Architectural Style: Spanish eclectic influences
B6. Construction History:
Built In 1937. A building permit was issued in 1962 for a small, 50 sq. ft. addition on the east elevation

B7. Moved? No

B8. Related Features:

B9a. Architect: Starks & Flanders
B9b. Builder: Starks & Flanders

B10. Significance:
Theme: Residential Bldg.
Area: Land Park, Swanston Park 02 subdivision
Period of Significance: 1937
Property Type: Residential
Applicable Criteria: (17.604.210(A)1.a.iii c, 17.604.210 (A)1.a.iv) d

The Leonard Starks-Saucerman Residence is significant as a fine example of Spanish eclectic design (17.604.210(A)1.a.iii c, and is the work of a master architect (17.604.210 (A)1.a.iv) d. The building appears to meet criteria for listing in the Sacramento Register of Historic Resources, and the California Register of Historical Resources.

The building reflects an interesting collection of Spanish Revival style elements with its textured white masonry walls and segments of hip-roof covered with red clay tile. The horizontal and vertical forms highlighted with the red clay tile on white provides a colorful interplay. The style is further displayed by the building’s form and massing, brick-laying technique, narrow recessed windows, the vertical pattern of vents, multi-paned metal-sashed windows, small entry gardens enclosed by low walls, and the use of wood lintels above windows and doors suggesting the history of its early frontier construction type. The residence is an innovative example of Spanish eclectic design of its era. The duplex is also the work of a Master Sacramento architect, Leonard Starks.

(See continuation sheet)

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: n/a

B12. References:
(See Continuation Sheet, p. 19)

B13. Remarks:

Date of Evaluation: December 2021
Resource Name or #: Starks-Saucerman House
Recorded by: Paula Boghosian

*P3a. Description: (continued)

The large living room is a notable feature of the house. This dramatic room with its richly wood paneled ceiling suggests the presence of a medieval gathering hall. The west elevation of the large living room contains two slender multi-paned windows that flank a larger similar one. The adjacent two-story form contains the recessed wood entry door to the southern duplex and is flanked by pillar-like brick forms with applied decorative concrete blocks supporting a shed roof. An adjacent projecting one story wing contains two slender windows beneath a shed roof. A grouping of vents in a vertical pattern similar to the shape of these windows has been inserted adjacent to the ground floor windows.

The two-story section of the duplex contains bedrooms for both tenants. Three identical windows with wood lintels have been inserted in the upper wall above the entry. Additional multi-pane metal sash windows are placed above each of two garage doors which contain lintels. A small entry garden is defined by a short masonry wall.

While the northern portion of the duplex is mostly one story, it shares a section of two-story occupancy with the bedrooms. The northern entry is similar to that on the south, with a recessed entry and wood door flanked by heavy stacks of patterned brick. The hipped roof extends down to cover the entry but is flush with the walls above the two multi-paned windows on the north. The north elevation contains three windows of the type found elsewhere on this building. The northern portion of the east elevation abuts an adjacent building a short distance away. It contains a small sliding window on the second floor facing south, and four windows along the east face. A hedge covers the short garden wall at the entrance.

The brick surface of the duplex appears textured due to a bricklaying technique where bricks are laid slightly in and out while maintaining a true and level coursing. This technique is called “skitted” and is intended to suggest the heavy adobe finish of original models of the style, and to enhance its eclectic Spanish Revival architectural style. The use of clay tile for the roof and the white surface over a masonry base enhances this image. The variety of forms and shapes found in the building also celebrates the multiple design devices used by the architect to achieve his goal. The structure is a skillful composition of block forms of varied heights and shapes blanketed with a rich collection of tiled hip roofs.

The interior of the house also reflects the broad degree of design sense demonstrated by the architect. The living room or “Great Hall” provides drama in its design and materials revealing the architects’ background in theatre design as well as historic architecture.

Starks has a background in theatre design from his early career with “Famous Players”, and work on the Panama Pacific Exposition appears to evidence itself in the composition of this room and its rich materials. The room is tall and long and is lit by exterior daylight on three sides. The ceiling is paneled with wood and supported with crossbeams providing a rich expanse of natural materials, and lit by glass and metal-work chandeliers. The tall south window, flanked with rich draperies, and bathing the room with light provides a compelling tour de force.

The bold fireplace and wood cabinetry add to the composite character of the room. It is richly theatrical in character, reflecting the design experience of the architect and his love of historic architecture.

The dining room is lit by a large window with draperies and enriched with a wood paneled ceiling and wood beams. A built-in buffet with a paneled backboard is recessed above the varied drawers and door. The wood in the room is variously decorated with colorful stenciled patterns. A transfer opening to the kitchen provides serving access for food.
A small workshop and art project room has been added across the entry hall, creating a box like form on the east elevation exterior and a small interior room. There is a stairway to the upper floor bedrooms off of the entry area hall.

The residential building is an interesting and complex combination of design features in an unusual and successful duplex format.
Figure 3 - The dining room with its rich wood-beam ceiling and stenciled built-in cabinets.

Figure 4 - The dining room's built-in cabinetry with stenciling.
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Figure 5 - The beamed dining room ceiling has stenciling similar to the cabinets.
Figure 6 - The living room displays the architects experience in theater design.
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Recorded by: Paula Boghosian

Figure 7 - The living room viewed to the north.

Figure 8 - The living room viewed to the south, with horizontal framing
The residential duplex building was designed by Master Sacramento architect Leonard Starks to serve as his own residence. It is a masterful composition of masonry forms of varied heights and shapes blanketed with a rich collection of tiled hip roofs. The forms are visually interesting while celebrating the variety of images possible within the general expressions of the style. The length of the building is interrupted by roof and wall features to vary potentially repetitive features resulting in an interesting composition.

Leonard Starks was a native of California, born in Healdsburg in 1891. In 1900 his family moved to San Francisco, where he completed his architectural course at the Wilmerding School of Industrial Arts in 1908. He then went to work for the office of Bakewell & Brown.

In 1912 Starks transferred to the Panama Pacific International Exposition (PPIE) as an assistant designer, where he designed several of the exposition buildings. He also worked with several of San Francisco’s prominent architects, including Bernard Maybeck, whom he assisted with the design work on the Palace of Fine Arts. He worked with Bakewell & Brown on the design of the Palace of Horticulture.

After completion of the Exposition work, Starks moved to the east coast due to his involvement with the study system established by the Beaux Arts School of Architecture in Paris and taught by its graduates in San Francisco and other cities. The seven years Starks spent working as a student was during evenings and weekends as he worked full time.

Starks moved to Washington D.C. where he worked until the end of the First World War and then moved to New York in 1919 where he was in charge of Thomas W. Lamb’s office, designing theaters and other public structures throughout the United States and Canada.

In 1919 Starks married Eleanor Whalen. She was a graduate of Amherst College and worked as a journalist for newspapers in Pennsylvania and Massachusetts. She subsequently worked for an architect in San Francisco during the construction of exhibit buildings for the 1915 PPIE. This is likely when they first met. After the construction of the Exposition, Eleanor went to work as a volunteer for the American Ambulance Service in France. After the end of the war, she returned from France with a Service Ribbon from the French Army and Croix de Guerre medal awarded for bravery while under enemy fire. In their photo albums Leonard always refers to her by the nickname, “Pike.” Perhaps it was her prior experience working as a journalist or her war experience that led to the nickname. She was a sharp instrument that didn’t put up with beating around the bush and wanted to get to the “point” of things.

In 1921 the Lamb architectural firm obtained a commission by the Famous Players, Inc. to build a chain of theaters on the west coast. At that time, the general manager of the theater company was Harris Connick, who had been an executive in the PPIE. Starks got the job and was sent to Sacramento to build the first theater. Due to an anti-trust suit, the project was later abandoned, but Starks decided to stay in Sacramento and open his own
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Starks soon became a partner of a well-known Sacramento architect, E.C. Hemmings. Their firm was retained by the Elks Lodge in 1923 to begin preliminary sketches for their new building at 11th and J Streets. Just following the order to begin preparation of working drawings for the Elks Lodge, in June of 1924, Hemmings died. By early 1925 Starks had taken in another partner, Edward F. Flanders and the two continued in business together until Flanders death in 1941. After that time, Starks ran the business under his own name until the mid-1950s when it became Starks, Jozens & Nacht. In 1965 it became Starks, Jozens, Nacht & Lewis. The company is still in business at the present time as Nacht & Lewis.

In addition to his work as an architect, Starks was involved in professional activities and organizations. In 1930 he became a member of the Sacramento Building Code Board of Examiners and Appeals, on which he served for the next thirty-two years. Starks was an active member of the San Francisco chapter of the American Institute of Architecture and later served as the first president of the Northern California Chapter after it was established. He was the first architect to serve as president of the Sacramento Builders Exchange.

After his retirement in 1965 Starks turned to his hobby of watercolor painting. His works were hung in many juried art shows and he won many honorable mentions and place ribbons. He was a member of the “Rocky Rollers” which was an informal group of retired architects and engineers that engaged in collective painting excursions as well as exhibitions. Some of its members were, along with Starks, Alfred Eichler, Orion Shields, Frank Deats, Leonard Hill and William Wintle.

The residential structure appears to be eligible for listing in the Sacramento Register of Historic Resources as a fine example of its style and type of architectural design, Criteria (17.604.210(A)1.a.iii c; and as the design of a Master architect, Criteria (17.604.210 (A)1.a.iv) d. The property also appears eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources. The houses in the immediate neighborhood of the property do not appear to meet criteria for inclusion in the Register as a historic district.
Some buildings by Leonard Starks, et al:

Ahl, Frank Z. Building, 1925
Alhambra Theater, 1927
Alturas High School, Alturas, 1930
Arnold Brothers Auto Agency, 1925
Bank of America, Oak Park, 1951
Blue Anchor Building, 1932
Brewster Apartments
California National Bank, 1926
Capitol Building & Loan Assn., 1927
Clunie Club House and Pool, 1936
Crocker School, 1930
Curtis Oaks Christian Church 1940
Del Rio Boat Club
Hickman & Coleman Co., 1929
Herman Davis & Sons, with Hemmings 1924
Davis Union High School, 1926
Dos Rios Housing Project with Dean and Devine, 1941
Dunsmuir High School, 1928
Eaton Cleaning & Dyeing Co., 1926
El Dorado County Bank
Elks Club Building, with Hemmings 1926
Elliot Auto Agency 1925
First Baptist Church, Willows, 1929
First Congregational Church
First Western Bank
Watt & El Camino 1958
21st & Capitol 1959
10th & K 1961
Foothill High School 1965
Fremont Presbyterian Church, 1926
Fresno Bee Building 1922
Fuller, W.P. Co., Warehouse with Hemmings 1924
Graft & Light Motel, SF 1959
Grant Union School District
Admin Center 1959
Grant High School 1931
Del Paso Jr. High 1951
Highlands High School 1960
Las Palmas High School 1951
Las Palmas Jr. High 1951
Rio Linda Jr. High 1951
Greenwald Store

Grove Apartments 1922
Marysville City Hall, 1940
C.K. McClatchy High School, 1937
Moose Hall, 1927
Mount Shasta High School, Mount Shasta, 1927
Newcastle Bank
Newcastle Community Hall, 1926
New Helvetia Public Housing with Devine, Dean & Dean 1941
North Sacramento Theatre, 1928
Office Bldg (Insurance, etc.) 1959
Oroville Elks Lodge, 1929
Panama-Pacific Exposition Buildings 1912-1915
Palace of Fine Arts with Maybeck
Palace of Horticulture with Bakewell & Brown
Park Side Community Church 1957
Perfection Bread Co., East addition, 1924
Percy Reese Residence, 1925
Pioneer Memorial Church 1926
Placer National Bank, Placerville, 1927
Ponderosa High School 1963
Portolla High School, 1930
Rapp Wm. A., Bldg.
Russell & Logan Battery Shop 1925
Sacramento Builders Exchange 1951
Sacramento County Courthouse 1959
Sacramento Municipal Airport, Hangers & Terminal, 1931
Scottish Rite Temple 1963
Senator Theatre, 1924
Sun Mount Preventorium, Colfax, 1925
Sutter Club with Dean & Dean 1930
Sutter Memorial Hospital
UC Davis, Admin. & Library Bldgs, 1939
U.S. Post Office, Sacramento, 1932
Veterans Memorial Building, Lincoln, 1931
William Land Memorial Monument, 1934
Williams City Hall and Firehouse, 1938
Williams Grammar School, 1930
Women’s Club, Roseville
Woodland Christian Church, 1928
City Hall, Yuba City, 1939
Figure 12 - The Senator Theatre ran a 12-page special supplement in the Bee to announce its grand opening on September 20, 1924. The theatre was Starks first architectural commission.

Figure 13 - The interior of the Senator theatre.
State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
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Figure 14- The Alhambra Theatre, 1927

Figure 15- interior of Alhambra Theatre
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Figure 16 - U.S. Post Office in Sacramento, 1932

Figure 17 - Blue Anchor Building, 1932
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Figure 18 - McClatchy High School, 1937

Figure 19 - Fresno Bee Building, 1922. It is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.
State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
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Figure 20 - The office crew in 1956.

Figure 21 - Ed Flanders, 1930
Figure 22 - This is Eleanor Whalen in San Francisco in 1914. Both Leonard and "Pike" were working on architecture for the 1915 Pacific International Exposition. This is probably when they met. She died in 1968 and he outlived her by 18 years.
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Recorded by: Paula Boghosian

Figure 23 - A barn on the Deterding Ranch (Now Ancil Hoffman Park), as painted by Leonard Starks.

Figure 24 - Eleanor (aka "Pike") and Leonard.
Resource Name or #: Starks-Saucerman House
Recorded by: Paula Boghosian

*B12. References:

Boghosian, Paula and Cox, Donald, Investment Tax Credit application for Arnold Brothers Auto Agency, 2005.
Nacht & Lewis Architecture historic records.
Online Archive of California, Guide of Leonard F. Starks Collection.
Sacramento, City of, Building Permits
Sacramento City Directories
Sacramento County Assessors Records
San Francisco, City Directories