

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

Primary # _____
HRI # _____
Trinomial _____
NRHP Status Code _____

Other Listings _____
Review Code _____ Reviewer _____ Date _____

Page 1 of 6 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) 601 15th Street

P1. Other Identifier: The Mirage

*P2. Location: ☐ Not for Publication ☒ Unrestricted

*a. County Sacramento and (P2c, P2e, and P2b or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

*b. USGS 7.5' Quad Sacramento East, CA Date 2021 T 8N; R 4E; ☐ of Mt. Diablo ☐ of Sec 00; B.M.

c. Address 601 15th Street City Sacramento Zip 95814

d. UTM: (Give more than one for large and/or linear resources) Zone __, __ mE/ __ mN

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

*P3a. **Description:** (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries) 601 15th Street (APN 002-0171-002-0000) is a two-story, 6,416 square-foot brick masonry mixed use residential and commercial building located in the Mansion Flats neighborhood of Sacramento on the south corner of 15th Street and F Street. The building was constructed in 1925 and has a rectangular footprint and a flat roof surrounded by a tiered parapet. The building is clad primarily with painted clay bricks laid in a running bond pattern. At the east (rear) of the building, the first story extends approximately five feet further than the second floor. A second-floor porch above it is enclosed by a metal railing and covered by a shed roof supported by square wooden pillars (Continued on Page 3).

*P3b. **Resource Attributes:** (List attributes and codes)

*P4. **Resources Present:**

☒ Building ☐ Structure ☐ Object ☐ Site ☐ District ☐ Element of District ☐ Other (Isolates, etc.)

P5b. **Description of Photo:** (view, date, accession #) View southeast of 601 15th St, taken March 19, 2026.

P5a. Photograph or Drawing (Photograph required for buildings, structures, and objects.)



*P6. **Date Constructed/Age and Source:** ☒

Historic ☐ Prehistoric ☐ Both
1925, Source: Sacramento Building Permit

*P7. **Owner and Address:**

Vare LLC, Care Of Vikram Wasu,
10369 Via Cinta Ct, Elk Grove, CA 95757

*P8. **Recorded by:** (Name, affiliation, and address) City of Sacramento, 300 Richards Blvd,
Sacramento, CA 95811

*P9. **Date Recorded:** June 1, 2026

P10. **Survey Type:** (Describe) Intensive

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

None

*Attachments: ☐ NONE ☐ Location Map
☒ Continuation Sheet ☒ Building, Structure,
and Object Record

☐ Archaeological Record ☐ District Record
☐ Linear Feature Record ☐ Milling Station
Record ☐ Rock Art Record
☐ Artifact Record ☐ Photograph Record ☐
Other (List): _____

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

Page 2 of 6

*NRHP Status Code _____

*Resource Name or # 601 15th Street

B1. Historic name: The Mirage

B2. Common name: _____

B3. Original Use: Commercial

B4. Present use: Commercial

*B5. Architectural Style: 20th-Century Commercial

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

601 15th Street was constructed in 1925 for J.B. Tucker by contractor T. H. Brown. It was originally designed to house three stores and four three-bedroom apartments. In 1927, the city issued a permit for a garage on the property, which had been removed by 1950, according to Sanborn fire insurance maps.

In 1963, owner Joe Cantorini had the building remodeled to a bar, with the remodel designed by notable Modernist architect Sooky Lee, an architect known for his Mid Century designs. According to building permits and plans (figs. 1-3), this remodel demolished the original north and south doors and first-story windows, with the exception of the central and southern horizontal fixed windows, on the west façade. It added the present storefronts, the fixed first-story window and wood paneling on the west façade, and the plaster cement sign. On the north façade, the renovation demolished or covered five small, fixed windows to make way for the sign, and one large, fixed storefront window. Although not shown in plans, aerial images indicate that the single-story addition on the south elevation was likely added as part of this project, as it existed only by 1968.

In 1968, Cantorini replaced the wood front wall with concrete after it was struck by a car. Although Cantorini and subsequent owners remodeled the interior several times, the only exterior change made to the building after 1968 were a reroofing in 2000 and the replacement of two small second-story double-hung windows at the center of the 15th Street façade with a single large window matching the profiles of the four preexisting windows surrounding it from 2020-2022.

*B7. Moved? ☒ No ☐ Yes ☐ Unknown Date: _____ Original Location: _____

*B8. Related Features: None

B9a. Architect: T. H. Brown b. Builder: T. H. Brown

*B10. Significance: Theme Out & Proud: Development of Visible Sacramento LGBTQ+ Community Area Sacramento, California
Period of Significance _____ Property Type Commercial Applicable Criteria 1/I

Historic Context:

The development of Sacramento's central city neighborhoods, including the Old Washington School (commonly known as Mansion Flats) neighborhood, is associated with the city's rapid transformation from a frontier settlement to a permanent urban center during the mid-nineteenth century. Following the establishment of Sutter's Fort in 1839 and the discovery of gold in 1848, Sacramento quickly emerged as a primary commercial and transportation hub serving the Sierra Nevada goldfields. Its location at the confluence of the Sacramento and American Rivers made it a strategic point for the movement of goods and people, and by 1850 the city had grown from a small settlement into a dense and rapidly expanding urban center. Within this system, circulation routes played a critical role in shaping patterns of development. Just a block away from 601 15th Street was one example, 16th Street (also known as the Marysville Highway) which functioned as a principal north-south corridor connecting Sacramento to the northern gold fields. As one of the primary routes from the city during the Gold Rush era, 16th Street carried freight, travelers, and supplies moving between the urban core and mining regions to the north.

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: N/A

*B12. References: City of Sacramento, "Sacramento's Historic Context," 2019. Refer to bibliography.

B13. Remarks: N/A

*B14. Evaluator: City of Sacramento.

(This space reserved for official comments.)

Source: Sacramento County Assessor, Online Parcel Viewer, 2026. Subject Parcel shown outlined in yellow.



State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary # _____
HRI # _____
Trinomial _____

Page 3 of 11
*Recorded by Hazel Bess.

Resource Name or # 601 15th Street
*Date June 1, 2026 ☒ Continuation ☐ Update



Figure 1: Existing and proposed 15th Street elevations. Sooky Lee, 1963. Center for Sacramento History.



Figure 2: Existing and proposed F Street elevations. Sooky Lee, 1963. Center for Sacramento History.

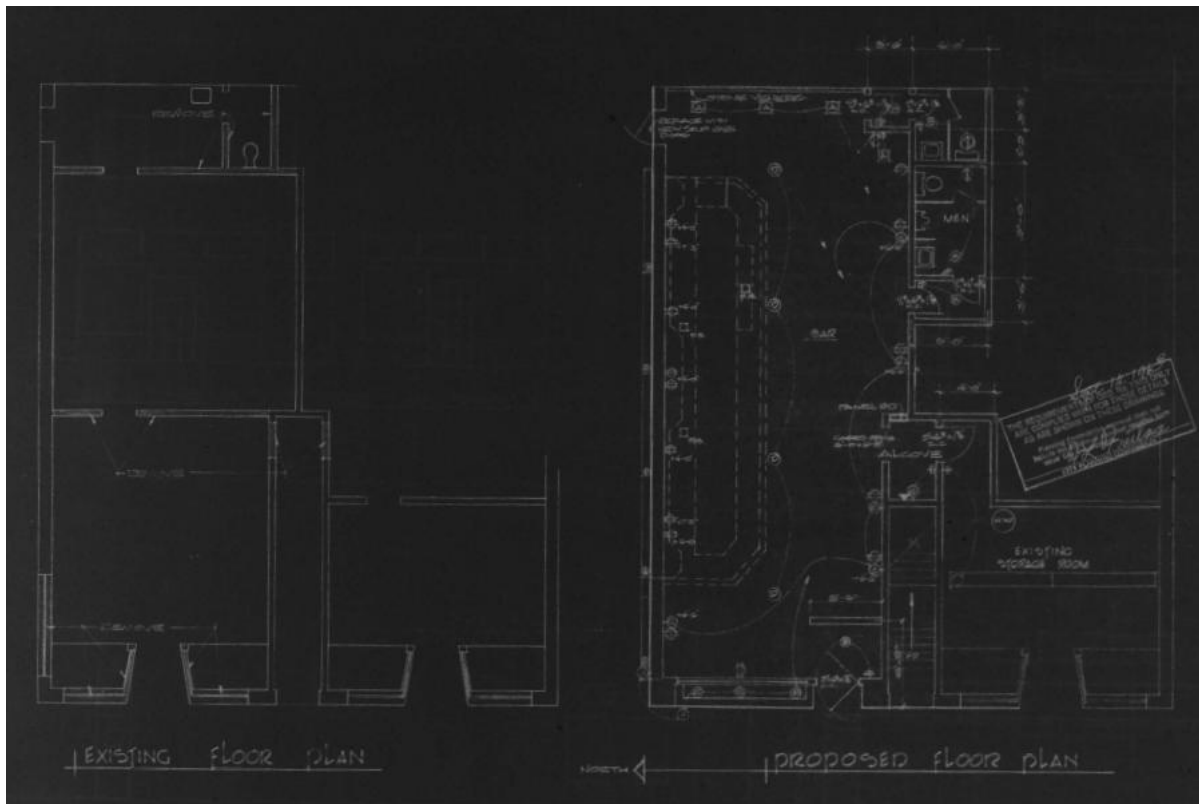


Figure 3: Existing and proposed floor plans. Sooky Lee, 1963. Center for Sacramento History.

***P3a. Description (continued):**

The second story has an irregular plan, covering all of the northern half of the building, with two rectangular indentations on the southern side, measuring approximately 7 feet in length, 5 feet in depth, 9 feet in height. These indented sections are clad in board and batten horizontal wood siding and have double-hung wood windows on all three sides. A single-story, concrete masonry addition protrudes into a parking lot to the building's south. HVAC, electrical wiring, and other utilities are located on the flat roof of the addition and adhered to the building's south façade.

The west (front) façade faces 15th Street. It is nearly symmetrical, with five evenly spaced second-story windows of matching dimensions, all double-hung wood windows with double hung eight-over-one sashes. Three doors grouped at the center of the façade on the first floor are also evenly spaced and of identical dimensions. The southernmost door is a paneled wood door, at center is an unornamented wooden door behind an iron security gate, and the northern door is wood with an inset window of patterned frosted glass. Above the southern door is a thin, horizontal fixed window with decorative divided lites that stretches to approximately 16 inches from the building's southwest corner. The central door is centered below a horizontal fixed window with decorative divided lites on the first floor, the center window of the five on the second story, and a louver vent just below the parapet. The northern of the three doors functions as the main entrance to the bar. To its north (left) is a horizontal fixed metal window with a deep sill, below which the wall is clad in vertical wood paneling. Above it, a plaster cement sign stretches from the left side of the center door around the northwestern corner of the building.

The sign continues across approximately two thirds of the building's northern façade. On the northern side, a brick chimney extends from the roofline at the center of the façade. The building has irregularly spaced double-hung wood windows on the second floor. These windows are single and double-mulled vertical windows with six-lite upper sashes, smaller, horizontal windows with three-lite upper sashes, and one very small vertical window with a four-lite upper sash. On the first story, below the end of the wrapped sign, is an unornamented wood door. To its left, at the eastern end of the building, an approximately sixteen by ten-foot section of the first floor is clad in stucco, and within it, a slightly recessed paneled wood door is centered between two sets of sliding, vertically oriented vinyl windows. To the left of the stucco section is an additional wood paneled door. The eastern edge of this door aligns with the end of the second story. The first floor extends an additional five feet. The wall in this section is brick with two approximately three-foot wide stucco "panels" framed by wood. A mailbox is located in the easternmost of these panels. The east (rear) façade is not visible from the public right-of-way. 601 15th Street is zoned C-2 (General Commercial).

Page 5 of 11
*Recorded by Hazel Bess.

Resource Name or # 601 15th Street
*Date June 1, 2026 ☒ Continuation ☐ Update



Figure 4: South façade, view north



Figure 5: West façade, view east



Figure 6: North façade, view south



Figure 7: Rear porch detail

***B10. Significance:**
Historic Context (continued)

The neighborhoods northeast of the original commercial core, including what would become the Old Washington School and Mansion Flats areas, developed during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Initially, these areas accommodated a mix of working- and middle-class residents, with development patterns shaped by proximity to downtown employment, transportation corridors (such as 16th Street), and industrial uses such as the Central Pacific Railroad Shops. Housing ranged from modest single-family dwellings to small multi-family structures, often interspersed with neighborhood-serving commercial uses.¹

Repeated flooding and fires in the mid-nineteenth century significantly influenced the physical development of these neighborhoods. Efforts to control flooding, including raising street grades and improving levee systems, reshaped the city's topography and reinforced the permanence of the grid system. Reconstruction following fires also contributed to a transition toward more durable construction materials, particularly brick masonry on commercial and mixed-use buildings such as 601 15th Street.²

By the 1920s, the residential mixed-use neighborhoods surrounding the Central Business District were fully integrated into Sacramento's urban core, buttressed by the growth of streetcar suburbs in areas like East Sacramento, Oak Park, Curtis Park, and Land Park, reflecting nearly a century of layered development. In the Central City, the neighborhood's character was defined not by a single period or architectural style, but by the cumulative result of incremental growth, adaptation, and changing urban needs.³

¹ City of Sacramento, "Sacramento's Historic Context," 2019; City of Sacramento, "Old Washington School Historic District Plan," 2019.

² "Sacramento's Historic Context," 2019; "Old Washington School Historic District Plan," 2019.

³ "Old Washington School Historic District Plan," 2019.

State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary # _____
HRI # _____
Trinomial _____

Page 6 of 11
*Recorded by Hazel Bess.

Resource Name or # 601 15th Street
*Date June 1, 2026 ☒ Continuation ☐ Update

Following the Great Depression and World War II, however, these established patterns were increasingly disrupted by broader social and economic forces. Suburbanization drew many middle-class residents away from central neighborhoods, contributing to population decline, changing demographics, and disinvestment. At the same time, mid-century planning priorities emphasizing automobile circulation and large-scale redevelopment introduced significant physical and spatial changes to Sacramento. The construction of Interstate 5 along the Sacramento River, the demolition of the West End, and other infrastructure projects altered long-standing circulation patterns and reinforced the shift away from neighborhood-scaled development.⁴

Urban renewal efforts from the early 1950s through the 1970s further reshaped the central city. Clearance and redevelopment, particularly in areas west of downtown, removed significant portions of Sacramento's historic fabric and disrupted established communities. While neighborhoods such as Mansion Flats were not subject to the same level of wholesale demolition, they experienced the secondary effects of these policies, including deferred maintenance, declining property values, and uncertainty regarding future development. Despite Sooky Lee's 1963 renovation of the building, the business at 601 15th Street suffered a poor reputation due to these factors.⁵

Beginning in the 1970s and continuing into the 1980s, these conditions created opportunities for reinvestment by a new generation of residents. Young people, artists, members of the LGBTQ+ community, and other historically underrepresented groups began purchasing and rehabilitating older properties in Midtown and the neighborhoods north and south of downtown, including Mansion Flats. Drawn by relatively affordable housing stock and proximity to the central city, these residents reinvested in existing buildings, often undertaking incremental rehabilitation consistent with the scale and character of the existing buildings.⁶

The opening of The Mirage in the early 1990s was a later expression of this trend. During this period, the establishment functioned as a social venue within Sacramento's growing Midtown cultural scene, including as a space that served Black lesbians, reflecting the broader pattern in which historically underrepresented communities established places of gathering and expression within the central city's increasingly visible LGBTQ+ social scene.⁷

This period of grassroots reinvestment played a critical role in stabilizing these neighborhoods and reshaping their identity. Rather than large-scale redevelopment, change occurred through adaptive reuse, small-scale rehabilitation, and the introduction of locally oriented businesses and cultural spaces. Over time, this contributed to the emergence of the Central City residential neighborhoods as a vibrant cultural center, characterized by a diverse mix of residents, independent businesses, nightlife, and arts-related activity.⁸

Concurrent with this reinvestment was the growing influence of the historic preservation movement in Sacramento. Increasing recognition of the architectural and cultural significance of these neighborhoods led to efforts to formally designate and protect them. The establishment of the New and Old Washington School Historic Districts in 1985 reflected this shift, acknowledging the importance of the area's historic development patterns and providing a framework for guiding future change through preservation-based planning approaches.⁹

Lesbian Bars in Sacramento (ca. 1969-2000)

Gay white men were historically, and continue to be, the most visible and recognized LGBTQ+ subgroup both in Sacramento and the broader LGBTQ+ population nationwide. As in other cities, lesbians in Sacramento often felt angered, embittered, and alienated by the treatment they received from gay men and the lack of recognition or representation they often received. Some gay businesses and organizations explicitly did not welcome lesbians. Many gay bars, which catered to a majority white male clientele, did not welcome and often rejected lesbian patrons. The practice of "carding" lesbians and LGBTQ+ persons of color to discourage their presence was not uncommon. If carded, those seeking admission would have to produce multiple forms of personal ID to secure entrance, making it difficult if not impossible for them to be admitted. As a result, lesbians in Sacramento were forced to establish their own safe spaces, social gathering places, clubs, and organizations where they could openly and comfortably express themselves (Continued on Page 3).¹⁰

Known lesbian bars that operated in the City of Sacramento during the formative period of the LGBTQ+ community's development from the late 1960s to approximately the year 2000 included the Blue Moon at 2565 Franklin Boulevard (extant), the Crescent Moon at 1704 Broadway (extant but extensively altered), the Mirage (the subject property), the Buffalo Club at 1831 S Street

⁴ "Old Washington School Historic District Plan," 2019.

⁵ "Old Washington School Historic District Plan," 2019.

⁶ "Old Washington School Historic District Plan," 2019.

⁷ "Old Washington School Historic District Plan," 2019.

⁸ "Old Washington School Historic District Plan," 2019.

⁹ "Old Washington School Historic District Plan," 2019.

¹⁰ Page & Turnbull, "The Blue Moon," Sacramento Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, 2025.

State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary # _____
HRI # _____
Trinomial _____

Page 7 of 11
*Recorded by Hazel Bess.

Resource Name or # 601 15th Street
*Date June 1, 2026 ☒ Continuation ☐ Update

(demolished), and Jammin' Jo's Sports and Dance Bar at 2721 Broadway (extant). The Mirage is the only known bar in Sacramento that catered specifically to Black lesbians.¹¹

The Mirage (1993-2001)

Because of the racism, discrimination, fetishization, and exclusion they often experienced, LGBTQ+ people of color in Sacramento created safe spaces of their own. Although early advertisements indicate that it was a bar for gay men as well as lesbians, The Mirage was known locally for hosting mostly Black women, making it an outlier in the Sacramento area.¹²

The Mirage hosted many activities typical of gay and lesbian bars in Sacramento, including a billiards organization, darts and baseball teams, queer film screenings, drag shows, and a DJ on Saturday nights. For much of its tenure, The Mirage also held a Sunday tea dance, a tradition in the gay community with roots in pre-Stonewall Fire Island, New York. The Sunday afternoon tea dance was originally intended to skirt 1960s laws that prohibited bars from "knowingly selling alcohol to homosexuals" and to allow weekend visitors to Fire Island to return to New York City. It later caught on outside of this context but had mostly died out by the mid-1970s, and by the 1990s provided an uncommon connection to the LGBTQ+ community's earlier history.¹³

Most notably, however, The Mirage also diverged from other Sacramento bars by celebrating the unique experience of Black lesbians. Although Sacramento's lesbian bars were not segregated, mixed-race couples were rare, and Black lesbians often felt unwelcome in these spaces. The Mirage was designed to be an exception, with music, food, staff, and décor chosen to "validate the Black gay experience." The Mirage also worked with the social group Gay and Lesbian African Americans (GALA), in 1996 hosting the kickoff event for a GALA event titled "AfroCentric Weekend," which involved poetry readings, screenings of gay and lesbian African American films, dancing, a barbeque, and a dominoes competition. The Mirage hosted performance by a live jazz band featuring transgender African American woman Diva Diana and Jazz Explosion, as well as a talent show later in the weekend. The bar was the only one of its kind, and provided a location for GALA and other events specifically celebrating the Black gay and lesbian community that did not have to be shared or borrowed for a weekend.¹⁴



Figure 8: Event advertisement.
Mom...Guess What? 1993.

Despite its importance to the community, The Mirage struggled to take off, and the bar's relationship with Alkali Flats and Mansion Flat neighbors was initially a tense one. When owner Valerie Marlow purchased the building in 1993, she also purchased the liquor license of the existing bar, Joe's Corner. Joe's Corner had had a bad reputation, known as "a center for prostitution and drug dealing and...the site of frequent brawls."¹⁵ Neighbors were unsupportive even after the bar changed hands, preventing Marlow from acquiring a dance permit for nearly a year. A Mansion Flats neighborhood group supportive of The Mirage speculated in Sacramento's LGBTQ newspaper *Mom...Guess What?* that the real reason for the opposition was that the bar would serve gays and lesbians. Marlow took steps to protect patrons of The Mirage, hiring security guards, installing video cameras and a large mirror behind the bar, and holding "neighborhood nights," when locals would be invited for complementary wine and cheese in order to form positive relationships in the area and decrease hostility towards The Mirage and its guests.¹⁶

Although these efforts were successful to some degree, with the *Sacramento Bee* publicly recognizing the bar's improved security under Marlow's ownership, there were further obstacles to The Mirage's success. During the building's tenure as Joe's Corner, the neighborhood had been devalued by its association in the news with serial killer Dorothea Puente, who had lived down the street and was rumored to have picked up victims in the bar. Puente's trial for the murders of several people in Sacramento was an ongoing news story in 1993, when The Mirage first opened. The poor reputation of the neighborhood and bar were a barrier to success for The Mirage. Another difficulty was the bar's continued patronage by men who had been regulars at Joe's Corner.

¹¹ Page & Turnbull, "The Blue Moon."

¹² "Lambda Freedom Fair," *Mom...Guess What?*, May 15, 1993.

¹³ *Mom...Guess What?*, May 15, 1993; *Mom...Guess What?*, October 15, 1993; Conversation between Liz [last name redacted] and Hazel Bess, April 14, 2026, Sacramento, CA; "Dance Ticket," *Sacramento Bee*, 1993-2001; Will Kohler, "The Very Gay and Interesting History of the Almost Lost Tradition of the Sunday Tea Dance," *Back2Stonewall*, May 26, 2019, <https://web.archive.org/web/20200412161716/http://www.back2stonewall.com/2019/05/gay-history-lost-tradition-sunday-tea-dance.html>.

¹⁴ Conversation between Liz [last name redacted] and Hazel Bess; Page & Turnbull, "Sacramento LGBTQ+ Historic Experience Project: Historic Context Statement," 2024, 76, 115.

¹⁵ MJ McKean-Reich, "A mirage in the urban desert," *Mom...Guess What?*, January 15, 1994.

¹⁶ McKean-Reich, "A mirage in the urban desert," "Neighborhood supports bar," *Mom...Guess What?*, March 15, 1993.

State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary # _____
HRI # _____
Trinomial _____

Page 8 of 11
*Recorded by Hazel Bess.

Resource Name or # 601 15th Street
*Date June 1, 2026 ☒ Continuation ☐ Update

Despite Marlow's increased security measures, the bar did not always feel safe for the women who wished to visit. The Mirage was also far from the central Lavender Heights area, which served as the social and cultural center of LGBTQ+ life in Sacramento. As a result of these combined factors, regardless of their race, Sacramento's lesbian and bisexual women tended to prefer The Blue Moon or The Buffalo Club, and the Mirage was rarely full. Although The Mirage's popularity as a gay bar declined soon after it opened, it continued to operate until 2001. Despite the brevity of its period of relevance to Sacramento's LGBTQ+ community, the creation of The Mirage and the events it hosted during its early years illustrate the community's diversity and the energy behind efforts to create spaces celebrating a range of experiences.¹⁷



Figure 9: The Mirage. Mom...Guess What? January 15, 1994.

Statement of Significance:

In order for a property to be considered eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register), or the Sacramento Register as a landmark, the property must possess significance and retain integrity to convey that significance. Refer to the *Sacramento LGBTQ+ Experience History Project Historic Context Statement (LGBTQ+ HCS)* and *Survey Methodology & Framework* for evaluative criteria of each theme.

California Register of Historical Resources Evaluation

The California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) is an inventory of significant architectural, archaeological, and historical resources in the State of California. The evaluative criteria used by the California Register for determining eligibility are closely based on those developed by the National Park Service for the National Register of Historic Places.

In order for a property to be eligible for listing in the California Register, it must be found significant under one or more of the following criteria:

1. (Events): Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.
2. (Persons): Associated with the lives of persons important to local, California or national history.
3. (Architecture): Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values.
4. (Information Potential): Has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California or the nation.

Sacramento Register of Historic and Cultural Resources

The Sacramento Register of Historic and Cultural Resources (Sacramento Register) is the City of Sacramento's official inventory of historic and cultural resources. In order to be listed as a local landmark, historic district, or contributing resource to a historic

¹⁷ Mom...Guess What?, August 15, 1993; Conversation between Liz [last name redacted] and Hazel Bess.

State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary # _____
HRI # _____
Trinomial _____

Page 9 of 11
*Recorded by Hazel Bess.

Resource Name or # 601 15th Street
*Date June 1, 2026 ☒ Continuation ☐ Update

district, a building, structure, site, or feature must meet the following criteria and requirements for listing on the Sacramento Register, as outlined in Chapter 17.604.210 of the City's municipal code:

- A. **Listing on the Sacramento Register—Landmarks.** A nominated resource shall be listed on the Sacramento Register as a landmark if the city council finds, after holding the hearing required by this chapter, that all of the requirements set forth below are satisfied:
1. Requirements.
 - a. The nominated resource meets one or more of the following criteria:
 - i. It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the history of the city, the region, the state or the nation;
 - ii. It is associated with the lives of persons significant in the city's past;
 - iii. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction;
 - iv. It represents the work of an important creative individual or master;
 - v. It possesses high artistic values; or
 - vi. It has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in the prehistory or history of the city, the region, the state or the nation;
 - b. The nominated resource 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 this section;
 - c. The nominated resource 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.
 2. Factors to be considered. In determining whether to list a nominated resource on the Sacramento register as a landmark, the factors below shall be considered.
 - a. A structure removed from its original location is eligible if it is significant primarily for its architectural value or it is the most important surviving structure associated with a historic person or event.
 - b. A birthplace or grave is eligible if it is that of a historical figure of outstanding importance and there is no other appropriate site or structure directly associated with his or her productive life.
 - c. A reconstructed building is eligible if the reconstruction is historically accurate, if the structure is presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan, and if no other original structure survives that has the same association.
 - d. Properties that are primarily commemorative in intent are eligible if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value invests such properties with their own historical significance.
 - e. Properties achieving significance within the past 50 years are eligible if such properties are of exceptional importance.

California Register Criterion 1/Sacramento Register Criterion i (Events): Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.

The property at 601 15th Street appears eligible under Criterion 1/i as the location of The Mirage, a Black lesbian bar that opened in 1993 when Sacramento's LGBTQ+ community had only recently become a visible and recognizable part of the city's population for the first time. During this formative period, gay bars served as the center of social life for many in the LGBTQ+ community and were the place where people went to form social and sexual connections, exchange news, share life experiences, discuss important topics to the community, and openly express themselves at a time when being gay was still not generally accepted by mainstream society. Rejected from most of the gay bars and spaces in Sacramento, which catered primarily to gay white men, Black lesbians in Sacramento were forced to establish their own spaces, including their own bars, where they could socialize safely and openly. According to numerous community members, Sacramento typically only had one lesbian bar at a time. During the 1990s, The Mirage was a departure from this trend, creating a one-of-a-kind space for Black women, however briefly.

The bar was the place where Black lesbians gathered and community celebrations including the Gay and Lesbian African Americans' Afrocentric Weekend. As such, it became an important connective force for Sacramento's Black lesbian community at a critical time. The property, thus, is significantly associated with establishing, supporting, and increasing the visibility of Sacramento's LGBTQ+ community and is eligible under Criterion 1/i.

California Register Criterion 2/Sacramento Register Criterion ii (Persons): Associated with the lives of persons important to local, California or national history.

The property at 601 15th Street does not appear to be eligible under Criterion 2/ii for association with an individual of historic significance to local LGBTQ+ history. The owner of The Mirage, Valerie Marlow, was not well-known within the lesbian community and research did not indicate that she was personally recognized as a leading figure in the establishment and development of Sacramento's LGBTQ+ community. As such, the property is not eligible under Criteria 2/ii.

State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary # _____
HRI # _____
Trinomial _____

Page 10 of 11
*Recorded by Hazel Bess.

Resource Name or # 601 15th Street
*Date June 1, 2026 ☒ Continuation ☐ Update

California Register Criterion 3/Sacramento Register Criteria iii-v (Architecture): Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values.

The property at 601 15th Street does not appear to be individually eligible under Criterion 3/iii. The subject property was remodeled in 1963 by Sooky Lee, an important local architect, but the building's exterior was a minor component of this work, primarily consisting of the addition of a sign and minor reconfigurations of first floor entrances and windows. As such, 601 15th Street is not a significant example of his craft nor the development of his style. The building is a modest commercial building built in the early 20th century. The building is not an exemplary representation of an architectural style. Therefore, it is not eligible for listing based on its architectural design under Criterion 3/iii-v.

Criterion 4/vi (Information Potential): Has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California or the nation.

The property at 601 15th Street does not appear to be individually eligible for listing in the California Register or Sacramento Register under Criterion 4/vi as a building or property that has the potential to provide information important to the prehistory or history of the City of Sacramento, state, or nation. It does not feature construction or material types, or embody engineering practices that would, with additional study, provide important information. Evaluation of this property was limited to age-eligible resources above ground and did not involve survey or evaluation of the subject property for the purposes of archaeological information.

Sacramento Register Factor e.: Factor e. for consideration of properties for listing on the Sacramento register states that properties that achieved their historic significance less than 50 years ago should be of exceptional significance. The subject property was constructed in 1925 and is over 50 years old. However, its historic association with the LGBTQ+ community began in 1993, less than 50 years ago at the time of this evaluation. The property is exceptionally significant for its cultural importance to the Black LGBTQ+ community. Based on a reconnaissance-level survey of properties identified through the Sacramento LGBTQ+ Historic Experience Project in 2024, relatively few properties remain that have a strong individual association with the development of the City of Sacramento's LGBTQ+ community, and that retain sufficient historic integrity. Fewer still of these are lesbian bars that existed in the City of Sacramento during the formative period of the community's development from the late 1960s to approximately 2000, and The Mirage is the only to have served specifically as a social space for Black lesbians. Therefore, the property meets consideration Factor e.

Integrity

601 15th Street retains all seven aspects of integrity (setting, location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association). The building remains in its original location and continues to be surrounded by a variety of commercial, residential, and mixed-use development, most of which was present during its period of significance (1993-2001). The building appears to have undergone minimal exterior alterations since the closure of The Mirage, primarily consisting of re-roofing and the reconfiguration of a second-floor window opening. The building would still be recognizable from the street to someone who visited the bar while it was in operation as The Mirage.

Character-defining Features of 601 15th Street

Character-defining features of 601 15th Street that reflect the period of significance (1993-2001) include but are not limited to the following features:

- Two-story height
- Brick masonry cladding
- Flat roof
- Second-story double-hung wood windows
- Front entrance with wood paneling and fixed window with deep sill

Conclusion

The property at 601 15th Street appears to be individually eligible for listing in the California Register and the Sacramento Register under Criteria 1/i (Events) for its association with the Black lesbian bar The Mirage. The bar was the only social gathering place catering specifically to Black lesbians in Sacramento during the 1990s, when the LGBTQ+ community was becoming an increasingly visible and recognizable part of Sacramento's population. It was the location of casual weekly social gatherings and cultural events including queer film screenings and jazz shows hosted by the Gay and Lesbian African Americans social group, all of which fostered connections within the Black LGBTQ+ community and played an integral role in the community's development. 601 15th Street appears to retain all seven aspects of historic integrity from its period of significance.

State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary # _____
HRI # _____
Trinomial _____

Page 11 of 11
*Recorded by Hazel Bess.

Resource Name or # 601 15th Street
*Date June 1, 2026 ☒ Continuation ☐ Update

References

601 15th Street. Google Street View. February 2020. Accessed March 11, 2026.

Aerial photo. Sacramento County. February 27, 1968. Accessed via Sacramento County Assessor.

Building permit records. City of Sacramento.

City of Sacramento. "Old Washington School Historic District Plan." 2019.

City of Sacramento. "Sacramento's Historic Context." 2019.

"Colliding Cars Bang Tavern Walls," *Sacramento Bee*, December 18, 1968.

"Dance Ticket," *Sacramento Bee*, July 5, 1996.

"Dance Ticket," *Sacramento Bee*, 1993-2001.

GEI Consultants, Mead & Hunt. "Mid-Century Modern in the City of Sacramento: Historic Context Statement and Survey Results." 2017.

Kohler, Will. "The Very Gay and Interesting History of the Almost Lost Tradition of the Sunday Tea Dance." Back2Stonewall, May 26, 2019. <https://web.archive.org/web/20200412161716/http://www.back2stonewall.com/2019/05/gay-history-lost-tradition-sunday-tea-dance.html>.

"Lambda Freedom Fair." *Mom...Guess What?*, May 15, 1993.

Liz. Conversation with Hazel Bess. April 14, 2026. Sacramento, CA.

McKean-Reich, MJ. "A mirage in the urban desert." *Mom...Guess What?*, January 15, 1994.

"Neighborhood supports bar," *Mom...Guess What?*, March 15, 1993.

Page & Turnbull. "The Blue Moon." Sacramento Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, 2025.

Page & Turnbull. "Sacramento LGBTQ+ Historic Experience Project: Historic Context Statement." 2024.

Sacramento City Directories. 1978-1994. Sacramento Public Library.

Sacramento County Assessor. Assessor Parcel Viewer. Accessed March 11, 2026.