



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: April 13, 2023 REPORT NO. HRB-23-013

HEARING DATE: April 27, 2023

SUBJECT: **ITEM #3 - Mamie and Oliver Evans/William Templeton Johnson House**

RESOURCE INFO: [California Historical Resources Inventory Database \(CHRID\) link](#)

APPLICANT: Michael A. Scott & Kerri M. Melucci; represented by Legacy 106, Inc.

LOCATION: 4388 Ampudia Street, Uptown Community, Council District 3
APN 443-061-34-00

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Mamie and Oliver Evans/William Templeton Johnson House located at 4388 Ampudia Street as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Mamie and Oliver Evans/William Templeton Johnson House located at 4388 Ampudia Street as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1924 under HRB Criteria C and D. This recommendation includes the southeast elevation brick terrace and walkway. This recommendation excludes the pre-1935 addition atop the garage, the 1994 patio, and the 2019 second-story addition, all built outside the period of significance. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

1. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Spanish Colonial Revival style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its period of significance. Specifically, the resource features an asymmetrical façade; a Mission half-barrel tile roof; attic vents with a quatrefoil motif; medium sand textured stucco wall surfacing; a quarter turret; a wooden paneled front door; French doors; arched stucco inset; paneled garage doors; Juliet balconies with lathe-turned spindles; custom divided-lite windows; and hand wrought metal window grilles.
2. The resource is representative of a notable work of Master Architect William Templeton Johnson, a prominent architect responsible for the design of many significant civic, institutional and residential buildings in the City, and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the resource is a notable example, and the only known example, of Johnson's collaborative design with architect Robert W. Snyder for a private residence in Johnson's preferred Spanish Colonial Revival style.

BACKGROUND

This item is being brought before the Historical Resources Board in conjunction with the owner's desire to have the site designated as a historical resource. The property is located on a corner lot and includes a 2-story residence with an attached garage.

The property was identified in the [2016 Uptown Historic Resources Survey Report](#) and given a Status Code of 5D3, "Appears to be a contributor to a district that appears eligible for local listing or designation through survey evaluation."

The historic name of the resource, the Mamie and Oliver Evans/William Templeton Johnson House, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Oliver Evans and Mamie Evans, who constructed the house as their personal residence, and the name of William Templeton Johnson, a Master Architect.

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Legacy 106, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria A, C, and D. Staff concurs that the site is a significant historical resource under HRB Criteria C and D, but not HRB Criterion A. This determination is consistent with the [Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria](#), as follows.

CRITERION A - Exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's, a community's or a neighborhood's historical, archaeological, cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, landscaping or architectural development.

The subject property is in the Presidio Ridge subdivision, which was filed with the County Recorder in 1923 by Rogan & Company, an investment company. It is the third house built in the subdivision and was the second highest-taxed property within the subdivision in the 1925 tax year.

The Presidio Ridge subdivision is in the general proximity of historically significant landmarks associated with civic leader and Progressive Party member George W. Marston. The subdivision is located to the east of Presidio Park (HRB #240), the Junipero Serra Museum (HRB #237), and the Presidio Golf Course. Historical records show that in 1907, five men including George W. Marston, purchased the Presidio Park area to preserve the heritage of the 1769 site of the first permanent European settlement on the Pacific coast of the United States, also known as the Presidio of San Diego Site (HRB #4). Marston later bought out the other men's share of the property and became the sole owner of the Presidio Park land. In 1925, he hired John Nolen, an internationally renowned urban planner, to design the Presidio Park area. In 1929, Marston commissioned the construction of the Junipero Serra Museum and donated the museum and the parklands to the City of San Diego. A few years later in 1932, Marston developed and opened the Presidio Golf Course.

The consultant report asserts that the subject property is eligible under Criterion A for its significance relating to the nearby "regional mosaic" of historically landmarked properties under the broader context of San Diego's Progressive Party, Chamber of Commerce, and civic leader George W. Marston's effort in establishing Presidio Park. Specifically, the report suggests that 4438 Ampudia

Street is a prominent house within the Presidio Ridge subdivision, supposedly one of Marston's "housing projects," which bore a financial relationship to the development of the nearby Presidio Park. However, the report did not offer any documentary evidence to suggest that either George Marston, the Chamber of Commerce, or San Diego's Progressive Party had any role in funding, design, or planning of the Presidio Ridge subdivision where the subject property is located. No evidence provided in the report indicates that 4388 Ampudia Street possesses any significance that is distinct among others of its kind or that surpasses the usual in significance, whether at a subdivision level, at the neighborhood level, or at the city level. Staff did not find evidence to suggest that the subject property exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's, a community's, or a neighborhood's, historical, archaeological, cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, landscaping or architectural development. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion A.

CRITERION C - Embodies distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period or method of construction or is a valuable example of the use of natural materials or craftsmanship.

The subject resource was constructed in 1924 in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The building features a cross-gabled roof topped with Mission half barrels tiles. The walls are made of hollow clay tiles and covered with medium-grain sand stucco. The cornice is stucco and slightly flared out, spanning the entirety of the building. An early addition flagstone perimeter wall wraps around the property along Ampudia Street and Fort Stockton Drive.

The southeast elevation of the building is the primary elevation, featuring a quarter turret with a deep inset, scalloped topped entry. This elevation also contains a wooden paneled front door, divided-lite French doors, custom divided-lite windows on stucco sills, handwrought metal window grilles, a Juliet balcony with turned spindles and arched stucco inset, and a cast stone vent with a quatrefoil motif.

The northeast elevation, facing out to Fort Stockton Drive, includes divided-lite windows of various sizes. Also located on this elevation is a "Mashrabiya" privacy window, a two-story wall projection with a tile roof, a French door, and a paneled garage door. A pre-1935 addition is situated above the garage, featuring divided-lite casement windows, an overhanging flat composition shingle roof, and exposed rafter tails. This elevation also features an original detached trunk room with a hipped roof and stucco cladding.

The southwest elevation of the gabled roof portion of the building features a Juliet balcony and a cast stone vent matching the one on the southeast elevation. The northwest (rear) elevation of the building contains a 2-story tall stucco chimney, casement windows, and a French door that leads out to an exterior patio with a wooden pergola.

The consultant report proposes a "1924 and pre-1935" date for the period of significance to include the pre-1935 flagstone perimeter wall. Besides the flagstone perimeter wall, the site contains a brick terrace and walkway in front of the southeast elevation matching the original 1924 building plans. A prominent Podocarpus tree is also located on the site near the northeast corner of the parcel. Because the brick hardscape is shown on the original 1924 plans, staff recommends the inclusion of this feature in the designation. Staff is not recommending the inclusion of the non-original flagstone

perimeter wall or the Podocarpus tree in this designation because they cannot be dated to the 1924 date of construction by available photographic evidence.

Modifications to the subject building include a pre-1935 addition atop the garage, a pre-1935 addition of a flagstone perimeter wall around the property, a 1994 rear patio construction, and a 2006 roof repair. In 2019, Historical Resources Staff approved a second-story attached addition directly southwest of the pre-1935 addition. The 2019 addition is differentiated from the original building using a smoother stucco texture, and the project was determined to be consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

Following the 1915-1916 Panama-California Exposition, the romantic ideal of Spanish and Latin American architecture was revived. What resulted was the Spanish Eclectic style which was the predominant style in Southern California between 1915 and 1940, significantly altering the architectural landscape until the Modernist movement took hold during and after WWII. The style uses decorative details borrowed from the entire history of Spanish architecture. These may be of Moorish, Byzantine, Gothic, or Renaissance inspirations, and unusually rich and varied series of decorative precedents. The style employed a variety of floor plans, as well as gabled, cross-gabled, gabled and hipped, hipped and flat roof forms with parapets. Other character defining features include Mission and Spanish clay tile; focal windows; arched windows and other openings; and accented entries. Overall, these modifications do not significantly impair the integrity of design, materials, workmanship or feeling as it relates to HRB Criterion C.

Significance Statement: The house continues to convey the historic significance of the Spanish Colonial Revival style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style, including an asymmetrical façade; a Mission half-barrel tile roof; attic vents with a quatrefoil motif; medium sand textured stucco wall surfacing; a quarter turret; a wooden paneled front door; French doors; arched stucco inset; paneled garage doors; Juliet balconies with lathe-turned spindles; custom divided-lite windows; and hand wrought metal window grilles. Therefore, staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion C.

CRITERION D - Is representative of a notable work of a master builder, designer, architect, engineer, landscape architect, interior designer, artist or craftsman.

The subject property was designed in 1924 by architect Robert W. Snyder and established Master Architect William Templeton Johnson.

William Templeton Johnson moved to San Diego in 1912 and started his architectural firm, designing the Francis W. Parker School (HRB #482) that same year. He also designed several residences in San Diego and Coronado. In the 1920s, Johnson designed the La Jolla Public Library (HRB #228), the Junipero Serra Museum (HRB #237), portions of the La Valencia Hotel (HRB #204), and La Jolla Public Library (HRB #228). He also designed the Balboa Park Fine Arts Gallery with Robert W. Snyder, which is part of Balboa Park National Register site (HRB #1). As his career progressed past 1930, he continued to design numerous important public buildings, such as the Museum of Natural History in Balboa Park, and the County Administration Building (HRB #203, designed in collaboration with Louis Gill, Richard Requa and Samuel Hamill), and the former main branch of the San Diego Public Library (HRB #683). More than 19 of his projects have been designated on the San Diego Historic Register. Although Johnson is well known for his residential designs, his primary impact on the City

of San Diego is through his design of public structures such as museums, schools and libraries. He was named into the AIA College of Fellows in 1939. Most of his designated properties were designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival Style, although he also designed properties in other styles like Italian Renaissance Revival, Pueblo Revival, and Mediterranean Revival. More importantly, Johnson preferred to build in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. If designated, the subject resource would be a notable example, and the only known example, of Johnson's collaborative design with architect Robert W. Snyder for a private residence in Johnson's preferred Spanish Colonial Revival style.

The applicant asserts that the property was constructed by established Master Builder Harry C. Brawner, stating that "The Evening Tribune of May 5, 1924, reported O.C. Evans, per H.C. Brawner, obtained a permit for a tile veneer residence and garage at 4388 Ampudia at a cost of \$20,000." However, the 1924 newspaper article provided on page 40 of the report does not show Brawner's name. Instead, H.C. Brawner's name appears on a 1928 building permit for a pergola, which the report has identified as the structure attached to the northwest elevation. Staff found that, contrary to the report's findings, archived building plans on file at the Development Services Records section reveal that the aforementioned pergola structure at the northwest elevation is a contemporary structure designed by landscape architect Wayne Takasugi in 1994 as part of patio building permit A-107174-94. This pergola is not a product of Brawner's. As such, staff did not find evidence of an extant 1928 pergola or any other structure that Brawner built at the subject property. Therefore, staff is not recommending designation under HRB Criterion D as a notable work of Master Builder Harry C. Brawner.

The applicant proposes the establishment of Robert W. Snyder as a Master Architect. However, staff finds that Snyder's overall body of work is not fully understood, and the report did not include sufficient information to support a determination under HRB Criterion D at this time.

Architect Robert W. Snyder obtained an education in architecture from the University of Pennsylvania and Cornell University in the 1890s before moving to San Diego in 1921. His work within the City of San Diego includes the Fine Arts Building in Balboa Park, which he designed with William Templeton Johnson (part of HRB #1); the Balboa Park Fire Alarm Headquarters Building (HRB #235); the Ocean Beach Library (HRB #565); the Logan Heights Library (demolished); and the property located at 7784 Hillside Drive. Staff conducted additional research through online books and online newspaper archives, discovering information suggesting that Snyder began his architectural career as early as 1899 in Scranton, Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania. His projects in Pennsylvania included various private residences, church buildings, banks, hospitals, schools, and firehouses. Snyder's architectural career in Pennsylvania was not evaluated under this historical nomination. Additionally, according to his biography from the document *San Diego Architects, 1868-1939*, Snyder had an active career in San Diego, lasting more than twenty years. The biography further describes Snyder as a draftsman and partner of William Templeton Johnson. Because the consultant report discovered only a few of Snyder's works in the City of San Diego, Snyder's complete body of work remains unidentified. Therefore, staff has not made a determination regarding Robert W. Snyder's eligibility under Criterion D as a Master Architect at this time. Eligibility under this criterion can be reevaluated at a future date pending submittal of additional information and analysis.

Significance Statement: The subject resource retains integrity and continues to reflect Master Architect William Templeton Johnson's original design, intent and aesthetic. It is a notable example,

and the only known example, of Johnson's collaborative design with architect Robert W. Snyder for a private residence in Johnson's preferred Spanish Colonial Revival style. Therefore, staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion D.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Designation brings with it the responsibility of maintaining the building in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The benefits of designation include the availability of the Mills Act Program for reduced property tax; the use of the more flexible Historical Building Code; flexibility in the application of other regulatory requirements; the use of the Historical Conditional Use Permit which allows flexibility of use; and other programs which vary depending on the specific site conditions and owner objectives. If the property is designated by the HRB, conditions related to restoration or rehabilitation of the resource may be identified by staff during the Mills Act application process, and included in any future Mills Act contract.

CONCLUSION

Based on the information submitted and staff's field check, it is recommended that the Mamie and Oliver Evans/William Templeton Johnson House at 4388 Ampudia Street be designated with a period of significance of 1924 under HRB Criteria C and D. This recommendation includes the southeast elevation brick terrace and walkway. This recommendation excludes the pre-1935 addition atop the garage, the 1994 patio, and the 2019 second-story addition, all built outside the period of significance.



Alvin Lin
Assistant Planner



Suzanne Segur
Senior Planner/ HRB Liaison
Development Services Department

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Attachment(s):

1. Draft Resolution
2. Applicant's Historical Report under separate cover

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON 4/27/2023

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 4/27/2023, to consider the historical designation of the Mamie and Oliver Evans/William Templeton Johnson House (owned by Michael A. Scott and Kerri M. Melucci, 4388 Ampudia Street, San Diego, CA 92103) located at **4388 Ampudia Street, San Diego, CA 92103**, APN: **443-061-34-00**, further described as BLK 503 LOT 10 NELY 6 FT OF LOT 9&ALL OF in the City of San Diego, County of San Diego, State of California; and

WHEREAS, in arriving at their decision, the Historical Resources Board considered the historical resources report prepared by the applicant, the staff report and recommendation, all other materials submitted prior to and at the public hearing, inspected the subject property and heard public testimony presented at the hearing; and

WHEREAS, the property would be added to the Register of Designated Historical Resources as **Site No. 0**, and

WHEREAS, designated historical resources located within the City of San Diego are regulated by the Municipal Code (Chapter 14, Article 3, Division 2) as such any exterior modifications (or interior if any interior is designated) shall be approved by the City, this includes but is not limited to modifications to any windows or doors, removal or replacement of any exterior surfaces (i.e. paint, stucco, wood siding, brick), any alterations to the roof or roofing material, alterations to any exterior ornamentation and any additions or significant changes to the landscape/ site.

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED, the Historical Resources Board based its designation of the Mamie and Oliver Evans/William Templeton Johnson House on the following findings:

(1) The property is historically significant under CRITERION C for its distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Spanish Colonial Revival style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1924 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features an asymmetrical façade; a Mission half-barrel tile roof; attic vents with a quatrefoil motif; medium sand textured stucco wall surfacing; a quarter turret; a wooden paneled front door; French doors; arched stucco inset; paneled garage doors; Juliet balconies with lathe-turned spindles; custom divided-lite windows; and hand wrought metal window grilles. This finding is further supported by the staff report, the historical research report, and written and oral evidence presented at the designation hearing.

(2) The property is historically significant under CRITERION D as a notable work of Master Architect William Templeton Johnson, a prominent architect responsible for the design of many significant civic, institutional and residential buildings in the City, and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the resource is a notable example, and the only known example, of Johnson's collaborative design with architect Robert W. Snyder for a private residence in Johnson's preferred Spanish Colonial Revival style. This finding is further supported by the staff report, the historical research report, and written and oral evidence presented at the designation hearing.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, in light of the foregoing, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego hereby approves the historical designation of the above named property. The designation includes the parcel and exterior of the building as Designated Historical Resource **Site No. 0**.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the designation shall include the southeast elevation brick terrace and walkway.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the designation shall exclude the pre-1935 addition atop the garage, the 1994 patio, and the 2019 second-story addition.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Secretary to the Historical Resources Board shall cause this resolution to be recorded in the office of the San Diego County Recorder at no fee, for the benefit of the City of San Diego, and with no documentary tax due.

Vote:

BY: _____
TIM HUTTER, Chair
Historical Resources Board

APPROVED: MARA W. ELLIOTT,
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: _____
LINDSEY SEBASTIAN,
Deputy City Attorney

DRAFT

RECORDING REQUESTED BY
CITY OF SAN DIEGO
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

WHEN RECORDED MAIL TO

HISTORICAL RESOURCES BOARD
ATTN: HRB SECRETARY
1222 FIRST AVENUE, MS 501
SAN DIEGO, CA 92101

SPACE ABOVE THIS LINE FOR RECORDER'S USE

RESOLUTION NUMBER **N/A**

HISTORICAL DESIGNATION OF PROPERTY ON

4388 Ampudia Street, San Diego, CA 92103

ASSESSOR PARCEL NUMBER **443-061-34-00**

HISTORICAL RESOURCES BOARD NUMBER **0**