



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: July 14, 2022 REPORT NO. HRB-22-024

HEARING DATE: July 28, 2022

SUBJECT: **ITEM #01 – Harry and Blanche A. Muns Speculation House**

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

APPLICANT: Barrie Staenberg; represented by Legacy 106, Inc

LOCATION: 3529 Dove Court, Uptown Community, Council District 3
APN 451-400-09-00

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Harry and Blanche A. Muns Speculation House located at 3529 Dove Court as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Harry and Blanche A. Muns Speculation House located at 3529 Dove Court as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1930 under HRB Criterion C. The designation includes the interior stairs, banister, and open beam ceilings in the living and dining rooms. This recommendation is based on the following finding:

The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character-defining features of the Spanish Eclectic style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1930 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features an asymmetrical front façade; hipped, gabled, and shed roof; Mission half-barrel tile roof; medium textured stucco wall surfacing; deep inset wood casement windows; arched window; original barn-style sliding garage doors; wooden plank-style windows shutters, lathe-turned spindles, interior adze-struck open beam ceiling; and interior stairs with polychrome floor tiles and wrought metal banister.

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 subject resource is a two-story residence with an attached garage.

The property was identified in the 2016 [Uptown Community Plan Area 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 Harry and Blanche A. Muns Speculation House, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Harry Muns and Blanche A. Muns, who constructed the house as a speculation house.

ANALYSIS

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

CRITERION B - Is identified with persons or events significant in local, state or national history.

The subject property located at 3529 Dove Court was occupied by John C. Leppert and Christine D. Leppert from 1973 to 2001 and 1973 to 2019, respectively. The applicant asserts that John C. Leppert is a significant individual under HRB Criterion B; however, staff disagrees.

John C. Leppert was born in San Diego in 1926 and resided in North Carolina at the age of 18. Graduating from San Diego State College at age 21, he later worked as the San Diego Junior Chamber of Commerce assistant manager in 1955. As a manager (and consequently director) and spokesperson of the San Diego Taxpayers Association, he has voiced various support and opposition for different programs and initiatives in the 1950s. In 1962, he was appointed to the Citizen's Advisory on the Welfare Study Commission. Leppert served as the vice president of a group in favor of San Diego Proposition 1 (1965), which supported the approval of the General Plan for The City of San Diego at the time. That same year, he chaired a benefit football game to fundraise for new facilities for the Boys and Girls Aid Society. He served on community boards such as the Military Draft Board.

As early as 1973, John C. Leppert and Christine D. Leppert moved to the subject property. The next year, he resigned from a State Hospital Advisory Board and the San Diego Taxpayer's Association. In 1976, Leppert became one of the five directors of the San Diego Chamber of Commerce. In 1977, the County Board of Supervisors appointed Leppert to the County Employees Retirement Board. At the same time, Leppert was working as a vice president of Cooke, Inc., an engineering firm. Later, he practiced as a marketing director for Kvass Construction Company in 1982. In Leppert's obituary, former City Manager John Lockwood praised him for his role as a liaison between the city manager's office and the hotels and businesses that leased city property near Mission Bay.

Although John C. Leppert has demonstrated a long career as a representative of taxpayers, his contributions appear to be ordinary and expected for his occupation. His achievements do not rise to the level of significance under Criterion B. The report states that "Leppert played a key leadership role in funding the post-1955 development of Mission Bay Park, Balboa Park, Coronado Bay Bridge, Point Loma Sewage Plant, portions of Interstate 5 and Jack Murphy Stadium in Mission Valley." However, Leppert's obituary only states that he served as the executive director of the taxpayer's

association from 1955 to 1970 during the construction of the San Diego Stadium, Point Loma Sewage Plant, and other infrastructures. It is inappropriate to credit the *funding* of these construction projects to Leppert, as no evidence was provided to substantiate this statement. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion B for association with John C. Leppert.

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 1930 in the Spanish Eclectic style. The building features mission half barrel tile roof with gabled, hipped, and shed forms. Decorative rafter tails are present below the roof eaves. The exterior is stucco and features its original medium grain texture.

The primary elevation is the west elevation. This elevation, on the ground floor, exhibits multiple wall planes, an original garage door, an arched window opening with fixed glazing and wrought metal grills, and two sets of casement windows with decorative plank-style window shutters. On the second floor, this elevation features deeply inset casement windows, a sliding window system with lathe-turned vertical posts, and decorative window shutters. The south elevation features gable roof forms and a stucco chimney. The chimney is topped with stacks of tile tents. Half-barrel tiles were used to form the attic vents along the gable ends. Fenestration along this elevation consists of casement windows with decorative shutters. The east elevation is the rear elevation, and it contains a second-story uncovered balcony with a stucco parapet. A ground-floor covered patio/ramada topped with Spanish tiles provides access to the interior through a pair of French doors. Another second set of French doors is present, leading to a hand-wrought balconet. Fenestration on this elevation consists of wood casement windows. The north elevation borders the neighboring property and features casement windows of various sizes.

Elements of the interior are recommended for designation, including the living room open beam and cross-truss system ceiling, the dining room open beam ceiling, and the tile staircase. The living room ceiling features adze-struck, hand-hewn beams with color stenciling. The center of the truss contains lath-turned vertical posts and features decorative corbels. The dining room open beam ceiling is similar in its hand-hewn design and includes ornamental corbels. The staircase was constructed with polychrome tiles and features wrought metal banisters; the banisters exhibit scroll-like designs, a twisted-metal form, and hand-tapped screws and rivets.

Modifications to the subject building include the removal of two Islamic-influenced "mashrabiya" window screens along the south elevation, the replacement of a rear door, and the installation of aluminum-framed sliding glass behind the turned wood spindles on the second-floor west elevation balcony, all at unknown dates. Overall, these modifications do not significantly impair the integrity of design, materials, workmanship or feeling as it relates to HRB Criterion C.

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.

Significance Statement: The house continues to convey the historic significance of the Spanish Eclectic style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style; including an asymmetrical front façade; hipped, gabled, and shed roof; Mission half-barrel tile roof; medium textured stucco wall surfacing; deep inset wood casement windows; arched window; original barn-style sliding garage doors; wooden plank-style windows shutters, lathe-turned spindles, interior adze-struck open beam ceiling; and interior stairs with polychrome floor tiles and wrought metal banister. 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 resource was built by Harry Muns Construction Company. However, the applicant's request for designation for the property located at 3529 Dove Court did not include sufficient information to support a determination under HRB Criterion D; therefore, staff has not made a determination regarding eligibility under Criterion D at this time. Eligibility under this criterion may be reevaluated at a future date pending submittal of additional information and analysis.

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 Harry and Blanche A. Muns Speculation House located at 3529 Dove Court be designated with a period of significance of 1930 under HRB Criterion C for the Spanish Eclectic style.



Alvin Lin
Assistant Planner



Suzanne Segur
Senior Planner/ HRB Liaison
Development Services Department

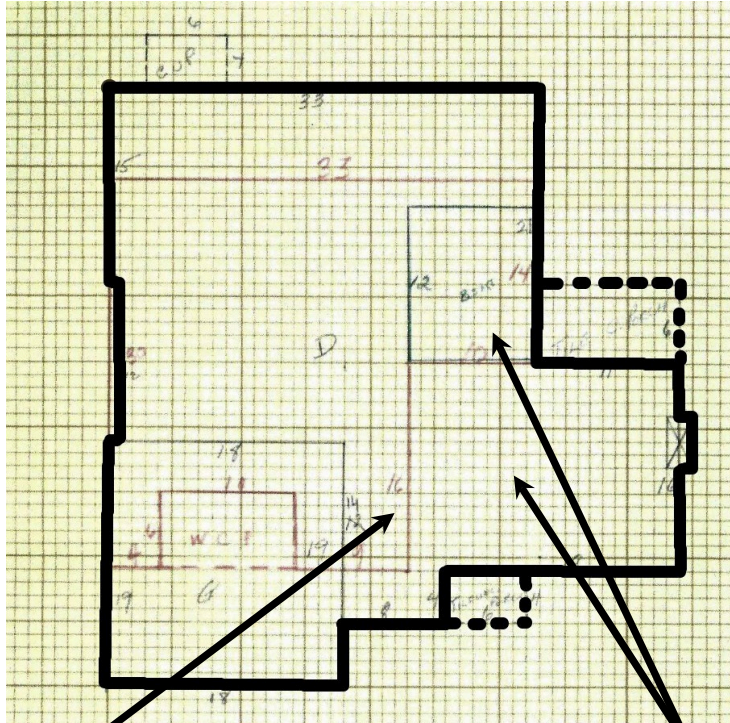
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Attachment(s):

1. Draft Resolution
2. Interior elements proposed for designation
3. Applicant's Historical Report under separate cover

Site Plan with Footprint

For interior features included in the proposed designation



Location of stairs/banister included in the designation



Location of living room and dining room open beam ceiling included in the designation



RESOLUTION NUMBER
ADOPTED ON 7/28/2022

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 7/28/2022, to consider the historical designation of the Harry and Blanche A. Muns Speculation House (owned by Barrie Staenberg, 3529 Dove Court, San Diego, CA 92103) located at **3529 Dove Court, San Diego, CA 92103**, APN: **451-400-09-00**, further described as LOT 7 POR 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. ,** 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 Harry and Blanche A. Muns Speculation 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 Eclectic style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1930 period of significance. Specifically, this property features an asymmetrical front façade; hipped, gabled, and shed roof; Mission half-barrel tile roof; medium textured stucco wall surfacing; deep inset wood casement windows; arched window; original barn-style sliding garage doors; wooden plank-style windows shutters, lathe-turned spindles, interior adze-struck open beam ceiling; and interior stairs with polychrome floor tiles and wrought metal banister. 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. .**

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the designation shall include the interior stairs, banister, and open beam ceilings in the living and dining rooms.

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: _____
DAVID MCCULLOUGH, 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

HISTORICAL DESIGNATION OF PROPERTY ON

3529 Dove Court, San Diego, CA 92103

ASSESSOR PARCEL NUMBER **451-400-0900-00**

HISTORICAL RESOURCES BOARD NUMBER