



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: July 12, 2023 REPORT NO. HRB-23-023

HEARING DATE: July 27, 2023

SUBJECT: **ITEM #2 – Ernest and Ida Cushman Speculation House**

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

APPLICANT: Maxwell Y Senescall & Briana N; represented by Landmark Historic Preservation

LOCATION: 2304 Plum Street, Peninsula Community, Council District 2
APN 450-053-05-00

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Ernest and Ida Cushman Speculation House located at 2304 Plum Street as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Ernest and Ida Cushman Speculation House located at 2304 Plum Street as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1928 under HRB Criterion C. The designation includes the original garage. The designation excludes the 2019 pergola structure in the rear yard. This recommendation is based on the following finding:

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; combination of roof forms including flat, hipped, shed, and faux gable; mission half barrel tile roof cover; decorative rafter tails; hand-troweled stucco cladding with sand finish; deep recessed arched front entry with a wooden plank style door; decorative wrought iron grille; divided lite wooden French doors, wood double hung windows, and deep inset wood casement windows.

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 one-story, single-family home with a detached garage sited on a corner lot in the Loma Portal neighborhood of the Peninsula Community.

The property was identified by the Quieter Homes Program and was determined to be a contributor to the National Register eligible Loma Portal Historic District.

The historic name of the resource, the Ernest and Ida Cushman Speculation House, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Ernest H. Cushman and Ida F. Cushman, who constructed the house as a speculation house.

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Landmark Historic Preservation, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criterion C, and staff concurs. This determination is consistent with the [Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria](#), as follows.

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 property was constructed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style, featuring a compound floor plan in an approximate "L"-shape. The property has a primarily flat roof. Exposed rafters are visible below tile roof portions of the building. The property is sided in hand-troweled stucco with a sand finish.

The southwest elevation is the primary elevation, featuring an arched, inset front entry below a shed tile roof. The front door is an arched wooden door, and the door surround contains an ogee stucco design. This elevation displays a multitude of roof planes and includes a parapet above the front entry. A combination of faux gable, hipped, and shed roofs accentuates this façade. A wooden gate connects the residence to the detached garage. Lastly, a wrought iron box window grille with a curved stucco top projects from this elevation, enclosing a pair of divided-lite French doors. The southeast elevation faces out to Plum Street and displays a number of deep inset, divided lite casement windows. The northwest elevation, facing the detached garage, displays both a hipped tile roof and a flat roof with no overhang. A divided-lite French door is present. The northwest elevation is the rear elevation, featuring a stucco chimney with chimney pots and a spark arrester. A single downspout is attached to the building façade. Windows along these two elevations are one-over-one wood double-hung, and divided lite casements.

The garage is clad in stucco and features a brick coping and an original garage door. A non-original pergola is present behind the garage. Although the consultant report recommends that the garage be excluded from the historic designation due to the removal of an original overhang, staff disagrees. The garage dates to the period of significance and retains its original wooden garage door, brick coping, stucco finish, and a deeply inset door design in keeping with the Spanish Colonial Revival style. Therefore, staff recommends that the garage be included with the designation.

Modifications to the building include the removal of an extending "pergola style" overhang on the detached garage, and the construction of the front brick walkway, both at unknown dates. In 2013, City staff approved the in-kind replacement of windows through the Quieter Homes Program as consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. In 2018, City staff approved the construction of a pergola structure behind the garage; the pergola was built in 2019. 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 Colonial Revival style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style; including an asymmetrical façade; combination of roof forms including flat, hipped, shed, and faux gable; mission half barrel tile roof cover; decorative rafter tails; hand-troweled stucco cladding with sand finish; deep recessed arched front entry with a wooden plank style door; decorative wrought iron grille; divided lite wooden French doors, wood double hung windows, and deep inset wood casement windows. 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 at 2304 Plum Street was built by Quality Building & Securities Company. Quality Building & Securities Company has not been established by the Historical Resources Board as a Master Architect, Designer or Builder, and there is insufficient information to designate it as such at this time. Therefore, staff does not recommend 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 Ernest and Ida Cushman Speculation House located at 2304 Plum Street be designated with a period of significance of 1928 under HRB Criterion C as a good example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style.

The designation includes the original garage. The designation excludes the 2019 pergola structure in the rear yard.



Alvin Lin
Assistant Planner



Suzanne Segur
Senior Planner/ HRB Liaison
City Planning Department

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Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON 7/27/2023

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 7/27/2023, to consider the historical designation of the **Ernest and Ida Cushman Speculation House** (owned by Maxwell Y Senescall & Briana N, 2304 Plum Street, San Diego, CA 92106) located at **2304 Plum Street, San Diego, CA 92106**, APN: **450-053-05-00**, further described as BLK 194 LOTS 5 & 6 SWLY 65 FT 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 Ernest and Ida Cushman 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 Colonial Revival Style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1928 period of significance. Specifically, the resource the resource features an asymmetrical façade; combination of roof forms including flat, hipped, shed, and faux gable; mission half barrel tile roof cover; decorative rafter tails; hand-troweled stucco cladding with sand finish; deep recessed arched front entry with a wooden plank style door; decorative wrought iron grille; divided lite wooden French doors, wood double hung windows, and deep inset wood casement windows. 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 original detached garage.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the designation shall exclude the 2019 pergola structure in the rear yard.

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

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

2304 Plum Street, San Diego, CA 92106

ASSESSOR PARCEL NUMBER **450-053-05-00**

HISTORICAL RESOURCES BOARD NUMBER **0**