



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO  
**Historical Resources Board**

DATE ISSUED: September 12, 2013 REPORT NO. HRB-13-043

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board  
Agenda of September 26, 2013

SUBJECT: **ITEM #6 – Boys Club of San Diego**

APPLICANT: Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater San Diego represented by Vonn Marie May

LOCATION: 2930 Marcy Avenue, Southeastern San Diego Community, Council District 8

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Boys Club of San Diego located at 2930 Marcy Avenue as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Boys Club of San Diego located at 2930 Marcy Avenue as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1942 under HRB Criterion A. The designation is limited to the original 1942 structure and excludes all other structures and park land on the parcel. This recommendation is based on the following finding:

The resource is a special element of San Diego's historical, cultural and social development by providing a safe and enriching environment for positive character development to San Diego's youth since its construction in 1942.

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 resource is a one and two story institutional building constructed in 1942 on the north side of Marcy Avenue between South 29<sup>th</sup> Street and South 30<sup>th</sup> Street in the Southeastern San Diego Community.

The historic name of the resource, the Boys Club of San Diego, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy which states that the site may be named for the specific name placed on the building upon construction.

**Development Services Department**

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## ANALYSIS

A historical resource research report was prepared by Vonn Marie May, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria A and C. Staff concurs that the site is a significant historical resource under HRB Criterion A, but not HRB Criterion C. 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 organization presently known as the Boys and Girls Club of America began in 1860 in Hartford Connecticut – a Boys Club established by Mary Goodwin, Alice Goodwin and Elizabeth Hammersley that fostered positive character development of young boys. These women understood that children thrive in an environment that encourages constructive learning and play, with the added effect of deterring delinquency. Boys Clubs founded in other regions later began to affiliate as the Federated Boys Club in 1906. This led to the nationalization of the organization and the eventual establishment of the Boys Club of America in 1931. The Boys Club of America became the Boys and Girls Club of America in 1990, and in 2006 the national organization celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> year of giving children hope, opportunity, and guidance.

The applicant's report states that the subject building is significant under HRB Criterion A as the site of the first Boys Club of America location in the City of San Diego and as a special element of the neighborhood's development. The Boys Club of San Diego was constructed in 1942 on the site made available by the San Diego City Council and deeded to the City in 1939. The project was initiated by William J. Oakes, the principal of Memorial Junior High School, adjacent to the site. Oakes had contacted the national office of Boys Club of America in New York to garner their support for the first Boys Club to be built in San Diego. The New York administrators gave their blessing and planning for the new Boys Club began in earnest with the forming of a Building Committee chaired by Wilbur A. Thomas and a sizeable funding campaign organized by New York Boys Club officials and local business leaders. The fundraising effort for the Boys Club was widely publicized and generated a great deal of public interest. It is important to note that fundraising and construction of the Boys Club was conducted during some of the America's darkest days of World War II, to include the attack on Pearl Harbor and America's subsequent declaration of war. Support from local clergymen like Rev. Shirley R. Shaw, as well as other prominent San Diegans including James A. Copley and Grace Legler Benbough helped to boost the sustained Boys Club fundraising endeavor which remained effective even through the community's simultaneous contribution to the war effort.

Construction of the building was done using loaned heavy equipment, donated labor, and materials that were either donated or purchased at cost. The building of the Boys Club was truly a community effort that required the cooperation and support of many different people. Those

who believed in it and helped it along understood its importance as an investment in the quality of life of future generations. Boys Club Building Committee Chairman Thomas exclaimed in a 1941 *San Diego Union* article, “when the Boys Club of San Diego is established and the results begin to show, we’ll wonder why the idea of such an organization had not been put into effect long ago. I have no hesitation in saying that it will be one of the soundest investments our citizens ever made.”

Construction of the Boys Club was completed in early 1942. In May of 1943 a formal dedication ceremony was held to commemorate the establishment of the Boys Club of San Diego. In attendance at the event were executives from the national organization as well as countless sponsors and laborers who supported the cause. For an annual rate of 25 cents, the Boys Club of San Diego opened its doors to hundreds of San Diego’s youth. Since that time, the organization has expanded its presence into other parts of San Diego. And the Boys and Girls Club at the subject property has itself expanded and changed to meet demands and, more importantly, continued its role as a beacon of hope and positive guidance for San Diego’s youth. Children who attended the facility have gone on to become doctors, lawyers, scientists, athletes and other contributing members of a productive society.

In regard to the period of significance, the applicant’s report identifies the period of significance as 1942-1953, marked by the completion of the building and the death of its founder, William J. Oakes. The applicant has presented only a nomination for the property’s designation under HRB Criteria A and C. Staff finds this proposed “end date” for the period of significance inappropriate without the nomination or designation of the property under HRB Criterion B for its association with Mr. Oakes. Furthermore, for a designation under Criterion A based on the significance of the function it serves in the community, an “end date” based on the founder’s death is inappropriate since it is understood that the facility still continues to serve the function for which it is significant. Alternatively, a date range of 1942-present would extend the period of time into the indefinite future without knowing whether or not the building will continue to serve its significant function. Staff finds that a period of significance represented by a date range is inappropriate and does not take into account the building’s ongoing significance to the community. Therefore, staff has identified the period of significance as 1942 when the building was originally constructed to serve the youth of San Diego.

As a significant community landmark reflecting the historical, cultural and social development of San Diego by providing a safe and enriching environment for positive character development to San Diego’s youth, staff recommends designation of the Boys Club of San Diego 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 building was built in 1942 of above-standard brick construction on a concrete foundation. The building presents a symmetrical façade made up of a central two story hipped roof square mass flanked by a pair of one story side gabled wings projecting diagonally to the east and west. The roof is medium pitched, sheathed in composition shingle and exhibits a

minimal boxed eave overhang with a rain gutter system. The central portion of the building is marked by a full length entry overhang supported by slender metal columns with a second story deck above. A cupola at the top features a distinct weather vane of a young boy running with a football under his arm. The main entrance features multi-paned sidelights, pilasters and an implied broken pediment above.

The building is described in the report as an institutional variant of the Colonial Revival style with design features that are not fully carried out but are merely suggested. Features of this style are seen chiefly in the accentuated entry with decorative crown and sidelights, and in the overall symmetry of the building's façade. The architect of the building is unknown but was likely affiliated with the Boys Club's national office in New York, resulting in a building design that more closely followed the prevailing styles and values of America's east coast.

Modifications to the subject building detract heavily from its character defining features, most notably in the replacement of all the original windows with vinyl windows. These replacement windows were placed in original openings but are of different styles and operations. At the covered entry, simulated divided light replacement windows exhibit a wholly different light pattern than what existed originally. It appears that the only original windows that remain are the sidelights flanking the entry door at the main entrance. Also new to the entrance are ADA access ramps, hand railings and portions of new concrete paving. In 1968, a fire inside the east wing of the building resulted in the extension of that wing by about 15 feet. A number of air conditioning units have been added that are visible from the front elevation.

The replacement of essentially all the building's original windows severely impact its character defining features and affect the materials, workmanship, design and feeling aspects of the building's integrity as it relates to its 1942 date of construction and period of significance. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion C.

#### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

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.

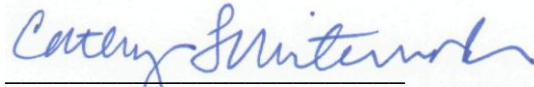
#### CONCLUSION

Based on the information submitted and staff's field check, it is recommended that the Boys Club of San Diego located at 2930 Marcy Avenue be designated with a period of significance of 1942 under HRB Criterion A as a special element of San Diego's historical, cultural and social development by providing a safe and enriching environment for positive character development to San Diego's youth since its construction in 1942. The designation is limited to the original 1942 structure and excludes all other structures and park land on the parcel. 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.



Camille Pekarek  
Planning Intern



Cathy Winterrowd  
Interim Deputy Director/HRB Liaison

CP/jb/cw

Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A  
ADOPTED ON 9/26/2013

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 9/26/2013, to consider the historical designation of the **Boys Club of San Diego** (owned by City of San Diego, 1200 Third Avenue, Suite 1700, San Diego, CA 92101) located at **2930 Marcy Avenue, San Diego, CA 92113**, APN: **545-592-01-00**, further described as BLK 12 (EX ST OP)ST CLSD ADJ & ALL OF BLKS 2&4&6&8&10& 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 **Boys Club of San Diego** on the following findings:

(1) The property is historically significant under CRITERION A as a special element of San Diego's historical, cultural and social development by providing a safe and enriching environment for positive character development to San Diego's youth since its construction in 1942. 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 is limited to the original 1942 structure and excludes all other structures and park land on the parcel.

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: N/A

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
JOHN LEMMO, Chair  
Historical Resources Board

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND  
LEGALITY: JAN I. GOLDSMITH,  
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
CORRINE NEUFFER,  
Deputy City Attorney