



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

DATE ISSUED: February 13, 2014 REPORT NO. HRB-14-010

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board  
Agenda of February 27, 2014

SUBJECT: **ITEM #5 – George Gans Spec House #5**

APPLICANT: William Turner and Carolyn Muhlstein

LOCATION: 3125 Bancroft Street, Greater North Park Community, Council District 3

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the George Gans Spec House #5 located at 3125 Bancroft Street as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the George Gans Spec House #5 located at 3125 Bancroft Street as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1925-1926 under HRB Criteria C and D. The designation excludes the modified detached garage at the rear of the property. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

1. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Craftsman style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1925-1926 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features a cross gable roof with exposed rafters and roof beams; partial width gabled front porch supported by round columns on stucco piers with curved stucco wall; matching stucco chimney; wood clapboard siding; and fenestration consisting of wood double hung windows and transomed picture windows.
2. The resource is representative of a notable work of Master Builder George Gans and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the resource retains signature features of Gans-built speculative homes and contributes to the understanding of Gans' body of work as having an enduring quality of craftsmanship and consistency of design.

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 story Craftsman

style single family residence built in 1925-1926 on the on the east side of Bancroft Street, just north of Redwood Street in the Altadena subdivision of the Greater North Park Community.

The building is located on APN 453-572-11-00. The property was identified in the Draft North Park Historic Survey 2004 and given a Status Code of 5S3, “appears to be individually eligible for local listing or designation through survey evaluation.”

The historic name of the resource, the George Gans Spec House #5, has been identified consistent with the Board’s adopted naming policy and reflects the name of George Gans, a Master Builder who constructed the house as a speculation house.

## ANALYSIS

A historical resource research report was prepared by William Turner, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria C and D 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 subject resource is a one story Craftsman style single family residence built in 1925-1926 of standard wood frame construction on a concrete foundation. The building is clad in wood clapboard siding and exhibits a broad “T” shaped plan form with partial width front porch. There is a low pitched, cross gabled roof sheathed in composition shingle and featuring wide overhanging eaves and exposed rafters and roof beams. The gabled front porch roof is broad, exhibits a decorative wood attic vent, and is supported by round columns on stucco piers connected by a decorative stucco wall. The multi light wood front door is centered along the front elevation and flanked by a pair of matching sidelights and 6 over 1 transomed wood picture windows beyond. Other fenestration consists primarily of 6 over 1 and 1 over 1 double hung wood windows. On the south side of the property, a scored concrete driveway passes a unique side porch entry and leads to the modified rear detached garage.

Alterations to the property are fairly minor and do not greatly impact the building’s character defining features or impair the integrity as it relates to the 1925-1926 date of construction and period of significance. New composition roof shingles were installed at an unknown date. A series of small outdoor storage units have been added to the north (side) elevation and are not visible from the public right-of-way over the north property line fence. Finally, the detached garage located at the rear of the property has been expanded and was converted into habitable space at an unknown date.

With origins in the British Arts and Crafts movement, which born in response to the overly ornate Victorian aesthetic and the highly mechanized Industrial Revolution, Craftsman style architecture was popular in the United States largely between 1905 and 1930. Early examples by Greene and Greene were highly publicized in magazines, thus familiarizing the rest of the nation with the style. Character defining features of Craftsman architecture include a low-pitched,

gabled roof with wide, unenclosed eave overhang; exposed roof rafters; decorative beams or braces; full or partial-width porches supported by tapered square columns or pedestals; wood or stucco cladding; and wood frame and sash windows in fixed, double hung and casement varieties.

The subject resource retains excellent integrity with limited modifications. The house continues to convey the historic significance of the Craftsman style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style; including the cross gable roof with exposed rafters and roof beams; partial width gabled front porch supported by round columns on stucco piers with curved stucco wall; matching stucco chimney; wood clapboard siding; and fenestration consisting of wood double hung windows and transomed picture windows. Therefore, staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion C with a 1925-1926 period of significance. This period of significance was selected since the Building Record and water/sewer connection records show the year 1925 while the County Lot & Block Books indicate the building may have been completed around the New Year of 1926.

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

George Gans was born in 1878 and moved to San Diego in 1912. In 1922, Gans and his wife, Amalia, along with his attorney, Lewis S. Riley formed the Laurel Building Company. During the 1920s, Gans and the Laurel Building Company constructed speculative homes within North Park in both the Craftsman and Spanish Eclectic architectural styles. George Gans has been recognized as a master builder by the HRB for his work within North Park and four other speculative homes built by Gans have been previously designated: HRB Sites #539, #792, #921, and #1045. These speculative homes were all built in the Craftsman style and given similar character defining features including Gans' signature curved porch wall, which is also seen in the subject property. One other home built by Gans has that been designated (HRB Site #900) was built in the Spanish Eclectic style.

Seen in the subject home is the fifth recognized speculative home built by Gans and a good demonstration of Gans' body of work exhibiting an enduring quality of craftsmanship and design. All of the known speculative Craftsman style homes built by Gans seem almost formulaic in their execution, but each contains a unique element or combination of elements to call its own. This consistent method of speculative home construction likely contributed to Gans' success as a prolific builder in San Diego. Compared to other speculative Craftsman style homes built by Gans, the subject resource looks similar but is made slightly distinct with the inclusion of a more substantial side entry along the driveway and a modified or expanded footprint to accommodate an enlarged kitchen and nook area. As a demonstration of a flexible consistency within George Gans' body of work, staff recommends designation of the subject resource under HRB Criterion D.

## 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 George Gans Spec House #5 located at 3125 Bancroft Street be designated with a period of significance of 1925-1926 under HRB Criterion C as a good example of the Craftsman style, and Criterion D as a notable work of Master Builder George Gans. The designation excludes the modified detached garage at the rear of the property. 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  
Junior Planner



Cathy Winterrowd  
Deputy Director/HRB Liaison

CP/cw

Attachments:

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A  
ADOPTED ON 2/27/2014

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 2/27/2014, to consider the historical designation of the **George Gans Spec House #5** (owned by William D. Turner and Carolyn A. Muhlstein, 3125 Bancroft Street, San Diego, CA 92104) located at **3125 Bancroft Street, San Diego, CA 92104**, APN: **453-572-11-00**, further described as BLK K LOT 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 George Gans Spec House #5 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 Craftsman style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1925-1926 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features a cross gable roof with exposed rafters and roof beams; partial width gabled front porch supported by round columns on stucco piers with curved stucco wall; matching stucco chimney; wood clapboard siding; and fenestration consisting of wood double hung windows and transomed picture windows. 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 Builder George Gans and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the resource retains signature features of Gans-built speculative homes and contributes to the understanding of Gans' body of work as having an enduring quality of craftsmanship and consistency of design.

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 exclude the modified detached garage at the rear of the property.

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