



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: July 18, 2014 REPORT NO. HRB-14-046

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board
Agenda of July 31, 2014

SUBJECT: **ITEM #8 – Gray Gables Inn**

APPLICANT: Alex Velasquez and Jennifer S. Ross represented by Legacy 106, Inc.

LOCATION: 3530 Promontory Street, Pacific Beach Community, Council District 2

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Gray Gables Inn located at 3530 Promontory Street as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Gray Gables Inn located at 3530 Promontory Street as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1929-1935 under HRB Criteria A and C. Interior elements included in the designation are the living room fireplace with arched niche and Batchelder or Batchelder style ceramic tile hearth; and the interior wood and brick detailing associated with the restaurant or tea room addition. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

1. The resource is a special element of Crown Point's and the City's historical, cultural, social, and economic development and retains integrity to its period of significance. Specifically, from about 1930-1935, the resource was the site of the Gray Gables Inn, a popular restaurant and tea room established in circa 1930 by owner Iva Valle. Her venture was born out of the necessity to provide for her family – and its success and popularity among locals allowed the family and the community to endure the economic hardships of the times.
2. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Tudor Revival style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1929-1930 period of significance. Specifically, the resource retains its steeply pitched gabled roof form; smooth stucco and brick exterior; prominent brick chimney with elaborated top; arched brick entry; divided light steel casement windows; and highly detailed Tudor Revival style restaurant addition.

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 two story single family residence built in 1929 in the Tudor Revival style, and located on the west side of Promontory Street just north of La Cima Drive in the Crown Point Subdivision of the Pacific Beach Community.

The building is located on APN 423-493-15-00. The property has not been identified in any historic surveys, as the subject area has not been previously surveyed.

The historic name of the resource, the Gray Gables Inn, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the historical name established by the original owner for its use as a restaurant shortly after initial construction.

ANALYSIS

A historical resource research report was prepared by Legacy 106, Inc., which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria A and C and staff concurs. 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.

Soon after Paul and Iva Valle completed construction of the subject house in 1929, Paul became gravely ill and was unable to work to support his wife and children. Faced with this, and the onset of the Great Depression, Iva Valle responded with such entrepreneurial fervor that she helped her family to survive and eventually prosper through the difficult times. In a San Diego Union article from 1949 aptly titled "Adversity Brings Success," the inspiring story of Iva's achievements as a successful restaurateur begins with the subject house. Around 1930, Iva spent the family's savings to build a small addition to the 3530 Promontory Street house and used the space as a tea room and small restaurant she called the Gray Gables Inn. Offering food, drink and charming atmosphere, the inn quickly became very popular as place for locals to eat and socialize. Iva showed an innate business sense and an understanding that big risks can sometimes lead to big rewards. The Gray Gables Inn enjoyed great success over the years, and when the Valle family moved out of the house in 1935, they took their growing restaurant business with them.

Significance Statement: The subject resource with its restaurant addition intact reflects a special or unique aspect of Crown Point's and the City's historical, cultural, social, and economic development. The Gray Gables Inn surpasses the usual in significance as it embodies an entrepreneurial spirit and a uniquely American mindset. This quality of perseverance through hardship represented by the Gray Gables Inn allowed the Valle family and people they employed and served to carry on a greater quality of life through some of America's most desperate of

economic times. The subject resource retains good integrity of association dating to the 1930-1935 period to convey this significance. Therefore, staff recommends 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 resource is a two story single family residence constructed in 1929 in the Tudor Revival style. It is of standard wood frame construction on a concrete foundation and exhibits a compound plan form with asymmetrical façade. The primary elevation is marked by multiple steeply-pitched gabled roof forms with enclosed eaves and minimal overhang. The roof does not appear to be sheathed in natural slate as the report suggests, but rather in a simulated slate composed of asbestos shingle as noted on the Building Record. Brick veneer wainscoting surrounds the house and is anchored by a massive brick chimney on the south (side) elevation and brick arched entry leading to the front porch. The decorative chimney pot elaboration is also constructed of brick. Two gabled dormers are seen on the north side of the house. Fenestration is characterized by tall multi-light steel casement windows, appearing singly or in groups. The original detached double garage with a replacement door sits at the southwest corner of the property and features brick cladding that has been painted, and a matching gable roof.

The nomination includes interior features proposed for designation (Attachment 2). The living room features a stout fireplace with arched niche and Batchelder or Batchelder style ceramic tile hearth below. Also included is the interior detailing associated with the restaurant or tea room addition incorporating hand hewn beams and framing, and brick wainscoting. Staff is in support of including these character defining interior features

In circa 1930, very shortly after the building's construction, a restaurant or tea room addition was built along the south (side) elevation. This addition expands on the Tudor Revival character of the original home and employs numerous architectural details embodying this style including the lancet arched entry door, decorative half timbering, and diamond-paned window. While this addition features a high degree of detailing, staff feels it can be effectively described as Tudor Revival in style rather than Programmatic as suggested in the report. The restaurant or tea room addition – through its age, architectural styling and intended use – has gained historical significance in its own right and is not considered to be an alteration affecting the resource's integrity. As such, the period of significance relating to Criterion C has been expanded to include this addition.

A few modifications have occurred over the years and together do not significantly impair the building's integrity. A small bump out addition is located behind the front gabled dormer on the north side of the house. A service door at the rear of the house is either a replacement or has been modified to include an aluminum window. The original stucco appears to have been added to, but with a texture sympathetic to the style and age of the building. The brick veneer surrounding the house has been partially removed – as seen in historic photos, this brick work originally reached up to the height of the lower window sills. Finally, it is not clear in the historic photos if the side entry to the porch is original, however this would not be considered a significant alteration negatively affecting integrity.

Significance Statement: Popular in the 1920s and 1930s, Tudor Revival architecture is loosely based on a variety of late Medieval English styles and influences, but unlike some English prototypes, Tudor Revival style houses exhibit steeply pitched gable roofs that dominate the facades. Other character defining features include the use of stucco as well as wood cladding and veneer, depending upon the subtype, and tall wood windows. Decorative half-timbering is present on only about half of the examples. The limited modifications allow the subject house to continue to convey the historic significance of the Tudor Revival style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style; including its steeply pitched gabled roof form; smooth stucco and brick exterior; prominent brick chimney with elaborated top; arched brick entry; divided light steel casement windows; and highly detailed Tudor Revival style restaurant C.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

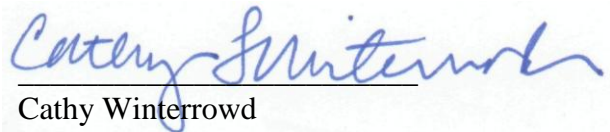
If the property is designated by the HRB, conditions related to restoration or rehabilitation of the resource may be identified by staff during the Mills Act application process, and included in any future Mills Act contract.

CONCLUSION

Based on the information submitted and staff's field check, it is recommended that the Gray Gables Inn located at 3530 Promontory Street be designated with a period of significance of 1929-1935 under HRB Criterion A as a special element of Crown Point's and the City's historical, cultural, social, and economic development; and Criterion C, as a resource that exhibits the character defining features of the Tudor Revival style and retains integrity to its 1929-1930 period of significance. Interior elements included in the designation are the living room fireplace with arched niche and Batchelder or Batchelder style ceramic tile hearth; and the interior wood and brick detailing associated with the restaurant or tea room addition. 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:

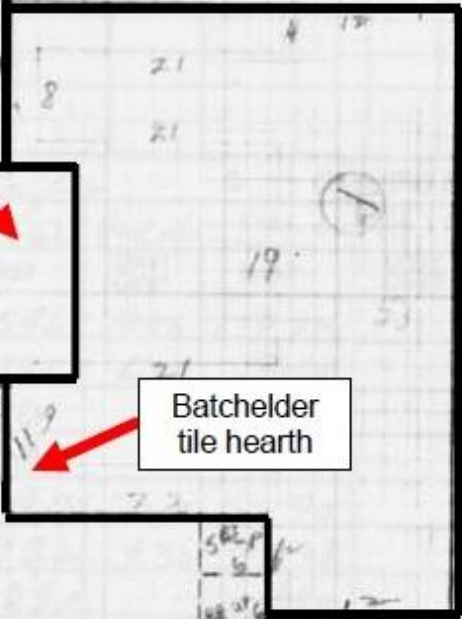
1. Draft Resolution
2. Interior Elements Proposed for Designation
3. Applicant's Historical Report under separate cover

A.5 Site Plan with Footprint showing location of historic addition with interior items proposed for designation

Taken from the Residential Building Record



Historically significant circa 1930 Gray Gables Inn addition with extensive wood elaborations



Batchelder tile hearth



Front Elevation (East)

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A

ADOPTED ON 7/31/2014

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 7/31/2014, to consider the historical designation of the **Gray Gables Inn** (owned by Alex Velasquez and Jennifer S. Ross, 3530 Promontory Street, San Diego, CA 92109) located at **3530 Promontory Street, San Diego, CA 92109**, APN: **423-493-15-00**, further described as BLK 10 LOT 222 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 Gray Gables Inn on the following findings:

(1) The property is historically significant under CRITERION A as a special element of Crown Point's and the City's historical, cultural, social, and economic development and retains integrity to its period of significance. Specifically, from about 1930-1935, the resource was the site of the Gray Gables Inn, a popular restaurant and tea room established in circa 1930 by owner Iva Valle. Her venture was born out of the necessity to provide for her family – and its success and popularity among locals allowed the family and the community to endure the economic hardships of the times. 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 C for its distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Tudor Revival style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1929-1930 period of significance. Specifically, the resource retains its steeply pitched gabled roof form; smooth stucco and brick exterior; prominent brick chimney with elaborated top; arched brick entry; divided light steel casement windows; and highly detailed Tudor Revival style restaurant addition. 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 living room fireplace with arched niche and Batchelder or Batchelder style ceramic tile hearth; and the interior wood and brick detailing associated with the restaurant or tea room 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: 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