



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: September 13, 2012 REPORT NO. HRB-12-051

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board
Agenda of September 27, 2012

SUBJECT: **Item #11 – Ridgeway House**

APPLICANT: Robert and Marilen Sedlock represented by Legacy 106, Inc.

LOCATION: 4256 Ridgeway Drive, Kensington-Talmadge Community, Council District 3

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Ridgeway House located at 4256 Ridgeway Drive as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Ridgeway House located at 4256 Ridgeway Drive as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1929 under HRB Criteria A, C and D. The interiors proposed in the designation include the exposed wood ceiling in the living room; second level interior living room balcony with lathe turned spindle wood balustrade; copper fireplace hood in the library; the decorative ceramic tile at the staircase risers; and the wrought iron staircase railing. The designation excludes the detached rear pool house which is approximately 300 square feet and was constructed in 1984. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

1. The resource is a special element of Kensington's economic, aesthetic and architectural development, reflecting the efforts of George Forbes, the Davis-Baker Company and Richard Requa to stabilize real estate activity in Kensington and set a standard for architectural and aesthetic development in Kensington. Specifically, Forbes, Davis-Baker and Requa sought to attract permanent residents who would build quality homes by designing and building model homes, including the Ridgeway House, which exemplifies the ideal California style.

2. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of Spanish Eclectic style architecture and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1929 period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits a low-pitched fired red clay Mission half-barrel tile roof with minimal overhanging roof eaves; hand troweled decorative stucco on the exterior facades; a colonnaded covered porch and inset arched doorway with a heavy wood paneled front door; rear porch with lathe turned column and railing on the second floor; Spanish style decorative wrought iron throughout the structure; a cantilevered stucco chimney with decorative, stepped double cap; small stucco front balcony a decorative wooden window grille on the front façade; and fenestration consisting of wood and metal casement and double hung windows.
3. The resource is representative of a notable work of Master Architect Richard Requa and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the resource was considered by Requa to be a unique opportunity to design a “typical California home,” drawing upon Spanish architectural history and aesthetics reflecting the principles of picturesque simplicity, unpretentious honesty in the use and treatment of construction materials, and the incorporation of gardens in the architectural scheme.

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 house is a two-story single-family residence with an attached garage in the front located in the Kensington Heights Neighborhood of the Kensington-Talmadge Community.

The historic name of the resource, Ridgeway House, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name placed on the building upon construction, as evidenced by the original plans and newspaper articles and advertisements from the period.

ANALYSIS

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

In 1920, George Forbes bought 110 acres north of the Kensington Manor subdivision and contracted with the Davis-Baker Real Estate Company of Pasadena to develop an exclusive residential subdivision with strict architectural controls requiring quality construction with an aesthetic inspired by San Diego's Spanish heritage. Master Architect Richard Requa was hired to oversee and approve all development in the subdivision. Upon sale of the first lots in 1926, sales

were swift, but development of the lots was not. Investors attracted to a restrictive subdivision with improvements and relatively low lot prices bought and re-sold the lots at a profit without developing them. Looking to stem this speculative activity and attract permanent residents to build homes and establish the neighborhood, Forbes and the Davis-Baker Company developed a plan to build model homes that would attract possible residents and set a standard for appropriate development in the neighborhood. The subject house was one such model home, one of several designed by Requa and financed by Forbes. The Ridgeway House was highly publicized in newspapers, magazines and journals as not only a model of development in Kensington, but a model of the ideal "California style" that could be built throughout San Diego. Photos of the exterior and interior were published, and public tours were made available upon appointment. The house was then sold by Forbes eight months later. Given the property's role in the early development of Kensington, serving as both a means of establishing an architectural standard and attracting permanent residents and stabilizing real estate activity; the property exemplifies a special element of Kensington's economic, aesthetic and architectural development. 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 subject property located at 4256 Ridgeway Drive is a two story, asymmetrical Spanish Eclectic style home constructed in 1929 and features a low-pitched fired red clay Mission tile half-barrel roof with minimal eave projections and hand troweled decorative stucco on the exterior façade. The heavy wood paneled front door is inset from the exterior walls and is centered within an arched front doorway. The front façade is dominated by a double arched covered entry loggia with a recessed doorway below an elaborately carved upper story window grille and the projecting chimney. This second floor chimney on the front of the left side cantilevers out over the first floor and has stucco surfacing matching the rest of the structure. The chimney also contains an arched and stepped top with clay tile roofed side vents. On the west side of the front elevation and left of the chimney, there is a cantilevered second story overhang covered by the main roof and is supported with wooden brackets matching those on the chimney. To the right of the chimney is a double casement window flanked by decorative painted wooden shutters. The second floor contains a rustic carved wood painted boxed window grille with a larger central opening around the divided wooden grillwork. To the right of the window grille is a portion of the structure that projects towards the street and contains an arched fixed window between the first and second floors which the interior stairway can be seen. A double metal rectangular casement window is to the right flanked by paneled shutters and at this point the livable portion of the structure joins the attached garage. On the upper level above the garage is a partially overhanging stucco balconet with double French doors and matching paneled shutters. Remaining fenestration consists of metal and wood framed casement and double hung windows. The attached two-car garage is located on the front of the structure to the right with a wooden garage door and a small copula topped with a decorative wrought iron weathervane.

The applicant has nominated several interiors to be part of the designation including the exposed wood ceiling in the living room; second level interior living room balcony with lathe turned spindle wood balustrade; copper fireplace hood in the library; the decorative ceramic tile at the staircase risers; and the wrought iron staircase railing. The decorative fireplace in the living room was originally proposed for designation; however, the report provides an original photo of the fireplace that illustrates it has been modified by removal of the original fireplace surround and introduction of a surround made of copper material. It is for this reason that staff is not recommending designation of the living room fireplace.

A pool house measuring approximately 300 square feet was constructed in 1984. The pool house is not attached to the existing house and is in the rear yard not visible from public view. Staff agrees with the report that the structure does not adversely impact the integrity of the resource; however since the structure was constructed outside of the period of significance, it is excluded from the proposed designation. It should also be noted that in the early 1970's some windows on the front façade had the original glazing replaced with colored bottle bottom glass within the original sash. Since the glazing was replaced within the original window unit, this is not a significant impact.

Hugely popular following the 1915-1916 Panama-California Exposition which revived the romantic ideal of Spanish and Latin American architecture; the Spanish Eclectic style 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, an 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. The subject house conveys the historic significance of the Spanish Eclectic style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style, including a low-pitched fired red clay Mission half-barrel tile roof with minimal overhanging roof eaves; hand troweled decorative stucco on the exterior facades; colonnaded covered porch and inset arched doorway with a heavy wood paneled front door; rear porch with lathe turned column and railing on the second floor; Spanish style decorative wrought iron throughout the structure; cantilevered stucco chimney with decorative stepped double cap; small stucco front balcony; a decorative rooftop cupola; a decorative wooden window grille on the front façade. Therefore, staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion C. The designation excludes the detached rear pool house which is approximately 300 square feet and was constructed in 1984.

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

Richard Requa came to San Diego in 1900, and though he did not attend architecture school he trained under Irving Gill, one of the early Modernists in San Diego. Gill was known for simplifying his designs, reducing ornamentation, and focusing on the mass and shape of a building. Requa was influenced by Gill's ideas and would incorporate them into his own designs after he left Gill's office.

Recognized as a Master Architect by the HRB, Requa was interested in a variety of architectural styles including Colonial Mexico styles, Pueblo, Spanish, and Moorish. Historian Parker Jackson has described Requa's style as "Southern Californian Architecture" and that Requa believed "the design of the building, the landscaping and the terrain should all be compatible and complement each other." To date, Requa has had 25 properties designated by the HRB either as an independent architect or in conjunction with another architect. Most of the properties Requa designed are of Spanish Eclectic style. The subject property located at 4256 Ridgeway Drive features several design elements that were inspired by Requa's travels to Spain in the late 1920's. These elements include the hipped fired red clay Mission half-barrel tile roof with minimal overhanging roof eaves; hand troweled decorative stucco on the exterior facades; a colonnaded covered porch and inset arched doorway with a heavy wood paneled front door; rear porch with lathe turned column and railing on the second floor; and Spanish style decorative wrought iron throughout the structure. In addition, Requa considered this commission from George Forbes to be a unique opportunity to design a "typical California home," drawing upon Spanish architectural history and aesthetics reflecting the principles of picturesque simplicity, unpretentious honesty in the use and treatment of construction materials, and the incorporation of gardens in the architectural scheme. As a result, the home is an important notable example of the work of Requa as a Master Architect. Therefore, staff recommends designation 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 Ridgeway House located at 4256 Ridgeway Drive be designated with a period of significance of 1929 under HRB Criterion A as a special element of Kensington's economic, aesthetic and architectural development; HRB Criterion C as a resource that embodies the distinctive characteristics of Spanish Eclectic style architecture and HRB Criterion D as a notable work of Master Architect Richard Requa. The interiors proposed in the designation include the exposed wood ceiling in the living room; second level interior living room balcony with lathe turned spindle wood balustrade; copper fireplace hood in the library; the decorative ceramic tile at the staircase risers; and the wrought iron staircase railing. The designation excludes the detached rear pool house which is approximately 300 square feet and was constructed in 1984. 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.



Jeffrey E. Oakley
Associate Planner



Cathy Winterrowd
Assistant Deputy Director/
HRB Liaison

JO/ks/cw

Attachment(s):

1. Draft Resolution
2. Photos of Proposed Interior Designations with a Key Map
3. Applicant's Historical Report under separate cover

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON 9/27/2012

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 9/27/2012, to consider the historical designation of the **Ridgeway House** located at **4256 Ridgeway Drive, San Diego, CA 92116**, APN: **440-031-09-00**, further described as LOT 285 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 Ridgeway House on the following findings:

(1) The property is historically significant under CRITERION A as a special element of Kensington's economic, aesthetic and architectural development, reflecting the efforts of George Forbes, the Davis-Baker Company and Richard Requa to stabilize real estate activity in Kensington and set a standard for architectural and aesthetic development in Kensington. Specifically, Forbes, Davis-Baker and Requa sought to attract permanent residents who would build quality homes by designing and building model homes, including the Ridgeway House, which exemplifies the ideal California style. 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 Spanish Eclectic style architecture and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1929 period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits a low-pitched fired red clay Mission half-barrel tile roof with minimal overhanging roof eaves; hand troweled decorative stucco on the exterior facades; a colonnaded covered porch and inset arched doorway with a heavy wood paneled front door; rear porch with lathe turned column and railing on the second floor; Spanish style decorative wrought iron throughout the structure; a cantilevered stucco chimney with decorative, stepped double cap; small stucco front balcony a decorative wooden window grille on the front façade; and fenestration consisting of wood and metal casement and double hung windows. This finding is further supported by the staff report, the historical research report, and written and oral evidence presented at the designation hearing.

(3) The property is historically significant under CRITERION D as a notable work Master Architect Richard Requa and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the resource was considered by Requa to be a unique opportunity to design a "typical California home," drawing upon Spanish architectural history and aesthetics reflecting the principles of picturesque simplicity, unpretentious honesty in the use and treatment of construction materials, and the incorporation of gardens in the architectural scheme. 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, exterior of the building and interiors as Designated Historical Resource **Site No. 0**. The interiors proposed in the designation include the exposed wood ceiling in the living room; second level interior living room balcony with lathe turned spindle wood balustrade; copper fireplace hood in the library; the decorative ceramic tile at the staircase risers; and the wrought iron staircase railing. The designation excludes the detached rear pool house which is approximately 300 square feet and was constructed in 1984.

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: _____
KEITH BAUERLE
Deputy City Attorney

