



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: October 11, 2012 REPORT NO. HRB-12-063

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board
Agenda of October 25, 2012

SUBJECT: **ITEM #12 – John Donohue Spec House #1**

APPLICANT: Martin and Carol Spuehler represented by Allan Hazard & Janet O'Dea.

LOCATION: 4129 Falcon Street, Uptown Community, Council District 2

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the John Donohue Spec House #1 located at 4129 Falcon Street as a historical resource with a period of significance of circa 1911.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the John Donohue Spec House #1 located at 4129 Falcon Street as a historical resource with a period of significance of c.1911 under HRB Criterion C. This designation excludes the detached 240 square foot garage constructed in 1980. This recommendation is based on the following finding:

The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of Craftsman Bungalow Architecture and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its circa 1911 period of significance. Specifically, the resource retains its gable roof with wide eave overhang and exposed decorative rafter tails, partial-width porch with piers and grouped square columns supporting an extended gable roof, decorative knee braces, extra stick work in both main and porch gables, and wood shiplap siding.

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 property located at 4129 Falcon Street is a circa 1911 Craftsman Bungalow single-family residence located in the Uptown Community.

The historic name of the resource, the John W. Donohue Spec House #1, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of John W. Donohue, who constructed the house as a speculation house.

ANALYSIS

A historical resource research report was prepared by Allen Hazard and Janet O'Dea, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criterion C. Staff concurs that the site is a significant historical resource under HRB Criterion C. 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 one and one-half story property was constructed circa 1911 and embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Craftsman Bungalow style. Although building permits were granted for the house November 3, 1910 it is unlikely that the house was completed in 1910. Therefore, staff has recommended a period of significance of circa 1911. The house features a gable roof with exposed rafter tails and an extended gable over the front partial width porch supported by square piers with three grouped square columns on each side. Both the main and porch gables feature extra stick work and decorative knee braces. There is a slim chimney on the south wall of the house as well as a central chimney on the south side towards the rear of the house. The original wood front door with viewing window is accessed through the front porch and is flanked by a small leaded glass casement window with a diamond muntin pattern. To the right of the partial width porch is a prominent bay window a portion of which features leaded glass in a diamond muntin pattern. A pair of double-hung windows sit within the main gable on the second story. The horizontal shiplap siding flares out where it meets the concrete foundation.

Two six-over-one double-hung windows sit on both sides of the chimney on the south side of the house. The center portion of the south elevation projects slightly and exhibits a Chicago-style window composed of a picture window below a leaded glass transom with a diamond muntin pattern flanked by two six-over-one double-hung windows. A wooden casement window sits to the right of the center projection. The north façade of the house is comprised of three replacement vinyl double-hung windows and two non-historic metal framed windows with attached window grills. The rear (west) elevation features a partial extension under a separate gable where a porch has been enclosed sometime before 1921 as it appears enclosed in the 1921 Sanborn maps. A shed for the water heater has been added to the northwest corner at an

unknown date. A large picture window sits on the main section of the house while new sliding windows appear on the enclosed porch.

Modifications to the house include a new roof with solar panels attached to the south side of the roof added in 2004. New windows have been added on the north and west elevations at an unknown date. The current homeowner has added a new white fence in front of the original concrete retaining wall with railings that guide the concrete steps up to the house. A 240 square foot detached garage constructed in 1980 sits on the southwest portion of the property. The modifications do not significantly detract from the resource and the house has retained architectural features consistent with Craftsman Bungalow style.

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. As a result, a flood of pattern books appeared, offering plans for Craftsman bungalows. One story vernacular examples are often called simply bungalows. 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 house conveys the historic significance of the Craftsman Bungalow style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style, including the gable roof with wide eave overhang and exposed decorative rafter tails, partial-width porch with piers and grouped square columns supporting an extended gable roof, decorative knee braces, extra stick work in both main and porch gables, and wood shiplap siding. Therefore, staff recommends 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 John W. Donohue Spec House #1 located at 4129 Falcon Street be designated with a period of significance of c.1911 under HRB Criterion C as a resource that embodies the distinctive characteristics. This designation excludes the detached garage constructed in 1980. 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.



Sarah Vonesh
Planning Intern



Cathy Winterrowd
Assistant Deputy Director/HRB Liaison

SV/ks/cw

Attachments:

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON 10/25/2012

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 10/25/2012, to consider the historical designation of the **John Donohue Spec House #1** located at **4129 Falcon Street, San Diego, CA 92103**, APN: **444-423-03-00**, further described as BLK 33 LOTS 5 & 6 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 John Donohue Spec House #1 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 Craftsman Bungalow architecture and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its circa 1911 date of construction and period of significance. Specifically, the resource retains its gable roof with wide eave overhang and exposed decorative rafter tails, partial-width porch with piers and grouped square columns supporting an extended gable roof, decorative knee braces, extra stick work in both main and porch gables, and wood shiplap siding. 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**. The designation excludes the 240 square foot detached garage constructed in 1980.

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