



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: March 13, 2009 REPORT NO. HRB-09-023

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board
Agenda of March 26, 2009

SUBJECT: **ITEM #12 – 1977 Titus Street**

APPLICANT: Jeffrey Lind, owner; represented by Legacy 106, Inc.

LOCATION: 1977 Titus Street, Uptown Community, Council District 2

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of 1977 Titus Street as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Do not designate the house at 1977 Titus Street as a historical resource under any HRB Criterion.

BACKGROUND

This item is being brought before the Historical Resources Board in conjunction with the owner's desire to have the house and site designated as a historical resource. The house at 1977 Titus Street was built in 1927 by the Quality Building and Securities Company. James and Florence Riach purchased 1977 Titus Street from the Quality Building and Securities Company in 1927 and they owned the property until 1955.



ANALYSIS

A historical resource research report was prepared by Legacy 106, Inc., which concludes that 1977 Titus Street is significant under HRB Criteria A and C. Staff does not agree that 1977 Titus Street is significant under either Criteria A or C 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 house at 1977 Titus Street is located in south Mission Hills on a rim with a view towards Middletown. At the time it was constructed, there were few homes in south Mission Hills, thereby making 1977 Titus Street one of the first homes in the area. In addition, 1977 Titus Street was one home in a group of four homes constructed on Titus Street by the Quality Building and Securities Company. Though the design of the home took advantage of the topography and was constructed as part of a group, this does not reflect a special element of the City's or a community's historical, architectural, or aesthetic development. Many homes in San Diego are located at the top of a hill or canyon to maximize the view and topography of the land. The construction of 1977 Titus Street along with the other homes by the Quality Building and Securities Company did not have a larger impact on the City or neighborhood. Therefore, the home is not eligible under HRB Criterion A.

CRITERION C - Embodies distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period or method of construction or is

The home at 1977 Titus Street was designed in the Spanish Eclectic architecture style and retains some character defining features of the style. This includes the architectural massing of the home with a central tower and hipped red tile roof. The central tower is flanked on either side by two wings; a one story gable roof wing to the northwest and a two story hipped wing to the southeast. Both wings have red tile roofs. One of the primary features of the front (northeast) façade is the large casement window centered above the main door with a small domed balconet. While a balconet was originally in this location, the balconet has been modified (see details below). The front door features an offset wicket as well as a sculpted stucco inset. Other features of the home include large and small multi-pane casement windows secured with wrought iron box window grates that allow the windows to open. In addition, a sculpted chimney with capped left shoulder and inset bowl is centered along the northeast elevation of the northwest wing.

While 1977 Titus Street retains some character defining features of the Spanish Eclectic architectural style, several modifications have lowered the material integrity of the building. This includes the following:

- Modifications to balconet – By the 1960s, the original balconet and iron work had been removed. A previous owner reconstructed a balconet, however, this balconet does not have the correct proportions or shape as it is much larger and rounder than the original. In addition, the metal handrail is not the original as historic photographs from 1927

indicate the railing had more pickets and the pickets wrapped around and above the stiles of the railing.

- Window Modifications at Master Bath – In the 1960s, the original large windows at the master bath (second floor of southeast wing) were replaced with two small multipaned casement windows. In 1979 these two small windows were replaced with three arched windows.
- Iron work – Historic photos from 1927 indicate the home originally had decorative iron work in the sculpted inset at the front door and above the door. This iron work has been removed and replaced with tiles.
- Other window modifications – Windows in several spots have been modified or removed. This includes along the southeast elevation at the master bath. There were two small single casement windows seen in the 1927 photographs. One of these windows was removed and the other was replaced with a double casement window, thereby modifying the size of the window. On the northwest elevation at the second floor both windows were removed and replaced with smaller casement windows. The replacement windows are not in the same location as the original windows.
- Roof Alterations – Bird blockers have been added, indicating the roof tiles may have also been replaced.
- Stucco Wall Cladding – The stucco wall cladding has been altered. The texture is very smooth. The original likely had more texture to it than the current texture.
- Large rear (southwest) addition

Staff's position is that the modification to the balconet is the most significant alteration. Staff attempted to work with the owner prior to bringing the property before the HRB to have the balconet reconstructed based on historic photographs. Staff felt if the balconet could be restored, the designation could be supported and the other alterations could be addressed through Mills Act considerations. The owner presented drawings to staff (attached to this staff report) that were not adequate and did not accurately depict the design of the original balconet. Rather than revise the drawings, the owner decided to bring the property before the HRB at this time.

Due to the number and type of alterations, there has been a cumulative impact to the home that lowers its material integrity. The current appearance of the house creates a false sense of history and the modifications do not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion C.

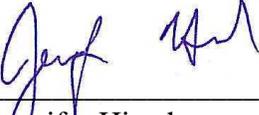
OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

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.

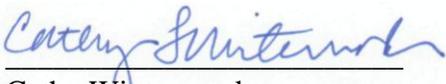
CONCLUSION

Based on the information submitted and staff's field check, staff does not recommend the designation of 1977 Titus Street.

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.



Jennifer Hirsch
Senior Planner



Cathy Winterrowd
Senior Planner/Program Coordinator

JH/cw

Attachments:

1. Applicant's Historical Report under separate cover
2. Drawings of proposed balconet provided by Applicant

