



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: September 15, 2010 REPORT NO. HRB-10-048

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board
Agenda of September 23, 2010

SUBJECT: **ITEM #5 – Robert and Frances Johnston Rental House**

APPLICANT: Dylan Calsyn & Beth Timpe represented by IS Architecture

LOCATION: 1545 29th Street, Greater Golden Hill Community, Council District 3

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Robert and Frances Johnston Rental House located at 1545 29th Street as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Robert and Frances Johnston Rental House located at 1545 29th Street as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1943-1948 under HRB Criterion A. This recommendation is based on the following finding:

The resource is a special element of the City's cultural development and retains integrity. Specifically, the resource, owned by Hollywood Theatre owners Robert and Frances Johnston was used to house burlesque performers and entertainers from the Hollywood Theatre at its heyday during World War II, and is one of the last remaining structures associated with the Hollywood Theatre, which attracted performers from across the country.



City Planning & Community Investment
202 C Street, MS 5A • San Diego, CA 92101-3865
Tel (619) 235-5200 Fax (619) 533-5951

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 building is a two story single family residence located in a low-density single family zone in the South Park Addition subdivision. The building is on the southeast corner of 29th Street and Cedar Street and is surrounded by residential uses.

This item was previously docketed for review by the Board at the July 22, 2010 hearing with a staff recommendation to not designate the house due to a lack of integrity. The item was continued for 60 days at the request of the applicant in order to allow time to provide additional research and analysis in support of designation.

The historic name of the resource, the Robert and Frances Johnston Rental House, has been identified by staff as the appropriate name based on the historical significance of the property. The Board's adopted naming policy is silent in regard to naming associated with Criterion A. With a strict application of the naming policy, the house would be named for the first owner/resident. However, staff's position is that this naming is inappropriate, as it does not relate to the significance or historic period of the building. Given that the property is eligible under HRB Criterion A as a special element of San Diego's cultural development because it was used by owners Robert and Frances Johnston to house entertainers from the Hollywood Theatre from 1943-1948, staff finds that the most appropriate name would be the Robert and Frances Johnston Rental House.

ANALYSIS

The applicant has submitted an addendum to the nomination prepared by IS Architecture and dated September 3, 2010 which concludes that the house is significant under HRB Criteria A, B and C. Staff has reviewed the addendum and concurs that the house is significant under HRB Criterion A, but not HRB Criteria B and C. 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.

The addendum has provided additional information on the history and significance of the Hollywood Theatre (originally the Liberty Theatre) located on F Street in downtown San Diego. The theatre was the only exclusively burlesque theatre in San Diego from the early 1920s until 1970. Burlesque was a highly popular form of entertainment in the early part of the twentieth century. The Hollywood Theatre operated as the Liberty Theatre up through the Depression and the 1935-36 Exposition, during which time the theatre had to shutter its doors for a year and a half. When the theatre reopened following the Exposition, it did so as the Hollywood Theatre. Famous burlesque acts, including Lili St. Cyr, started and performed at the theatre. During World War II the Theatre enjoyed terrific success with the influx of new servicemen. The severe

housing shortage created by the influx of both servicemen and war-time workers prompted the Johnstons to purchase the subject property to house their entertainers and workers, which they did from 1943-1948. With the demolition of the Hollywood Theatre in 1982, the subject property is one of the few remaining properties associated not only with the Johnstons, but with the burlesque entertainers that made the Hollywood Theatre such an enduring success and a unique entertainment venue in downtown San Diego. Therefore, staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion A as a special element of the cultural development of San Diego, with a period of significance of 1943-1948.

CRITERION B - Is identified with persons or events significant in local, state or national history.

The addendum provides some additional information on Robert and Frances Johnston and asserts that the subject property is the best remaining example that could be associated with them. However, the report limits its discussion of the Johnston's properties to the subject property and a home in Mission Hills located at 2350 Fort Stockton Drive, which is under review as a structure 45 years old or older. No final determination regarding eligibility of the Fort Stockton home has been made. The Criteria Guidelines require research into all properties owned, operated or occupied by the potentially significant individual in order to determine which extant property best reflects the individual's significant accomplishments. The report did not provide any analysis beyond the mention of the Mission Hills property and the fact that the Hollywood Theatre has been demolished. Even if the Johnstons were to be considered historically significant, the applicant has not provided the research or analysis required to demonstrate that the subject property is the appropriate property to be designated for an association with them. Therefore, staff continues to recommend against designation under HRB Criterion B.

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 applicant has not provided any additional information regarding the integrity of the home not previously known at the time of the last staff report. Staff maintains that the modifications (which include substantial additions and wholesale replacement of the windows) have significantly and adversely impacted the building's integrity as it relates to design, materials, workmanship and feeling, all of which are critical to conveying significance as a resource which embodies the distinctive characteristics of vernacular Prairie architecture. As a result, the building no longer retains architectural integrity to its 1912 date of construction. Therefore, staff continues to recommend against 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 Robert and Frances Johnston Rental House located at 1545 29th Street be designated under HRB Criterion A as a special element of San Diego's cultural development with a period of significance of 1943-1948. 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.



Kelley Stanco
Senior Planner



Cathy Winterrowd
Principal Planner/HRB Liaison

KS/cw

- Attachment(s):
1. Draft Resolution
 2. Staff report HRB-10-034, dated July 15, 2010
 3. Applicant's Addendum under separate cover

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON 9/23/2010

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 9/23/2010, to consider the historical designation of the **Robert and Frances Johnston Rental House** (owned by Dylan S. Calsyn & Beth K. Timpe, 1545 29th Street, San Diego, CA 92102) located at **1545 29th Street, San Diego, CA 92102**, APN: **539-354-01-00**, further described as BLK 12 LOT 1 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 Robert and Frances Johnsons Rental House on the following findings:

(1) The property is historically significant under CRITERION A as a special element of San Diego's cultural development. Specifically, the resource, owned by Hollywood Theatre owners Robert and Frances Johnston was used to house burlesque performers and entertainers from the Hollywood Theatre at its heyday during World War II, and is one of the last remaining structures associated with the Hollywood Theatre, which attracted performers from across the country. 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 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: _____
NINA FAIN
Deputy City Attorney



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: July 15, 2010 REPORT NO. HRB-10-034

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board
Agenda of July 22, 2010

SUBJECT: **ITEM #8 – 1545 29th Street**

APPLICANT: Dylan Calsyn & Beth Timpe represented by IS Architecture

LOCATION: 1545 29th Street, Greater Golden Hill Community, Council District 3

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the property located at 1545 29th Street as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Do not designate the property located at 1545 29th Street under any adopted HRB Criteria.

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 building is a two story single family residence located in a low-density single family zone in the South Park Addition subdivision. The building is on the southeast corner of 29th Street and Cedar Street and is surrounded by residential uses.



City Planning & Community Investment
202 C Street, MS 5A • San Diego, CA 92101-3865
Tel (619) 235-5200 Fax (619) 533-5951

On May 2, 2007 the property was reviewed by the Design Assistance Subcommittee (DAS) at the owner's request. The DAS was asked to comment on the impact of prior modifications on the building's integrity and eligibility for designation, and to recommend restoration measures that may increase the likelihood of the building's designation. The prior modifications are detailed in the discussion of Criterion C below. The meeting record for this DAS meeting has been included as Attachment 1. The general consensus of the DAS was that the modifications were significant and extensive restoration would be required. No such restoration has occurred to date.

ANALYSIS

A historical resource research report was prepared by IS Architecture, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criterion C. Staff disagrees that the site is a significant historical resource under HRB Criterion C, due to a lack of integrity. 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 house located at 1545 29th Street is a two story vernacular single family home constructed in 1912 in the Prairie style. The house features a flat roof with overhanging boxed eaves and soffit; wood cornice; heavy dash stucco over wood frame construction; and a concrete foundation. The entry is slightly recessed under the second floor at the northwest corner of the house with a large square stucco column at the corner. To the right of the recessed porch, a gently rounded bay features three windows. At the second floor, square bays at each corner project forward around the corner of the building over decorative wood corbels. As originally designed in 1912, the house was square in shape, with generally equal massing at the top and bottom floors. While not exactly symmetrical, the original massing was balanced and contained within the square foot print. In 1924 a single-story addition was added to the south side of the building down the full length of the side and flush with the front façade. The highly prominent addition features a tripartite window; and although it was a relatively early addition, it severely impacted the original compact and rather symmetrical vernacular Prairie design. The house has undergone a number of other modifications, some of which have unknown dates. These modifications include:

- The enclosure of a second floor balcony located at the rear of the building along the Cedar Street frontage, again in a highly visible location.
- A ground floor addition at the east (rear façade), flush with the north (Cedar St) elevation.
- Possibility of additional enclosures at the rear of the property, as evidenced by odd recesses, projections, roof and cornice lines, and fenestration patterns.
- Wholesale replacement of all original wood frame and sash windows with vinyl frame and sash windows in 2001. The windows were generally replaced within the same opening with the same operation and glazing pattern and appear similar to those in the historic photos (note that ogees were not present on the original windows). A few significant exceptions occur at the central window on the rounded bay on the main

façade, which was enlarged and changed from 1-over-1 to single pane fixed; as well as multiple changes to the fenestration on the north, Cedar Street façade, including the removal of a door opening. In addition to the changes in size and operation, the use of a completely different and historically inappropriate material is not an in-kind replacement consistent with the Standards.

- Patching of the stucco in a manner similar too, but clearly different from the original stucco.

The modifications noted have significantly and adversely impacted the building's integrity as it relates to design, materials, workmanship and feeling, all of which are critical to conveying significance as a resource which embodies the distinctive characteristics of vernacular Prairie architecture. As a result, the building no longer retains architectural integrity to its 1912 date of construction. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion C.

OTHER CRITERIA

Although the report does not recommend designation under HRB Criteria A and B, the report does state in passing, *“At the present time, the property does not appear to be eligible under Criteria A or B. However, the residence was briefly associated with people and events during the 1940’s that relate not only to San Diego’s war-time population boom, but to the history of the famous Hollywood Theatre on F Street between 4th and 5th Avenues... At the discretion of City of San Diego staff and the HRB, these circumstances... may also qualify the property for designation under Criterion A – Cultural Landscape for representing a notable element in the city’s social and cultural development during WWII, or under Criterion B – Historic Person or Event for having a notable association with [Robert and Frances] Johnston and with the Hollywood entertainers during the height of the theatre’s success.”*

Based upon the information provided in the report, staff concurs with the report's conclusion that the building is not eligible for designation under HRB Criteria A or B. In regard to Criterion A, while the building's use as housing for performers from the Hollywood Theater is interesting and somewhat unique, it is not reflective of a special element of development in San Diego.

According to the Criteria Guidelines, “special elements of development refer to a resource that is distinct among others of its kind or that surpass the usual in significance. It is not enough for a resource to simply reflect an aspect of development.” In regard to Criterion B, there is insufficient evidence provided to support the establishment of Robert and Frances Johnston as historically significant individuals. In addition, the HRB's Criteria Guidelines require that “the resource must be associated with the person during the period that the person's significant achievements and contributions occurred.” If the Johnstons were historically significant, the subject property, which was used as a rental/income property and not their residence or place of business, would not be eligible for designation under HRB Criterion B. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation of the property at 1545 29th Street under HRB Criteria A or B.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

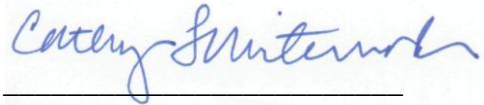
If the property is designated by the HRB, conditions related to restoration or rehabilitation of the resource may be identified by staff during the Mills Act application process, and included in any future Mills Act contract.

CONCLUSION

Based on the information submitted and staff's field check, it is recommended that the property located at 1545 29th Street not be designated under any adopted HRB Criteria. 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.



Kelley Stanco
Senior Planner



Cathy Winterrowd
Principal Planner/HRB Liaison

KS/cw

Attachment(s): 1. Design Assistance Subcommittee Meeting Record, May 2, 2007
2. Applicant's Historical Report under separate cover

DESIGN ASSISTANCE SUBCOMMITTEE

May 2, 2007, 3:00 pm – 6:30
4th Floor Conference Room
City Administration Building
202 C Street, San Diego, CA

MEETING NOTES

1. ATTENDANCE

Boardmembers:

David Marshall (Chair), Laura Burnett, Delores McNeely, Otto Emme and John Eisenhart

Staff:

Marianne Greene, City Attorney's Office; Michael Tudury and Cathy Winterrowd, HRB; Garry Papers, Deputy Director, Urban Form Division

Guests:

Office Bungalow Court: Marie Lia, attorney; Mike McPhee and Bruce Leidenberger, La Jolla Pacific Development; Lyda Cohen, 4th & Thorn LLC; Faramarz Jabbari, ARK architects

St. Cecelia's Chapel: Janay Kruger, consultant; John Silber, architect; Gary Squire, owner

3178 Maple Street: Penelope Wolfe Olds, owner, Cathy Winterrowd, HRB presenter

29th and Cedar Streets: Janet O'Day, Happy Hazard LLC; Dylan Calsyn and Beth Timpe, owners

Imperial Avenue Marketplace: Alex Zirpolo, Elkins-Zirpolo; Marie Lia, attorney; Cindy Blair, Fehlman LaBarre architects

Mingei Museum: Ricardo Rabines and Marin Gertler, Safdie Rabines architects, Rob Sidner, Museum Director

NTC Sellers Plaza: Item Continued

ATM at NTC: Item Continued

Other: Ted Giesing, Old Globe Theatre, Paul and Sarai Johnson, architecture

2. Public/Staff Comment

July Meeting Date: The first Wednesday in July is July 4, a holiday. DAS members agreed to meet Tuesday, July 3 in July. **Staff has since determined that due to staff vacation schedule and other commitments, July 3 is not possible. Staff has subsequently contacted DAS members and Wednesday, July 11 was chosen for the July DAS meeting.**

Railroad Museum Outdoor Exhibit: Staff has been working with John Rotsart, Executive Director of the Model Railroad Museum (MRRM) and Kathleen Hasenaur of Park and Rec to identify an area for the missing element of the MRRM exhibits, an outdoor model railroad display. A previous DAS review determined that the Alcazar/Persian Water Rug Garden was not a location that would be consistent with the Standards. However, a

Delores McNeely indicated that, like Mr. Marshall, she was OK with the existing windows and entry door. Mr. Emme concurred.

Mr. Emme suggested that, since the house is so simple in nature, the owner also look at the neighborhood for ideas for landscaping.

Laura Burnett and John Eisenhart concurred with Mr. Emme regarding the need to add landscaping to reinforce the historic character of the district.

Mr. Marshall commented on the existing olive color of the building, noting that the historic color was more likely a cream or white. He felt that the wall color should be corrected, allowing for more color options for a fabric awning.

Mr. Marshall indicated that if the owner were to agree to make the entry canopy changes suggested as well as painting it a historic color, he would feel comfortable designating the house, and making these changes a requirement of the Mills Act, to be done within one year. Although Ms. McNeely and Ms. Burnett agreed with Mr. Marshall, both Mr. Emme and Mr. Eisenhart indicated that the changes are minor and should be done before designation.

Other Comment:

Sarai Johnson suggested that the owner look at the NPS Preservation Brief on adding awnings to historic resources.

Paul Johnson suggested that the owners obtain and review the Sanborn Maps regarding any historic entry canopy.

- **29th and Cedar Streets:** Owners Beth Timpe and Dylan Calsyn, the owners of this 1912 Prairie style house discussed possible reversal of a previous owner's alterations to the windows and doors, as well as a ground floor addition. They indicated that they would be amenable to some changes in order for the structure to have sufficient historic fabric and integrity for designation on an individual basis.

The owners, with the assistance of HRB staff Cathy Winterrowd noted that the 1912 residence was converted to a duplex in 1926, and has, with the new ownership been converted back into a single-family residence.

They pointed out that most of the windows, and all those facing the streets on this corner lot, were changed to vinyl-framed double-pane windows. This was done because the house is located on the Lindberg Field flight path and the airplane noise is excessive. In addition, the front window was modified from what was probably a double-hung window to a wider picture window.

Finally, it was noted that, in 1924, an early addition was done to the front of the house at the ground floor to enlarge the rooms to the right of the entry as viewed from the street. The owners indicated that, due to the date of the addition, perhaps the addition might be considered historic.

Board Comment:

Mr. Marshall noted that the 1924 addition was out of character with the Prairie style and severely impacted the architectural style. He noted that the addition would be the biggest hurdle to designation.

Ms. McNeely agreed that the 1924 addition looked wrong, but that she was not that concerned with the change to vinyl framed double hung windows since they appear to

have a function (double-hung) that was consistent with the original wood windows. She noted that the new picture window at the front of the house was wrong and should be changed back to the original historic size and function.

Mr. Emme said that he could not support designation of any house with vinyl framed windows unless it was only being considered as a contributor to a historic district - not on an individual basis.

Ms. Burnett said that the addition was OK and that although the vinyl windows were not good, if the picture window was changed, she could support designation.

John Eisenhart stated that he could not support the individual designation of the house due to the addition, the vinyl windows and the picture window.

Mr. Marshall said that if the addition could be set back approximately 12" from the main body of the house, this may be supportable. In addition, for an individual designation, he felt that a new double-hung wood window, width to match the original would need to be installed in place of the picture window, and that the vinyl-frame windows facing the streets should be replaced with new wood double-hung windows (which could be laminated or double-pane glass). Lastly, he stated that the current stucco texture may also be an issue.

Mr. Emme stated that the re-stuccoing may have occurred as a result of a fire that had occurred. Consultant Janet O'Day said that she believed the "knobby" stucco texture was original.

Mr. Eisenhart stated that the correct term for this stucco texture is "heavy dash."

Mr. Emme stated that, in his view, without significant changes, the house could not be designated. He stated that any other comment about details such as the stucco texture would require a site visit.

Ms. O'Day mused about the possibility that the house might be designated as a contributor to a district. Since there was no district proposed in this area for the foreseeable future, this was not discussed.

- Imperial Avenue Marketplace (Farmers Market/Barrio Logan):

Chair David Marshall recused himself on this item and the next item, and turned over the chair to Boardmember Otto Emme. Mr. Marshall left the meeting at this time.

The applicant's team for this multi-block project, Marie Lia, attorney, Cindy Blair of Fehlman LaBarre Architects and Alex Zirpolo, one of the owners, discussed the proposed mixed use project and indicated that their intent was to have the project meet the Standards.

The proposed project is located on the full block bounded by Imperial and Commercial Streets (north and south), and 21st and 22nd Streets (west and east), as well as portions of the blocks to the west, north and east of the full block.

The proposed project would have underground parking for approximately 874 cars, 69,685 sq. ft. of commercial uses and 517,438 sq. ft. of residential. There are 481 residential units proposed, some of which would be affordable.

Mr. Zirpolo noted that the property was purchased in 1988, and that the team has been working diligently with the Barrio Logan community to assure that the project was what they wanted. The owners originally considered a warehouse use for many of the structures, but the community stated that the area needed retail. The owners have also met with a co-op of businessmen in the area and the established community groups.