



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO  
**Historical Resources Board**

DATE ISSUED: October 13, 2011 REPORT NO. HRB-11-071

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board  
Agenda of October 27, 2011

SUBJECT: **ITEM #11 – Richard and Viola Requa House**

APPLICANT: Kenji and Leslie Ima represented by Scott A Moomjian, Esq.

LOCATION: 4346 Valle Vista Way, Uptown Community, Council District 2

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Richard and Viola Requa House located at 4346 Valle Vista Way as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Richard and Viola Requa House located at 4346 Valle Vista Way as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1911 under HRB Criteria C and D. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

1. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of Craftsman style architecture with Spanish/Mediterranean influences and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1911 period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits a low pitch front-gabled roof; wide overhanging eaves; exposed roof rafters; a low-pitched, front-gabled partial porch with an arched recessed opening flanked by slender vertical sidelights; a front door composed of glass panes and flanked by multi-paned sidelights; and double-hung, single lite casement, and hopper wood windows.
2. 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 is a good example of one of Requa's earlier works in the Craftsman style as an independent architect and was Requa's personal residence until 1920.

## 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 one story single-family residence located in the Mission Hills Neighborhood of the Uptown Community.

The historic name of the resource, the Richard and Viola Requa House, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of the original owner and Master Architect, Richard Requa, who designed the house for him and his wife, Viola Requa's, personal residence until 1920.

## ANALYSIS

A historical resource research report was prepared by Scott Moomjian, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria C and D. Staff concurs that the site is a significant historical resource under HRB Criteria C and D. 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 house is a one story Craftsman style with Spanish/Mediterranean influences constructed in 1911 and features a low pitch front-gabled roof; wide overhanging eaves; exposed roof rafters; a low-pitched, front-gabled partial porch with an arched recessed opening flanked by slender vertical sidelights; double-hung and casement wood windows; and a front door composed of glass panes and flanked by multi-paned sidelights. The flooring in the front of the entryway and throughout the front yard area is composed of brick which extends into the trellis and patio area along the northeast portion of the property. The fireplace and a small chimney flue are located in the middle of the house. The west or rear elevation faces an open space canyon and two levels of balcony decks connect the house to the canyon. The main level balcony deck has decorative Spanish influenced design elements along the railing.

Modifications include a total of three windows along the north, side elevation and west, rear elevation that were replaced with non-historic aluminum windows. Along the east, front elevation, an original opening features a metal sliding glass door which replaced an older sliding door at an unknown date. The brick patio in the front yard was originally landscaped with plant material. When originally constructed, the home featured a basement that faced out towards the canyon which was finished for an additional living space around 1962 according to the report. These modifications are very minor and do not significantly impair the building's integrity. Overall, the building continues to convey the character defining features of the Craftsman style with Spanish/Mediterranean influences and retains a high degree of integrity from its 1911 date of construction. Therefore, staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion C.

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

Richard Requa (1881-1941) designed 4346 Valle Vista Way in 1911, earlier in his career as an independent architect. 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; however, five of the designated resources are Craftsman style with classical influences and were constructed prior to 1916. Requa is known to have practiced in the Craftsman style early in his career before developing his "Southern California" or Spanish Eclectic style of architecture. The subject property located at 4346 Valle Vista Way features several design elements that are also featured on the five early Craftsman style resources previously designated. These elements include the overall Craftsman style; stucco exterior façade; low-pitched, front-gabled roof; wood casement windows; and arched entryways. The subject property is one of the earliest Requa-designed structures to feature these elements and it is evident with his home that Requa used many of those same design elements for his future architectural designs before his later partnership with Frank Mead and his future career designing "Southern Californian Architecture." As a result, the home is an important, early, 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 Richard and Viola Requa House located at 4346 Valle Vista Way be designated with a period of significance of 1911 under HRB Criterion C as a resource that embodies the distinctive characteristics of Craftsman style architecture with Spanish/Mediterranean Influences and Criterion D as a notable work of Master Architect Richard Requa and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. 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.



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Jeffrey E. Oakley  
Associate Planner



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Cathy Winterrowd  
Principal Planner/HRB Liaison

JO/ks/cw

Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A  
ADOPTED ON 10/27/2011

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 10/27/2011, to consider the historical designation of the **Richard and Viola Requa House** (owned by Ima Family Trust 07-24-91, 4346 Valle Vista Way, San Diego, CA 92103) located at **4346 Valle Vista Way, San Diego, CA 92103**, APN: **443-270-18-00**, further described as LOT 28 OF VL 28 POR 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 Richard and Viola Requa House 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 style architecture with Spanish/Mediterranean influences and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1911 period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits a low-pitched, front-gabled partial porch with an arched recessed opening flanked by slender vertical sidelights; a front door composed of glass panes and flanked by multi-paned sidelights; and double-hung, single lite casement, and hopper wood windows. 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 D as a notable work of Master Architect Richard Requa and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the resource is a good example of one of Requa's earlier works in the Craftsman style as an independent architect and was Requa's personal residence until 1920. This finding is further supported by the staff report, the historical research report, and written and oral evidence presented at the designation hearing. 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: \_\_\_\_\_  
KEITH BAUERLE  
Deputy City Attorney