



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: March 8, 2012 REPORT NO. HRB-12-020

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board
Agenda of March 22, 2012

SUBJECT: **ITEM #17 – The David Louis and Susan E. Kretsinger House**

APPLICANT: Owner represented by Legacy 106, Inc.

LOCATION: 2539 Palm Avenue, 92156, Otay Mesa-Nestor Community, Council District 8

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the David Louis and Susan E. Kretsinger House located at 2539 Palm Avenue as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the David Louis and Susan E. Kretsinger House located at 2539 Palm Avenue as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1896 under HRB Criteria A and C. The designation excludes the 1928 kitchen addition and the non historic detached garage. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

1. The resource is a special element of the San Diego's citrus orchard agricultural industry development and retains integrity. Specifically, the resource contributes to the understanding of the citrus orchard economic development of South San Diego after the completion of the National City and Otay Railroad in 1887 and the Sweetwater Dam in 1888.
2. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of Queen Ann Free Classic and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1896 period of significance. Specifically, the resource retains its hipped roof with intersecting gables, gabled dormers, a centrally located tower, full-width front porch, two decorative chimneys, and a widow's walk just behind the tower. The exterior also retains its wood lap siding and wood shingles.

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 property is located in a predominantly single-family area of the South Bay near a commercial node.

The historic name of the resource, the David Louis and Susan E. Kretsinger House has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the names of the original owners who constructed the house as their personal residence.

ANALYSIS

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

With the introduction of the National City and Otay Railroad in 1887, Nestor and Palm City developed as agricultural areas. The "frostless" environment of the area was considered ideal for growing fruits and vegetables. Additionally, the slightly elevated highland soils above the floodplain provided proper drainage and did not have issues with root rot that made for an ideal citrus growing climate. The rail line made several stops and allowed citrus growers to easily transport their products. It is estimated that in 1901 ten million pounds of lemons and 2.5 millions of oranges were transported by the railroad. The rail line eventually became known as the San Diego & Arizona Railroad. The completion of the Sweetwater Dam in 1888 and the Otay Reservoir enabled the formation of water districts to finance water delivery systems to the agricultural orchards further allowing the expansion of the citrus orchards.

In 1916 the Hatfield Flood destroyed nearly all of the homes constructed in Palm City. The flood destroyed the rail line and agricultural fields in the low lying areas. The Kretsinger House was spared only by its location above the floodplain. Despite the destructive flood, the citrus orchards continued to thrive well into the 1930s. The Kretsinger House is significant as one of the few remaining examples of the citrus orchard agricultural farmhouses in the South Bay. It contributes to the understanding of the citrus orchard economic development of South San Diego after the completion of the National City and Otay Railroad in 1887 and the Sweetwater Dam in 1888, therefore staff recommends designation of 2539 Palm Avenue under 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.

Constructed in 1896, the house was built in the Queen Anne Free Classic style. The house has a hipped roof with several intersecting gables, gabled dormers and a centrally located tower. The

roof form features two decorative chimneys and a widow's walk just behind the tower. The exterior of the house is sheathed predominantly with wood lap siding and wood shingles in select areas. The majority of windows spaced evenly on each elevation are single light wood sash.

The north elevation features a full width shed and gable roof porch supported by turned spindle posts on top of a low wall. The wall has decorative turned spindles and corner balustrades. The west elevation features a bay window on the two story gable end. This elevation also features a one story shed roof addition that houses the 1928 kitchen addition. The south elevation features the rear of the shed roof kitchen addition and the gable roofed portion of the historic house with a small shed roof porch at the southwest corner. The west elevation features a bay window on a two story gable roof similar to the west elevation.

There have been some modifications to the property over the years, which include the rear kitchen addition, a stucco coat on the on the originally exposed brick chimney, a slightly higher railing around the widow's walk, a new detached garage, a slight grade change at the front of the house, and the introduction of new material at the front steps and sidewalks. There is also some question on the northeast corner of the front porch. The historic photo shows something within the front porch area, which could be a pair of windows however it is not clear. Overall, the modifications do not detract from the historic character of property and the house retains its character defining features. The house continues to convey the historic significance of the Queen Ann Free Classic architecture by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style. Additionally, it is significant as one of the few examples of the style remaining. Therefore staff recommends designation under Criterion C.

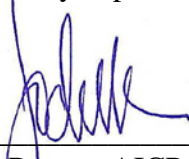
OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

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.

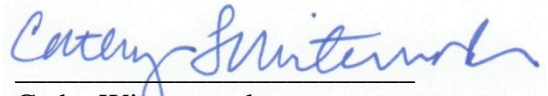
CONCLUSION

Based on the information submitted and staff's field check, it is recommended that the David Louis and Susan E. Kretsinger House located at 2539 Palm Avenue be designated with a period of significance of 1896 under HRB Criterion A for its association with the citrus orchard agricultural development of South San Diego after the completion of the National City and Otay Railroad in 1887 and the Sweetwater Dam in 1888 and Criterion C as a good example of a Queen Anne Free Classic. The designation excludes the 1928 kitchen addition and the non historic detached garage. 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.



Jodie Brown, AICP
Senior Planner



Cathy Winterrowd
Principal Planner/HRB Liaison

JB/cw

Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON 3/22/2012

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 3/22/2012, to consider the historical designation of the **David Louis and Susan E. Kretsinger House** located at **2539 Palm Avenue, San Diego, CA 92156**, APN: **628-101-07-00**, further described as PAR 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 David Louis and Susan E. Kretsinger on the following findings:

(1) The property is historically significant under CRITERION A as a special element of San Diego's citrus orchard agricultural industry development and retains integrity. Specifically, the resource contributes to the understanding of the citrus economic development of South San Diego after the completion of the National City and the Otay Railroad in 1887 and the Sweetwater Dam in 1888. 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 with a period of significance of 1896 as a resource that embodies the distinctive characteristics of Queen Ann Free Classic style architecture and retains integrity to the date of construction. Specifically, the resource retains its hipped roof with intersecting gables, gabled dormers, a centrally located tower, full-width front porch, two decorative chimneys, and a widow's walk just behind the tower. The exterior also retains its wood lap siding and wood shingles. 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 1928 kitchen addition and the non historic detached garage.

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