



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 13, 2009

TO: HRB Boardmembers

FROM: Jodie Brown, AICP, Senior Planner, CPCI

SUBJECT: Item 5 – 4186 Jackdaw Street

This item was continued from the June 25, 2009 meeting of the Historical Resources Board at the request of the applicant. Staff is in receipt of a memo dated June 25, 2009 from Christianne Knoop, which responds to the staff report dated June 11, 2009. Staff has the following comments on the June 25th memo:

Construction Date:

In the June 25th Staff Report, staff was concerned about the date of construction. Based on the information provided in the consultant's report there were several questions regarding the year of construction. The consultant's report noted that the house was constructed in 1914 based on the Residential Building Record, an ad from the Southwest Builder and Contractor and an ad from the Daily Transcript both from 1914. The address listed in the advertisements was for 4636 Jackdaw Street and did not correspond with the current address. Unfortunately, no Notice of Completion was found and, based on the directory search, the property was not listed until it was purchased in 1920 by John and Julia Shuyler. Additionally, the Sewer Permit that was provided for the house did not have a date (year) specified.

The consultant was able to provide clarification on the disparity in addresses listed in the advertisements by comparing this property with the City Directory listing of a nearby address that shifted from 4435 Jackdaw to 4185 Jackdaw between 1910 and today. The consultant also used information as it relates to the historic photo. The photo was taken by Ralph P. Stineman prior to 1916 as he was listed as a resident of Los Angeles in 1916 and likely did not take the photo after this date. Given the additional information, staff concurs that the date of construction was closer to 1914 than 1920.

Distinctive Wood Shingles and Vertical Slats/Window Bands:

Historically, the house had a distinctive wood shingle pattern. The pattern had alternating wide and slender bands and the flared skirt featured vertical wood slats. There were also horizontal wood bands above and below the windows. Prior to the current owner purchasing the house

asbestos shingles were installed on the house. It was not uncommon to install asbestos shingles over an original siding material. The current owner removed the asbestos shingles and replaced them with wood shingles in an inappropriate pattern. The existing wood shingles do not have any decorative elements that were present in the historic photo. Additionally, an added course of rounded shingles was added near the top of the windows. Per the Secretary of the Interior's Standards "Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved." The Standards also state "Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence." While the existing shingles may be in keeping with other Martin V. Melhorn properties nearby it has drastically altered the appearance of this house. The wood shingle replacement and pattern are not in keeping with the Standards.

Painted Porch Columns and Chimney:

The consultant has noted that the paint that was added to the exterior of the brick porch columns and chimney was beneficial and noted the brick deterioration of a neighboring property. Staff does not concur on the treatment of these elements. As state previously, per the Standards distinctive materials, features, finishes and construction techniques.....will be preserved." Exposed masonry is generally hard fired and meant to remain unpainted. While the mortar may require repointing during its lifetime, proper maintenance will ensure a long life. When paint is added to the exterior of the brick it could affect the longevity of the material. Depending on the breathability of the paint that was applied to the brick, water vapor may be trapped and in the long run create more significant problems. While abrasive paint removal methods are not appropriate there are several chemical paint removers that can maintain the exterior skin of the brick while removing the paint.

Carport:

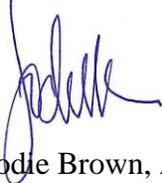
The current owner installed a carport over the driveway. When the house was originally constructed the driveway accessed a detached garage at the rear of the property. The garage was similar to the design of the main house. The side yard spacing allowed a 10-15 foot separation between 4186 Jackdaw and the neighboring house. The addition of the carport and the removal of the historic driveway have visually affected the spatial relationship. As stated in the Standards "New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property." Furthermore, the Guidelines state that new additions should be placed on non-character-defining elevations. The carport also partially obscures the character-defining porch.

Rear Addition and Pendant Lights:

The new addition is located at the rear of the property and has no visibility from the street. The addition is consistent with the Standards. Staff concurs with the consultant that the addition does not adversely impact the house.

The pendant lights were added to the historic interior by the current owner. The lights are minimally and do not overly detract from the intact living room.

In conclusion, staff believes that the exterior of the house has been adversely impacted by the numerous alterations. A number of the alterations are not in keeping with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. Staff does not recommend designation of this house under Criterion C. Additionally, given that the unique craftsmanship of the home has been altered staff believes that it is no longer a representative example of Alberta Security Company/Martin V. Melhorn's work.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jodie Brown', with a stylized, cursive script.

Jodie Brown, AICP
Senior Planner

Attachments: 1. Memo from Christianne Knoop, dated June 25, 2009
2. Historical Resources Staff Report dated June 11, 2009

**Applicant Response to
Staff Recommendation**

DATE: June 25, 2009 REPORT NO. HRB-09-040

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board Agenda of June 25, 2009

SUBJECT: ITEM #6 -4186 Jackdaw Street

APPLICANT: Bill and Astrid Shannon, property owners Represented by Christianne Knoop, consultant

LOCATION: 4186 Jackdaw Street, Uptown Community, Council District 2

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of 4186 Jackdaw Street as a historical resource.

INTRODUCTION:

Please accept this document as an additional attachment to the Historical Resources Board staff report dated June 11, 2009 with the same subject and description as listed above.

This document contains new facts, research and analysis, which should address concerns raised by the staff regarding the construction date and architectural integrity of the subject property.

1. CONSTRUCTION DATE

The staff report suggests that the house may have been constructed in 1920. As stated in the research report, this house was constructed in 1914. This is an important point, because it establishes this home as being a rare example of the earliest generation of Martin Melhorn homes.

The staff report notes that ads from 1914 for the home at that lot (in two different sources) list an address of 4636 Jackdaw rather than the modern address of 4186 - a difference of 450. Research indicates that addresses on Jackdaw shifted some time around 1914. Page 215 in the 1910 City Directory list Charles Freson at 4435 Jackdaw. The Charles Freson home has been designated as HRB #738. The modern address of the Freson Home is 4185 Jackdaw - also a difference of 450. The lot and block numbers of the Melhorn house are the same as the original subdivision map and remain the same in the current county assessor's map. These numbers should be considered more definitive.

Also, the subdivision lot books show the property in 1912 and 1913 as having a value of \$600. In 1914 the value climbs to \$900 and in 1915 the value of improvements climbs from \$0 to \$620 a reasonable value for this home at that time. Additional research shows sewer permits were issued to Melhorn's Company at this and nearby sites in late 1914 and early 1915. Alberta Security Company sold the property in 1920. In the interim the house was likely rented and served as a collateral property for other development.

Finally, a photograph of the house was discovered in the Ralph P. Stineman collection at the San Diego Historical Society. The curators of this collection date the contents to the period between 1911 to 1915. After 1915, Stineman is no longer taking pictures in San Diego and no longer appears in the city directory. In 1916, Stineman appears on the voter registration rolls in Los Angeles. A home built in 1920 would not appear in the Stineman collection.

2. DISTINCTIVE WOOD SHINGLES and VERTICAL SLATS

The staff report notes that the current shingles on the home differ from those seen in the provided Stineman photograph. Shingles are an inherently nondurable building material. It is not unusual for unpainted original shingles to have been replaced multiple times on a 95 year old home.

Similar to the original shingles, the unpainted vertical slats likely deteriorated and in due course were replaced. Since (unlike the shingles) these slats were not standard building materials, they were replaced with more standard shingles.

As noted elsewhere, a previous owner had replaced the original shingles and vertical slats with asbestos shingles some decades ago. The current owner subsequently replaced those asbestos shingles with wood shingles. The current shingles are consistent with other Melhorn homes of the period and specifically with the nearby 1913 Melhorn King House (HRB #318) which has a similarly flared foundation (see photos below).



Left: 3201 Washington Place

Bottom: 4186 Jackdaw

Staff also notes that the current siding includes a band of decorative circular shingles. The current owner recognizes that as a designated home this property would, in future, require siding and slats similar to those in the Stineman photo.

For the present, it should be noted that only three or four feet of this decorative band is visible from the street. And given the darkness of the wood, the decorative band is difficult to see and certainly has little affect on the home's overall appearance.

Almost all of the durable, original fabric (windows, doors, and fascia) on this home remain intact and in excellent condition. Nondurable fabric (roofing, siding, and paint) have been replaced, but this should not disqualify the home from designation.



3. WINDOW BANDS

Staff notes the absence of horizontal wood boards above and below the windows. This again relates to difficulties in replacement of the non-durable shingles and slats. These boards are superficial fascia. Similar boards can be seen on a neighboring Melhorn home at 4201 Jackdaw. As can be seen in the attached photos (photos #2) the boards are attached to the surface of the wall. These are simple squared timbers which could be easily replicated when the current siding needs replacement.



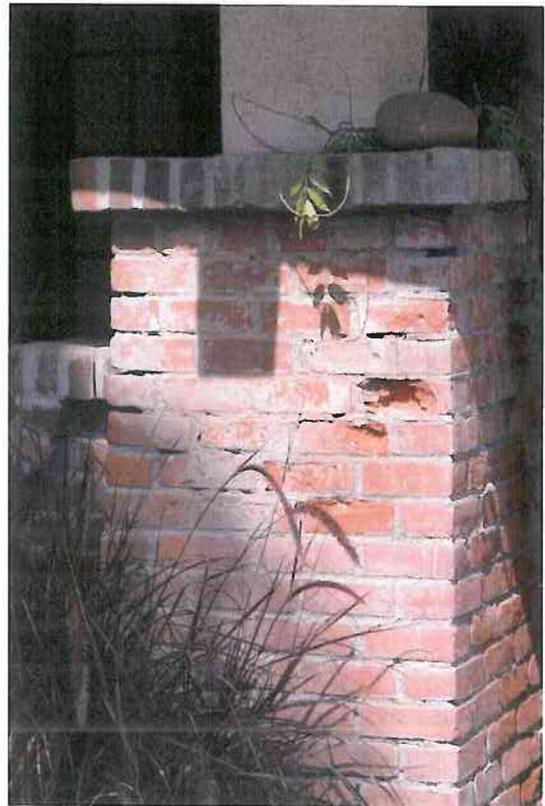
4. PAINTED PORCH COLUMNS AND CHIMNEY

Staff notes that the brick chimney and porch columns are currently painted, but appear unpainted in the Stineman photo.

This paint has almost certainly helped preserve the original brick. Compare again the neighboring Melhorn home at 4201 Jackdaw. This porch is very similar in style and construction. It was built at the same time, perhaps from the same batch of brick. However the bricks and mortar at 4201 Jackdaw, never having been painted, are so badly eroded, that they have required replacement (please see photos to the right).

The owner of the candidate house, himself a builder, believes removing the paint would expose the original brickwork to damage.

This paint should certainly not be counted against the home as it is considered for designation.



5. CARPORT

Staff notes the presence of a non-original carport in the driveway. This semi-permanent trellis was constructed without any damage to the original fabric of the home. It is not likely to be mistaken as an original part of the house. The owner regards the trellis as an element of landscaping. A climbing vine is likely to completely cover the trellis in a few seasons.

6. REAR ADDITION

As historic homes are often called upon to serve modern families, many home like this one, have modest additions built in a consistent style. As noted by staff, this addition can not be seen from the street. As such, it should have very little impact on the suitability of this home for designation.

7. PENDANT LIGHTS

As noted in the staff report, the lights at the living room crossbeams have been replaced. However the absence of these lights only minimally affects the historical value of this interior. In every other way this interior is exceptional. Besides being unusually complex in materials and labor, this interior is pristine. It has never been painted or refinished. As such, it could serve and an invaluable reference for the restoration of other interiors which have suffered modification and neglect.

CONCLUSION

The reservations and concerns of the staff regarding the house at 4186 Jackdaw Street have been well addressed. This house should be designated under criterion C for architecture and and D as an example of one of the earliest homes built by master builder Martin Melhorn.



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: June 11, 2009 REPORT NO. HRB-09-040

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board
Agenda of June 25, 2009

SUBJECT: **ITEM #6 –4186 Jackdaw Street**

APPLICANT: Bill and Astrid Shannon, property owners
Represented by Christianne Knoop, consultant

LOCATION: 4186 Jackdaw Street, Uptown Community, Council District 2

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of 4186 Jackdaw Street as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Do not designate the house at 4186 Jackdaw Street as a historical resource under any HRB Criteria due to a loss of integrity.

BACKGROUND

This item is being brought before the Historical Resources Board at the owner's request to have the house and site designated as a historical resource. The house at 4186 Jackdaw Street is a single family home that was originally constructed ca. 1920 by the Alberta Security Company. The house was constructed in the Craftsman style with Japoneseque influences.



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ANALYSIS

A historical resource research report was prepared by Christianne Knoop, the consultant on behalf of the property owners, Bill and Astrid Shannon, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria C and D. Staff disagrees with the determination that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria C and D, 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 was originally constructed ca. 1920 in the Craftsman Bungalow style with Japoneseque influences by the Alberta Security Company/Martin V. Melhorn. The house is a one story frame and wood shingle structure which flares at the foundation. The roof is low pitched gable and hipped roof with exposed rafter tails.

The low pitched roof has a gable that runs east/west with an intersecting gable that runs north/south. The main façade of the house has a small hipped gable that sits slightly above the gable for the front porch. The front porch gable is located at the southeast corner of the house. Each gable roof has a peaked roof line and false beams.

The front porch is supported by three large multi-level brick columns. On the north wall of the front porch is an original wood and glass front door and the west wall features a pair of 12 light French doors. The French doors feature screen doors.

Original windows on the house are a mixture of double hung and fixed wood windows. The large center window in the living room and the dining room feature multi-lights on the upper portion. Windows on either side of the chimney on the north side also feature stained glass.

The property owners are also proposing to designate the interior (dining and living room) of the house. The living room has a beamed ceiling with non-historic pendant lights in the beams. Portions of the beams are flared, repeating the angular oriental roof detail. The stained wood beams, wainscot and trim have never been painted. Both rooms contain crown molding with the dining room being larger and more ornate. The north end of the living room contains a tiled fireplace, with built-in cabinets on both sides and stained glass above the built-ins. The fireplace tile is in an earth tone mottled brown/green color and has a slightly raised hearth. The cased doorway into the dining room is detailed with wood block dentil work, which is repeated elsewhere in the house. The cased doorway has built-in cabinetry on either side. One built-in serves as a fold down desk and the other is a book shelf. The fold down desk has art glass doors, which mimics the angular oriental roof detail. The dining room has a built-in buffet and wood wainscot walls with a plate rail. The upper cabinet on the buffet has an angular front with clear leaded glass doors. The buffet base cabinet also has art glass doors.

The consultant's report concludes that the house was constructed in 1914 based on the Residential Building Record, an ad from the Southwest Builder and Contractor and an ad from the Daily Transcript both from 1914. While the lot and the block listed in the ads correspond with 4186 Jackdaw Street, the addresses listed in the ads do not correspond. The address listed

in the ads is for 4636 Jackdaw Street. Unfortunately, no Notice of Completion was found and based on the directory search the property was not listed until it was purchased in 1920 by John and Julia Shuyler. Additionally, the Sewer Permit that was provided for the house does not have a date (year) specified. Staff is concerned that the property was not constructed until a later date than proposed by the consultant.

Staff has several concerns with a number of alterations that have been completed on the house. Originally, the wood shingles on the house had a very distinct pattern. The wall sheathing alternated between wide and narrow horizontal bands of wood shingles while the flared portion of the wall had vertical wood slats. Separation between the horizontal wood shingles and the vertical wood slats was provided by a continuous wood board and just above the windows and doors was a continuous band that matched the lower band. Prior to the current property owners purchasing the property, the original wood shingles were covered with asbestos siding. The current owners removed the asbestos siding and replaced the original wood shingles. The new wood shingles lack any pattern to replicate the original style. The owners also added a new decorative element with round shingles just below the header height of the windows and doors. The vertical slats on the flared portion of the wall and the two trim boards were not replicated in the new wall sheathing. Additionally, while they were originally unpainted, the porch columns and the chimney have been painted and a carport was added to the south side of the house. The carport is not recessed and appears to be flush with the front of the house. The ribbon driveway that leads to the detached garage has been removed and replaced with an in-ground support/turf system. In 2002 a bedroom and bathroom were added to the rear of the house with no street visibility. Based on these alterations, staff does not recommend designation under Criterion C.

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

The consultant has stated that the property is also eligible under Criterion D for its association with the Alberta Security Company and Martin V. Melhorn.

Martin V. Melhorn was born in Indiana in 1866. He lived and worked in Falls City, Nebraska and Denver, Colorado before moving to San Diego in 1911 with his wife, Alberta, and their son William. With John J. Wahrenberger and John C. Rice as his partners, Martin formed the Bay City Construction company in 1911. Bay City Construction lasted until 1916 and during this time Melhorn and Wahrenberger both predominantly designed in the Craftsman and Arts & Crafts styles.

In 1913 Melhorn started another company, Alberta Security Company, with his wife Alberta, which focused on the financial aspects of his construction business. Bay City Construction Company was dissolved when John Wahrenberger became ill in 1916 at which time Melhorn began working under the name Martin V. Melhorn Investments. During this time Melhorn's design style shifted away from Arts & Crafts and became more experimental and he designed larger residences for leading citizens of San Diego. Some of his experimental designs at this time included cottages and bungalows in which he incorporated Prairie, Neoclassical, Colonial Revival and Japanese inspired elements.

Martin V. Melhorn Investments gave way to M.V. Melhorn & Son in 1922 when he partnered with his son William. This partnership lasted until Martin Melhorn's unexpected death in 1926. There are several homes that have been listed on the Register that have been designed by Melhorn. These homes include: HRB Site #318—The Melhorn/King Residence, 1302 Washington Place; HRB Site #583—Neil Brown/Martin V. Melhorn House, 4195 Palmetto Way; HRB Site #780—Alberta Security Company/Martin V. Melhorn Spec Home #1, 1201 West Arbor Drive; HRB Site #790—Tudor Rogers/Martin V. Melhorn House, 4060 Alameda Drive; and HRB Site #823—Franklin and Helen Boulter/Martin V. Melhorn House, 4119 Palmetto Way. Given the number of alterations that have occurred to the exterior of the home, staff believes that the property is no longer representative of Martin V. Melhorn and is not a notable example of his work, therefore staff does not recommend designation under 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 to not designate the house at 4186 Jackdaw Street as a historical resource under any HRB Criterion. 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
Senior Planner



Cathy Winterrowd
Senior Planner/Program Coordinator

jb/cw

Attachment: Applicant's Historical Report under separate cover