



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: April 11, 2024 REPORT NO. HRB-24-019

HEARING DATE: April 25, 2024

SUBJECT: **ITEM #5 – JOHN AND ELIZABETH SUCHY/CHARLES SALYERS HOUSE**

RESOURCE INFO: [California Historical Resources Inventory Database \(CHRID\) link](#)

APPLICANT: Jeffrey A & Jennifer E Calhoun; represented by BFS Environmental Services

LOCATION: 4834 Marlborough Drive, Kensington-Talmadge Community, Council District 9
APN 440-511-17-00

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the John and Elizabeth Suchy/Charles Salyers House located at 4834 Marlborough Drive as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the John and Elizabeth Suchy/Charles Salyers House located at 4834 Marlborough Drive as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1931 under HRB Criteria C and D. The designation includes the original detached garage. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

1. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Spanish Colonial Revival style and retains integrity from its 1931 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features an asymmetrical façade; stucco cladding; varied roof forms including gable, shed, and flat roofs; barrel tile roof cover; decorative attic vents; arched focal window; arched front entry; arched wooden front door; decorative window spindles and grilles; and wooden divided-lite casement windows.
2. The resource is representative of the notable work of Master Architect Charles H. Salyers, an accomplished architect responsible for buildings designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, and Streamline Moderne styles in San Diego, some of which have been historically designated. Specifically, the subject resource is an earlier example of his work in the Spanish Colonial Revival style work prior to his procurement of an architectural license in 1932, expressing a quality of craftsmanship seen in his other known works and retains integrity as it relates to the original 1931 design and period of significance.

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 has not been identified in any historic surveys, as the subject area has not been previously surveyed.

The historic name of the resource, the John and Elizabeth Suchy/Charles Salyers House, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of John R. Suchy and Elizabeth A. Suchy, who constructed the house as their personal residence, and the name of Charles H. Salyers, a Master Architect who designed the home.

In order to be eligible for designation and listing on the City's Register, a resource must meet one or more of the City's designation criteria as specified in the Historical Resources Guidelines of the Land Development Manual and retain integrity as it relates to the significance of the resource. Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance, which requires an understanding of the physical features and characteristics that existed during the resource's period of significance. The National, California, and City of San Diego Registers recognize location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association as the seven aspects of historical integrity.

Although not all seven aspects of integrity need to be present for a property to be eligible for designation, the record must demonstrate that the property retains enough physical and design characteristics to reflect and convey the significance of the property. Each resource depends on certain aspects of integrity, more than others, to express its historic significance. Determining which of the aspects are most important to a particular property requires an understanding of the property's significance and its essential physical features. The [*Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria*](#) provide information regarding the City's designation criteria, as well as guidance on their application and how to evaluate the integrity of a resource.

ANALYSIS

The property located at 4834 Marlborough Drive is a one-story, Spanish Colonial Revival style single-family residence constructed in 1931 in the Kensington-Talmadge Community Planning Area. Other buildings and structures present on site include a detached garage. The property is located in the Kensington neighborhood among similarly scaled residential structures. The property is in its original location.

Since its construction in 1931, the property has been modified as follows: Complete enclosure of the south (side) elevation porch with new walls, casement windows, and a door between 1956 and 1988; extension of the west (rear) elevation porch roof between 1956 and 1963; and rooftop solar panel addition in 2022.

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by BFS Environmental Services, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria C and D, and staff concurs. 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 property was constructed in 1931 in the Spanish Colonial Revival Style and features a combination of gable, shed, and flat roofs. The east (front) elevation displays a low-pitched, cross-gabled barrel tile roof design, merging into the primarily flat composition roof. Portions of the roof also feature decorative rafter ends. The exterior cladding is stucco with a hand-troweled, irregular finish. All windows on the residence and detached garage are wood.

The east elevation is the front and primary elevation, featuring an asymmetrical design and a carport. Architectural details include rectangular gable vents, a set of three 3-lite casement windows covered by a stucco bellcast-curved accent with decorative spindles and grilles, a covered front entry with arched openings, an arched wooden front door with a glass lite (covered by a security door), an arched focal window, and an arcaded design on the carport. "Impost" details are also present on all arched elements.

The south (side) elevation displays a stucco chimney, decorative attic vents, divided-lite casement windows, an enclosed porch with a tile roof and a glazed door (covered by a security door), and two slider windows with security grates. The west elevation (rear) elevation features a tile-clad shed roof supported by wood posts over a brick patio, a door, and divided-lite casement windows in various sizes. The north (side) elevation features a false gable and flat roof design, decorative attic vents, and divided-lite casement windows of various sizes.

The original detached garage features a flat roof, a service door, and casement windows. The Historical Resource Research Report did not identify any alterations to this garage, and it retains high integrity. As it is an original accessory building to the subject resource, Staff recommends including the detached garage in the designation.

Following the 1915-1916 Panama-California Exposition, the romantic ideal of Spanish and Latin American architecture was revived. What resulted was the Spanish Eclectic style which was the predominant style in Southern California between 1915 and 1940, significantly altering the architectural landscape until the Modernist movement took hold during and after WWII. The style uses decorative details borrowed from the entire history of Spanish architecture. These may be of Moorish, Byzantine, Gothic, or Renaissance inspirations, and unusually rich and varied series of decorative precedents. The style employed a variety of floor plans, as well as gabled, cross-gabled, gabled and hipped, hipped and flat roof forms with parapets. Other character defining features include Mission and Spanish clay tile; focal windows; arched windows and other openings; and accented entries.

Of the seven aspects of integrity, design, materials, and workmanship are the most critical to the property's ability to convey significance under HRB Criterion C as a resource that embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The property, which has been modified as detailed in the beginning of the analysis section of this report, retains overall integrity of design, materials and workmanship despite the modifications, which are located at secondary and rear elevations only. The side porch enclosure and rear patio cover extension are not readily visible

and do not impact significant character defining features. Therefore, the property does retain integrity to its 1931 period of significance under HRB Criterion C.

Significance Statement: The house continues to convey the historic significance of the Spanish Colonial Revival style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style; including an asymmetrical façade; stucco cladding; varied roof forms including gable, shed, and flat roofs; barrel tile roof cover; decorative attic vents; arched focal window; arched front entry; arched wooden front door; decorative window spindles and grilles; and wooden divided-lite casement windows. Therefore, staff recommends 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 property was built in 1931 by Charles H. Salyers. Salyers was born in Tennessee in 1900 and moved to San Diego at the age of nine. As a young man, he worked in the building industry and developed skills in residential design and construction. His obituary states that he attended the "Cantell College of Architecture and Engineering in Los Angeles." Salyers' earliest works were in the Spanish Eclectic style. He obtained an architect's license in 1932, and thereafter became a prolific residential designer. He began designing in the Streamline Moderne style in the 1930s, including in his residential designs. In 1941, Salyers was recruited to serve as the first Chief Building Inspector at the newly created County Surveyor's Office. He relinquished this position in 1948 when Governor Earl Warren appointed him Chief of the State Division of Housing. After serving in this capacity for two years, he returned to San Diego and resumed designing and constructing single-family houses. In his later years, he gained publicity for relocating an entire apartment building from Point Loma to Golden Hill. Salyers retired from practice in 1966. Although he never earned the renown of many of his contemporaries, Salyers was nonetheless a builder, architect and public administrator of note. Recognized in large part for his innovative approach to design, he helped shape the unique residential character of midcentury San Diego.

At least seven of Salyer's works have been designated as historical resources by the City of San Diego Historical Resources Board. They include his contributions to the Paul E. Stake/George Schilling House (HRB #356), which established him as a Master Architect by the HRB in 1998, the James P. and Florence E. Gibson/Charles Salyers House (HRB #925), the Lewis and Annie Dodge/Charles Salyers/Dodge Construction Company Spec House #1 (HRB #1244) and the Lewis and Annie Dodge/Charles Salyers/Dodge Construction Company Spec House #2 (HRB #1349).

The subject residence, designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style, represents Salyer's notable work, particularly his earlier work prior to his procurement of an architectural license in 1932. His earliest works are Spanish Colonial Revival style residences, and the subject property is representative of his notable work in the style, prior to his transition to a more modernist style evident in his mid-1930s architectural design, such as in the Streamline Modern styled Leslie R. and Isabel M. Smith/Charles H. Salyers Spec House #1 (HRB #1048). The subject property conveys his skill as an architect through its high-quality design and craftsmanship.

Of the seven aspects of integrity, design, materials, and workmanship are the most critical to the property's ability to convey significance under HRB Criterion D as a resource that represents the notable work of Master Architect Charles H. Salyers. The property, which has been modified as

detailed in the beginning of the analysis section of this report, retains overall integrity of design, materials and workmanship despite the modifications, which are located at secondary and rear elevations. These side porch enclosure and rear patio cover extension are not readily visible and did not impact significant character defining features. Therefore, the property does retain integrity to its 1931 period of significance under HRB Criterion D.

Significance Statement: The subject resource is representative of the notable work of Master Architect Charles H. Salyers, an accomplished architect responsible for buildings designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, and Streamline Moderne styles in San Diego, some of which have been historically designated. Specifically, the subject resource is an earlier example of his work in the Spanish Colonial Revival style work prior to his procurement of an architectural license in 1932, expressing a quality of craftsmanship seen in his other known works and retains integrity as it relates to the original 1931 design and period of significance. Therefore, staff recommends designation of the subject property under HRB Criterion D.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS


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. 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 John and Elizabeth Suchy/Charles Salyers House located at 4834 Marlborough Drive as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1931 under HRB Criterion C as an example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style and Criterion D as a notable work of Master Architect Charles Salyers. The designation includes the original detached garage.



Alvin Lin
Assistant Planner
City Planning Department



Suzanne Segur
Senior Planner/ HRB Liaison
City Planning Department

AL/ss

Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON 4/25/2024

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 4/25/2024, to consider the historical designation of the John and Elizabeth Suchy/Charles Salyers House (owned by Jeffrey A & Jennifer E Calhoun, 4834 Marlborough Drive, San Diego, CA 92116) located at **4834 Marlborough Drive, San Diego, CA 92116**, APN: **440-511-17-00**, further described as BLK 3 LOT 3 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 John and Elizabeth Suchy/Charles Salyers 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 the Spanish Colonial Revival style and retains integrity from its 1931 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features an asymmetrical façade; stucco cladding; varied roof forms including gable, shed, and flat roofs; barrel tile roof cover; decorative attic vents; arched focal window; arched front entry; arched wooden front door; decorative window spindles and grilles; and wooden divided-lite casement 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 with a 1931 period of significance representative of the notable work of Master Architect Charles H. Salyers, an accomplished architect responsible for buildings designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, and Streamline Moderne styles in San Diego, some of which have been historically designated. Specifically, the subject resource is an earlier example of his work in the Spanish Colonial Revival style work prior to his procurement of an architectural license in 1932, expressing a quality of craftsmanship seen in his other known works and retains integrity. 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 designation shall include the original 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:

APPROVED: MARA W. ELLIOTT,
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: _____
TIM HUTTER, Chair
Historical Resources Board

BY: _____
LINDSEY SEBASTIAN,
Deputy City Attorney

DRAFT

RECORDING REQUESTED BY
CITY OF SAN DIEGO
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

WHEN RECORDED MAIL TO

HISTORICAL RESOURCES BOARD
ATTN: HRB SECRETARY
1222 FIRST AVENUE, MS 501
SAN DIEGO, CA 92101

SPACE ABOVE THIS LINE FOR RECORDER'S USE

RESOLUTION NUMBER **N/A**

HISTORICAL DESIGNATION OF PROPERTY ON

4834 Marlborough Drive, San Diego, CA 92116

ASSESSOR PARCEL NUMBER **440-511-17-00**

HISTORICAL RESOURCES BOARD NUMBER **0**