



Save Our Heritage Organisation

Protecting San Diego's architectural and cultural heritage since 1969

April 22, 2025

Suzanne Segur
City of San Diego Historic Resources Board
1222 First Avenue
San Diego, CA 92101

Re: HRB April 24, Agenda Item 1 – 310 San Fernando Street, The Dr. Winfield McKay and Susan McKay House

Dear Ms. Seegur,

We are writing to provide comments and clarification regarding the above-referenced property, which is scheduled as Agenda Item 1 for the upcoming Historic Resources Board hearing.

When SOHO evaluated the property, one of the elements we specifically examined was the stucco. It exhibits a heavy sand finish and does not appear to have a Tex-Cote over it. While there may be isolated areas with additional surface material, the applicant's report includes photographs that suggest these are layers of paint rather than newly applied stucco. When Bruce Coons met with the property owner previously, he shared SOHO's position that the stucco is consistent with the original style and finish of the house and confirmed our belief that the building is historic. At that time, he also encouraged the owner to consider incorporating the historic house into any development plans.

Upon reviewing the applicant's report more closely, we noted a significant issue with its architectural classification. The house is labeled Spanish Eclectic based on only two features, which the report then uses to argue it is not a good example of that style. However, this conclusion is fundamentally flawed. The home is not Spanish Eclectic—it is clearly Prairie in style. Not only does this misidentification undermine the report's credibility, but the two properties listed immediately afterward are also mischaracterized in the same way, which further calls the methodology into question.

The report also inaccurately states that the house has "eaves with little or no overhang." This is plainly incorrect. The home features wide, overhanging eaves, one of the hallmark characteristics of Prairie-style architecture. It also claims the roof is a Mission-style barrel tile roof, when in fact it is a flat tile roof, more consistent with Prairie design and increasingly rare in San Diego. Even if the flat tile roof has been replaced with asphalt shingles, such a change does not compromise the building's historic integrity.

When viewing the early photograph of the house, the design and presence are unmistakable. The structure is immediately recognizable, with its defining architectural elements still intact. The alterations that have occurred are minor and do not detract from the home's historic character or its architectural significance.

SOHO firmly believes that the Dr. Winfield McKay and Susan McKay House is a meaningful and early contributor to the La Playa neighborhood. We urge the Board to support its designation as a historical resource based on its integrity, significance, and distinctive Prairie-style architecture.

Thank you for your attention and for your continued stewardship of San Diego's historic resources.

Sincerely,

Bruce Coons
Executive Director