



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: July 10, 2025 REPORT NO. HRB-25-032

HEARING DATE: July 24, 2025

SUBJECT: **ITEM #4 – Charles and Geraldine Zurn Spec House**

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

APPLICANT: Michael J. Fagan & Cassandra R. Gomez; represented by Landmark Historic Preservation

LOCATION: 4640 West Talmadge Drive, Kensington-Talmadge Community, Council District 9  
APN 465-352-08-00

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of Charles and Geraldine Zurn Spec House located at 4640 West Talmadge Drive as a historical resource.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Charles and Geraldine Zurn Spec House located at 4640 West Talmadge Drive as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1926 under HRB Criterion C. The designation excludes the detached garage/ADU structure modified outside the period of significance. This recommendation is based on the following finding:

The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features Mission Revival style and retains integrity from its 1926 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features a flat roof with arched parapets and crenelations, arched cast attic vents, round clay tile attic vents, clay tile visor roof, clay tile roof covered porch, Tuscan style porch supports, battered stucco chimney, wrought iron grille, light-sand stucco finish, oversized corner bollards, wooden French doors, deeply inset arched focal windows, tripartite window, and double hung windows.

### 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 Charles and Geraldine Zurn Spec House, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Charles H. Zurn and Geraldine E. Zurn, who constructed the house as a speculation house.

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 4640 West Talmadge Dr is a one-story, Mission Revival style single-family residential building constructed in 1926 in the Kensington-Talmadge Community Planning Area. Other buildings and structures present on site include a detached garage/ADU structure. The property is located on a rectangular lot at the T-intersection of West Talmadge Drive and Short Street. The property is in its original location.

Since its construction in 1926 the property has been modified as follows: A workshop addition was constructed on the detached garage in 2004. Before 2008, a cat-face stucco finish was applied to the exterior of the property. In 2021, an ADU was added to the detached garage. On the main residence, the front and side elevation rectangular windows were replaced with vinyl windows in their original openings prior to 2019. Front porch saltio tiles were also added prior to 2019. Rooftop solar panels were added in 2022. A spa and associated patio tilework were added to the rear yard in 2023. Between 2023 and 2024, the owners replaced all non-original windows with wooden windows, replaced the rear and side elevation doors with newer French doors, replaced the front door with a newer Spanish style door, resurfaced the stucco to a light sand finish, added awnings above window openings, and removed the non-original front patio saltio floor tiles. Undated changes include the construction of a concrete site wall with brick cap at the front yard of the property.

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Landmark Historic Preservation, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criterion C, 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.*

Although nominated as a Spanish Colonial Revival style building, the subject resource is more accurately described as Mission Revival Style due to the prominence of Mission Revival features. The property is clad in a light sand-textured stucco. The roof is primarily flat with simple parapets, except at the east (front) elevation, where Mission Revival style arched parapets and corner crenelations are prominently displayed. Two arched cast decorative attic vents are below the arched parapets. The covered front patio is formed by a projecting tile roof cover with rounded eaves. Supporting this roof cover are two Tuscan-style stucco columns. On the front patio facades, a wooden tripartite window is present, as is the primary entry consisting of a wooden Spanish-style door. Two oversized bollards, reminiscent of Mission-style buttresses, are affixed to each corner of the front facade. Two deeply inset, arched wooden focal windows are present at the front façade, as is an original wrought iron grille. The deeply inset openings create an illusion of thick adobe, indicating a Mission Revival influence.

The south (side) elevation features circular clay tile attic vents, a raised secondary entry with a tile-covered visor roof, and metal downspouts. The north (side) elevation features clay tile attic vents and a battered stucco chimney. The west (rear) elevation features two divided-lite French door sets. Windows along the side and rear elevations are wooden double hung or fixed.

The original detached garage has a flat roof, simple parapets, and stucco cladding. The garage was enlarged in 2004 and then further enlarged in 2021 through the construction of an attached ADU. This garage/ADU structure no longer retains its original floor plan or its original garage door opening. It has been altered to the point that it no longer contributes contextually to the significance under HRB Criterion C. Therefore, staff does not recommend that it be included in the designation.

California was the birthplace of the Mission and Mission Revival style and many of its landmark examples are concentrated there. The earliest examples of the style were built in 1890s and by 1900 the style was spreading eastward under the influence of fashionable architects and national builders' magazines. Although never common outside of the southwestern states, scattered examples were built in early 20th-century suburbs throughout the country. Most date from the years between 1905 and 1920. Commonly found features of the Mission Revival style include: Mission-shaped dormer or roof parapet; widely overhanging eaves, usually open; porch roofs clad in tile supported by large square piers, commonly arched above; and wall surfaces usually clad in smooth stucco.

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 Mission 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. The front door replacement is insufficient, on its own, to impair the integrity of the design to the point that the property is ineligible for designation. The French door replacements on the side and rear elevations are minor modifications on secondary facades that do not significantly alter the property's character-defining features. The 2023-2024 project installed wooden windows on the front and side facades, restored the original front porch concrete flooring, and changed the stucco texture to a more historically appropriate

finish, which helped restore the overall integrity of design and material. While the window replacements were not done with Heritage Preservation Staff guidance, the homeowners used available historical photos to restore the front façade windows, and the side elevation windows were rehabilitated with historically appropriate wood windows. Other related site work, like the rear yard pool, rear yard tilework, and front yard site wall, does not significantly impact the property's character defining features. The added fabric window awnings are historically compatible and are consistent with the [\*Guidelines on Sustainability for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings\*](#). Therefore, the property retains its integrity to its 1926 period of significance under HRB Criterion C.

Significance Statement: The house continues to convey the historic significance of the Mission Revival style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style; including a flat roof with arched parapets and crenelations, arched cast attic vents, round clay tile attic vents, clay tile visor roof, clay tile roof covered porch, Tuscan style porch supports, battered stucco chimney, wrought iron grille, light-sand stucco finish, oversized corner bollards, wooden French doors, deeply inset arched focal windows, tripartite window, and double hung windows. 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.*

The subject property at 4640 West Talmadge Drive was built by Charles H. Zurn. Zurn has not been established by the Historical Resources Board as a Master Architect, Designer or Builder, and there is insufficient information to designate him as such at this time. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion D. As the property is not significant under Criterion D, an evaluation of integrity as it relates to Criterion D is not relevant or required.

#### 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 Charles and Geraldine Zurn Spec House located at 4640 West Talmadge Drive be designated with a period of significance of 1926 under HRB Criterion C. The designation excludes the detached garage/ADU structure modified outside the period of significance.



Alvin Lin  
Associate 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

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on , to consider the historical designation of the **Charles and Geraldine Zurn Spec House** (owned by Michael J Fagan and Cassandra R Gomez, 4640 West Talmadge Drive, San Diego, CA 92116) located at **4640 West Talmadge Drive, San Diego, CA 92116**, APN: **465-352-0800**, further described as LOT 106 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 Charles and Geraldine Zurn Spec House on the following findings:

The property is historically significant under CRITERION C for its distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features Mission Revival style and retains integrity from its 1926 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features a flat roof with arched parapets and crenelations, arched cast attic vents, round clay tile attic vents, clay tile visor roof, clay tile roof covered porch, Tuscan style porch supports, battered stucco chimney, wrought iron grille, light-sand stucco finish, oversized corner bollards, wooden French doors, deeply inset arched focal windows, tripartite window, and double hung windows. 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 exclude the detached garage/ADU structure modified outside the period of significance.

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:

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
KRISTI BYERS, Chair  
Historical Resources Board

APPROVED: HEATHER FERBERT,  
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
LINDSEY SEBASTIAN,  
Deputy City Attorney