



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: September 10, 2025 REPORT NO. HRB-25-047

HEARING DATE: September 25, 2025

SUBJECT: **ITEM #9 – JOHN & KATE BARDSLEY/ A.M. SOUTHARD HOUSE**

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

APPLICANT: Forplay Unlimited LLC; represented by BFS Environmental Services

LOCATION: 1239 Myrtle Avenue, Uptown Community, Council District 3
APN 452-450-2700

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the John & Kate Bardsley/ A.M. Southard House located at 1239 Myrtle Avenue as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the John & Kate Bardsley/ A.M. Southard House located at 1239 Myrtle Avenue as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1925 under HRB Criteria C and D. The designation excludes the 1978 second story addition and the 1979 kitchen addition. 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 1925 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features a stucco exterior, varied roof forms including a flat roof with parapet and low-pitched shed tile roof, recessed arched primary entrance, arched focal windows, asymmetrical façade and multi-lite wood fenestration.
2. The resource is representative of the notable work of proposed Master Builder, A.M. Southard, a prolific and accomplished builder responsible for the construction of many quality revival style residences in the San Diego area in the 1920s and 1930s through the A.M. Southard Company and the Southard Steel Structures Company and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the resource exhibits the high quality of design and craftsmanship generally associated with Southard's residences.

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 was identified in the [Uptown Community Plan Area Historic Resources Survey Report](#) and given a Status Code of 5D3, "Appears to be a contributor to a district that appears eligible for local listing or designation through survey evaluation."

The historic name of the resource, the John & Kate Bardsley/ A.M. Southard House, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of John and Kate Bardsley, who constructed the house as their personal residence and the name of A.M. Southard, a proposed Master Builder.

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 1239 Myrtle Avenue is a one-story Spanish Colonial Revival style single-family residence with a second story rear addition, constructed in 1925 in the Uptown Community Planning Area. Other buildings and structures present on site include an original garage. The property is located in a residential neighborhood surrounded by structures of a similar scale and age. The property is in its original location.

Since its construction in 1925 the property has been modified as follows: In 1934 a rear porch at the southwest corner was partially enclosed. The residence was reroofed in 1961 and the south façade of the garage was extended in 1965. A second story addition with balcony was constructed at the southwest corner in 1978. In 1979 a one-story addition to the kitchen was built on the east façade. Lastly, solar panels were added on the flat portion of the roof sometime between 2020 and 2022. Wrought iron grills were installed on the front arched windows at an unknown date.

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 subject resource was constructed in 1925 in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The historic portion of the residence is one-story and features a partially parapeted roof with a low-pitched shed tile roof on the western portion. A non-historic second story addition with front facing gable is located at the southwest corner. The exterior of the resource is clad with a smooth stucco finish. The primary entrance is centrally located on the asymmetrical façade and is recessed within an arched opening. The entrance is approached via a scored concrete walkway that leads to a brick and concrete stoop. The east wing of the primary north façade projects slightly beyond the primary entrance and features three eight-lite casement windows. The west wing is recessed from the primary entrance and features two large, arched wood windows with wrought iron grills. A small square window is tucked into the corner near the main entrance. Both the east and west portions of the primary façade feature a molding above the windows that extends to the side elevations. At the northwest corner a wingwall connects the residence to a stucco wall. Other fenestration includes casement and double hung wood windows in a variety of sizes.

The Spanish Colonial Revival style uses decorative details borrowed from the entire history of Spanish architecture. Its vocabulary is influenced by Moorish, Byzantine, Gothic or Renaissance precedents. The style became popular after the Panama-California Exposition of 1915 and reached its height in the 1920's and early 1930's before rapidly declining in the 1940's. Identifying features include a low-pitched roof with little or no eave overhang, red tile roof covering, stucco exterior wall finishes, an asymmetrical façade and arches above doors and principal windows. Common decorative details are patterned tiles, carved stonework, large focal windows, wooden or iron window grilles, decorative vents and balconies.

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 Spanish Colonial Revival style. The property, which has been modified as detailed in the beginning of the analysis section of this report, retains integrity of design, material, workmanship and feeling as it relates to Criterion C. The 1978 second story addition, which encompassed the 1934 southwest porch partial enclosure, is located at the rear of the resource and is compatible in scale and style with the historic portion of the building. The kitchen addition, which is also compatible in scale, massing and style, is located on the secondary east façade and is set back significantly from the primary elevation. The garage extension, reroof and addition of solar panels are minor modifications. Therefore, the property does retain integrity to its 1925 period of significance under HRB Criterion C.

Significance Statement: The resource continues to convey the historic significance of the Spanish Colonial Revival style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style; including a stucco exterior, varied roof forms including a flat roof with parapet and low-pitched shed tile roof,

recessed arched primary entrance, arched focal windows, asymmetrical façade and multi-lite wood fenestration. 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 resource was built for John and Kate Bardsley by A.M. Southard in 1925. Southard was a prolific builder of high quality residences in the 1920s and 1930s, several of which are already designated on the San Diego Register. Southard was previously proposed to be established as a Master in the nomination for the Charlotte Gary Barnum House, HRB #1257, located at 5805 Camino de la Costa. Staff did not support the establishment of Southard as a Master at that time because the building was modified to the extent that it no longer reflected Southard's work. The current nomination for 1239 Myrtle Avenue proposes to establish A.M. Southard as a Master Builder.

Alfred Mansel (A.M.) Southard was born in Colorado in 1893 and moved to San Diego in 1916. During World War I, Southard trained with the military as a pilot and became an instructor at North Island. He married his wife, Julia Killeen, in 1918. Between 1920 and 1925 A.M. and Julia served as the San Diego representative of Pacific Ready-Cut Homes under their company the A.M. Southard Company. Pacific Ready-Cut Homes was a "kit house" company that focused their sales on the Pacific coast. Under their partnership with Pacific Ready-Cut Homes, the A.M. Southard Company dominated the ready-cut niche in San Diego and assembled hundreds of residential structures in the early to mid-1920s.

By late 1925 the A.M. Southard Company had severed their relationship with Pacific Ready-Cut and began to focus on the design and construction of individual residences. Most of the houses constructed by Southard were in the popular Spanish Colonial Revival style; however, the company designed in a variety of revival architectural styles including Colonial Revival and Tudor Revival. By 1926 the A.M. Southard Company was considered San Diego's largest home builder and was one of the largest in Southern California. The firm specialized exclusively in the construction of residences and peaked in production in the period from 1927 to 1928. The company saw a downturn in commissions after 1929 due to the Great Depression.

By 1932 A.M. Southard was working as a salesman for E.H. Depew and Company. In 1936 he became the manager of the new Southard Steel Structures Company which specialized in a new method of construction using electrically welded steel which he called "Electrosteel." The new company did not take off in the same way as his previous building company and the Southards moved to Los Angeles in 1939 and subsequently divorced. In the early to mid-1950s, A.M. Southard returned to San Diego and built small units on residential lots. Southard moved to Albuquerque then Pasadena and died in Santa Ana in 1972.

There are currently at least ten residences associated with Southard listed on the San Diego Register:

- Mary Hyde House (HRB #1435), 3446 Elliot Street, 1925
- Dr. David and Margaret Higbee House (HRB #1252), 3705 Pringle Street, 1925
- William F. and Leta B. Gernandt House (HRB #846), 5002 Canterbury Drive, 1926
- Edgar V. Ullrich House #2 (HRB #1440), 6001 Bellevue Street, 1927

- Charlotte Gary Barnum House (HRB #1257), 5805 Camino de la Costa, 1927
- Alfred and Julia Southard House (HRB #863), 3612 Elliot Street, 1927
- Cora M. and Cora Lee Wells House (HRB #619), 4990 Canterbury Drive , 1927
- Norman Kennedy House (HRB #965), 716 La Canada, 1928
- Captain Manuel Rosa Hose (HRB #1110), 3114 Lawrence Street, 1928
- S. Janet Rental House (HRB #1421), 3112 Curtis Street, 1936

According to the [Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria](#) a Master can be established through a combination of one or more factors, including the scope and excellence of their overall body of work and the quality of design and detailing excellence. Through his work with the A.M. Southard Company and the Southard Steel Structures Company, Southard was responsible for the construction of hundreds of quality residences in the San Diego area. The number of Southard's residences currently listed on the San Diego register speaks to the overall excellence of his work. Additionally, visual inspection of Southard's body of work affirms his skill at building in a variety of architectural styles and the general high quality of his work product. Therefore, staff supports establishing A.M. Southard as a Master Builder in the City of San Diego.

The Historical Resource Research Report argues that the subject resource is a notable example of Southard's work because it exhibits the high quality of design and craftsmanship generally associated with Southard and retains integrity.

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 proposed Master Builder A.M. Southard. The property, which has been modified as detailed in the beginning of the analysis section of this report, retains integrity of design, material, workmanship and feeling as it relates to Criterion D. The additions and modifications do not detract from the quality of design and craftsmanship generally associated with Southard. Therefore, the property does retain integrity to its 1925 period of significance under HRB Criterion D.

Significance Statement: The resource is representative of the notable work of proposed Master Builder A.M. Southard, a prolific and accomplished builder responsible for the construction of many quality revival style residences in the San Diego area in the 1920s and 1930s through the A.M. Southard Company and the Southard Steel Structures Company. Specifically, the resource is significant as a notable example of Southard's work because it exhibits the high quality of design and craftsmanship generally associated with Southard's residences. Therefore, staff recommends the establishment of A.M. Southard as a Master Builder, and the 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 & Kate Bardsley/ A.M. Southard House located at 1239 Myrtle Avenue be designated with a period of significance of 1925 under HRB Criterion C as an example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style and Criterion D as a notable work of proposed Master Builder A.M. Southard. The designation excludes the 1978 second story addition and the 1979 kitchen addition.



Suzanne Segur
Senior Planner/ HRB Liaison
City Planning Department

ss/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 **JOHN & KATE BARDSLEY/ A.M. SOUTHARD HOUSE** (owned by Forplay Unlimited LLC, 633 North Belardo Road, Palm Springs, CA 92262) located at **1239 Myrtle Avenue, San Diego, CA 92103**, APN: **452-450-2700**, further described as 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 & Kate Bardsley/ A.M. Southard 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 1925 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features a stucco exterior, varied roof forms including a flat roof with parapet and low-pitched shed tile roof, recessed arched primary entrance, arched focal windows, asymmetrical façade and multi-lite wood fenestration. 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 as a notable work of proposed Master Builder, A.M. Southard, a prolific and accomplished builder responsible for the construction of many quality revival style residences in the San Diego area in the 1920s and 1930s through the A.M. Southard Company and the Southard Steel Structures Company and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the resource is significant as a notable example of Southard's work because it exhibits the high quality of design and craftsmanship generally associated with Southard's residences. 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 1978 second story addition and the 1979 kitchen addition.

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