



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: September 10, 2025 REPORT NO. HRB-25-043

HEARING DATE: September 25, 2025

SUBJECT: **ITEM #5 – PETERSON LUMBER & FINANCE COMPANY/ VIRGIL CASH SPEC HOUSE #1**

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

APPLICANT: Jeffrey & Sarina Lynn; represented by BFS Environmental Services

LOCATION: 2477 Marilouise Way, Uptown Community, Council District 3
APN 442-701-1900

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Peterson Lumber & Finance Company/ Virgil Cash Spec House #1 located at 2477 Marilouise Way as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Peterson Lumber & Finance Company/ Virgil Cash Spec House #1 located at 2477 Marilouise Way as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1935 under HRB Criteria C and D. The designation excludes the 2019 second story addition and the garage/companion unit modified outside of the period of significance. 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 with modern influences and retains integrity from its 1935 period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits a low-pitched tile roof with little eave overhang, unenclosed eaves, varied roof forms including hipped and shed, smooth stucco exterior, asymmetrical façade, decorative beams, wood casement windows, deep set decorative window and porte-cochere with square columns and tile roof. The modern influence can be seen in the steel corner focal window.
2. The resource is representative of the notable work of proposed Master Builder Virgil Cash, a designer of high quality residences and commercial properties in the San Diego area during the early 1930s through early 1950s, and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the resource, which is designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style with modern influences, is significant as an example of Cash's work during a transitional period when he began to experiment with incorporating modern design features. Additionally, the residence features the use of fenestra steel windows, a technology that was previously limited to factories, and exhibits the high quality of design and detailing generally associated with his work.

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 \(2016\)](#) and given a Status Code of 5S3, "Appears to be individually eligible for local listing or designation through survey evaluation."

The historic name of the resource, the Peterson Lumber & Finance Company/ Virgil Cash Spec House #1, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of the Peterson Lumber & Finance Company, who constructed the house as a speculation house and the name of Virgil Cash, a proposed Master Architect.

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 2477 Marilouise Way is a two-story, Spanish Colonial Revival style single-family residential building with modern influence constructed in 1935 in the Uptown Community Planning Area. Other buildings and structures present on site include a garage/ accessory dwelling unit. The property is located on an interior lot in the Presidio Hills neighborhood. The property is in its original location.

Since its construction in 1935 the property has been modified as follows: Between 1964 and 2007 a planter box was removed from beneath the steel corner window and tile was added to the window sill. Also between 1964 and 2007 the concrete patio was extended to the west, a stucco and brick railing was added, the stairs were extended to the east and an additional stair was added. In 2019 the property underwent an addition and rehabilitation project that included the construction of a second story addition with terrace, roof deck, enclosure of the side porch, partial removal of the rear wall to accommodate the installation of a window wall system, the remodel of the rear

garage/companion unit structure, and the addition of a site wall. The 2019 project was reviewed by Heritage Preservation staff and was determined to be consistent with the Standards. In 2020 solar panels were added to rear portions of the roof.

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by BFS Environmental Services, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria A, C and D. Staff concurs that the site is a significant historical resource under HRB Criteria C and D but not HRB Criterion A. This determination is consistent with the *Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria*, as follows.

CRITERION A - Exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's, a community's or a neighborhood's historical, archaeological, cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, landscaping or architectural development.

The Historical Resources Research Report states that the 2477 Marilouise Way property is significant under Criterion A as the only known example of the transitional period of architectural design for proposed Master Architect Virgil Cash, and the only building that represents the Spanish Colonial Revival to Art Moderne style in the Presidio Hills neighborhood. The analysis of the resource as it relates to Cash's overall body of work is more appropriate for discussion under Criterion D (see below). Furthermore, the nomination did not contain contextual information about the development of the Presidio Hills neighborhood or an inventory of Spanish Colonial Revival style residences in Presidio Hills. With the information provided, it is not feasible to determine that the resource is the only Spanish Colonial Revival residence with modern influences in the Presidio Hills neighborhood. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion A. As the property is not significant under Criterion A, an evaluation of integrity as it relates to Criterion A is not relevant or required.

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 2477 Marilouise Way property was constructed as a one-story residence in 1935 in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The resource, which was constructed toward the end of the period of significance for Spanish Colonial Revival, shows influences of modern styles which were beginning to grow in popularity. The historic portion of the building features a low-pitched hipped and shed tile roof with unenclosed eaves and little overhang. The exterior of the residence is clad in a smooth stucco. The western portion of the asymmetrical primary façade features the concrete, uncovered entry porch and front door. The eastern portion projects in front of the entry and contains a small, deep set wood casement window and a large steel casement window that wraps around a corner. Decorative beams project above the windows. Two smooth battered pilasters are found on the front façade, one between the two windows and one in the corner of the porch. A porte-cochere with square pillars and tile roof projects from the east elevation. Other fenestration includes wood casement windows in various sizes and lite patterns.

The 2019 second story addition is setback from the eastern portion of the primary façade and steps back from the primary entrance. The stucco clad second story features a combination of low-pitched, hipped tile roofs with little eave overhang and a roof deck at the rear. Windows on the

second story are wood casement. The garage and companion unit structure in the rear yard features a stucco exterior, tile roof and wood casement windows.

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 the Spanish Colonial Revival style with modern influences. The property, which has been modified as detailed in the beginning of the analysis section of this report, retains integrity of design, materials, workmanship and feeling as it relates to Criterion C. The front porch modifications are minimal and do not impair any character defining features of the resource. The second story addition was designed consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and does not detract from the resource's ability to convey its historic significance as a transitional Spanish Colonial Revival style residence. The addition is setback from the primary façade and features windows that are differentiated from the historic structure. Furthermore, the massing, scale and size of the addition is compatible with the original historic residence. Therefore, the property does retain integrity to its 1935 period of significance under HRB Criterion C.

Significance Statement: The resource continues to convey the historic significance of the Spanish Colonial Revival style with modern influences by embodying the historic characteristics associated with those styles; including a low-pitched tile roof with little eave overhang, unenclosed eaves, varied roof forms including hipped and shed, smooth stucco exterior, asymmetrical façade, decorative beams, wood casement windows, deep set decorative window and porte-cochere with square columns and tile roof. The modern influence can be seen in the steel corner focal window. 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 designed for the Peterson Lumber and Finance Company by Virgil Cash in 1935. Cash was the designer of high quality residences and commercial properties in the San Diego area during the early 1930s through early 1950s. Cash is already recognized by the City of Coronado as a Master Architect and has two properties designated for that association on the Coronado Register. The current nomination for 2477 Marilouse Way proposes to establish Virgil Cash as a Master Architect.

Virgil Cash was born in 1903 in Farlington, Kansas and moved to San Diego in 1923 to attend San Diego State College. He graduated in 1928 and began his career as a drafter working on both residential and commercial properties in San Diego County. He was associated with the firms Loring and Cash and John S. Siebert and Company before opening his own firm in 1933.

Cash designed in a variety of styles that mimicked contemporary trends. In the 1930s, his work was mostly comprised of Spanish Colonial Revival style homes; however, his work eventually evolved into Streamline Moderne, Minimal Traditional, Custom Ranch and Contemporary designs. He was also active on multiple planning and design boards in the San Diego region; including the Grossmont-Mt. Helix Improvement Association which he founded along with several others including prominent San Diegans Ed Fletcher and Fred Heilbron. Additionally, Cash served as the San Diego representative for the American Institute of Building Design, ultimately serving as its president for three years. Virgil Cash retired in 1968 and died in 1986.

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. Cash was responsible for the design of many residential and commercial structures in the San Diego area that exhibit a high quality of design and attention to detail. Additionally, the recognition of Cash as a Master Architect by the City of Coronado speaks to the overall excellence of his body of work. Therefore, staff supports establishing Virgil Cash as a Master Architect in the City of San Diego.

The Historical Resource Research Report argues that the subject resource represents Cash's notable work because it represents a transitional period in Cash's design style as he evolved from working primarily in the Spanish Colonial Revival style to utilizing modern styles. Additionally, the house featured "fenestra steel sash windows," a technology that was previously only used in factories.

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 Architect Virgil Cash. The property, which has been modified as detailed in the beginning of the analysis section of this report, retains integrity of design, materials, workmanship and feeling as it relates to HRB Criterion D. The modifications to the front porch are minor, and do not detract from the significant aspects of the residence's design. Additionally, the 2019 addition and rehabilitation was determined to be consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. Therefore, the property does retain integrity to its 1935 period of significance under HRB Criterion D.

Significance Statement: The resource is representative of the notable work of proposed Master Architect Virgil Cash, the designer of high quality residences and commercial properties in the San Diego area during the early 1930s through early 1950s. Specifically, the resource, which is designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style with modern influences, is significant as an example of Cash's work during a transitional period when he began to experiment with incorporating modern design features. Additionally, the residence features the use of fenestra steel windows, a technology that was previously limited to factories, and exhibits the high quality of design and detailing generally associated with his work. Therefore, staff recommends the establishment of Virgil Cash as a Master Architect, 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 Peterson Lumber & Finance Company/ Virgil Cash Spec House #1 located at 2477 Marilouise Way be designated with a period of significance of 1935 under HRB Criterion C as an example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style with modern influences and Criterion D as a notable work of proposed Master Architect Virgil Cash. The designation excludes the 2019 second story addition and the garage/companion unit modified outside of the period of significance.



Suzanne Segur
Senior Planner/ HRB Liaison
City Planning Departments

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Attachment(s):

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