



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: April 8, 2026 REPORT NO. HRB-26-019

HEARING DATE: April 23, 2026

SUBJECT: **ITEM #6 – JOHN AND CLARA FERRY HOUSE**

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

APPLICANT: Nicholas Oswald and Quang Tran; represented by Landmark Historic Preservation

LOCATION: 4204 Randolph Street, Uptown Community, Council District 3
APN: 443-300-18-00

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the property located at 4204 Randolph Street as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the John and Clara Ferry House located at 4204 Randolph Street as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1909 under HRB Criterion C. The designation excludes the rear detached garage and the attached workshop, which were built outside the period of significance. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Craftsman style and retains integrity from its 1909 period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits a moderately hipped roof with wide overhanging eaves and exposed rafter tails, horizontal wood siding, a projecting front-facing gable supported by straight, square wood clad columns, corner bay windows, a brick chimney and double-hung wood 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 was identified in the [2016 Uptown Community Plan Area Historic Resources Survey](#) 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 property at 4204 Randolph Street is a contributing resource to the Arnold and Choate's Addition-North Florence Heights National Register Historic District.

The historic name of the resource, the John and Clara Ferry House, has been identified as consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of John and Clara Ferry, who constructed the house as their personal residence.

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 at 4204 Randolph Street is a two-story, Craftsman-style single-family residential building constructed in 1909 in the Uptown Community Planning Area. Other buildings and structures on the site include a detached garage with an attached workshop. The property is located on the corner of Randolph and West Arbor Streets in a primarily residential neighborhood in Mission Hills. The property is in its original location.

Since its construction in 1909, the property has been modified as follows: at an unknown date, the rear detached garage with an attached workroom was constructed, stucco was added to the lower portions of the front porch columns; removal of the decorative gable-end stickwork, wood spindles added to the front porch windows; an iron railing was added to the front porch, and a new window added on the second floor on the South façade. The roof was replaced with composition shingles in 1962; a pool was added in 1972 and removed in 2023. The rear and side perimeter fence was added in the 1980's, and in 2021, the concrete walkways on the primary elevation were removed and replaced with brick; stucco columns with a brick cap were added, along with wood gates and stucco site walls with a wood topper. Other modifications completed at an unknown time include changes to the corner bay windows, which appear to have been modified over the years from a two-over-two, present at the South façade, to either a two-over-one, as shown on the Southwest façade, or a one-over-one, present on the North façade. Air conditioning units were added at the south façade in circa 2024, and in 2025, the stucco was removed from the lower portions of the porch columns and replaced with horizontal wood siding. The project was reviewed and deemed consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards by Heritage Preservation staff.

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.

The subject resource is a two-story Craftsman-style single-family home constructed in 1909, with a moderately pitched hipped roof covered in composition shingles, wide overhanging eaves with exposed rafter tails, and narrow horizontal wood siding. The primary façade is asymmetrical, with a central projecting front-facing gable with a decorative gable vent and features a second-story balcony with a solid wood balustrade supported by straight, square columns. Both the balustrade and columns are clad in the same horizontal wood siding as the house. The entry porch is located below the central projection and features a centrally located wood-and-glass entry door flanked by two wood casement windows with wooden spindles. Fenestration consists of single and multi-light wood double-hung and casement windows. Other features include two corner bay windows with hipped roofs on the primary façade at the North and South corners, a brick chimney on the South façade, and a detached rear garage accessed via West Arbor Drive.

With origins in the British Arts and Crafts movement, which was born in response to the overly ornate Victorian aesthetic and the highly mechanized Industrial Revolution, Craftsman style architecture was popular in the United States largely between 1905 and 1930. Early examples by Greene and Greene were highly publicized in magazines, thus familiarizing the rest of the nation with the style. Character-defining features of Craftsman architecture include a low-pitched, gabled roof with wide, unenclosed eave overhang; exposed roof rafters; decorative beams or braces; full or partial-width porches supported by tapered square columns or pedestals; wood or stucco cladding; and wood frame and sash windows in fixed, double-hung and casement varieties.

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 Craftsman style. The property, which has been modified as detailed at the beginning of the analysis section of this report, still conveys its architectural significance. The modifications, including the removal of the decorative gable-end stickwork, addition of wood spindles to the front porch windows, and a new window added on the second floor on the South façade, do not significantly impair the resource's ability to convey significance under Criterion C. The corner bay window replacements are compatible with the property's architectural style and fit within the original openings. Other modifications, such as the roof replacement, the addition of an iron railing to the front porch, air conditioning units at the south façade, and the replacement of the concrete walkways, are minor and do not detract from the property's historic significance. Therefore, the property does retain integrity to its 1909 period of significance under HRB Criterion C.

Significance Statement: The resource continues to convey the historic significance of the Craftsman style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style, including a moderately hipped roof with wide overhanging eaves and exposed rafter tails, horizontal wood siding, a projecting front-facing gable supported by straight, square wood clad columns, corner bay windows,

a brick chimney and double-hung wood windows. Therefore, staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion C.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

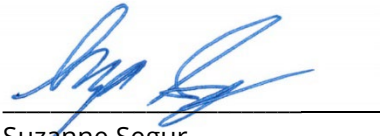
Designation brings with it the responsibility of maintaining the building in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The benefits of designation include the availability of the Mills Act Program for reduced property tax; the use of the more flexible Historical Building Code; flexibility 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 Clara Ferry House, located at 4204 Randolph Street, be designated with a period of significance of 1909 under HRB Criterion C as a good example of the Craftsman style. The designation excludes the rear detached garage and the attached workshop, which were built outside the period of significance.



Shannon Anthony
Senior Planner
City Planning Department



Suzanne Segur
Senior Planner/ HRB Liaison
City Planning Department

SA/SS

Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON 4/23/2026

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 4/23/2026, to consider the historical designation of the **John and Clara Ferry House** (owned by Nicholas Oswald & Quang Tran, 4204 Randolph Street, San Diego, CA 92103) located at **4204 Randolph Street, San Diego, CA 92103**, APN: **443-300-1800**, further described as BLK 1 LOTS 7 & 8 LOTS 5 & 6 & E 25 FT 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 Clara Ferry 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 Craftsman style and retains integrity from its 1909 period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits a moderately hipped roof with wide overhanging eaves and exposed rafter tails, horizontal wood siding, a projecting front-facing gable supported by straight, square wood clad columns, corner bay windows, a brick chimney and double-hung wood 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 rear detached garage and the attached workshop, which were built 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