



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: July 8, 2026 REPORT NO. HRB-26-029

HEARING DATE: July 23, 2026

SUBJECT: **ITEM #3 – HOUSE OF DREAMS**

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

APPLICANT: Norton Family Trust 01-30-80; represented by BFS Environmental Services

LOCATION: 1428 Soledad Avenue, La Jolla Community, Council District 1
APN 350-370-18-00

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the House of Dreams located at 1428 Soledad Avenue as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the House of Dreams located at 1428 Soledad Avenue as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1916 under HRB Criterion C. The designation excludes the detached two-story residential/garage structure. This recommendation is based on the following finding:

The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Craftsman style with East Asian-inspired influences and retains integrity from its 1916 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features low-pitched roofs, widely overhanging eaves, latticework, unenclosed rafters, porches supported by battered columns that continue to the ground level, wood shingle siding, divided-lite and leaded wood windows, and divided-lite French doors; as well as East Asian-inspired influences that include stepped massing, gable-on-hip roofs, peaked/flared rooflines, sweeping roofs, and upturned rafter tails.

BACKGROUND

This item is being brought before the Historical Resources Board in conjunction with a preliminary review application to determine whether or not the property is historically significant as part of a constraints analysis for future development.

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 House of Dreams, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the historical name established by the original owner, Florence W. Howard.

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 1428 Soledad Avenue is a three-story, Craftsman-style single-family residential building with East Asian-inspired influences constructed in 1916 in the La Jolla Community Planning Area. The site originally contained a one-story cottage constructed in 1911; however, the subject property underwent a major renovation in 1916 that resulted in the three-story residence seen today. None of the original 1911 building remains, except for the brick exterior/stone interior chimney, which was retained and extended in 1916. Other buildings and structures present on the site include a two-story residential/garage structure built in 1916. The property is located on a hill. The property is in its original location.

Since the major renovation in 1916, the property has been modified as follows: Between 1921 and 1954, the southeast (front) elevation ground floor porch was screened-in with mesh screening within the original porch openings, the easternmost portion of the porch was enclosed, and its wood flooring was changed to concrete; a portion of the southeast (front) elevation wall of the house at the east end was extended one foot toward the street, and a small addition was constructed; at the easternmost (front) corner of the property, the roof eaves were extended by a foot; and a door was added at the southeast (front) façade. Between 1921 and 1931, the northwest (rear) elevation ground floor covered porch was enclosed with glass. Around 1926-1927, the detached one-story residential/garage structure was relocated closer to the residence and was modified with a second-story addition. Between 1927 and 1931, the southwest (side) elevation's second-floor open porch was fully enclosed, and its original railings and battered columns were removed. In 1931, a second-floor window opening on the northwest (rear) elevation was reduced in size. Between 1954 and 2023, the southeast (front) elevation ground-floor entry porch was tiled with Saltillo tiles, and the porch door was replaced. In 1959, a half bath was constructed at the northwest (rear) elevation of the full-width ground-floor wrap-around porch, thus enclosing a small portion of it. In 1968, a raised

porch was added to the ground-floor projection at the northeast (side) elevation, and an existing window was replaced with a door. In c.1970, the northwest (rear) elevation wraparound porch was enclosed with solid walls and windows, but retained some of the original railings at the northwest (rear) and northeast (side) elevations. Also, in c.1970, the ground-floor diamond-pane door on the northeast (side) elevation was partially infilled. Sometime after 1971, the original roofing shingles that overlapped the roof fascia were removed. In 2003, the original lot containing the residence was subdivided into three parcels. In 2012, solar panels were added to the second-floor roof. Between 2019 and 2022, windows on the two-story residential/garage structure were replaced with modern vinyl retrofits. At an unknown date, the original shake shingle roof cover was replaced with asphalt shingles, the third-floor observation room's shingle siding was replaced with plywood siding, and original landscape features, including the cobblestone paths, two torii gates, a half-moon bridge, and a thatched tea house, were removed. For a visual reference on the location of these alterations, see Attachment A, Site Plan with Footprint, of the historical report.

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by BFS Environmental Services, which concludes that the resource is not eligible for designation under any HRB Criteria. Staff disagrees, finding that the site is a significant historical resource under HRB Criterion C. 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 property was originally constructed as a one-story beach cottage in La Jolla in 1911. However, it was effectively rebuilt in 1916 into a three-story residence with a sprawling plan, resulting in a design that no longer represents a modest beach cottage, which are commonly one or two stories and small- or medium-sized. Therefore, it does not embody the characteristics of a beach cottage, and it is not significant under HRB Criterion A for that association.

Although the property exhibits prominent East Asian-inspired features, a less common stylistic influence applied to Craftsman homes, the City lacks a historic context statement addressing East Asian influences in Craftsman architecture locally in San Diego. Therefore, staff does not have sufficient information and context at this time to determine the property's significance as a special element of the City's or La Jolla's architectural development.

Research into the history of the property at 1428 Soledad Avenue did not reveal any information to indicate that the property exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's or La Jolla's historical, archaeological, cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, landscaping or architectural development. 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 B - Is identified with persons or events significant in local, state or national history.

Florence White Howard designed and commissioned the building in 1911 and again in 1916. Howard was born in 1855 in Illinois and frequently traveled the world and attended world fairs. Described as

a “free-spirited artist,” she sought to replicate Oriental aesthetics in her own house. She furnished her home with items she collected from Asian countries and from various world fairs. She was forced to foreclose on the property in 1921. According to the historical report, Howard did not make any demonstrable achievements or contributions to the history of San Diego, the state, or the nation.

Florence W. Howard and subsequent owners and tenants of the property at 1428 Soledad Avenue did not reveal any individuals who could be considered historically significant in local, state or national history. Furthermore, no events of local, state or national significance are known to have occurred at the subject property. Therefore, the property is not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion B. As the property is not significant under Criterion B, an evaluation of integrity as it relates to Criterion B 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 Historical Resource Research Report identifies the property as a Craftsman residence with Asian-Eclectic influences. The principal style for the subject property is Craftsman, which governs the general form, plan, and roof details. Then, Asian-inspired features, such as pagoda-style roof ornamentation, were applied to the Craftsman residence to reflect the East Asian influence.

The subject property is a three-story residence with a sprawling floor plan. The roof design is emphasized by multiple gable-on-hip roof planes. Roof ridges terminate in peaks, and lattice detailing is visible on gable ends. Curved rafters project from the eaves, forming a wide overhang. The roof cover material is composition shingles. The exterior siding material is primarily multi-width wood shingles, except at the southeast (front) entry, which is sided in board-and-batten. Areas of the northwest elevation ground floor covered porch were enclosed with vertical wood siding. The third-floor observation room is clad in non-original plywood.

The front elevation is the southeast elevation, featuring a partial-width screened-in porch. This porch area is characterized by battered columns sided in wood shingles. The southwest (side) elevation contains a brick chimney, a ground-floor porch, and a projecting enclosed second-story porch. The northwest (rear) elevation features a full-length ground-floor wraparound porch that was enclosed. A two-story projection also occupies this façade; it is glassed-in on the ground floor. “X-shaped” latticework is exhibited here below the eaves. The northeast (side) elevation contains an enclosed porch on the ground floor. A one-story wing projects from this elevation, extending behind the two-story residential/garage structure. Along areas of the northwest (rear), northeast (side), and southwest (side) elevation porch enclosure, the original railing remains.

A one-story detached 1916 garage was constructed in the same Craftsman style with East Asian-inspired influences, but it was moved southwesterly around 1926-1927 and modified to form a two-story building with residential space above the garage. As such, it no longer retains its original location, form, and design. It does not possess integrity to be included in the designation. Therefore, this structure is excluded from the designation under HRB Criterion C.

With origins in the British Arts and Crafts movement, which emerged in response to the overly ornate Victorian aesthetic and the highly mechanized Industrial Revolution, Craftsman-style

architecture was popular in the United States 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. Greene and Greene were notable Pasadena architects who drew upon traditional Chinese and Japanese architecture and implemented their interpretations on residential buildings. 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. In *A Field Guide to American Houses*, Virginia Savage McAlester discusses East Asian influence in Craftsman architecture, stating that “secondary influences such as Tudor false half-timbering, Swiss balustrades, or Oriental roof forms are also sometimes seen” and noting that a peaked or flared Oriental roof line is a typical elaboration that can be seen on Craftsman homes.

The subject property embodies the distinctive characteristics of Craftsman style with East Asian-inspired influences and features. Craftsman-style features include low-pitched roofs, widely overhanging eaves, unenclosed rafters, and porches supported by battered columns that extend to ground level. Divided-lite windows with leaded panes or wood muntins further enhance the style, as do wooden French doors with diamond-shaped muntins. Exposed beams and repeating “X-shaped” latticework are visible on the southwest projection and the northwest projection, located below the eaves. This can be considered as either a Craftsman-style decoration or an Asian-inspired feature.

The East Asian-inspired architectural influences include gable-on-hip roofs, peaked/flared rooflines, sweeping roofs, and upturned rafter tails (flying eaves). Typically, Craftsman homes in San Diego that incorporate East Asian influences in the design are more restrained and subtle in elaboration, such as those seen on HRB Site #1164 located at 3916 Alameda Place, HRB Site #780 located at 1201 W Arbor, and even HRB Site #1008-019 located at 3553 28th Street, which is perhaps the most heavily East Asian-inspired resources on the City’s Register. However, the subject property incorporates stronger East Asian forms and stylistic details than what are typically seen. Gable-on-hip roofs resemble those of traditional Chinese and Japanese temples. The peaked/flared roofline, a rise in the ridge at its ends, indicates a distinctive Asian influence. Sweeping roofs are concave roof shapes formed by curved rafters. When these roofs are combined with upturned rafter tails, they mimic “flying eaves” of traditional Chinese and Japanese temples. All of the aforementioned East Asian-influenced architectural features are expressed on the subject property, except at one location at the ground-floor southeast corner, where the roof is hipped only. Lastly, the stepped massing of the property evokes the design of traditional Japanese castles. The period of significance is 1916, reflecting the date that the building was effectively rebuilt while incorporating and extending the original 1911 chimney.

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. The property, which has been modified as detailed in the beginning of the analysis section of this report, retains integrity to convey significance as a resource that embodies the distinctive characteristics of Craftsman architecture with East Asian-inspired influences.

Considering the overall size, architectural complexity, and strong character defining features of the property, the majority of the alterations are comparatively minor, affecting limited wall areas.

The relocation and subsequent alterations to the garage do not impact the primary residence or its ability to convey its architectural significance, nor do the lot split and landscape alterations. Limited window and door modifications to the rear and side elevations and removal of wood shingles that wrapped the edge of the fascia board do not impact significant character defining features and are largely minimally visible. The enclosure of the northwest (rear) elevation wraparound porch with glass, vertical siding and shingle siding impact a Craftsman feature; however, many of the original railings and battered columns are retained at their location at the rear of the building, which characterizes them as secondary, rather than primary, character defining features. The enclosure of the second-floor patio on the southwest (side) elevation, which removed original battered columns and railings, does impact a character defining feature on a moderately visible side elevation.

Modifications to the front façade, including the screening-in of the front porch with mesh screening in the original opening, the full enclosure of the northeastern-most portion of the porch and removal of the wall behind, the construction of a roof extension and bump-out addition on the northeastern wing, and the replacement of the shingle siding on the third-floor observation room with plywood siding are highly visible and do impact character defining features of the resource. In resources of a more common style that exhibit modest character defining features, these modifications would likely have a significant impact on design, materials and workmanship that would result in a loss of integrity. However, considering the overall size, architectural complexity, and uncommonly strong East Asian-inspired character defining features, staff finds that the overall integrity of materials, design and workmanship is retained and that the resource is able to convey its significance as a resource that embodies the distinctive characteristics of Craftsman architecture with East Asian-inspired influences, as detailed in the significance statement below.

Significance Statement: The house, which retains integrity to its 1916 period of significance, continues to convey the historic significance of the Craftsman style with East Asian-inspired influences by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style, including low-pitched roofs, widely overhanging eaves, latticework, unenclosed rafters, porches supported by battered columns that continue to the ground level, wood shingle siding, divided-lite and leaded wood windows, and divided-lite French doors; as well as East Asian-inspired influences that include stepped massing, gable-on-hip roofs, peaked/flared rooflines, sweeping roofs, and upturned rafter tails. 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 1428 Soledad Avenue was built in 1916 by Andrew W. Woods and retains a 1911 chimney originally built by Perl Acton. The property was designed by its original owner, Florence W. Howard. Neither Acton, nor Woods, nor Howard has been established by the Historical Resources Board as a Master Architect, Designer or Builder, and there is insufficient information to designate them 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.

CRITERION E - Is listed or has been determined eligible by the National Park Service for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or is listed or has been determined eligible by the State Historical Preservation Office for listing on the State Register of Historical Resources.

The property at 1428 Soledad Avenue has not been listed on or determined eligible for listing on the State or National Registers. Therefore, the property is not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion E. As the property is not significant under Criterion E, an evaluation of integrity as it relates to Criterion E is not relevant or required.

CRITERION F - Is a finite group of resources related to one another in a clearly distinguishable way or is a geographically definable area or neighborhood containing improvements which have a special character, historical interest or aesthetic value or which represent one or more architectural periods or styles in the history and development of the City.

The property at 1428 Soledad Avenue is not located within a designated historic district. Therefore, the property is not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion F. As the property is not significant under Criterion F, an evaluation of integrity as it relates to Criterion F 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 House of Dreams located at 1428 Soledad Avenue be designated with a period of significance of 1916 under HRB Criterion C as a resource that embodies the distinctive characteristics of Craftsman architecture with East Asian-inspired influences. The designation excludes the detached two-story residential/garage structure.



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City Planning Department



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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 07/23/2026

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 07/23/2026, to consider the historical designation of the **House of Dreams** (owned by Norton Family Trust 01-30-80, PO BOX 271429, Fort Collins, CO 80527) located at **1428 Soledad Avenue, CA 92037**, APN: **350-370-18-00**, further described as PAR 3 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 House of Dreams 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 with East Asian-inspired influences and retains integrity from its 1916 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features low-pitched roofs, widely overhanging eaves, latticework, unenclosed rafters, porches supported by battered columns that continue to the ground level, wood shingle siding, divided-lite and leaded wood windows, and divided-lite French doors; as well as East Asian-inspired influences that include stepped massing, gable-on-hip roofs, peaked/flared rooflines, sweeping roofs, and upturned rafter tails. 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 two-story residential/garage structure.

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: «Vote»

BY: _____
KRISTI BYERS, Chair
Historical Resources Board

APPROVED: HEATHER FERBERT,
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: _____
LINDSEY SEBASTIAN,
Deputy City Attorney