THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: September 9, 2026 REPORT NO. HRB-26-037

HEARING DATE: September 24, 2026

SUBJECT: **ITEM #7 – Lewis and Annie Dodge/ Dodge Construction Company Spec House #1**

RESOURCE INFO: California Historical Resources Inventory Database (CHRID) link

APPLICANT: Castro Family Trust; represented by BFSA Environmental Services

LOCATION: 4663 Biona Drive, Kensington-Talmadge Community, Council District 9
APN 465-345-0500

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Lewis and Annie Dodge/ Dodge Construction Company Spec House #1 located at 4663 Biona Drive as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Lewis and Annie Dodge/ Dodge Construction Company Spec House #1 located at 4663 Biona Drive as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1926 under HRB Criteria C and D. The designation excludes the rear dormer constructed 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 Tudor Revival style and retains integrity from its 1926 period of significance. Specifically, the resource displays a steeply pitched, cross-gabled roof with a dominant front facing gable, stucco exterior, arched focal window, massive brick chimney, arched brick front entry surround, and tall, multi-lite wood windows.
2. The resource is representative of a notable work of Master Builder Dodge Construction Company and retains integrity as it relates to the original 1926 design. Specifically, the resource is significant as an example of the Dodge Construction Company's early work in the Tudor Revival style and demonstrates the high quality of design and craftsmanship generally associated with the company.

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 Lewis and Annie Dodge/ Dodge Construction Company Spec House #1, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Lewis and Annie Dodge, who constructed the house as a speculation house and the name of the Dodge Construction Company, a 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 4663 Biona Drive is a one-and-a-half story, Tudor Revival style single-family residence constructed in 1926 in the Kensington-Talmadge Community Planning Area. Other buildings and structures present on site include a detached garage. The property is located in a single-family residential neighborhood consisting of houses of a similar size and scale. The property is in its original location.

Since its construction in 1926 the property has been modified as follows: Sometime between 1928 and 1951 a rear dormer was added. In 1968 modifications were made to the kitchen windows on the south façade and the bathroom window on the east façade. Circa 2013 the stucco perimeter wall was replaced with a fence. In 2025 Heritage Preservation staff reviewed a permit to restore the kitchen and bathroom windows based on photo documentation as well as relocation of the kitchen door. These modifications were determined to be consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards by Heritage Preservation staff. Other work completed in 2025 included a new rear patio, relocating the driveway gate to its current location, exterior stucco repairs, replacement of the front walkway and exterior painting. Additionally, the garage door was replaced and a rear garage window was removed at unknown dates. A comparison of the current appearance to historic photos also reveals that the chimney top was modified sometime between 1991 and 2007.

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by BFSA 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 resource is a one-and-a-half story, Tudor Revival style single-family residence constructed in 1926. The residence features a steeply pitched, cross gabled roof with a projecting one-story wing on the west (primary) façade. The primary façade is dominated by a front facing gable featuring a large, arched, multi-lite focal window. The main entrance is located on the north façade of the one-story wing and features an arched brick surround that is integrated with the massive brick chimney. A recessed concrete porch is located on the south façade. The building also features a stucco exterior and tall, multi-lite wood windows in fixed, casement and double hung varieties.

Popular in the 1920s and 1930s, Tudor Revival architecture is loosely based on a variety of late Medieval English styles and influences, but unlike some English prototypes, Tudor Revival style houses exhibit steeply pitched gable roofs that dominate the facades. Other character defining features include decorative half-timbering; tall, narrow windows, usually appearing in multiple groups and with multi-pane glazing; massive chimneys, sometimes with decorative chimney pots; entry porches with round or Tudor arches; and gable dormers. Relatively uncommon before World War I, widespread adoption of masonry veneering techniques in the 1920s accompanied a dramatic rise in the style's popularity as even the most modest examples began to closely mimic the brick and stone veneers of their English prototypes. Tudor Revival style houses usually include the use of stucco as well as wood cladding and brick or stone veneer, depending upon the subtype.

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 Tudor Revival style. The property, which has been modified as detailed in the beginning of the analysis section of this report, continues to retain integrity as it relates to HRB Criterion C. The shed dormer and patio additions are located on the rear façade and do not impact any character defining features. The 2025 window restoration and door relocation were reviewed by Heritage Preservation staff and deemed to be consistent with the Standards. The removal of the front stucco wall has a minor impact on integrity but does not detract from the overall integrity of feeling, association or design. Other modifications are minor and do not have a major impact on the property's historic integrity. Therefore, the property does retain integrity to its 1926 period of significance under HRB Criterion C.

Significance Statement: The house continues to convey the historic significance of the Tudor Revival style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style; including a steeply pitched, cross-gabled roof with a dominant front facing gable, stucco exterior, arched focal window, massive brick chimney, arched brick front entry surround, and tall, multi-lite wood 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 4663 Biona Drive property was built in 1926 by Master Builder Lewis Dodge of the Dodge Construction Company as a speculation house. Dodge was a third generation carpenter and builder, first apprenticing with his father then later working as a professional builder from 1891 until his death in 1934. Arriving in San Diego in 1923 with his son Edward Lewis Dodge, they established their construction company that would produce over 42 residences in the Tudor, Dutch Colonial, English, Mission, and Spanish Colonial Revival styles.

Dodge Construction Company was recognized as a building company of high quality and craftsmanship in the San Diego Union and Evening Tribune newspapers as well as by developer John P. Mills Organization. The company was chosen to represent the newly developed Sunset Cliffs subdivision, by building a showcase home for W.S. Mills, the sales manager for the John P. Mills Organization. Dodge's showcase home was featured in the 1926 celebration of "Better Homes" week in the newspapers. The "Better Homes" section of the newspaper was inspired by the Better Homes Movement, a national drive to build better quality affordable homes with progressive design features. It was driven by the ideology of providing good design and quality construction for all social and economic levels. On May 10, 1925, Kensington Park put an advertisement of the newly designed homes to be expected within the neighborhood. Three of the five homes within the article were built by the Dodge Construction Company; two Spanish styled and one Dutch Colonial home, all located on Biona Drive. Dodge Construction Company was cited many times in the "Better Homes" section of the newspaper for his work in Kensington and Sunset Cliffs. The company continued to construct homes until the Great Depression forced the sale of many of their properties at a significant price reduction.

The designation of the Lewis and Annie Dodge /Dodge Construction Company House (HRB Site #1192 located at 4649 Biona Drive) established Lewis Dodge/Dodge Construction Company as a Master Builder. At least five other residences attributed to Lewis Dodge/Dodge Construction Company are currently listed on the San Diego register, including another property on Biona Drive directly to the south of the subject resource:

- HRB #592, John and Amy Ballinger House, 4730 Vista Street
- HRB #631, Lewis Dodge Spec House #1, 4660 Tivoli Street
- HRB #1111, Lewis and Annie Dodge Spec House #1, 4545 Alhambra Street
- HRB #1184, Lewis and Annie Dodge Spec House #2, 4653 Biona Drive
- HRB #1244, Lewis and Annie Dodge/Charles Salyers/Dodge Construction Company Spec House #1, 5308 E. Palisades Road
- HRB #1349, Lewis and Annie Dodge/Charles Salyers/Dodge Construction Company Spec House #2, 4624 Granger Street
- HRB #1506, Benjamin F. Dillingham III House, 4494 Tivoli Street

The subject resource was constructed during a period when the Dodge Construction Company was experimenting with residential revival style architecture; including Tudor Revival, Dutch Colonial Revival and Spanish Colonial Revival. Starting in 1926, the company began to work almost exclusively in the Spanish Colonial Revival style and often collaborating with Master Architect Charles Salyers. The subject resource is an example of the Dodge Construction Company's early work in the Tudor Revival style. Additionally, the resource exemplifies the high quality and craftsmanship generally associated with the Dodge Construction Company.

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 Master Builder Dodge Construction Company. The property, which has been modified as detailed in the beginning of the analysis section of this report, continues to retain integrity as it relates to HRB Criterion D. The shed dormer and patio additions are located on the rear façade and do not impact any character defining features associated with Dodge's original design. The 2025 window restoration and door relocation were reviewed by Heritage Preservation

staff and deemed to be consistent with the Standards. The removal of the front stucco wall has a minor impact on integrity but does not detract from the overall integrity of feeling, association or design. Other modifications are minor and do not have a major impact on the property's historic integrity. Therefore, the property does retain integrity to its 1926 period of significance under HRB Criterion D.

Significance Statement: The resource is representative of a notable work of Master Builder Lewis Dodge of the Dodge Construction Company, a prominent and accomplished building contractor responsible for the construction of many quality residences in San Diego, and continues to reflect Dodge's original 1926 design, intent and aesthetic. The resource is significant as an example of Dodge's early work in the Tudor Revival style and demonstrates the high quality of design and craftsmanship generally associated with the Dodge Construction Company. Therefore, staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion D as a notable work of Master Builder Lewis Dodge of the Dodge Construction Company.

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 (Lewis and Annie Dodge/ Dodge Construction Company Spec House #1 located at 4663 Biona Drive be designated with a period of significance of 1926 under HRB Criterion C as an example of the Tudor Revival style and Criterion D as a notable work of Master Builder the Dodge Construction Company. The designation excludes the rear dormer constructed outside of the period of significance.

Suzanne Segur
Senior Planner/ HRB Liaison
City Planning Department

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Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON 9/24/2026

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 9/24/2026, to consider the historical designation of the **Lewis and Annie Dodge/Dodge Construction Company Spec House #1** (owned by Castro Family Trust 08-04-17, 4663 Biona Drive, San Diego, CA 92116) located at **4663 Biona Drive**, **San Diego, CA 92116**, APN: **465-345-0500,** further described as BLK E LOT 5 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 Lewis and Annie Dodge/Dodge Construction Company Spec House #1 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 Tudor Revival style and retains integrity from its 1926 period of significance. Specifically, the resource displays a steeply pitched, cross-gabled roof with a dominant front facing gable, stucco exterior, arched focal window, massive brick chimney, arched brick front entry surround, and tall, multi-lite 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.

(2) The property is historically significant under CRITERION D as a notable work of Master Builder Dodge Construction Company and retains integrity as it relates to the original 1926 design. Specifically, the resource is significant as an example of the Dodge Construction Company's early work in the Tudor Revival style and demonstrates the high quality of design and craftsmanship generally associated with the company. 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 dormer constructed outside of 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

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