



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: August 11, 2016 REPORT NO. HRB-16-054

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board  
Agenda of August 25, 2016

SUBJECT: **ITEM #10 – Alberta Security Company/Martin V. Melhorn Spec House #5**

APPLICANT: Kevin Denton & Lucia Denton represented by Legacy 106, Inc.

LOCATION: 4774 Panorama Drive, Greater North Park Community, Council District 3

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of Alberta Security Company/Martin V. Melhorn Spec House #5 located at 4774 Panorama Drive as a historical resource.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Alberta Security Company/Martin V. Melhorn Spec House #5 located at 4774 Panorama Drive as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1920 under HRB Criteria C and D. The designation excludes the rear addition constructed in 1948. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

1. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Dutch Colonial Revival Style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1920 period of significance. Specifically, the resource displays a gambrel roof with continuous shed dormer, a symmetrical primary elevation, an elaborated main entrance, multi-pane windows in pairs and a one-story side wing with flat roof.
2. The resource is representative of a notable work of Master Builder Martin V. Melhorn and retains integrity as it relates to the original 1920 design. The house is notable as an early example of Melhorn's work in the Dutch Colonial Revival Style during a period of independent and stylistically experimental work, demonstrating his skill for elegant design and quality construction. Specifically, the resource is the only known example of Melhorn's work in the Dutch Colonial Revival Style.

### 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 subject resource is a two-story single-family residence constructed in 1920 in the Dutch Colonial Revival Style. The building is located in

the Valle Vista Terrace subdivision of the Greater North Park Community and its primary façade faces Panorama Drive with a canyon located to the rear.

The building is located on APN 438-150-27 and has been identified as a contributor in both the Draft 2004 and 2014 North Park Surveys.

The historic name of the resource, the Alberta Security Company/Martin V. Melhorn Spec House #5, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Alberta Security Company, who constructed the house as a speculation house and the name of Martin V. Melhorn, a Master Builder.

### ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Legacy 106, Inc., 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 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.*

Research into the history of the property at 4774 Panorama Drive did not reveal any information to indicate that the property exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's or Uptown's historical, archaeological, cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, landscaping or architectural development. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion A.

*CRITERION B - Is identified with persons or events significant in local, state or national history.*

Research into the owners and tenants of the property at 4774 Panorama Drive 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.

*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 single-family residence constructed in 1920 in the Dutch Colonial Revival Style. The building is located in the Valle Vista Terrace subdivision of the Greater North Park Community and its primary façade faces Panorama Drive with a canyon located to the rear. The main rectangular massing of the house has a side gambrel roof with a continuous shed dormer containing six second-story windows. A one-story side wing with flat roof and balcony projects from the north façade. Also, a small one-story addition bumps out from the rear of the house. A large stuccoed chimney can be seen on the east elevation. The exterior is clad in a wide horizontal clapboard and the roof is covered with composition shingles. A garage is located to the south and behind the house.

The main portion of the house is symmetrical in composition with three bays. The primary entrance is centrally located and elaborated by an arched portico and concrete porch with wooden balustrade. Most of the windows on the main part of the house are wood framed, double hung and multi-pane (6 or 4) over single pane and are grouped together in pairs on the main façade. The exceptions are 2 six-light fixed frame and a one-over-one double hung on the south elevation, a metal sliding window on the rear addition and a fixed window with a seven-lite upper pane on the north elevation behind the side wing. Also, a diamond patterned wooden window is located on the second floor of the north elevation. The side wing features fluted pilasters, large twelve lite windows, a single ten-lite French door, decorative brackets and a balustrade that defines the balcony on the flat roof. A pair of French doors provide access to the balcony from the second floor of the main house. Decorative wood louvered attic vents are located near the apex of the roof on both the north and south elevations.

Several alterations have been made to the property since its construction in 1920. A photo taken from the 2004 Greater North Park Draft Survey shows that the front windows on the first floor of the primary façade were vinyl windows at this time. These windows have been replaced with wooden windows that would have matched those original to the home. The rear one-story addition to the home was added about 1948. The front concrete porch does not appear on the building record and may be a later addition. In comparing pictures from the 2004 survey and the present it is apparent that the porch was recently modified with the addition of balusters and cement stairs. Additionally, a cement walkway was added leading from the primary entrance to the street. It is also evident that the roof has recently been replaced. The garage has most likely been either rebuilt or remodeled. The modifications do not have significant impacts to integrity of design, materials, workmanship or feeling, and the building retains integrity as it relates to architectural significance.

Following the Centennial Exposition of 1876 America experienced a rebirth of interest in its colonial past. Primarily popular from 1880 to 1955, Colonial Revival buildings reference the early English and Dutch homes of the Atlantic seaboard, particularly the Georgian and Adam styles. As with their prototypes, Colonial Revival structures generally have a symmetrical front façade with the principal areas of elaboration being entrances, windows and cornices. Roofs can be hipped, gable or gambrel and some variations feature a center gable projecting slightly from the primary façade. One-story side wings with flat roofs are common. Windows are typically double-hung sash with multi-pane glazing in one or both sashes and are commonly found in pairs, triples or bay windows. The most dominant feature of the Dutch Colonial Revival subtype are gambrel roofs which can either have separate dormer windows on the second floor or a continuous shed dormer with several windows. Front-facing gambrel roofs were most common in earlier revival houses while side gambrels became populate in the 1920s and '30s.

Significance Statement: The house continues to convey the historic significance of the Dutch Colonial Revival by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style; including a gambrel roof with continuous shed dormer, a symmetrical primary elevation, an elaborated main entrance, multi-pane windows in pairs and a one-story side wing with flat roof. 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.*

Martin V. Melhorn was born in Indiana in 1866. He lived and worked in Falls City, Nebraska and Denver, Colorado before moving to San Diego in 1911 with his wife, Alberta, and their son William. Melhorn established the Alberta Security Company in 1913 which focused primarily on the financial aspects of building construction. The Alberta Security Company and Melhorn purchased and built the subject property in 1919. Melhorn and his affiliates were prolific builders in the City of San Diego – particularly in the areas of Mission Hills, Hillcrest, University Heights, North Park and South Park – and numerous Melhorn-built homes have been listed on the San Diego Register. Melhorn’s status as a Master Builder was established in 2003 with the designation of the Neil Brown/Martin V. Melhorn House at 4195 Palmetto Way (HRB Site #583).

The subject property was constructed in 1920 during a period of transition for Melhorn in which he began to move away from the building of Craftsman styled homes in favor of the Prairie, Colonial Revival, and Spanish Eclectic styles. The house at 4774 Panorama Drive is the only known example of Melhorn’s work in the Dutch Colonial Revival Style.

Significance Statement: The subject resource retains excellent integrity and continues to reflect Melhorn’s original design, intent and aesthetic. The house is notable as an early example of Melhorn’s work in the Dutch Colonial Revival Style during a period of independent and stylistically experimental work, demonstrating his skill for elegant design and quality construction. The resource is the only known example of Melhorn’s work in the Dutch Colonial Revival Style. Therefore, staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion D as a notable work of Master Builder Martin V. Melhorn.

*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 4774 Panorama Drive 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.

*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 4774 Panorama Drive is not located within a designated historic district. Therefore, the property is not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion F.

#### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

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 Alberta Security Company/Martin V. Melhorn Spec House #5 located at 4774 Panorama Drive be designated with a period of significance of 1920 under HRB Criterion C as a resource that exhibits the distinctive characteristics of Dutch Colonial Revival Style; and HRB Criterion D as a resource that is representative of a notable work of Master Builder Martin V. Melhorn. The designation excludes the rear addition constructed in 1948. 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.



Suzanne Segur  
Assistant Planner



Kelley Stanco  
Senior Planner/HRB Liaison

SS/ks

### Attachments:

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A  
ADOPTED ON 8/25/2016

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 8/25/2016, to consider the historical designation of the **Alberta Security Company/Martin V. Melhorn Spec House #5** (owned by Denton Living Trust 04-28-08, 4774 Panorama Drive, San Diego, CA 92116) located at **4774 Panorama Drive, San Diego, CA 92116**, APN: **438-150-27-00**, further described as VL 379 (EX ST OP ) NLY 55 FT OF 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 Alberta Security Company/Martin V. Melhorn Spec House #5 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 Dutch Colonial Revival Style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1920 period of significance. Specifically, the resource displays a gambrel roof with continuous shed dormer, a symmetrical primary elevation, an elaborated main entrance, multi-pane windows in pairs and a one-story side wing with flat roof. 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 Martin V. Melhorn and retains integrity as it relates to the original 1920 design. The house is notable as an early example of Melhorn's work in the Dutch Colonial Revival Style during a period of independent and stylistically experimental work, demonstrating his skill for elegant design and quality construction. Specifically, the resource is the only known example of Melhorn's work in the Dutch Colonial Revival Style. 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 addition constructed in 1948.

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: N/A

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
COURTNEY ANN COYLE, Chair  
Historical Resources Board

APPROVED: JAN I. GOLDSMITH,  
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
CORRINE NEUFFER,  
Deputy City Attorney