



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: October 15, 2020 REPORT NO. HRB-20-049

HEARING DATE: October 29, 2020

SUBJECT: **ITEM #8 – Florence Palmer Spec House #2**

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

APPLICANT: Benjamin Reineman and Amy Waterhouse; represented by Vonn Marie May

LOCATION: 7154 Olivetas Avenue, La Jolla Community, Council District 1
APN 351-141-1500

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Florence Palmer Spec House #2 located at 7154 Olivetas Avenue as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Florence Palmer Spec House #2 located at 7154 Olivetas Avenue as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1927 under HRB Criteria C and D. The designation excludes the rear addition built outside 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 a good level of architectural integrity from its 1927 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features an irregular floor plan; 1½ story massing; exposed rafter tails; stucco; decorative half-timbering; clay pipe vents in the gable ends, and fenestration consisting primarily of 6-over-1 double hung wooden windows and 8-lite wooden casement windows.
2. The resource is representative of a notable work of established Master Designer Florence Palmer and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the subject property is one of the earliest known examples of her independently designed works and features limited, but quality Tudor Revival design elements such as stucco, decorative half-timbering, and divided lite wooden windows and exemplifies her beginnings as an independent, female designer.

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 property is located in the Barber Tract neighborhood of the La Jolla community and is located on a corner parcel which features a single-family residence and an original detached garage.

The property has not been identified in any adopted historic surveys, as the subject area has not been recently surveyed.

The historic name of the resource, the Florence Palmer Spec House #2, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Florence Palmer, an established Master Designer who constructed the house as a speculation property.

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Vonn Marie May, 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 subject property is located in the Barber Tract neighborhood of the La Jolla community on a corner parcel which features a single-family residence and an original detached garage, both constructed in the Tudor Revival style. The primary façade features an asymmetrical front façade with decorative half-timbering around the entrance door, a side facing open gable roof with varied planes and exposed rafter ends and divided lite wood windows and doors. The side elevations feature limited details but contain divided lite wooden windows and doors, stucco, and clay drainpipes in the high pitched open gabled roof ends. The rear elevation showcases the irregular floor plan with a semi courtyard with a modern deck and access to the original detached garage that was also constructed in the Tudor Revival style.

Modifications prior to 2019 are limited and include the removal and replacement of an original window on the primary façade with a door, the addition of a jalousie window on the northeast elevation, and a rear deck and addition which was deemed consistent with the Secretary of Interior's Standards and differentiated from the existing house with a varied stucco texture and score lines. During 2018-2019, the property underwent a rehabilitation project that included the restoration of original window on the primary façade, the restoration of the original stucco texture under the restored window, the removal of the jalousie window with a historical appropriate wooden window as shown in the historic photograph within the Historical Resources Research Report. Overall these modifications do not impact integrity of design, materials, workmanship or feeling as it relates to Criterion C.

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 the use of stucco as well as wood cladding and veneer, depending upon the subtype, and tall wood windows. Decorative half-timbering is present on only about half of the examples.

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 an irregular floor plan; 1½ story massing; exposed rafter tails; stucco; decorative half-timbering; clay pipe vents in the gable ends, and fenestration consisting primarily of 6-over-1 double hung windows and 8-lite casement 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 subject property is located in the Barber Tract neighborhood of the La Jolla community and was designed by established Master Designer, Florence Palmer and constructed by Frank Stimson in 1927.

Florence Buchanan was born in Missouri and was raised in Stockton, California. As an unmarried woman in the Progressive Era, Florence exhibited a strong and independent spirit, and by 1910 Florence had moved to Brooklyn, where she volunteered for the Eleventh Assembly District of the Woman Suffrage Party. On March 28, 1923 Florence married architectural designer Herbert Palmer. They married in Reno, Nevada and relocated to La Jolla where they established a home and their professional practice as 'Palmer and Palmer, architects and builders'. In March 1926 Florence filed for divorce from Herbert and their divorce was granted on May 20, 1926. After the Palmers dissolved their personal and professional relationship, Palmer continued her independent architectural design/build practice and began designing in her preferred style, Tudor Revival with the subject property being the first known residence solely designed by her. Over time, her later examples, all constructed in the Tudor Revival style, became more detailed including stacked brick, half-timbering in the gabled ends and diamond pane, leaded glass windows.

Palmer was one of four women working in the field of architecture and home building in the 1920s and 1930s in San Diego, along with Hazel Wood Waterman, Lillian J. Rice and Louise Severin. In 1933 Florence received accolades from the San Diego AIA Chapter awards jury for her design of the two homes located at 7252 and 7270 Monte Vista Street and for her 346 Fern Glen residence. Several dwellings built in the Tudor Revival / English Cottage style between 1929 and 1940 are located in close proximity to Palmer's three adjacent Fern Glen houses and can be attributed to her through water and sewer permits. These include 7135 Draper Avenue, 410 Fern Glen, 350 Fern Glen, 704 Fern Glen, 7252 Monte Vista, 7250 Monte Vista, and 741 Rushville. These properties have remained mostly unaltered since their original design and conception.


Significance Statement: The subject property continues to convey the historic significance of Florence Palmer's original designs as it is one of the earliest known examples of her independently designed works and features limited, but quality Tudor Revival design elements such as stucco, decorative half-timbering, and divided lite wooden windows. Therefore, staff recommends designation 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 Florence Palmer Spec House #2 located at 7154 Olivetas Avenue be designated with a period of significance of 1927 under HRB Criterion C, as a good example of the Tudor Revival style; and Criterion D, for its association with established Master Designer, Florence Palmer. The designation excludes the rear addition constructed outside the period of significance.



Emma Haggerty
Associate Planner



Suzanne Segur
Senior Planner
Development Services Department

EH/ss

Attachment(s):

1. Draft Resolution
2. Consultant's Report underneath cover

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON 10/29/2020

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 10/29/2020, to consider the historical designation of the Florence Palmer Spec House #2 (owned by Benjamin Reineman and Amy Waterhouse, 7154 Olivetas Avenue, La Jolla, CA 92037) located at **7154 Olivetas Avenue, La Jolla, CA 92037**, APN: **351-141-15-00**, further described as BLK 9 LOTS 16 & 18 E 60 FT OF N 50 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 Florence Palmer Spec House #2 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 a good level of architectural integrity from its 1927 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features an irregular floor plan; 1½ story massing; exposed rafter tails; stucco; decorative half-timbering; clay pipe vents in the gable ends, and fenestration consisting primarily of 6-over-1 double hung wooden windows and 8-lite wooden casement 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 established Master Designer Florence Palmer and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the subject property is one of the earliest known examples of her independently designed works and features limited, but quality Tudor Revival design elements such as stucco, decorative half-timbering, and divided lite wooden windows and exemplifies her beginnings as an independent, female designer. 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 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: _____
DAVID MCCULLOUGH, Chair
Historical Resources Board

APPROVED: MARA W. ELLIOTT,
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: _____
LINDSEY SEBASTIAN,
Deputy City Attorney