



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: February 11, 2021 REPORT NO. HRB-21-014

HEARING DATE: February 25, 2021

SUBJECT: **ITEM #10 – Marine National Bank of San Diego Spec House**

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

APPLICANT: William Turner and Carolyn Muhlstein

LOCATION: 1773 Sunset Boulevard, Uptown Community, Council District 3
APN 531-631-08-00

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Marine National Bank of San Diego Spec House located at 1773 Sunset Boulevard as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Marine National Bank of San Diego Spec House located at 1773 Sunset Boulevard as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1912 under HRB Criterion C. The designation excludes the approximately 220-square-foot cantilevered rear addition and the approximately 132-square-foot upper-story rear addition. This recommendation is based on the following finding:

The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Prairie style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1912 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features direct expressions of the building's structural system, horizontal massing, a shallow pitch roof with deep overhangs, repetitive façade geometry, minimal use of solid load-bearing walls, the absence of applied decoration, and wood and glass exterior finishes.

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 is located on the south side of Sunset Boulevard, near where it intersects with Fort Stockton Drive. It is in the Mission Hills subdivision of the Uptown Community. The rear (south end) of the parcel slopes downwards into Mission Hills Canyon.

The property was identified in the 2016 Uptown Community Plan Area Historic Resource Survey Report 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 historic name of the resource, the Marine National Bank of San Diego Spec House, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Marine National Bank of San Diego, who constructed the house as a speculation house.

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by William Turner, 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 was constructed in 1912 as a two-story, single-family residence designed in the Prairie style. The house is clad in light sand stucco and has a flat roof with deep eaves. The windows on the front and sides of the house are wood casements. Most of them have a latticed lite pattern at the top. The primary façade of the house is symmetrical and features a shallow front porch. At either end of the porch, there is a massive square column. The flat porch roof features exposed beams and is attached to the piers about two feet below the top of the piers. All windows on the façade are wood casements with a lattice lite pattern in their upper section. The windows on the side elevations are also wood, and many of them have the same lattice lite pattern. The west (side) elevation features an attached garage and a chimney. Because the parcel slopes down at the rear, there is a daylight basement level at the rear of both the house and garage. There is also a ground floor addition at the rear of both the house and the garage, which cantilevers over the basement level. Both the basement level and ground floor level are clad in horizontal wood siding matching the front of the attached garage. On the rear of the house only, there is also an upper story addition, which is clad in vertical wood siding. Most of the windows on the rear elevation are vinyl.

The subject resource has undergone few modifications since its 1912 period of significance. In 2018-2019, the front porch was reconstructed based on a 1917 photograph. This work was reviewed by historical resources staff and determined to be consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The Notice of Completion only mentions two dwelling units (1773 Sunset, and the neighboring house addressed 1763). The garage and most sections of the rear additions are shown on the 1921 Sanborn map. However, because they are not mentioned in the Notice of Completion, are not made of concrete like the main block of the house, and are clad in different materials, it is likely that they are not part of the original construction. The Historical Resource Research Report posits a c. 1917-1921 date for the construction of the rear additions. The 1917 photograph shows a portion of the attached garage on the edge of the photograph. Due to the early date of construction for most of these sections (likely 1917 because the garage is shown in the photo at that time), they are not proposed to be excluded from the designation. However, the 220-square-foot¹ portion of the ground-floor addition that cantilevers over the basement level is not shown on the Sanborn maps. Additionally, the upper-story rear addition (currently clad in vertical siding) is shown on the Sanborn maps as only spanning part of the rear of the house, and the Assessor's Building Record labels it as an enclosed porch. Currently, it serves as interior living space and it spans the entire rear of the house, for a total area of 132 feet.² These modifications do not significantly impair integrity of design, materials, workmanship or feeling as it relates to Criterion C.

¹ Dimensions are based on Assessor's Building Record and are approximate.

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The Prairie style was popular between 1900 and 1920 and was primarily used for domestic architecture. The style originated in Chicago and is closely associated with Frank Lloyd Wright. It spread nationwide due to being featured in magazines and pattern books. Its primary character defining features are a low-pitched roof, deep eaves, two-story construction with one-story wings or porches, and detailing that emphasizes horizontal lines. Examples of features used to create a horizontal emphasis include the deep eaves at both the main roof and lower roofs, contrasting trim between stories, contrasting colors on cornices and eaves, horizontal siding, and horizontal rows of windows. Roofs are typically hipped. Massive porch piers are also common, especially on high-style examples. High-style examples also typically have a one-story wing, porch or carport on one side of the house. Windows typically have multi-paned upper sections, and are either casements or double-hung.

Significance Statement: The house continues to convey the historic significance of the Prairie style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style; including deep eaves, massive porch piers, a horizontal emphasis created by the porch roof, and casement windows with multi-pane upper sections. 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 Marine National Bank of San Diego Spec House located at 1773 Sunset Boulevard be designated with a period of significance of 1912 under HRB Criterion C as a good example of the Prairie style. The designation excludes the approximately 220-square-foot cantilevered rear addition and the approximately 132-square-foot upper-story rear addition.



Gemma Tierney
Associate Planner



Suzanne Segur
Senior Planner/ HRB Liaison
Development Services Department

GT/ss

Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER
ADOPTED ON 2/25/2021

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 2/25/2021, to consider the historical designation of the Marine National Bank of San Diego Spec House (owned by William D Turner and Carolyn A Muhlstein, 1773 Sunset Boulevard, San Diego, CA 92103) located at **1773 Sunset Boulevard, San Diego, CA 92103**, APN: **443-650-12-00**, further described as LOTS G & H POR 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. ,** 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 Marine National Bank of San Diego Spec 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 Prairie style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1912 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features direct expressions of the building's structural system, horizontal massing, a shallow pitch roof with deep overhangs, repetitive façade geometry, minimal use of solid load-bearing walls, the absence of applied decoration, and wood and glass exterior finishes. 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. .**

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the designation shall exclude the approximately 220-square-foot cantilevered rear addition and the approximately 132-square-foot upper-story rear addition.

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