



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: February 11, 2021 REPORT NO. HRB-21-013

HEARING DATE: February 25, 2021

SUBJECT: **ITEM #9 – John and Oda McDermott Speculation House**

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

APPLICANT: Jim Kane; represented by Legacy 106, Inc.

LOCATION: 4124 Norfolk Terrace, Kensington-Talmadge Community, Council District 9
APN 440-350-0100

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the John and Oda McDermott Speculation House located at 4124 Norfolk Terrace as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the John and Oda McDermott Speculation House located at 4124 Norfolk Terrace as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1929 under HRB Criterion C. This recommendation is based on the following finding:

The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Spanish Eclectic style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1929 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features an asymmetrical façade clad in smooth stucco; low pitched roof covered with red clay mission tile; inset front entry porch with arched stucco opening; arched window hood above the principle front window; and arcaded wing wall.

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 one-story single-family residence with a detached two-car garage located in the Kensington community of San Diego.

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

The historic name of the resource, the John and Oda McDermott Speculation House, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the names of John and Oda McDermott who constructed the house as a speculation house in 1929.

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Legacy 106, Inc., which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criterion C. Staff concurs 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 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 property is a one-story Spanish Eclectic style residence which features an asymmetrical façade; rectangular plan; combined flat, gable, and shed roof forms; wood windows with wooden lower sills; decorative round tile vents; and stucco exterior.

The primary elevation faces south onto Norfolk Terrace and features a front-gabled roof on the west end. Under the gable is a decorative stucco arched window hood which covers a three-part focal window made up of one large fixed pane window at the center and two-over-one rectangular double-hung windows on each side. A shed roof covers the remainder of the façade, which includes an inset arched porch. The raised central inset porch is accessed by a red scored concrete walkway and includes the primary entrance, an east-facing original wood door, three south-facing two-over-one double-hung wood windows, and one west-facing two-over-one double-hung wood window. To the right of the porch, the primary façade continues with a pair of double-hung two-over-one wood windows and an arcaded wing wall.

The south elevation also features the original detached two car garage, which is accessed by a scored concrete driveway which runs along the east side of the parcel. Located to the northeast of the main residence, the stucco-clad garage retains its original flat roof, wood detail surrounding the original opening, and original wood casement windows on the north and west elevations.

The east elevation is primarily covered by a flat roof with a small parapet, although the far-left side of this elevation is covered by the mission tile eave of shed roof which covers a portion of the primary elevation. This stucco-clad façade features five round clay tile vents and two pairs of double-hung wood windows which flank the residence's secondary entrance.

The north elevation is the rear of the house and is out of public view. This elevation features a concrete patio accessed by a pair of non-historic wood and glass French doors, which are covered by an awning. Fenestration on this elevation consists of one three-over-five glass block and a pair of double-hung windows.

The west elevation features a mixed roof form, beginning with the clay tile gable end which covers the primary façade. The large stucco-covered chimney breaks up the roof line as it transitions to a flat roof with a parapet to the rear of the house. Fenestration on the gable end consists of one double-hung wood window. To the north of the chimney, fenestration consists of one double-hung wood window, a pair of two double-hung windows, one square casement window, and another pair of double-hung wood windows.

Modifications to the property are minimal and include the permitted in-kind replacement of the two-over-one divided light double-hung rectangular wooden windows on the south elevation. A set of new French doors have been installed on the north elevation. The impacts of this modification are limited, as the doors are out of the public view. Additionally, after conducting a site visit, staff determined that the house was

likely restuccoed; however, the new stucco appears to be consistent with the original texture. Overall, the modifications noted do not significantly impair integrity of design, materials, workmanship, or feeling and do not result in a loss of integrity.

Following the 1915-1916 Panama-California Exposition, the romantic ideal of Spanish and Latin American architecture was revived. What resulted was the Spanish Eclectic style which was the predominant style in Southern California between 1915 and 1940, significantly altering the architectural landscape until the Modernist movement took hold during and after WWII. The style uses decorative details borrowed from the entire history of Spanish architecture. These may be of Moorish, Byzantine, Gothic, or Renaissance inspirations, and unusually rich and varied series of decorative precedents. The style employed a variety of floor plans, as well as gabled, cross-gabled, gabled and hipped, hipped and flat roof forms with parapets. Other character defining features include Mission and Spanish clay tile; focal windows; arched windows and other openings; and accented entries.

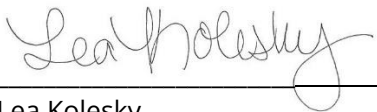
Significance Statement: The house continues to convey the historic significance of the Spanish Eclectic style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style; including asymmetrical façade clad in smooth stucco; low pitched roof covered with red clay mission tile; inset front entry porch with arched stucco opening; arched window hood above the principle front window; and arcaded wing wall. Therefore, staff recommends designation of the subject property 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 John and Oda McDermott Speculation House located at 4124 Norfolk Terrace be designated with a period of significance of 1929 under HRB Criterion C as the resource specifically embodies the characteristics of the Spanish Eclectic style.



Lea Kolesky
Junior Planner



Suzanne Segur
Senior Planner/ HRB Liaison
Development Services Department

LK/el

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 John and Oda McDermott Speculation House (owned by Jim Kane, 4124 Norfolk Terrace, San Diego, CA 92116) located at **4124 Norfolk Terrace, San Diego, CA 92116**, APN: **440-350-01-00**, further described as BLK 11 LOT 1 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 John and Oda McDermott Speculation 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 Spanish Eclectic style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1929 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features an asymmetrical façade clad in smooth stucco; low pitched roof covered with red clay mission tile; inset front entry porch with arched stucco opening; arched window hood above the principle front window; and arcaded wing wall. 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 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