



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: March 11, 2021 REPORT NO. HRB-20-027

HEARING DATE: March 25, 2021

SUBJECT: **ITEM #6 – Fred Bushman Building**

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

APPLICANT: Bejan Arfaa represented by Scott A. Moomjian

LOCATION: 3951-3957 Goldfinch Street and 820 W. University Avenue, Uptown Community, Council District 3, APN 444-612-05-00

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Fred Bushman Building located at 3951-3957 Goldfinch Street as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Fred Bushman Building located at 3951-3957 Goldfinch Street as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1927 under HRB Criterion C. The designation excludes the rear attached former garage and the single-family house that has the address 820 W. University Avenue. This recommendation is based on the following finding:

The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character-defining features of the Two-Part Commercial Block type with Spanish Eclectic influences and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its period of significance. Specifically, the resource features a clear division between the first-floor storefronts and the upper residential stories, large storefront windows with decorative transoms, balanced façade, and being built out to the property line, and Spanish Eclectic decorative features.

BACKGROUND

This item is being brought before the Historical Resources Board in conjunction with a preliminary review application to determine whether or not the building is historically significant as part of a constraints analysis for future development. The property is located at the northeast corner of the intersection of Goldfinch Street and University Avenue, in the Arnold and Choate's Addition subdivision of the Uptown Community. It contains a two-story commercial building that faces Goldfinch Street and a one-story single-family residence that faces University Ave.

The property was identified in the 2016 Uptown Community Plan Update Historic Resources Survey Report and was 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 Fred Bushman Building, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Fred Bushman, who constructed the building as an investment property.

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Scott A. Moomjian, which concludes that the resource is not significant under any HRB Criteria. Staff disagrees and finds 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 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 3951-3957 Goldfinch Street and 820 W. University Avenue 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 3951-3957 Goldfinch Street and 820 W. University Avenue 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 building located at 3951-3957 Goldfinch Street was built in 1927 as a Two-Part Commercial Block building with Spanish Eclectic influences. It features a nearly symmetrical façade, flat roof, smooth stucco exterior, glazed ceramic tile along the foundation, large storefront windows, wood windows at the upper levels, and plain stucco vents. The storefront windows are topped by decorative transom windows fronted by wood spindles. The west elevation is topped by a simply shaped parapet punctuated by two small visor roofs clad in red clay Mission half barrel tiles. The storefront windows and ceramic tile extend across the west elevation (facing Goldfinch Street) and continue along a small portion of the south elevation. At the center of the west elevation, between the two storefronts, is an arched opening leading to a recessed door. There is a recessed lightwell at the second-floor level of the north elevation. The rear elevation features an attached one-story structure that was originally built as a garage.

The subject resource has undergone some alterations since its 1927 period of significance. Four windows on the north (side) elevation have been replaced with vinyl windows, and two windows on the south elevation have been boarded, although the openings remain. According to the building owner, the glazed ceramic tile along the foundation of the west elevation and a portion of the south elevation was first added in 1998 and replaced in 2019. The transom window above the northernmost storefront has been boarded over. Three different types of molding are seen at the base of the transom windows, indicating that some are replacements. Finally, the one-story structure at the rear has been modified from its former use of a garage through the removal of the garage door. These modifications do not impair integrity of design, materials, workmanship or feeling as it relates to Criterion C.

The Two-Part Commercial Block type emerged as a distinct building type in the first half of the 19th century and was prevalent from the 1850s to the 1950s. It is primarily characterized by a clear visual division between the first floor and the upper floors. This visual division may be achieved by using different stylistic elements on the first floor versus the upper floors, and/or including a cornice or belt course above the first floor to divide it from the upper floors. The first floor contains more public spaces, such as stores, banks, or hotel lobbies. The upper floors contain more private spaces, such as residences, hotel rooms, or meeting halls. Most Two-Part Commercial block buildings are two to four stories in height. The first floor is typically more decorated than the upper floors. The storefront also employs building materials and styles that are popular at the time to help it attract customers. This often results in frequent alterations to the storefront to keep up with changing trends. By the mid-19th century, Two-Part Commercial Block buildings typically featured large plate glass storefront windows, and balanced facades, and were built out to the property line. After the Victorian period, they frequently had flat roofs, sometimes with a parapet. Two-Part Commercial Block buildings are frequently found in neighborhood commercial areas that developed along streetcar lines.

The building located at 820 W. University Avenue was built in 1913 as a 1.5-story, single-family residence in the Craftsman style. It is clad in horizontal wood siding and features a partial-width front porch. The porch's front gable roof is supported by simple, square wood columns that sit on top of a low wall clad in horizontal wood siding that matches the house's siding. The side gable roof is clad in composition shingles and features exposed decorative rafter tails. A gabled dormer is centered on the street-facing roof slope. The windows are wood and either fixed or double-hung operation. Many of them feature leaded glass transoms.

The house at 820 W. University Avenue has undergone several modifications since its 1913 date of construction. When it was originally built, it faced onto Goldfinch Street, where the 3951-3957 Goldfinch building is currently located. It was moved to its present location in 1927 to allow 3951-3957 Goldfinch to be built. Sanborn Fire Insurance maps indicate that, in 1921 (when it was still at its original location), it featured extensions off the rear and right-side elevations, and a wider front porch. On the 1950 Sanborn map, it appears in its current location, without the side and rear bump-outs, and with its current porch width. The dormer window has been replaced with a vinyl window.

Although the building at 820 W. University Avenue features some of the character-defining features of the Craftsman style, such as wood siding, exposed decorative rafter tails, and front porch, it lacks

some of the other character-defining features of the style, such as tapered porch columns or large pedestals, decorative beams or knee braces, and a low-pitched roof. Additionally, the house's relocation and modifications have resulted in a significant loss of integrity of location, setting, and design. For these reasons, staff does not recommend designation of the building at 820 W. University Avenue under HRB Criterion C.

With origins in the British Arts and Crafts movement, Craftsman style architecture was popular in the United States largely between 1905 and 1930. Early examples by Greene and Greene were highly publicized in magazines, thus familiarizing the rest of the nation with the style. Character-defining features of Craftsman architecture include a low-pitched, gabled roof with wide, unenclosed eave overhang; exposed roof rafters; decorative beams or braces; full or partial-width porches supported by tapered square columns or pedestals; wood or stucco cladding; and wood frame and sash windows in fixed, double hung and casement varieties.

Significance Statement: The resource at 3951-3957 Goldfinch Street continues to convey the historic significance of the Two-Part Commercial Block type with Spanish Eclectic influences by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style; including a clear division between the first-floor storefronts and the upper residential stories; large storefront windows with decorative transoms; balanced façade; being built out to the property line; and Spanish Eclectic decorative features such as a smooth stucco exterior, simple parapet, visor roofs with Mission tiles, decorative spindles, and an arched opening. 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.

Research into the construction of the property at 3951-3957 Goldfinch Street and 820 W. University Avenue failed to conclusively identify a builder, designer or architect. Therefore, the property is not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion D.

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 3951-3957 Goldfinch Street and 820 W. University Avenue 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.

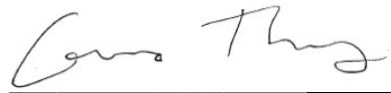
The property at 3951-3957 Goldfinch Street and 820 W. University Avenue is not located within a designated historic district. Therefore, the property is not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion F.

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 Fred Bushman Building located at 3951-3957 Goldfinch Street be designated with a period of significance of 1927 under HRB Criterion C as a good example of Two-Part Commercial building type with Spanish Eclectic influences. The designation excludes the rear attached former garage and the single-family house that has the address 820 W. University Avenue.



Gemma Tierney
Associate Planner

GT/ss



Suzanne Segur
Senior Planner
Development Services Department

Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON 3/25/2021

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 7/23/2020, to consider the historical designation of the Fred Bushman Building (owned by Massarat Family Trust 08-30-99, 9302 La Jolla Farms Road, La Jolla, CA 92037) located at **3951-3957 Goldfinch Street, San Diego, CA 92103**, APN: **444-612-05-00**, further described as BLK 67 LOTS 11 & 12 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 Fred Bushman Building 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 Two-Part Commercial Block type with Spanish Eclectic influences and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1927 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features a clear division between the first-floor storefronts and the upper residential stories, large storefront windows with decorative transoms, balanced façade, and being built out to the property line, and Spanish Eclectic decorative features. 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 attached former garage and the single-family house that has the address 820 W. University Avenue.

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