



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: July 8, 2021 REPORT NO. HRB-21-041

HEARING DATE: July 22, 2021

SUBJECT: **ITEM #2 – Fred Heilbron House**

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

APPLICANT: Marcus Thorp J W Trust; represented by Legacy 106, Inc.

LOCATION: 2526-2532 A Street, Golden Hill Community, Council District 3
APN 534-151-0400

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Fred Heilbron House located at 2530-2532 A Street as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Fred Heilbron House located at 2530-2532 A Street as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1906 under HRB Criterion C. The designation excludes the north elevation additions as well as the garage and apartment building addressed as 2526-2528 A Street which were built outside the 1906 period of significance. This recommendation is based on the following finding:

The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Craftsman style with Neoclassical influences and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1906 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features a full width, covered front porch; wooden siding; exposed rounded rafter tails; and fenestration consisting of divided lite and single lite double hung wooden windows. Neoclassical elements are visible through the pedimented gable with fishscale shingles; decorative paneled entranceway; Doric porch columns; and simple cornice band located under the hipped roofline.

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 Golden Hill community on the southern facing side of A Street and is directly east of Golden Hill park.

The property was identified in the [2016 Golden Hill Survey Report](#) and identified as a potentially historic individual resource appearing eligible for listing on the local register, the California Register of Historical Resources, and the National Register of Historic Places.

The historic name of the resource, the Fred Heilbron House, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Fred Heilbron, who constructed the house as his family's personal residence.

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Legacy 106, Inc. which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria A and C. Staff concurs that the site is a significant historical resource under HRB Criterion C but not HRB Criterion A. 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 2530-2532 A Street did not reveal any information to indicate that the property exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's or Golden Hill's historical, archaeological, cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, landscaping or architectural development. The consultant's report finds that the property is significant for its association with Councilman Fred Heilbron, who was previously designated as a historically significant individual under HRB Criterion B (further discussed under Criterion B), and his fight to convince the Common Council to abandon the purchase of private water in favor of staking a water rights claim on the Colorado River between 1919-1927. The result of that fight, once the League of Southwest and the federal government completed the Boulder Dam Project, the All American Canal, and aqueduct that delivered water to San Diego in 1947, set up the annexations of the 1960s, and allowed the growth and development of the San Diego region. Specifically, the report finds that Heilbron's leadership with the Common Council focused on the development of publicly owned reservoirs and high elevation gravity flow dams, which in addition to the emphasis upon legal Spanish water rights laws, would allow San Diego to secure a portion of the Colorado River to qualify as a member of the League of the Southwest.

Staff disagrees that the subject property is significant under Criterion A. In order for a property to be associated with the historical, social, economic, political and engineering facets of Criterion A, the resource must exemplify or reflect the unique elements of those particular aspects of development, not just for its association with a historical individual. While the property was occupied during an early portion of Heilbron's political career, the subject property does not have any other direct association with the fight to convince the Common Council to abandon the purchase of private water nor can the subject property be contributed to the success of that fight. 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.

Fred Heilbron and his wife Charlotte constructed the property located at 2526-2532 A Street in 1906 and resided there until 1925 while maintaining ownership of the property until 1973. While living in the subject property, Fred Heilbron was politically active and was elected to the San Diego Common Council where he served as a Councilman from 1917-1921 and again for a short time in 1927. He ran on a platform which stressed the need for more water in the city and supported the construction of the El Capitan Dam. Fred Heilbron was identified as a historically significant individual with the designation of [HRB #1262, 4399 Hermosa Way](#). During the historical designation, it was found that his accomplishments were best associated with that property since he resided in it from 1924 until his death in 1973.

Research into the other owners and tenants of the property at 2530-2532 A Street 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 property located at 2530-2532 A St was constructed in 1906 in the Craftsman style with Neoclassical elements. The property features a two-story massing clad in wood siding with a hipped roof that is partially interrupted with an off centered decorative pedimented gable. The primary elevation features a covered, full width front porch which shelters an off centered paneled entranceway that is next to an oversized double hung wooden window. The west elevation features the continuation of wood siding, double hung wooden windows, an oversized brick chimney and two sets of bay windows featuring a central window flanked by narrower double hung windows. The east elevation features four double hung windows set in the wooden siding along with an added portico that shelters a side entrance door. The rear elevation features a full width addition that occupies the entire façade and is differentiated with a flat roofing that is situated lower than the original hipped roof.

Modifications to the property include the rear room additions on the north façade and removal of an exterior two-story staircase along the west elevation at an unknown date, the addition of a four lite square window on the west side of the porch at an unknown date, and the addition of a side entrance with a small portico on the east elevation slightly recessed from the primary façade. While the property originally featured two rear garages at the time of construction, they have since been removed and replaced with apartments with garages below built after the date of construction and are therefore excluded from the historic designation. Overall, these modifications do not significantly impair integrity of design, materials, workmanship or feeling.

With origins in the British Arts and Crafts movement, born in response to the overly ornate Victorian aesthetic and the highly mechanized Industrial Revolution, 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. As a result, a flood of pattern books appeared, offering plans for Craftsman bungalows. One story vernacular examples are often called simply bungalows. Character defining features of Craftsman architecture include a low-pitched, gabled roof with wide, unenclosed eave overhang; exposed roof rafters; multiple roof planes; decorative beams or braces; full or partial-width porches supported by tapered square columns or pedestals; decorative attic vents; wood or stucco cladding; and wood frame and sash windows in fixed, double hung and casement varieties.

The Neoclassical style was a prominently used for domestic buildings throughout the United States during the first half of the 20th century. The revived interest in these past design elements stemmed from the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition held in 1893, which had a classical theme that featured large colonnaded structures arranged around a central court. The first wave of popularity of the Neoclassical style was from 1900-1920 and featured larger properties with hipped roofs and decorative support columns. The second wave, from the mid-1920s to the 1950s, focused more

emphasis on side-gabled roofs and less ornate columns. The style eventually fell out of fashion and was replaced in popularity with other eclectic styles.

Significance Statement: The house continues to convey the historic significance of the Craftsman style with Neoclassical influences by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style; specifically, the resource features a full width, covered front porch; wooden siding; exposed rounded rafter tails; and fenestration consisting of divided lite and single lite double hung wooden windows. Neoclassical details include: the pedimented gable with fishscale shingles; Doric porch columns; and a cornice band located under the hipped roofline.

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 Heilbron House located at 2530-2532 A Street be designated with a period of significance of 1906 under HRB Criterion C, through the retention of character defining features of the Craftsman style with Neoclassical influences. The designation excludes the north elevation additions as well as the garage and apartment building addressed as 2526-2528 A Street which were built outside the 1906 period of significance.



Emma Haggerty
Senior Planner



Suzanne Segur
Senior Planner/ HRB Liaison
Development Services Department

eh/SS/alm

Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER
ADOPTED ON 7/22/2021

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 7/22/2021, to consider the historical designation of the Fred Heilbron House (owned by Thorp Marcus J W Trust 03-11-10, 4681 Harvey Road, San Diego, CA 92116) located at **2530-2532 A Street, San Diego, CA 92102**, APN: **534-151-04-00**, further described as BLK 30 LOTS 33 & 34 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 Fred Heilbron 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 Craftsman style with Neoclassical influences and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1906 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features a full width, covered front porch; wooden siding; exposed rounded rafter tails; and fenestration consisting of divided lite and single lite double hung wooden windows. Neoclassical elements are visible through the pedimented gable with fishscale shingles; decorative paneled entranceway; Doric porch columns; and simple cornice band located under the hipped roofline. 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 north elevation additions as well as the garage and apartment building addressed as 2526-2528 A Street which were built outside the 1906 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