



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: October 14, 2021 REPORT NO. HRB-21-056

HEARING DATE: October 28, 2021

SUBJECT: **ITEM #03 – William Birney and Kneeland Jenkins Speculation House**

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

APPLICANT: Adrian D & Nicole A S Veloz; represented by Landmark Historic Preservation

LOCATION: 4268 Hortensia Street, Uptown Community, Council District 3  
APN 443-211-21-00

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the William Birney and Kneeland Jenkins Speculation House located at 4268 Hortensia Street as a historical resource.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the William Birney and Kneeland Jenkins Speculation House located at 4268 Hortensia Street as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1930 under HRB Criterion C. This designation includes the original detached garage. 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 1930 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features flat, gabled, and shed roof; the asymmetrical front façade; red mission tile roof with exposed rafter tails; original paneled sliding garage door with a turned spindle; irregular stucco cladding with sandy texture; prominent focal window with decorative wrought iron grille and tilework; casement wood window groupings; original leaded arched window; and one-over-one wood double-hung windows.

### 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 a one-story, single-family residence with a detached garage located in the Mission Hills neighborhood.

The property was identified in the 2016 Uptown Community Plan Area Historic Resources 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 William Birney and Kneeland Jenkins Speculation House, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of William S. Birney and Kneeland Jenkins, who constructed the house as a speculation house.

## ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research was prepared by Landmark Historic Preservation, 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 property was constructed in 1930 in the Spanish Eclectic style and features an L-shaped plan and an original detached street-facing garage. The resource has a flat roof with a faux cross-gable design. The gabled and shed roof are topped with red mission clay tiles with short, exposed, and arched-cut rafter tails. A front patio wall with a parabolic arched entry encloses a courtyard space between the garage and dwelling. A hipped roof structure, lined with mission half-barrel tiles and flat clay tiles, covers the arched front entrance. The residence, the front wall, and the garage are clad with uneven sandy stucco texture. The garage features original paneled sliding garage doors and a turned wood beam divider.

Along the front elevation gable facade, a rectangular focal window is enclosed by a window bay with a wrought-iron grille. The window bay also contains a brick planter with painted tilework. Although somewhat hidden from the street, the primary façade of the residence features casement window groupings and rustic wooden decorative shutters. The deep inset front doorway with a paneled door opens out to the original rounded patio steps. The southwest side elevation features double-hung windows and a half-glass service door. The chimney is located along the northeast elevation, where double-hung windows and a stained arched window are also present. The rear elevation contains single double-hung and paired double-hung windows. A louvered window with turned wood spindle enclosure is also installed along this rear façade. Decorative tile attic vents are present along all elevations of the residence except for the two facades facing the front courtyard.

Modifications to the property include the single rear louvered window replacement in the original window opening along the rear elevation. Overall, this modification does not significantly impair the integrity of design, materials, workmanship, or feeling as it relates to HRB Criterion C.

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 resource continues to convey the historic significance of the Spanish Eclectic style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style, including the flat, gabled, and shed roof; the asymmetrical front façade; red mission tile roof with exposed rafter tails; original paneled sliding garage door with a turned spindle; irregular stucco cladding with sandy texture; prominent focal window

with decorative wrought iron grille and tilework; casement wood window groupings; original leaded arched window; and one-over-one wood double-hung 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 at 4268 Hortensia was owned by Master Builder Morris B. Irvin and Ida B. Irvin for short intervals between 1930 and 1933. During this time, for unidentified reasons, the ownership of the property was transferred multiple times between Irvin and William S. Birney/Kneeland Jenkins. No documentation was provided which showed Irvin's involvement in the design or construction of the house. Morris B. Irvin was a real estate developer whose role in the property may have been merely financial. Therefore, staff does not recommend 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 William Birney and Kneeland Jenkins Speculation House located at 4268 Hortensia Street be designated with a period of significance of 1930 under HRB Criterion C as a good example of the Spanish Eclectic Style. This designation includes the original detached garage.



Alvin Lin  
Junior Planner



Suzanne Segur  
Senior Planner/ HRB Liaison  
Development Services Department

al/SS

Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A  
ADOPTED ON 10/28/2021

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 10/28/2021, to consider the historical designation of the **William Birney and Kneeland Jenkins Speculation House** (owned by Veloz Adrian D & Nicole A S, 4268 Hortensia Street, San Diego, CA 92103) located at **4268 Hortensia Street, San Diego, CA 92103**, APN: **443-211-21-00**, further described as LOT P 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 William Birney and Kneeland Jenkins 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 1930 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features flat, gabled, and shed roof; the asymmetrical front façade; red mission tile roof with exposed rafter tails; original paneled sliding garage door with a turned spindle; irregular stucco cladding with sandy texture; prominent focal window with decorative wrought iron grille and tilework; casement wood window groupings; original leaded arched window; and one-over-one wood double-hung windows. 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 include the original detached garage.

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

RECORDING REQUESTED BY  
CITY OF SAN DIEGO  
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

**WHEN RECORDED MAIL TO**

HISTORICAL RESOURCES BOARD  
ATTN: HRB SECRETARY  
1222 FIRST AVENUE, MS 501  
SAN DIEGO, CA 92101

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SPACE ABOVE THIS LINE FOR RECORDER'S USE

RESOLUTION NUMBER **N/A**

HISTORICAL DESIGNATION OF PROPERTY ON

**4268 Hortensia Street, San Diego, CA 92103**

ASSESSOR PARCEL NUMBER **443-211-21-00**

HISTORICAL RESOURCES BOARD NUMBER **0**