



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: May 11, 2017 REPORT NO. HRB-17-034

HEARING DATE: May 25, 2017

SUBJECT: **ITEM #10 – 1263 Virginia Way**

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

APPLICANT: Sandra Saw and Jeff Marchioro represented by IS Architecture

LOCATION: 1263 Virginia Way, La Jolla Community, Council District 1
APN 350-501-05-00

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the property located at 1263 Virginia Way as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Do not designate the property located at 1263 Virginia Way under any adopted HRB Criteria.

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 contains a one-and-a-half story Tudor Revival style residence and garage constructed in 1927.

The property was identified in the 2004 Draft La Jolla Survey and given a Status Code of 7R, "identified in reconnaissance level survey but not evaluated." Properties that were not identified as potential contributors to a potential historic district were assigned this status code.

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by IS Architecture, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria B and C. Staff finds that the site is not a significant historical resource under any HRB Criteria. 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 1263 Virginia Way did not reveal any information to indicate that the property exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's or La Jolla'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.

The property at 1263 Virginia Way has an association with Helen Copley, a prominent local and national publisher, philanthropist and wife of James Copley. James took over full control of the Copley Press in 1959 and served as the chief executive officer until his death in 1973. James was considered a giant in the publishing field, and over the course of his career he tripled the circulation of the San Diego Union-Tribune. Following James' death, Helen assumed control of the Copley Press until her retirement in 2001. While Helen was at the helm of the Copley Press, the afternoon Tribune won two Pulitzer Prizes. Helen oversaw the merger of the Union and Tribune in 1992, and the largest acquisition in Copley Press history in 1996. Helen was also heavily involved in civic and philanthropic causes, launching the San Diego Council on Literacy in 1986, and giving generously to the San Diego Symphony, the University of San Diego, the San Diego Museum of Contemporary Art, and the San Diego Animal Shelter. Helen passed away in 2004.

According to the Chain of Title provided in the HRRR, Helen Copley purchased the subject property in 1981 and ownership remained in the family until 2010. The Directory Listing of Occupants notes that Helen Copley was not documented as a resident of this property, although this information was unlisted from 1982-1994. In other words, there is no documentation that Copley personally used the subject property as a residence or retreat as asserted by the HRRR. Copley owned many properties in San Diego during this time period and may have used the house at 1263 Virginia Way as a rental or speculative property. The argument that Copley personally used the property is unsubstantiated by the documentation found in the HRRR. The HRRR also asserts that the property is significant because it was Copley's private retreat away from the public eye. However, this is inconsistent with the City's Designation Criteria Guidelines, which require that the property be the resource that best exemplifies a significant individual's significant contributions to the history of San Diego, rather than their private life.

The significant accomplishments of Helen Copley were previously considered as part of the Board's review of her main residence, Foxhill, located at 7007 Country Club Drive in 2015. The HRRR prepared for that property concluded that Helen is historically significant, but that the extant corporate office on Ivanhoe best represents the significant accomplishments of both Helen and James Copley. At that time, staff recommended that Helen's accomplishments, while highly admirable, occurred primarily after her husband's passing in 1973, and were therefore too recent to evaluate objectively within their historical context. Staff further recommended that given more time and perspective, Helen Copley may well be found to be a historically significant individual, at which time the most appropriate representative resource can be identified. The Board concurred, and the Country Club Drive property was not designated for an association with Helen Copley.

Staff has reviewed the information in the HRRR for the subject property at 1263 Virginia Way, and maintains the position that insufficient time has passed to objectively evaluate Helen Copley's significance. Furthermore, were she found to be historically significant, the historical record ties her to this property only through ownership, with no documentation that any possible significant accomplishments are associated with this property. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion B at this time.

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 contains a one-and-a-half story single family residence constructed in 1927 in the Tudor Revival style. The original garage, also in the Tudor Revival style sits behind the main structure. The residence faces Virginia Way and the front entrance is accessed by a modern brick walkway. The structure features a steeply pitched side gable roof with two projecting front facing gables. The smaller gable shelters an enclosed front entry that features rounded arch openings and a copper awning. A single steeply pitched gable dormer with wood window protrudes from the roof. Extending across about half of the front of the house is an uncovered porch sheathed in a modern brick. On the southern portion of the front façade is also tripartite wood focal window consisting of a fixed pane window flanked by two tall, narrow four-over-one single hung windows. Two tall, narrow four-over-one single hung windows are located on the northern portion of the primary façade. The house is clad in stucco and features decorative half-timbering and a massive stucco chimney on the southwest façade.

Several alterations have been made to the property since its construction in 1927. In 1982, during the ownership of Helen Copley, a bathroom addition was added to the rear of the property. The decorative half-timbering and copper canopy were added at this time and the front entry was enclosed. Rear and side additions were added in 2011 and were approved as consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards by Historic Resources staff. Additionally, at some point after 2011 brick was added to the front porch and stairs.

Popular in the 1920s and 1930s, Tudor Revival architecture is loosely based on a variety of late Medieval English styles and influences, but unlike some English prototypes, Tudor Revival style houses exhibit steeply pitched gable roofs that dominate the facades. Other character defining features include decorative half-timbering; tall, narrow windows, usually appearing in multiple groups and with multi-pane glazing; massive chimneys, sometimes with decorative chimney pots; entry porches with round or Tudor arches; and gable dormers. Relatively uncommon before World War I, widespread adoption of masonry veneering techniques in the 1920s accompanied a dramatic rise in the style's popularity as even the most modest examples began to closely mimic the brick and stone veneers of their English prototypes. Tudor Revival style houses usually include the use of stucco as well as wood cladding and brick or stone veneer, depending upon the subtype.

The house features many of the character defining features of the Tudor Revival style including a steeply pitched roof; tall, narrow windows; a massive chimney; front entry porch with rounded arch; decorative half-timbering; stucco cladding; and a gable dormer. However, the integrity has been greatly impacted by modifications. The additions to the rear and side of the structure do not significantly impact the integrity of the property because they are consistent with the Standards.

Conversely, the addition of half-timbering, enclosure of the front entry, and addition of the canopy and brickwork significantly impair integrity of design, materials and feeling. The half-timbering, although consistent with the Tudor Revival style, was added over fifty years after the construction of the house and therefore gives a false sense of the original design of the structure, in direct conflict with Standard 3. The enclosure of the porch alters a key feature of the original design, in direct conflict with Standard 9. The changes to the property significantly impair its integrity of design, materials and feeling to the extent that the building no longer retains integrity as a resource that embodies the distinctive characteristics of its original Tudor Revival design, and therefore staff does not recommend designation under 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 1263 Virginia Way 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 1263 Virginia Way 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 1263 Virginia Way 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 property located at 1263 Virginia Way not be designated under any HRB Criteria.



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SS/el

Attachment(s):

1. Applicant's Historical Report under separate cover