



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: June 8, 2017 REPORT NO. HRB-17-036

HEARING DATE: June 22, 2017

SUBJECT: **ITEM #8 – 4639 Vista Street**

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

APPLICANT: Karen E. Rogers-Cook Revocable Trust represented by Johnson & Johnson

LOCATION: 4639 Vista Street, Kensington-Talmadge Community, Council District 9
APN 465-344-09-00

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the property located at 4639 Vista Street as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Do not designate the property located at 4639 Vista Street 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 building is a two-story Tudor Revival style single-family residence built in 1926 on the east side of Vista Street, between Adams Avenue and Madison Avenue in the Kensington Park Annex within the Kensington-Talmadge Community. The property was identified in the 1996 Mid-City Survey and given a Status Code of 5D2, "Contributor to a district that is eligible for local listing or designation."

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Johnson & Johnson, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criterion C and staff does not concur. 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 4639 Vista Street did not reveal any information to indicate that the property exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's or Kensington-Talmadge'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 4639 Vista 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 is a two-story Tudor Revival style single-family residence built in 1926 of standard wood frame construction on a concrete foundation. The building exhibits an irregular plan form and a symmetrical primary façade. The steeply pitched jerkinhead roof with gabled dormers contains the building's second floor, and a large front-facing gable marks the central entry to the building. The building is clad in a combination of running bond brick, heavy dash stucco, and composition shingle at the roof. The segmental arch entry door is accented by a decorative brick surround. The arch of the entry is repeated in a pair of Palladian feature windows on either side. An extended exterior chimney is present on the south side of the building and features a modest amount of decorative brickwork. Fenestration throughout consists generally of multi-light vinyl clad composite casement windows. At the rear of the property is a non-historic detached garage built in the 1980s.

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 facades. Other character defining features include the use of stucco as well as wood cladding and brick or stone veneer, depending upon the subtype. Decorative half-timbering is present on about half of examples. Fenestration is typically characterized by tall, narrow windows, usually appearing in multiple groups and with multi-pane glazing. 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.

The property has been subject to a number of alterations over time which have significantly impacted character defining features and impaired overall integrity as it relates to the 1926 date of construction and period of significance. The most significant among these alterations occurred in 1996, when the wood windows of the original house were replaced throughout with dual-paned vinyl clad composite windows according to the report. Close examination of the existing windows and comparison to those pictured in the transitional photos provided on page 75 in the report reveal the disparity between the two. While the window replacements generally mimicked the light patterns of the original windows, the material of the replacement windows throughout is not

historically appropriate, and just as critical, the size of the retrofitted sashes are in fact smaller than the originals and do not accurately recreate the original appearance. Where the house originally contained larger windows fit properly to their frames, the house now appears with windows that appear constricted – not only inhibiting the amount of openness provided by the glazing, but also modifying the proportions of the window sashes and the individual panes within them. The wholesale window replacement has significantly impacted essential character defining features and integrity of design, materials, workmanship and feeling.

In addition to the extensive window replacement, the 1996 transitional photos also reveal that the two front dormers have been modified by the removal of original wood shingle cladding around the windows where non-historic stucco has now been applied. Google Street View imaging from 2014 shows the building before a recent roof replacement, and shows that wood shingle cladding was also present on the north-facing dormer over the driveway. The modification to the dormers is a considerable impact to character defining features of the house, and significantly impairs the building's integrity as it relates to the original design and materials.

Additional modifications that only contribute further to the building's impaired integrity include a non-historic trellis over the driveway; non-historic pavers at the walkway and driveway; and a French door with sidelights under the trellis on the north side of the building which is not estimated by staff to be original. Finally, a number of remodels occurred at the back of the house in the 1980s and 1990s, resulting in a two-story addition positioned behind the main roof ridge. While the two-story rear addition is generally sympathetic to the original building in terms of placement and massing, and does not significantly impair integrity on its own, the addition does not appear readily distinguished from the original, at least in terms of its fenestration or stucco cladding.

The cumulative effect of previous alterations to the subject property – most notably the wholesale window replacement and the non-historic stucco at the originally shingle-clad dormers – significantly impact character defining features critical to the building's conveyance of its Tudor Revival style as it was originally constructed. The building's integrity of design, materials, workmanship and feeling has been considerably undermined. Therefore, staff cannot support designation of the subject property 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 4639 Vista Street was built by Lucille Helen Lainson. Lainson has not been established by the Historical Resources Board as a Master Architect, Designer or Builder, and there is insufficient information and analysis in the report to designate her as such at this time. Nevertheless, due to previously discussed integrity loss resulting from various alterations, the building no longer conveys the original design and intent of the builder or designer. Therefore, staff does not recommend 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 4639 Vista Street 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 4639 Vista Street 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 not recommended that the property located at 4639 Vista Street be designated under HRB Criteria.



Camille Pekarek
Associate Planner



Elyse W. Lowe
Deputy Director
Development Services Department

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Attachment:

1. Applicant's Historical Report under separate cover