



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: July 13, 2017 REPORT NO. HRB-17-042

HEARING DATE: July 27, 2017

SUBJECT: **ITEM #10-140 West Thorn Street**

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

APPLICANT: Edward C. Lenhart Revocable Living Trust represented by Heritage Architecture & Planning

LOCATION: 140 West Thorn Street, 92103, Uptown Community, Council District 3
APN 452-538-17-00

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the 140 West Thorn Street as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Do not designate the property located at 140 West Thorn 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 property is located in the Horton's addition in a multi-family and single-family residential neighborhood.

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Heritage Architecture and Planning, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria C and D. Staff does not concur and believes that the property is not significant due to a lack of integrity. 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.*

Constructed in ca. 1909, the property was designed in the Prairie style. The house is two stories with a stucco exterior and a predominantly flat roof. The house fronts on to West Thorn Street and appears as a two story mass flanked by one story wings. Due to the slope of the lot, the west side and the rear of the lot feature a lower floor. The covered front porch is slightly recessed between the one story portions of the building with the remainder of the porch pushing past the front façade. The porch roof is supported by decorative square posts that rest on a low stucco wall. The porch is accessed from both the east and the west sides.

The two story portion of the front façade features symmetrically placed windows on the upper and the lower floor. The second floor roof features a deep eave to provide some protection for the windows. The first floor has two fixed windows flanking the double entry door. Just to the right of the front entrance is a solid door providing access to a secondary unit. The one story portions of the front façade feature large windows placed symmetrically on either side. Each of these windows features a stucco pop-out around the window.

The east façade of the house features two evenly spaced windows on the second floor and five windows on the first floor. The first floor also features a small shed roof addition towards the rear.

The north façade of the house is similar to the layout of the front façade with a porch area recessed between the 2 one story portions. At the center of the rear porch is an exposed brick chimney. The porch is accessed via a number of single doors or pairs of French doors. The northwest corner of the house also provides access to the rear yard via a single Bel-Air style door flanked by double hung windows.

The west façade of the house fronts on to Front Street and appears as two stories. The lower floor has a single solid door and multiple wood divided light windows. The 1st floor has a bay window protruding from the wall surface which is flanked by double hung windows on either side. Further along the façade there are two sets of windows slightly off set from each other.

The Prairie style originated in Chicago and was popular primarily in the Midwest for the early part of the 20th century. An indigenous American style, the Prairie School shared the ideals of the British Arts and Crafts movement and was popularized by architects including Frank Lloyd Wright, George Maher and others. Character defining features of Prairie style architecture include low-pitched, usually hipped roofs, wide overhanging eaves, and façade detailing emphasizing horizontal lines.

Based on a review of the historic photo and the existing conditions, there have been a significant number of changes to the property which have negatively impacted its integrity. On the front façade, first floor, the front porch pergola has been covered and made into a solid roof, the cap on the porch wall has been removed, the pair of front French doors have been replaced with modern wood and stained glass doors, and a door has been added to the right of the front entrance. Planters were also added to the front of the house. Above the entrance at the second floor, the decorative window box at the center of the three windows has been removed and the transom for the window to the left has been replaced with fewer divided lights. At the one story portions of the facade flanking the porch, the windows have been replaced with aluminum sliders and a stucco pop

out has been added around each of the windows. There are no historic photos of the east façade, however based on the evidence, there are three new aluminum windows added to this façade. It is difficult to tell how the windows on this façade were altered, but based on how the newer windows are placed in the wall, they are either new openings or modified openings. Similar to the east façade, there are no historic photos for the north façade. The Sanborn maps do not show a porch at this façade, but they also do not show a porch on the south (front) façade. Likely, there was either no covered porch on this façade or it was limited to a pergola. Currently, this façade has a covered porch. There also appears to be a couple of new doors accessing the porch and at the northwest corner, two non-historic windows. At the west façade of the house, all of the windows on the 1st floor have been replaced with aluminum windows that do not match the original operation. The window set just above the basement entry also appears to have been modified. The historic photo shows the headers of the last two windows at this façade matching and currently the headers are off-set. At the bay window, the corbel detail underneath the bay has been removed and it appears that a small shed roof has been added at the top. The top of the chimney at the northwest corner has also been removed. In addition to the numerous modifications previously made to the house, the exterior was restuccoed. The stucco texture was based on the original texture.

Given the cumulative modifications to all sides of the house and the negative impact that these modifications have had on the overall design, materials and feeling, staff does not recommend 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.

Constructed ca. 1909, this property was originally designed by William Sterling Hebbard. Born in 1863 in Milford, Michigan, William Sterling Hebbard attended college at Cornell, then in 1887, relocated to Chicago, where he worked for the famed firm of Burnham and Root. In 1888, he moved to Los Angeles where he worked for the architectural firm of Curlett, Eisen and Cuthbertson. Through Cuthbertson, he cultivated an interest in studying the early California architecture of the Missions. While living in Los Angeles, he received his first commission, to design a power plant for the San Diego Cable Railway Company (now demolished). Upon completion of the power house, Hebbard relocated to San Diego and designed a series of structures associated with the Railway Company. At the beginning of the 20th century, Hebbard explored several architectural styles. The Maryland Hotel is an example of his facility to produce quality design in the Neo-classical style.

In 1896, Hebbard entered into an eleven-year partnership with Irving Gill. That partnership influenced Irving Gill's design aesthetic and is evidenced by his use of arches and an emphasis on natural lighting. Upon the dissolution of that partnership, Hebbard continued to practice in San Diego for ten years until 1917.

Hebbard was active as an original member, and the only one from San Diego, of the State Board of Architectural Examiners, instituted in 1903. His architectural license, #A9, was only the ninth issued in the state. In 1918, he left San Diego to become a consultant for the U. S. Army for military shipbuilding and design. Following his discharge from the military in 1922, he resumed his architectural practice in Los Angeles. William Sterling Hebbard passed away in 1930.


As a result of the aforementioned window replacements, additions and material changes to the original structure, the subject building lacks enough original integrity to honestly convey the original design and intent of the Master Architect. 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 not recommended that the property at 140 West Thorn Street be designated under any HRB Criteria due to a lack of integrity.



Jodie Brown, AICP
Senior Planner



Elyse W. Lowe
Deputy Director
Development Services Department

JB/ks/el

Attachment(s):

1. Applicant's Historical Report under separate cover