



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: July 13, 2017 REPORT NO. HRB-17-043

HEARING DATE: July 27, 2017

SUBJECT: **ITEM #11 – Councilman Fred Heilbron House**

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

APPLICANT: Paul H. and Carol S. Yong Family Trust represented by Legacy 106, Inc.

LOCATION: 4399 Hermosa Way, 92103, Uptown Community, Council District 3
APN 443-290-0100

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Councilman Fred Heilbron House located at 4399 Hermosa Way as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Councilman Fred Heilbron House located at 4399 Hermosa Way as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1924-1973 under HRB Criteria B and C. The designation excludes the garage which is constructed outside of the period of significance. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

1. The resource is identified with Councilman Fred Heilbron, a historically significant person and retains integrity for that association. Specifically, the resource was Heilbron's home during the most productive years of his efforts to bring new sources of water to the San Diego region from 1924 to 1973. The property was Heilbron's home during his 1925 mayoral campaign in which he ran on a platform which emphasized finding new ways to bring water to San Diego. Heilbron served as Chairman of the San Diego County Water Authority and was instrumental in obtaining federal funding for the San Diego Aqueduct. Councilman Heilbron's efforts brought Colorado River water to the San Diego region and the increased water supply has allowed its population to continue to grow and the area to flourish.
2. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of Spanish Colonial Revival style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1924 period of significance. Specifically, the resource displays an asymmetrical façade, stucco cladding, low-pitched tile roof with little eave overhang, arched windows with Solomonic columns, stucco chimney with tile roof and decorative vents, an elaborated front entry surround, and wooden 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 property contains a two-story Spanish Colonial Revival style home constructed in 1924.

The property was identified in 2016 Uptown Community Plan Update 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 Councilman Fred Heilbron House, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Councilman Fred Heilbron, a historically significant individual.

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Legacy 106, Inc. which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria B and C and staff concurs. 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 4399 Hermosa Way did not reveal any information to indicate that the property exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's or Uptown'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.

Fred Heilbron, along with his wife Charlotte, constructed the house at 4399 Hermosa Way in 1924 and lived there until his death in 1973. Heilbron was a master plumber who owned a plumbing and heating business in downtown San Diego. Additionally, he had obtained a law degree and passed the bar exam but never practiced. Heilbron was politically active and was elected to the San Diego Common Council, a precursor to today's City Council. Heilbron served as a Councilman from March 1917 through April 1921 and again for a short time in 1927. He also ran unsuccessfully for Mayor in 1925. Often, he ran on a platform which stressed the need for more water in the city and supported the construction of the El Capitan Dam.

Throughout his career, Councilman Heilbron was an advocate for bringing new sources of water to the San Diego region. The semi-arid climate of San Diego has always made the issue of water an important one. With the population explosion during World War II, it became evident to political leaders such as Heilbron that there was a need for more water. In 1944, the San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA) was formed and Heilbron was appointed as Chairman, a position which he held until his death in 1973. The goal of the SDCWA was to find new ways to bring water to the area.

In the fall of 1944, President Franklin D. Roosevelt authorized the construction of the San Diego Aqueduct to link the region to Colorado River water. Although this was a major accomplishment for the SDCWA, funding was cancelled at the end of the war. Heilbron, the region's most adamant water advocate, was sent to Washington, D.C. by Mayor Harley Knox to lobby for the aqueduct project. Heilbron was successful and the bill allowing the project to move forward was approved by Congress. The first Colorado River water reached San Diego in November of 1947 when the San Diego Aqueduct was finally completed. In 1968, the SDCWA honored Heilbron by opening a facility named the Fred A. Heilbron Operations Center in Escondido.

Significance Statement: The resource is identified with Councilman Fred Heilbron, a historically significant person and retains integrity for that association. Specifically, the resource was Heilbron's home during the most productive years of his efforts to bring new sources of water to the San Diego region from 1924 to 1973. The property was Heilbron's home during his 1925 mayoral campaign in which he ran on a platform which emphasized finding new ways to bring water to San Diego. Heilbron served as Chairman of the San Diego County Water Authority and was instrumental in obtaining federal funding for the San Diego Aqueduct. Councilman Heilbron's efforts brought Colorado River water to the San Diego region and the increased water supply has allowed its population to continue to grow and the area to flourish. Therefore, staff recommends 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 resource is a two-story, single family residence constructed in 1924 in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The structure sits on a canyon lot and the slope of the land allows for a basement level at the rear. A low stucco site wall surrounds the front yard and a small detached garage is located at the front of the lot. The garage is modern and is excluded from this designation. The house features an L-shaped plan with the primary entrance being accessed by a scored concrete patio on the south façade. The stucco clad structure is topped with a low-pitched, hipped tile roof. The front façade features a large focal window and leaded glass windows on the first floor and a set of arched windows with Solomonian columns on the second floor. The large, two-story chimney on the south façade is topped with a hipped tile roof and contains decorative vents. A two-story addition and deck on the rear façade are not original to the property.

Several modifications have been made to the home since its construction in 1924. A one-story rear addition with sunporch above was constructed in 1947. The sunporch was later enclosed in 1954 and the rear deck was added in 1985. Staff has observed that according to the Assessor's Building Record the garage may have originally been located in the basement at the rear of the house. In 2012, Historic Resources staff determined that the construction of the present garage and site wall was consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. At some point, a previous owner infilled a set of French doors on the south façade. Working with Historic Resources staff, the doors were recently restored to match a 1927 photo of the property. These modifications do not significantly impair integrity of design, workmanship, materials or feeling.

The Spanish Colonial Revival style uses decorative details borrowed from the entire history of Spanish architecture. Its vocabulary is influenced by Moorish, Byzantine, Gothic or Renaissance precedents. The style became popular after the Panama-California Exposition of 1915 and reached

its height in the 1920's and early 1930's before rapidly declining in the 1940's. Identifying features include a low-pitched roof with little or no eave overhang, red tile roof covering, stucco exterior wall finishes, an asymmetrical façade and arches above doors and principle windows. Common decorative details are patterned tiles, carved stonework, large focal windows, wooden or iron window grilles, decorative vents and balconies.

Significance Statement: The house continues to convey the historic significance of the Spanish Colonial Revival style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style; including an asymmetrical façade, stucco cladding, low-pitched tile roof with little eave overhang, arched windows with Solomonic columns, stucco chimney with tile roof and decorative vents, an elaborated front entry surround, and wooden windows.

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 4399 Hermosa 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 4399 Hermosa 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.

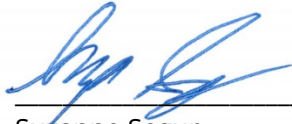
The property at 4399 Hermosa Way is not located within a designated historic district. Therefore, the property is not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion F.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

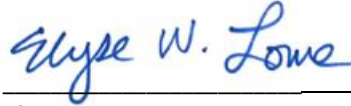
Designation brings with it the responsibility of maintaining the building in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The benefits of designation include the availability of the Mills Act Program for reduced property tax; the use of the more flexible Historical Building Code; flexibility 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 Councilman Fred Heilbron House located at 4399 Hermosa Way be designated with a period of significance of 1924-1973 under HRB Criterion B as a resource that is identified with Councilman Fred Heilbron, a historically significant person, and under HRB Criterion C as a resource that exhibits the characteristics of the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The designation excludes the garage which is constructed outside of the period of significance.



Suzanne Segur
Assistant Planner



Elyse W. Lowe
Deputy Director
Development Services Department

SS/el

Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON 7/27/2017

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 7/27/2017, to consider the historical designation of the **Councilman Fred Heilbron House** (owned by Paul H and Carol S Yong Family Trust 07-12-11, 4399 Hermosa Way, San Diego, CA 92103) located at **4399 Hermosa Way, San Diego, CA 92103**, APN: **443-290-01-00**, further described as VL 32 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 Councilman Fred Heilbron House on the following findings:

(1) The property is historically significant under CRITERION B as a resource that is identified Fred Heilbron, a historically significant person and retracts integrity for that association. Specifically, the resource was Heilbron's home during the most productive years of his efforts to bring new sources of water to the San Diego region from 1924 to 1973. The property was Heilbron's home during his 1925 mayoral campaign in which he ran on a platform which emphasized finding new ways to bring water to San Diego. Heilbron served as Chairman of the San Diego County Water Authority and was instrumental in obtaining federal funding for the San Diego Aqueduct. Councilman Heilbron's efforts brought Colorado River water to the San Diego region and the increased water supply has allowed its population to continue to grow and the area to flourish. This finding is further supported by the staff report, the historical research report, and written and oral evidence presented at the designation hearing.

(2) The property is historically significant under CRITERION C for its distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of Spanish Colonial Revival style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1924 period of significance. Specifically, the resource displays an asymmetrical façade, stucco cladding, low-pitched tile roof with little eave overhang, arched windows with Solomonic columns, stucco chimney with tile roof and decorative vents, an elaborated front entry surround, and wooden 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 exclude the garage which is constructed outside of the 1924-1973 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: N/A

BY: _____
DAVID MCCULLOUGH, Chair
Historical Resources Board

APPROVED: MARA W. ELLIOTT,
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: _____
CORRINE NEUFFER,
Deputy City Attorney