



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: August 10, 2017 REPORT NO. HRB-17-049

HEARING DATE: August 24, 2017

SUBJECT: **ITEM #7 – Herbert and Alexina Childs/Thomas L. Shepherd House**

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

APPLICANT: Laughlin/Sage Family Trust represented by Scott A. Moomjian and Brian F. Smith and Associates

LOCATION: 210 Westbourne Street, 92037, La Jolla Community, Council District 1  
APN 351-210-21

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Herbert and Alexina Childs/Thomas L. Shepherd House located at 210 Westbourne Street as a historical resource.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Herbert and Alexina Childs/Thomas L. Shepherd House located at 210 Westbourne Street as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1950 to 1971 under HRB Criteria C and D. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

1. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the French Eclectic style with Georgian influences and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1950-1971 period of significance. Specifically, the resource retains its high pitched roof, exterior stucco, up-ward flaring eaves, an asymmetrical façade, cedar shingle roof, decorative quoin detailing at the corners and around the main entrance, wood divided light windows and doors, Doric pilasters; wide plaster cornice and the main entry door with entablature.
2. The resource is representative of a notable work of Master Architect Thomas L. Shepherd and retains integrity as it relates to his original design and his later modifications. Specifically, the resource reflects Shepherd's distinctive and immediately recognizable style, blending classic revival styles of the past with a mid-century design aesthetic. Shepherd was responsible for the design of the both the original house and the later 1971 additions, which maintained the original styling that was so distinctive of Shepherd's work.

## 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 along the coast on a corner lot in a predominantly single family residential neighborhood.

The property has not been identified in any historic surveys, as the subject area has not been previously surveyed.

The historic name of the resource, the Herbert and Alexina Childs/Thomas L. Shepherd House has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Herbert and Alexina Childs who constructed the house as their personal residence and the name of Thomas L. Shepherd a Master Architect.

## ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Brian F. Smith and Associates, Inc. which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria C and D 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.*

Constructed in 1950, in the French Eclectic style with Georgian influences the house and is laid out with a stepped design creating a stepped floor plan across the lot. The exterior of the house is sheathed with stucco and the moderately pitched roof is sheathed with wood shingles. The eaves are boxed and have a slight flare at the roof-wall junction. The fenestration consists of wood divided light casements and fixed windows. Decorative detailing is provided through the inclusion of quoins at the corners, Doric columns at the enclosed loggia; wood shutters; and quoins and an entablature at the front entrance.

Along Westbourne Street, the two car garage is at the forefront of the property. The house then steps back at the west side of the house several times to create a stepped foot print. The main entrance is located on the west façade and is recessed in the wall plane. The entrance is to the right of the enclosed loggia on a raised patio. As the lot slopes towards the north, the house appears to have a lower story at the northwest corner.

There have been few modifications to the building since its initial construction. The loggia was enclosed in 1971 as part of a remodel designed by Thomas L. Shepherd. The loggia maintained its Doric support columns and the windows and doors were reused at the outer walls. The enclosed loggia is further distinguished by the recessed walls between the columns. At the rear of the property there have been a few modifications to the windows and doors.

In her book *A Field Guide to American Houses*, Virginia Savage McAlester states that "French Eclectic houses were rarely built before World War I. Many Americans – among them architects and builders – served in France during World War I, and gained a firsthand familiarity with the broad spectrum of

smaller French houses upon which this style is based. The style began to be somewhat fashionable in the early 1920s. By 1930, French Eclectic houses were overtaking Tudor to become the second most popular Eclectic style during the 1930s (behind the always leading Colonial Revival.) As with most other Eclectic styles, the French variant faded from favor after World War II."

McAlester notes that French Eclectic style homes were constructed predominantly between 1915 and 1945, and can be identified through their principal subtypes – symmetrical, asymmetrical and towered - and their character defining features. The subject property is designed in the asymmetrical subtype, which is the most common subtype and includes both picturesque examples based on rambling French farmhouses as well as more formal houses similar to the symmetrical subtype, but with off-center doorways and asymmetrical facades.

McAlester identifies key character-defining features of the style, which include a "tall, steeply pitched hipped roof (occasionally gabled in towered subtype) without a dominant front-facing cross-gable; eaves commonly flared upward at roof-wall junction; segmental arches on doors, windows or dormers; and brick, stone or stucco wall cladding, sometimes with decorative half-timbering." McAlester goes on to state that the [French Eclectic] style shows great variety in form and detailing but is united by the characteristic roof. Doors in informal examples are usually set in simple arched openings; doors in symmetrical formal houses may be surrounded by stone quoins or more elaborate Renaissance detailing. Windows may be either double-hung or casement sashes, the latter sometimes with small leaded panes. Full-length casement windows with shutters (French doors) are sometimes used.

In addition to the French Eclectic style, the subject property also displays Georgian influences. These influences are conveyed through the Doric columns at the enclosed loggia; the wide plaster cornice that wraps around the house; and the main entry door with the entablature.

Significance Statement: The house continues to convey the historic significance of the French Eclectic style with Georgian influences by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the styles; including its high pitched roof, exterior stucco, up-ward flaring eaves, an asymmetrical façade, cedar shingle roof, decorative quoin detailing at the corners and around the main entrance, wood divided light windows and doors, Doric pilasters; wide plaster cornice and the main entry door with entablature. 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.*

Thomas Leroy Shepherd was born in 1897 in Wisconsin and matriculated at the University of Wisconsin and Columbia University in New York, where he studied architecture. However, his designs were clearly influenced by his travels in Europe, particularly in the Mediterranean region. He moved to southern California in the 1920s and worked in Pasadena, as well as for the noted architect George Washington Smith in Santa Barbara.

In 1926, he relocated to La Jolla and designed primarily residences in new subdivisions in La Jolla, but also throughout the San Diego region. He briefly entered into partnership with Herbert Mann, also a Master Architect. This partnership was dissolved in 1932, prior to the construction of the subject house. Homes that have been designed and designated by the HRB include: the Darlington

House (HRB Site #327), which established him as a Master Architect by the HRB on July 26, 1995; the Mabel Scruggs/Thomas L. Shepherd House (HRB Site #514); the Henry and May Turner/Herbert Mann-Thomas Shepherd House (HRB Site #560); the Katharine Smith/Thomas Shepherd House (HRB Site #630); and the Philip Barber/Herbert Mann and - 3 - Thomas Shepherd Spec House No. 1 (HRB Site #829). In addition to his houses, he designed the La Jolla Beach and Tennis Club, the Marine Room, the Spanish-style Arcade building and an addition to the La Valencia Hotel. His architectural influence on La Jolla is substantial as he designed buildings and homes primarily in the community throughout his lengthy and prolific fifty-year career. He passed away at the age of 82 in 1979.

Significance Statement: The resource reflects Shepherd's distinctive and immediately recognizable style, blending classic revival styles of the past with a mid-century design aesthetic. Shepherd was responsible for the design of the both the original house and the later 1971 additions, which maintained the original styling that was so distinctive of Shepherd's work. Therefore, staff recommends designation of the Herbert and Alexina Childs/Thomas L. Shepherd House 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 Herbert and Alexina Childs/Thomas L. Shepherd House located at 210 Westbourne Street be designated with a period of significance of 1950-1971 under HRB Criteria C and D as a good example of the French Eclectic style with Georgian influences designed by Master Architect Thomas L. Shepherd.

  
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Jodie Brown, AICP  
Senior Planner

  
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Elyse W. Lowe  
Deputy Director  
Development Services Department

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Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A  
ADOPTED ON 8/24/2017

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 8/24/2017, to consider the historical designation of the **Herbert and Alexina Childs/Thomas L. Shepherd House** (owned by Laughlin/Sage Family Trust 08-24-06, 210 Westbourne Street, San Diego, CA 92037) located at **210 Westbourne Street, San Diego, CA 92037**, APN: **351-210-21-00**, further described as BLK 1 LOTS 2 & 4 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 Herbert and Alexina Childs/Thomas L. Shepherd 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 French Eclectic style with Georgian influences and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1950-1971 period of significance. Specifically, the resource retains its high pitched roof, exterior stucco, up-ward flaring eaves, an asymmetrical façade, cedar shingle roof, decorative quoin detailing at the corners and around the main entrance, wood divided light windows and doors, Doric pilasters; wide plaster cornice and the main entry door with entablature. 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 D as a notable work of Master Architect Thomas L. Shepherd and retains integrity as it relates to his original design and his later modifications. Specifically, the resource reflects Shepherd's distinctive and immediately recognizable style, blending classic revival styles of the past with a mid-century design aesthetic. Shepherd was responsible for the design of the both the original house and the later 1971 additions, which maintained the original styling that was so distinctive of Shepherd's work. 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 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