



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: October 12, 2017 REPORT NO. HRB-17-064

HEARING DATE: October 26, 2017

SUBJECT: **ITEM #10 – Casa Descanso**

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

APPLICANT: Gregory and Shannon Knuth; represented by IS Architecture

LOCATION: 5201 Marlborough Drive, 92116, Kensington-Talmadge Community, Council District 9  
APN 440-201-02-00

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Casa Descanso located at 5201 Marlborough Drive as a historical resource.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Casa Descanso located at 5201 Marlborough Drive as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1929 under HRB Criterion C. The designation excludes the detached garage that was later modified with a flat-roof second-story pre-1961 addition. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character-defining features of the Monterey/Spanish Colonial Revival style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits a two-story asymmetrical façade; low-pitched gable and hipped roof forms covered in half-barrel red clay tile; narrow eaves with decorative rafter tails; lightly textured stucco walls; a corner-wrap around wood balcony with square balusters, supported by cantilevered beams and decorative diagonal bracing; and an arch-topped, glazed, wood batten front door.

### 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 resource is a two-story Monterey/Spanish Colonial Revival style, single-family residence that was built in 1929 on the east side of Marlborough Drive, near the intersection of Bedford Drive, as part of the Kensington Heights neighborhood in the community of Kensington-Talmadge.

The historic name of the resource, the Casa Descanso, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the specific name placed on the building upon construction, as published in advertisements for the Kensington Heights neighborhood in the *San Diego Union* in 1929 featuring the home named as the *Casa Descanso*.

## ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by IS Architecture which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criterion C, 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 1929, the subject property is a two-story Monterey/Spanish Colonial Revival style single family residence facing west onto Marlborough Drive. The asymmetrical, two-story home features a low-pitch primary hipped roof that covers a centrally-located corner-wrapping balcony, and a single-story ell projection with low-pitch gable roof at the right side of the front elevation. The roof is sheathed in half-barrel red clay tile, and the eaves are shallow and adorned with decorative rafter tails. The prominent balcony is accessed via an eight-light wood double door at the second story of the west elevation, and is supported below by cantilevered wood beams and decorative diagonal bracing. Fenestration generally consists of a combination of irregularly-spaced, one-over-one wood double hung windows at secondary elevations. Windows at the first story of the primary elevation consist of an eight-light wood casement window, a narrow arched single-light wood window with flared beveled surround, and a large nine-light fixed wood window at the single-story ell projection. The arch-topped, glazed wood batten front door is north-facing, and is located below the balcony.

Modifications to the house include a pre-1961 second-story flat-roof addition to the detached garage, replacement of two original wood windows with Jalousie windows at the rear east-facing elevation (dates unknown), and replacement of three original wood windows with Jalousie windows at the south elevation (dates unknown).

Following the 1915-1916 Panama-California Exposition held in San Diego, California, the romantic ideal of Spanish and Latin American architecture was revived. What resulted was the Spanish Eclectic style, reaching its height in Southern California in the 1920s and 1930s before rapidly declining in the 1940s. The style uses decorative details borrowed from the entire history of Spanish architecture, including but not limited to Moorish, Byzantine, Gothic, or Renaissance inspirations. The style employed a variety of floor plans, as well as gabled, cross-gabled, gabled and hipped, hipped and flat roof forms with parapets. Other character-defining features include a low-pitched roof with little or no eave overhang, red clay tile roof covering, stucco exterior wall finishes, an asymmetrical façade, and arches above doors and principle windows.

Monterey/Spanish Colonial style architecture, a subtype of the Spanish Eclectic style, is distinguished by primary character-defining features of two-stories, low-pitched hipped and/or gabled roof, and broad balconies usually cantilevered and covered by the principal roof. Secondary character-

defining features of the style include asymmetrical façade, stucco wall surfaces, walls extending into a gable without break, shallow eaves, red tile roof covering, and one or more prominent arches.

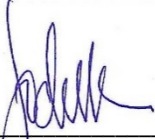
Significance Statement: The house continues to convey the historic significance of the Monterey/Spanish Colonial Revival and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1929 period of significance. Specifically, the resource retains all of the primary character-defining features of the Monterey/Spanish Colonial Revival style: two-stories, low-pitched hipped and/or gabled roof, and broad balconies usually cantilevered and covered by the principal roof, and retains secondary character-defining features of the style including asymmetrical façade, light texture stucco wall surfaces, half-barrel red tile roof covering, and shallow eaves.

#### 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 Casa Descanso located at 5201 Marlborough Drive be designated with a period of significance of 1929 under HRB Criterion C. The designation excludes the detached garage that was later modified with a flat-roof second-story pre-1961 addition.

 signing for  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Sonnier Francisco  
Senior Planner

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Elyse W. Lowe  
Deputy Director  
Development Services Department

SF/el

Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A  
ADOPTED ON 10/26/2017

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 10/26/2017, to consider the historical designation of the **Casa Descano** (owned by Gregory S and Shannon M Knuth, 5201 Marlborough Drive, San Diego, CA 92116) located at **5201 Marlborough Drive, San Diego, CA 92116**, APN: **440-204-02-00**, further described as LOT 30/EXC S 50 FT/LOT 31 & ALL 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 Casa Descano 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 Monterey/Spanish Colonial Revival style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its period of significance of 1929. Specifically, the resource exhibits a two-story asymmetrical façade; low-pitched gable and hipped roof forms covered in half-barrel red clay tile; narrow eaves with decorative rafter tails; lightly textured stucco walls; a corner-wrap around wood balcony with square balusters, supported by cantilevered beams and decorative diagonal bracing; and an arch-topped, glazed, wood batten front door. 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 detached garage that was later modified with a flat-roof second-story pre-1961 addition.

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