



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: October 12, 2017 REPORT NO. HRB-17-061

HEARING DATE: October 26, 2017

SUBJECT: **ITEM #7 – Augustus and Louise Cosgrove/Chris Cosgrove House**

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

APPLICANT: Thomas and Sandra Flinn represented by Legacy 106, Inc.

LOCATION: 3202 Curtis Street, 92103, Peninsula Community, Council District 2
APN 450-082-07-00

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Augustus and Louise Cosgrove/Chris Cosgrove House located at 3202 Curtis Street as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Augustus and Louise Cosgrove/Chris Cosgrove House located at 3202 Curtis Street as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1928 under HRB 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 Spanish Eclectic style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1928 period of significance. Specifically, the resource retains its asymmetrical façade, stucco exterior, clay tile roof with exposed rafter ends, wood sash windows, parabolic tiled focal window, wrought iron railing and covered entry.
2. The resource is representative of a notable work of proposed Master Builder Chris Cosgrove and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the resource represents the pre-World War II phase of Cosgrove's career where most of his known works were completed in the 1950s and the 1960s.

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 a predominantly single family neighborhood of Loma Portal in Point Loma.

The property was identified as part of the Quieter Home Program (QHP) and determined to be a potential contributor to the potential National Register Loma Portal Historic District.

The historic name of the resource, the Augustus and Louise Cosgrove/Chris Cosgrove House has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Augustus and Louise Cosgrove who constructed the house as their personal residence and the name of Chris Cosgrove a proposed Master Builder.

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Legacy 106, 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 1928 in the Spanish Eclectic style, the house is one story on a corner lot. The exterior of the subject house features stucco with an undulating texture. The southeast and southwest façades both present with a clay tile roof that appears to be gable roof. Directly behind the clay tile roof is a flat roof with a parapet. The entrance to the house is located at the southeast corner of the house. The entrance is integrated into a small corner porch supported by a stepped columns with a stucco exterior. The Curtis Street façade showcases a gable end roof which intersects with a shed roof. The gable end has evenly spaced round clay vents. The façade is dominated by a stucco chimney. Flanking the chimney are two large wood windows. The window to the right is a single light fixed window with a non-historic awning. The left side window features a pair of five light casement windows. The casement windows features a protruding hood and base not present on the fixed window to the right of the chimney. The northwest corner of the house features a decorative wing wall that provides a narrow opening to access the rear of the house.

The Evergreen side of the house appears as three separate parts due to the stepped roof line. The main entrance is located at the corner of the house in the largest section. The main entrance and a small window are located within the covered porch area. To the right of the covered porch is a large fixed, single light window. Stepped back from the corner façade are two pairs of single light French doors which access a walled courtyard area. To the right of the recessed portion is the third section which protrudes out slightly. This section features a parabolic arch, single light window with decorative tile.

A detached garage sits slightly down slope to the north of the main house. The garage and the house are separated by a small fenced yard. The two car garage is sheathed with stucco and features an articulated parapet.

Overall, the building is intact. There have been very few alterations. The windows were replaced as part of the Quieter Home Program and the kitchen was remodel on the interior. These modifications do not have a significant impact on the integrity of design, materials, workmanship or feeling, and the building retains integrity as it relates to architectural significance.

Following the 1915-1916 Panama-California Exposition, the romantic ideal of Spanish and Latin American architecture was revived. What resulted was the Spanish Eclectic style which was the predominant style in Southern California between 1915 and 1940, significantly altering the architectural landscape until the Modernist movement took hold during and after WWII. The style

uses decorative details borrowed from the entire history of Spanish architecture. These may be of Moorish, Byzantine, Gothic, or Renaissance inspirations, and unusually rich and varied series of decorative precedents. 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 Mission and Spanish clay tile; focal windows; arched windows and other openings; and accented entries.

Significance Statement: The house continues to convey the historic significance of the Spanish Eclectic style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style; including its asymmetrical façade, stucco exterior, clay tile roof with exposed rafter ends, wood sash windows, parabolic tiled focal window, wrought iron railing and covered entry.

CRITERION D - Is representative of a notable work of a master builder, designer, architect, engineer, landscape architect, interior designer, artist or craftsman.

Chris A. Cosgrove (b. 1888) was born in Rhode Island and moved to San Diego in 1915 at the age of 16. He enlisted in the Navy soon thereafter. In 1928 he is listed in the San Diego City Directory as an architect, and would continue to be identified in the City Directory off and on as an architect as well as a builder/contractor through 1937. Little is known about Cosgrove's early work. However, Cosgrove built the subject house on 3202 Curtis Street for his parents in 1928. The property at 3111 Curtis Street was also built by Cosgrove, but the majority of the homes constructed during his early years appear to have been done in Coronado. In 1941, Cosgrove appears to have reached a career turning point when he collaborated with five other leaders in the building industry to create a new "Masterpiece Home" in Talmadge. The project received newspaper coverage and appears to be Cosgrove's first notable project.

During World War II Cosgrove met his third wife, Celia Barbachano. Celia came from a distinguished Mexican family, the Barbachano family, responsible for many accomplishments including building the Hotel Rosarito. Cosgrove's connections to high society through Celia's family appeared to have opened new opportunities for Cosgrove in land development and custom home construction. Cosgrove formed his own company and began his career in real estate development and custom home construction in 1945.

In 1946, Cosgrove built the Ken Cinema in Kensington, utilizing flagstone on the facades, an element which would become a trademark of his in years to come. Cosgrove would also take advantage of a regulatory lapse in areas such as Kensington, which allowed him to introduce Modern Ranch style architecture into a neighborhood dominated by Spanish Eclectic styles. Between 1945 and 1949 he built eight homes in Kensington, all on Canterbury Drive and all in the Colonial Revival and Modern Ranch styles. Two of these were Cosgrove's own residences: 4290 Canterbury, completed in 1946/47 which he resided in from 1946/47-1948, as well as 4310 Canterbury (the site being considered for designation), completed in 1949 and his residence from 1949-1951.

Following World War II, Cosgrove became significantly involved in Federal Housing Administration (FHA) housing. He built FHA funded low-cost housing throughout San Diego City and County, including Point Loma, Rancho Santa Fe, Escondido, Borrego Springs, Alpine, and Mount Helix, as well as Los Angeles and Palm Springs. Cosgrove promoted the construction of "El Rancho" Model 833 and economy Model 810, which were modest ranch style homes found in the FHA guide books that he "customized" through the use of wide overhanging eaves, flagstone veneers and large pane glazing. Three of Cosgrove's largest FHA projects in Escondido (49 units), Lomita Village (585 units) and a 116 unit rental property at 43rd Street and Ocean View Boulevard were in development in 1952.

Beginning in 1950, Cosgrove was directly affected by a massive nationwide Congressional FHA investigation of the building industry and its association with housing being sold to veterans through the G.I. Bill. Accusations of overcharging, faulty construction and unlawful arrangements with savings and loans were driving the larger investigation, which forced Cosgrove to sell his home at 5310 Canterbury Drive (the property being considered for designation) in 1951 and liquidate his company. Though not responsible for any faulty construction, Cosgrove was tried and convicted in 1953 for "having a Veterans Affairs Administration officer as part of his company, apparently in an effort to expedite the G.I. loans on Cosgrove Homes." He was fined \$10,000 and served one year at Mount Lemmon federal prison camp. Upon his return in 1954, Cosgrove took up residence in the La Mesan Mobile Lodge where he would live until his death in 1985. He continued to develop properties after his relocation to the La Mesan Mobile Lodge, including subdivisions in Alpine.

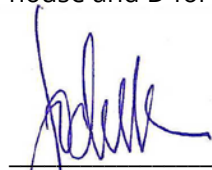
Significance Statement: Cosgrove was an accomplished builder in the post war era and had many significant developments during this time period. Not much is known about the early period of his career during the late 1920s and 1930s. The breadth of Cosgrove's career is evident in his span as a builder from the 1920s with the Spanish Eclectic styles to the 1950s Mid Century Modern buildings. Therefore, staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion D.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

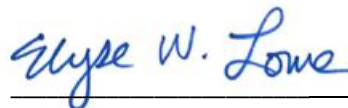
Designation brings with it the responsibility of maintaining the building in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The benefits of designation include the availability of the Mills Act Program for reduced property tax; the use of the more flexible Historical Building Code; flexibility 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 recommended that the Augustus and Louise Cosgrove/Chris Cosgrove House located at 3202 Curtis Street be designated with a period of significance of 1928 under HRB Criteria C as a good example of a Spanish Eclectic style house and D for its association with Chris Cosgrove.



Jodie Brown, AICP
Senior Planner



Elyse W. Lowe
Deputy Director
Development Services Department

JB/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 **Augustus and Louise Cosgrove/Chris Cosgrove House** (owned by Thomas and Sandra L Flinn, 3202 Curtis Street, San Diego, CA 92106) located at **3202 Curtis Street, San Diego, CA 92106**, APN: **450-082-07-00**, further described as BLK 249 LOT 6 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 Augustus and Louise Cosgrove/Chris Cosgrove 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 Spanish Eclectic style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1928 period of significance. Specifically, the resource retains its asymmetrical façade, stucco exterior, clay tile roof with exposed rafter ends, wood sash windows, parabolic tiled focal window, wrought iron railing and covered entry. 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 proposed Master Builder Chris Cosgrove and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the resource represents the pre-World War II phase of Cosgrove's career where most of his known works were completed in the 1950s and the 1960s. 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