



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: October 12, 2017 REPORT NO. HRB-17-062

HEARING DATE: October 26, 2017

SUBJECT: **ITEM #8 – Frances Wadsworth House**

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

APPLICANT: Steven Kolbert represented by Legacy 106, Inc.

LOCATION: 4435 New Jersey Street, Uptown Community, Council District 3
APN 445-181-09-00

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Frances Wadsworth House located at 4435 New Jersey Street as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Frances Wadsworth House located at 4435 New Jersey Street as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1933 under HRB Criterion C. This recommendation is based on the following finding:

The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Spanish Eclectic style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1933 period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits asymmetrical façades and varied wall planes; combination barrel clay tile roof and flat roof with parapets; modest roof eave overhang with exposed rafter tails; hand-troweled stucco finish; covered arched entry porch; recessed front focal windows; and fenestration consisting primarily of divided light steel casement windows with prominent stucco sills.

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 one-story single-family residence built in 1933 in the Spanish Eclectic style on the east side of New Jersey Street, mid-block between Monroe Avenue and Meade Avenue in the University Heights subdivision of the Uptown Community.

The property was identified in the 2016 Uptown Survey 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 Frances Wadsworth House, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Frances Wadsworth, who constructed the house as a personal residence.

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Legacy 106, Inc., 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.

The subject resource is a one-story, single-family residence with detached garage built in 1933 in the Spanish Eclectic style. The building is of standard wood frame construction on a concrete foundation and maintains an original, roughly L-shaped plan form sited on a gently sloping rectangular lot in the University Heights neighborhood. The building exhibits a predominantly flat roof, accented by gabled and shed roof forms at the front. The gabled and shed roofs are sheathed in Mission clay tile and have modest eave overhang with exposed rafter tails. Rectangular clay attic vents are visible at all elevations. The building is clad in a hand-troweled, sand finish stucco and exhibits asymmetrical façades with some measure of varied wall planes and irregular massing.

The gabled projecting wing at the front of the building is marked by a central exterior stucco chimney flanked by rectangular, recessed wood fixed windows. Remaining fenestration consists of divided light steel casement windows, and all original window openings feature large stucco sills. A curvilinear scored concrete walkway leads to the main entry. The arched main entry porch is set back to the right of the front gabled wing. At the elevated concrete porch are the original wood side-facing main entry door, and a front-facing multi-light French door set. At the rear of the property, a two-car, detached garage structure is accessed from the rear alley. The garage structure exhibits a flat roof with parapet, stucco cladding, and wood divided light windows.

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.

Alterations to the subject resource are fairly limited, and do not significantly impact character defining features or impair integrity. At an unknown date, the roof tiles were replaced in-kind with Mission clay barrel tiles and bird blockers were added. On south side, near the rear of the building, one garden window was installed in what may be a modified window opening, and, just beyond the garden window, an aluminum slider window was placed within an original window opening. Finally, at the rear (east) elevation, a French door set is believed to have been installed where a window once was. These modifications do not significantly impact the building's integrity of design, materials, workmanship or feeling to the extent that the building no longer conveys its original 1933 design and period of significance.

The front inset focal windows which flank the chimney appear unusual to staff in that they do not match the steel casements seen elsewhere in the building. They are also differentiated from the other windows by their more pronounced stucco recesses – however this feature is to be expected in focal windows on a building of this style, and there is no indication that the openings have been altered in any way. The report provides a 1951 aerial photo, and the applicant asserts that this photo does not show any window muntins. The photo is somewhat difficult to read, however staff believes it may show vertical elements within the windows to suggest there may have been casement windows in this location. If these two windows have indeed been replaced, the openings themselves do not appear to have been modified; the wood frame material is not inappropriate for a building of this style and age; and the single light appearance of the window does not add any historically inappropriate embellishment that would detract from the building's other original character defining features. These windows still read as character defining focal windows typical of the Spanish Eclectic style and their possible replacement does not significantly impair the building's ability to convey its significance.

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 asymmetrical façades and varied wall planes; combination barrel clay tile roof and flat roof with parapets; modest roof eave overhang with exposed rafter tails; hand-troweled stucco finish; covered arched entry porch; recessed front focal windows; and fenestration consisting primarily of divided light steel casement windows with prominent stucco sills. Therefore, staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion C.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

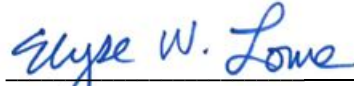
Designation brings with it the responsibility of maintaining the building in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The benefits of designation include the availability of the Mills Act Program for reduced property tax; the use of the more flexible Historical Building Code; flexibility 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 Frances Wadsworth House located at 4435 New Jersey Street be designated with a period of significance of 1933 under HRB Criterion C as a resource that exhibits the distinctive characteristics of the Spanish Eclectic style.



Camille Pekarek
Associate Planner



Elyse W. Lowe
Deputy Director
Development Services Department

CP/jb/el

Attachments:

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 **Frances Wadsworth House** (owned by Steven L. Kolbert, 4435 New Jersey Street, San Diego, CA 92116) located at **4435 New Jersey Street, San Diego, CA 92116**, APN: **445-181-09-00**, further described as BLK 82 LOTS 15 & 16 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 **Frances Wadsworth 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 Spanish Eclectic style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1933 date of construction and period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits asymmetrical façades and varied wall planes; combination barrel clay tile roof and flat roof with parapets; modest roof eave overhang with exposed rafter tails; hand-troweled stucco finish; covered arched entry porch; recessed front focal windows; and fenestration consisting primarily of divided light steel casement windows with prominent stucco sills. 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