



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: October 12, 2017 REPORT NO. HRB-17-063

HEARING DATE: October 26, 2017

SUBJECT: **ITEM #9 – The Robert Kelly House**

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

APPLICANT: Robert and Melinda Murphy Trust; represented by Allen Hazard & Janet O'Dea

LOCATION: 1708 W. Montecito Way and 4154 Stephens Street, Uptown Community, Council District 3
APN 443-442-0600

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Robert Kelly House located at 1708 W. Montecito Way and 4154 Stephens Street as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Robert Kelly House located at 1708 W. Montecito Way and 4154 Stephens Street as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1913 under HRB Criterion C. The designation excludes the rear additions and garage constructed outside of the period of significance. This recommendation is based on the following finding:

The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Prairie style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1913 period of significance. Specifically, the resource retains a flat roof with wide overhanging boxed eaves; stucco exterior, single story porches and wood 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 two-story duplex is located at the corner of West Montecito Way and Stephens Street in the Mission Hills neighborhood.

The property was identified in the 2016 Uptown Community Plan Update and given a Status Code of 7R, "*identified in Reconnaissance Level Survey: Not evaluated.*" The property was incorrectly identified as a 1934 Mission Revival style house.

The historic name of the resource, the Robert Kelly House, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Robert Kelly, who constructed the house as his personal residence.

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Allen Hazard and Janet O'Dea, 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 stucco clad, two-story, duplex constructed in 1913 in the Prairie style. The property sits on the corner of W. Montecito Way and Stephens Street with its primary façade facing W. Montecito Way. A detached garage is located behind the house with access from Stephens Street. The structure is box-like in appearance and features a flat roof with wide overhanging boxed eaves. A one-story porch and the main entrance are located on the W. Montecito façade. The porch is also box-like with rounded arch openings and a balcony above. A similar porch is also located on the Stephens Street façade. The property features simple wood windows in a variety of fixed and double hung styles. At the rear of the property are several additions which are distinguished by a lower roof, lack of eaves and casement windows. The whole structure, including a chimney on the west façade, is covered in a smooth stucco texture. Overall, the simple architectural details give the property a horizontal emphasis visually.

Several alternations have been made to the property since its construction in 1913. The structure was converted from a single family home to a duplex at an unknown date. It is likely that this modification took place around 1923 when the city directory started listing the occupants of 4154 Stephens Street. At the time of the conversion a rear extension was added to the property. Visual evidence and Sanborn maps show that two other smaller additions were added to the rear sometime before 1956. In 1966 the owners applied for a permit to reroof the structure. Other changes to the property included the restuccoing of the structure and the enclosure of the side porch by placing windows and doors in the openings. In 2016 the owners worked with City staff on a project that included the construction of a new garage and the restoration/remodeling of the house. Work included the reversal of the enclosure of the porch, the restuccoing of the house in a texture that matched the original, the addition of a balcony to the west façade and the construction of a two-story addition in place of the two smaller rear additions. This worked was determined to be consistent with the Secretary of the Interiors Standards by City staff. These modifications do not have significant impacts to integrity of design, materials, workmanship or feeling, and the building retains integrity as it relates to architectural significance.

The Prairie style originated in Chicago and was popular primarily in the Midwest for the early part of the 20th century. An indigenous American style, the Prairie School shared the ideals of the British Arts and Crafts movement and was popularized by architects including Frank Lloyd Wright, George

Maher and others. Character defining features of Prairie style architecture include low-pitched, usually hipped roofs, wide overhanging eaves, cornices and façade detailing emphasizing horizontal lines. Prairie style houses are typically two stories and often feature casement windows, one-story wings, porches, porte cocheres and inconspicuous entries. Pattern books and popular magazines spread vernacular examples widely to suburbs throughout the country, with most being built between 1905 and 1915.

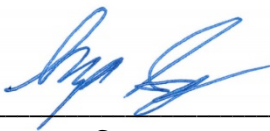
Significance Statement: The house continues to convey the historic significance of the Prairie style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style; including a flat roof with wide overhanging boxed eaves; stucco exterior, single story porches and wood windows.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

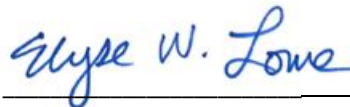
Designation brings with it the responsibility of maintaining the building in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The benefits of designation include the availability of the Mills Act Program for reduced property tax; the use of the more flexible Historical Building Code; flexibility 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 Robert Kelly House located at 1708 W. Montecito Way and 4154 Stephens Street be designated with a period of significance of 1913 under HRB Criterion C as a resource that exhibits the distinctive characteristics of the Prairie style. The designation excludes the rear additions and garage constructed outside of the period of significance.



Suzanne Segur
Associate 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 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 **Robert Kelly House** (owned by Robert G and Melinda E Murphy Trust 11-05-14, 1102 Golf Course Road, Friday Harbor, WA, CA 98250) located at **1708 W. Montecito Way and 4154 Stephens Street, San Diego, CA 92103**, APN: **443-442-06-00**, further described as BLK 4 E 74.95 FT OF S 94.73 FT 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 Robert Kelly 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 Prairie style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1913 period of significance. Specifically, the resource retains a flat roof with wide overhanging boxed eaves; stucco exterior, single story porches and wood 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 rear additions and garage constructed outside of the 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