



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: May 10, 2018 REPORT NO. HRB-18-024

HEARING DATE: May 24, 2018

SUBJECT: **ITEM #6 – 1545 32nd Street**

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

APPLICANT: Mark Abbott and Anita Olivarez-Abbott; represented by Scott A. Moomjian

LOCATION: 1545 32nd Street, Golden Hill Community, Council District 3
APN 539-381-01-00

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the property located at 1545 32nd Street as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Do not designate the property located at 1545 32nd Street under any adopted HRB Criteria.

BACKGROUND

This item is being brought before the Historical Resources Board in conjunction with a preliminary review application to determine whether or not the building is historically significant as part of a constraints analysis for future development. The resource is a one-story, single-family residence that was built in 1922 on the southeast corner of the intersection of 32nd Street and Cedar Street, as part of the San Diego Proper Union Subdivision, in the community of Golden Hill.

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

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Scott A. Moomjian, which concludes that the resource is not significant under any HRB Criteria. Staff concurs that the site is not significant under any HRB Criteria. This determination is consistent with the [Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria](#), as follows.

CRITERION A - Exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's, a community's or a neighborhood's historical, archaeological, cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, landscaping or architectural development.

The subject property at 1545 32nd Street was built in 1922 and is composed of a rectangular building covered by a flat roof with a parapet, wide overhanging eaves supported by decorative brackets, a circular wrap-around front porch, and cobblestone foundation and stair walls. Another residence composed of similar architectural features is located two blocks north of the subject property at 1802 Bancroft Street. It was built approximately in 1916 (based on a review of Sanborn Fire Insurance maps and water and sewer records). Although both properties exhibit an unusual combination of architectural features, neither the Subject Property nor the property at 1802 Bancroft Street reflect a special element of development that maintained an established precedent or model for development contextually to the neighborhood, community, or City. Further, the subject property lacks requisite integrity to be considered eligible for designation as a historical resource. The materials, workmanship, and design of the subject property have been compromised due to numerous alterations which include the partial infill of the front porch at the southwest corner of the building (c. 1940-1950), the removal of original porch columns and replacement with steel supports (date unknown), a front-facing garage addition (c. 1940-1950), and changes to fenestration at the north elevation, consisting non-original fixed windows, one of which features an 8-lite transom (dates unknown). Therefore, staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion A.

CRITERION B - Is identified with persons or events significant in local, state or national history.

Research into the owners and tenants of the property at 1545 32nd Street did not reveal any individuals who could be considered historically significant in local, state or national history. Furthermore, no events of local, state or national significance are known to have occurred at the subject property. Therefore, the property is not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion B.

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 property is a one-story single-family residence built 1922 and is composed of elements and features of a variety of architectural styles. The building is rectangular, covered by a flat roof with a parapet, and features wide overhanging eaves supported by decorative brackets, a circular wrap-around front porch, and cobblestone foundation and stair walls. The concrete porch stairs with cobblestone walls ascend to the front door, located on the left side of the west-facing front façade. Fenestration consists of wood sash windows with upper divided lites. The Historical Research Report identifies the property as "Eclectic" in style, stating that it fails to embody a single, dominant architectural style, and is instead of "an awkward mix of several different styles, including Moderne, Spanish, Craftsman, Victorian, Prairie, and Tudor." The report suggests that the original style of the property was a combination of Art Moderne style, noting the semi-circular porch, horizontal lines, and flat roof; Craftsman style, noting the rock foundation and stair walls and wood windows; and Prairie style, noting horizontal fascia, and stucco porch rail and ceiling of the subject property. However, the report also notes that the subject property lacks several other primary character-defining features of these three styles. The report continues to identify the stucco exterior, scrolled metal porch posts, and clay tile at a north facing pop-out as being features of Spanish

Revival style; the eaves, eave brackets, and wood plank porch floors as features of Victorian style, and the decorative wood details at the cornice as half-timbering features of Tudor style.

Staff has a differing interpretation of the architectural style of the subject property, and finds that the subject property was originally of a combination of Italian Renaissance and Craftsman styles. Character-defining features of Italian Renaissance style architecture at the subject property include stucco siding, and wide overhanging eaves supported by decorative brackets, and a cornice of decorative wood trim. Character-defining features of Craftsman style architecture at the subject property include wood frame and sash windows, cobblestone foundation and stair walls, and a prominent front porch.

Alterations to the subject property include the partial infill of the front porch at the southwest corner of the building (c. 1940-1950), the removal of original porch columns and replacement with steel supports (date unknown), a front-facing garage addition (c. 1940-1950) which projected that portion of the house more forward (westerly) than its original design, and changes to fenestration at the north elevation, consisting non-original fixed windows. Although the pop-out projection at the north elevation is identified in the report as an addition, citing its absence on Sanborn Fire Insurance maps for the subject property, a pop-out projection of the same dimension and relative location is present at the similarly-designed property at 1802 Bancroft Street, and is also depicted on the 1920 and 1950 Sanborn maps for that property, which likely does not appear to be simply coincidental. Whether or not the pop-out projection is original to the subject property, it too, bears non-original features including clay roof tile, exposed rafter tails, and a non-original window with an 8-lite transom that does not match other windows at the property. Alterations to the rear of the property include a shed addition to the east of the garage (c. 1922-1928), removal of a covered porch, and the addition of non-original windows and doors.

The Italian Renaissance style developed in the 1880s and flourished through the 1920s. In *A Field Guide to American Houses*, Virginia Savage McAlester states that although the style was used in houses throughout the United States, it was much less commonly used than the contemporaneous styles of the time, and steadily declined in popularity by the 1930s and 1940s. It was more commonly used in the design of upscale residences and public buildings. Common character-defining features of the style include low-pitched hipped and flat roofs; widely overhanging eaves supported by decorative brackets; ceramic roof tiles; symmetrical façade; stone, brick, or stucco cladding; round arches above doors, windows, and porches; and recessed entryways usually accented by small columns or pilasters. Other common decorative details of the style are molded cornices, belt courses, roofline balustrades, and pedimented windows.

With origins in the British Arts and Crafts movement, which was born in response to the overly ornate Victorian aesthetic and the highly mechanized Industrial Revolution, Craftsman style architecture was popular in the United States largely between 1905 and 1930. Early examples by Greene and Greene were highly publicized in magazines, thus familiarizing the rest of the nation with the style. Character-defining features of Craftsman architecture include a low-pitched, gabled roof with wide, unenclosed eave overhang; exposed roof rafters; decorative beams or braces; full or partial-width porches supported by tapered square columns or pedestals; wood or stucco cladding; and wood frame and sash windows in fixed, double hung and casement varieties.

Due to the numerous described alterations, the subject property no longer retains requisite integrity of materials, workmanship, or design to be considered eligible as an historic resource under HRB Criterion C as a good example of Italian Renaissance or Craftsman style architecture. Therefore, staff is not recommending 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.

Research into the construction of the property at 1545 32nd Street failed to conclusively identify a builder, designer or architect. Therefore, the property is not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion D.

CRITERION E - Is listed or has been determined eligible by the National Park Service for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or is listed or has been determined eligible by the State Historical Preservation Office for listing on the State Register of Historical Resources.

The property at 1545 32nd Street has not been listed on or determined eligible for listing on the State or National Registers. Therefore, the property is not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion E.

CRITERION F - Is a finite group of resources related to one another in a clearly distinguishable way or is a geographically definable area or neighborhood containing improvements which have a special character, historical interest or aesthetic value or which represent one or more architectural periods or styles in the history and development of the City.

The property at 1545 32nd Street is not located within a designated historic district. Therefore, the property is not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion F.

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 property located at 1545 32nd Street not be designated under any adopted HRB Criteria.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sonnier Francisco", is written over a horizontal line.

Sonnier Francisco
Senior Planner/ HRB Liaison

SF/jb

Attachment(s):

1. Applicant's Historical Report under separate cover