



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: August 8, 2018 REPORT NO. HRB-18-039

HEARING DATE: August 23, 2018

SUBJECT: **ITEM #6 – 3155 2nd Avenue**

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

APPLICANT: Christian and Suzan Clausen 1996 Trust; represented by Johnson & Johnson

LOCATION: 3155 2nd Avenue, Uptown Community, Council District 3
APN 452-626-0300

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the property located at 3155 2nd Avenue as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Do not designate the property located at 3155 2nd Avenue under any adopted HRB Criteria.

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 a two-story Folk Victorian style residence constructed in 1904. The parcel also contains a workshop constructed in 1992.

The property was identified in the *2016 Uptown Community Plan Area Historic Resources Survey Report* and given a Status Code of 5S3, "appears to be individually eligible for local listing or designation through survey evaluation."

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Johnson and Johnson, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria A, C and D. Staff disagrees and finds 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 resource was the first residence constructed on the block prior to the installation of the Spruce Street streetcar line and is an example of early development in the Bankers Hill neighborhood. Like all buildings, the structure reflects the historical and architectural development of the neighborhood; however, it cannot be considered a special element simply because of its early construction. Special elements of development are resources that are distinct among others of their kind or surpass the usual in significance. More research would need to be done to establish if the subject property's early construction date is a special element of the development of the City or Bankers Hill.

Theodosia Conner, an early San Diego developer, purchased the 2nd Avenue property and constructed the subject resource in 1904. The consultant report provides information that Conner purchased, developed and sold properties under her own name, independent of her husband Charles. In order to consider if the property can be determined a special element, more information would need to be provided about how and why a woman-developed property surpasses other contemporaneously developed properties in significance. Additionally, more context would need to be provided about early real estate development in San Diego and the rarity of women in this field. Therefore, staff is not recommending designation under HRB Criterion A at this time.

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

Master Architect Eugene Hoffman and his family resided at the 3155 2nd Avenue property from 1923 to 1934 (see discussion under Criterion D). According to the City of San Diego's *Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria*, resources associated with a Master Architect are not significant under Criterion B unless the resource was the office of the Master. Therefore, staff is not recommending 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 resource is a two-story, single family residence constructed in 1904 in the Folk Victorian style. The main massing of the house is covered by a steeply pitched front gable roof which features two dormers on the south façade. The rear section of the house is a full two-stories and features a flat roof. Wood siding is present on the exterior of both the front and rear portions of the structure. The enclosed entry porch is located in a one-story massing on the south façade. Wood French doors are present in both dormers on the south façade; one leads to a walled patio above the entry porch and the other to a small balcony. Another two sets of French doors which lead to a small balcony are located on the second floor of the front façade. The house also features a brick chimney on the north façade and wood windows in a variety of shapes, operations and sizes.

The property has undergone a significant amount of alterations since it was first constructed in 1904. The most prominent modification is the front porch enclosure which was done at an unknown date. Sanborn maps indicate that the porch was unenclosed until 1956 and the Assessor's Building Record shows the porch as enclosed in 1959. The massing at the rear of the structure has

been modified several times as indicated by Sanborn maps, the Assessor's Building Record and building permits. Most recently, a 2017 addition and remodel was reviewed by historic resources staff and determined to be consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. In 2013 eight windows were replaced in kind. Also, the chimney was rebuilt at an unknown date. Several modifications were made by Eugene Hoffman when his family moved to the property in 1923 (see discussion under Criterion D). These modifications include the replacement of the original windows on the second story of the front façade (as seen in a 1905 historic photo) and dormers on the south façade with French doors. Also, the balconies and patio over the entry were added at this time.

The Folk Victorian style was common throughout the country, and closely tied to the National Folk style made popular after the nationwide expansion of the railroad in the 1850s. Folk Victorian houses were generally built in the late 19th and early 20th century, declining in popularity by 1910 with the trend toward Craftsman Bungalow style houses. Essentially straightforward and more modest versions of earlier Victorian houses, the Folk Victorian style is characterized by a simple folk house form with a sparing application of Victorian detailing that is most often focused at the front porch and cornice line. The style typically presents moderate to steeply pitched gabled or pyramidal roof forms, simple window surrounds, boxed or open roof to wall junctions, porches with spindlework detailing or flat, jigsaw cut trim, cornice-line brackets, generally symmetrical façades, and a lack of textured and varied wall surfaces.

While the property exhibits some character defining features of the Folk Victorian style, the cumulative effects of changes over time; specifically, the porch enclosure, addition of French doors and balconies on the two main facades, and the addition of a walled patio over the entrance; have greatly impacted the integrity of the original structure. The property does not retain integrity of design or materials; therefore, staff is not recommending designation under Criterion C.

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

Master Architect Eugene Hoffman purchased the subject property in 1923 and lived there with his family until 1934. Hoffman made significant changes to the property including the addition of French doors and balconies on the two main facades and the addition of a walled patio over the entry porch.

Born 1870 in Dresden, Germany, Eugene Hoffman immigrated to the United States with his mother at the age of seven in 1877. He received his degree at New York City College and landed an apprenticeship with Carreer & Hastings. He went on to design several power plants, office buildings, department stores and homes throughout New Jersey and New York. Hoffman moved to San Diego in 1910 and his first project was to build power plants and boiler rooms for San Diego's electric railway. Hoffman began his own practice in San Diego and worked on a number of project for the Spreckels family including a remodel of the Coronado Hotel, the Mission Cliff Gardens, and the San Diego Electric Machine shop. Other projects included the design of the Oxford Hotel, also known as the William Penn Hotel, and the classic revival style SDG&E Substation B building. Hoffman partnered with fellow architect George S. Walker working on hotel remodeling and individual residences. Hoffman's list of clients grew as he designed and supervised construction of the Thum Brothers' warehouse, the Knickerbocker and Belmont Hotels, remodeling of the Waldorf Hotel, and the Savage Tire Plant.

With the depression halting development, Hoffman moved his family to Santee in 1933 where he managed to remain somewhat active in the Santee community designing various buildings. During the last part of his career, Hoffman designed Santee Elementary School, as well as several other residences, department stores and office buildings in the community until he passed away in 1948 at the age of 78.

Currently, Hoffman has five designated sites on the City of San Diego's historic register including HRB # 127-082, the William Penn Hotel; HRB #141, the Hotel Knickerbocker (not extant); HRB #354, SDG&E Substation B; HRB #440, the Barcelona Apartment Hotel; and HRB #458, the Wonder Bread Building. Hoffman is best known in San Diego for his design of industrial buildings, commercial properties and hotels.

The subject resource cannot be considered as being representative of a notable work of Eugene Hoffman because he did not design the original 1904 structure. Furthermore, this property cannot be considered a rare example of his residential work in San Diego for the same reason. Although the house exhibits some modifications made by Hoffman, the property is not representative of the quality of design and detail typically associated with his work. Therefore, staff does not recommend 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 property located at 3155 2nd Avenue not be designated under any HRB Criteria.



Suzanne Segur
Associate Planner



Sonnier Francisco
Senior Planner/ HRB Liaison

SS/el

Attachment(s):

1. Applicant's Historical Report under separate cover