



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: October 11, 2018 REPORT NO. HRB-18-052

HEARING DATE: October 25, 2018

SUBJECT: **ITEM #7 – The Frank Melcher House**

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

APPLICANT: Michael Bush; represented by IS Architecture

LOCATION: 4309 Arista Street, Uptown Community, Council District 3
APN 433-210-09

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Frank Melcher House located at 4309 Arista Street as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Frank Melcher House located at 4309 Arista Street as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1939 under HRB Criterion C. This recommendation is based on the following finding:

1. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of Spanish Revival style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its period of significance. Specifically, the resource features a medium sand stucco exterior finish, fixed, casement, and double-hung wood windows, a terracotta tiled roof with slight overhanging eaves and exposed rafter ends underneath. The decorative finishing details include wrought iron railings, decorative tiling, leaded glass panels and a leaded glass transom window.

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 house is in the Winthrop Highlands section of Mission Hills on an elevated and prominent corner lot bound by Arista Street and Presidio Drive.

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

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by IS Architecture which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criterion C. Staff concurs that the site is a significant historical resource under HRB Criterion C. 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 Frank Melcher House is a two story, single-family residence with a partially attached garage constructed in the Spanish Revival style. The building sits on an elevated corner lot between Arista Street and Presidio Drive, with its front elevation oriented toward Arista Street. The house has an irregular layout and features a medium sand stucco finish. The partial hipped roof is clad in barrel terracotta tiles and overhangs slightly to provide views of exposed rafter tails underneath. The asymmetrical front façade features an off-center semicircular portico supported by two columns on top of poured concrete stairs. The original wood doors on the north façade contain leaded glass panels and the original transom window. On the second story lies a small semicircular porch which is guarded by the original wrought iron railing and is accessed by the original wood door. The north façade contains two pairs of double-hung wood windows, with one pair on each floor. Additional detailing around the pair on the second story include a small sill and painted wood shutters. The first floor features a square projection with a fixed center wood window flanked by wood casement windows that is capped with terracotta tiles. Directly above the terracotta tiles are three rows of six decorative tiles embedded in the stucco.

A small single-story wing with a terracotta barrel tiled roof is flush to the right of the north façade. It contains a single, steel bay window divided by four thin muntins surrounded by decorative tiles. The west façade of this single-story wing features another projection containing fixed and casement wood windows. The second story contains double-hung wood windows and a faux chimney with decorative tiles and a terracotta barrel tiled cap. Following the chimney and extending to the end of the property's west façade is the rear addition which was completed in 1979. The east façade features a slight overhang on the second floor with five wood corbels located underneath. This façade contains both double-hung and casement wood windows as well as a small terracotta tile roof. The garage roof blends into a small porch roof which is supported by wood beams on a set of concrete stairs that leads to a small wood side door. The south façade of the property features double-hung wood windows, single light French wood doors, and stuccoed columns to support the overhanging second story addition. A large deck addition surrounded by a stuccoed retaining wall occupies most of the backyard.

Modifications occurred to the property in 1979, with the removal of an enclosed porch as well as the existing second story receiving a rear addition to include two additional bedrooms and a bathroom. The straight, flat roof line visible on the east and west façades delineates the rear addition from the existing structure. Restoration to the property occurred in 2017 which included the removal of the non-historic stucco, removal of the 1970s window awnings and sconces, and replacing the vinyl windows and doors on the addition to wood. Overall the house retains a good level of its original materials and character defining features, and therefore retains integrity under HRB Criterion C.

The Spanish Revival style in San Diego flourished after the close of the Panama-California Exposition that was held in San Diego, California between 1915 and 1917. The architectural master plan of the Exposition was designed by lead architect, Bertram Goodhue, who appropriated architectural design from the Spanish Baroque *Churrigueresque* and vernacular building forms from Spain, Mexico and Native Americans. After the Exposition closed in 1917 and throughout the 1930s, Spanish influenced architectural design became a leading domestic residential style and in some areas such as Santa Barbara, California, the Spanish Revival style became the choice for rebuilding its town and municipal buildings after a devastating earthquake in 1925. The architecture and engineering firm responsible for the design of 1050 Cypress Avenue, Edwards and Plunkett, designed many Spanish Revival style commercial buildings in Santa Barbara during the late 1920s and 1930s. The style employed a variety of floor plans and roof forms, such as, gabled, cross gabled, gabled and hipped, hipped and flat roof forms with parapets. Other character defining features include stucco exterior wall surfaces, Mission and Spanish terra cotta clay tile; focal windows; arched windows and other openings; and accented entries.

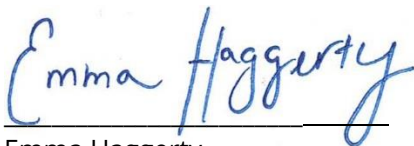
The house continues to convey the historic significance of the Spanish Revival style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style; therefore, staff recommends designation under Criterion C.

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 Frank Melcher residence located at 4309 Arista Street be designated with a period of significance of 1939 under HRB Criterion C.



Emma Haggerty
Assistant Planner



Kelley Stanco
Senior Planner/HRB Liaison
Planning Department

EH/ks

Attachment(s):

1. Draft Resolution
2. Applicant's Historical Report under separate cover

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON 10/25/2018

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 10/25/2018, to consider the historical designation of the **Frank Melcher House** (owned by Michael J Bush and Patricia C Marquez, 4309 Arista Street, San Diego, CA 92103) located at **4309 Arista Street, San Diego, CA 92103**, APN: **443-210-09-00**, further described as LOTS 7 & 8 SWLY 90 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 Frank Melcher House on the following finding:

(1) The property is historically significant under CRITERION C for its distinctive characteristic through the retention of character defining features of the Spanish Revival style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1939 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features a medium sand stucco exterior finish, fixed, casement, and double-hung wood windows, a terracotta tiled roof with slight overhanging eaves and exposed rafter ends underneath. The decorative finishing details include wrought iron railings, decorative tiling, leaded glass panels and a leaded glass transom window. 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: _____
JEREMY JUNG,
Deputy City Attorney