



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: October 11, 2018 REPORT NO. HRB-18-053

HEARING DATE: October 25, 2018

SUBJECT: **ITEM #8** – Ralph and Helene Benton/Ralph Hurlburt and Charles Tifal House

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

APPLICANT: William A. Lansdale & Connie K. Koros; represented by Legacy 106, Inc.

LOCATION: 3312 Elliott Street, Peninsula Community, Council District 2  
APN 450-134-13-00

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Ralph & Helene Benton/Ralph Hurlburt and Charles Tifal House located at 3312 Elliott Street as a historical resource.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Ralph and Helene Benton/Ralph Hurlburt and Charles Tifal House located at 3312 Elliott Street as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1926 under HRB Criteria C and D. The designation excludes the small addition on the northwest façade of the garage. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

1. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Tudor Revival style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1926 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features multiple steep cross gabled roofs, a smooth finish stucco exterior with half timbering in the large gable end on the front façade, tall narrow wooden casement windows, and an arched entry doorway.
2. The resource is representative of a notable work of the established Master Designer, Ralph E. Hurlburt and established Master Builder, Charles H. Tifal and retains integrity as it relates to the original design.

### 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 subject resource is a one-and-a-half story single family residence built in 1926 in the Tudor Revival style on the northwest side of Elliott Street within the Peninsula Community.

The building is located on APN 450-134-13-00. The property was identified in the Quieter Home Program (QHP) and provided in-kind wood windows in 2003-2004 as part of the sound attenuation program.

The historic name of the resource, the Ralph & Helene Benton/Ralph Hurlburt and Charles Tifal House has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Ralph & Helene Benton, who constructed the house as their personal residence and the name of Ralph Hurlburt and Charles Tifal, the Master Designer and Master Builder who were hired to construct the property.

## ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Kiley Wallace of Legacy 106, Inc. which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criterion C and D. Staff concurs that the site is a significant historical resource under HRB Criterion C and D. 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 property at 3312 Elliott Street was constructed in 1926 in the Loma Portal neighborhood in the Tudor Revival style. The house features an irregular shaped layout with multiple steeply pitched gabled roofs sheathed with dimensional asphalt shingles. The exterior walls feature a sand colored, smooth stucco finish with dark brown half timbering in the large gable on the front façade. There are 8-light wood casement windows on the southwest elevation, southeast and northeast elevations. Brick is used throughout the property in the landscape retaining walls, the main walkway, and the stairs which lead to the main entrance. Brick veneer makes up the floor of the elevated patio. The gabled entry way is lined with a faux stone archway which leads to an arched wooden door. The chimney on the southeast façade has been stuccoed in the same sand color, smooth finish and has a brick chimney cap as well as decorative faux brick patching placed throughout. The original detached garage is in the rear of the property. It is stuccoed in the same color and finish as the rest of the house and has a flat roof with a straight parapet.

Modifications include the in-kind window replacements as part of the Quieter Homes Program in 2003-2004. Additional modifications include shutter replacements, entry door replacement, and the removal of the original flowerbox on the front facade. The chimney has been stuccoed, given faux brick patching, as well as a brick extension to its existing cap. A small addition on the side of the existing detached garage, which is clad in yellow siding, occurred at an unknown date which is why it is excluded from the designation. Overall the house retains a good level of its original materials and character defining features, and therefore retains integrity under HRB Criterion C.

Popular in the 1920s and 1930s, Tudor Revival architecture is loosely based on a variety of late Medieval English styles and influences, but unlike some English prototypes, Tudor Revival style houses exhibit steeply pitched gable roofs that dominate the facades. Other character defining features include the use of stucco as well as wood cladding and veneer, depending upon the subtype, and tall wood windows. Decorative half-timbering is present on only about half of the examples.

The house continues to convey the historic significance of the Tudor Revival style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style; therefore, staff recommends 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.*

Constructed in 1926 by Master Builder Charles Tifal and designed by Master Designer Ralph Hurlburt, the house was commissioned by the owners, Ralph & Helene Benton who lived in the property from the date of its construction in 1926 until 1933.

Charles Tifal was born in 1882 in Wisconsin and relocated to San Diego in approximately 1920. In the early 20s, Hurlburt and Tifal designed and constructed structures, primarily custom residences, in a myriad of styles. In 1942 Tifal was no longer working with Hurlburt but was partnered with Scott King. The firm of Tifal and King installed the Alvarado Road Pump House, cottage, and garage. Charles Tifal died at the age of 86 in 1968. In 2011, the Historic Resources Board established Charles Tifal as a Master Builder for his construction of high-end homes in the French Eclectic, Arts and Crafts, Tudor Revival, and Italian Renaissance styles which can be found throughout San Diego. There are currently 12 houses built by Charles Tifal listed on the local register.

Ralph Hurlburt was born in 1888 in Nebraska. He was trained by his grandfather in the construction trade. In 1916, he married and relocated to San Diego. Upon arrival, he was involved in real estate financing and law and later transferred to architectural design. Early in his career, Hurlburt partnered with builder Charles Tifal, a partnership that lasted until shortly before Hurlburt's death in 1942. In 2011, the Historic Resources Board established Ralph Hurlburt as a Master Designer for his noted designs of Spanish Eclectic, Tudor Revival, English Cottage, French Eclectic, and Colonial Revival homes throughout San Diego. There are currently 10 houses designed by Ralph Hurlburt listed on the local register.

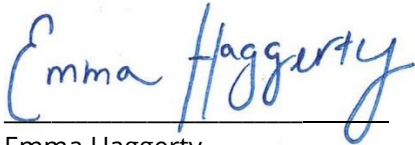
The subject property, 3312 Elliott Street, is representative of the notable work of Master Designer Ralph E. Hurlburt and Master Builder Charles H. Tifal, in the Tudor Revival style. Based on the research provided in the applicant's historical report, as well as staff's own research and field visit, staff recommends designation of the Ralph & Helene Benton/Ralph Hurlburt and Charles Tifal House as a significant historical resource 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 Ralph & Helene Benton/Ralph Hurlburt and Charles Tifal House located at 3312 Elliott Street be designated with a period of significance of 1926 under HRB Criteria C and D. The designation excludes the small addition on the northwest façade of the freestanding garage.



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 **Ralph & Helene Benton/Ralph Hurlburt and Charles Tifal House** (owned by William A Lansdale and Connie K Koros, 3312 Elliott Street, San Diego, CA 92106) located at **3312 Elliott Street, San Diego, CA 92106**, APN: **450-134-13-00**, further described as BLK 19 LOT 17 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 Ralph & Helene Benton/Ralph Hurlburt and Charles Tifal House on the following findings:

(1) The property is historically significant under CRITERION C for its distinctive characteristic through the retention of character defining features of the Tudor Revival style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1926 period of significance. Specifically, the resource maintains its multiple steep cross gabled roofs, a smooth finish stucco exterior with half timbering, tall narrow wooden casement windows, and an arched entry doorway. This finding is further supported by the staff report, the historical research report, and written and oral evidence presented at the designation hearing.

(2) The property is historically significant under CRITERION D as a notable work of the established Master Builder Charles Tifal and the established Master Designer Ralph Hurlburt. Specifically, the resource embodies the distinctive characteristics related to the Tudor Revival style with its multiple steep cross gabled roofs, a smooth finish stucco exterior with half timbering, tall narrow wooden casement windows, and an arched entry doorway. 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 small addition located on the northwest façade of the garage.

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

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