



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: January 10, 2018 REPORT NO. HRB-19-003

HEARING DATE: January 24, 2018

SUBJECT: **ITEM #6 – John C. Mabee House**

RESOURCE INFO: California Historical Resources Inventory Database (CHRID) link

APPLICANT: Miguel Espinosa Jr. and Margaret A. Esbenshade; represented by IS Architecture

LOCATION: 4545 Yerba Santa Drive, College Area Community, Council District 9
APN 461-400-07-00

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the John C. Mabee House located at 4545 Yerba Santa Drive as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the John C. Mabee House located at 4545 Yerba Santa Drive as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1963 under HRB Criterion C. The designation excludes the rear 503 square foot addition that was completed outside the period of significance. This recommendation is based on the following finding:

1. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Custom Ranch style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1963 period of significance. Specifically, the resource provides horizontal massing that is wide to the street with custom details such as large angled focal windows, two wide stone chimneys, a port cochere with two crosshatch screens and a low-sloping roof with deep overhangs and extended rafter tails.

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 sits on a triangular lot at the corner of Yerba Santa Drive within the gated community of Alvarado Estates, which is located on a prominent hilltop overlooking Mission Valley. The property has not been identified in any historic surveys, as the subject area has not been previously surveyed.

The historic name of the resource, the John C. Mabee House, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of John C. Mabee 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 Criteria B and C. Staff concurs that the site is a significant historical resource under HRB Criterion C, but not HRB Criterion B. This determination is consistent with the *Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria*, as follows.

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

John and Betty Mabee hired William Lumpkins to construct the subject resource in 1962. By 1963 the property was complete and was where they lived until 2000. John Mabee was a business owner and quickly turned his single grocery store into the Big Bear Supermarket chain, which in 1969 became the largest independent supermarket chain in San Diego County history. It was during the expansion of their grocery store chain that the Mabees began purchasing thoroughbred horses. The Mabees achieved much success as owners and in 1972 started Golden Eagle Farm, a 560-acre horse racing and breeding operation located in Ramona. Their farm became nationally recognized and the Mabees became leading owners and breeders of thoroughbred horses. They achieved much success and were named California's leading breeders from 1990 until 2001 and have were also inducted into the Hall of Fame of the California Thoroughbred Breeders Association.

The Mabees have achieved renowned success as owners and breeders of thoroughbred horses in California; however, their contributions to the sport, which occurred primarily between 1972 and 2000, are recent, and staff finds that an insufficient amount of time has passed to objectively and dispassionately assess their significance. Furthermore, the Golden Eagle Farm, which is still extant and included a dwelling for the Mabees as well as full horse breeding and training facilities, would be the more appropriate resource to designate under Criterion B, should the Mabees' be found historically significant in the future. Therefore, staff does not recommend 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 resource was built in 1963 by William Lumpkins using light-frame construction on a cement slab foundation. It is composed of an east and west wing that connect at the garage. Together, these wings roughly take the shape of an upside down "U" and wrap around to contain the central patio and pool. The wings feature prominent, low-sloped gabled roofs with composite roof shingles and deep overhangs. The exterior walls of the house are composed of a textured stucco finish along the upper portion and the lower portion is made up of a painted wood board-and-batten siding. The resource features large angled focal windows, two wide stone chimneys, a port cochere with two crosshatch screens and a low-sloping roof with deep overhangs and extended rafter tails.

Modifications occurred on the rear of property which include replacements to windows and doors and a small addition located on the rear of the west elevation was completed in 1993. The frames of the existing sliding doors were changed from aluminum to wood and the glass in four windows were changed from single pane to textured or double-pane glass. The front door was replaced with a student-designed mahogany door when the property was under the ownership of San Diego State University. Despite these modifications and the addition, the resource still maintains its historical significance.

The Custom Ranch style of architecture was popular between 1950 and 1975 and is differentiated from Tract Ranch homes because they were typically custom-designed with a specific client in mind. The Ranch style became the era's most prevalent type of residential construction in San Diego. Custom Ranch Homes are generally more lavish than their tract counterparts, but like Tract Ranch housing, materials and detailing are generally traditional. Primary character defining features include horizontal massing, wide to the street; usually single-story; custom details such as wood shutters, large windows, or large prominent brick or stone chimneys; and prominent low-sloped gabled or hipped roofs with deep overhangs. Secondary character defining features include a sprawling floor plan frequently "L" or "U" shaped around a central courtyard; large attached carports or garages; and expensive building materials such as wood shingle roofing, wood siding, brick, stone, and adobe which are usually much more generous in materials and craftsmanship than tract homes.

Significance Statement: The house continues to convey the historic significance of the Custom Ranch style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style; including horizontal massing that is wide to the street with custom details such as large angled focal windows, two wide stone chimneys, a port cochere with two crosshatch screens and a low-sloping roof with deep overhangs and extended rafters.

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

The subject resource was constructed by William Lumpkins, who is a renowned architect in the Southwest for his Pueblo Revival architecture and his use of historic building methods and materials. During his time in San Diego, Lumpkins constructed multiple properties in La Jolla as well as the William Black House, commonly known as the Chancellor's House, on the UCSD campus. The William Black House, which has been designated and listed on the National Register under Criteria A and C, included both the Pueblo Revival architecture and Lumpkins as a Master Architect. However, the Historical Resources Board has not yet established Lumpkins as a Master Architect under HRB Criterion D with a local designation.

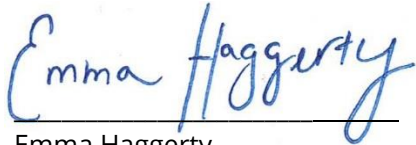
Additionally, the applicant has not proposed designation under HRB Criterion D and has not provided an analysis of his work within San Diego sufficient enough to support designation under D or establishment of Lumpkins locally as a Master Architect. If the property owner wishes to return to the Historical Resources Board with additional analysis at a future date to support designation under HRB Criterion D, they may do so. However, at this time staff is not recommending the property 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 John C. Mabee House located at 4545 Yerba Santa Drive be designated with a period of significance of 1963 under HRB Criterion C. The designation excludes the rear 503 square foot addition that was completed outside the period of significance.



Emma Haggerty
Assistant Planner
Development Services Department



Kelley Stanco
Development Project Manager
Planning Department

EH/ks

Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER
ADOPTED ON

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on , to consider the historical designation of the John C. Mabee House (owned by Miguel Espinosa Jr. and Margaret A. Esbenshade) located at **4545 Yerba Santa Drive, San Diego, CA 92115**, APN: **461-400-07-00**, further described as 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. ,** 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 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 Custom Ranch style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1963 period of significance. 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. .**

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the designation shall exclude the rear 503 square foot addition that was completed outside 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:

BY: _____
DAVID MCCULLOUGH, Chair
Historical Resources Board

APPROVED: MARA W. ELLIOTT,
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: _____
JEREMY JUNG,
Deputy City Attorney