



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: February 14, 2019 REPORT NO. HRB-19-004

HEARING DATE: February 28, 2019

SUBJECT: **ITEM #6 – Charles and Ethel Weiss/Edward Depew House**

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

APPLICANT: Selman Revocable Living Trust represented by Jennifer Ayala

LOCATION: 4194 Randolph Street, Uptown Community, Council District 3
APN 443-472-10-00

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Charles and Ethel Weiss/Edward Depew House located at 4194 Randolph Street as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Charles and Ethel Weiss/Edward Depew House located at 4194 Randolph Street as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1925 under HRB Criteria C and D. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

1. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of Spanish Eclectic style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits an asymmetrical front façade; textured exterior stucco; hipped and gabled roof clad in tiles; arched focal window; clay tile vents; wood windows and the original arched front door with decorative quoins around the entryway.
2. The resource is representative of a notable work of Master Builder, Edward Depew, and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the resource is a notable example of one of Depew's earliest works in San Diego in the Spanish Eclectic style.

BACKGROUND

This item is being brought before the Historical Resources Board in conjunction with a proposed building modification or demolition of a structure of 45 years or more, consistent with San Diego Municipal Code Section [143.0212](#). The property is in the neighborhood of Mission Hills on a corner lot between Randolph Street and West Arbor Drive.

The property was identified in the 2016 Uptown Community Plan Update and given a Status Code of 5D3, meaning it “appears to be a contributor to a district that appears eligible for local listing or designation through survey evaluation.”

The historic name of the resource, the Charles and Ethel Weiss/ Edward Depew House has been identified consistent with the Board’s adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Charles and Ethel Weiss, who constructed the house as their personal residence and the name of Edward Depew, a Master Builder.

Referral to the Historic Resources Board under SDMC [143.0212](#)

On December 23, 2015, a permit under PTS #463647 was applied for the subject resource. The scope of work for this permit was for a “combination building permit for unpermitted remodel of an existing SDU. Work to include replacement of 10 windows (resize) installing two new window openings, one new sliding door opening and door replacement with electrical rewiring at main house. Window removed and door replacement, electrical rewiring and new tankless heater at detached garage”. The plans, photo survey, and Assessor’s Building Record were routed to staff for historic review. It was during this review that the property was determined potentially historic and that the plans were deemed inconsistent with the Secretary of Interior Standard’s as the plans showed the existing modified modern windows being permitted. The reviewer noted that the plans could be approved if the windows were restored to their original size, material, operation, lite pattern, and glazing. If the owners did not want to move forward with this, a historical resources research report could be submitted instead.

On May 11, 2016, the consultant submitted a written description of the property and its alterations, a chain of title, historic photographs, and Sanborn maps. The consultant had noted that based on alterations made to the rear of the house and to the garage doors that the property was no longer significant. However, staff at the time noted that the permit was for interior work only and determined that the alterations on the rear of the house were also done without the benefit of a permit. The reviewer at that time restated that if the windows were to be restored to their original size, material, operation, lite pattern and glazing that the plans could be approved and if they did not want to move forward with that, a historical resources research report could be submitted instead.

On August 9, 2018, the consultant submitted a historic resource research report. Staff reviewed the report and deemed it incomplete, requiring revisions to clarify the extent of modifications that existed prior to the unpermitted work. This review was completed on August 30, 2018. A revised report was submitted on September 17, 2018 and incorrectly deemed complete by staff on October 8, 2018. On October 17, 2018 staff issued comments stating the report was deemed complete in error and that the report should be revised to evaluate the property prior to the unpermitted work occurring. The permit for this project had expired and the same scope of work was transferred to a new project number, PTS #622911. A revised report was submitted to staff on December 12, 2018 and on January 9, 2019, staff deemed the report complete and the comments were sent to the consultant. Staff informed the consultant that they disagreed with the conclusion of the report, and that the property would be forwarded to the Historical Resources Board with a recommendation to designate the building.

The consultant's report provides an evaluation of the building in its current state and address what it was like prior to the unpermitted alterations. The report includes Google street view photos of the building prior to the start of the unpermitted work.

Building Condition Evaluation

Unpermitted work is a violation of the San Diego Municipal Code and the City of San Diego can require restoration of the property as a remedy, even upon subsequent owners, since they are strictly liable for unpermitted work. Therefore, the Board can and must evaluate the building prior to the unpermitted modifications.

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Jennifer Ayala, which concludes that the resource is not significant under any HRB Criteria. Staff disagrees and supports that the site is a significant historical resource under HRB Criteria C and D. This determination is consistent with the *Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria*, as follow.

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.

Research into the history of the property at 4194 Randolph Street did not reveal any information to indicate that the property exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's or Uptown's historical, archaeological, cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, landscaping or architectural development. 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 4194 Randolph 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 resource is set within Mission Hills in the North Florence Heights addition on a corner lot between Randolph Street and West Arbor Drive. The property is one-story, asymmetrical single-family Spanish Eclectic style home with a detached garage. The property is made of wood framing on a raised wood joist floor system. The front façade features both hipped and gable roofs clad in modern, yet compatible tiles with a circular decorative vent above a large focal window. The front entry features an original arched wooden door surrounded by decorative quins. The stucco texture on the entire property is unique in that it has a smooth texture but was etched by hand to create a distinct carved appearance. Additional features of the house include a flat roof over the rear portion of the structure, decorative clay drains, a stuccoed chimney, large multi-lite, single pane wood

windows that were altered without a proper permit. The detached garage features the same unique stucco texture and pattern. Originally the garage also had large multi-lite, single pane wood windows as well as two original wooden garage doors divided by a simple wooden post.

Modifications to the property are limited and do not detract from the overall structure. The following modifications were completed between 2014-2015 and include the replacement of an awning on the front façade as well as the addition of awnings on the side and the rear facades, the addition of a wrought iron grate around a new electrical box, new lighting fixtures on the front and rear of the property as well as the side of the garage, and an alteration to the chimney cap. The replacement of the roof tiles were completed at an unknown date, however they are compatible in design and do not detract from the existing structure. These modifications do not impair integrity of design, materials, workmanship or feeling and the building retains integrity as it relates to architectural significance.

Unpermitted modifications to the property occurred in three phases from 2008 to 2014. The first phase of unpermitted modifications started during an interior bathroom remodel under permit #542682 in 2008/2009. During that remodel, five original double hung wood windows on the west (rear) façade were removed and their openings were changed. One window grouping which contained two separate windows were removed and infilled with stucco while one single window was removed, and the stucco was patched, and the original opening was modified and infilled with glass blocking. The other window grouping which contained two windows were removed and the opening was extended to fit French doors with stairs added underneath. However, neither the plans nor the scope of work for permit #542682 included window opening modifications. Had the original scope of work included window opening modifications, the property would have been reviewed by historic resources staff. Since the permit did not include this work which resulted in the property not being routed for historic review, staff did not have the opportunity to evaluate the resource and prevent these inconsistent modifications from occurring. In the report, the consultant has argued that the Building Inspector at this time had the discretion to approve changes in the field. Staff disagrees with the consultant and can confirm that Building Inspectors do not have the ability to approve changes in the field that are not included in the plans. Staff also argues that from the provided plans which show the existing windows were to remain, that the Building Inspector would not have been looking for these changes as they were not included in the permit's scope of work.

The second phase of modifications occurred to the garage doors. Originally, the garage doors were two wooden doors separated by a center post. As there is no permit for this work, it is estimated by the consultant through the use of Google Maps that modifications occurred in 2011 when the center post was removed, and the doors were changed to single door made of a modern, incompatible material.

The third phase of unpermitted modifications occurred to the property in 2014 with the replacement of the original fourteen windows and three doors that were done without the benefit of a permit. On a single-family dwelling unit, windows can be replaced without the benefit of a permit if they do not break the weather resistant barrier and their openings are not changed. However, nine of the new windows have different dimensions than the current windows and a permit would have been required. Had this work come in for a permit, staff would not have approved the materials, size, operation, lite pattern, or glazing of any of current windows.

Overall the property has experienced a total of sixteen window changes, twelve in which would have required a permit, and three door changes, two for the garage, which would have required a permit as well. As previously stated, the unpermitted changes cannot be considered as a loss of integrity when evaluating the historicity of the property.

Following the 1915-1916 Panama-California Exposition, the romantic ideal of Spanish and Latin American architecture was revived. What resulted was the Spanish Eclectic style, which was the predominant style in Southern California between 1915 and 1940, significantly altering the architectural landscape until the Modernist movement took hold during and after WWII. The style uses decorative details borrowed from the entire history of Spanish architecture. These may be of Moorish, Byzantine, Gothic, or Renaissance inspirations, an unusually rich and varied series of decorative precedents. The style employed a variety of floor plans, as well as gabled, cross-gabled, gabled and hipped, hipped and flat roof forms with parapets. Other character defining features include Mission and Spanish clay tile; focal windows; arched windows and other openings; and accented entries.

Significance Statement: The house continues to convey the historic significance of the Spanish Eclectic style by embodying an asymmetrical front façade; textured exterior stucco; hipped and gabled roof clad in tiles; arched focal window; clay tile vents; wood windows and the original arched front door with decorative quoins around the entryway. Therefore, staff recommends 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.

Edward Harold Depew, born in 1897, arrived in San Diego with his wife Dorothy in 1921; Edward was 24 years old. From the outset he was active in the building trade. He worked as an architect for the Ideal Building Company from 1925 to 1927. By 1928 he owned his own design-building firm. From the late 1920s through the 1940s he designed and built buildings throughout San Diego. Though capable of working in a variety of the eclectic styles popular at the time, it appears that Depew was most adept in the Spanish Eclectic style, of which the subject property is a good example. In the late 1940s Depew gave up the contracting business and opened the Depew Marine Center, selling and repairing boats - said to be the first major yacht and marine sales center in San Diego.

Outside of his professional career Edward was a charter member of the Point Loma Community Church, even holding early services in his home. He was a Mason and was instrumental in the acquisition of the land for the Scottish Rite Temple in Mission Valley. He was also a member of the San Diego Yacht Club.

Depew's status as a Master Architect was established in 2005 with the designation of the Ena Shapley/Edward Depew House (HRB #721). The Dr. Harry and Beryl Faulkner House (HRB #651), has previously been designated as well as the Depew Building Company / Edward Depew Spec House #1 (HRB #1237).

The applicant has provided an advertisement from the Evening Tribune that displays a drawing of the subject resource which explains that it was built by E.H. Depew while he was working for the Ideal Building Company, where he remained until 1927. Although this resource is modest in size

compared to other structures Depew built later on in his career, this property exemplifies his range of skills and expertise, allowing for a better understanding of his total body of work.

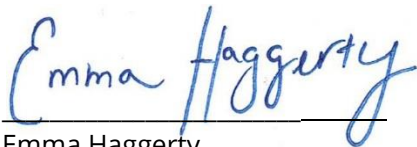
Significance Statement: The subject resource retains integrity and continues to reflect Depew's original design, intent and aesthetic. The house is notable as an example of Depew's early work in San Diego in the Spanish Eclectic style. This resource demonstrates his range of skills and work from his beginnings in San Diego with a modest design. Therefore, staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion D as a notable work of Master Architect Edward Depew.

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 Charles and Ethel Weiss/Edward Depew House located at 4194 Randolph Street be designated with a period of significance of 1925 under HRB Criterion C for a good example of a Spanish Eclectic style property and HRB Criterion D, for its association with established Master Builder, Edward Depew.



Emma Haggerty
Assistant Planner



Suzanne Segur
Senior Planner, Historical Resources

EH/ss

Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 2/28/2019, to consider the historical designation of the **Charles and Ethel Weiss/Edward Depew House** (owned by Selman Revocable Living Trust, 4184 Randolph Street, San Diego, CA 92103) located at **4194 Randolph Street, San Diego, CA 92103**, APN: **443-472-10-00**, further described as BLK 4 LOT 1 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 Charles and Ethel Weiss/Edward Depew House on the following findings:

(1) The property is historically significant under CRITERION C for its distinctive characteristics through the retention of character-defining features of Spanish Eclectic style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits an asymmetrical front façade; textured exterior stucco; hipped and gabled roof clad in tiles; arched focal window; clay tile vents; wood windows and the original arched front door with decorative quoins around the entryway. 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 Master Builder, Edward Depew, and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the resource is a notable example of one of Depew's earliest works in San Diego in the Spanish Eclectic style. 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:

BY: _____
DAVID MCCULLOUGH, Chair
Historical Resources Board

APPROVED: MARA W. ELLIOTT,
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: _____
JEREMY JUNG,
Deputy City Attorney