



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: July 11, 2019 REPORT NO. HRB-19-028

HEARING DATE: July 25, 2019

SUBJECT: **ITEM #6 – Thomas Sharpe/ Joel Brown Spec House #1**

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

APPLICANT: Rafael Nunez and Elizabeth Beringer; represented by Allen Hazard and Janet O'Dea

LOCATION: 1020 West Montecito Way, Uptown Community, Council District 3  
APN 444-392-0400

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Thomas Sharpe/ Joel Brown Spec House #1 located at 1020 West Montecito Way as a historical resource.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Thomas Sharpe/ Joel Brown Spec House #1 located at 1020 West Montecito Way as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1910 under HRB Criteria C and D. The designation excludes the 2012 detached playroom structure and the 1980 and 2017 rear additions constructed outside of the period of significance. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

1. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Craftsman style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1910 period of significance. Specifically, the resource displays a gable roof with unenclosed eaves, partial width half walled porch with Japanese inspired porch supports, wood trellis, brick chimney with cobblestones, decorative beams and attic vents, wood windows and wood exterior cladding.
2. The resource is representative of a notable work of Master Architect Joel Brown and retains integrity as it relates to the original 1910 design. Specifically, the house is an early example of Brown's work in San Diego and also an example of his work in the Craftsman style.

### 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 located in the Mission

Hills neighborhood in the Uptown Community Plan Area and contains a two-story single-family residence constructed in 1910.

The property was identified in the 2016 Uptown Community Plan Area Historic Resources Survey Report and given a Status Code of 5D3, "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 Thomas Sharpe/Joel Brown Spec House #1, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Thomas Sharpe, who constructed the house as a speculation house and the name of Joel Brown, a Master Architect.

### ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Allen Hazard and Janet O'Dea, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria C and D and staff concurs. 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 resource is a two-story single-family residence constructed in 1910 in the Craftsman style. The house features a side gable roof with unenclosed eaves and a shed dormer on the front façade. Wood siding covers the exterior of the first floor while the upper story is clad in wood shingle siding. The front façade features a partial width, half walled porch with Japanese inspired supports and flat roof with exposed rafters. The roof extends to the east beyond the porch to form a trellis. Additionally, two wood tripartite focal windows are located on the front elevation. The remaining windows on the house are wood in a variety of double hung and casement styles. A brick chimney with decorative cobblestones is featured on the west façade. Other ornamental features include decorative beams, attic vents and notched rafter tail ends.

Several modifications have been made to the property since its 1910 date of construction. In 1980, a one-story addition and deck were constructed at the rear of the house. A new detached playroom structure was constructed in 2012 in the former location of the original garage. In 2017, a second story addition was constructed over the previous addition. This project was reviewed by historical resources staff and determined to be consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. These modifications do not significantly impact integrity of design, materials, workmanship or feeling and the building retains integrity as it relates to architectural significance.

With origins in the British Arts and Crafts movement, born in response to the overly ornate Victorian aesthetic and the highly mechanized Industrial Revolution, Craftsman style architecture was popular in the United States largely between 1905 and 1930. Early examples by Greene and Greene were highly publicized in magazines, thus familiarizing the rest of the nation with the style. As a result, a flood of pattern books appeared, offering plans for Craftsman bungalows. One story vernacular examples are often called simply bungalows. Character defining features of Craftsman architecture include a low-pitched, gabled roof with wide, unenclosed eave overhang; exposed roof rafters;

decorative beams or braces; full or partial-width porches supported by tapered square columns or pedestals; decorative attic vents; wood or stucco cladding; and wood frame and sash windows in fixed, double hung and casement varieties.

Significance Statement: The house continues to convey the historic significance of the Craftsman style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style; including a gable roof with unenclosed eaves, partial width half walled porch with Japanese inspired porch supports, wood trellis, brick chimney with cobblestones, decorative beams and attic vents, wood windows and wood exterior cladding. 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.*

Joel Brown was born in Indiana in 1870. In the late 1890s and until around 1906-1908, Brown worked for the Indiana Architecture firms of Powers & Kibele and Brown & Houck, and designed such locally prominent buildings as the Hartford City Public Library and the Hartford City High School built between 1902-1904. Brown moved to San Diego with his wife Edith between 1908 and 1909 and quickly became a prominent building contractor and architect. Brown was responsible for the development of a number of properties throughout San Diego, particularly in Mission Hills. Brown was mostly active in San Diego between 1910 and 1920 and his designs were primarily high-quality residences in the Craftsman and Prairie styles.

Joel Brown's status as a Master Architect was established with the 2003 designation of HRB Site # 593 at 2124 Sunset Boulevard under Criterion D. Currently there are seven properties individually listed on the local register that are attributed to Joel Brown:

- The Kirkland Apartments built in 1912 at 2309 5th Avenue (HRB Site #483)
- The J. L. Brown Spec House built in 1912 at 2858 Evergreen Street (HRB Site #575)
- The Katherine H. Wagenhals/Joel Brown House built in 1913 at 2124 Sunset Boulevard (HRB Site #593)
- The Joel L. and Edith M. Brown House built in 1916 at 4141 Lark Street (HRB Site #777)
- The Clara Champlin House built in 1912 at 1445 Granada Avenue (HRB Site #1255)
- The Joel Brown Spec House #2 built in 1916 (HRB Site #1267)
- The Joel Brown/Martin V. Melhorn Spec House #1 built in 1916 (HRB Site #1311)

The subject resource was designed by Brown and expresses the same high quality of craftsmanship seen in his other known works that are historically designated. Additionally, the subject resource is representative of Brown's early work in San Diego in the Craftsman style.

Significance Statement: The subject resource retains excellent integrity and continues to reflect Joel Brown's original design, intent and aesthetic as a Master Architect. The house is notable as an early example of Brown's work in San Diego and also as an example of his work in the Craftsman style.

#### 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 Thomas Sharpe/ Joel Brown Spec House #1 located at 1020 West Montecito Way be designated with a period of significance of 1910 under HRB Criterion C as a good example of the Craftsman style and Criterion D as a resource that is representative of a notable work of Master Architect Joel Brown. The designation excludes the 2012 detached playroom structure and the 1980 and 2017 rear additions constructed outside of the period of significance.



Suzanne Segur  
Senior Planner  
Development Services Department

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Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A  
ADOPTED ON 7/25/2019

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 7/25/2019, to consider the historical designation of the Thomas Sharpe/ Joel Brown Spec House #1 (owned by Rafael E Nunez and Elizabeth Beringer, 1020 W Montecito Way, San Diego, CA 92103) located at **1020 W Montecito Way, San Diego, CA 92103**, APN: **444-392-04-00**, further described as BLK 25 LOTS 7 THRU 12 E 45 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 Thomas Sharpe/ Joel Brown Spec House #1 on the following findings:

(1) The property is historically significant under CRITERION C as a resource that embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Craftsman style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1910 period of significance. Specifically, the resource displays a gable roof with unenclosed eaves, partial width half walled porch with Japanese inspired porch supports, wood trellis, brick chimney with cobblestones, decorative beams and attic vents, wood windows and wood exterior cladding. 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 Architect Joel Brown and retains integrity as it relates to the original 1910 design. Specifically, the house is an early example of Brown's work in San Diego and also an example of his work in the Craftsman 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 designation shall exclude the 2012 detached playroom structure and the 1980 and 2017 rear additions constructed outside of 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:

APPROVED: MARA W. ELLIOTT,  
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
DAVID MCCULLOUGH, Chair  
Historical Resources Board

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
LINDSEY SEBASTIAN,  
Deputy City Attorney

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