



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: October 10, 2019 REPORT NO. HRB-19-039

HEARING DATE: October 24, 2019

SUBJECT: **ITEM #6 – Harry Gregg/William Sterling Hebbard House**

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

APPLICANT: Edward C. Lenhart Revocable Living Trust; represented by Heritage Architecture & Planning

LOCATION: 140 West Thorn Street, Uptown Community, Council District 3  
APN 452-538-17-00

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Harry Gregg/William Sterling Hebbard House located at 140 West Thorn Street as a historical resource.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Harry Gregg/William Sterling Hebbard House located at 140 West Thorn Street as a historical resource with a circa 1912 period of significance under HRB Criteria C and D. This recommendation is based on the following finding:

1. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Prairie style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its circa 1912 period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits a horizontal massing; two-story central bay with single-story wings; prominent flat roof with overhanging eaves at the second-story; full-width front porch with wood trellis, symmetrical primary facade, stucco cladding, brick chimney; and original wood fenestration and doors.
2. The resource is representative of a notable work of Master Architect, William Sterling Hebbard, and retains integrity to its circa 1912 period of significance. Specifically, the resource is a good example of his solo work in the Prairie style featuring divided lite windows, full-width porch, stucco cladding, and wide eaves.

## 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 single-family Prairie style residence built circa 1912; located within the Park West neighborhood in Uptown. The property's 1912 date of construction is documented on the Assessor's Building Record.

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 Harry Gregg/William Sterling Hebbard House, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the names Harry Gregg who constructed the house as his personal residence and the name of William Sterling Hebbard, Master Architect.

## ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Heritage Architecture & Planning 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 circa 1912 in the Prairie style. The building has a symmetrical two-story central bay with single-story wings and features a prominent flat roof with overhanging eaves on the second-story. The single-story wings both have a flat roof with a parapet. Across the front façade on West Thorn Street, a full-width porch covered by a wood trellis supported on simple wood posts runs the length of the first floor of the central bay. The front entry is centered and flanked by two fixed windows with operable divided-lite transoms. The subject resource is clad in stucco and features a brick chimney on the north façade. Fenestration consists mainly of original wood frame double hung and casement windows with divided lite transoms. The roof's broad overhanging eaves, the full width front porch, wide windows and single-story wings emphasize the horizontal massing of the structure.

Several alterations have been made to the subject resource since its construction circa 1912. The roof was replaced in 1954; it was re-stuccoed and the foundation was repaired in 1960; and in 2013 it was re-stuccoed again. It is not known if this is the original stucco texture, however, the current stucco texture is similar enough to be considered appropriate for designation. In 2015, the second-floor interior was renovated and in 2018 the property underwent substantial restoration efforts to return to its appearance as depicted in a circa 1912 historic photograph. Restoration work included: several windows within their original openings, front entry doors within their original opening, porch wall caps, planter box with corbels on second-story of the south façade, removal and restoration of

the window stucco surrounds, and removal of the front terrace rooftop. All restoration efforts were reviewed and approved by Historic Resources staff as consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. Overall, these modifications do not significantly impair integrity of design, materials, workmanship or feeling.

The Prairie style originated in Chicago and was popular primarily in the Midwest for the early part of the 20th century. An indigenous American style, the Prairie School shared the ideals of the British Arts and Crafts movement and was popularized by architects including Frank Lloyd Wright, George Maher and others. Character-defining features of Prairie style architecture include low-pitched, usually hipped roofs, wide overhanging eaves, cornices and façade detailing emphasizing horizontal lines. Prairie style houses are typically two stories and often feature casement windows, one-story wings, porches, porte cocheres and inconspicuous entries. Pattern books and popular magazines spread vernacular examples widely to suburbs throughout the country, with most being built between 1905 and 1915.

Significance Statement: The house continues to convey the historic significance of the Prairie style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style; and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its circa 1912 period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits a horizontal massing; two-story central bay with single-story wings; prominent flat roof with overhanging eaves at the second-story; full-width front porch with wood trellis, symmetrical primary facade, stucco cladding, brick chimney; and original wood fenestration and doors. 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.*

William Sterling Hebbard was born in Michigan in 1863, and relocated to California in 1888 after graduating from the Cornell School of Architecture and working for a year in Chicago with noted architects Burnham and Root. Hebbard relocated to San Diego from Los Angeles in 1890. He designed the Cable Railway Company's powerhouse and a number of residences. He formed a partnership with Irving Gill in 1896 that lasted until 1907, when he again practiced by himself.

Hebbard was a contributing author for the state architectural licensing law, and was the only San Diego appointee to the first State Board of Architecture in 1901, and held offices with the Board in 1916 and 1918. Hebbard founded the San Diego Architectural Association in 1910, the predecessor of the American Institute of Architects. Hebbard died in Coronado in 1930.

More than 20 properties representing Hebbard's work have been designated by the HRB to date. Most of these are associated with Hebbard and Gill, with ten attributed solely to Hebbard, including HRB #556 on Akron Street constructed in the Modern style in 1913; a Prairie style, constructed in 1912 and located on Curlew Street (HRB #437); the Mission Revival railroad depot on 6th Avenue (HRB #700); and the Maryland Hotel (HRB #701) constructed in 1914 in the Neo-Classical style with Italian Renaissance features. Three of Hebbard's buildings are listed on the National Register, including the locally designated George Marston House and the Burnham-Marston House that were associated with the Hebbard and Gill partnership. The third National Register building is the Ramona Town Hall attributed solely to Hebbard.

Significance Statement: The subject property at 140 West Thorn Street is a notable example of Hebbard's work and retains integrity to its circa 1912 period of significance. Specifically, the resource is a good example of his solo work in the Prairie style featuring divided lite windows, full-width porch, stucco cladding, and wide eaves. Therefore, staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion D as the notable work of Master Architect William Sterling Hebbard.

#### 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 Harry Gregg/William Sterling Hebbard House located at 140 West Thorn Street be designated with a period of significance of circa 1912 under HRB Criterion C as a resource that exhibits the distinctive character defining features of the Prairie style; and HRB Criterion D as a resource that is representative of a notable work of Master Architect William Sterling Hebbard.



Shannon Anthony  
Junior Planner



Suzanne Segur  
Senior Planner

SA/ss

Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A  
ADOPTED ON 10/24/2019

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 10/24/2019, to consider the historical designation of the Harry Gregg/William Sterling Hebbard House (owned by Edward C Lenhart Revocable Living Trust, 140 W Thorn Street, San Diego, CA 92103) located at **140 W Thorn Street, San Diego, CA 92103**, APN: **452-538-17-00**, further described as BLK 392 LOT F S FT LOT E & ALL 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 Harry Gregg/William Sterling Hebbard 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 the Prairie style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its circa 1912 period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits a horizontal massing; two-story central bay with single-story wings; prominent flat roof with overhanging eaves at the second-story; full-width front porch with wood trellis, symmetrical primary facade, stucco cladding, brick chimney; and original wood fenestration and doors. 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, William Sterling Hebbard, and retains integrity to its circa 1912 period of significance. Specifically, the resource is a good example of his solo work in the Prairie style featuring divided lite windows, full-width porch, stucco cladding, and wide eaves. 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: \_\_\_\_\_  
LINDSEY SEBASTIAN,  
Deputy City Attorney