



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: November 8, 2019 REPORT NO. HRB-19-042

HEARING DATE: November 21, 2019

SUBJECT: **ITEM #5 – Cuesta and Solana Cottages**

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

APPLICANT: 800 Coast LLC; represented by Scott Moomjian

LOCATION: 811-821 Coast Boulevard South, La Jolla Community, Council District 1
APN 350-070-1100

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Cuesta and Solana Cottages located at 817 and 819- 819½ Coast Boulevard South as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Cuesta and Solana Cottages located at 817 and 819- 819½ Coast Boulevard South as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1914 under HRB Criterion A. The designation excludes the buildings located at 811-815 and 821 Coast Boulevard South. This recommendation is based on the following finding:

The resources are special elements of La Jolla's historical, cultural, social, economic, aesthetic, and architectural development and retains integrity to the 1914 date of construction and period of significance. Specifically, the resources, which embody the character defining features of Beach Cottage architecture, are two of a finite and limited number of beach cottages remaining which reflect the early development history of La Jolla and retains integrity for that association.

BACKGROUND

This item is being brought before the Historical Resources Board in conjunction with a preliminary review application to determine whether or not the property is historically significant as part of a constraints analysis for future development. The subject parcel contains six residential structures, the buildings located at 811-815 Coast Boulevard South have already been determined to not be historically significant by City staff through the preliminary review process.

The subject property was located within the boundary of the 1977 La Jolla Historical Survey and the buildings were identified as "Cuesta" and "Solana" cottages. The other structures on the parcel were not identified in this survey. The property was also within the boundary of the 2004 Draft La Jolla Historical Survey and was photographed but not evaluated.

The historic name of the resource, the Cuesta and Solana Cottages, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the names historically associated with the property.

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Technical Report (HRTR) was prepared by Brian F. Smith and Associates, which concludes that the resource is not significant under any HRB Criteria. Staff disagrees and concludes that the site is a significant historical resource under HRB Criterion A. This determination is consistent with the *Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria*, as follows.

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.

The village of La Jolla began in the 1880s during the "boom" period of San Diego's history as a small coastal community. One of the first land tracts in the area was La Jolla Park, which was developed in 1887 by Frank Botsford and was the first subdivision to have identified lots and streets. The first permanent residence in La Jolla was constructed that same year. Historian Patricia Schaechlin described La Jolla's early history as follows: *"In 1888, the land collapse left a scraggly collection of cottages, few residents, no improvements and little hope.... La Jolla experienced a steady growth in the first two decades of the twentieth century, a time when the community became a village. It grew from a 350 population, some one hundred houses, to a village and a popular resort with a commercial base of tourism large enough to support its permanent residents."*¹

Beach Cottages were the dominant housing type in La Jolla during this early period through the 1930's. The Beach Cottage style was ideal for use as a summer or winter retreat or, even though lacking in many modern conveniences, they could be and were used as permanent residences. Early beach cottages were characterized (in part) as smaller dwellings, typically one story, with a low pitched roof and exposed rafters; wood siding; a small front porch and garden area; and an orientation toward any available beach or coastal view. Originally known by name, the cottages were not given proper addresses until 1913. By the 1920s, the population had increased to over 2,500 people and the tourism industry was firmly established. Hotels were constructed in increasing numbers, and as the famous and wealthy began to vacation there, the cottages were no longer seen as suitable accommodations. Increased population, tourism and wealth, coupled with shifting architectural preferences, caused Beach Cottages to fall out of favor through the late 1920s and 1930s. In the following decades, many of these early cottages were relocated to less desirable inland lots.

¹ Patricia Schaechlin, *La Jolla: The Story of a Community 1897-1987* (San Diego: Friends of the La Jolla Library, 1988).

The structures located at 817 and 819-819½ Coast Boulevard South were identified as "Cuesta" and "Solana" cottages in Howard S.F. Randolph's *La Jolla Year by Year*. The residence located at 821 Coast Boulevard South was also identified as "Sea Dream" cottage. "Cuesta" and "Solana" cottages exhibit the primary characteristics typical of La Jolla beach cottages; one story, small dwelling, low pitched roof, wood shingle siding and orientation toward an available costal view; however, "Sea Dream" cottage has been substantially modified (as discussed in detail under Criterion C) and no longer represents a La Jolla beach cottage. The "Cuesta" and "Solana" cottages retain integrity of location, setting, feeling and association which are the fundamental aspects of integrity related to historical, cultural, social and economic development.

Significance Statement: The Cuesta and Solana cottages are special elements of La Jolla's historical, cultural, social, economic, aesthetic, and architectural development and retain integrity to the 1914 date of construction and period of significance. Specifically, the resources, which embody the character defining features of Beach Cottage architecture, are two of a finite and limited number of beach cottages remaining which reflect the early development history of La Jolla and retain integrity for that association. Therefore, staff recommends 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 811-821 Coast Boulevard South 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.

817 Coast Blvd South

The property located at 817 Coast Blvd South, Cuesta cottage, was constructed in 1914 in the Craftsman style. The structure is a one-story residence with a basement constructed into a hillside at the rear of the subject parcel. The residence features a shallow side gable roof, wood shingle siding and decorative attic vents. A partial width porch is featured on the façade that is oriented towards the ocean and a brick chimney is present on the south façade.

With origins in the British Arts and Crafts movement, which was 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; wood or stucco cladding; and wood frame and sash windows in fixed, double hung and casement varieties.

Several modifications have been made to the Cuesta cottage since its 1914 date of construction. Alterations to the structure were made in 2019 including the enclosure of the area beneath the front porch, the replacement of the original wood windows with vinyl windows and the replacement of the porch railing. The 2019 modifications were all done without the benefit of a permit and were not determined to be consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards by historical resources staff. The porch had previously been modified prior to 1949 when stairs were added. Also, a sliding door and patio were added to the north façade at an unknown date. The modifications to the porch and the alteration of window/door openings would significantly impair integrity of design, materials and workmanship to the extent that the property does not retain integrity as it relates to HRB Criterion C; however, staff does not conclude that the property is a good example of the Craftsman style. While the structure exhibits Craftsman features, it does not rise to the level of significance to be individually eligible as a good example of the style. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation of 817 Coast Blvd South under HRB Criterion C.

819 Coast Blvd South

The structure located at 819-819½ Coast Blvd South, Solana cottage, was constructed in 1914 in the Craftsman style. The structure is a one-story residence with a shallow side gable roof and wood shingle siding located on the interior of the parcel. The house features a partial width front porch on the south façade and features several of the original wood windows as well as decorative attic vents.

Several modifications have been made to the Solana cottage since its 1914 date of construction. Some of the windows were replaced with vinyl in 2019 without the benefit of a permit. This modification was not reviewed by historical resources staff and was not determined to be consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The front porch was added sometime before 1949 and a rear deck and walkway were added. The large single lite front windows are likely a modification because this type of window was rarely seen on residential properties in 1914. The addition of a front porch and the alteration of windows on the primary façade would significantly impair integrity of design, materials and workmanship to the extent that the property does not retain integrity as it relates to HRB Criterion C; however, staff does not conclude that the property is a good example of the Craftsman style. While the structure exhibits Craftsman features, it does not rise to the level of significance to be individually eligible as a good example of the style. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation of 819-819½ Coast Blvd South under HRB Criterion C.

821 Coast Blvd South

The structure located at 821 Coast Blvd South, Sea Dream cottage, was constructed in 1915 with a significant renovation in 1937. Historic photos and Sanborn maps indicate that the property was originally a one-story Craftsman style residence with wood cladding and a partial width porch on the ocean facing façade. Currently, the structure is a stucco clad residence raised above a three-car garage. The house features a shallow gable roof with little eave overhang and double hung wood windows with an enclosed porch on the primary façade.

Sea Dream cottage was severely modified in a 1937 renovation which included the raising of the building to accommodate a garage below and moving the entire structure several feet towards the

street. Other modifications include the stuccoing of the exterior, a rear addition constructed in 1948 and the removal of the original front porch during the 1937 renovation.

The residence located at 821 Coast Blvd South was originally constructed in the Craftsman style and today exhibits few of the character defining features of the style, including a low-pitched gable roof with exposed rafter tails and some original double hung wood windows. The building does not, however, reflect any of the other many features of the Craftsman style; and embodies the style in a minimal, insignificant way. Furthermore, the addition of the garage and the removal of the front porch detract from the architectural integrity of the structure. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation of 821 Coast Blvd South 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.

Research into the construction of the property at 811-821 Coast Boulevard South failed to conclusively identify a builder, designer or architect. Therefore, the property is not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion D.

CRITERION E - Is listed or has been determined eligible by the National Park Service for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or is listed or has been determined eligible by the State Historical Preservation Office for listing on the State Register of Historical Resources.

The property at 811-821 Coast Boulevard South has not been listed on or determined eligible for listing on the State or National Registers. Therefore, the property is not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion E.

CRITERION F - Is a finite group of resources related to one another in a clearly distinguishable way or is a geographically definable area or neighborhood containing improvements which have a special character, historical interest or aesthetic value or which represent one or more architectural periods or styles in the history and development of the City.

The property at 811-821 Coast Boulevard South is not located within a designated historic district. Therefore, the property is not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion F.

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 Cuesta and Solana Cottages located at 817 and 819- 819½ Coast Boulevard South as historical resources with a period of significance of 1914 under HRB Criterion A as special elements of the development of the La Jolla community. The designation excludes the buildings located at 811-815 and 821 Coast Boulevard South.



Suzanne Segur
Senior Planner

Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON 11/21/2019

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 11/21/2019, to consider the historical designation of the Cuesta and Solana Cottages (owned by 800 Coast LLC C/O CA Real Estate Services, 1302 Camino Del Mar, Del Mar, CA 92014) located at **811-821 Coast Boulevard South, La Jolla, CA 92037**, APN: **350-070-11-00**, further described as BLK 55 LOT 11 LOT 10 & /EXC SLY 12FT/ 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 Cuesta and Solana Cottages on the following findings:

(1) The property is historically significant under CRITERION A as resources that are special elements of La Jolla's historical, cultural, social, economic, aesthetic, and architectural development and retain integrity to the 1914 date of construction and period of significance. Specifically, the resources, which embody the character defining features of Beach Cottage architecture, are two of a finite and limited number of beach cottages remaining which reflect the early development history of La Jolla and retain integrity for that association. 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 buildings located at 811-815 and 821 Coast Boulevard South.

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: _____
LINDSEY SEBASTIAN,
Deputy City Attorney