



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: January 17, 2019

TO: Historical Resources Board and Interested Parties

FROM: Emma Haggerty, Associate Planner, Historical Resources, Development Services
Department

SUBJECT: **ITEM 6 - Joel Brown Spec House #2 (HRB #1267)**

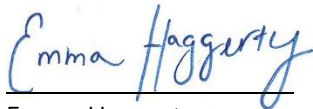
The amendment to the designation of the Joel Brown Spec House #2 was previously docketed for review by the Historical Resources Board on November 21, 2019, at which time staff did not recommend the rear 1931 addition or the interior staircase under HRB Criterion C for the Spanish Colonial Revival style. This memo is intended to supplement staff report HRB 19-048 by clarifying staff's recommendation as well as correcting an omission as it relates to the property's interior features. No significant new restoration work or other alterations have been made to the property since the item was previously heard by the HRB.

Since the November hearing, the applicant has provided additional information regarding HRB Criterion A asserting that the 1931 rear addition, the interior staircase and stair hall features are significant under Criterion A as they reflect the historical and architectural development of the trend of utilizing Spanish-Colonial Revival architecture in Southern California following San Diego's Panama-California Exhibition in 1915. Staff does not support this finding as the modernization of the interior and modifications to the exterior of a property this grand were historically not uncommon and the modifications to the interior and exterior alone do not reflect a special aspect of the City's general development that would allow it to rise to the level of designation under Criterion A. Additionally, for a resource to be significant under Criterion A as it relates to the architectural development it must exemplify or reflect development associated with the city's built environment, especially that designed and constructed by non-architects, including real estate developers, contractors, speculators, homeowners and others associated with the building industry. While the addition, staircase and stair hall features were not constructed by a well-known architect, they alone do not rise to the level of architectural development to be considered eligible for designation under HRB Criterion A.

At the request of Board Member Coyle, staff has evaluated the interior staircase including the wood handrail, stringers, treads, risers, and wrought iron balusters including the continuation of the stair banister at the second-floor landing, elements of the stair hall including the arch-topped, half-round

transom window set into the east wall, the half round transom window, lower double casement window, and stair hall exterior door were also constructed and added to the interior of the house in 1931 during a renovation which redesigned the resource's interior in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. According to the *Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria*, interior elements must embody the distinctive characteristics of a style of architecture and be tied to the context and significance of the historical resource. Although the proposed interior features embody the distinctive characteristics of the Spanish Colonial Revival style, they do not relate to the property's significance as a 1916 Prairie style residence. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation of the interior staircase and stair hall features under HRB Criterion C.

In conclusion, staff continues to not recommend amending the existing designation to extend the period of significance to 1931 to include the rear addition, the interior staircase, or the interior stair hall features for designation under HRB Criteria A or C.



Emma Haggerty
Associate Planner



Suzanne Ségur
Senior Planner

Attachments:

1. Draft Resolution
2. Staff Report HRB 19-048 dated November 2019
3. Applicant's Historic Report (under separate cover)



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: November 7, 2019 REPORT NO. HRB-19-048

HEARING DATE: November 21, 2019

SUBJECT: **ITEM #10 – Joel Brown Spec House #2 (HRB #1267)**

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

APPLICANT: Burkhart/Mazzola Family Trust; represented by IS Architecture

LOCATION: 4127 Lark Street, Uptown Community, Council District 3

DESCRIPTION: Consider an amendment to the designation of the Joel Brown Spec House #2 (HRB #1267) located at 4127 Lark Street to include the 1931 rear two-story addition and interior staircase under HRB Criterion C.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Do not amend the designation to include the rear addition or interior staircase within the Joel Brown Spec House #2 under any adopted HRB Criteria.

BACKGROUND

This item is being brought before the Historical Resources Board in conjunction with the owner's desire to amend the designation of HRB Site #1267 located at 4127 Lark Street in accordance with [SDMC Section 123.0205](#).

The subject property was historically designated by the Board on September 28, 2017 under HRB Criteria C as a good example of the Prairie style and Criteria D as a notable work of Master Architect Joel Brown with a period of significance of 1916. The designation excluded the flat-roofed two-story addition at the rear and the detached garage. Following the hearing, the consultant provided a Historical Resources Research Report Addendum which included additional information about the historical significance of the rear 1931 two-story addition and interior staircase. The applicant wishes for the Board to review this information and consider amending the existing designation to extend the period of significance to 1931 and include the addition and staircase under HRB Criterion C. No significant new restoration work or other alterations have been made to the property since the item was previously heard by the HRB.

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report Addendum was prepared by IS Architecture, which concludes that the rear addition and interior staircase are significant under HRB Criterion C. Staff disagrees and finds that the rear addition and staircase are not significant under any HRB Criteria. 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.

As detailed in staff report HRB-17-053, the subject resource is a two-story single-family residence built in 1916 in the Prairie style. The building is of standard wood frame construction on a concrete foundation, sited on a west-facing, flat rectangular lot near the corner of Lark Street and West Montecito Way. The building has an irregular plan form and asymmetrical primary façade. A most prominent feature is the low-pitch, hipped roof with very wide boxed eaves and long decorative brackets underlined by a decorative stucco cornice, imparting a very strong horizontal emphasis.

The rear two-story 1931 addition was constructed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style and features a flat roof with parapet, stucco exterior and wood windows. Alterations were made to the addition during a 2015-2017 rehabilitation project. Since the 1931 addition was constructed outside the property's 1916 period of significance, staff determined that it was appropriate for modifications to be made to this part of the house without a significant impact to the overall integrity of the property. Had the addition been original to the property's 1916 period of significance, the approved modifications would not have been consistent with the Secretary of Interior's Standards. Modifications to the addition during the 2015-2017 rehabilitation project include an enclosure of an inset door along with an addition of a door along the south elevation. Additional modifications include the removal of large, fixed window and the addition of three double hung windows on the east elevation as well as the removal of a tripartite window and a single double hung window as well as the addition of French doors also along the east elevation. These modifications significantly impact integrity of design, materials, workmanship and feeling to the extent that the addition no longer is a good example of Spanish Colonial Revival style architecture and can no longer accurately reflect the architectural development of the resource. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation of the addition under HRB Criterion C.

The staircase was also constructed in 1931 during a renovation which redesigned the resource's interior in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. According to the *Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria*, interior elements must embody the distinctive characteristics of a style of architecture and be tied to the context and significance of the historical resource. Although the staircase embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Spanish Colonial Revival style, it does not relate to the property's significance as a 1916 Prairie style residence. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation of the interior staircase under HRB Criterion C.

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 designation of the Joel Brown Spec House #2 (HRB #1267) located at 4127 Lark Street not be amended to include the 1931 rear two-story addition and interior staircase under HRB Criterion C.



Emma Haggerty
Assistant Planner



Suzanne Segur
Senior Planner
Development Services Department

EH/ss

Attachment(s):

1. Applicant's Historical Report Addendum under separate cover