



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: June 11, 2020 REPORT NO. HRB-20-019

HEARING DATE: June 25, 2020

SUBJECT: **ITEM #11 – A.W. Woods Spec House #1**

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

APPLICANT: Thomas Gesell and Susan Diekman; represented by Nexus Planning and Research

LOCATION: 1674 Torrance Street, Uptown Community, Council District 3
APN 451-122-0900

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the A.W. Spec House #1 located at 1674 Torrance Street as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the A.W. Woods Spec House #1 located at 1674 Torrance Street as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1913 under HRB Criterion C. The designation excludes the rear second story addition constructed in 2004 and the two-story side porch which was enclosed outside of the period of significance. This recommendation is based on the following finding:

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 1913 period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits a side gabled roof with wide unenclosed eaves and exposed rafters, shed dormer, full width porch with tapered columns, wood cladding, knee braces, decorative attic vents and barge boards, and double hung and casement wood windows.

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 one-and-a-half story single family residence and garage located on an interior lot in the Mission Hills neighborhood.

The property was identified in the 2016 Uptown Community Plan Area Historic Resources Survey Report and given a Status Code of 7R, "Identified in reconnaissance level survey but not evaluated."

The historic name of the resource, the A.W. Woods Spec House #1, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of A.W. Woods, who constructed the house as a speculation house.

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Nexus Planning and Research, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criterion C 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 one-and-a-half story Craftsman style single family residence and garage constructed in 1913. The house features a side gabled roof with wide, unenclosed eaves and exposed rafters with a large shed dormer on the primary façade. The first level of the resource is clad with wood siding while the remainder of the building is clad in wood shingles. An inset porch with four tapered columns extends across the full length of the first floor of the street elevation. The driveway side elevation features a brick chimney and a subordinate two-story massing which is clad in the same manner as the main portion of the structure. Fenestration consists of wood double hung and casement windows in a variety of sizes and lite patterns. Other Craftsman style architectural details include knee braces and decorative attic vents and bargeboards.

The resource has had several modifications since its 1913 date of construction. The sleeping porch in the shed dormer was enclosed at an unknown date; however, the use of single lite windows allows the space to visually read as if it was still open to the exterior. Both stories of the side porch were enclosed at an unknown date post 1958. The Assessor's Building Record, which first documented the property that year, labels these spaces as concrete covered porches but it is clearly visible that these labels were later edited to be enclosed porches. In 2004, a second story dormer was added to the rear of the resource. Other modifications to the rear façade include the removal of a kitchen window, the relocation of rear entry doors and the construction of a deck. Additionally, a railing was added to the north side of the front porch and a kitchen window at the rear of the driveway side was modified at an unknown date. These modifications do not significantly impair integrity of design, materials, workmanship or feeling as it relates to Criterion C.

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 side gabled roof with wide unenclosed eaves and exposed rafters, shed dormer, full width porch with tapered columns, wood cladding, knee braces, decorative attic vents and barge boards, and double hung and casement wood windows. Therefore, staff recommends designation 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 A.W. Woods Spec House #1 located at 1674 Torrance Street be designated with a period of significance of 1913 under HRB Criterion C as a good example of the Craftsman style. The designation excludes the rear second story addition constructed in 2004 and the two-story side porch which was enclosed outside of the period of significance.



Suzanne Segur
Senior Planner
Development Services Department

SS/ss

Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON 6/25/2020

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 6/25/2020, to consider the historical designation of the A.W. Woods Spec House #1 (owned by Thomas R Gesell and Susan C Diekman, 1674 Torrance Street, San Diego, CA 92103) located at **1674 Torrance Street, San Diego, CA 92103**, APN: **451-122-09-00**, further described as BLK 70 LOTS 5 & 6 ST CLSD ADJ & 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 A.W. Woods Spec House #1 on the following findings:

The property is historically significant under CRITERION C for its distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Craftsman style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1913 period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits a side gabled roof with wide unenclosed eaves and exposed rafters, shed dormer, full width porch with tapered columns, wood cladding, knee braces, decorative attic vents and barge boards, and double hung and casement wood windows. 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 rear second story addition constructed in 2004 and the two-story side porch which was enclosed 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:

BY: _____
DAVID MCCULLOUGH, Chair
Historical Resources Board

APPROVED: MARA W. ELLIOTT,
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: _____
LINDSEY SEBASTIAN,
Deputy City Attorney