



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: June 11, 2020 REPORT NO. HRB-20-021

HEARING DATE: June 25, 2020

SUBJECT: **ITEM #12 – Nora Connell/Allen Hilton Spec House #1**

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

APPLICANT: Shoji and Ayako Matsumoto; represented by Legacy 106, Inc.

LOCATION: 4030 North Hempstead Circle, Kensington-Talmadge Community, Council District 9, APN 440-163-01-00

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Nora Connell/Allen Hilton Spec House #1 located at 4030 North Hempstead Circle as a historical resource.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Nora Connell/Allen Hilton Spec House #1 located at 4030 North Hempstead Circle as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1927 under HRB Criteria C and D. The designation excludes the 1947 side addition as well as the rear basement enclosure, which were both completed outside the period of significance. This designation includes the California art tile fireplace. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

1. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Spanish Eclectic style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1927 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features a smooth stucco exterior, a recessed central arched entranceway, wooden divided lite windows, and red mission clay tiles.
2. The resource is representative of a notable work of Master Builder, Allen Hilton, a well-known builder in San Diego who mostly designed multifamily residential structures, and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the resource is one of the few known examples he constructed as a single-family residence that exemplifies his fine detailing in the Spanish Eclectic 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 mid-blocked on a curvilinear street within the Kensington neighborhood.

The property has not been identified in any historic surveys, as the subject area has not been previously surveyed.

The historic name of the resource, the Nora Connell/Allen Hilton Spec House #1 has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Nora Connell, who constructed the house as a speculation property and the name of Allen Hilton, a Master Builder.

## ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Legacy 106, Inc. 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 property is a one-story Spanish Eclectic style residence which features a smooth stucco exterior with a partial gabled roof clad in mission clay tiles followed by a flat roof with a simple parapet. The primary façade features a centralized, arched entry door flanked by two large divided lite wooden casement windows as well as an attached garaged with an arched entry door. The side elevations feature limited ornamental details, but display the same smooth stucco exterior as well as divided lite wooden casement windows. The southeast side elevation features a small addition that was completed outside the period of significance and is visible to the street. The rear elevation slopes downward into the backyard and features a single story as well as a basement. This elevation features the continued flat roof and smooth stucco finish as well as a concrete patio area that is accessed by a divided lite French door. Additional features include double hung wooden windows as well as visibility of the basement access enclosure.

Modifications to the property are minimal and include a small addition on the southeast elevation. This addition, while visible to the street, was constructed in 1947 outside the period of significance and features a shed roof with composite shingles and is differentiated from the original house. Additional modifications include the replacement of three rear windows with modern replacements, a basement walkway enclosure. Overall, these modifications do not significantly impair integrity of design, materials, workmanship or feeling and do not result in a loss of integrity as it relates to Criterion C.

The Spanish Eclectic/Colonial Revival style uses decorative details borrowed from the entire history of Spanish architecture. Its vocabulary is influenced by Moorish, Byzantine, Gothic or Renaissance precedents. The style became popular after the Panama-California Exposition of 1915 and reached its height in the 1920's and early 1930's before rapidly declining in the 1940's. Identifying features include a low-pitched roof with little or no eave overhang, red tile roof covering, stucco exterior wall

finishes, an asymmetrical façade, wing walls, and arches above doors and principle windows. Common decorative details are patterned tiles, carved stonework, large focal windows, wooden or iron window grilles, decorative vents and balconies.

Significance Statement: The house continues to convey the historic significance of the Spanish Eclectic style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style; including a smooth stucco exterior, a recessed central arched entranceway, wooden divided lite windows, and red mission clay tiles.

*CRITERION D - Is representative of a notable work of a master builder, designer, architect, engineer, landscape architect, interior designer, artist or craftsman.*

Allen H. Hilton was born in 1890 in Oregon and arrived in San Diego in 1924. As a teenager, he worked as a contractor for his father, and later obtained his architect and contractor licenses in 1926. He designed buildings primarily in the Spanish Eclectic style and focused heavily on apartment building construction, with limited known examples of single family residential properties he constructed. Historically designated examples of Hilton's work include:

- The Adams Apartments, 2448 Adams Avenue (HRB #713)
- George and Martha Murrin/Allen Hilton Spec House #1, 4625 E Talmadge (HRB #913)
- Gordon B. Wells/Allen H. Hilton Bungalow Court Apartments, 1525-1537 Union St (HRB #1264)

Hilton's articulation of the Spanish Eclectic style is well recognized through his fine detailing throughout the interior and exterior of the buildings. Such features include smooth plaster walls, niches, decorative tiles, plaster grill work, beehive fireplaces, and courtyards with fountains, flowers, and shrubbery. In the Board's action to designate The Adams Apartments (HRB #713), the Board established Hilton as a Master Builder.

Significance Statement: The resource is representative of a notable work of Master Builder Allen H. Hilton, a well-known builder in San Diego who mostly designed multifamily residential structures, and retains integrity as it relates to its original design, materials, and setting. Specifically, the resource is one of the few known examples he constructed as a single-family residence that exemplifies his fine detailing in the Spanish Eclectic 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 Nora Connell/Allen Hilton Spec House #1 at 4030 North Hempstead Circle be designated with a period of significance of 1927 under HRB Criteria C and D. The designation excludes the 1947 side addition as well as the rear basement enclosure, which were both completed outside the period of significance. The designation includes the California art tile fireplace.



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Emma Haggerty  
Associate Planner

EH/ss



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Suzanne Segur  
Senior Planner  
Development Services Department

Attachment(s):

1. Draft Resolution
2. Interior fireplace proposed for designation
3. 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 Nora Connell/Allen Hilton Spec House #1 (owned by Shoji and Ayako Matsumoto, 4030 N Hempstead Circle, San Diego, CA 92116) located at **4030 N Hempstead Circle, San Diego, CA 92116**, APN: **440-163-01-00**, further described as BLK 10 POR 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 Nora Connell/Allen Hilton Spec House #1 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 Spanish Eclectic style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1927 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features a smooth stucco exterior, a recessed central arched entranceway, wooden divided lite windows, and red mission clay tiles. 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 Builder, Allen Hilton, a well-known builder in San Diego who mostly designed multifamily residential structures, and retains integrity as it relates to the original design and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the resource is one of the few known examples he constructed as a single-family residence that exemplifies his fine detailing in the Spanish Eclectic 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 include the California art tile fireplace.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the designation shall exclude the 1947 side addition and the rear basement enclosure built outside 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.

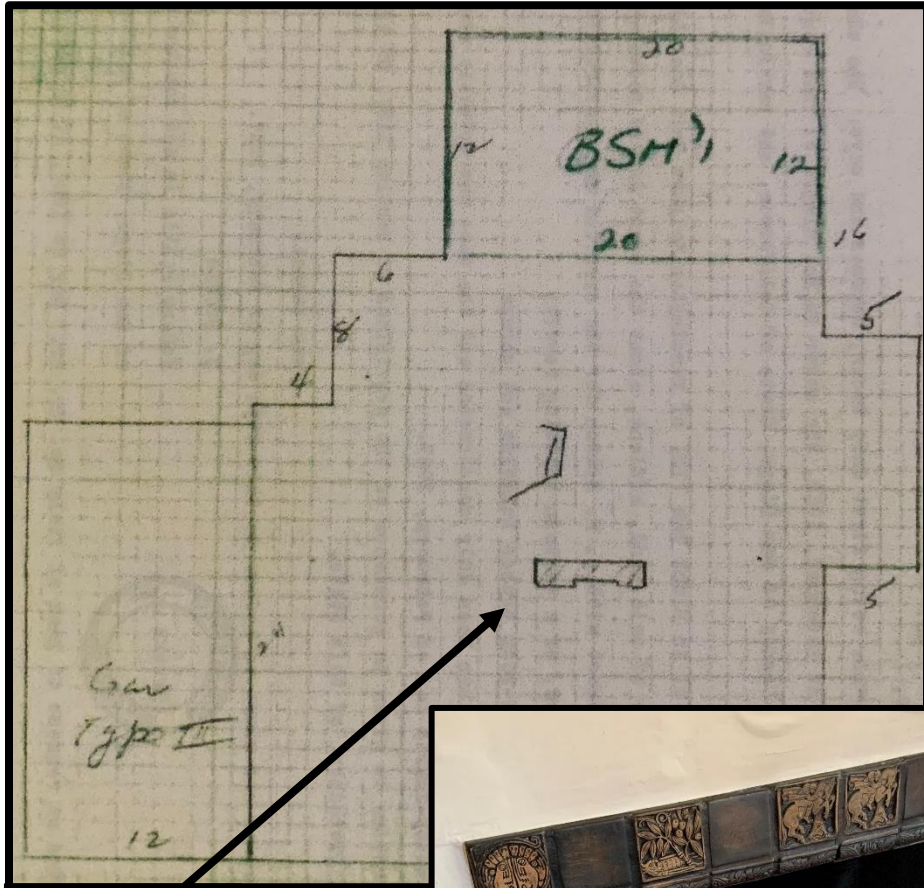
Vote:

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

APPROVED: MARA W. ELLIOTT,  
CITY ATTORNEY

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

**Site Plan with Footprint**  
Fireplace included in Proposed Designation



Location of  
fireplace  
included in  
designation

