



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO  
**Historical Resources Board**

DATE ISSUED: January 22, 2016 REPORT NO. HRB-16-003

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board  
Agenda of January 28, 2016

SUBJECT: **ITEM #8 – Bertram and Ingeborg Carteri/Louis Gill Spec House #1**

APPLICANT: Charlotte Holmes Trust represented by Legacy 106, Inc.

LOCATION: 4379 North Talmadge Drive, Kensington-Talmadge Community, Council District 9

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Bertram and Ingeborg Carteri/Louis Gill Spec House #1 located at 4379 North Talmadge Drive as a historical resource.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Designate the Bertram and Ingeborg Carteri/Louis Gill Spec House #1 located at 4379 North Talmadge Drive as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1926 under HRB Criteria C and D. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

1. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of Spanish Eclectic style architecture with Monterey influences and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1926 date of construction and period of significance. Specifically, the resource features two-story massing; a moderate-pitch, hipped roof sheathed in Mission clay tile with minimal eave overhang; medium sand finish stucco cladding; an original L-shaped plan form with projecting wings; Monterey style second floor balconies with heavy wood beams, carved wood balustrade and decorative corbels; and fenestration consisting largely of multi-lite wood casement windows accented with wood lintels, deep insets, arches, and wrought iron detailing.
2. The resource is representative of a notable work of Master Architect Louis Gill and retains integrity as it relates to the original 1926 design. Specifically, the resource is representative of Gill's quality, high style work in a single family residence built for a prominent developer, and is one of the few residential examples of his work to be identified.

## 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 house is a two-story Spanish Eclectic with Monterey influence style single-family residence built in 1926 on a curved, corner lot on the south side of North Talmadge Drive in Talmadge Park of the Kensington-Talmadge Community.

The building is located on APN 465-331-06-00. The property was identified in the 1996 Mid-City Survey however was not assigned a Status Code for unknown reasons.

The historic name of the resource, the Bertram and Ingeborg Carteri/Louis Gill Spec House #1, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Bertram and Ingeborg Carteri, who constructed the house as their personal residence (but sold it prior to occupation) and the name of Louis Gill, a Master Architect.

## ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Legacy 106, Inc., which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria B, C, and D. Staff concurs that the site is a significant historical resource under HRB Criteria C and D, but not HRB Criterion B. This determination is consistent with the *Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria*, as follows.

*CRITERION B - Is identified with persons or events significant in local, state or national history.*

The subject property was first owned and built by prominent San Diego entrepreneur and developer Bertram Carteri as a home for himself and his wife, however, the Carteris never occupied the residence and financial hardship compelled them to sell the property shortly after its completion to Abelardo and Aida Rodriguez in 1926.

Abelardo Rodriguez and his wife Aida Rodriguez owned the property from 1926 until 1940, and occasionally occupied the home during that period. Abelardo Rodriguez served as Governor of Northern Baja California from 1923 to 1929, as Mexico's interim president from 1932 to 1934, and as Governor of the Mexican state of Sonora from 1943 to 1949. Through his various roles in the Mexican government, Rodriguez fostered Mexico's tourism and gambling industries and cross-border trade, promoted public works projects, and enacted laws to help Mexico's working class through the Great Depression.

The applicant's report provides additional information and details on Rodriguez's professional and personal life. It notes Rodriguez's considerable wealth and prominence during his life and indicates that he was harshly criticized and also well-respected by many in both Mexico and the U.S. The applicant's report asserts the subject property is significant under HRB Criterion B for its association with Abelardo Rodriguez through his ownership of the property during a large portion of his productive life. The report also notes that Rodriguez traveled a great deal and owned many properties in Mexico and the U.S. and acknowledges the sporadic occupation of the

property during this time. It appears the property was primarily used by Rodriguez and his wife as a vacation home or part time retreat.

The information provided in the report indicates Abelardo Rodriguez was indeed significant as a prominent politician in Mexico. And while he promoted friendly relations with the U.S. and owned and occupied properties in the U.S., his historical significance appears greatest for the country of Mexico, and his many public works and achievements were for the primary benefit of the people of Mexico. The report does not reasonably illustrate how his achievements were demonstrably important to the U.S. or to San Diego during the period in history. The report asserts that Rodriguez maintained a significant association with the subject property, however, it appears the home was only one of many properties he owned in both countries and it was only occupied by him and his wife part-time. Furthermore, the sporadic occupation of the property implies its use only as a vacation home and personal property not related to Rodriguez's professional achievements or role as a Mexican politician.

The report does not adequately demonstrate the national, state, or local historical significance of Abelardo Rodriguez, nor does it detail the associative integrity of the subject property and the role it may have played in the professional achievements and contributions of Rodriguez. Therefore staff does not recommend designation of the subject property 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.*

The subject resource is a two-story single-family residence with detached garage and guest unit built in 1926 in the Spanish Eclectic style with Monterey influences. The building is of above-standard wood frame construction on a concrete foundation, and maintains an original L-shaped plan form with prominent wings stretching to the north and east. The building is clad in medium sand finish stucco and features a moderate-pitch hipped roof form sheathed in Mission clay tile with minimal eave overhang. A scored concrete walk leads to the symmetrical entry which faces northeast and is marked by a wide inset wood paneled door with Juliet balcony above. The building's strict symmetry is limited to this primary façade wall, however the composition maintains an attractive balance overall.

Fenestration consists primarily of multi-lite wood casement windows, and select windows and doors at or near the primary elevation are elaborated with arches, wood lintels, or wrought iron detailing. All windows feature a distinct, recessed reveal detail below the sills. The building's Monterey influence is expressed chiefly through a pair of second story balconies covered by the principal roof located at the ends of the two wings. The balconies cantilever slightly with decorative supporting corbels, and substantial wood beams frame the carved wood balustrades and corbel detailing. A stucco clad chimney is located at the south (side) elevation. An original detached garage with second story guest quarters and matching fenestration is located to the west of the residence at the rear of the property.

The applicant's report properly points out some minor discrepancies between the building's existing configuration and the elevations drawn by the original architect Louis Gill, and are generally considered to be small design changes made during construction. These discrepancies

include the tripartite arched window at the east end of the east wing, the lack of shutters, the change to the single-story bump out configuration on the west elevation, and an existing French door with sidelights shown as windows at the rear of the south elevation. There is no evidence to suggest that these were not field changes made during construction and after these drawings were completed. One additional discrepancy not noted in the report relates to the inset detail of the front door, which is presently of a much simpler design than that shown on the drawings. This area of the entry is difficult to read in the historic photos provided, however, close examination of this area does not appear to indicate that the existing, simpler detail is not original.

Modifications include the replacement of a casement window pair with a single-lite fixed window within the existing opening on the west elevation of the north wing, and the enclosure of the east wing balcony with simple glazing. These two modifications do affect the primary elevation, however, given the building's relatively large scale and abundance of decorative qualities, the modifications are reversible and, more importantly, retain the original openings and essential details of the window and balcony. These two primary elevation modifications do not impart any significant effect on the building's character-defining features or overall integrity. Remaining modifications are three small window replacements within existing openings, occurring on the side and rear of the building (two on the west and one on the south elevation). Overall, the modifications have not significantly impacted integrity of design, materials, workmanship or feeling to the extent that the building no longer retains integrity to its original design and 1926 period of significance.

The applicant's report recommends the designation include the foyer with stairway, and the living room tile fireplace. The inclusion of interior features in historic designations is entirely voluntary, and the property owner has reconsidered and elected not to include any interior elements. Therefore staff does not recommend any interior elements be included in the designation.

Following the 1915-1916 Panama-California Exposition, the romantic ideal of Spanish and Latin American architecture was revived. What resulted was the Spanish Eclectic style, which was the predominant style in Southern California between 1915 and 1940, significantly altering the architectural landscape until the Modernist movement took hold during and after WWII. The style uses decorative details borrowed from the entire history of Spanish architecture. These may be of Moorish, Byzantine, Gothic, or Renaissance inspirations, an unusually rich and varied series of decorative precedents. The style employed a variety of floor plans, as well as gabled, cross-gabled, gabled and hipped, hipped and flat roof forms with parapets. Other character defining features include Mission and Spanish clay tile; focal windows; arched windows and other openings; and accented entries.

The Monterey style is one of California's few indigenous architectural styles and was popular during the first half of the twentieth century. The style blended old Spanish building characteristics with the architectural language of New England that was being brought to California at the time. Character defining features of this style include low-pitched gabled or hipped roofs, and cantilevered second floor balconies with wood railings covered by the principal roof. It is not uncommon to have wood railings replaced with decorative iron railings in the Creole French variant. Roofs are usually covered in wood shingle or tile, and walls are

typically clad in stucco, brick or wood. Door and window surrounds sometimes mimic the Territorial examples of the Spanish Colonial prototypes; paired windows and false shutters are common.

Significance Statement: Limited modifications allow the house to continue to convey the historic significance of the Spanish Eclectic style with Monterey influence by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style; including two-story massing; a moderate-pitch, hipped roof sheathed in Mission clay tile with minimal eave overhang; medium sand finish stucco cladding; an original L-shaped plan form with projecting wings; Monterey style second floor balconies with heavy wood beams, carved wood balustrade and decorative corbels; and fenestration consisting largely of multi-lite wood casement windows accented with wood lintels, deep insets, arches, and wrought iron detailing. Therefore, staff recommends designation of the subject property 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.*

The property was designed by Master Architect Louis John Gill. While also having worked alongside his uncle Irving Gill from 1912 to 1919, Louis Gill was a prolific architect in his own right and was responsible for or otherwise involved in the design of many prominent commercial buildings, apartments, churches and homes throughout San Diego and Coronado, some of which have been designated historic. Gill worked almost exclusively in the Spanish Eclectic and Mission Revival styles. Aside from his many contributions to San Diego's architectural heritage, Gill is also recognized for his participation in a variety of professional organizations including the San Diego Chapter of the A.I.A. and the California State Board of Architectural Examiners. Of his many San Diego works, at least nine have been added to the local historic register, with some designated expressly as notable works of Gill's.

The subject property's original owner Bertram Carteri commissioned Louis Gill to design the home as a personal residence for himself and his wife. The two men had an existing working relationship in which Gill had designed several commercial buildings and a bungalow court for Carteri along Adams Avenue in Normal Heights for the planned commercial development known as Carteri Center. The high quality design and attention to detail brought to the subject resource typifies the signature Spanish Eclectic style of Gill's works during this time.

Significance Statement: The subject resource retains excellent integrity and continues to reflect Louis Gill's original design, intent and aesthetic. The house is notable as a quality, high style example of Gill's work for a prominent San Diego developer, and is one of only a few single family residences on the local register to be associated with him. Therefore, staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion D as a notable work of Master Architect Louis Gill.

#### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

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 Bertram and Ingeborg Carteri/Louis Gill Spec House #1 located at 4379 North Talmadge Drive be designated with a period of significance of 1926 under HRB Criterion C as a resource that exhibits the distinctive characteristics of Spanish Eclectic style architecture with Monterey influences; and HRB Criterion D as a resource that is representative of a notable work of Master Architect Louis Gill. 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.



Camille Pekarek  
Associate Planner



Kelley Stanco  
Senior Planner/HRB Liaison

CP/ks

### Attachments:

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A  
ADOPTED ON 1/28/2016

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 1/28/2016, to consider the historical designation of the **Bertram and Ingeborg Carteri/Louis Gill Spec House #1** (owned by Charlotte Holmes Trust, 4379 North Talmadge Drive, San Diego, CA 92116) located at **4379 North Talmadge Drive, San Diego, CA 92116**, APN: **465-331-06-00**, further described as LOTS 182 & 183 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 Bertram and Ingeborg Carteri/Louis Gill 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 Spanish Eclectic style architecture with Monterey influences and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1926 date of construction and period of significance. Specifically, the resource features two-story massing; a moderate-pitch, hipped roof sheathed in Mission clay tile with minimal eave overhang; medium sand finish stucco cladding; an original L-shaped plan form with projecting wings; Monterey style second floor balconies with heavy wood beams, carved wood balustrade and decorative corbels; and fenestration consisting largely of multi-lite wood casement windows accented with wood lintels, deep insets, arches, and wrought iron detailing. 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 Louis Gill and retains integrity as it relates to the original 1926 design. Specifically, the resource is representative of Gill's quality, high style work in a single family residence built for a prominent developer, and is one of the few residential examples of his work to be identified. 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: \_\_\_\_\_  
JOHN LEMMO, Chair  
Historical Resources Board

APPROVED: JAN I. GOLDSMITH,  
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
CORRINE NEUFFER,  
Deputy City Attorney