



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

DATE ISSUED: January 22, 2016 REPORT NO. HRB-16-004

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board  
Agenda of January 28, 2016

SUBJECT: **ITEM #9 – Royal Brown House**

APPLICANT: Daniel Tarman and Magadelene Drew represented by IS Architecture

LOCATION: 3643 Grim Avenue, 92104, Greater North Park Community, Council District 3

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Royal Brown House located at 3643 Grim Avenue as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Royal Brown located at 3643 Grim Avenue as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1933-1941 under HRB Criterion B. The designation excludes the rear shed roof addition and the non-historic carport. This recommendation is based on the following finding:

The resource is identified with Royal Brown, a historically significant person and retains integrity for that association from 1933-1941. Specifically, the resource is associated with important contributions to the performing arts in San Diego. Mr. Brown was a Fellow of the American Guild of Organist, pianist, composer and instructor. He was the City's official Civic Organist for the Spreckels Organ Pavilion from 1933 until 1954 and the official Exposition Organist for the 1935 California-Pacific International Exposition during his occupation of the subject property. He was instrumental in the advancement of music and recognized the importance of modern music, radio and telegraphy.

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. Located in the North Park community, the house is located in a single and multi-family neighborhood with older one story homes and some new two story construction.

The building is located on APN 453-143-07. The property was identified in the 1996 Mid-City Survey and given a Status Code of 5S3, "Appears to be individually eligible for local listing or designation through survey evaluation."

The historic name of the resource, the Royal Brown House has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of a historically significant individual.

## ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by IS Architecture, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criterion B and staff concurs. 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.*

Born in Baird, Texas in 1890, Royal A. Brown relocated to San Diego in 1906. The earliest account of his recitals occurred in 1910 when he performed for the San Diego Army and Navy Academy. He also performed at the US Grant Hotel on numerous occasions and prominent churches throughout San Diego. In 1911, he was appointed faculty member of the San Diego Music Institute where he taught piano and the principles of music form and harmony. He was an active member of the Amphion Club which was founded in 1892 and influential in the development of city's early music scene.

In 1914, Mr. Brown became the official organist of St. Joseph's Catholic Church, a position which he held for 20 years. He performed for the weekly mass, and developed Christmas and Easter programs as well as public recitals. By 1915, Mr. Brown began performing at Spreckels Organ Pavilion in Balboa Park as a guest performer, substitute and chief associate to Dr. Humphrey Stewart who was the first Civic Organist of the city.

In October 1917, Mr. Brown along with Dr. Stewart, became founding members of the San Diego sub-chapter of the Southern California Chapter of the America Guild of Organists (A.G.O.) with Mr. Brown elected secretary. Headquartered in New York and founded in 1896, the AGO maintained Chapters in each state. The group worked to increase the knowledge and appreciation of the highest type of organ playing and music literature. Their policy was to hold public services with organ recitals housed in local San Diego County churches. The San Diego chapter was chartered in 1922 with Mr. Brown as the Dean until 1923. In 1919, Mr. Brown was awarded the degree of Associate and in 1921 he became a fellow (F.A.G.O).

In 1923, Royal and Ethel Brown purchased the subject property and resided at the property until 1941. Royal practiced and composed in his residence studio as well as taught piano and organ. He advocated music programs and promoted up and coming talent, while continuing to develop his own work. In addition to composing his own work, Royal directed special chorale and orchestral programs, and developed arrangements for others. By 1927, his musical arrangements and piano and organ performances were regularly broadcast on KFSD. He also accompanied

singers, played recitals and participated in dedication ceremonies. He performed, composed and arranged ecclesiastical music for several local denominations and non-sectarian programs.

In January 1933, Mr. Brown was appointed San Diego's Civic Organist for the Spreckels Organ Pavilion. He became the successor of Dr. Stewart upon his demise in December 1932. As Civic Organist, Mr. Brown provided non-sectarian programs of classical and non-classical music. As the city's Organist, Mr. Brown was also appointed the official Exposition Organist. In preparation of the California-Pacific International Exposition, Mr. Brown became the first musician in the city to play a telegraph as a musical instrument and have it transmitted 2000 miles away to the Chicago World Fair. During this period, he also began composing the Organ Suite "In Balboa Park" also known as the Balboa Park Suite. He also maintained four recitals a week, added new pipes to the organ and developed weekly, holiday, and special event programs. In 1942, the city discontinued organ recitals, citing the presence of the Navy and difficulty entering Balboa Park for civilians. Between July 1942 and July 1948, the Organ Pavilion was closed with few special performances including Mr. Brown even though his appointment was on hiatus.

In 1941, the Browns sold the subject property. Mr. Brown continued to compose music and play recitals at local churches and play private programs. Mr. Brown was appointed official organist at the Union Congregational Church in La Jolla. After WWII, in July 1948 organ recitals were reinstated in Balboa Park with Mr. Brown serving as Civic Organist. Mr. Brown served as the Civic Organist until his death in 1954.

The subject property was constructed in 1923 in the Craftsman Bungalow style. The house is one story with clapboard siding. It features a low pitch gable roof with a moderate overhang and a porch that wraps around the west and south sides of the house. The porch has a slightly pitched gable roof and is supported by boxed tapered piers. The fenestration on the house is mixture of single and multi-light fixed, double hung and casement windows.

Modifications to the house consist of a rear shed roof addition completed ca. 1945, removal of the original garage, and construction of a carport. The front porch was significantly modified with the removal of the porch wall and the removal of the decorative molding on the tapered porch columns. The modifications do not impact the associative relationship to the Mr. Brown, however they have an adverse impact on the overall integrity of the property in terms of its architectural character.

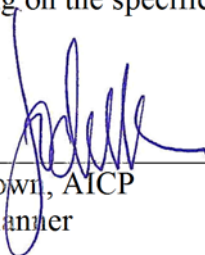
Significance Statement: The resource is identified with Royal A. Brown, a historically significant person and retains integrity for that association from 1933-1941. Specifically, the resource is associated with important contributions to the performing arts in San Diego. Mr. Brown was a Fellow of the American Guild of Organists, pianist, composer and instructor. He was the City's official Civic Organist for the Spreckels Organ Pavilion from 1933 until 1954 and the official Exposition Organist for the 1935 California-Pacific International Exposition during his occupation of the subject property. He was instrumental in the advancement of music and recognized the importance of modern music, radio and telegraphy.

## 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.

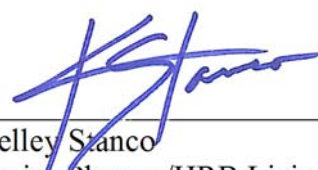
## CONCLUSION

Based on the information submitted and staff's field check, it is recommended that the Royal Brown House located at 3643 Grim Avenue be designated with a period of significance of 1933-1941 under HRB Criterion B for its association with a historically significant person. The designation excludes the rear shed roof addition and the non-historic carport. 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.



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Jodie Brown, AICP  
Senior Planner



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Kelley Stanco  
Senior Planner/HRB Liaison

JB/ks

Attachment(s):

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 **Royal Brown House** (owned by Daniel Tarman and Magadlene Drew, 3643 Grim Avenue, San Diego, CA 92104) located at **3643 Grim Avenue, San Diego, CA 92104**, APN: **453-143-07-00**, further described as BLK G LOTS 14 & 15 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 Royal Brown House on the following findings:

(1) The property is historically significant under CRITERION B for its association with a historically significant person and retains integrity for that association from 1933-1941. Specifically, the resource is associated with important contributions to the performing arts in San Diego. Mr. Brown was a Fellow of the American Guild of Organist, pianist, composer and instructor. He was the City's official Civic Organists for the Spreckels Organ Pavilion from 1933 until 1954 and the official Exposition Organist for the 1935 California-Pacific International Exposition during his occupation of the subject property. He was instrumental in the advancement of music and recognized the importance of modern music, radio and telegraphy. 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 shed roof addition and the non-historic carport.

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