



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: February 19, 2016 REPORT NO. HRB-16-015

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board
Agenda of February 25, 2016

SUBJECT: **ITEM #6 – 1678 National Avenue, 926 Sigsbee Street, 928 Sigsbee Street**

APPLICANT: Raquel C. Garcia Trust and Kamal Shamoo represented by Marie Burke Lia

LOCATION: 1678, 1682, 1684-86, 1692-95 National Avenue, and 926, 928, 930 Sigsbee Street, Barrio Logan Community, Council District 8

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the properties located at 1678 National Avenue, 926 Sigsbee Street, and 928 Sigsbee Street as a historical resource(s).

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Do not designate the properties located at 1678 National Avenue, 926 Sigsbee Street, and 928 Sigsbee Street under any adopted HRB Criteria.

BACKGROUND

This item is being brought before the Historical Resources Board in conjunction with a preliminary review application to determine whether or not the buildings are historically significant as part of a constraints analysis for future development. The buildings identified as 1678 National Avenue, 926 Sigsbee Street, and 928 Sigsbee Street are each one-story Folk Victorian style buildings built in 1903 according to the Assessor's Building Record and moved to their present location circa 1923 at the north corner of National Avenue and Sigsbee Street in the Mannasse and Schiller's Addition of the Barrio Logan Community.

The buildings are located on APN 538-040-31-00. This large parcel contains a total of seven separate structures: 1678, 1682, 1684-86 and 1692-95 National Avenue, and 926, 928, and 930 Sigsbee Street. Four buildings identified as 1682, 1684-86 and 1692-95 National Avenue, and 930 Sigsbee Street were previously evaluated by staff and cleared through the Potential Historic Resource Review process.

The three buildings identified as 1678 National Avenue and 926 and 928 Sigsbee Street have not been identified as potentially significant individual resources in any previous surveys. Only the building identified as 1678 National Avenue was listed among surveyed buildings in the 2011 Barrio Logan Historical Resources Survey and given a Status Code of 7R, “Identified in Reconnaissance Level Survey; Not evaluated.” The 926 and 928 Sigsbee Street buildings were possibly not identified in the same survey for unknown reasons.

ANALYSIS

Historical Resource Research Reports were prepared by Kathleen Crawford of the Office of Marie Burke Lia, which concludes that the resource is not significant under any HRB Criteria and staff concurs. This determination is consistent with the *Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria*, as follows.

CRITERION A - Exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's, a community's or a neighborhood's historical, archaeological, cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, landscaping or architectural development.

The applicant's report provides a good historical context for the area of Barrio Logan and for the development patterns related to the subject property. Early in Barrio Logan's history, the area south of New Town was known as the East End. Real estate speculation and subdivision development in the East End began primarily after the start of the area's American period in 1846. Gradual residential infill occurred in and around Logan Heights in the early 20th century, and was spurred on periodically from the dredging of the bay, the 1915 Panama-California Exposition and World War I. The commercial fishing industry and other bay-related development grew considerably after 1910, and attracted many Japanese immigrant fishermen. In 1926 John Nolen's updated plan for the bay area of Logan Heights promoted development for industrial and commercial uses.

The subject buildings identified as 1678 National Avenue, 926 Sigsbee Street and 928 Sigsbee Street were all built in 1903 according to the Assessor's Building Record and were moved to their present locations from unknown sites circa 1923. In review of the subject property and the reports provided by the applicant, staff requested the applicant provide additional examination of the property in the historic context of relocated buildings brought to the area to provide affordable housing for new and existing low-income residents.

Between the 1920s and 1950s – which included the end of WWI, the Mexican Revolution, the Great Depression, WWII, and the advent of the automobile and highway system – many Mexican Americans, African Americans, and Asians moved into low-income housing in the area. Many of these people were attracted by the nearby bayfront and railroad jobs, and also spurned by racial discrimination imposed by restrictive covenants elsewhere in the city. Following the Mexican Revolution and during the labor gap brought on by WWII, large numbers of Mexican immigrants came to the area. Accordingly, there was an increased demand for small, inexpensive, multi-family and single-family housing units. This pattern of development is reflected in the subject property, which was vacant in 1921 and contained eight structures by 1950.

Relocation of wood framed structures in the early 20th century was a familiar occurrence in San Diego, and a generally common practice throughout the US since the early 18th century. Very often existing wood structures would be moved for reuse in underdeveloped areas of the city. San Diego's mild climate prolongs the life span of these wood structures and smaller, wood framed buildings were relatively easy to relocate. The development of the subject property with the placement of older wood structures onto an already developed lot in the 1920s provided additional rental housing for the property owner, and was surely encouraged by increased demand for inexpensive housing in the Barrio Logan area during that time.

At this time, there is not enough information to establish a comprehensive historical context relating to the relocation of buildings into the area of Barrio Logan, providing inexpensive housing for its residents. No information is available to compare the subject property to other resources with a similar history and pattern of development. Furthermore, and as discussed in the Criterion C analysis of this report, the buildings have been subject to a number of alterations over time that have compromised their integrity such that they may no longer reflect the significance of their historical context. Without an historical context established, research into the history of the property at 1678 National Avenue, 926 Sigsbee Street, and 928 Sigsbee Street did not reveal any information to indicate that the property exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's or Barrio Logan's historical, archaeological, cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, landscaping or architectural development. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion A.

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

Research into the owners and tenants of the properties at 1678 National Avenue and 926 and 928 Sigsbee Street did not reveal any individuals who could be considered historically significant in local, state or national history. Furthermore, no events of local, state or national significance are known to have occurred at the subject property. Therefore, the property is not eligible for designation 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.

As detailed in McAlester's *A Field Guide to American Houses*, the Folk Victorian style was common throughout the country, and closely tied to the National Folk style made popular after the nationwide expansion of the railroad in the 1850s. Folk Victorian style houses were generally built in the late 19th and early 20th century, declining in popularity by 1910 with the trend toward Craftsman Bungalow style houses. Essentially straightforward and modest versions of earlier Victorian houses, the Folk Victorian style is characterized by a simple folk house form with a sparing application of Victorian detailing that is most often focused at the front porch and cornice line. The style typically presents moderate to steeply pitched gabled or pyramidal roof forms, simple window surrounds, boxed or open roof to wall junctions, porches with spindlework detailing or flat, jigsaw cut trim, cornice-line brackets, generally symmetrical façades, and a lack of textured and varied wall surfaces.

1678 National Avenue

The building identified as 1678 National Avenue was built in 1903 according to the Assessor's Building Record, and is located at the west corner of the property, fronting onto the north side of National Avenue. The building consists of a one-story, Folk Victorian style, single-family residence of light, single wall construction on a concrete perimeter wall foundation with floor joists. The building's plan form is rectangular with a full-width front porch. The moderate pitch front gable roof is sheathed in asphalt shingle and exhibits narrow eave overhang. Horizontal wood siding is present on the primary façade while the balance of the building is of vertical board and batten siding. A shallow hipped roof covers the front porch and is supported by simple square wood posts. The front entrance is made up of an original single wood paneled door with transom and non-historic stained glass above. Turned post details are present where the front porch cover meets the front wall. Fenestration generally consists of wood double hung windows except where replacements have occurred.

Based on Sanborn Maps and water/sewer connection records, it is believed the building identified as 1678 National Avenue was relocated from an unknown location to its present site circa 1923. Besides the building's relocation, alterations to the subject building primarily relate to elements of the front porch, the fenestration, and a post-1923 rear laundry and bath addition. According to the report, the front porch posts, railing and stairs have been replaced, and only two of the original six window assemblies remain fully intact. Generally the window alterations include replacement with historically inappropriate units or removal of original sashes. The window alterations have largely occurred within existing openings, but have resulted in integrity loss of design or materials.

926 Sigsbee Street

The building identified as 926 Sigsbee Street was built in 1903 according to the Assessor's Building Record, and is located at the east corner of the property, fronting onto the north side of Sigsbee Street. The building consists of a one-story, Folk Victorian style, single-family residence of light, single wall construction on a concrete perimeter wall foundation with floor joists. The building's plan form is rectangular with a full-width front porch. The moderate pitch front gable roof is sheathed in asphalt shingle and exhibits narrow eave overhang. Horizontal wood siding is present on the primary façade while the balance of the building is of vertical board and batten siding. A shallow hipped roof covers the front porch, supported by simple square wood posts and elaborated by a small amount of jigsaw cut wood trim. The front entrance is made up of a replacement single wood door with a two-lite transom above. It is not known whether the two-lite configuration of the transom is original as it does not match any other light pattern on the house. Turned post details are present where the front porch cover meets the front wall. Fenestration generally consists of wood double hung windows except where replacements have occurred.

Based on Sanborn Maps and water/sewer connection records, it is believed the building identified as 926 Sigsbee Street was relocated from an unknown location to its present site circa 1923. Besides the building's relocation, alterations to the subject building primarily relate to elements of the front porch, the fenestration, and a post-1923 rear laundry and bath addition.

According to the report, the front porch posts and railing have been replaced, and only two of the original six window assemblies remain fully intact. Generally the window alterations include replacement with historically inappropriate units or removal of original sashes. The window alterations have largely occurred within existing openings, but have resulted in integrity loss of design or materials.

928 Sigsbee Street

The building identified as 928 Sigsbee Street was built in 1903 according to the Assessor's Building Record, and is located immediately south of 926 Sigsbee Street at the east corner of the property. The building consists of a one-story, Folk Victorian style, single-family residence of light, single wall construction on a concrete perimeter wall foundation with floor joists. The building's plan form is rectangular with a full-width front porch. The moderate pitch front gable roof is sheathed in asphalt shingle and exhibits narrow eave overhang. Horizontal wood siding is present on the primary façade while the balance of the building is of vertical board and batten siding. A shallow hipped roof covers the front porch, supported by simple square wood posts and elaborated by a small amount of jigsaw cut wood trim. The front entrance is made up of a replacement single wood door with a transom above. Turned post details are present where the front porch cover meets the front wall. The top of an interior brick chimney is visible at the rear of the building. Fenestration generally consists of wood double hung windows except where replacements have occurred.

Based on Sanborn Maps and water/sewer connection records, it is believed the building identified as 928 Sigsbee Street was relocated from an unknown location to its present site circa 1923. Besides the building's relocation, alterations to the subject building primarily relate to elements of the front porch, the fenestration, and a post-1923 rear laundry and bath addition. According to the report, the front porch posts, railing and stairs have been replaced, and only two of the original six window assemblies remain fully intact. Generally the window alterations include replacement with historically inappropriate units or removal of original sashes. The window alterations have largely occurred within existing openings, but have resulted in integrity loss of design or materials.

A 1928 plumbing permit for 928 Sigsbee Street suggests this was when the building was converted into a duplex. This is also believed to be the time when two windows on either side of the front living rooms were added – the addition of only the window on the southwest side can be confirmed as it is not present in the 1925 aerial photograph. Also at the time of this building's conversion to a duplex, the original pair of windows at the front elevation was altered to provide the second entry door.

Eligibility Analysis for 1678 National Avenue, 926 Sigsbee Street, & 928 Sigsbee Street

The three subject buildings were relocated from their original locations to the present site. The original locations and appearance of the three buildings is unknown. As noted in the *HRB Designation Criteria Guidelines*, consideration of moved buildings is limited primarily because “significance is embodied in locations and settings as well as in the properties themselves.”

Furthermore, relocation “may also cause the loss of historic features such as landscaping, foundations, and chimneys, as well as loss of the potential for associated archeological deposits.”

All three of the subject buildings are in very poor condition as documented in the Civil Penalty Notice and Order issued by the City in 2012 and provided in the report. To a certain extent, the *HRB Designation Criteria Guidelines* accept that “if a resource is in such poor condition that original materials and features may no longer be salvageable, then the resource’s integrity may be adversely impacted.” The very poor condition of the front porches and other elements on all three of the subject buildings, as well as replacement of certain components of these character-defining features have resulted in some amount of integrity loss.

It is not known what further integrity loss may have occurred as a result of the relocation of these buildings or if the front porches were wholly rebuilt at or after the time of relocation. The forensic analysis provided in the report finds gaps in the main foundation perimeter wall which may have been utilized in the buildings’ relocations, and the foundations of the three porches are either falling away or have been replaced in recent years. Integrity loss has also occurred in the replacement, alteration or partial removal of the majority of windows in all three structures.

The subject buildings have each sustained significant loss of integrity of location, setting, design, materials, and workmanship as a result of relocation from an unknown site and alterations to character-defining features. This integrity loss is even more impactful on these buildings as they are very modest and stylistically reserved from the start. The three buildings visibly lack architectural detailing, particularly at the front porches, such as spindlework detailing or brackets under the eaves that would characterize them as highly representative or valuable examples of the Folk Victorian style. In their current configurations, and in part due to significant loss in integrity from relocation and alteration, the three buildings identified as 1678 National Avenue, 926 Sigsbee Street, and 928 Sigsbee Street do not embody the distinctive characteristics of the Folk Victorian style sufficient to convey the historic significance of that style. The buildings are not valuable examples of the use of indigenous materials, nor do they exemplify high craftsmanship and design. The three buildings are of common, single wall construction and do not embody the distinctive characteristics of a rare or unique type or method of construction. Finally, the buildings’ age and physical features do not exemplify or reflect the era when their style, type or method of construction became popular. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion C of the buildings identified as 1678 National Avenue, 926 Sigsbee Street, or 928 Sigsbee Street.

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

Research into the construction of the properties at 1678 National Avenue and 926 and 928 Sigsbee Street failed to conclusively identify a builder, designer or architect. Therefore, the property is not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion D.

CRITERION E - Is listed or has been determined eligible by the National Park Service for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or is listed or has been determined eligible by the State Historical Preservation Office for listing on the State Register of Historical Resources.

The properties at 1678 National Avenue and 926 and 928 Sigsbee Street have not been listed on or determined eligible for listing on the State or National Registers. Therefore, the property is not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion E.

CRITERION F - Is a finite group of resources related to one another in a clearly distinguishable way or is a geographically definable area or neighborhood containing improvements which have a special character, historical interest or aesthetic value or which represent one or more architectural periods or styles in the history and development of the City.

The property at 1678 National Avenue and 926 and 928 Sigsbee Street is not located within a designated historic district. Therefore, the property is not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion F.

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 not recommended that the properties located at 1678 National Avenue and 926 and 928 Sigsbee Street be designated under any HRB Criteria. 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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CP/ks

Attachment:

1. Applicant's Historical Report for 1678 National Avenue under separate cover
2. Applicant's Historical Report for 926 Sigsbee Street under separate cover
3. Applicant's Historical Report for 928 Sigsbee Street under separate cover