



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: September 8, 2016 REPORT NO. HRB-16-056

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board
Agenda of September 20, 2016

SUBJECT: **ITEM #11 – Gladys Benson House**

APPLICANT: Melvin Collins represented by Allen Hazard & Janet O'Dea

LOCATION: 1617 West Montecito Way, Uptown Community, Council District 3

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Gladys Benson House located at 1617 West Montecito Way as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Gladys Benson House located at 1617 West Montecito Way as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1924 under HRB Criterion C. This recommendation is based on the following finding:

The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Mission Revival style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1924 date of construction and period of significance. Specifically, the resource features a symmetrical primary façade with prominent entry; decorative wood paneled front door; multi-lite arched feature windows; medium sand finish stucco cladding; flat roof form with parapet accented by an arched Mission clay tile porch cover; square louvered attic vents; and fenestration consisting mainly of wood double hung and casement 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 resource is a one-story single-family residence built in 1924 in the Mission Revival style on the south side of West Montecito Way, just east of Stephens Street in the North Florence Heights Addition of the Uptown Community.

The building is located on APN 443-474-02-00. The property was identified in the Draft 2015 Uptown Historical Resources Reconnaissance Survey and given a Status Code of 5D3, "Appears to be a contributor to a district that appears eligible for local listing or designation though survey evaluation."

The historic name of the resource, the Gladys Benson House, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Gladys Benson, who constructed the house as her personal residence.

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Allen Hazard & Janet O'Dea 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-story, single family residence built in 1924 in the Mission Revival style. The building is sited on a small, flat, rectangular lot facing north. Built of standard wood frame construction on a concrete foundation, the building is of modest scale and exhibits a rectangular plan form. The building is clad in a medium sand finish stucco and the flat roof form with simple parapet is interrupted simply at the west elevation by an exterior stucco chimney and a small amount of wall articulation. The symmetrical primary elevation presents a central entry with original wood paneled door and an arched porch roof with Mission clay tile sheathing. Two pairs of 8-lite arched wood casement windows flank the entry porch and square louvered attic vents mark both side elevations. Fenestration consists primarily of wood double hung windows and arched wood casement windows. An original concrete driveway at the west side of the property leads to an attached single car garage at the rear.

Alterations to the property are fairly minimal and do not significantly impact character defining features of impair integrity as it relates to the 1924 date of construction and period of significance. A number of site walls and a side yard gate have been added at the front of the property that do not overwhelm the original structure or significantly impact character-defining features critical to its design. According to the applicant's report, the porch roof cover underwent much-needed repair and received new Mission clay tiles, rafter tails and bargeboards. In addition, two arched art glass casement windows at the rear of the west elevation are believed to have replaced double hung units. Finally, the entry walkway and porch floor have received contemporary tile, and the structure has been restuccoed in a medium sand finish stucco which is compatible with the original texture. Overall, these alterations are in keeping with the original design of resource and do not significantly impair integrity of design, materials, workmanship or feeling.

California was the birthplace of the Mission style and many of its landmark examples are concentrated there. The earliest were built in 1890s; by 1900 houses in this style were spreading eastward under the influence of fashionable architects and national builders' magazines. Although never common outside of the southwestern states, scattered examples were built in early 20th-century suburbs throughout the country. Most date from the years between 1905 and 1920. Commonly found features of the Mission Revival style include: Mission-shaped dormer or roof parapet commonly with red tile roof covering; widely overhanging eaves, usually open; porch roofs supported by large square piers, commonly arched above; wall surfaces usually smooth stucco. The shift from Mission Revival to Spanish style is well established with the design and completion of the

Panama California Exposition and public debut in 1915. But there are very few residential examples of non-Mission Revival, Spanish style residential architecture before World War I. 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.

Significance Statement: The house continues to convey the historic significance of the Mission Revival style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style; including symmetrical primary façade with prominent entry; decorative wood paneled front door; multi-lite arched feature windows; medium sand finish stucco cladding; flat roof form with parapet accented by an arched Mission clay tile porch cover; square louvered attic vents; and fenestration consisting mainly of wood double hung and casement windows. Therefore, staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion C.

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 Gladys Benson House located at 1617 West Montecito Way be designated with a period of significance of 1924 under HRB Criterion C as a resource that exhibits the distinctive characteristics of the Mission Revival style of architecture. 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 9/20/2016

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 9/20/2016, to consider the historical designation of the **Gladys Benson House** (owned by Melvin R. Collins, 1617 West Montecito Way, San Diego, CA 92103) located at **1617 West Montecito Way, San Diego, CA 92103**, APN: **443-474-02-00**, further described as BLK 6 LOT 12 N 10 FT OF E 50 FT LOT 11 E 50 FT 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 Gladys Benson House 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 Mission Revival style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1924 date of construction and period of significance. Specifically, the resource features a symmetrical primary façade with prominent entry; decorative wood paneled front door; multi-lite arched feature windows; medium sand finish stucco cladding; flat roof form with parapet accented by an arched Mission clay tile porch cover; square louvered attic vents; and fenestration consisting mainly of wood double hung and casement 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 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: _____
COURTNEY ANN COYLE, Chair
Historical Resources Board

APPROVED: JAN I. GOLDSMITH,
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: _____
CORRINE NEUFFER,
Deputy City Attorney