



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: September 8, 2016 REPORT NO. HRB-16-057

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board
Agenda of September 20, 2016

SUBJECT: **ITEM #13 – John and Elsa Pearson/John Pearson Spec House #1**

APPLICANT: Christine Morales represented by Scott Moomjian, Esq.

LOCATION: 3435-3435½ Texas Street, North Park Community, Council District 3

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the John and Elsa Pearson/John Pearson Spec House #1 located at 3435-3435½ Texas Street as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the John and Elsa Pearson/John Pearson Spec House #1 located at 3435-3435½ Texas Street as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1925 under HRB Criteria C and D. The 1988 addition to the rear structure at -3435½ Texas Street is excluded from this nomination. 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 Colonial Revival Style and retains integrity from its 1925 period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits asymmetrical massing; low-pitched tile roof; textured exterior stucco; large focal windows; decorative features such as the tile attic vents, decorative metal gate, and arched openings.
2. The resource is representative of a notable work of proposed Master Builder John Pearson, a prominent and accomplished building contractor responsible for the construction of many quality houses in the City, some of which have been historically designated. Specifically, the resource is one of his earlier houses in the Spanish Colonial Revival Style that expresses a quality of craftsmanship seen in his other known works.

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 resource consists of two structures, a one story, single-family residence at 3435 Texas Street constructed in 1925 in the Spanish Colonial Revival style; and a two story structure at the rear of the lot, also constructed in 1925 in the Spanish Colonial Revival style, consisting of a small dwelling unit addressed at 3435½

Texas Street over a garage. The buildings sit on an interior lot with the front elevation oriented toward Texas Street and is located in the North Park Community.

The building is located on APN 453-372-15-00. The property was located within the boundary of the Draft 2016 North Park Survey, but was not evaluated.

The historic name of the resource, John and Elsa Pearson/John Pearson Spec House #1, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of the owners who constructed the house as a speculation house.

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Scott Moomjian, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criterion 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 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.

Research into the history of the property at 3435-3435½ Texas Street did not reveal any information to indicate that the property exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's or the North Park community'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 property at 3435-3435½ Texas 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.

The subject resource is a one story, single-family residence constructed in 1925 in the Spanish Colonial Revival Style. The building sits on an interior lot with its front elevation oriented toward Texas Street. The house is asymmetrical and features a side gable roof with a cross gable projecting from the main façade over the entry. The roof is low pitched and covered with a red clay half-barrel tile. The exterior walls and chimney are covered in stucco and a scored concrete walkway leads from the street to the front entry. Behind the house is a second dwelling unit, 3435½ Texas Street, also built in 1925. This unit is much simpler in design and features a flat roof, stucco exterior and clay tile trim. An addition was added to the east side of this structure in 1988.

The wood front door to the main structure is accessed through two arched entryways leading to a recessed porch on the west façade. An uncovered, scored concrete porch extends from the driveway to the entry. The building features two large focal windows on the primary façade, both consist of a single pane fixed sash flanked by two four-over-one double hung wood windows. An arched attic vent is located beneath the apex of the projecting gable. A wing wall projects from the side of the main façade and features an arched opening with a decorative metal gate. The fenestration consists mostly of double hung wooden windows. A bay projects from the rear façade and secondary entrances are located on the north and east sides of the house.

Several small modifications have been made to the home since its construction. At some point in time the original windows were replaced with vinyl. After consulting with staff, these windows were removed and replaced with historically accurate double hung wooden windows. Additionally, a non-original garage door was removed and replaced with the guidance of staff. The attic vent had also been removed but the original was found and reinstated in its proper location. These modifications do not significantly impair integrity of design, materials or feeling.

The Spanish 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 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 resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Spanish Colonial Revival Style and retains integrity from its 1925 period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits asymmetrical massing; low-pitched tile roof; textured exterior stucco; large focal windows; decorative features such as the tile attic vents, decorative metal gate, and arched openings. 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.

John Pearson came to the United States from Sweden in 1904. His younger brother, Master Builder Pears Pearson, followed in 1905 and the two settled in Colorado where John worked as a layman carpenter. John married Elsa Larson in 1910 and moved to San Diego in the early 1920's along with Pears and his family. John and Elsa settled in North Park living in several homes which he constructed until the 1950's when the family moved to La Mesa.

Pearson's work includes nineteen known houses, two which have been demolished, in the North Park area. These houses were constructed in either the Craftsman or Spanish Colonial Revival styles. Pearson's Craftsman houses are distinguished by their carved corbels, decorative brackets and sunburst attic vents. His Spanish Colonial Revival houses have similar high quality details such as arched entryways, elaborated cap style chimneys, wing walls, decorative vents and complex fenestration. The interiors of these houses often feature details such as covered lath and plaster

ceilings, built-ins and fireplaces with high quality tiles. Two of Pearson's houses in San Diego have been historically designated:

- HRB Site #931 – E.A and Effie Tindula House, 3593 29th Street built in 1925 in the Craftsman Style
- HRB Site # 1008-012 – North Park Dryden District Contributor, 3511 28th Street built in 1925 in the Spanish Colonial Revival Style

The subject resource was built in 1925 by John Pearson as a speculative house and is an early example of his work in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The building demonstrates the high quality of design and craftsmanship seen in Pearson's other known works that are historically designated. 3435-3435½ Texas Street features arched entryways, a wing wall and decorative attic vents typical of Pearson's work in this style.

Significance Statement: The resource is representative of a notable work of proposed Master Builder John Pearson, a prominent and accomplished building contractor responsible for the construction of many quality houses in the City, some of which have been historically designated. Specifically, the resource is one of his earlier houses in the Spanish Colonial Revival Style that expresses a quality of craftsmanship seen in his other known works. Therefore, staff recommends the establishment of John Pearson as a Master Builder, and designation of the subject property 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 property at 3435-3435½ Texas Street has 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 3435-3435½ Texas 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 recommended that the John and Elsa Pearson/John Pearson Spec House #1 located at 3435-3435½ Texas Street be designated with a period of significance of 1925 under HRB Criterion C as a resource that exhibits the distinctive

characteristics of the Spanish Colonial Revival Style; and HRB Criterion D as a resource that is representative of a notable work of proposed Master Builder John Pearson. The designation excludes the 1988 addition to the rear structure. 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.



Suzanne Segur
Assistant Planner



Kelley Stanco
Senior Planner/HRB Liaison

SS/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 **John and Elsa Pearson/John Pearson Spec House #1** (owned by Christine Morales, 3435 Texas Street, San Diego, CA 92104) located at **3435-3435½ Texas Street, San Diego, CA 92104**, APN: **453-372-15-00**, further described as BLK 17 LOTS 45 & 46 ST CLSD ADJ & 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 John and Elsa Pearson/John Pearson 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 Colonial Revival Style and retains integrity from its 1925 period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits asymmetrical massing; low-pitched tile roof; textured exterior stucco; large focal windows; decorative features such as the tile attic vents, decorative metal gate, and arched openings. 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 proposed Master Builder John Pearson, a prominent and accomplished building contractor responsible for the construction of many quality houses in the City, some of which have been historically designated. Specifically, the resource is one of his earlier houses in the Spanish Colonial Revival Style that expresses a quality of craftsmanship seen in his other known works. 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 1988 addition to the rear structure at 3435½ Texas Street.

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