



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: September 10, 2020 REPORT NO. HRB-20-042

HEARING DATE: September 24, 2020

SUBJECT: **ITEM #9 - Helen Bradish Spec House #1**

RESOURCE INFO: [California Historical Resources Inventory Database \(CHRID\) link](#)

APPLICANT: Fenton Bankers Hill LLC; represented by Jennifer Ayala of Nexus Planning and Research

LOCATION: 328 Grape Street and 2004 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Uptown Community, Council District 3  
APN 533-206-06-00

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Helen Bradish Spec House #1 located at 328 Grape Street as a historical resource.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Helen Bradish Spec House #1 located at 328 Grape Street as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1908 under HRB Criterion C. The designation excludes the rear modified addition constructed outside of the period of significance and the building located at 2004 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue. This recommendation is based on the following finding:

The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of Folk National style with Neoclassical influences and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1908 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features a pyramidal roof form with an integral front porch, wood siding with a thick cornice band below the eaves, wood windows, and a Corinthian column.

### BACKGROUND

This item is being brought before the Historical Resources Board in conjunction with a proposed building modification or demolition of a structure of 45 years or more, consistent with San Diego Municipal Code Section 143.0212. The property is located on a corner lot of a mixed-use block with both residential and commercial structures.

The property at 2004 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue was identified in the *2016 Uptown Community Plan Area Historic Resources Survey Report* and given a Status Code of 5S3, "Appears to be individually eligible for local listing or

designation through survey evaluation." 328 Grape Street was not individually identified nor evaluated in this survey.

The historic name of the resource, the Helen Bradish Spec House #1 has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Helen Bradish, who owned the parcel from 1904-1914 and likely constructed the house as a speculation house while residing at 2004 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

## ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Jennifer Ayala of Nexus Planning and Research which concludes that neither property is significant under any HRB Criterion. Staff disagrees and finds that 328 Grape Street is a significant historical resource under HRB Criterion C. 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 properties at 2004 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 328 Grape Street did not reveal any information to indicate that the property exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's or Uptown'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 2004 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 328 Grape 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 property located at 328 Grape Street was constructed in 1908 in the Folk National style and features a pyramid, hipped roof form with boxed eaves that align with a thick cornice band below. The primary façade features an integral front porch supported by a single Corinthian style column, narrow wood siding, two small single pane windows along with a rectangular tripartite bay window that includes two narrow windows with decorative leaded glass in the upper sash and a large fixed window with a thick dividing muntin. The side elevations feature limited decorative details, but include wood siding, the continuation of the cornice band detailing along with narrow wood windows. The rear elevation has undergone some modifications and currently features an enclosed addition with a shed roof. As noted in McAlester's *A Field Guide to American Houses*, most pyramidal shaped, urban examples of the Folk National style included Neoclassical, Colonial Revival, Prairie, or

Craftsman style detailing. Neoclassical elements are evident on the subject property through the use of divided leaded glass, a heavy cornice band, and the single Corinthian style column.

Modifications to this property are minimal and include a modern entrance door, a partial window infill on the east elevation and a small addition located on the north elevation completed after construction. Per the request of the City of San Diego's Code Enforcement, the windows are currently boarded up since the structure is vacant. Overall, these modifications do not significantly impair the integrity of the design, materials, workmanship or feeling as it relates to Criterion C.

The property located at 2004 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue was constructed in c. 1889 in the Folk Victorian style with Italianate influences and features a square layout with a hipped roof clad in asphalt shingles with overhanging eaves supported by decorative brackets on a plain frieze, a combination of wood cladding that varies from elevation to elevation and divided lite double hung wooden windows. The main facade features a modern brick, centralized entry porch with a modern single entrance door. The modern brick on the entrance porch is continued and visible throughout portions of the foundation, side entry porch, and walkways. Speculation that the property was relocated to the site or relocated on site was inconclusive and the estimated 1889 date of construction is based Sanborn Maps, newspaper articles, and ownership records.

Since construction, substantial modifications have occurred that have negatively impacted the integrity of the resource and its eligibility for designation. When first constructed, the property featured a covered front porch that ran the entire length of the front façade and a rear entrance in the northern corner of the west elevation as noted on the 1906 Sanborn Map. By 1921, the property had a central opening added to the west elevation and an exterior staircase on the north elevation that was accessed by an off centered door that is still present today. As noted on the 1956 Sanborn Map, the centralized and corner west elevation entrances were removed, but the covered full width front porch remained and the secondary entrance on south elevation was not yet constructed. In 1960 the property was surveyed by the County Assessor's Office and the dimensions of the existing east and south entrance porch landings are noted on the Assessor's Building Record while the north elevation staircase having been removed. As a result, staff has concerns regarding the historicity of the decorative spindlework and Greek Revival style pedimented gable above the main entrance porch and finds that these features were added some time in the late 1950s and were designed to match the look and feel of the existing structure. Additional evidence that these entrance porches were added or modified in the 1950s are visible in the use of raked brick, a machine-made, manufactured brick typically found on mid-century construction, that is visible on the porch landing, stairs, walkways, and as a veneer on portions of the foundation. Other modifications include the addition of shingles and a belt course trim on the east, south, and west facades. The shingles were added prior to 1960, as they are also noted on the Assessor's Building Record but are likely not original as they do not match in design from elevation to elevation nor are present on the north elevation. Specifically, the shingles on the east elevation have a pointed edge while the shingles on the south and west elevation feature a smooth, scalloped edge. The scalloped shingles on the south elevation have also been added to partially infill a window opening with an air conditioning unit. The belt course also appears to be a later addition, as it is not evenly aligned, is continually interrupted and built around the existing windowsills, and has been partially applied over the existing siding. More recent modifications include the removal of the double front doors and shutters which were noted as being present during the 1981 survey of the property. Overall due to the substantial

amount of exterior modifications the property no longer retains integrity of design, materials, workmanship or feeling as it relates to Criterion C.

As detailed in McAlester's *A Field Guide to American Houses*, the Folk National style was made popular after the nationwide expansion of the railroad in the 1850s. Folk National style houses were generally built in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> 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 National style is characterized by a simple folk house form with a sparing application of simplified 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 simple spindlework detailing or flat, cornice-line brackets, generally symmetrical façades, and a lack of textured and varied wall surfaces.

Significance Statement: The property located at 328 Grape Street continues to convey the historic significance of the Folk National style with Neoclassical influences by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style; including a pyramidal form with an integral front porch, wood siding with a thick cornice band along the roof line, wood windows, and the Corinthian column.

*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 2004 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 328 Grape 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 2004 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 328 Grape 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 properties at 2004 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 328 Grape Street is not located within a designated historic district. Therefore, the property is not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion F.

#### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

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. 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 Helen Bradish Spec House #1 located at 328 Grape Street be designated with a period of significance of 1908 under HRB Criterion C as a good example of the Folk National style with Neoclassical influences. The designation excludes the rear addition constructed outside of the period of significance and the building located at 2004 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue.



Emma Haggerty  
Associate Planner

EH/ss



Suzanne Segur  
Senior Planner  
Development Services Department

Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A  
ADOPTED ON 9/24/2020

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 9/24/2020, to consider the historical designation of the Helen Bradish Spec House #1 (owned by Fenton Bankers Hill LLC, 7577 Mission Valley Road, San Diego, CA 92108) located at **2004 4th Avenue and 328 Grape Street, San Diego, CA 92101**, APN: **533-206-06-00**, further described as BLK 241 LOT G 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 Helen Bradish 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 Folk National style with Neoclassical influences and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1908 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features a pyramidal roof form with an integral front porch, wood siding with a thick cornice band below the eaves, wood windows, and a Corinthian column. 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 modified addition constructed outside of the period of significance and the building located at 2004 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

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:

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
DAVID MCCULLOUGH, Chair  
Historical Resources Board

APPROVED: MARA W. ELLIOTT,  
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
LINDSEY SEBASTIAN,  
Deputy City Attorney