



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: May 9, 2013 REPORT NO. HRB-13-022

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board
Agenda of May 23, 2013

SUBJECT: **ITEM #8 – Sylvan and Florence Ybarra House**

APPLICANT: Christopher and Viki Woehler represented by Legacy 106, Inc.

LOCATION: 4234 Middlesex Drive, 92116, Kensington-Talmadge Community, Council District 9

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Sylvan and Florence Ybarra House located at 4234 Middlesex Drive as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Sylvan and Florence Ybarra House located at 4234 Middlesex Drive as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1929 under HRB Criterion C. The designation excludes the rear 170 square foot addition from 1969 and the small garage extension from 1968. This recommendation is based on the following finding:

The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of Spanish Eclectic style architecture and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its period of significance. Specifically, the resource retains its asymmetrical façade, sand finish stucco, low-pitched Mission clay tile roof, exposed short angle-cut rafter tails, recessed windows and doors, arched openings, arched colonnade, and enclosed courtyard. Therefore, staff recommends designation of the subject property under HRB Criterion C.

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 house is a single-story, stucco over wood frame house set on a concrete foundation. It was built in 1929 in the Spanish Eclectic style in the Kensington Heights Unit 2 subdivision of the Kensington neighborhood.

The historic name of the resource, the Sylvan and Florence Ybarra House, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Sylvan and Florence Ybarra, who constructed the house as their personal residence in 1929.

ANALYSIS

A historical resource research report was prepared by Legacy 106, Inc. which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria A and C. Staff concurs that the site is a significant historical resource under HRB Criterion C but does not agree that the site is significant under HRB Criterion A. 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 historical report states that the subject house is significant under HRB Criterion A as it reflects the development of Kensington Heights as a community based on the "California Architecture" design philosophy and as it demonstrates special elements of the Davis-Baker Company's planning philosophy and marketing program for its subdivisions.

There is no evidence that the subject house reflects the development of Kensington Heights as a community based on the "California Architecture" design philosophy of Richard Requa to any greater extent than the other houses in the community. Further, the home was built as part of the second phase of Kensington Heights development subsequent to the neighborhood establishing its California Style and Spanish Eclectic architectural theme.

The report also states that the subject house is a good example of the real estate marketing campaign of George Forbes along with the Davis-Baker Company. The report includes a grouping of historical advertisements apparently showing that the house was used as a marketing strategy and as a model/showcase house for the development of Kensington Heights. The first advertisement in the San Diego Union from April 14, 1929 includes a photograph of the house and appears to announce its construction. The advertisement notes the, "Price only \$9000. terms," making it unclear whether this was a sales advertisement or part of a marketing strategy. The Davis-Baker Company appears to have acted as a sales office for the subject house but was in no way associated with its construction as the house was constructed and occupied by Sylvan Ybarra and his wife Florence. The Davis-Baker Company was responsible for numerous model homes in the community which were highly publicized and open to the public for tours. These model homes include the Ridgeway House constructed at the same time as the subject house in 1929 (HRB #1071), The Albert Eugene and Helen Riley House (HRB #961) and the George H. Prudden House (HRB #394). These model houses were built on a much grander scale than the subject house and the subject house does not appear to have been open to the public. For these reasons, there is no evidence the subject house was used as a part of a large marketing campaign or as a model house to influence and attract future buyers to the neighborhood. Therefore, Staff does not recommend the designation of the subject house under HRB Criterion A.

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.

Constructed in 1929, this one-story Spanish Eclectic residence features an asymmetrical façade and U-shaped compound floor plan. A combination of shed, gable and flat roofs are employed and shed and gable roofs are sheathed in Mission clay tiles. A slight eave overhang with exposed angle-cut rafter tails are present at the eaves. The exterior is clad in an undulating sand stucco finish and fenestration is made up of wood double hung, fixed, and casement windows. The subject house also features: recessed windows and doors, arched openings, an arched colonnade, and clay attic vents.

The main, asymmetrical facade is dominated by two projections on either side of a small enclosed courtyard in front of a recessed entry porch. The projection to the left makes up the attached garage while the projection to the right features a large recessed arched picture window. The double archway front colonnade establishes the front entry porch which features a scored concrete floor and a grouping of three windows, one fixed flanked by two double hung windows. The original vertical plank front door sits in an arched opening on the east-side of the front porch. A low stucco wall spans between the front projections to enclose the front courtyard with a simple wooden gate. A simple access door to the garage is located on the west projection in the courtyard. The eastern projection maintains its gable roof form past a simple rounded stucco chimney where it meets a flat roof with parapet. Beyond the chimney, a shed roof sheathed in Mission clay tile extends out from the flat roof to create a small covered patio featuring a scored concrete floor and a multi-light fixed window flanked by two double hung windows. The rear façade maintains the flat roof with parapet and grouped angled square clay tiles for drainage. The rear elevation features a small addition which is composed of arched casement windows and a French door.

Few modifications have occurred over the years which do not impact the overall historic significance of this house. In 1968, the garage was extended forward 4 ½ feet in order to make room for longer and larger vehicles of the time. The original opening remains intact inside the garage and the addition is discernible as the stucco texture is different and the joint is visible. Because of this, the addition is consistent with the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards. In 1969, a sundeck was enclosed at the rear façade of the house, not visible from the public right of way. The grouping of three windows on the front façade have been replaced in kind at an unknown date. Other modifications include one aluminum window that has been installed on the west side façade of the garage, metal light fixtures added at the garage, a stamped concrete walkway added to the front of the property and finally a new garage door. Overall, the modifications do not detract from the historic character of property as the modifications are distinguishable and the house retains its character defining features.

Hugely popular following the 1915-1916 Panama-California Exposition which revived the romantic ideal of Spanish and Latin American architecture; the Spanish Eclectic style was the predominant style in Southern California between 1915 and 1940, significantly altering the architectural landscape until the Modernist movement took hold during and after WWII. 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.

The subject house conveys the historic significance of the Spanish Eclectic style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style, including the asymmetrical façade, sand finish stucco, low-pitched Mission clay tile roof, exposed short angle-cut rafter tails, recessed windows and doors, arched openings, arched colonnade, and enclosed courtyard. Therefore, staff recommends designation of the subject property 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 Sylvan and Florence Ybarra House located at 4234 Middlesex Drive be designated with a period of significance of 1929 under HRB Criterion C as a good example of Spanish Eclectic Architecture. The designation excludes the rear 170 square foot addition from 1969 and the garage extension from 1968. 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.



Sarah Vonesh
Planning Intern



Cathy Winterrowd
Principal Planner/HRB Liaison

SV/jb/cw

Attachments:

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON 5/23/2013

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 5/23/2013, to consider the historical designation of the **Sylvan and Florence Ybarra House** (owned by Christopher T and Viki D Woehler, 4234 Middlesex Drive, San Diego, CA 92116) located at **4234 Middlesex Drive, San Diego, CA 92116**, APN: **440-052-15-00**, further described as LOT 69 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 Sylvan and Florence Ybarra House on the following findings:

(1) The property is historically significant under CRITERION C for its distinctive characteristics of the Spanish Eclectic style including the asymmetrical façade, sand finish stucco, low-pitched Mission clay tile roof, exposed short angle-cut rafter tails, recessed windows and doors, arched openings, arched colonnade, and enclosed courtyard. 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, 170 square-foot addition from 1969 and the small garage extension from 1968.

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 AS TO FORM AND
LEGALITY: JAN I. GOLDSMITH,
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: _____
CORRINE NEUFFER,
Deputy City Attorney