



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: May 9, 2013 REPORT NO. HRB-13-023

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board
Agenda of May 23, 2013

SUBJECT: **ITEM #9 – 4615 Vista Street**

APPLICANT: Jonathan Brenner & Heather Lee Beatty represented by Johnson and
Johnson Architecture

LOCATION: 4615 Vista Street, Kensington-Talmadge Community, Council District 9

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the property located at 4615 Vista Street as a
historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Do not designate the property located at 4615 Vista Street under any adopted HRB Criteria due to a lack of integrity.

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 Spanish Eclectic style residence constructed in 1927 on the east side of Vista Street, north of Madison Avenue in the Kensington Villa Annex subdivision of the Kensington-Talmadge Community.

ANALYSIS

A historical resource research report was prepared by Johnson and Johnson Architecture, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria A and C. Staff does not concur that the site is a significant historical resource under HRB Criteria A or 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.

The applicant's report states that the subject property is significant under HRB Criterion A as a resource that exemplifies special elements of the City's historical and architectural development, reflecting middle class and streetcar suburb development in San Diego. Aside from stating that the subject home was among the earliest built in the subdivision and is an example of one of the latest styles of the period, the applicant has not demonstrated how the subject property is unique among the other early homes built within the subdivision. The report provides no comparative analysis and no documentation to indicate how the subject property reflects middle class or streetcar suburb development or development in the Kensington Villa Annex subdivision to any greater extent than other homes in the neighborhood. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation 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.

The subject property was constructed in 1927 as a one story Spanish Eclectic style residence with a detached two car garage. Architectural detail and embellishment throughout is relatively understated. The building's overall form is rectangular and features primarily a flat roof with parapet walls and accent gable and shed roofs of Mission clay tile at the front. A central scored concrete walkway leads to a recessed front porch entry. The parapet walls of the main residence are somewhat crenelated and this motif is repeated in the roof form of the garage. Fenestration consists primarily of wood double hung windows. The west (front) elevation presents slightly more elaboration with a mix of 9 over 1 double hung windows, a fixed single light with a 9 light transom above, and arched fixed windows. The balance of the house features 1 over 1 double hung windows.

Following the 1915-1916 Panama-California Exposition, the romantic ideal of Spanish and Latin American architecture was revived. What resulted was the Spanish Eclectic style which 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.

Staff has serious concerns regarding alterations to the subject property. A modification that has had the greatest negative effect on the resource's integrity is the non-historic Spanish Lace style stucco texture, which has been applied to both the main residence and the garage. The subject building was modestly designed, with relatively few and subtle character defining features. Consequently, the alteration of the stucco texture over the entirety of the property has had a tremendous effect on the appearance of the buildings and significantly impairs the resource's

integrity as it relates to the 1927 date of construction and period of significance. Other modifications to the property relate to window replacements that have occurred on the north (side) elevation. At the center of the north elevation is a replacement slider window. The two windows on either side of this slider window are replacement wood double hung windows.

The modifications to the subject property, most notably the historically inappropriate stucco application, greatly alter the structure's character defining features and significantly degrade the overall integrity of the property and its ability to convey historic significance of the Spanish Eclectic style. Therefore, staff does not recommend 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 property located at 4615 Vista Street not be designated under any HRB criteria due to a lack of integrity. 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
Planning Intern



Cathy Winterrowd
Assistant Deputy Director/HRB Liaison

CP/jb/cw

Attachment:

1. Applicant's Historical Report under separate cover