



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: July 11, 2013 REPORT NO. HRB-13-035

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board
Agenda of July 25, 2013

SUBJECT: **ITEM #6 – Horton and Helen Titus House**

APPLICANT: Thome Family Trust; represented by Scott A. Moomjian

LOCATION: 3114 Lawrence Street, 92106, Peninsula Community, Council District 2

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Horton and Helen Titus House located at 3114 Lawrence Street as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Horton and Helen Titus House located at 3114 Lawrence Street as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1928 under HRB Criterion C. The designation excludes the more recently constructed two story garage and laundry room located at the northwest corner of the house. This recommendation is based on the following finding:

The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Spanish Eclectic style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its period of significance. Specifically, the resource retains its asymmetrical façade, undulating stucco finish, low-pitched mission clay tile roof, exposed angle-cut rafter tails, recessed windows and doors, arched openings, balconies, enclosed courtyard, decorative iron work, and decorative tile work.

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 located in a residential neighborhood largely surrounded by one and two-story single family houses, and a few multi-family buildings.

The historic name of the resource, the Horton and Helen Titus House, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Horton and Helen Titus, who constructed the house as their personal residence in 1928.

ANALYSIS

A historical resource research report was prepared by Scott Moomjian, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria B and C. Staff concurs that the site is a significant historical resource under HRB Criterion C, but not Criterion B. This determination is consistent with the *Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria*, as follows.

CRITERION B - Is identified with persons or events significant in local, state or national history.

The report claims the subject property is significant under HRB Criterion B for its association with prominent Tuna boat captain, Captain Manuel Rosa. Manuel Garcia Rosa was born on the island of Pico in the Azores in 1893, served for the United States Navy during WWI and was married to Maria Rosa, also from Azores. In 1926, Rosa's moved to San Diego in hopes of finding work in the growing local fishing industry. Shortly after in 1927, Rosa acquired his first tuna clipper boat, the *Lusitania*, constructed specifically for fishing off the Mexican coast. At the time, the *Lusitania* was the second largest documented tuna clipper boat in the United States.

The 1927-1928 success of the *Lusitania* along with other local tuna clipper boats including the *Olympia*, *Del Monte*, and *Atlantic* ignited the "Tuna Clipper Revolution." For the first time in history, over 50% of the tuna processed in California ports was caught south of the border because of new boats constructed specifically for the more productive Mexican coast. The "Tuna Clipper Revolution" had a significant impact on the Southern California tuna industry and economy as new Portuguese, Japanese, and Italian fishermen invested in the building of their own new vessels in San Diego. The new boats allowed captains to become more independent and increased the distances they could operate increasing their productivity.

In 1935, Manuel and Maria Rosa acquired the house located at 3114 Lawrence Street from the First National Trust & Savings Bank of San Diego. Manuel Rosa owned and resided in the property from at least 1938 until his death in 1972. His family continued to own the house until 2012.

Over the course of his career, Captain Manuel Rosa owned and operated as many as six tuna fishing boats at one time and was known as a pioneer in the exploration and expansion of fishing grounds off the coast of Mexico. "Rosa Bank," southwest of Vizcaino Bay and the "Lusitania Banks" off Mexico are areas both named in his honor. During WWII, two of the ships that he operated were employed by the US Navy. It is unclear when Captain Rosa officially retired from management of his tuna fishing fleet but he remained active in the tuna industry until his death in January of 1972. Over his lifetime, Rosa served as president of the American Tunaboat Association, the Sociedad de Espiritu Santos and was a member of the Portuguese Society and the Portuguese American Social Club in San Diego.

While Captain Manuel Rosa appears to have been an active member of the Portuguese community and a prominent Captain in the tuna fishing industry, staff does not believe that these accomplishments raise him to the level of a historic person for the City of San Diego. Further, even though Manuel Rosa owned the subject property from 1935 until his death in 1972, his prominence in San Diego is more closely associated with his tuna boats, especially the Lusitania. For this reason, staff does not recommend the designation of 3114 Lawrence Street 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.

Constructed in 1928 by the A.M. Southard Company, this two-story Spanish Eclectic single family residence features an asymmetrical façade below a low-pitched hipped roof sheathed with mission clay tile. The low pitched roof extends creating a moderate eave overhang with exposed angle-cut rafter tails. The property is surrounded by a high stucco wall and the exterior is clad in an undulating sand stucco finish. A stucco belt course stretches between the two stories around the entire original portion of the house. Fenestration is made up of wood fixed, and multi-light casement windows, some of which have decorative wood shutters.

Three stairs and a stone walkway access the wood paneled front entry door. To the left of the entrance, a decorative tile depicting a religious figure and two multi-paned, arched focal windows sit below a small second story balcony with wrought iron railings and exposed wood support beams. The balcony is accessed by a pair of multi-light French doors with wood shutters. To the right of the entrance, a large fixed window with twelve lights, a tile sill and large wood shutters sit recessed in the stucco. A grouping of three casement windows above a diamond pattern tile detail are found at the second story above the multi-paned fixed window. The second story also features two small recessed windows with wrought iron grills. At the northeast portion of the house, a low stucco wall encloses a small side courtyard. This north side portion of the house features a number of multi-paned doors and casement windows as well as a single circular port window with an iron grill at the second story of the northeast corner. A second story balcony is found on the east façade of this rear portion which is covered by a non-historic metal awning. A stucco chimney is found at the south façade with a decorative clay feature at the top, similar to the detailing found at the front façade second story window. The rear façade is made up of casement windows with shutters, a door under a non-historic metal awning, and two additions.

Few modifications have occurred over the years which do not impact the overall historic significance of this house. In 1948, a garage addition was constructed at the southwest portion of the house and a second story was added on in 1961. The garage features a wood door with two small inset windows and the second story contains a grouping of six casement windows. A wall connecting the garage and the main portion of the house contains a small porch area with an arched opening below a shed roof. A one-story laundry room addition was added to the northwest corner of the house at an unknown date and features a flat roof, wood door and casement windows. Other modifications include the installation of metal awnings, a replacement sliding window in an original opening at the second floor of the south elevation and the installation of an air conditioning unit at the same location. Overall, these 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, undulating stucco finish, low-pitched mission clay tile roof, exposed angle-cut rafter tails, recessed windows and doors, arched openings, balconies, enclosed courtyard, decorative iron work, and decorative tile work. 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 Horton and Helen Titus House located at 3114 Lawrence Street be designated with a period of significance of 1928 under HRB Criterion C as a good example of Spanish Eclectic Architecture. The designation excludes the two car garage constructed in 1948, the second story garage addition, and the small laundry room addition at the northwest corner of the house. 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.



Jodie Brown, AICP
Senior Planner



Cathy Winterrowd
Interim Deputy Director/HRB Liaison

JB/cw

Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A

ADOPTED ON 7/25/2013

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 7/25/2013, to consider the historical designation of the **Horton and Helen Titus House** (owned by Thome Family Trust, 3114 Lawrence Street, San Diego, CA 92106) located at **3114 Lawrence Street, San Diego, CA 92106**, APN: **532-472-05-00**, further described as BLK 132 LOT 4 SLY 100 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 **Horton and Helen Titus 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 Spanish Eclectic style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1928 period of significance. Specifically, the resource retains its asymmetrical façade, undulating stucco finish, low-pitched mission clay tile roof, exposed angle-cut rafter tails, recessed windows and doors, arched openings, balconies, enclosed courtyard, decorative iron work, and decorative tile work. 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 more recently constructed two story garage and laundry room located at the northwest corner of the house.

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