



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO  
**Historical Resources Board**

DATE ISSUED: August 14, 2014 REPORT NO. HRB-14-050

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board  
Agenda of August 28, 2014

SUBJECT: **ITEM #6 – The Wirt and Maud Smith Apartment House**

APPLICANT: Tiffiney Wells; represented by Legacy 106, Inc.

LOCATION: 4574-4576 North Avenue, 92116, Uptown Community, Council District 3

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Wirt and Maud Smith Apartment House located at 4574-4576 North Avenue as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Wirt and Maud Smith Apartment House located at 4574-4576 North Avenue as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1913 under HRB C. This recommendation is based on the following finding:

The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of Craftsman style architecture and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1913 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features a gable roof with triangular knee brackets, exterior walls sheathed with wood lap siding and wood shingles at the gable end, a full width front porch with a second story balcony, and wood double hung windows.

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 property is located in the Uptown community in a neighborhood of single and multi family homes.

The building is located on APN 445-121-28-00. The property was identified in the 2007 Draft Uptown Survey and given a Status Code of 5S3, "Appears to be individually eligible for local listing or designation through survey evaluation."

The historic name of the resource, the Wirt and Maud Smith Apartment House, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of the owners who constructed the house as a multifamily building.

## ANALYSIS

A historical resource research report was prepared by Legacy 106 which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criterion C and staff concurs. This determination is consistent with the *Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria*, as follows.

*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 1913 in the Craftsman style, the house features two and a half stories with a gable roof sheathed asphalt shingles with exposed rafter tails. The exterior walls are sheathed with wood lap siding on the upper and lower levels and wood shingles in the gable end. The gable end has triangular knee braces and a decorative vent at the apex. Fenestration consists of a mix of fixed and double hung windows.

The front entrance is centrally located beneath the two story porch and flanked by wood and glass sidelights. At either end of the porch are nearly identical window units that feature a fixed window flanked by a double hung window. The window to the right of front door appears to have the original leaded glass in the upper portion of the fixed window. The porch is supported by four evenly spaced square columns with a simple wood rail in between the columns. The upper portion of the porch features a balcony accessed by a 10-lite door flanked by 5-lite sidelights. The upper floor replicates the spacing of the first floor and features a pair of double hung windows at each end. The gable end features a larger double hung window between two smaller windows.

The southern and northern elevations maintain the symmetry of the front façade with evenly spaced windows and dormers at the roof line. The dormers have gable roofs with exposed rafter tails and triangular knee braces. The gable ends feature a pair of double hung windows.

The rear of the house features a two story shed roof portion with exterior wood stairs leading to the second floor and a metal stair leading to the roof. Similar to the other facades, the windows are evenly spaced on the plane and feature six windows across each floor. All the windows on the shed roof portion have been replaced. The gable end features two evenly spaced double hung windows.

At the southwest corner of the property is a 1 ½ story out building. The outbuilding was constructed in 1913 and appears to be a contributing resource to the site. The building is a smaller version of the front house and features a gable roof with a dormer on each side. The exterior is sheathed with wood lap siding and the windows are a mixture of wood double hung and aluminum sliders. The rear of the outbuilding features a shed roof addition.

There have been a few modifications to the main house and include replacement windows in the gable end and dormers, a replacement front door, removal of the leaded glass in the fixed window on the south side of the front porch, removal of two triangular knee braces on the front façade, and windows at the rear, on the shed roof portion, have been replaced with aluminum sliders.

The rear building appears to mainly have window and door replacements as well as a rear addition. While there have been modifications to the building, it is set to the rear of lot and the overall design of the building relates to the main house. Given the relationship of the outbuilding to the main house, staff believes this is a contributing resource.

With origins in the British Arts and Crafts movement, which born in response to the overly ornate Victorian aesthetic and the highly mechanized Industrial Revolution, Craftsman style architecture was popular in the United States largely between 1905 and 1930. Early examples by Greene and Greene were highly publicized in magazines, thus familiarizing the rest of the nation with the style. Character defining features of Craftsman architecture include a low-pitched, gabled roof with wide, unenclosed eave overhang; exposed roof rafters; decorative beams or braces; full or partial-width porches supported by tapered square columns or pedestals; wood or stucco cladding; and wood frame and sash windows in fixed, double hung and casement varieties.

Significance Statement: The house retains a good amount of architectural detailing and continues to convey the historic significance of the Craftsman style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style; including a gable roof with triangular knee brackets, exterior walls sheathed with wood lap siding and wood shingles at the gable end, a full width front porch with a second story balcony, and wood double hung windows. Additionally, the house represents one of the few Craftsman style houses originally constructed as a multi-family residence. Therefore, staff recommends designation of the subject property under HRB Criterion C.

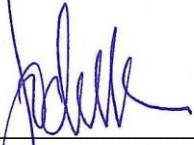
#### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

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 Wirt and Maud Smith Apartment House located at 4574-4576 North Avenue be designated with a period of significance of 1913 under HRB Criterion C as a good example of the Craftsman style. 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.



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Jodie Brown, AICP  
Senior Planner



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Cathy Winterrowd  
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 8/28/2014

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 8/28/2014, to consider the historical designation of the **Wirt and Maud Smith Apartment House** (owned by Tiffiney A. Welles, 4548 North Avenue, San Diego, CA 92116) located at **4574-4576 North Avenue, San Diego, CA 92116**, APN: **445-121-28-00**, further described as BLK 44 LOT 43 LOT 44 & /EXC S 5 FT OF E 75 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 Wirt and Maud Smith Apartment House on the following findings:

(1) The property is historically significant under CRITERION C for its distinctive characteristics of the Craftsman style architecture and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1913 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features a gable roof with triangular knee brackets, exterior walls sheathed with wood lap siding and wood shingles at the gable end, a full width front porch with a second story balcony, and wood double hung windows. 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 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