



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: October 10, 2014 REPORT NO. HRB-14-063

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board
Agenda of October 23, 2014

SUBJECT: **ITEM #9 – 405 Belvedere Street**

APPLICANT: Beacham Family 1999 Trust represented by Scott A. Moomjian

LOCATION: 405 Belvedere Street, La Jolla Community, Council District 1

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the property located at 405 Belvedere Street as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Do not designate the property located at 405 Belvedere Street under any adopted HRB Criteria due to a lack of historical significance, a sufficient degree of integrity, or association with an established master architect, builder or designer.

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 subject resource is a one-story single family residence built in 1937 at the southeast corner of Belvedere Street and Monte Vista Avenue in the First Addition to South La Jolla in the La Jolla Community.

The building is located on APN 351-232-01-00. The property was identified in the 2003 La Jolla Historical Reconnaissance Survey and given a Status Code of 7R, "Identified in Reconnaissance Level Survey: Not evaluated."

ANALYSIS

A historical resource research report was prepared by Scott Moomjian, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criterion C. Staff finds that the site is not a significant historical resource under any HRB Criteria due to a lack of historical significance, a sufficient degree of integrity, or association with an established master architect, builder or designer. 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 property located at 405 Belvedere Street did not reveal any information to indicate that the property exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's or La Jolla'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 property at 405 Belvedere 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 subject property is a one-story single family residence built in 1937 in the Minimal Traditional style. The building is of standard wood frame construction on a concrete foundation and is sited on a corner lot facing north. The irregular plan form surrounds a central patio and presents asymmetrical façades from two primary view sheds along Belvedere Street and Monte Vista Avenue. The primarily hipped roof is sheathed in composition shingle and exhibits moderate eave overhang with exposed rafters. The building is clad primarily in wood lap siding with a brick veneer accent wall containing the central brick chimney near the entry along the north elevation. Fenestration consists of multi-light wood windows in fixed, casement and double hung varieties – some with decorative wood shutters. The modest entry faces east and is accessed from a brick walkway to the street. A detached guest house built in 1949 is located at the south end of the property and is not included in the subject historical nomination.

Alterations to the subject property have negatively affected integrity and character defining features. Chief among these is a 1975 utility room addition. This addition occurred along the west elevation and in-filled the service yard area which originally separated the residence from the garage. Shortly after this time, the original garage door was replaced and the opening may have been altered as well. In 1977, the roofing material was replaced. In 2014, new doors for the garage were installed to more closely reflect the original. The 1975 addition connecting the residence to the garage greatly affects the massing and scale of resource. Characteristic to the Minimal Traditional style is its emphasis on modesty as a reflection of the frugal times. True to the style, the subject home originally appeared more compact when viewed from the west or northwest – with the elevation broken up by the hipped roof forms of the two distinct structures

and the service yard in between. The 1975 addition inhibits this character-defining feature as this elevation now appears as a single broad, continuous wall plane and roof form.

The Minimal Traditional style gained in popularity with the onset of the Great Depression and a greater need for relatively basic, economic housing while retaining American ideals and style through the use of simplified traditional architectural elements on a scaled down home. Pre-War examples were normally single-lot developments in established subdivisions, and typically referenced older revival styles. Post-War examples often integrate the garage and reflect the emerging Contemporary trends.

Significance Statement: The *Modernism Historic Context Statement* indicates the majority of Modern Minimal Traditional buildings will gain their significance in a district context and provides evaluation criteria for those resources that may qualify for individual listing. The criteria for individual designation includes unique or distinguished examples that exhibit the primary character defining features and most if not all of the secondary character defining features. The building must retain a high degree of integrity, and may be associated with a master builder, designer or architect. The subject property does not meet these criteria and therefore does not reach a level of significance needed to warrant individual designation. While it is the nature of Minimal Traditional style buildings to be modestly executed, unique or distinguished features may elevate individual examples beyond the usual in significance. The subject resource's integrity and character-defining features have been negatively affected primarily by the 1975 addition connecting the residence to the garage. Still, if the house retained better integrity, its architectural features are very common among similarly styled residences. Furthermore, the applicant's report does not identify in the resource any unique features that may single the building out as individually eligible. The resource does not represent a unique or distinguished example of the style, does not retain a high level of integrity, and is not associated with an established master builder, designer or architect. Therefore staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion C.

CRITERION D - Is representative of a notable work of a master builder, designer, architect, engineer, landscape architect, interior designer, artist or craftsman.

The subject property was designed by Harold Abrams. Abrams has not been recognized by the HRB as a Master Architect at this time. The applicant's report does not propose the HRB grant Master status to Abrams, nor does it provide adequate documentation to do so. 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 property at 405 Belvedere 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 property at 405 Belvedere Street is not located within a designated historic district, and is therefore not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion F.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

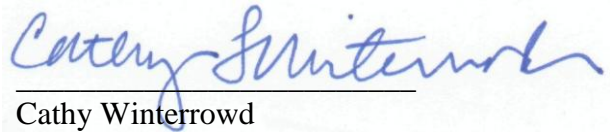
If the property is designated by the HRB, conditions related to restoration or rehabilitation of the resource may be identified by staff during the Mills Act application process, and included in any future Mills Act contract.

CONCLUSION

Based on the information submitted and staff's field check, it is recommended that the property located at 405 Belvedere Street not be designated under any HRB Criteria. 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
Junior Planner



Cathy Winterrowd
Deputy Director

CP/cw

Attachment:

1. Applicant's Historical Report under separate cover