



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

# Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: January 15, 2009 REPORT NO. HRB-09-002

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board  
Agenda of January 22, 2009

SUBJECT: **ITEM #7 – Charles W. Fox/William Sterling Hebbard House**

APPLICANT: Woodglen RSL LLC, owner; represented by Marie Burke Lia

LOCATION: 3100 Brant Street, Uptown Community, Council District 2

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Charles W. Fox/William Sterling Hebbard House located at 3100 Brant Street as a historical resource.

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Charles W. Fox/William Sterling Hebbard House located at 3100 Brant Street as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1908 under HRB Criteria C and D, excluding the 6,000 square foot 2006/2007 additions. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

1. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Craftsman style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1908 period of significance.
2. The resource is representative of a notable work of Master Architect William Sterling Hebbard and retains integrity as it relates to the original design.



## 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 large two story Craftsman style house built in 1908 for Charles W. Fox and designed by Master Architect William Sterling Hebbard. The house is sited on a large lot and fronts to the side of the lot, with commanding views of downtown and the harbor.

The historic name of the resource, the Charles W. Fox/William Sterling Hebbard House, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and includes the name of Charles W. Fox, who constructed the house as his personal residence and is listed as sole owner at the time of construction; and the name of William Sterling Hebbard, a Master Architect.

In November of 2004, the applicant and their architect, Marc Tarasuck, presented a project to the HRB's Design Assistance Subcommittee (DAS). The project proposed to add just under 6,000 square feet to the existing 4,000 square foot residence. The additions, which consist of one and two story elements, are located on the rear of the house and the side of the house opposite of the Brant Street frontage. Attachment 1 provides a diagram illustrating the location of the additions. Because the house is sited so the side of the house fronts onto Brant Street, the additions at the "rear" of the house are visible from Brant Street. The DAS reviewed the project and determined that the amount of square footage to be added did not in and of itself preclude consistency with the Standards. The DAS further stated that the project was well designed and compatible with the design of the house while at the same time subtly differentiated in a manner consistent with the Standards. The meeting minutes have been included as Attachment 2. Based on the DAS review, the project was approved as consistent with the Standards by the Development Services Department during the "45 year" review.

A historic resource designation application was submitted by the applicant following approval of the project in February 2006. When the application came up for processing in September 2007, staff conducted a site visit and found that the project was still under construction. In addition to concerns about taking the designation forward while site visibility and access was limited by construction activity, staff had some concern that the subtle differentiation discussed at the DAS hearing was too subtle in the final product. The rear additions, which are readily visible from Brant Street, blended too well with the original construction. Staff met with the applicant and their architect and discussed a number of remedies to this issue. Ultimately, staff and the applicant agreed that the following three measures would help to increase the architectural integrity of the historic resource and differentiate the new construction from the original house:

1. Restore the pair of casement windows on the lower right hand corner of the Brant Street façade on the original house, which had been removed by a prior owner.
2. Construct a shed roof overhang at the second floor addition along the Brant Street elevation, in order to break-up the eave-line and introduce a clearly new element.
3. Create and install an informational plaque, located along the public right-of-way, which includes a historic photograph, a sketchmap showing the footprint of the original construction and the additions, and a brief history of the house.

To date, the first two modifications have been completed. Photos of the house “before” and “after” these modifications have been included in Attachment 3. Staff is currently in the process of working with the applicant to design the informational plaque, which will be installed following designation. It is staff’s position that the project as approved by the DAS and later modified is consistent with the U.S. Secretary of the Interior’s Standards; and that the property retains sufficient integrity in its current condition to be eligible for historic designation. It is recommended that the nearly 6,000 square feet 2006/2007 addition be excluded from the historic designation.

## ANALYSIS

A historical resource research report was prepared by the Office of Marie Burke Lia, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria B, C and D. Staff concurs that the site is a significant historical resource under HRB Criteria C and D, but not HRB Criterion B, as follows:

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

The applicant’s report states that the property at 3100 Brant Street is significant under HRB Criterion B for its association with Charles W. Fox, who had the house built in 1908. The applicant provides information regarding Fox in the report dated November 2004 and the addendum dated December 2008. Fox was born in Iowa in 1867 and appears to have come to San Diego around 1905 when he is first found in the San Diego City and County Directory. Fox was involved in real estate with offices downtown; however no specific information was provided regarding Fox’s real estate dealings or his impact, if any, on development in San Diego. Fox was a member of the Board of Education in 1909, served as Vice-President of the Chamber of Commerce in 1913 and was elected to the City Council in 1916. In 1917 Fox sold the Brant Street house and moved to a property on Kalmia in Burlingame. By 1920 he and his family had relocated to Oakland. The information provided in the report and the addendum focuses primarily on where he lived when and very generally what he did, but does not provide strong evidence in support of his significance. There is no real understanding of how he contributed significantly to the field or how he might have shaped or impacted the history of San Diego; and there is no information on what he may have developed or where or whether that development was significant. His involvement in the Chamber of Commerce and the City Council is interesting, but limited and not necessarily historically significant. Therefore, staff does not recommend 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 property at 3100 Brant Street is a two story Craftsman style home built in 1908 for Charles W. Fox and was designed by Master Architect William Sterling Hebbard. Although accessed via Brant Street, the house faces to the south to capture sweeping views of the property and the downtown skyline. The original driveway across the front of the house is no longer present, but can be seen in the historic photograph from 1923. Access is now taken exclusively from Brant Street, which is the main public vantage point, although portions of the front façade are visible the farther one walks down Brant Street.

The house features a large side-gable roof (the gable ends are visible from Brant Street) with asphalt shingles; exposed rafter tails; decorative brackets; thickly textured stucco siding over wood frame construction; and a concrete foundation. The entry is centered on the south façade and is recessed under the second story which is supported by two large, simple columns. Above the entry at the second floor is a large tri-partite window with multi-light fixed transom, flanked by smaller fixed or casement windows. To the right of the entry bay are two more sets of tri-partite windows, one over the other. To the left of the entry bay is a projecting sunroom with extensive glazing under a front-gable roof. Above that sits another tri-partite window. The south elevation also features a small dormer centered on the roof. The Brant Street elevation features several sets of casement windows and a pair of custom-built multi-lite wood frame and sash French doors, which are not original.

Early modifications included several additions to the rear of the property which were replaced with new additions during the 2006/2007 remodel. A second floor terrace at the southwest corner of the building was enclosed some time ago and was subsequently restored as part of the 2006/2007 remodel. At an unknown date, the casement windows under the small shed roof pop-out on the Brant Street elevation were replaced with a large picture window. The current owners replaced the picture window with custom-built multi-lite wood frame and sash doors during the 2006/2007 remodel. The original pair of casement windows to the right of this door were also removed at an unknown date and the opening closed. This opening was restored and the windows reconstructed as part of the modifications agreed upon by the applicant and staff. The most significant modification is the nearly 6,000 square feet added to the rear and back side of the property in 2006/2007. As stated previously, this addition was reviewed by the DAS and determined to be consistent with the Standards by both the Subcommittee and the Development Services Department in their review of the project application. The additions, though large, have a limited impact on the footprint of the original structure and are respectful in design, materials and scale. The bulk of the addition is located to the west and is largely detached from the original structure, with a wing connecting the addition to the original house through the addition at the rear.

The property is a very good example of Craftsman style architecture with a period of significance of 1908 and retains a good degree of integrity. Therefore, staff recommends 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.*

William Sterling Hebbard was born in Michigan in 1863, and relocated to California in 1888 after graduating from the Cornell School of Architecture and working for a year in Chicago with noted architects Burnham and Root. Hebbard relocated to San Diego from Los Angeles in 1890. He designed the Cable Railway Company's powerhouse and a number of residences. He formed a partnership with Irving Gill in 1896 that lasted until 1907, when he again practiced by himself.

Hebbard was a contributing author for the state architectural licensing law, and was the only San Diego appointee to the first State Board of Architecture in 1901, and held offices with the Board in 1916 and 1918. Hebbard founded the San Diego Architectural Association in 1910, the predecessor of the American Institute of Architects. Hebbard died in Coronado in 1930.

More than 20 properties representing Hebbard's work have been designated by the HRB to date. Most of these are associated with Hebbard and Gill, with seven attributed solely to Hebbard, including HRB #556 on Akron Street constructed in the Modern style in 1913; a Prairie style, constructed in 1912 and located on Curlew Street (HRB #437); the Mission Revival railroad depot on 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue (HRB #700); and the Maryland Hotel (HRB #701) constructed in 1914 in the Neo-Classical style with Italian Renaissance features. Three of Hebbard's buildings are listed on the National Register, including the locally designated George Marston House and the Burnham-Marston House that were associated with the Hebbard and Gill partnership. The third National Register building is the Ramona Town Hall attributed solely to Hebbard.

The subject property at 3100 Brant Street is a very good and notable example of Hebbard's work and retains integrity to its 1908 period of significance, exclusive of the additions completed in 2006/2007. Therefore, staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion D as the work of Master Architect William Sterling Hebbard.

#### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The 2006/2007 additions are excluded from the designation and will be excluded from any future Mills Act agreement. Additional conditions related to restoration, rehabilitation and/or maintenance 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 Charles W. Fox/William Sterling Hebbard House located at 3100 Brant Street be designated under HRB Criterion C as a very good example of Craftsman architecture retaining a good degree of integrity and Criterion D as the work of Master Architect William Sterling Hebbard. 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.



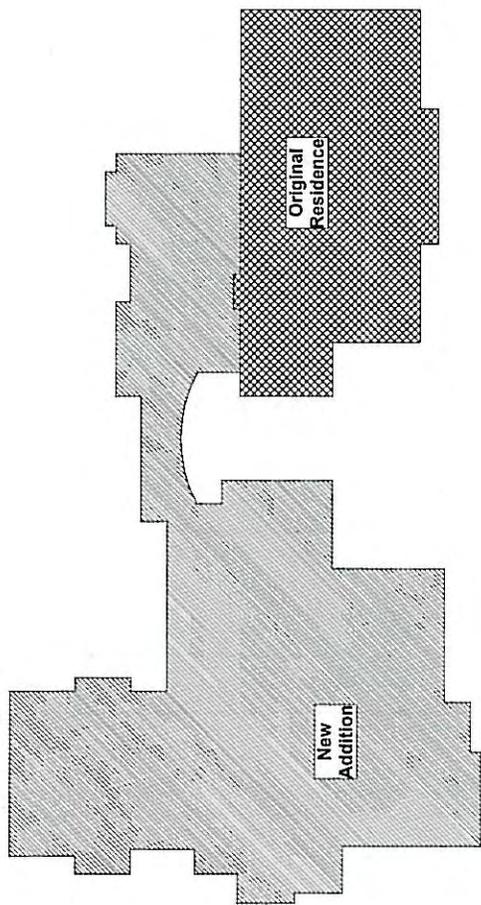
Kelley Saunders  
Senior Planner



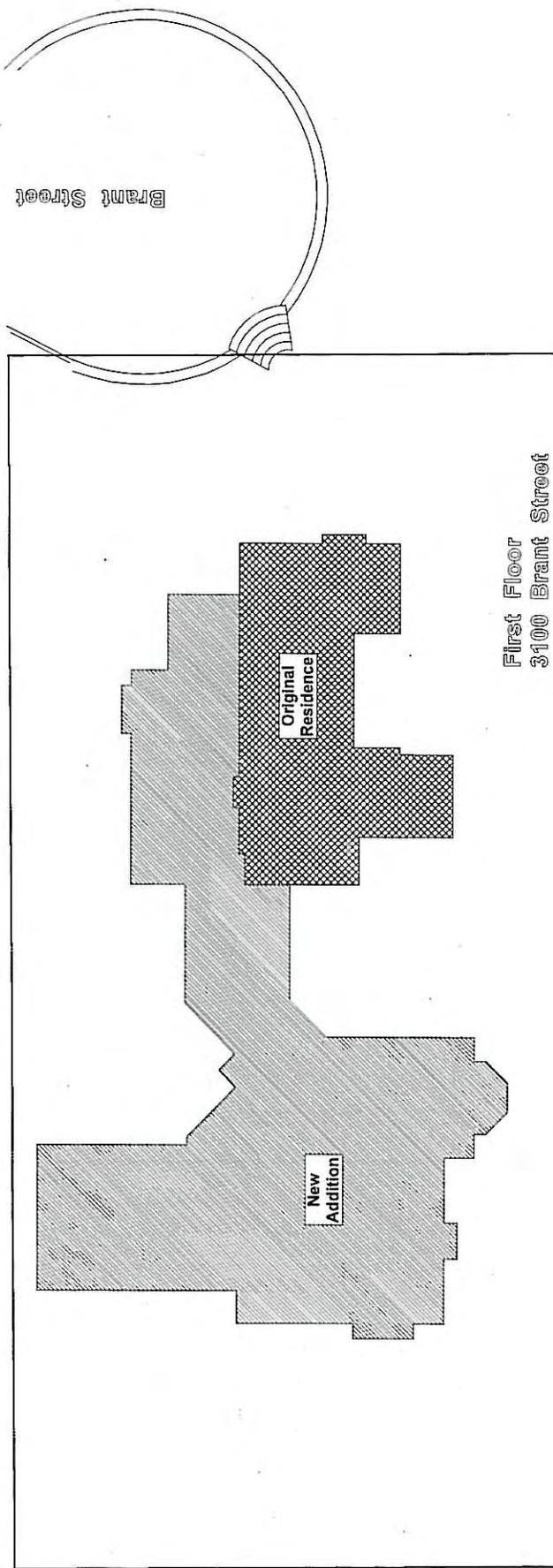
Cathy Winterrowd  
Senior Planner/Program Coordinator

KS/cw

- Attachment(s):
1. Diagram illustrating the location of the additions approved from 2004-2007
  2. Design Assistance Subcommittee Meeting Minutes of November 3, 2004
  3. Photos "before" and "after" modifications to increase differentiation and consistency with the Standards
  4. Applicant's Historical Report under separate cover



Second Floor



First Floor  
3100 Brant Street

Curlew Street

Brant Street

# CITY OF SAN DIEGO HISTORICAL RESOURCES BOARD

## DESIGN ASSISTANCE SUBCOMMITTEE

Wednesday, November 3, 2004, at 3:00 PM

4<sup>th</sup> Floor Large Conference Room

City Administration Building

202 C Street, San Diego, CA

## MEETING RECORD

### 1. ATTENDANCE

Boardmembers: David Marshall, Chair; Laura Burnett; Edward Lynch; Marsha Sewell

Staff: Teri Delcamp

Guests: Ara Arn, Don Edson Architects; Michael Atwell, Marc Tarasuck AIA & Associates; Marc Tarasuck, Marc Tarasuck AIA & Associates; Marie Lia, Attorney; Steve Barklis, Hard Rock Hotel; Douglas Holbrook, property owner; Bob Bauer, Architect; Ione Stiegler, IS Architecture; Joseph Reid, IS Architecture; Jim Walsh, homeowner; Robert Lawrence, homeowner; Melanie Como, Heritage Architecture & Planning; Bruce Coons, Save Our Heritage Organisation; Beverly Schroeder, CCDC

### 2. Public Comment

None

### 3. HRB Site #130-054, Golden Hill Historical District, 838 25<sup>th</sup> Street, code compliance case/Mills Act site, revised plans

#### Background:

This item was presented to the Subcommittee at the last meeting. The Subcommittee commented that the proposed project did not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. Comments centered on the new addition not being stepped back enough from the historical building; the three garage doors being too prominent and out of character; the mansard roof form was too dominant and out of character; and a lack of support for the railing above the entry porch.

The property owner, Douglas Holbrook, has retained an architect familiar with historic preservation, Bob Bauer. Revised plans were displayed for the Subcommittee's consideration. The site is zoned commercial and requires a setback from the adjacent residentially zoned parcel. The proposed use is mixed use, office and residential. They

are following the Golden Hill Planned District Ordinance Design Guidelines as well as the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The intent is to provide a contemporary addition using materials and forms that are compatible with the main building. They will be adding five parking spaces: two in a garage off E Street, and three off 25<sup>th</sup> which are uncovered spaces. The addition is now stepped back six feet from the historical building's wall facing E Street. Four alternative design elevations facing E Street were displayed.

Boardmember Comments:

The Subcommittee commented that the plans are a vast improvement over the previous design. However, they strongly encouraged the applicant to reduce the amount of new parking. They did not support the second curb cut on 25<sup>th</sup> Street, and agreed with a proposed rear garage door on the addition to allow through access to the carriage house. They suggested a wheelchair lift to the rear of the building instead of the extensive ramping. A suggestion was made to replace the proposed solid parapet wall at the top of the addition with an open picket railing to reduce the massing. The majority of the Subcommittee preferred elevation Alternative B. In response to questions, Mr. Holbrook confirmed that they will be using wood sash windows. The Subcommittee did not agree that the railing that has been installed at the second floor front of the historical building is historically accurate.

Public comment: Bruce Coons agreed with the Subcommittee's comments and also felt that the second floor railing was not there historically and should not have been installed.

4. **PTS #54231, 3100 Brant Street, rehabilitation of potentially historical building**

Background:

This site is potentially historical, and the applicant has submitted a Single Discipline Preliminary Review to obtain early input on whether or not the proposed addition meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The home was built in 1908, was designed by William Sterling Hebbard and was the home of prominent San Diegan Charles Fox. Some additions have been made to the home, although its integrity is still intact. The owner will be seeking historical designation. Marc Tarasuck, and Michael Atwell described the project, which involves a large addition to the rear of the home and replacement of a non-historical swimming pool with a more compatible swimming pool as well as a cabana. The addition connects the house at a single wall to the rear, and there is a small amount of addition to the right side of the house with a new entry door. The existing main entry, which is on the left side of the house, will remain as original. The additions will be differentiated by having a lower roof ridge, simpler rafter tails, different divide patterns on the wood windows, and the introduction of a wood railing which does not occur as an element on the original house. The site area is almost an acre; the existing home is 4,065 square feet and the additions total 5,965 square feet.

Boardmember Comments:

The Subcommittee commented that the additions are larger than the existing home. While one Board member said that she could not support the large size of the addition, the Subcommittee said that the focus is on the publicly visible areas, that the Secretary of the Interior's Standards do not have square footage limitations, and that the project appears to meet the Standards. The majority of the Subcommittee said that the project is well done, compatible and yet differentiated in a subtle way. The applicant was strongly encouraged to retain the existing mature palm tree, which they plan to do. There was a suggestion by one member that, if the size could not be reduced, that perhaps the addition could be articulated less to make it less prominent. Overall, the Subcommittee found that the project meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, and that it would not preclude a future designation.

Public comment: Bruce Coons said the project is beautiful. He suggested that the proposed new dormer be simplified to a shed roof element to be less prominent.

5. **PTS # 49703, 4082 St. James Place, restoration of potentially historical building**

Background:

This site would be potentially historical once restored, and the applicant has submitted a Single Discipline Preliminary Review to obtain early input on whether or not the proposed restoration of the front façade meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The owner intends to designate the site after the restoration is completed. The applicants presented proposed plans, as-built plans from the 1960s showing the original front façade before it was altered, and additionally showed historical photographs which staff had not yet seen.

Boardmember Comments:

Based on the amount of documentation, including plans and historical photographs, the Subcommittee said that a Restoration under the Secretary of the Interior's Standards is an appropriate treatment. Details and stucco finish were discussed. The Subcommittee also suggested that the new fence and arbor be altered (painted at least, and perhaps the arbor removed or reduced in height) so that it is less prominent. Provided the project is carried out in compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Reconstruction, the project will not preclude future designation and will actually help allow designation to occur.

6. **National City and Otay Railroad depot rehabilitation/reconstruction**

Boardmember Marshall recused himself from this item due to his firm's contract with the applicant. Marsha Sewell chaired the Subcommittee for this item.

Background:

The National City and Otay Railroad (NC&OR) depot building is part of the Hard Rock Hotel project that was recently recommended for approval by the Historical Resources Board. At the time the Subcommittee and the Board considered the project, it was acknowledged that a certain amount of reconstruction would need to occur, but that some of the building would be restored. The applicant's consultants, Heritage Architecture & Planning, have since conducted more detailed studies of the building to find out how much historical fabric is extant. Diagrams showing the building coded to original fabric, non-historical alterations, and non-original finishes, etc., were displayed.

The only remaining exterior historical feature that is not altered or covered up is the trefoil window. They also found that the building has a stepped brick foundation and the applicants fear it will not be able to withstand the new construction adjacent to it but will collapse. The applicants will be able to salvage non-finished brick from other areas of the building to utilize on exposed interior surfaces. There is also still a question regarding whether the original openings were symmetrical, and this may only be revealed once they begin deconstruction. If they were able to restore the building, there would need to be seismic improvements visible on the interior of the building. Given the building will act as a lobby/bar for the hotel, the applicants are also interested in having a historical interior appearance. The reconstruction will allow both the interior and the exterior to be returned to a historically accurate appearance as the seismic upgrades will be concealed within the reconstructed walls.

Boardmember Comments:

In response to questions, the applicants agreed that, once they determine the correct historical configuration of openings, they will restore that configuration (specific opening in question is the fourth opening from the left on the south elevation). The applicants also confirmed that they will be removing and restoring the trefoil window for re-installation on that façade. Thorough documentation of the building should be completed. The Subcommittee thanked the applicants for the additional information and agreed that reconstruction is the appropriate treatment.

Public comment: Bruce Coons questioned why they cannot save the stepped brick foundation. He also does not think that the exterior openings were symmetrical. Regarding the foundation, the applicants responded that the excavation needed below the hotel footprint could result in the existing walls' collapse, and that all of the existing brick on the facades that are being included in the project have either been painted or plastered over. Mr. Coons reluctantly conceded to the proposed project.

**7. Adjourned at 4:30 PM.**



1000 1/2 W. 10th St. Phoenix, Ariz.

