



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

# Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: July 10, 2009 REPORT NO. HRB-09-048

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board  
Agenda of July 23, 2009

SUBJECT: **ITEM #11 – George Gans Spec House #3**

APPLICANT: Rebecca Grossenbacher Trust, owner, represented by Scott Moomjian

LOCATION: 3120 Felton Street, North Park Community, Council District 3

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the George Gans Spec House #3 located at 3120 Felton Street as a historical resource.

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the George Gans Spec House #3 as a historical resource under HRB Criteria C and D. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

1. The resource embodies distinctive characteristics through retention of character defining features of the Craftsman architectural style and retains integrity from its period of significance, the construction date of 1927.
2. The resource is representative of the notable work of master builder George Gans.



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## 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 Craftsman style house at 3120 Felton Street was built by Master Builder George Gans in 1927. The house is one of at least 24 speculative houses constructed by George Gans between 1922 and 1928.

The historic name, George Gans Spec House #3, is consistent with other designated historic resources constructed by George Gans in the Craftsman style between 1922 and 1928: the George Gans Spec House #1 (HRB #539), and the George Gans Spec House #2 (HRB #792).

## ANALYSIS

A historical resource research report was prepared by Scott Moomjian, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria C and D. Staff concurs that the site is a significant historical resource under HRB Criteria C and D, 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.*

The one-story rectangular Craftsman dwelling was constructed by George Gans in 1927. The single-family wood frame home sits on a concrete foundation with a sub-floor. The exterior is clad in horizontal clapboard, while a low-pitched front-gabled roof covers the building.

The primary (east) elevation is framed by a front-gabled roof that features wide overhanging eaves and exposed rafters. The façade is symmetrical, consisting of a central front entryway flanked by two wooden tripartite windows. The identical tripartite windows consist of a central, large 4 over 1 fixed window that is flanked by narrower double-hung windows.

The most salient feature of the primary elevation is the large centrally located porch. The slightly elevated porch is covered by a front-gabled roof set within the larger gable of the home. At the extending corners of the porch, two circular wood columns support the gable and sit on large square brick pedestals. Between the brick posts, a low-lying curved brick wall encloses the east side of the porch. A small-scale version of the curved brick wall also encloses the north end of the porch. The south end of the porch is open, allowing side access from the driveway.

The overhanging eave of the south elevation is broken by a small gable and brick chimney. Centered below the gable is a secondary entry and non-original trellis. Adjacent to this entry, a brick chimney pierces the overhanging eave of the south elevation and is flanked on either side by fixed wood windows.

In addition to the tripartite windows on the primary elevation, fenestration consists primarily of wood double-hung windows and small fixed windows.

The driveway leads to a small rectangular garage at the southwest corner of the lot. The garage features a low-pitched, front gabled roof that is similar to the gabled roofs of the home and porch. It also features horizontal clapboard siding. Two wood doors with identical rectangular windows allow entry into the garage. The fixed windows appear on the upper portion of each door and consist of three-over-three glass panes. The garage appears in 1940 Sanborn Maps in its current location.

Alterations to the site include modifications to the driveway and front landscaping. A portion of the driveway (behind the fence) along south elevation features a “Hollywood” ribbon style driveway. The front portion of the driveway has been modified by the removal of the ribbon concrete strips and addition of colored concrete tiles.

Staff recommends designation of the George Gans Spec House #3 under Criterion C. The building embodies distinctive characteristics of Craftsman architecture including the following: a low-pitched roof with wide overhanging eaves and exposed rafters, clapboard siding, exterior chimney, frequent use of double-hung windows, and a low-pitched gabled porch with wide overhanging eaves and exposed rafters,

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

George Gans was born in 1878 and moved to San Diego in 1912. In 1922, Gans and his wife, Amalia, along with his attorney, Lewis S. Riley, formed the Laurel Building Company. Between 1922 and 1928, Gans and the Laurel Building Company constructed speculative single family residences within North Park in both Craftsman and Spanish Eclectic architectural styles. Due to his work in North Park, George Gans has been recognized by the HRB as a Master Builder.

Designated sites include the following: the George Gans Spec House #1 (HRB Site #539) and the George Gans Spec House #2 (HRB Site #792). Both of these sites were constructed in the Craftsman style in the years 1925 and 1926 respectively. These sites are also characterized by a prominent front-facing gabled porch with Gans’ signature low-lying curved brick wall.

Gans was established as a master by the HRB for the number of homes he built in North Park and his use of a curved porch wall. Gans built homes in both Craftsman and Spanish Eclectic styles as his own home embodies Spanish Eclectic architecture and was designated by the HRB (HRB Site #900). The George Gans Spec House #3 also appears to be his last Craftsman style building as no homes built after 1928 have been identified as being constructed by George Gans or the Laurel Building Company.

Overall, the George Gans Spec House #3 is characterized by the master builder’s signature porch and appears to be a late example of his work in the Craftsman style. As such, Staff recommends


the HRB designate the George Gans Spec House #3 under Criterion D as it is a notable work of master builder, George Gans.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

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 George Gans Spec House #3 be designated under HRB Criteria C and D. 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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Joseph Fantone  
Planning Intern

  
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Cathy Winterrowd  
Principal Planner/HRB Liaison

jf/jh/cw

Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A  
ADOPTED ON 7/23/2009

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 7/23/2009, to consider the historical designation of the **George Gans Spec House #3** (owned by Rebecca Grossenbacher Trust, 3120 Felton Street, San Diego, CA 92104) located at **3120 Felton Street, San Diego, CA 92104**, APN: **453-573-18-00**, further described as Lot 15, Block J, Map 1663 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 George Gans Spec House #3 on the following findings:

(1) The property is historically significant under CRITERION C for its distinctive characteristics through retention of character defining features of the Craftsman architectural style and retains integrity from its period of significance, the construction date of 1927. Specifically, the building retains a low profile, a low-pitched front-gabled roof with overhanging eaves and exposed rafters, a smaller separately front-gabled porch, and original fixed and double-hung wood windows, as well as tripartite windows. This finding is further supported by the staff report, the historical research report, and written and oral evidence presented at the designation hearing; and

(2) The property is historically significant under CRITERION D for its representation of a notable work of Master Builder, George Gans. Specifically, the building is notable as it appears to be Gans' last Spec Houses constructed in the Craftsman style and prominently displays Gans' signature low-lying curved brick wall. 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: \_\_\_\_\_  
NINA FAIN  
Deputy City Attorney