



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

# Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: July 10, 2009 REPORT NO. HRB-09-051

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board  
Agenda of July 23, 2009

SUBJECT: **ITEM #6 – Stephen McMorrow Spec House #1**

APPLICANT: James & Lillian Thompson Family Living Trust represented by Scott Moomjian

LOCATION: 3620 Albert Street, 92103, Uptown Community, Council District 3

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Stephen McMorrow Spec House #1 located at 3620 Albert Street as a historical resource.

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Stephen McMorrow Spec House #1 located at 3620 Albert Street, excluding all other structures on the parcel, as a historical resource under HRB Criterion C. This recommendation is based on the following finding:

The resource embodies distinctive characteristics through retention of character defining features of the Craftsman Bungalow architectural style and retains a high level of integrity from its period of significance, the construction date of 1915.



## BACKGROUND

This item is being brought before the Historical Resources Board in conjunction with a proposed demolition or building modification, not consistent with the Secretary of the Interiors Standards, of a structure of 45 years or more, consistent with San Diego Municipal Code Section 143.0212.

The subject property is located just north of Balboa Park, on the west side of Albert Street, two blocks west of Park Boulevard. Four residences currently exist on the parcel. As the proposed project does not impact any other structure on the parcel, an analysis of only 3620 Albert Street was provided by the consultant and therefore only 3620 Albert Street is included in staff's report and recommendation.

The residential building record for 3620 Albert Street indicates that it was constructed in 1915. No notice of completion was submitted, and the only water/sewer connection record that exists dates to 1924. However the earlier date of 1915 is supported by the Sanborn map which shows that the property existed on site prior to 1921. The first occupant of 3620 Albert Street is listed as Steven and Minnie McMorow in 1924; however the consultant report suggests that the property was vacant or a rental property in other years, which is why staff has determined that the proposed name, the Stephen McMorow Spec House #1, is consistent with the HRB naming policy.

## ANALYSIS

A historical resource research report was prepared by Scott Moomjian, which concludes that 3620 Albert Street is not significant under any HRB Criteria. Staff concurs that the property is not significant under Criteria A, B, and D, but finds that 3620 Albert is eligible for designation under HRB Criterion C, 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.*

3620 Albert Street was constructed in the Craftsman Bungalow style, which incorporates some, but not all, character defining features of high style Arts & Crafts/Craftsman architecture with simplified form and detail. The subject house embodies distinctive character defining features of the style as described below.

The house is single story, rectangular in plan, with a low-pitch front gabled composition roof. A brick chimney is present above the roofline on the west elevation. The eaves are open with decoratively cut rafter tails and decorative false beams are present at the gable over the full width front porch. The attic space is vented with a decorative vent flanked by fixed pane windows at

the center of the porch gable. The full width front porch is accessed from the front by concrete steps and a straight walkway from the sidewalk. The house and low porch walls are finished with horizontal lap siding, which appears to be original to the house. Four square posts extend from the porch wall to the roof to support the porch gable. A wood front door, believed to be original, is set off center in the front façade and is obscured by a metal security screen, a reversible modification.

Fenestration on the house consists of original wood frame double hung windows with wood screens on the front and side elevations. Under the porch roof on the front façade, single light double hung windows are present on either side of the entry door. The south elevation features set of double hung windows flanking a center panel with a single light lower and multi light upper sash. Smaller wood double hung windows are present toward the rear of this elevation.

On the west elevation is a small popout where original windows have been changed for louvered windows. This rear popout appears to be original to the structure as it is present on the 1921, 1940 and 1956 Sanborn maps provided in the historical report. Adjacent to this popout is a small non-historic addition that is not present on any Sanborn map. The historical report does not provide a date for this addition, which is characterized by a flat roof, a sliding wood frame window and a rear entry door accessed by concrete steps leading to a small landing. The addition is clad in horizontal lap siding matching that of the historic portions of the house, however the lap of this post 1956 addition does not match up with the historic siding at the corner transitions. This addition and the other minor, reversible, alterations such as the installation of the metal security screen at the entry door, and installation of non historic louvered windows at the rear popout appear to be minor, and do not detract from the Craftsman Bungalow style of the house.

The historical research report submitted by the consultant states that the house at 3620 Albert Street retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and feeling, and states that the associative element of integrity is not applicable. Staff agrees that the house possesses all six applicable elements of integrity. Additionally, the house embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Craftsman Bungalow style through the retention of character defining features of the style including a low-pitch front gabled roof with an open eave overhang and decoratively cut eaves, decorative false beams at the gable, wood windows and screens, horizontal wood lap siding, and a full width front porch supported by four slender square posts. Therefore the house is significant under HRB Criterion C, architecture and staff recommends designation under this criterion.

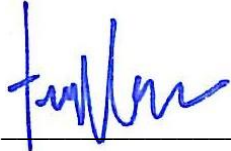
## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

3620 Albert Street is the only structure on the parcel that has been analyzed for historical significance. Therefore all other structures on the parcel are excluded from the designation.

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 Stephen McMorro Speck House #1 be designated under HRB Criterion C as an example of Craftsman Bungalow style architecture retaining a high level of integrity, and excluding all other structures on the parcel. 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.



---

Tricia Olsen  
Associate Planner



---

Cathy Winterrowd  
Principal Planner/HRB Liaison

TO/cw

Attachment(s):       1. Applicant's Historical Report under separate cover  
                              2. Draft Resolution 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 **Stephen McMorro Spec House #1** (owned by James & Lillian Thompson Family Living Trust, 2145 Buena Creek Road, Vista, CA 92084) located at **3620 Albert Street, San Diego, CA 92103**, APN: **452-331-22-00**, further described as north 25 feet of the east 15 feet of Lot 5 and north 25 feet of the west 10 feet and the east 15 feet of Lot 6, and all of Lots 7, 8, & 9, Block 231, University Heights 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 Stephen McMorro Spec House #1 on the following finding:

(1) The property is historically significant under CRITERION C for its distinctive characteristics of the Craftsman Bungalow style including a low-pitch front gabled roof with an open eave overhang and decoratively cut eaves, decorative false beams at the gable, wood windows and screens, horizontal wood lap siding, and a full width front porch supported by four slender square posts; and the property retains a high level of integrity from its period of significance, the construction date of 1915.

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