



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

# Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: February 12, 2010 REPORT NO. HRB-10-008

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board  
Agenda of February 26, 2010

SUBJECT: **ITEM #7 - The Ralph Hurlburt/Alexander Schreiber Spec House # 2**

APPLICANT: Marjorie Forbes Living Trust represented by Happy Hazard LLC

LOCATION: 3907 Hawk Street, Uptown Community, Council District 2

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Ralph Hurlburt/Alexander Schreiber Spec House #2, located at 3907 Hawk Street, as a historical resource.

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Ralph Hurlburt/Alexander Schreiber Spec House #2, including specified interior elements, 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 the retention of character defining features of Colonial Revival Cottage style architecture with Craftsman Bungalow influences and retains architectural integrity from its 1920 period of significance.
2. The specified interior elements of the resource embodies distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of Arts and Crafts style craftsmanship.
3. The resource is identified as a notable work of Master Designer Ralph Hurlburt and Master Builder Alexander Schreiber.



## BACKGROUND

This item is being brought before the Historical Resources Board at the owners' request to have the property designated as a historical resource. 3907 Hawk Street is a one-story, single family home that was constructed in 1920 and exhibits character defining features of Colonial Revival Cottage style architecture with Craftsman Bungalow influences. The subject property is located in Arnold and Choate's Addition, a residential subdivision in south Mission Hills.

The house is among a row of adjacent Colonial Revival style bungalows with Craftsman influences attributed to Master Designer Ralph Hurlburt and Master Builder Alexander Schreiber. In 1919, Hurlburt purchased several adjoining lots on Hawk Street and designed four speculation homes, including the subject property. These houses were constructed by Schreiber the following year. The Ralph Hurlburt/Alexander Schreiber Spec House #1, located at 3917 Hawk Street, was designated by the Board in August 2009 under HRB Criteria C and D.

The historic name of the resource, the Ralph Hurlburt/Alexander Schreiber Spec House #2, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and includes the names of Hurlburt, an established Master Designer, and Alexander Schreiber, an established Master Builder, who constructed the house as a speculation house.

## ANALYSIS

A historical resource research report prepared by Happy Hazard, LLC concludes that the house at 3907 Hawk Street is significant under HRB Criteria C and D. Staff concurs that the resource is significant under both 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 subject property was built in 1920 and embodies the distinctive characteristics of Colonial Revival Cottage style architecture, as well as Craftsman Bungalow influences. The wood frame house is single storied, rectangular in plan and sits on a concrete foundation. A medium-pitched, jerkinhead-style roof is sheathed in composition shingles and features boxed eaves. Aside from a painted brick chimney on the north elevation, exterior surfaces are clad in narrow shiplap siding.

Reflective of the Colonial Revival style, the front façade of the subject house is balanced and symmetric. At the center of this façade is a portico-style porch, which is supported by two pairs of squared wood posts and covered by a jerkinhead-style roof projection. A central, solid wood front door is flanked by sidelights which have been replaced in the original openings. On either side of the porch and entryway is an identical set of two 8-over-1 double hung wood frame and sash windows.

Fenestration consists primarily of double hung wood windows with a multi-paned upper sash and a single-paned lower sash, most of which are grouped in adjacent pairs. Along the structure's south elevation is a single replacement window installed in the original opening.

Adjacent to the main house is a detached, two-car garage with original wooden doors. In the same manner as the subject house, the garage embodies elements of Colonial Revival style architecture with Craftsman Bungalow influences and features a jerkinhead-style roof with composition shingles, boxed eaves and narrow shiplap siding. The garage is accessed by a wide concrete driveway and is partially obscured from public view by a contemporary wooden fence.

Aside from the aforementioned window and sidelight replacements, few alterations have been made to the subject house since its initial construction. Overall, modifications to the house have been minor in scope, are reversible and do not compromise its character defining features.

The owner has requested that specific elements of the interior be included in the designation. These Arts and Crafts style interior features reflect Schreiber's skill as a carpenter and craftsman. The features in the living room and dining room proposed to be included are:

- The 21" gumwood crown molding in both rooms;
- The 14" gumwood baseboards in both rooms;
- The gumwood window trim in both rooms;
- The oak floors in both rooms;
- The gumwood secretary/telephone desk and bookcase on the north wall of the living room;
- The built-in gumwood china cabinet/buffet on the east wall of the dining room; and
- The gumwood interior doors connecting the living room and dining room to adjacent rooms and French doors between the living room and dining room.

In conclusion, the Ralph Hurlburt/Alexander Schreiber Spec House #2 retains integrity and embodies many distinctive characteristics of Colonial Revival Cottage style architecture with Craftsman Bungalow influences. These include a symmetrical façade, shiplap siding, a jerkinhead-style roof with boxed eaves, a portico-style front porch with squared posts, a wood front door with sidelights, and adjacent pairs of multi-paned windows. 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.*

Master Designer Ralph E. Hurlburt, born and raised in Nebraska, initially worked as a banker in his home state. In his youth he had also been trained in the construction trade, and in 1916 he moved to San Diego and his career shifted to architecture. Shortly after his arrival, Hurlburt renovated the Mathew Sherman home into the Sherman Apartments with his uncle, and by the early 1920s he had emerged as one of the city's foremost residential architects. He designed numerous homes in the Colonial Revival, English Tudor, French Eclectic, Italian Renaissance and Spanish Eclectic styles until his death in 1942.

Hurlburt is known for infusing quality craftsmanship into his period revival style homes and has been awarded the title of Master Designer by the HRB. To date, eight of his structures have been designated by the Board as historical sites, including.

Master Builder Alexander Schreiber was born in Otis, Kansas in 1887 and moved to San Diego in 1911. Initially he was a carpenter, but by 1916 he was identified in the City Directory as a building contractor, and in 1920 he opened a real estate office in Hillcrest. Over the next two decades, Schreiber constructed numerous residential and commercial buildings throughout the city in North Park, University Heights, Mission Hills, South Park, Encanto and Point Loma. He retired from practice in 1940 and died in 1947.

Schreiber was among the city's most prolific contractors in the interwar period, and as such was recognized as a Master Builder by the HRB in 1990. Like Hurlburt, Schreiber is acclaimed for his skilled craftsmanship, and the Master Builder is also credited with constructing the first home in San Diego completely wired for electric appliances. Of the structures built by Schreiber, seven have been designated by the Board as historical sites.

Though Hurlburt and Schreiber were both accomplished in their own right, only a handful of structures have been jointly attributed to both masters. 3907 Hawk Street, therefore, stands out as a rare and remarkably intact example of Hurlburt and Schreiber's collaboration. For this reason, staff concurs that the subject house merits designation under HRB Criterion D.

#### 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 Ralph Hurlburt/Alexander Schreiber Spec House #2 be designated under HRB Criterion C for embodying characteristics of Colonial Revival Cottage style architecture with Craftsman Bungalow influences retaining integrity from its 1920 period of significance; and HRB Criterion D as a notable and limited example of the collaborative work of Master Designer Ralph Hurlburt and Master Builder Alexander Schreiber. The designation includes the following interior elements designed in the Arts and Crafts style and built by Schreiber:

- The 21" gumwood crown molding in both rooms;
- The 14" gumwood baseboards in both rooms;
- The gumwood window trim in both rooms;
- The oak floors in both rooms;
- The gumwood secretary/telephone desk and bookcase on the north wall of the living room;
- The built-in gumwood china cabinet/buffet on the east wall of the dining room; and
- The gumwood interior doors connecting the living room and dining room to adjacent rooms and French doors between the living room and dining room.

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  
Principal Planner/HRB Liaison

KS/cw

- Attachments:
1. Draft Resolution
  2. Applicant's Historical Report under Separate Cover

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A  
ADOPTED ON 2/26/2010

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 2/26/2010, to consider the historical designation of the **Ralph Hurlburt/Alexander Schreiber Spec House # 2** (owned by Marjorie A. Forbes Living Trust 9-23-05, 3907 Hawk Street, San Diego, CA 92103) located at **3907 Hawk Street, San Diego, CA 92103**, APN: **444-614-04-00**, further described as the South 15 feet of Lot 7, all of Lots 8 and fractional Lot 9 of Block 75 of Arnold and Choate's Addition according to Map no. 334 filed November 29, 1872; and the East 10 feet of Hawk Street adjoining said lots on the West as closed to public use November 23, 1914 by resolution No. 18617 of the Common council of the City of San Diego, 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 Ralph Hurlburt/Alexander Schreiber Spec House # 2 on the following findings:

(1) The property is historically significant under CRITERION C as it embodies distinctive characteristics of Colonial Revival Cottage style architecture with Craftsman Bungalow influences through the retention of character defining features and retains architectural integrity from its period of significance, the construction date of 1920. Specifically, the house retains a symmetrical façade; narrow shiplap siding; a jerkinhead-style roof and boxed eaves; a portico-style front porch with squared posts; a solid wood front door with sidelights; and adjacent pairs of multi-paned 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 interior of the property is historically significant under CRITERION C as it embodies distinctive characteristics of Arts and Crafts style craftsmanship through the retention of character defining features and retains architectural integrity from its period of significance, the construction date of 1920. Specifically, the house retains the following features in the dining room and living room: gumwood crown molding, window trim and baseboards in both rooms; oak floors in both rooms; the built-in gumwood secretary/telephone desk and bookcase on the north wall of the living room; built-in gumwood china cabinet/buffet on the east wall of the dining room; and gumwood interior doors connecting the living room and dining room to adjacent rooms; and French doors between the living room and dining room. This finding is further supported by the staff report, the historical research report, and written and oral evidence presented at the designation hearing; and

(3) The property (including the interior elements listed in finding 2 above) is historically significant under CRITERION D as a notable work of Master Designer Ralph Hurlburt and Master Builder Alexander Schreiber. Specifically, the house stands out as a rare and remarkably intact example of Hurlburt and

Schreiber's collaboration. 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 those interior elements of the living room and dining room specifically identified in finding (2) of this resolution, in addition to 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

DRAFT