



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

# Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: February 10, 2011 REPORT NO. HRB-11-008

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board  
Agenda of February 24, 2011

SUBJECT: **ITEM #6 – Dr. James and Virginia Churchill/William Templeton Johnson House**

APPLICANT: James Schwendig Trust & Michael Bogue Trust represented by Scott A. Moomjian

LOCATION: 3264 Curlew Street, 92103, Uptown Community, Council District 2

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Dr. James and Virginia Churchill/William Templeton Johnson House located at 3264 Curlew Street as a historical resource.

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Dr. James and Virginia Churchill/William Templeton Johnson House located at 3264 Curlew Street as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1922 under HRB Criteria C and D. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

1. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of Spanish Eclectic style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1922 period of significance. Specifically, the character-defining features



**City Planning & Community Investment**  
202 C Street, MS 5A • San Diego, CA 92101-3865  
Tel (619) 235-5200 Fax (619) 533-5951

include an asymmetrical plan; red Mission tile, side-gabled roof with exposed, angular rafter tails, clay roof vents, stucco exterior and chimney, wood casement windows, and a recessed front entryway with decorative molding.

2. The resource is representative of a notable work of Master Architect William Templeton Johnson and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the resource displays Johnson's notable Spanish Eclectic design and is one of two homes built in the early 1920's during his middle years, a very productive time in his career.

## 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 home is a two-story residence constructed in 1922 by William Templeton Johnson in a predominately single-family residential neighborhood in the Uptown/Banker's Hill community.

The historic name of the resource, the Dr. James and Virginia Churchill/William Templeton Johnson House, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of the original owner, who had the house constructed as their personal residence and Master Architect, William Templeton Johnson who designed the home.

## ANALYSIS

A historical resource research report was prepared by Scott A. Moomjian, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria B, C, D. Staff concurs that the site is a significant historical resource under HRB Criteria C, D, but not HRB Criterion B. This determination is consistent with the *Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria*, as follows:

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

The applicant's report states that the house is significant due to its association with Dr. James Churchill, who played a significant role in San Diego's history. Dr. Churchill was recognized as the dean of internal medicine in San Diego, a leader in the county medical society and the first physician to specialize in internal medicine in the county. His leadership among San Diego doctors increased in the late 1920's. He was the president of the medical staff at Mercy Hospital in 1924 and elected president of the San Diego County Medical Society in 1929. His leadership role lead to his election of regent for the American College of Physicians in 1932 and a master in 1963, just before his death in 1967.

During World War I, he enlisted in the United States Navy and reached the rank of lieutenant, which led to his practice at the Balboa Naval Hospital. When the demand for hospitals in San Diego grew after World War II, Dr. Churchill was appointed co-chairman of the Medical Society's drive for raising funds. The committee was responsible for raising two million dollars to construct the Sharp Memorial Hospital. In 1960, his professional career ended due to a severe stroke. In April of 1967, he passed away at age 85.

Although, Dr. Churchill's involvement in San Diego's medical society was significant, the report provides inadequate evidence to determine his specific contribution to history. In addition, the report mentions several other resources, which perhaps, may be better associated with his success, like the Balboa Naval Hospital, Mercy Hospital and Sharp Hospital. The nomination report lacks sufficient support to determine if 3264 Curlew Street is the best resource identified with his involvement in San Diego's history. 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.*

Designed by noted San Diego Architect William Templeton Johnson in 1922, the Spanish Eclectic residence has two-stories, including a finished basement equaling 4,134 square feet. The house is sheathed in smooth stucco and covered with a side-gable, Mission, red clay tile roof with exposed, angular rafter tails. Curved clay tile vents are set in a triangular orientation beneath the rafters. It appears that the exterior was re-stuccoed with a smooth texture, although this modification does not appear to affect the integrity to the point that it is no longer eligible for designation. On the front façade is a large stucco chimney. Recessed into the arched entryway with decorative molding, is a large wood door with a glass opening covered by a security grille. Fenestration consists primarily of individual or sets of wood, multi-paned casements.

A two-car garage with a wood tilt up door is located on the north elevation. The garage door was originally two double hinged doors that were replaced by the Melhorn Construction Company in 1953. The residential building records indicated that the garage was extended, although the original architectural plans included in the report depict the garage being the same size.

In the architectural plans, the first floor fenestration, between the garage and main structure, was drawn as two small casement windows, which were symmetrical. However, the tripartite casements in place are much larger and are asymmetrical. Their configuration is consistent with the overall design of the structure, no historic photos were provided in the nomination report, and no permits were found indicating the windows were replaced.

The west rear elevation consists of a large pergola, which extends over most of the length of the house and was added in 1994. The pergola has five broad stucco sections topped with a wooden trellis and features four arched openings. Also added at the same time, was a pool and spa. This addition is not visible from the public right of way and it is not attached to the main structure and is reversible.

The house appears to be in excellent condition and retains integrity from its period of significance. As an excellent example of Spanish Eclectic architecture, staff recommends designation of the Dr. James and Virginia Churchill /William Templeton Johnson House 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.*

Noted San Diego architect William Templeton Johnson designed 3264 Curlew Street in 1922. Long recognized by the Historical Resources Board as a Master Architect, William Templeton Johnson designed the Dr. James and Virginia Churchill/ William Templeton Johnson house during the same period of his career that he designed other historically significant structures. A few of the notable works he designed, designated by the Historical Resources Board included HRB # 127-079 the Samuel I. Fox Building at 531 Broadway, HRB # 204 the La Valencia Hotel at 1132 Prospect Street, and HRB # 237 the Junipero Serra Museum at 2727 Presidio Drive. During the 1920s, the public and his peers recognized all as masterful examples of the Spanish Eclectic style. Today, all are major San Diego landmarks that add a romantic Spanish-era aura to our contemporary city. As a masterful composition of residential architecture and place making that ranks favorably with the best of William Templeton Johnson's well-known institutional works, staff recommends designation of the Dr. James and Virginia Churchill /William Templeton Johnson House under HRB Criterion D, with a period of significance from 1922.

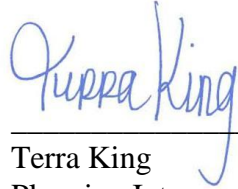
#### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

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

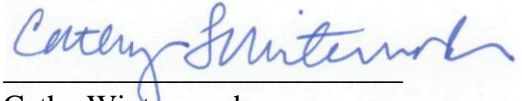
Based on the information submitted and staff's field check, it is recommended that the Dr. James and Virginia Churchill/William Templeton Johnson House located at 3264 Curlew Street be designated with a period of significance of 1922 under HRB Criteria C, and D but not Criterion B. Designation brings 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.



---

Terra King  
Planning Intern



---

Cathy Winterrowd  
Principal Planner/HRB Liaison

TK/cw

Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A  
ADOPTED ON 2/24/2011

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 2/24/2011, to consider the historical designation of the **DR. JAMES AND VIRGINIA CHURCHILL/WILLIAM TEMPLETON JOHNSON HOUSE** (owned by James Schwendig Trust & Michael Bogue Trust, 3264 Curlew Street, San Diego, CA 92103) located at **3264 Curlew Street, San Diego, CA 92103**, APN: **452-494-16-00**, further described as BLK 377 POR 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 Dr. James and Virginia Churchill/William Templeton Johnson House on the following findings:

(1) The property is historically significant under CRITERION C for its distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of Spanish Eclectic style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its period of significance. Specifically, the resource embodies an asymmetrical plan; red Mission tile, moderately pitched, side-gabled roof with exposed, angular rafter tails; clay tile vents set in a triangular orientation; stucco exterior and chimney; individual or sets of wood, multi-paned casement windows; and a recessed front entryway with decorative molding. This finding is further supported by the staff report, the historical research report, and written and oral evidence presented at the designation hearing.

(2) The property is historically significant under CRITERION D as a notable work of Master Architect William Templeton Johnson and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the resource displays Johnson's notable Spanish Eclectic design and is one of two homes built in the early 1920's during his middle years, a very productive time in his career. 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