



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

# Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: May 19, 2011 REPORT NO. HRB-11-030

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board  
Agenda of May 26, 2011

SUBJECT: **ITEM #8 – 7123 Olivetas Avenue**

APPLICANT: James and Alice Barry represented by Vonn Marie May

LOCATION: 7123 Olivetas Avenue, 92037, La Jolla Community, Council District 1

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the property located at 7123 Olivetas Avenue as a historical resource.

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Do not designate the property located at 7123 Olivetas Avenue under any adopted HRB Criteria.

## 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 subject property is located at 7123 Olivetas Avenue in the La Jolla community. The property consists of a one-story Colonial Revival single family home with an attached garage.



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## ANALYSIS

A historical resource research was prepared by Vonn Marie May and Robert Broms which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria A, C, and D. An addendum was prepared which indicated the applicant wished to change this determination and that the property was significant only under HRB Criteria C and D. Staff does not concur that the site is a significant historical resource under any HRB Criteria due to a lack of integrity. This determination is consistent with the *Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria*, as follows:

*CRITERION A - Exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's, a community's or a neighborhood's historical, archaeological, cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, landscaping or architectural development.*

The applicant had originally indicated that the resource was significant under HRB Criterion A due to its contribution to the development of the Barber Tract neighborhood in the La Jolla community. A later addendum from the applicant rescinded the decision to consider the property significant under Criterion A. Staff concurs that the property is not significant under Criterion A since the property is not a special element of the community's historical and/or architectural development.

*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.*

According to the applicant's report the house embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Colonial Revival and Shingle styles with Tudor Revival influences. The house features a multi-gabled roof with varying roof lines of medium to high pitch covered with wooden shingles. While there are no eave or rake overhangs the eave lines are comprised of flat fascia boards laying right under the roofline. With the exception of a portion of the eastern facing wall on the rear of the property, the house is clad in even rows of thin wooden shingles. Fenestration is primarily multi-paned, wood framed windows flanked by decorative wooden shutters as well as double-hung and casement wood framed windows. A Tudor style pointed arch door serves as the front entrance to the home. The west elevation features an exterior tapering chimney made of clinker brick and is located on the wall perpendicular to the wall containing the front door. The original garage on the north end of the property is now a utility room with a Dutch door entry and flanking windows. On the south wing facing the rear of the property is a back porch with a flat roof covered in composition shingle and supported by wooden trellises. An attached double garage is present on the southern end of the property and is consistent with the rest of the home with a multi-gabled roof and wooden shingles on the roof and walls.

The applicant states that the original house was a small cottage built in 1926 in the Cape Cod variant of the Colonial Revival style with Tudor influences clad in shingles. A large addition was built in 1933, in the same Colonial Revival style, by established Master Architect Thomas Shepherd which included repositioning the entry door from being a side-facing entry to a front-facing entry on a newly constructed south wing to the house. The wing was of narrow dimension and included a veranda facing the back yard. An attached double garage was also added at this

time connected by the south wing addition to the original house. The original garage was converted into a utility room with an additional casement window on the north wall and the garage door was converted into a Dutch door entry with flanking windows. According to the report, the last known alterations to the house occurred in the post war era estimated between 1949 and 1950. This modification enclosed the rear veranda and extended the south wing back approximately ten feet. A pair of aluminum sliding glass doors was added to this addition along with plywood siding different from the cladding on the rest of the house. It is believed the attic studio above the garage was also added in the 1949/1950 addition. This included the addition of an entrance on the rear of the garage with a narrow glass door with a wooden panel and flanking sidelights.

The present-day appearance of the house is the result of several modifications, however it is unclear as to how much of the home has actually been altered, when the modifications occurred, and how the modifications have affected the integrity of the property. Due to the lack of documentation such as historical photos and/or plans, the applicant's assertion that the modifications have not significantly impacted the integrity of the home cannot be verified. The report and addendum state that the original 1926 house was largely unchanged other than reorienting the entry using the same door, converting the garage, and adding the southern wing but it is unclear how this conclusion was drawn based on the information provided. Without plans of the 1933 remodel we are unable to distinguish subsequent modifications. In addition to understanding the modifications to the original and/or 1933 plans we cannot be certain that the materials which make up the appearance of the house such as the shingle siding or even the Tudor style front door are original. Since the first addendum the applicant has contacted staff stating they have found the original plans of the 1933 Shepherd remodel. Staff was not provided with copies of the plans by the time this report was prepared. Therefore, based on the information available, staff does not recommend the designation of 7123 Olivetas Street under Criterion C.

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

The applicant's report states that the house is representative of the notable work of recognized Master Architect Thomas Shepherd. Shepherd was born in 1897 and studied at the University of Wisconsin and Columbia University in New York, where he studied architecture. However, inspiration seems to have been drawn from his travels in Europe, particularly in the Mediterranean region.

In 1926, he had relocated to and was primarily designing residences in new subdivisions in La Jolla. His homes include the Darlington House and the John Scripps residence in addition to over 200 other residences. In addition to his houses, he designed the La Jolla Beach and Tennis Club, the Marine Room, the Spanish-style Arcade building and an addition to the La Valencia Hotel. His architectural influence on La Jolla is substantial having designed buildings and homes throughout his lengthy and prolific fifty-year career. He passed away at the age of 82 in 1979.

While the architect of the original 1926 house cannot be determined, we do know that Thomas Shepherd designed an addition to the small Colonial Revival cottage in 1933, as evidenced by the Notice of Completion. However, without historic photographs or plans we are unable to determine his original design for the addition and whether subsequent modifications to the home have impacted the integrity of Shepherd's work. Therefore staff does not recommend designation of 7123 Olivetas Avenue under Criterion D, as the property does not represent a notable work of a Master.

#### 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.

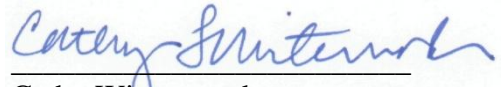
#### CONCLUSION

Based on the information submitted and staff's field check, it is recommended that the property at 7123 Olivetas Avenue not be designated under any HRB Criteria due to a lack of integrity. 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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Jennifer Feeley  
Planning Intern



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Cathy Winterrowd  
Principal Planner/HRB Liaison

JF/cw

Attachment(s):

1. Applicant's Historical Report and addenda under separate cover