



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: July 14, 2011 REPORT NO. HRB-11-043

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board
Agenda of July 28, 2011

SUBJECT: **ITEM #6 – Robert and Ruby Magness House**

APPLICANT: Roger A. Benham and Laurie L. Benham, owners

LOCATION: 412 San Fernando Street, Peninsula Community, Council District 2

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Robert and Ruby Magness House located at 412 San Fernando Street as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Robert and Ruby Magness House located at 412 San Fernando Street as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1951-1953 under HRB Criterion C. This recommendation is based on the following finding:

The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Custom Ranch style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits intersecting low pitched gable roofs; overhanging eaves; exposed rafter tails; wide wood lap siding and brick veneer; a wide brick chimney; fixed and awning wood frame and sash windows with a distinct horizontal emphasis; a long, recessed entry porch; and a courtyard formed by the “L” shape of the house and enclosed with a low brick wall and wood gate.



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BACKGROUND

This item is being brought before the Historical Resources Board in conjunction with a proposed building modification or demolition of a structure of 45 years or more, consistent with San Diego Municipal Code Section 143.0212. The house is a one story Ranch house built by John C. Washington for the Magness family in the La Playa neighborhood of Point Loma.

The historic name of the resource, the Robert and Ruby Magness House, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Robert and Ruby Magness, who constructed the house as their personal residence.

ANALYSIS

A historical resource research report was prepared by Laurie Benham, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criterion C. Staff concurs that the site is a significant historical resource under HRB Criterion C. This determination is consistent with the *Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria*, 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 is a one story, "L" shaped Custom Ranch style house constructed between 1951 and 1953 that features intersecting low pitched gable roofs; overhanging eaves; exposed rafter tails; wide wood lap siding and brick veneer over wood frame construction and a concrete foundation. The house is set deep on the lot and is accessed via a rubble driveway leading to the entry porch recessed under the eave line, which is supported by simple square wood posts. Brick veneer at the porch and entry highlights the entry door, which is set perpendicularly to the street. Just beyond the entry and to the right is a brick and grass courtyard formed by the "L" shape of the house and enclosed with a low brick wall and wood gate. A recessed porch similar to the one at the entry is found at the courtyard. To the left of the entry porch is the former carport which has been converted to a garage through the installation of tilting doors at the front and back. The garage roof is set just below the roof of the main house, providing visual relief along the roofline. A wide brick chimney is located at the rear of the house and is just visible above the ridgeline. Fenestration on the house consists primarily of fixed and awning wood frame and sash windows with a distinct horizontal emphasis.

Modifications to the house include the conversion and expansion of the original carport in the 1960s; which included replacing the asphalt floor with concrete, adding tilt-up wood doors at the front and back of the carport, and adding 3 feet to the south side of to accommodate additional storage. This addition is evident through the differentiated roofline. Also in the 1960s, skylights were added at the living room; the original French doors at the living room leading to the backyard were replaced with aluminum sliding doors; and two high windows at the rear of the house were replaced with aluminum sliding doors. Other modifications include replacement of the original entry door in the 1970s and installation of a wrought iron security door; addition of a bay window at the kitchen along the rear elevation; and the recent replacement of the wood shake shingle roof with dimensional asphalt shingles (this work is ongoing and was approved by staff.) The majority of the modifications are located at the rear, are not visible, and do not adversely

impact the house to a significant degree. The most significant modification, the conversion of the carport, left the original form of the carport largely intact and simply installed tilt-up doors at the front and rear. This space continues to serve its auto-oriented purpose, has not been converted to habitable space, and continues to convey the general design intent and purpose. The conversion of the garage does not adversely impact the integrity of the overall resource to the extent that it no longer retains integrity and the character defining features of the Custom Ranch style.

The San Diego Modernism Context Statement identifies the primary and secondary character defining features of the Custom Ranch style, which includes horizontal massing, wide to the street; single story; custom details such as wood shutters, large wood windows; or large prominent brick or stone chimneys; prominent low-sloped gabled or hipped roofs with deep overhangs; sprawling floor plan frequently “L” or “U” shaped around a central courtyard; large attached carports or garages; and expensive building materials including wood shingle roofing, wood siding, brick, etc. The Context Statement also states that Custom Ranch Homes “frequently included a large landscaped property, with a deep street setback creating a generous front yard.” The subject house exhibits all of these primary and secondary character defining features and retains sufficient integrity to its 1951-1953 date of construction. Therefore, staff recommends designation of the house at 412 San Fernando under HRB Criterion C.

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 Robert and Ruby Magness House located at 412 San Fernando Street be designated with a period of significance of 1951-1953 under HRB Criterion C as a resource that embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Custom Ranch style and retains 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.



Kelley Stanco
Senior Planner



Cathy Winterrowd
Principal Planner/HRB Liaison

KS/cw

- Attachments: 1. Draft Resolution
1. Applicant's Historical Report under separate cover

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON 7/28/2011

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 7/28/2011, to consider the historical designation of the **ROBERT AND RUBY MAGNESS HOUSE** (owned by Roger A. Benham and Laurie L. Benham, 412 San Fernando Street, San Diego, CA 92106) located at **412 San Fernando Street, San Diego, CA 92106**, APN: **532-471-09-00**, further described as BLK 131 LOT 4 ST CLSD ADJ S & /EXC N 42.5 FT/ 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 Robert and Ruby Magness House on the following findings:

(1) The property is historically significant under CRITERION C as a resource the embodies the distinctive character defining features of the Custom Ranch style and retains integrity to its 1951-1953 period of significance. Specifically, intersecting low pitched gable roofs; overhanging eaves; exposed rafter tails; wide wood lap siding and brick veneer; a wide brick chimney; fixed and awning wood frame and sash windows with a distinct horizontal emphasis; a long, recessed entry porch; and a courtyard formed by the "L" shape of the house and enclosed with a low brick wall and wood gate. 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: _____
KEITH BAUERLE
Deputy City Attorney