



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO  
**Historical Resources Board**

DATE ISSUED: March 8, 2012 REPORT NO. HRB-12-021

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board  
Agenda of March 22, 2012

SUBJECT: **ITEM #15 – Morris B. Irvin Spec. House No. 2**

APPLICANT: Owner represented by Allen Hazard and Janet O’Dea

LOCATION: 4239 Saint James Place, 92103, Uptown Community, Council District 2

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Morris B. Irvin Spec. House No. 2 located at 4239 Saint James Place as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Morris B. Irvin Spec. House No. 2 located at 4239 Saint James Place as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1922 under HRB Criteria C and D. The designation excludes the non historic detached garage. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

1. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of Spanish Revival style architecture and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1922 period of significance. Specifically, the resource retains its red tile and flat roofs, asymmetrical façade, arched windows and door, and decorative wood grilles.
2. The resource is representative of a notable work of Master Builder Morris B. Irvin and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the resource exhibits Irvin’s characteristic style and refined features, including the stucco and arched openings, and retains a high degree of integrity to its 1922 date of construction.

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 property is located within a predominantly single-family neighborhood of Mission Hills on a raised lot.

The historic name of the resource, the Morris B. Irvin House, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Morris B. Irvin, a Master Builder.

## ANALYSIS

A historical resource research was prepared by Allen Hazard and Janet O'Dea which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria C and D and staff concurs. 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.*

Constructed in 1922 in the Spanish Revival style, the house is situated on a raised lot with several red concrete stairs leading to the front entrance. The house features a flat roof with parapet walls and she roofs with tile roofing. The centrally located front entrance has a clay tile shed roof with decorative supports and rafter tails. The shed roof is matched over the front porch windows and at the southwest corner and north side over the dining room protrusion. The exterior walls are sheathed with stucco and the windows are a mixture of fixed, casement divided light, and double hung 1/1 sashes.

The west façade features three arched windows with a low decorative wood railing at the northwest corner. A round, decorative wood attic vent is located above the windows creating a very stylized appearance. The southwest corner has a low wall off of the small covered entrance area with four 8-light casement windows and a small tiled shed roof. The south elevation has a gently rounded and stuccoed chimney with several 1/1 double hung windows evenly spaced on the wall plane. The north façade has a small shed roof protrusion flanked by 1/1 double hung windows. The remainder of the wall plane has windows evenly spaced.

There have been some modifications to the exterior of the house, which include the replacement of the original roof tile with a clay barrel tile, the construction of new rear yard detached garage in 1969, and the restucco of the exterior. Based on historic photos, the original stucco texture had a smoother undulating surface compared to the more contemporary Santa Barbara finish. The modifications do not detract from the historic significance of the property and the house retains its character defining features. The house continues to convey the historic significance of Spanish Revival architecture by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style. Therefore, staff recommends designation 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.*

Morris B. Irvin has been previously established as a Master Builder and to date the Historical Resources Board has designated five residences built by him, all located in Mission Hills, including:

HRB #611 – William E. Kier House, 2252 Fort Stockton

HRB #794 – M.B and Ida Irvin Spec House #1, 3960 Alameda Place  
HRB #815 – Nathan Rigdon and Morris Irvin Spec House #3, 1885 Sheridan  
HRB #817 – Nathan Rigdon and Morris Irvin Spec House #2, 1760 West Lewis  
HRB #860 – Irvin Security Company Spec House #1/Morris B. Irvin House, 4167-4169 Jackdaw

The residence at 4239 Saint James Place retains a high level of integrity in terms of location, setting, feeling, and association as the structure remain on the site where it was constructed, and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century residential character of the Mission Hills neighborhood where the residence is located remains largely unchanged. The association of the property with an established Master Builder, Morris B. Irvin, and his speculative venture, also associate the property with the early residential development of the Mission Hills area. The design, materials, and workmanship of the residence reflects construction practices common to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Craftsman style and Master Builder Morris B. Irvin. The residence retains its original style, building footprint, and most historic materials. While the modified texture coat obscures intact historic exterior finish materials, the house still conveys its historic character. Features such as the arched windows, a decorative attic vent, shed roof supports and exposed rafter tails indicate a high level of workmanship that is still evident. The house conveys the historic significance associated with Morris B. Irvin and the design that he was associated with during the early part of the century. Therefore, staff recommends designation under Criterion D.

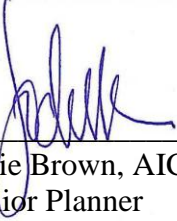
#### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

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

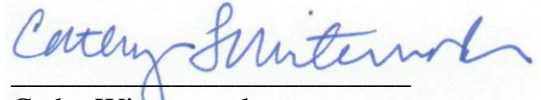
Based on the information submitted and staff's field check, it is recommended that the Morris B. Irvin Spec. House No. 2 located at 4239 Saint James Place be designated with a period of significance of 1922 under HRB Criterion C embodying the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of Spanish Revival style architecture and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1922 period of significance and Criterion D. Specifically, the resource retains its red tile and flat roofs, asymmetrical façade, arched windows and door, and decorative wood grilles and is associated with Master Builder Morris B. Irvin. The designation excludes the detached non- historic garage. 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.



---

Jodie Brown, AICP  
Senior Planner



---

Cathy Winterrowd  
Principal Planner/HRB Liaison

JB/cw

Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A  
ADOPTED ON 3/22/2012

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 3/22/2012, to consider the historical designation of the **Morris B. Irvin Spec. House No. 2** located at **4239 Saint James Place, San Diego, CA 92103**, APN: **443-432-03-00**, further described as BLK 11 LOT 2 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 Morris B. Irvin Spec. House No. 2 on the following findings:

(1) The property is historically significant under CRITERION C with a period of significance of 1922 as a resource that embodies the distinctive characteristics of Spanish Revival style architecture and retains integrity to the date of construction. Specifically, the resource retains its red tile and flat roofs, asymmetrical façade, arched windows and door, and decorative wood grilles. 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 Builder Morris B. Irvin. Specifically, the resource exhibits Irvin's characteristic style and refined features, including the stucco and arched openings, and retains a high degree of integrity to its 1922 date of construction. 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**. The designation excludes the non historic detached garage.

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