



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 15, 2010

TO: HRB Boardmembers

FROM: Jodie Brown, AICP, Senior Planner, CPCI

SUBJECT: Item 13 – 1479 J Street and 360 15<sup>th</sup> Street

---

This item was last heard before the Historical Resources Board (HRB) on September 27, 2007 as a referral from CCDC. At that time the property owner wanted to demolish the buildings to expand the affordable housing units located adjacent to the property. During the HRB meeting the buildings were not designated by a 5-1-1 vote.

The buildings are now under new ownership and the property owners would like to restore them based on a historic photo. A portion of the restoration costs could be made available through CCDC's Façade Improvement Program which requires historical designation for participation in the program.

The buildings have suffered further deterioration since 2007 and 360 15<sup>th</sup> Street has remained without a roof for at least eight years. While many of the original features are extant on the building, staff is concerned that much of the historic fabric will have to be replaced. If designated, replacement material will be in-kind and consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

HRB staff continues to recommend designation of the Isaac Lyon Building at 1479 J Street and the Isaac Lyon Rental House at 360 15<sup>th</sup> Street under Criterion C as rare examples of Victorian commercial and residential vernacular architecture in downtown San Diego.

Attachment(s): Draft Resolution  
September 13, 2007 Memo  
May 8, 2007 Memo  
April 19, 2007 Memo  
April 12, 2007 Staff Report  
Consultant Report

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A  
ADOPTED ON 1/28/2010

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 1/28/2010, to consider the historical designation of the **Isaac Lyon Building and the Isaac Lyon Rental House** (owned by 12th and A Hotel Partners LP, 402 West Broadway, Suite 1220, San Diego, CA 92101) located at **1479 J Street and 360 15th Street, San Diego, CA 92101**, APN: **535-396-04-00**, further described as Sherman Addition, Block 36, Lot 4 exc; W 30 ft. N 65 ft. of Lot 3 and N 65 ft. of Lot 4 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 Isaac Lyon Building at 1479 J Street and the Isaac Lyon Rental House at 360 15<sup>th</sup> Street on the following findings:

(1) The properties are historically significant under CRITERION C for their distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Folk Victorian style and retaining a good level of architectural integrity from their ca. 1883 period of significance. Specifically, the commercial building with a corner entry and a chamfered bay canted to the intersection, 1/1 double hung window capped with corbelled cornices in the upper register and a decorative cornice at the parapet. The residential property features a hipped and front gabled roof in an l shaped foot print with a frontal bay including scrolled brackets, dentil molding, carved panels and horizontal shiplap wood siding. 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

CITY OF SAN DIEGO  
M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: September 13, 2007

TO: Historical Resources Board

FROM: Michael Tudury, Senior Planner/Architect, Historical Resources Staff

SUBJECT: Item 6 – Issac Lyon Building, 1479 J Street and  
Issac Lyon Rental Property, 360 15<sup>th</sup> Street

---

This item was continued from the April 26 and the May 24, 2007 hearings to allow the applicant time to explore options for the reuse of these potentially historic structures. Staff has included as Attachments 1, 2 and 3 to this memo the April HRB staff report and associated memo, as well as the memo from the May HRB meeting.

The sites are currently owned by the estate of Kenneth Cummings. The executor of the estate is attorney John C. Edwards of La Jolla. Mr. Ferris of Wakefield Housing is currently in escrow for the properties.

At the HRB Design Assistance Subcommittee (DAS) meeting on August 1, 2007, architect Mark Steele and Wakefield Housing representative Jack Ferris presented a proposal to the DAS that would be a new structure that would expand the adjacent Lilian Place affordable housing project. The proposal incorporated elements of the existing structures as well as reference to the scale and details of these structures, but did not propose the reuse of either of the structures. The relevant portion of the August 2007 DAS Meeting Notes are included as attachment 4 to this memo.

HRB staff is recommending designation of the Issac Lyon Building at 1479 J Street and the Issac Lyon Rental Property at 360 15<sup>th</sup> Street under HRB Criterion C as rare examples of Victorian commercial and residential vernacular architecture in downtown San Diego.

- Attachments:
1. Staff report HRB-07-025 dated April 12, 2007
  2. Staff memo to the Board dated April 19, 2007
  3. Staff memo to the Board dated May 8, 2007
  4. Design Assistance Subcommittee Meeting Notes from August 1, 2007



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: April 12, 2007 REPORT NO. HRB-07-025

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board  
Agenda of April 26, 2007

SUBJECT: **ITEM 13 – JOSEPH IRELAND BUILDING, 1479 J STREET & JOSEPH IRELAND RENTAL PROPERTY (historic name to be confirmed), 360 15<sup>th</sup> STREET**

APPLICANT: Kathleen Crawford on behalf of Kenneth Cummings, owner, referred from the City Centre Development Corporation.

LOCATION: 1479 J Street & 360 15<sup>th</sup> Street, Centre City Community, Council District 2

DESCRIPTION: Designate under one or more established HRB Criteria or do not designate.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Joseph Ireland Building at 1479 J Street and the Joseph Ireland Rental Property (historic name to be confirmed pending complete title report), located at 360 13<sup>th</sup> Street and under HRB Criterion C as rare examples of Victorian commercial and residential vernacular in downtown San Diego.

### BACKGROUND

This item is being referred to the Historical Resources Board by the City Centre Development Corporation in conjunction with the City Municipal Code that requires potential historical sites previously identified in a survey be reviewed by the City's Historical Resources Board (HRB) prior to development. Both 1479 J Street and 360 15<sup>th</sup> Street were included in surveys prepared for the Centre City Development Corporation in 1989 and 2001. They were most recently identified as sites #30 and #63 in the *East Village Combined Historical Surveys 2005*, where they were evaluated as eligible for local listing.

Dating from the 1880s, these wood framed structures are located on the same parcel. Dating to 1884, 1479 J Street was originally built as a two-story, mixed use commercial/residential building. Located in the southwest quadrant of J and 15<sup>th</sup> Streets, it consists of a 4080 sq. ft. rectangular footprint with a chamfered bay canted to the intersection. The upper story sports a pair of one-over-one sash windows (now boarded), while a replacement entry door occupies the lower register. Four bays of sash windows (now boarded), capped with corbelled cornices in the upper register, light the J Street façade, while two bays of paired sash windows and one bay of a single sash window (also boarded) light the upper register on the 15<sup>th</sup> Street façade. The parapet roofline is accented by a decorative cornice with spindle work brackets. The building is sheathed in wide ship lap siding and trimmed with corner boards.

An historic photo (Attachment 1) indicates that the building was originally intended to accommodate commercial use on the ground floor, with five bays of multi-paned glazing along the 15<sup>th</sup> Street façade, adjacent to the corner entrance. This is confirmed by the 1888 Sanborn map that notes twin storefronts on the ground floor, with residential use on the upper story. Unfortunately, the building was unoccupied, most likely resulting from an economic “bust”, so it was slowly converted to more intense residential uses. Sanborn maps indicate the lower register assumed the configuration in the historic photo by 1906, with a dwelling noted at 368 15<sup>th</sup> Street and a store and second floor dwelling at 372 15<sup>th</sup> Street. By 1921, the 15<sup>th</sup> Street store fronts were boarded up and the entire building had been converted to lodgings, with the secondary entrances on J Street and 15<sup>th</sup> Street still extant today. By 1940, both buildings had been further subdivided to address Depression and war-related housing shortages. 1479 J Street accommodated 18 lodgers, while 360 15<sup>th</sup> Street housed 6 tenants.

Known as the Joseph Ireland rental property, 360 15<sup>th</sup> Street was always a modest, one-story, Victorian vernacular single family dwelling. Reportedly moved from its original (unknown) location, its move was most likely facilitated by its diminutive 664 sq. ft. size, enhanced with a 48 sq. ft. covered front porch, and at one time, a 50 sq. ft. rear utility porch, now removed. It currently sits on a concrete block basement, partially clad with narrow drop lap siding. Its hipped and front gabled roof is open to the sky, the result of an unexecuted rehabilitation project. Consequently, the property has experienced severe deterioration over the past five years. Nonetheless, with its one story asymmetrical massing and glazed tripartite frontal bay, it continues to convey the essential character defining features of a folk Victorian cottage. A raised porch, covered with a shed roof, shelters the front door that is located at the crux of the L-shaped footprint. The original door, entry stairs, scrolled eaves and turned porch posts are no longer extant. Eave details in the frontal bay include scrolled brackets, dentil molding, carved panels and turned colonettes, while a simply carved cornice and corner boards trim the currently unpainted horizontal shiplap wooden siding. Fenestration consists of tall one-over-one double hung windows surrounded with flat trim work. The windows are topped by flared stepped cornices and supported on bracketed sills. A damaged interior brick chimney now only extends to the roofline, while portions of the rear and side walls are missing.

The original owners of both buildings were Joseph and Elizabeth Ireland (1888-1907), followed by Vernon and Florence Rood (1907-1935). Between 1913-1925, R. H. Root operated a grocery store at 1479 J Street. He was followed in 1926 by R. G. Stewart, who operated a restaurant.

Although R. O. Douglas offered furnished rooms from 1926-1930, by 1935, Roods had conveyed the property to Louis Johnson and 1479 J Street was vacant. Subsequent historical owners, who used the property for rental purposes, included: Lois and George Corodemas (1936-1941), L. G. and Jesty Wesley, (1941; 1943-45); various members of the Mackenzie family (1941-1943) John Anderson (1945-1952); and Eva Taylor and various members of the Hooper family (1952-1977). The current owner, Ken Cummings, acquired the property in 1999. Between 1955-1980, the property was know as the J Street Hotel, managed successively by Carrie Bryant (1955-1960) and Eva Taylor (1960-1980).

## ANALYSIS

A historical report was prepared by Kathleen Crawford. Staff concurs that the site is a significant historical resource under HRB CRITERION C (Architecture), 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 indigenous materials or craftsmanship.*

The Joseph Ireland Building and the Joseph Ireland Rental Property are wood framed, Victorian-era buildings from the 1880s. They are good examples of an increasingly rare collection of early building stock in downtown San Diego representing the “Boom of the Eighties” that was spurred by intensely competitive railroad connections between Southern California and the East Coast of America. As such, they typify vernacular building traditions in San Diego conducted by both individuals and speculators, mostly combining pattern book designs with common building materials and easily understood construction techniques.

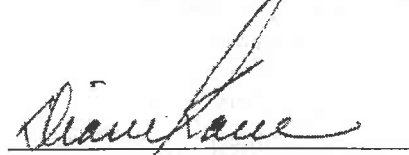
Both buildings use simple footprints that maximize square footage and minimize complicated carpentry. The fancy work, most likely standardized elements that were locally milled, is relegated to the street facades, where it is concentrated at the cornices and around window and door openings. Despite the modifications, such as the conversion of the first floor of 1479 J Street from commercial to residential purposes, and loss and/or deterioration of historic fabric, such as the chimney, roof, rear porch and front steps of 360 15<sup>th</sup> Street, both buildings continue to possess a majority of their character defining features. On 1479 J Street, these include: the rectangular, two story massing with chamfered corner entrance; the shiplap siding with corner boards; the bracketed parapet; the upper register tall rectangular sash windows with flat trim, bracketed cornices and protruding sills; the transomed paneled side door along J Street; and the belt course between the first and second floors. Although the first floor commercial facade has been slip covered, and the original entry doors are no longer extant, these represent a small portion of the exterior and can be reconstructed from photographic evidence. At 360 15<sup>th</sup> Street, character defining features include the one-story, asymmetrical footprint; the angled frontal bay with tall, rectangular tripled sash windows; the covered side entry porch; the hipped and gabled roofline; and the dentil, panel, colonette and bracket trim. Again, missing features can be accurately reconstructed from photographic evidence (Attachment 2).

As a comparative analysis, 360 15<sup>th</sup> Street is one of 23 pre-1900 Victorian residences included in the *East Village Combined Surveys 2005*, while 1479 J Street is one of five pre-1900 commercial

properties included in the survey. If 1479 J Street is considered a multi-family property (based upon its use) rather than a commercial property (based upon its original design) then it is one of eight pre-1920 multi-family buildings included in the *East Village Combined Surveys 2005*. Both buildings deserve the protection of historic designation to ensure their continued contribution to San Diego's history. Consequently, staff recommends that the Joseph Ireland Building, located at 1479 J Street, and the Joseph Ireland Rental Property, located at 360 13<sup>th</sup> Street, be designated under HRB Criterion C as rare examples of Victorian commercial and residential vernacular in downtown San Diego.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the information submitted and staff's field check, it is recommended that the Joseph Ireland Building, located at 1479 J Street, and the Joseph Ireland Rental Property (historic name to be confirmed pending complete title report), located at 360 13<sup>th</sup> Street, be designated under HRB Criterion C as rare examples of Victorian commercial and residential vernacular in downtown San Diego. 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.



Diane Kane, Ph.D., AICP  
Senior Planner



Cathy Winterrowd  
Senior Planner/Program Coordinator

DK/cw

- Attachment(s):
1. Historic photo, c. 1890 (courtesy Bruce Coons)
  2. 360 15<sup>th</sup> Street DPR Form, 1989 Bayside Inventory
  3. Applicant's Historical Report (under separate cover)
  4. Chain of Title page missing from the applicant's Historical Report (under separate cover)

CITY OF SAN DIEGO  
M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: April 19, 2007

TO: Historical Resources Board Members

FROM: Diane Kane, Senior Planner, Historical Resources Board

SUBJECT: April 26, 2007 HRB Agenda: Agenda Item #13

REFERENCE: Chain of Title & Directory Research

---

In reviewing ownership information submitted in the historical research report for 1479 J Street and 360 15<sup>th</sup> Street, staff noted that the ownership information on both properties was identical, although the parcel information indicated that the buildings were on separate parcels. The report's preparer's clarified that both structures were currently on the same parcel, but was unable to verify whether they were always on the same parcel, as ownership information was only researched back to the 1930s. Consequently, HRB staff asked California Lot Book, Inc. to research the Chain of Title for 1479 J Street and 360 15<sup>th</sup> Street back to the 1880s to determine if both properties were in common ownership from the time of their construction.

The additional Chain of Title evidence indicates that the buildings were indeed in common ownership from their date of construction. Who the original builder was, however, is still in question. The Assessor's Residential Building Record provides the date of 1880 for 360 15<sup>th</sup> Street and 1884 as the date of 1479 J Street. According to the Chain of Title, Issac Lyon acquired the property from Matthew Therman on July 17, 1883. Therman transferred the title to E.C. Jacobs and R. B. Wiseman on August 21, 1886. If the Residential Building Record is accurate, it appears that Issac Lyon was the first owner of 1479 J Street and Matthew Therman is likely to be the first owner of 360 15<sup>th</sup> Street. (N.B. The researcher at California Lot Book stopped in 1883 because prior to that date, the ownership records become increasingly more complicated. He verified that in 1883, all lots fronting on 15<sup>th</sup> Street within the block were owned by Matthew Therman; but, without additional research, it is not known when Therman acquired the property.)

Both properties appear on the 1888 Sanborn map, giving the latest date for their construction. Although ten other people owned the property between August 21, 1886 and July 2, 1888, no one owned it for longer than five months except Peter and Leonhard Mayrhofer, who had ownership from September 28, 1887 through February 16, 1889. Their tenure, however, coincides with the publication of the 1888 Sanborn map, which implies that the buildings were in place prior to their ownership.



City Directory research provides some tangential, but not conclusive evidence. The earliest City Directory, with listings by last name and by occupation, was published in 1887-1888. Matthew Therman is not listed, but John Therman, perhaps a relative, is listed in 1887-1888 as a real estate broker and in 1889-1890 as a banker. Issac Lyon is listed as a carpenter living at 20<sup>th</sup> and O Streets in Sherman Heights in 1887-1888. In 1889-1890, he is listed at 443 15<sup>th</sup> Street, within a block of the subject properties. In 1887-1888, Leonhard Mayrhofer is listed as the proprietor of Mayrhofer's Beer Hall, located at 701-703 Fifth Avenue, while his residence is listed at 1041 F Street. Peter Mayerhoefer is listed as living at 1812 B Street. G. W. Gerlach, residing at 1723 F Street, is listed as the proprietor of a bath house on the PCSS Company wharf. None of these owners appear to be residing or doing business at either property during the late 1880s, leading to the conclusion that they were speculating in real estate as part of the regional land boom of the time. Other owners appearing on the Chain of Title between 1886 and 1889 were not listed in the City Directory of 1887-1888. Perhaps they had already left town after their speculative fling in real estate. The only person with building skills is Issac Lyon, a carpenter who owned the property for three years. It is possible that he built both buildings, either as a contractor for hire or as an owner/builder; but the historical record is incomplete and one can only infer his involvement from circumstantial evidence. Staff also checked the 1886 Sanborn Maps provided in the *East Village Combined Surveys 2005* as part of the supplemental research on these buildings. No Sanborn maps were prepared for this portion of San Diego in 1886, leading to the possibilities that the Residential Building Record is in error regarding the buildings' early 1880s construction dates, or that too few buildings were erected in the neighborhood in 1886 to be worthy of recordation by the Sanborn Map Company.

In conclusion, the Chain of Title indicates that 1479 J Street is associated with Isaac Lyon and 360 15<sup>th</sup> Street is most likely associated with Matthew Therman, while evidence from the City Directory points to Issac Lyon as the most likely first owner of both properties. A less likely alternative, presented by the Sanborn maps, is that both properties are first associated with Peter and Leonhard Mayrhofer. If the HRB would like additional information prior to acting on this item, staff recommend that the research report be referred back to the applicant for amendment. Otherwise, according to the HRB naming policy, 1479 J Street should be designated the Isaac Lyon Building and 360 15<sup>th</sup> Street should be designated the Matthew Therman Spec. House.

Diane Kane  
Senior Planner

DK / dk

Attachment: California Lot Book, Inc. Title Search for APN 535-396-04 (pp. 1-3)

CITY OF SAN DIEGO  
M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: May 8, 2007  
TO: Historical Resources Board  
FROM: Diane Kane, Senior Planner  
SUBJECT: Item # 6, May 24, 2007 HRB Agenda  
REFERENCE: Name of Historical Resource

---

The April 26, 2007 Agenda and Staff Report HRB 07-025 indicated that the historic name of the properties located at 1479 J Street and 360 Fifteenth Street would be confirmed upon the receipt of additional information from the applicant. Although a staff Memo, dated April 19, 2007, provided a preliminary hypothesis regarding the original owner and/or builder of each building, definitive information did not arrive until after the memo was issued.

Primary documents, consisting of copies of the property deeds, provided not only the names of various parties to the transactions, but also the type of transaction and the monetary amount involved. Official records between 1883 and 1900 indicate that real estate transfers involved all eight lots fronting 15<sup>th</sup> Street between J and K Streets. The record shows that property values jumped significantly at two points: the transaction in 1886 between Grantor Issac Lyon and Grantees E.C. Jacobs and R. B. Wiseman, where the property value jumped from \$500 in 1883 to \$4,000 in 1886; and, the transaction on February 16, 1889 between Grantor Leonard Mayrhofer and Grantee G. W. Gerlach for \$9,000, a healthy 17 month increase from the previous \$6,000 on September 28, 1887. All other transactions appear to be real estate speculation, with price rises reflecting short term gains during a land boom.

Sanborn map and photographic evidence proves that there were 3 cottages and a 2 story commercial/residential building on 4 of the 8 lots by 1888. The Assessor dates the commercial building to 1884 and one of the cottages to 1880 (the other two cottages are gone). The only person who owned the lots long enough to build anything on them was a carpenter who had the lots between 1883-1886. The 17 month period between September 1887 and February 1889, when the value again jumped from \$6,000-\$9,000, provides a window of opportunity for construction activity; but, both buildings needed to be erected in time to appear on the 1888 Sanborn Map, which curtails the construction time slot to less than a year, and more likely 3-6 months. Analysis by both staff and the consultant follows:

1. The cottage and commercial building were in existence by at least 1888, providing a "ceiling" date.

Page 2

Name of person memo is directed to

Current date

2. The Assessor indicates the cottage was built in 1880 and the commercial building in 1884.
3. Despite the Assessor's information, a carpenter owned the lots between 1883-1886. The extended time frame and owner's occupation suggest that he would have been the likely candidate to construct both buildings.
4. Based upon 2 and 3 above, there is a "floor" date of 1880 for the cottage and 1886 for the commercial building.
5. Comparing the Assessor's information with the carpenter's period of ownership, the commercial building could very well have been built in 1884. As far as the cottage, it would appear that the building was constructed sometime between 1880-1886. Considering that lot prices jumped considerably from 1883-1886, we tend to believe it was built between these dates. Thus, we are attributing both buildings to carpenter Issac Lyon.

Diane Kane  
Senior Planner

DK / dk