



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: February 14, 2013 REPORT NO. HRB-13-010

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board
Agenda of February 28, 2013

SUBJECT: **ITEM #7 – George and Mary Williams House**

APPLICANT: Nicholas M. Gistaro Living Trust and Tina M. Zenzola represented by IS
Architecture

LOCATION: 4117 Lymer Drive, Kensington-Talmadge Community, Council District 9

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the George and Mary Williams House located at
4117 Lymer Drive as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the George and Mary Williams House located at 4117 Lymer Drive as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1929 under HRB Criterion C. The designation excludes the 1971 southeast wing addition and the 2008 addition totaling approximately 510 square feet. This recommendation is based on the following finding:

The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of Spanish Colonial Revival style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1929 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features a combination of low-pitched Mission clay tile roof and flat roof; smooth finish stucco; an arched, recessed entry with balcony above; a decorative wooden grille and tile placards to ornament the primary façade; and fenestration consisting of multi-light wood casement windows.

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 resource is a two-story Spanish Colonial Revival style residence built in 1929 on the south side of Lymer Drive in the Kensington Manor subdivision of the Kensington-Talmadge Community.

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

Development Services Department

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ANALYSIS

A historical resource research report was prepared by IS Architecture, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criterion C 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.

The subject property is a two-story Spanish Colonial Revival style single family residence constructed in 1929. It is of standard wood frame construction on a concrete foundation. The primary form is a two-story structure with a low-pitched Mission clay tile side gable roof with minimal eave overhang and exposed rafter tails. Attached to the east side is a single-story garage with a flat roof. The north façade is anchored to the central concrete front walkway by a deeply inset, arched entry featuring a heavy wood paneled door with original hardware. A balcony covered by the main roof with a small portion protruding out over the main entrance makes up the northwest corner of the second story. The balcony header is supported by decorative corbels and plain wood posts. Fenestration consists primarily of multi-light wood casement windows. Decorative elements include the colored tile placards beneath the window to the west of the entry door, and the wood grille at the second story to the east of the balcony.

Modifications have been made to the structure since its construction. First, the residential building record indicates additions that occurred in 1936 and 1960. No permits and no information could be found as to the nature or location of these additions, though it is believed that they occurred at the rear of the structure. Subsequent modifications also occurred at the rear. In 1971, a 365 square foot two-story addition was made at the southeast corner to accommodate a bedroom, bathroom and storage area and in 2008 an addition and remodel, which was reviewed by HRB staff, occurred at the rear elevation but also included a few changes that are visible from Lymer Drive. These changes include the addition of a small window on the west facing wall of the recessed balcony; the replacement of two windows at the rear of the east elevation with vinyl-clad wood windows of the same style and configuration; and window infill at two locations on the west elevation that are clearly demarcated with decorative grilles that mimic the existing one on the front (north) elevation. Finally, an undated alteration to the window adjacent to the front door on the west side resulted in the placement of a non-historic picture window in the existing opening. In 2012 this window was restored to its original style and operation with the help of forensic evidence. The non-historic balcony railing at the front elevation was not restored since presently there is no evidence conveying its precise historic appearance. The limited modifications visible from the public right of way are reversible and do not alter its character defining features or significantly impair the integrity as it relates to the 1929 date of construction. The additions at the rear of the structure are away from public view and would be excluded from designation.

Hugely popular following the 1915-1916 Panama-California Exposition which revived the romantic ideal of Spanish and Latin American architecture; the Spanish Colonial Revival style was the predominant style in Southern California between 1915 and 1940, significantly altering

the architectural landscape until the Modernist movement took hold during and after WWII. The style uses decorative details borrowed from the entire history of Spanish architecture. The style employed a variety of floor plans, as well as gabled, cross-gabled, gabled and hipped, hipped and flat roof forms with parapets. Other character defining features include Mission and Spanish clay tile; focal windows; arched windows and openings; accented entries; casement or double hung windows, often not in uniform size or shape; and glazed tile for interior and exterior decoration.

The limited modifications to the subject building do not alter its character defining features or significantly impair the integrity as it relates to the 1929 date of construction and period of significance. The subject house is a relatively simple yet elegant example of a resource that continues to convey the historic significance of the Spanish Colonial Revival style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style including the smooth finish stucco; straightforward massing; low-pitched Mission clay tile roof; arched, recessed entry; second floor balcony on the primary façade; and sparing decorative features such as the wooden grille on the second story and the tile placards on the first. Therefore, staff recommends designation of the subject property 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 George and Mary Williams House located at 4117 Lymer Drive be designated with a period of significance of 1929 under HRB Criterion C as a resource that embodies the distinctive characteristics of Spanish Colonial Revival style architecture. The designation excludes the 1971 southeast wing addition and the 2008 addition totaling approximately 510 square feet. 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.



Camille Pekarek
Planning Intern



Cathy Winterrowd
Assistant Deputy Director/HRB Liaison

CP/jb/cw

Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON 2/28/2013

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 2/28/2013, to consider the historical designation of the **George and Mary Williams House** (owned by Nicholas M. Gistaro Living Trust 02-26-04 and Tina M. Zenzola, 4117 Lymer Dr, San Diego, CA 92116) located at **4117 Lymer Dr, San Diego, CA 92116**, APN: **440-382-14-00**, further described as BLK 8 LOT 14 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 **George and Mary Williams 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 Colonial Revival style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1929 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features a combination of low-pitched Mission clay tile roof and flat roof; smooth finish stucco; an arched, recessed entry with balcony above; a decorative wooden grille and tile placards to ornament the primary façade; and fenestration consisting of multi-light wood casement windows. 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 designation shall exclude the 1971 southeast wing addition and the 2008 addition totaling approximately 510 square feet.

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: _____
CORRINE NEUFFER,
Deputy City Attorney