



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: June 13, 2013 REPORT NO. HRB-13-027

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board
Agenda of June 27, 2013

SUBJECT: **ITEM #8 – George Forbes Spec House #2**

APPLICANT: William Jones and Cheryl Sueing-Jones represented by Marie Burke Lia

LOCATION: 5358 Canterbury Drive, Kensington-Talmadge Community, Council District 9

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the George Forbes Spec House #2 located at 5358 Canterbury Drive as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the George Forbes Spec House #2 located at 5358 Canterbury Drive as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1929 under HRB Criteria A and C. The designation excludes the rear patio enclosure at the northwest corner, and the second floor covered porch enclosure at the southwest corner. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

1. The resource is a special element of Kensington Heights' historical and architectural development and retains integrity to the 1929 date of construction and period of significance. Specifically, the resource was built by George Forbes, the president of the Kensington Heights Company, as an early speculation house used to attract buyers and generate interest in the subdivision as well as to set a standard in the community in terms of architectural quality and design.
2. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Spanish Eclectic style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1929 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features an irregular, asymmetrical form with stucco exterior cladding; varied gable and shed roof forms with Spanish clay tile; arched accented front entry; and fenestration consisting primarily of multi light casement and fixed steel 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 property consists of a two story

Spanish Eclectic style residence constructed in 1929 on the west side of Canterbury Drive where it intersects with Palisades Road at the north end of the Kensington Heights Subdivision.

The historic name of the resource, the George Forbes Spec House #2, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of George Forbes, who constructed the house as a speculation house.

ANALYSIS

A historical resource research report was prepared by Kathleen Crawford of the Office of Marie Burke Lia, which concludes that the resource is significant under Criteria A and C and staff concurs. 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 community of Kensington is made up of five separate subdivisions: Kensington Park, Kensington Park Annex, Kensington Park Extension, Kensington Talmadge, and finally Kensington Heights, which is located at the north end of the Kensington community and was the last to be developed. In 1920, George Forbes purchased the land north of Kensington Manor and contracted with the Davis-Baker Real Estate Company to develop what would become Kensington Heights. Collectively, they were known as the Kensington Heights Company with George Forbes as president. In an attempt to create a cohesive and exclusive community of "luxuriously modest homes of refinement," the developers applied strict architectural design restrictions requiring minimum square footage and building costs as well as Spanish influenced architecture to be reviewed and approved by Richard Requa. The subdivision was to be developed in three separate units of increasing cost and quality.

The primary Kensington Heights Company marketing campaign for the three units of Kensington Heights spanned from 1926 through 1929. The key strategy emphasized the subdivision's exclusivity in terms of location, design quality, lot sizes and landscape design. The promotional campaign also involved residential showcase or model homes to attract prospective buyers. In each of the three Kensington Heights units, Forbes invested personal funds to hire architects and builders to create Spanish Eclectic mansions to showcase the community. He may have financed the 1926 "Contest House" that Davis-Baker promoted as a public design contest in the *San Diego Union*. In truth, the contest was a publicity sham. Requa, in fact, designed the house and Davis-Baker had commercial photographers document its construction. The resulting news hype captured the imagination of San Diegans. A well known model home and one of the earliest built in Unit 3 of Kensington Heights is the Forbes-Requa Model House (HRB Site #569) at 5318 Canterbury Drive, a few doors down from the subject property.

The subject property was also one of the earliest built in Unit 3 of Kensington Heights. The property was built in 1929 by Forbes as an early speculation house, and although the applicant has not provided any advertising documentation to that effect, it is believed by staff that the

property could well have been used as a model home as its construction predates that of the Forbes-Requa Model House (HRB Site #569). The property was built on a choice lot overlooking Mission Valley, meeting or exceeding all design and cost requirements for Unit 3 homes, and was even adorned with extensive landscape material. Forbes sold the subject property just one month after a Notice of Completion was filed. Whether it was used as a model or built as speculation, it was an early Unit 3 home built by Forbes, setting a developmental standard for the exclusive community and certainly playing a role in Forbes' promotion of Kensington Heights.

Therefore, with evidence that the home was one of the earliest in the Kensington Heights community and was built by Forbes and used as a speculative home to generate interest and investment in Kensington Heights, staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion A.

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 Eclectic style residence constructed in 1929. A two car detached garage of similar architectural detailing is located to the west (rear) of the main residence. The main building's overall form is irregular, and exhibits a concrete foundation with stucco exterior and gable and shed roof forms of Spanish clay tile. Original fenestration consists primarily of multi light casement and fixed steel windows. The primary (east) façade features an arched, recessed entry with a single wood door. The second story is highlighted by windows with shutters or wrought iron grilles and a wrap around wrought iron balcony at the southeast corner.

Various modifications to the subject property have overall little effect on the building's integrity as it relates to its 1929 construction. At the east (front) elevation: two false balconies have been removed from windows on the north end of the first floor; decorative archway tile at the entry has been removed or covered by a layer of stucco; a false chimney was removed above the entry; and two sets of doors were replaced at the southeast corner second story balcony with multi light casement metal windows to match. A small shed roof cover was added over the entry door at the south (side) elevation. At the west (rear) elevation was the enclosure of the 2nd floor covered porch at the southwest corner and the enclosure of the open patio to the north. These enclosures utilized wood casement windows of matching light patterns to the existing original windows. The main residence has been reroofed with appropriate Spanish clay tile to match the original. Finally, it appears that the Sanborn Map may have misrepresented the size and location of the original detached garage. Based on historic photos provided by the applicant (Attachment 1) the detached garage at the rear of the property looks to have been merely expanded with pop-outs occurring at the west and north elevations.

Following the 1915-1916 Panama-California Exposition, the romantic ideal of Spanish and Latin American architecture was revived. What resulted was the Spanish Eclectic style which 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. These may be of Moorish, Byzantine, Gothic, or Renaissance inspirations, an unusually rich and varied series of decorative precedents. 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 other openings; and accented entries.

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. The house continues to convey the historic significance of Spanish Eclectic architecture by embodying the character defining features of the style including the asymmetrical façade; Spanish clay tile roof; smooth stucco exterior walls; accented windows and front entry; and multi light casement and fixed steel windows. 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 Forbes Spec House #2 located at 5358 Canterbury Drive be designated with a period of significance of 1929 under HRB Criteria A and C as a special element of Kensington Heights' historical and architectural development, and as a resource that embodies the distinctive characteristics of Spanish Eclectic style architecture. The designation excludes the rear patio enclosure at the northwest corner, and the second floor covered porch enclosure at the southwest corner. 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

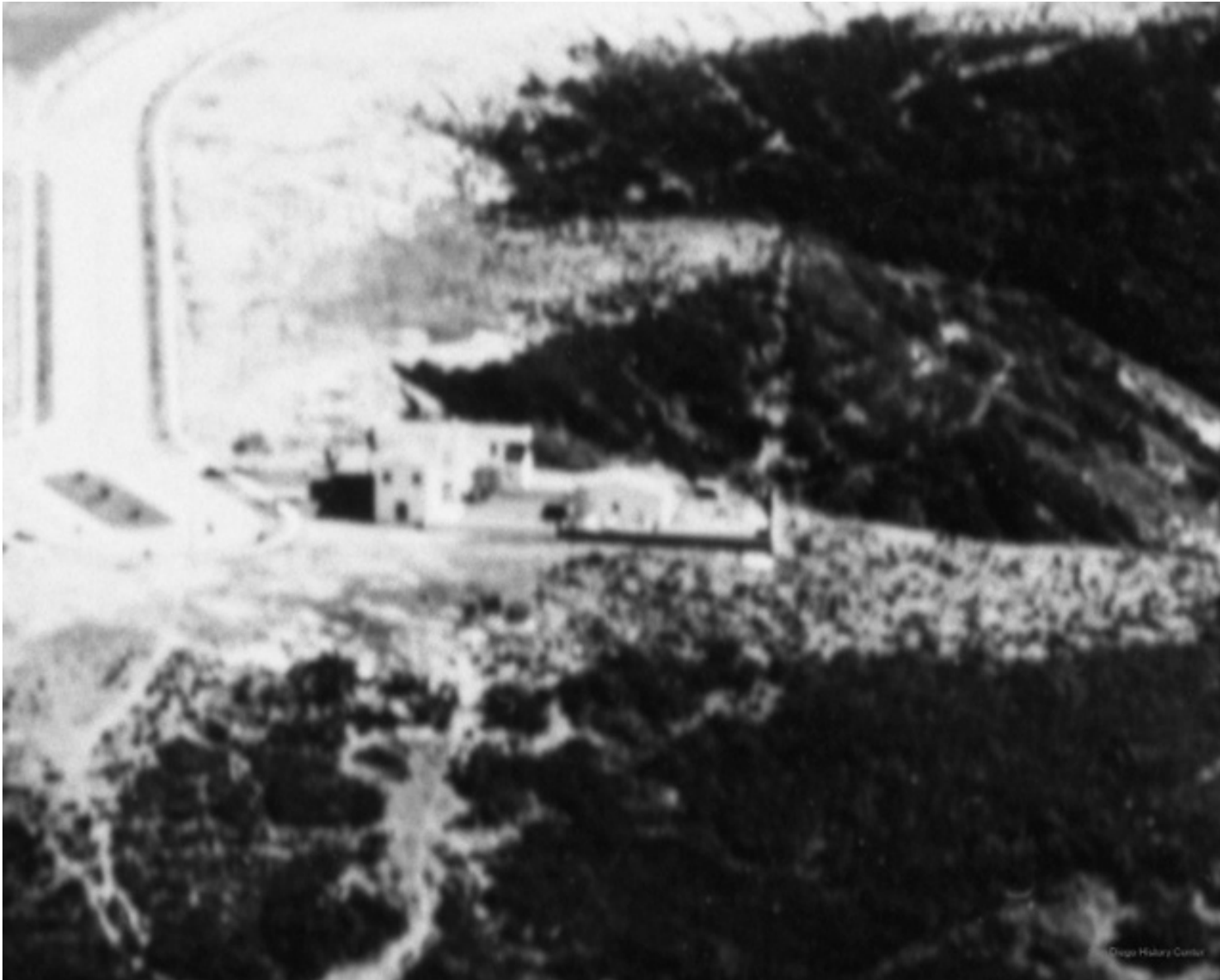


Cathy Winterrowd
Assistant Deputy Director/HRB Liaison

CP/ks/cw

Attachments:

1. Historic Photograph of North Elevation (ca. 1929)
2. Draft Resolution
3. Applicant's Historical Report under separate cover



5358 Canterbury Drive – North Elevation (ca. 1929)

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON 6/27/2013

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 6/27/2013, to consider the historical designation of the **George Forbes Spec House #2** (owned by William Jones and Cheryl Sueing-Jones, 5358 Canterbury Drive, San Diego, CA 92116) located at **5358 Canterbury Drive, San Diego, CA 92116**, APN: **440-011-05-00**, further described as LOT 260 POR OF LOT A & ALL OF 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 Forbes Spec House #2** on the following findings:

(1) The property is historically significant under CRITERION A as a special element of Kensington Heights' historical and architectural development and retains integrity to the 1929 date of construction and period of significance. Specifically, the resource was built by George Forbes, the president of the Kensington Heights Company, as an early speculation house used to attract buyers and generate interest in the subdivision as well as to set a standard in the community in terms of architectural quality and design. 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 C for its distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Spanish Eclectic style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1929 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features an irregular, asymmetrical form with stucco exterior cladding; varied gable and shed roof forms with Spanish clay tile; arched accented front entry; and fenestration consisting primarily of multi light casement and fixed steel 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 rear patio enclosure at the northwest corner, and the second floor covered porch enclosure at the southwest corner.

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