



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: February 12, 2015 REPORT NO. HRB-15-013

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board
Agenda of February 26, 2015

SUBJECT: **ITEM #11 – Nathan Rigdon Spec House #3 (HRB Site #1113)**

APPLICANT: Elizabeth Willis Revocable Trust represented by Legacy 106, Inc.

LOCATION: 1515 West Lewis Street, Uptown Community, Council District 3

DESCRIPTION: Consider an amendment to the designation of the Nathan Rigdon Spec House #3 (HRB Site #1113) located at 1515 West Lewis Street to include designation under HRB Criterion B.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Do not amend the designation of the Nathan Rigdon Spec House #3 (HRB Site #1113) located at 1515 West Lewis Street to include designation under HRB Criterion B.

BACKGROUND

This item is being brought before the Historical Resources Board in conjunction with the owner's desire to amend the designation of HRB Site #1113 located at 1515 West Lewis Street, in accordance with SDMC Section 123.0205.

The subject property was historically designated by the Board on July 25, 2013 under HRB Criterion D as a notable work of Master Builder Nathan Rigdon and as an important example of his early work in the Mission Hills Box style, with a period of significance of 1910. Following the hearing, the consultant provided a Supplemental Research Report which included additional information about one of the resource's occupants, Ruth Lindley. The applicant wishes for the Board to review this information and consider amending the existing designation to include Criterion B.

ANALYSIS

A Supplemental Research Report was prepared by Legacy 106, Inc., which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criterion B. Staff finds that the site is not a significant

historical resource under HRB Criterion B due to a lack of historical significance and associative integrity. This determination is consistent with the *Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria*, as follows.

CRITERION B - Is identified with persons or events significant in local, state or national history.

Fred and Alma Lindley owned and occupied the subject property from 1920 to 1975. Their daughter Ruth Lindley was born in 1921 and grew up in the subject property. In her adolescence, she attended San Diego High School and San Diego State College. After developing an affinity for flying and obtaining her pilot's license in 1940, Lindley left for Texas in 1943 to begin her training in the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) paramilitary organization.

The WASP program began in 1942 with the merging of the Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron (WAFS) and the Women's Flying Training Detachment (WFTD) under the leadership of renowned aviators Nancy Harkness Love and Jacqueline Cochran. The WASP program was finally approved as the U.S. entered WWII and when it became clear to U.S. Army Air Force officials that WASP would be needed in the face of an increasing shortage of pilots and increasing combat losses. The women of WASP did not study combat tactics and were generally restricted to flying within the United States; however they were expected to master a wide variety of aircraft from agile trainers, to heavy bombers, to swift fighters, and deliver them to airfields as needed for the war effort. Until the program ended in 1944, just over a thousand women had served their country in a time of great need through the WASP program. In recent decades, WASP veterans have gained well-deserved recognition for their service; and Avenger Field near Sweetwater, Texas has been rightly selected for the home of the National WASP World War II Museum which opened in 2005.

Lindley joined her fellow pilots to begin her WASP training at Avenger Field outside Sweetwater, Texas in February of 1943. After graduation, she was placed in the 5th ferrying group and stationed at Love Field in Dallas, Texas. During her service, she flew nearly every make of fighter aircraft and advanced enough to acquire certification to deliver fighters to the frontlines. In September of 1944, Lindley returned to San Diego for her wedding ceremony at the family home. Shortly thereafter, Lindley announced her retirement as a WASP and left for her new home with her husband in Great Falls, Montana.

Determining a resource's eligibility under Criterion B for significant person(s) is multifaceted and requires first determining the importance of the individual, and second determining that the resource retains associative integrity for that individual. The associative integrity is established first by determining a direct link to the individual's significant achievements based on the length and nature of their association with the resource, and second by determining that the resource is sufficiently intact to be best identified with the significant individual.

The *Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria* state, "a person would not be considered historically significant simply by virtue of position/title, association, affiliation etc." While the historic significance of the WASP program is clear, and Lindley's participation in it is highly admirable, her individual contributions within that context do not rise to a level of significance to warrant designation of the subject property under

Criterion B. Lindley served honorably and did her job well, however she did not achieve singular greatness among her peers within the WASP program. Furthermore, Lindley's association with the property is not strongly related to her significant activities and achievements between 1943 and 1944 for which she has been nominated by the applicant. Lindley's association with the resource is more commemorative in nature as the place where she spent her childhood and celebrated her marriage. Also, staff feels that any significance Lindley may deliver in her association with the WASP program may be best represented at the air fields where she was trained and stationed during her service.

The report does not adequately demonstrate the historical significance of the individual achievements and contributions of Ruth Lindley, nor does it detail the requisite associative integrity of the subject property. Therefore staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion B.

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, it is recommended that the designation of the Nathan Rigdon Spec House #3 (HRB Site #1113) located at 1515 West Lewis Street not be amended to include Criterion B. The resource would continue to be maintained in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards as HRB Site #1113. The benefits of the existing designation will remain, including 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
Associate Planner



Kelley Stanco
Senior Planner/HRB Liaison

CP/ks

Attachment:

1. Applicant's Supplemental Research Report (under separate cover)