



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: September 10, 2015 REPORT NO. HRB-15-041

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board
Agenda of September 24, 2015

SUBJECT: **ITEM #8 – 3136 James Street**

APPLICANT: Aaron and Laura Schneir represented by Scott A. Moomjian

LOCATION: 3136 James Street, Peninsula Community, Council District 2

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the property located at 3136 James Street as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Do not designate the property located at 3136 James Street under any adopted HRB Criteria.

BACKGROUND

This item is being brought before the Historical Resources Board in conjunction with a proposed building modification or demolition of a structure of 45 years or more, consistent with San Diego Municipal Code Section 143.0212. The building is a one-story single-family residence built in 1922 on the north side of James Street, east of Evergreen Street in the Manasse and Schiller's Subdivision of the Peninsula Community.

The building is located on APN 450-344-10-00. The property was identified in the Quieter Home Program (QHP) Report 1D in 2003 and given a former National Register status code of 4R, "May become a contributor to a listed/eligible/appears eligible district."

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Scott Moomjian, which concludes that the resource is not significant under any HRB Criteria 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.

Research into the history of the property at 3136 James Street did not reveal any information to indicate that the property exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's or Peninsula's historical, archaeological, cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, landscaping or architectural development. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion A.

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

Research into the owners and tenants of the property at 3136 James Street did not reveal any individuals who could be considered historically significant in local, state or national history. Furthermore, no events of local, state or national significance are known to have occurred at the subject property. Therefore, the property is not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion B.

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 one-story Spanish Eclectic style single-family residence constructed in 1922 of standard wood frame construction on a concrete foundation with floor joists. The building exhibits an irregular, "U"-shaped plan form with an asymmetrical primary elevation. The building is clad in smooth stucco and the roof form is uniformly flat with a parapet that steps slightly up to the central mass containing the front-facing stucco chimney. The primary entry consists of a concrete porch covered by a fabric awning located at the southeast corner of the property, along the driveway side of the building. Decorative features are somewhat scarce – limited generally to rectangular roof vents and subtle geometric trim around windows and entry door at the primary elevation only. Fenestration is varied, consisting of 8-light wood casement pairs at the primary elevation, 6-over-1 wood double hung windows and 1-over-1 vinyl double hung windows.

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, and 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 property has undergone relatively few alterations over the years and retains a good level of integrity in terms of its design, materials, workmanship and feeling. In 2005, 23 windows and 3 doors were replaced "in kind" with newer wood and vinyl windows as part of the San Diego

Quieter Homes Program (QHP). The property was evaluated under National Register criteria and identified as a potential contributor to a potential historic district at that time. The proposed window and door replacements for QHP were approved by City staff as a modification consistent with the US Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

The property generally retains a good level of integrity; however, it fails to present an adequate level of significance to be determined individually eligible for designation. The information provided in the report does not suitably demonstrate any clear architectural significance. The building is very stylistically reserved. Only limited distinguishing features are presented, enough to only just convey a Spanish Eclectic style influence. The building lacks much architectural detailing to classify it as a highly representative or valuable example of the Spanish Eclectic style, such as elaborated, inset or arched focal windows and doors; a varied or accented roof form; decorative wrought iron detailing or tile work; elaborated chimney tops; or tower elements. The property does not embody the distinctive characteristics of the Spanish Eclectic style sufficient to convey the historic significance of that style. The building is not a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials nor does it exemplify high craftsmanship and design. The building does not embody the distinctive characteristics of a rare or unique building type or method of construction. Finally, the building's age and physical features do not exemplify or reflect the era when its style, type or method of construction became popular. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion C.

CRITERION D - Is representative of a notable work of a master builder, designer, architect, engineer, landscape architect, interior designer, artist or craftsman.

The subject property at 3136 James Street was built by contractor Joel L. Brown. Brown has not been established by the Historical Resources Board as a Master Architect, Designer or Builder, and there is insufficient information to designate him as such at this time. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion D.

CRITERION E - Is listed or has been determined eligible by the National Park Service for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or is listed or has been determined eligible by the State Historical Preservation Office for listing on the State Register of Historical Resources.

The property at 3136 James Street has not been listed on or determined eligible for listing on the State or National Registers. Therefore, the property is not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion E.

CRITERION F - Is a finite group of resources related to one another in a clearly distinguishable way or is a geographically definable area or neighborhood containing improvements which have a special character, historical interest or aesthetic value or which represent one or more architectural periods or styles in the history and development of the City.

The property at 3136 James Street is not located within a designated historic district. Therefore, the property is not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion F.

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 not recommended that the property located at 3136 James Street be designated under any HRB Criteria. 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
Associate Planner



Kelley Stanco
Senior Planner/HRB Liaison

CP/ks

Attachment:

1. Applicant's Historical Report under separate cover