



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

# Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: September 22, 2008 REPORT NO. HRB-08-059

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board  
Agenda of September 25, 2008

SUBJECT: ITEM 8 – ELIZABETH SULLIVAN FREY HOUSE/SPINDRIFT  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE #5

APPLICANT: Marie Burke Lia on behalf of the property owner, Lee Carson

LOCATION: 7961 St Louis Terrace, La Jolla Community, Council District 1

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Elizabeth Sullivan Frey House/Spindrift Archaeological Site #5 located at 7961 St Louis Terrace as a historical resource.

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Elizabeth Sullivan Frey House/Spindrift Archaeological Site #5 located at 7961 St Louis Terrace as a historical resource under HRB Criteria A and C. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

1. The resource exemplifies special elements of the City's archaeological and cultural development as evidenced by the documented association to the significant Spindrift archaeological site located within the traditional territory of the Kumeyaay people and known to be of cultural significance to today's Kumeyaay tribes of San Diego.
2. The resource embodies distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Spanish Eclectic architectural style and retains a good level of integrity from its 1927 period of significance.



## 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 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 resource is a single story, irregularly shaped, asymmetrical, Spanish Eclectic style single family residence home built in 1927.

The house was constructed under the ownership of Elizabeth Sullivan Frey in the original La Jolla Vista subdivision of the current La Jolla Shores residential community. The resource rests within the boundaries of the regionally significant Spindrift Archaeological Site (SDM-W-1; SDI-39), a known prehistoric village occupied by native peoples of San Diego over a period of several thousand years. Consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy, the historic name, the Elizabeth Sullivan Frey House/Spindrift Archaeological Site #5, includes the name of the owner of record at the time of construction and archaeological site name.

## ANALYSIS

A historical resource research report was prepared by the Office of Marie Burke Lia which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criterion C (Attachment 1). In addition, a cultural resources study was prepared by Brian F. Smith & Associates which concludes that remnants of the significant Spindrift Archaeological site are found within the property boundaries. Staff concurs that the site is a significant historical resource under HRB Criterion C and has determined that the site is also a significant historical resource under HRB Criterion A, 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.*

This property is located within the mapped boundaries of a regionally significant archaeological site known as the Spindrift Site, (CA-SDI-39/17,372, SDMM-W-1). This site encompasses a large habitation area known to its Kumeyaay inhabitants as *Mut kula xuy/Mut lah hoy ya* (place of many caves). The area is composed of several large midden areas, temporary camps, pottery and lithic scatters, various shell scatters, and burials. The site is composed of multiple, consecutive layers representative of different cultural phases found in the San Diego region. The 20-acre knoll, historically known as the Richards Tract and the La Jolla Vista Tract, was originally investigated and recorded by Malcolm Rogers during the late 1920s, and by James Moriarty in the 1960s, and has been associated with occupations by groups from the La Jolla Complex and the Late Prehistoric Kumeyaay.

The HRB's first designation of a portion of the Spindrift site was in 1999 (HRB #390). Other portions of the Spindrift site (HRB #638, #813 and #818) were designated between 2003 and 2007. Previously, the HRB considered whether to develop a policy of pre-designating the entire Spindrift site so that property owners would be informed before they embark on projects with the potential to adversely impact the significant site. Administrative issues associated with this approach resulted in a continuation of parcels being considered on a case-by-case basis as

projects are processed through the Development Services Department. In 2007, the Archaeology Subcommittee began reviewing the potential for creating an archaeological geographic historic district encompassing all the properties within the known and mapped boundaries of this significant archaeological and Native American site.

The archaeological fieldwork conducted at this property resulted in the identification of cultural materials and deposits within the property boundaries that have been disturbed by the development of the neighborhood in the 1920s and by grading for the present lot. The archaeological survey was conducted by inspecting all areas of bare soil within the landscape possessing adequate ground visibility. All of the planters surrounding the house contained a few weathered shell fragments associated with the prehistoric occupation of SDI-39. Subsurface excavations within the project area consisted of three shovel test pits (STPs 1, 2, and 3) and one standard 1-x-1-meter test unit (TU 1). The excavations indicated that the subsurface soil present at the project is generally a moderately compact, mottled composite of various imported fills, often mixed with prehistoric cultural deposits. All of the excavated levels of soil from TU 1 and STPs 1, 2, and 3 contained trash including bricks, metal, and glass and landscape debris such as, plastic, geo-grid matting and irrigation hose/pipe debris. None of the trash was temporally or functionally diagnostic and could not be definitively ascribed to the historic period (at least 45 years old).

Subsurface excavations resulted in the recovery of prehistoric lithic artifacts, ceramics, and marine shell. Of the 47 lithic artifacts recovered, lithic production waste was the dominant artifact category, followed by one groundstone implement, and two stone tools. The presence of ceramics indicates a Late Prehistoric/Kumeyaay cultural affiliation. No evidence of any prehistoric features was observed during the excavations. Although the portion of the site within the subject parcel is disturbed and does not retain integrity, due to the significant nature of Site SDI-39 throughout this La Jolla neighborhood, any impacts to this resource are considered significant by the City of San Diego. An archaeological site designation summary was submitted to the San Diego Historical Resources Board to officially document the 7961 Saint Louis Terrace portion of SDI-39 as an official City of San Diego Historical Resource (Attachment 2). This is based on the elements of the being significant under Criterion A, as exemplifying and reflecting special elements of the City's historical, archaeological and cultural development.

HRB staff concurs with this determination and recommends the Board designate the site under Criterion A as the resource exemplifies special elements of the City's archaeological and cultural development as evidenced by the documented association to the significant Spindrift archaeological site located within the traditional territory of the Kumeyaay people and known to be of cultural significance to today's Kumeyaay tribes of San Diego.

*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 property at 7961 St Louis Terrace has a concrete foundation, stucco exterior and mixed gable roof with Spanish tile and exposed rafters. The rear and south sides of the house include a flat roof and a shed roof portion with Spanish tile. A stuccoed brick chimney is present on the front elevation. A low wall and terrace are present at the front of the house. The entrance is located at the

juncture of the two major house wings, with concrete walkway and steps leading to an arched and inset doorway. Doors include French with multi-lite window and wood with single pane. Windows are wood framed, multi-lite in a variety of styles, including casement, fixed pane, and double hung sash. Windows vary in size, shape and placement around the building with two prominent windows in the front set in arched openings.

A two car, detached garage is located at the rear of the lot at the end of a long driveway on the south portion of the site. This structure has a stucco exterior, flat roof with tiled shed roof portion and metal door. The property is landscaped with mature bushes, grass lawn and trees. The house and site has been maintained and is in good condition.

According to the residential building record, the property was remodeled in 1944 with the addition of a room on the south end of the building. The addition includes a flat roof with a red tile cap along the parapet. It is set back from the street elevation, differentiated from the original by use of a flat roof line and does not significantly detract from the character of the resource. The 1949 Sanborn map shows the house in its current configuration, including the small addition

Therefore, staff recommends that the Board designate the resource located at 7961 St Louis Terrace as a historical resource under HRB Criterion C as a good example of Spanish Eclectic architecture embodying distinctive characteristics of the style and retaining a good level of integrity from its 1927 period of significance.

#### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The removal of the tile cap along the flat side roof and garage parapets and restoration of a simple stucco parapet in its place will be included as a condition of any future Mills Act agreement. Additional 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 Elizabeth Sullivan Frey House/Spindrift Archaeological Site #5 located at 7961 St Louis Terrace be designated under HRB Criteria A and C. 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.



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Cathy Winterrowd  
Senior Planner/Program Coordinator

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Attachments:

1. Applicant's Historical Report under separate cover
2. Confidential Archaeological Site Information (not for public review)