



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

# Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: July 9, 2009 REPORT NO. HRB-09-050

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board  
Agenda of July 23, 2009

SUBJECT: **Item #13 –Richard M. Hathaway Spec. House No. 2**

APPLICANT: Mary and Fred Buchanan Family Disclaimer Trust, property owners  
represented by Legacy 106, Inc., consultant

LOCATION: 1855 Altamira Place, Uptown Community, Council District 2

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Richard M. Hathaway Spec. House No. 2  
as a historical resource.

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Richard M. Hathaway Spec. House No. 2 at 1855 Altamira Place as a historical resource under HRB Criteria C. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

The resource embodies distinctive characteristics through retention of character defining features of the Spanish Eclectic architectural style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1925 period of significance.



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## BACKGROUND

This item is being brought before the Historical Resources Board at the owner's request to have the house and site designated as a historical resource. The house at 1855 Altamira Place is a single family home, which was originally designed and constructed by Richard M. Hathaway in 1925.

The historic name of the house is based on the original owner who designed the house and had it built and is consistent with the adopted naming policy.

## ANALYSIS

A historical resource research report was prepared by Legacy 106 Inc. on behalf of the property owners, the Buchanan Family Trust, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria A and C. Staff concurs with the determination that the resource is significant under HRB Criterion C as a good example of a Spanish Eclectic style. Staff does not concur under 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.*

The consultant has proposed that the house at 1855 Altamira Place is significant for exemplifying the architectural transition from Craftsman style houses to Spanish Eclectic style houses within the Mission Hills area. While the report provides sufficient statistics on the number and style of homes in the surrounding community, the consultant has not fully developed the material to support the designation of this property under Criterion A as it relates to the architectural transition between two styles.

The consultant has also proposed that the house is significant as an example of small scale development. In 1921, the Hathaways moved into an existing Craftsman style residence on Altamira and proceeded to acquire lots 1, 2, and 4, which are located on either side of their residence. Between early 1924 and late 1925, Richard Hathaway completed a house for each lot. Each house has a similar appearance with smooth-sand stucco, square massing and Spanish Eclectic architecture.

The consultant provided information on the quick succession of owners of 1855 Altamira Place and the importance of the first three owners, but did not adequately address the idea of the "small scale development." While Hathaway constructed three homes on the same street, it appears to be more related to "right time, right place." The consultant mentions that when the properties were deeded to the Carles, there were several lots in the City of Coronado that were transferred to the Hathaways, but the consultant did not fully evaluate the lots in Coronado or elsewhere in the city to determine if Richard Hathaway was indeed a small scale developer. The relationships between the Hathaways, the Carles and the Lichtys was speculative and did not add a necessary dimension to the theory that Hathaway was a small scale developer and staff does not

recommend designation of the property under Criterion A exemplifying or reflecting special elements of small scale development.

*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 house is rectangular in plan with a front gable sheathed with barrel clay tile and tiered flat roofs with a parapet on the majority of the roof. The rear and highest roof level is the second floor while the tiered roofs behind the front door accommodate an interior staircase. The house is constructed with a balloon frame bolted to the concrete foundation and sheathed with stucco. The windows on the house are generally double hung 1/1 wood windows with the exception of the main focal window. The focal window is an arched tripartite divided light wood window. The window features Salomónica columns that have the appearance of candles.

The front façade has a recessed front porch with a centrally located front door. The original paneled front door is sheltered by a small shed roof sheathed with clay tile. The front porch features a low stucco and wrought iron railing that is stepped down from a higher platform on the porch. The higher platform features a solid low stucco wall with an original painted clay pot. The gable roof portion of the house also features low, narrow wing walls at each corner.

The east elevation features a protruding stucco chimney with an arched/pointed stucco cap. This façade has several window pairs placed evenly on the wall plain and shows the gable to flat roof transition.

The south (rear) elevation features a one story projection and a non historic door that provides access to the yard. The façade features several pairs of windows placed evenly on the wall plane. The rear yard also features an original detached garage with access from the alley.

The west façade shows the transition from the one story to the two story transition. This façade features several pairs of double hung window spaced evenly on the wall plane.

The consultant also believes that the interior fireplace with Batchelder tile, the plastered walls in the living room, dining room, family room, entry vestibule, staircase, walls and ceiling along with the open beams are note-worthy and should be included in the designation along with the front yard landscaping. The Yucca trees that flank the main arched window (which appear in the 1925 newspaper ad) as well as the front yard shrubs were present when the Buchanan family purchased the house in 1957 and the consultant believes that these items should be included as contributing elements to the resource.

Overall the integrity of the house is good and the house has been maintained. Staff believes that there have been a few minor changes to the exterior of the home, but the alterations do not detract from the historic character of the house. A second floor access wood door to the roof top above the dining room was modified in the 1950s. It is currently a double hung aluminum window. A rear yard access door was also changed in the recent past. Regardless of the modifications, the property is historically significant under Criterion C for its distinctive characteristics of Spanish Eclectic style architecture including the smooth-sand stucco finish; a

tiered flat and gable roof with barrel tile; wood 1/1 double hung windows; arched tripartite divided light focal window with Salomónica columns with a candle motif; associated interior features (interior fireplace with Batchelder tile, the plastered walls in the living room, dining room, family room, entry vestibule, staircase, walls and ceiling along with the open beams) and front yard landscaping features included as contributing resources.

#### 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.

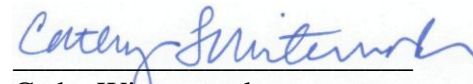
#### CONCLUSION

Based on the information submitted and staff's field check, it is recommended that 1855 Altamira Place is designated as a historical resource under HRB Criterion C as a good example embodying distinctive characteristics of Spanish Eclectic style architecture with associated interior features (interior fireplace with Batchelder tile, the plastered walls in the living room, dining room, family room, entry vestibule, staircase, walls and ceiling along with the open beams) and front yard landscaping features included as contributing resources.. 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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Senior Planner



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Cathy Winterrowd  
Principal Planner/HRB Liaison

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Attachment(s): Draft Resolution  
Applicant's Historical Report under separate cover