



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

# Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: August 14, 2009 REPORT NO. HRB-09-056

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board  
Agenda of August 27, 2009

SUBJECT: **ITEM # 12 - The Ralph Hurlburt/Alexander Schreiber Spec House # 1**

APPLICANT: Chris and Julie Pallia, owners; represented by Happy Hazard, LLC

LOCATION: 3917 Hawk Street, Uptown Community, Council District 2

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Ralph Hurlburt/Alexander Schreiber Spec House # 1, located at 3917 Hawk Street, as a historical resource.

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Ralph Hurlburt/Alexander Schreiber Spec House # 1 as a historical resource under HRB Criteria C and D. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

1. The resource embodies distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of Colonial Revival style architecture and retains architectural integrity from its 1920 period of significance.
2. The resource is identified as a notable work of Master Architect Ralph Hurlburt and Master Builder Alexander Schreiber.



## BACKGROUND

This item is being brought before the Historical Resources Board at the owners' request to have the property designated as a historical resource. 3917 Hawk Street is a one-story, single family home that was constructed in 1920 and exhibits character defining features of Colonial Revival style architecture. The subject property is located in Arnold and Choate's Addition, a residential subdivision in south Mission Hills.

The house is among a row of adjacent Colonial Revival style bungalows attributed to Master Architect Ralph Hurlburt and Master Builder Alexander Schreiber. In 1919, Hurlburt purchased several adjoining lots on Hawk Street and designed four speculation homes, including the subject property. These houses were constructed by Schreiber the following year.

Staff concurs that the historic name, the Ralph Hurlburt/Alexander Schreiber Spec House # 1, is consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy as it includes the names of both Hurlburt, an established Master Architect, and Schreiber, an established Master Builder. The name also acknowledges that the resource was constructed as a speculation house.

## ANALYSIS

A historical resource research report prepared by Happy Hazard, LLC concludes that the house at 3917 Hawk Street is significant under HRB Criteria C and D. Staff concurs that the resource is significant under both HRB Criteria C and D, as follows:

*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.*

Built in 1920, the 1,464-square-foot subject house embodies many distinctive characteristics of Colonial Revival style architecture. The wood frame house is single storied, rectangular in plan and sits on a concrete foundation. A medium-pitched, jerkinhead-style roof is sheathed in composition shingles and features boxed eaves. Decorative dentils surround the roof. Aside from a red brick chimney on the north elevation, exterior surfaces are clad in narrow shiplap siding.

Reflective of the Colonial Revival style, the front façade of the subject house is balanced and symmetric. At the center of this façade is a portico-style porch, which is supported by two Doric columns and covered by a jerkinhead-style roof projection. A central, solid wood front door – which is accessed by the porch – retains its original hardware and is flanked by sidelights. On either side of the porch and entryway is an identical set of two 8:1 double hung sash windows.

Fenestration consists primarily of double hung wood windows with a multi-paned upper sash and a single-paned lower sash, most of which are grouped in adjacent pairs. Along the structure's north elevation is a single louvered window, and near its southeast corner is a fixed plate glass window. Most likely, the louvered and fixed varieties are not original, but since these windows are installed in original openings and are not visible from the street, they do not significantly detract from the house's architectural integrity.

Adjacent to the main house is a detached, two-car garage with original wooden doors. In the same manner as the subject house, the garage embodies elements of Colonial Revival style architecture and features a jerkinhead-style roof with composition shingles, boxed eaves and narrow shiplap siding. The garage is accessed by a Hollywood-style driveway and is partially obscured from public view by a contemporary wooden fence.

Aside from the aforementioned window replacements, few alterations have been made to the subject house since its initial construction. Building permits reveal that the structure has twice been re-roofed, and in 1991 a fiberglass patio cover was constructed over a rear doorway on the east elevation. Several interior renovations have also been performed. At one point, asbestos siding was installed over the original shiplap boards, but in 2007 it was removed and the shiplap siding was restored. Overall, modifications to the house have been minor in scope, are reversible and do not compromise its character defining features.

In conclusion, the Ralph Hurlburt/Alexander Schreiber Spec House # 1 retains integrity and embodies many distinctive characteristics of Colonial Revival style architecture. These include a symmetrical façade, shiplap siding, a jerkinhead-style roof with boxed eaves, a portico-style front porch with classical columns, an accentuated front door with sidelights, and adjacent pairs of multi-paned windows. Therefore, staff recommends 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.*

Master Architect Ralph E. Hurlburt, born and raised in Nebraska, initially worked as a banker in his home state. In his youth he had also been trained in the construction trade, and in 1916 he moved to San Diego and his career shifted to architecture. Shortly after his arrival, Hurlburt renovated the Mathew Sherman home into the Sherman Apartments with his uncle, and by the early 1920s he had emerged as one of the city's foremost residential architects. He designed numerous homes in the Colonial Revival, English Tudor, French Eclectic, Italian Renaissance and Spanish Eclectic styles until his death in 1942.

Hurlburt is known for infusing quality craftsmanship into his period revival style homes and has been awarded the title of Master Architect by the HRB. To date, six of his structures have been designated by the Board as historical sites, including:

- HRB # 464 – The Wonder House of Stone
- HRB # 523 – James C. and Lillie Byers/Ralph E Hurlburt House
- HRB # 613 – Alfred LaMotte/Hurlburt and Tifal House
- HRB # 697 – Edwin and Rose Emerson/Hurlburt and Tifal House
- HRB # 824 – Sam and Mary McPherson/Ralph E. Hurlburt and Charles Tifal House
- HRB # 906 – John Snyder/Ralph E. Hurlburt and Charles H. Tifal Spec House # 1

Master Builder Alexander Schreiber was born in Otis, Kansas in 1887 and moved to San Diego in 1911. Initially he was a carpenter, but by 1916 he was identified in the City Directory as a building contractor, and in 1920 he opened a real estate office in Hillcrest. Over the next two decades, Schreiber constructed numerous residential and commercial buildings throughout the

city in North Park, University Heights, Mission Hills, South Park, Encanto and Point Loma. He retired from practice in 1940 and died in 1947.

Schreiber was among the city's most prolific contractors in the interwar period, and as such was recognized as a Master Builder by the HRB in 1990. Like Hurlburt, Schreiber is acclaimed for his skilled craftsmanship, and the Master Builder is also credited with constructing the first home in San Diego completely wired for electric appliances. Of the structures built by Schreiber, five have been designated by the Board as historical sites, including:

- HRB # 522 – Claude and Edna Bradley Woolman/Alexander Schreiber House
- HRB # 618 – Alexander Schreiber Spec House # 1
- HRB # 730 – Alexander Schreiber Spec House # 2
- HRB # 762 – Alexander Schreiber Spec House # 3
- HRB # 772 – Alexander Schreiber Spec House # 4

Though Hurlburt and Schreiber were both accomplished in their own right, only a handful of structures have been jointly attributed to both masters. 3917 Hawk Street, therefore, stands out as a rare and remarkably intact example of Hurlburt and Schreiber's collaboration. For this reason, staff concurs that the subject house merits designation under HRB Criterion D.

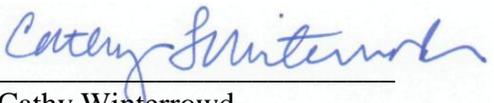
#### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

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 Ralph Hurlburt/Alexander Schreiber Spec House # 1 be designated under HRB Criterion C for embodying characteristics of Colonial Revival style architecture and retaining integrity from its 1920 period of significance, and HRB Criterion D as a notable work of Master Architect Ralph Hurlburt and Master Builder Alexander Schreiber. 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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Andrew Goodrich  
Planning Intern

  
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Cathy Winterrowd  
Principal Planner/HRB Liaison

AG/ks/cw

- Attachments: 1. Draft Resolution  
2. Applicant's Historical Report under Separate Cover

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A  
ADOPTED ON 8/27/2009

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 8/27/2009, to consider the historical designation of the **Ralph Hurlburt/Alexander Schreiber Spec House # 1** (owned by Chris & Julia Pallia, 10537 Sand Crab Place, San Diego, CA 92130) located at **3917 Hawk Street, San Diego, CA 92103**, APN: **444-614-03-00**, further described as The south fifteen feet of Lot 5, all of Lot 6 and the north ten feet of Lot 7 in Block 75 of Arnold and Choate's Addition according to Map no. 334 filed in the office of the County Recorder of San Diego County, November 29, 1872. Also the east 10 feet 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 Ralph Hurlburt/Alexander Schreiber Spec House # 1 on the following findings:

(1) The property is historically significant under CRITERION C as it embodies distinctive characteristics of Colonial Revival style architecture through the retention of character defining features and retains architectural integrity from its period of significance, the construction date of 1920. Specifically, the house retains a symmetrical façade; narrow shiplap siding; a jerkinhead-style roof and boxed eaves; a portico-style front porch with classical columns; an accentuated front door with sidelights; and adjacent pairs of multi-paned windows. This finding is further supported by the staff report, the historical research report, and written and oral evidence presented at the designation hearing; and

(2) The property is historically significant under CRITERION D as a notable work of Master Architect Ralph Hurlburt and Master Builder Alexander Schreiber. Specifically, the house stands out as a rare and remarkably intact example of Hurlburt and Schreiber's collaboration. 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 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: \_\_\_\_\_  
NINA FAIN  
Deputy City Attorney