



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: May 19, 2011 REPORT NO. HRB-11-031

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board
Agenda of May 26, 2011

SUBJECT: **ITEM #9 – Emma Spargle Chanter/Martin V. Melhorn House**

APPLICANT: Chuck Leib represented by IS Architecture

LOCATION: 4139 Palmetto Way, Uptown Community, Council District 2

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Emma Spargle Chanter/Martin V. Melhorn House located at 4139 Palmetto Way as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Emma Spargle Chanter/Martin V. Melhorn House located at 4139 Palmetto Way as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1922 under HRB Criteria C and D. The designation shall exclude the c.1940s-50s laundry room addition to the original detached garage. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

1. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Craftsman style with Japanese influences and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1922 period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits a wide, low-pitch cross-gabled roof; wide fascia; exposed rafter tails; stucco siding; Japonesque gable front porch with twin triple porch supports, cross beams and an



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arched porch ceiling constructed with narrow slats; and single pane and multi-lite fixed and casement wood frame and sash windows.

2. The resource is representative of a notable work of Master Builder Martin V. Melhorn and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the resource is a highly intact and well executed example of Melhorn's work in the Craftsman style and reflects a high level of design and construction.

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. The building is a one story house located in the North Florence Heights Subdivision of the Mission Hills Neighborhood within the Uptown Community Planning Area.

The historic name of the resource, the Emma Spargle Chanter/Martin V. Melhorn House, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Emma Spargle Chanter, who had the house built as her personal residence, and Martin V. Melhorn, an established Master Builder.

ANALYSIS

A historical resource research report was prepared by IS Architecture, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria B, C and D. Staff concurs that the site is a significant historical resource under HRB Criteria C and D but not under Criterion B. 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.

Mabel F. Culbertson (1874-1948) owned and resided at 4139 Palmetto Way from August, 1924 until December, 1935 when she sold the house and moved to 2965 2nd Avenue. Culbertson was a landscape artist who painted in the Plein-Air and California Impressionist traditions. Although the report notes that she was listed in "Artist in California 1786-1940" and "Who's Who in American Art," there is little information to establish that Culbertson was regarded as a significant artist during her time or by present-day artists, critics or scholars. In addition, if such information were available, the report would need to demonstrate that Culbertson was not only a significant artist, but an historically significant individual. Therefore, staff does not recommend 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 at 4139 Palmetto Way is a one story Craftsman Bungalow home built in 1922 and features a low-pitched cross-gable roof; overhanging eaves; exposed rafter tails; stucco over wood frame construction; and a concrete foundation. A centralized scored and painted concrete walkway and steps lead to the front porch. The porch is the primary focus of this Craftsman Bungalow and consists of wide fascia, exposed rafters, and wide overhang with Japanese architectural influences such as the set of twin triple porch supports and cross beams, an arched porch ceiling constructed with narrow slats, and a secondary fascia with an insert creating an arched feel at the apex of the porch and east elevation. Fenestration on the main façade or west elevation is symmetrical featuring a full-light segmented arched door with a plain wood frame screen. The main entrance is flanked by a pair of twelve-over-one double hung windows with plain lintels and sills. Fenestration on the remaining facades consists of single-pane and multi-lite fixed and casement wood frame and sash windows. A large bow window is located on the south elevation. The stucco chimney with segmental arch relief and convex corners is located on the north elevation. Craftsman style attic vents are located below the rafters of the north, south, and east or rear elevation of the house. A detached garage is located at the rear with a more recent laundry room addition attached.

Modifications include an early circa 1940s-50s laundry room added to the original detached garage, a newer aluminum garage door, and an altered Hollywood-style driveway with an in-filled median. No construction permits associated with this property have been identified, although the house, garage and laundry room addition were re-stuccoed from a medium-sand texture to a semi-rough hand trowled texture within the last ten years. The current owners have reversed this change and returned the house to a more appropriate light sand stucco texture. All of the modifications have a minor impact on the integrity of the house.

The house embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Craftsman style with Japanese influences, as described above, and retains integrity to its 1922 date of construction. Therefore, staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion C. The designation shall exclude the c.1940s-50s laundry room addition to the original detached garage.

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

Martin V. Melhorn (1866-1926) moved to San Diego in 1911 and formed the Bay City Construction Company with John J. Wahrenberger and John C. Rice as his partners. Bay City Construction lasted until 1916 and during this time Melhorn and Wahrenberger both predominantly designed in the Craftsman and Arts & Crafts styles. In 1913 Melhorn started another company, Alberta Security Company, with his wife Alberta, which focused on the financial aspects of his construction business. Bay City Construction Company was dissolved when John Wahrenberger became ill in 1916 at which time Melhorn began working under the name Martin V. Melhorn Investments. During this time Melhorn's design style shifted away from Arts & Crafts and became more experimental and he designed larger residences for leading

citizens of San Diego. Martin V. Melhorn died on August 17, 1926. However, the Alberta Security Company and his son, William B. Melhorn continued to acquire land, develop and build. Melhorn was established by the Board as a Master Builder in 1993 with the designation of HRB Site #318.

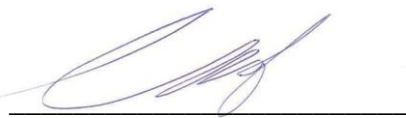
4139 Palmetto Way reflects Melhorn's later work in San Diego and is considered to be one of the first projects involving the Alberta Security Company and M.V. Melhorn & Son Designers and Builders. The subject property is a Craftsman Bungalow with design elements deriving from the Japonesque aesthetic. This property and other houses on the block feature a concentration of his innovative designs constructed between 1916 and 1922. Therefore, staff recommends designation of the subject property under HRB Criterion D as a resource that is representative of a notable work of Master Builder Martin V. Melhorn.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

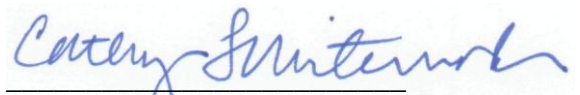
If the property is designated by the HRB, conditions related to restoration or rehabilitation of the resource may be identified by staff during the Mills Act application process, and included in any future Mills Act contract.

CONCLUSION

Based on the information submitted and staff's field check, it is recommended that the Emma Spargle Chanter/Martin V. Melhorn House located at 4139 Palmetto Way be designated with a period of significance of 1922 under HRB Criterion C as a resource that exhibits the distinctive characteristics of Craftsman style architecture with Japanese influences; and HRB Criterion D as a resource that is representative of a notable work of Master Builder Martin V. Melhorn. The designation shall exclude the c.1940s-50s laundry room addition to the original detached garage. 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.



Jeffrey E. Oakley
Associate Planner



Cathy Winterrowd
Principal Planner/HRB Liaison

JO/ks/cw

Attachment(s):

1. Draft Resolution
2. Applicant's Historical Report under separate cover

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON 5/26/2011

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 5/26/2011, to consider the historical designation of the **Emma Spargle Chanter/Martin V. Melhorn House** (owned by Charles G. Leib Jr. and Frank P. Delouise Jr., 4139 Palmetto Way, San Diego, CA 92103) located at **4139 Palmetto Way, San Diego, CA 92103**, APN: **443-473-02-00**, further described as BLK 5 LOTS 11 S 48 FT 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 Emma Spargle Chanter/Martin V. Melhorn House on the following findings:

(1) The property is historically significant under CRITERION C for its distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Craftsman style with Japanese influences and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1922 period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits a wide, low-pitch cross-gabled roof; wide fascia; exposed rafter tails; stucco siding; Japonesque gable front porch with twin triple porch supports, cross beams and an arched porch ceiling constructed with narrow slats; and single pane and multi-lite fixed and casement wood frame and sash windows. This finding is further supported by the staff report, the historical research report, and written and oral evidence presented at the designation hearing.

(2) The property is historically significant under CRITERION D as a notable work of Master Builder Martin V. Melhorn and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the resource is a highly intact and well executed example of Melhorn's work in the Craftsman style and reflects a high level of design and construction. 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**. This designation shall exclude the c.1940s-50s laundry room addition to the original detached garage.

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: _____
KEITH BAUERLE
Deputy City Attorney