



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: October 14, 2011 REPORT NO. HRB-11-067

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board
Agenda of October 27, 2011

SUBJECT: **ITEM #8 – Alfred and Jessica Phinney/Thomas L. Shepherd House**

APPLICANT: Gary L. Greenberg Trust represented by Marie Burke Lia

LOCATION: 7124 Olivetas Avenue, La Jolla Community, Council District 1

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Alfred and Jessica Phinney/Thomas L. Shepherd House located at 7124 Olivetas Avenue as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Alfred and Jessica Phinney/Thomas L. Shepherd House located at 7124 Olivetas Avenue as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1962 under HRB Criteria C and D. The designation excludes the 248 square feet rear addition dating to 1988, and the 68 square feet ground floor addition and 232 square feet second floor addition dating to 2011. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

1. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of French Eclectic Revival style architecture and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1962 period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits steeply pitched hipped roofs with heavy cedar shakes; hipped roof dormers; slightly overhanging eaves with exposed rafter tails; smooth stucco walls with decorative timbering; a wood batten entry door set under a slightly recessed arched opening; multi-lite wood frame and sash fixed and casement windows; and a brick chimney with a decorative top.
2. The resource is representative of a notable work of Master Architect Thomas L. Shepherd and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the resource reflects Shepherd's distinctive and immediately recognizable style, blending classic revival styles of the past with a mid-century design aesthetic.

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 house is a one and two story French Eclectic Revival style house located in the residential subdivision of the First Addition to South La Jolla. The house is one of three adjacent properties designed by Thomas L. Shepherd.

The historic name of the resource, the Alfred and Jessica Phinney/Thomas L. Shepherd House, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of the owners who constructed the house as their personal residence and the name of Thomas L. Shepherd, an established Master Architect.

ANALYSIS

A historical resource research report was prepared by Kathleen Crawford of the office of Marie Burke Lia, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria A, C and D. Staff concurs that the site is a significant historical resource under HRB Criteria C and D, but not HRB Criterion A. 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.

The applicant's report states that the house is significant under HRB Criterion A as a special element of La Jolla's architectural development, as it is one of three adjacent homes designed by Master Architect Thomas L. Shepherd. While it is unique to find such a clustering of Master Architect designed homes, there is no evidence to suggest that this clustering is historically significant and would reflect a special element of La Jolla's architectural development. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion A.

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 and two story French Eclectic Revival style home constructed in 1962, and features steeply pitched hipped roofs with heavy cedar shakes; slightly overhanging eaves with exposed rafter tails; smooth stucco walls with decorative timbering over wood frame construction; and a concrete foundation. The front façade features a two-car garage set slightly forward of the main house. To the right, the main entry is accessed down a narrow brick walkway along the north side of the house. The wood batten entry door is set under a slightly recessed arched opening. Original, smaller hipped roof dormers are set on the north and south elevations, set toward the rear and toward the front, respectively. A brick chimney with decorative top is set along the north elevation toward the rear of the house. The 1962 Shepherd plans show multi-lite fixed and casement windows throughout the house.

In 1988, an addition totaling 248 square feet was added to the rear of the house and is not visible from the street or the entry walkway. At an unspecified date, the original multi-lite fixed and casement windows were removed and replaced with vinyl windows of historically inappropriate styles and operations. The roof was originally clad with heavy cedar shakes, which had also been removed. In 2010, the current owner approached the City and historic resources staff with a rehabilitation project which would restore the cedar shake roof and the multi-lite fixed and casement windows, and construct a 300 square foot addition consisting of a small addition at the ground floor and expansion of the existing attic space to accommodate a small second floor addition. Historic resources staff worked with the applicant to modify the project proposal consistent with the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards. Limitations created by available lot area as well as the existing floor-plan and useable attic space necessitated placing the new addition along the southern elevation on the front half of the house. Per staff direction, the addition was pushed back past the existing dormer and the roof height was reduced below the peak of the existing roof. The resulting addition is minimally visible when viewing the house straight-on, and is not visible when viewing the house from the northeast, which is the primary vantage point that provides visibility of both the front façade and the main entry along the north elevation. It should be noted that while the California State Historic Building could be applied to allow restoration of the cedar shake roof on the original house, this material was not allowed on the contemporary addition. A compatible substitute asphalt shingle was used instead.

With the restoration of the cedar shake roof and the wood multi-lite fixed and casement windows consistent with the original plans, the overall integrity of the house has been greatly improved. Further, the 1988 addition at the rear and the 2010/11 addition approved by historic resources staff as consistent with the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation do not significantly impair the building's integrity or ability to convey the original style. Therefore, staff recommends designation of the property at 7124 Olivetas Avenue under HRB Criterion C as a resource that embodies the character defining features of the French Eclectic Revival style and retains integrity to its 1962 period of significance.

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

The applicant's report states that the house is representative of the notable work of recognized Master Architect Thomas Shepherd. Shepherd was born in 1897 and studied at the University of Wisconsin and Columbia University in New York, where he studied architecture. However, inspiration seems to have been drawn from his travels in Europe, particularly in the Mediterranean region. In 1926, he had relocated to and was primarily designing residences in new subdivisions in La Jolla. His homes include the Darlington House and the John Scripps residence in addition to over 200 other residences. In addition to his houses, he designed the La Jolla Beach and Tennis Club, the Marine Room, the Spanish-style Arcade building and an addition to the La Valencia Hotel. His architectural influence on La Jolla is substantial having designed buildings and homes throughout his lengthy and prolific fifty-year career. He passed away at the age of 82 in 1979.

The subject property was designed by Shepherd in 1962 for original owners Alfred and Jessica Phinney, as evidenced by the original plans included in the applicant's report. The house was

constructed between two existing Shepherd designed homes to the north and south. The subject property was designed to reflect the style of the home to the south and compliment the style of the home to the north, which was modified to accommodate development of the subject property. All three homes feature deeply recessed side entries. In taking the French Eclectic Revival and Tudor detailing from his earlier work and blending them to create the subject property, Shepherd created a structure that was both contemporary for the period, yet complimentary to the surrounding established neighborhood. The house, as recently rehabilitated and restored by the current owner, represents a notable work of established Master Architect Thomas L. Shepherd, and therefore staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion D.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

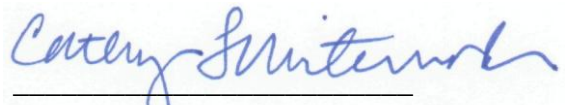
If the property is designated by the HRB, conditions related to restoration or rehabilitation of the resource may be identified by staff during the Mills Act application process, and included in any future Mills Act contract.

CONCLUSION

Based on the information submitted and staff's field check, it is recommended that the Alfred and Jessica Phinney/Thomas L. Shepherd House located at 7124 Olivetas Avenue be designated with a period of significance of 1962 under HRB Criterion C as a resource that embodies the character defining features of the French Eclectic Revival style and retains integrity to its period of significance, and Criterion D as a resource that is representative of a notable work of Master Architect Thomas L. Shepherd and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. The designation excludes the 248 square feet rear addition dating to 1988, and the 68 square feet ground floor addition and 232 square feet second floor addition dating to 2011. 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.



Kelley Stanco
Senior Planner



Cathy Winterrowd
Principal Planner/HRB Liaison

KS/cw

Attachments:

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON 10/27/2011

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 10/27/2011, to consider the historical designation of the **Alfred and Jessica Phinney/Thomas L. Shepherd House** (owned by Gary L. Greenberg Trust 06-30-08, 7124 Olivetas Avenue, San Diego, CA 92037) located at **7124 Olivetas Avenue, San Diego, CA 92037**, APN: **353-141-16-00**, further described as BLK 9 LOT 12 NLY 15 FT OF LOT 10 & ALL 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 Alfred and Jessica Phinney/Thomas L. Shepherd House on the following findings:

(1) The property is historically significant under CRITERION C as a resource that embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of French Eclectic Revival style architecture and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1962 period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits steeply pitched hipped roofs with heavy cedar shakes; hipped roof dormers; slightly overhanging eaves with exposed rafter tails; smooth stucco walls with decorative timbering; a wood batten entry door set under a slightly recessed arched opening; multi-lite wood frame and sash fixed and casement windows; and a brick chimney with a decorative top. 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 established Master Architect Thomas L. Shepherd. Specifically, the resource reflects Shepherd's distinctive and immediately recognizable style, blending classic revival styles of the past with a mid-century design aesthetic. 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**. The designation excludes the 248 square feet rear addition dating to 1988, and the 68 square feet ground floor addition and 232 square feet second floor addition dating to 2011.

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