



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: October 13, 2016 REPORT NO. HRB-16-069

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board  
Agenda of October 27, 2016

SUBJECT: **ITEM #11 – Alberta Security Company/Martin V. Melhorn Spec House #6**

APPLICANT: Steven and Kathryn Gill represented by Legacy 106, Inc..

LOCATION: 1003 Alberta Place, Uptown Community, Council District 3

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Alberta Security Company/Martin V. Melhorn Spec House #6 located at 1003 Alberta Place as a historical resource.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Alberta Security Company/Martin V. Melhorn Spec House #6, located at 1003 Alberta Place under HRB Criteria C and D, with a period of significance of 1923. The designation excludes the 200 square foot detached guest quarters constructed in 1942. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

1. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of Mission Revival and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1923 date of construction and period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits a flat roof with simple decorative Mission parapet; stucco over wood frame construction; a symmetrical front façade consisting of a centered entry door under low-pitch, red tiled gable porch cover supported by decorative stucco corbels; and multi-lite and single-lite 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 1923 design. Specifically, the resource is a significant example of Master Builder Martin V. Melhorn's later work when he was developing his Mission Revival style, expressed in a larger scale in the subject property.

### 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 single family residence located on APN 451-060-21-00 in the residential subdivision of Alberta Addition. The property was identified in the Draft 2016 Uptown Survey and given a Status Code of 5D3, "Appears

to be a contributor to a district that appears eligible for local listing or designation through survey evaluation.”

The historic name of the resource, the Alberta Security Company/Martin V. Melhorn Spec House #5, has been identified consistent with the Board’s adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Alberta Security Company, who constructed the house as a speculation house and the name of Martin V. Melhorn, a Master Builder.

## ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Legacy 106, Inc., which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criterion C and D, and staff concurs. 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.*

Research into the history of the property at 1003 Alberta Place did not reveal any information to indicate that the property exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City’s or Uptown’s historical, archaeological, cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, landscaping or architectural development. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion A.

*CRITERION B - Is identified with persons or events significant in local, state or national history.*

Research into the owners and tenants of the property at 1003 Alberta Place did not reveal any individuals who could be considered historically significant in local, state or national history. Furthermore, no events of local, state or national significance are known to have occurred at the subject property. Therefore, the property is not eligible for 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 located at 1003 Alberta Place is a one story single family home constructed in 1923 in the Mission Revival style, and features a flat roof with simple decorative Mission parapet, and stucco over wood frame construction. The building exhibits a symmetrical front façade consisting of a centered entry door under low-pitch, red tiled gable porch cover supported by decorative stucco corbels. The porch is flanked by paired 12-over-1 double hung wood frame and sash windows. A secondary side porch is located off of the street side façade and features a pair of wood frame French doors flanked by 9-over-1 double hung wood frame and sash windows. Remaining fenestration consists of other multi-lite and single-lite wood frame and sash windows. Modifications are minimal, and include a small addition constructed at the rear in 1931, and in-kind stucco replacement in 2015. The modifications do not adversely impact the building’s design, materials, workmanship or feeling, and do not result in a loss of integrity.

California was the birthplace of the Mission style and many of its landmark examples are concentrated there. The earliest were built in 1890s; by 1900 houses in this style were spreading eastward under the influence of fashionable architects and national builders' magazines. Although never common outside of the southwestern states, scattered examples were built in early 20th-century suburbs throughout the country. Most date from the years between 1905 and 1920. Commonly found features of the Mission Revival style include: Mission-shaped dormer or roof parapet commonly with red tile roof covering; widely overhanging eaves, usually open; porch roofs supported by large square piers, commonly arched above; wall surfaces usually smooth stucco. The shift from Mission Revival to Spanish style is well established with the design and completion of the Panama California Exposition and public debut in 1915. But there are very few residential examples of non-Mission Revival, Spanish style residential architecture before World War I. The style uses decorative details borrowed from the entire history of Spanish architecture. These may be of Moorish, Byzantine, Gothic, or Renaissance inspirations, an unusually rich and varied series of decorative precedents. The style employed a variety of floor plans, as well as gabled, cross-gabled, gabled and hipped, hipped and flat roof forms with parapets. Other character defining features include Mission and Spanish clay tile; focal windows; arched windows and other openings; and accented entries.

Significance Statement: The house continues to convey the historic significance of the Mission Revival style with Spanish Eclectic style influences by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style, including a flat roof with simple decorative Mission parapet; stucco over wood frame construction; a symmetrical front façade consisting of a centered entry door under low-pitch, red tiled gable porch cover supported by decorative stucco corbels; and multi-lite and single-lite wood frame and sash windows.

*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 was born in Indiana in 1866. He lived and worked in Falls City, Nebraska and Denver, Colorado before moving to San Diego in 1911 with his wife, Alberta, and their son William. Melhorn established the Alberta Security Company in 1913 which focused primarily on the financial aspects of building construction. The Alberta Security Company and Melhorn purchased and built the subject property in 1918. Melhorn and his affiliates were prolific builders in the City of San Diego – particularly in the areas of Mission Hills, Hillcrest, University Heights, North Park and South Park – and numerous Melhorn-built homes have been listed on the San Diego Register. In 1922 Melhorn began working with his son, William to design and build houses as M.V. Melhorn & Son. Following Martin's death in 1925, William continued in home design and construction as William B. Melhorn Company. Martin V. Melhorn's status as a Master Builder was established in 2003 with the designation of the Neil Brown/Martin V. Melhorn House at 4195 Palmetto Way (HRB Site #583). The subject property at 1003 Alberta Place was constructed in 1923, late in Martin Melhorn's career while he was working with his son, and just two years prior to his death.

Significance Statement: The subject resource is a significant example of Master Builder Martin V. Melhorn's later work when he was developing his Mission Revival style, expressed in a larger scale in the subject property. Therefore, staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion D as a notable work of Master Builder Martin V. Melhorn.

CRITERION E - *Is listed or has been determined eligible by the National Park Service for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or is listed or has been determined eligible by the State Historical Preservation Office for listing on the State Register of Historical Resources.*

The property at 1003 Alberta Place has not been listed on or determined eligible for listing on the State or National Registers. Therefore, the property is not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion E.

CRITERION F - *Is a finite group of resources related to one another in a clearly distinguishable way or is a geographically definable area or neighborhood containing improvements which have a special character, historical interest or aesthetic value or which represent one or more architectural periods or styles in the history and development of the City.*

The property at 1003 Alberta Place is not located within a designated historic district. Therefore, the property is not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion F.

#### 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 Alberta Security Company/Martin V. Melhorn Spec House #6, located at 1003 Alberta Place be designated with a period of significance of 1923 under HRB Criterion C as a good example of Mission Revival architecture, and Criterion D as the work of Master Builder Martin V. Melhorn. The designation excludes the 200 square foot detached guest quarters constructed in 1942. 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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Kelley Stanco  
Senior Planner/HRB Liaison

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Attachments:

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A  
ADOPTED ON 10/27/2016

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 10/27/2016, to consider the historical designation of the **Alberta Security Company/Martin V. Melhorn Spec House #6** (owned by Steven M and Kathryn A Gill, 1003 Alberta Place, San Diego, CA 92103) located at **1003 Alberta Place, San Diego, CA 92106**, APN: **451-060-21-00**, further described as LOT 22 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 Alberta Security Company/Martin V. Melhorn Spec House #6 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 Mission Revival and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1923 date of construction and period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits a flat roof with simple decorative Mission parapet; stucco over wood frame construction; a symmetrical front façade consisting of a centered entry door under low-pitch, red tiled gable porch cover supported by decorative stucco corbels; and multi-lite and single-lite 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 established Master Builder Martin V. Melhorn and retains integrity as it relates to the original 1923 design. Specifically, the resource is a significant example of Master Builder Martin V. Melhorn's later work when he was developing his Mission Revival style, expressed in a larger scale in the subject property. 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 designation shall exclude the 200 square foot detached guest quarters constructed in 1942.

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: \_\_\_\_\_  
COURTNEY ANN COYLE, Chair  
Historical Resources Board

APPROVED: JAN I. GOLDSMITH,  
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
CORRINE NEUFFER,  
Deputy City Attorney