



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: October 14, 2016 REPORT NO. HRB-16-070

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board
Agenda of October 27, 2016

SUBJECT: **ITEM #12 – San Diego Cable Railway Company Spec House #1**

APPLICANT: Charles E. Tiano Trust 9-22-04 represented by Allen Hazard & Janet O'Dea

LOCATION: 1625 Adams Avenue, Uptown Community, Council District 3

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the San Diego Cable Railway Company Spec House #1 located at 1625 Adams Avenue as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the San Diego Cable Railway Company Spec House #1 located at 1625 Adams Avenue as a historical resource with a period of significance of c.1886-1913 under HRB Criterion C. This recommendation is based on the following finding:

The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Italianate style with West Coast Stick influences and retains integrity to its period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits a low-pitch, short mansard roof with scalloped wood shingles; overhanging eaves with enclosed soffit and decorative carved brackets at the corners; 10-inch wood shiplap siding over wood frame construction; a two-story, squared projecting bay; and tall, 1-over-1 double hung wood frame and sash windows.

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 two story Victorian-era home located on block 26 in the subdivision of University Heights. The building appears to have been relocated twice. Records show it was first assessed on block 26 on a lot fronting on to North Avenue; however, the materials and finishes indicate a slightly earlier date of construction, indicating that the building may have originally been constructed somewhere nearby. The building was then relocated c.1913 within block 26 to its present location fronting onto Adams Avenue. The building is presently located on APN 445-033-21-00. The property was identified in the Draft 2016 Uptown Historic Survey and given a Status Code of 5S3, "Appears to be individually eligible for local listing or designation through survey evaluation."

Due to the building's early transitory history, precise naming of the house is not possible. The recommended historic name of the resource, the San Diego Cable Railway Company Spec House #1, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of first owner to which the house can be clearly connected through deed and tax records, but never resided there.

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Allen Hazard and Janet O'Dea, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criterion C, 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 1625 Adams Avenue 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 1625 Adams Avenue 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 at 1625 Adams Avenue is a two story single family residence constructed c.1886-1888 in the Italianate style with West Coast Stick influences and features a low-pitch, short mansard roof with scalloped wood shingles; overhanging eaves with enclosed soffit and decorative carved brackets at the corners; 10-inch wood shiplap siding over wood frame construction; and a pier and post foundation. The front entry features a wood and glass front door flanked by in-filled sidelites, under a multi-lite transom. The entry is located under a shed roof porch supported on thick square wood columns with simple carved bracket detailing. To the right of the entry is a two-story projecting bay filled with tall, 1-over-1 double hung wood frame and sash windows. Remaining fenestration throughout the house consists of the same tall, 1-over-1 double hung wood frame and sash windows.

Modifications include the early relocation of the building discussed previously; construction of the front porch and rear addition c.1910; and in-fill of the glazing at the entry sidelights (which is pending restoration.) The house has undergone restoration work in recent years, including repair and limited in-kind replacement of siding, repair of windows, restoration of one previously altered window, and repairs at the porch.

The subject building does not fit cleanly or neatly into any one architectural style. The applicant's report provides a discussion of both the Victorian-era Eastlake style, and the Italianate style, which was attributed to the property in the Draft 2016 Uptown survey. The applicant's report ultimately concludes that the building is better classified as Eastlake, which many sources, including McAlester, identify more as a stylistic influence or detail, rather than a style unto itself. Staff reviewed this information, along with *A Field Guide to American Houses* by Virginia Savage McAlester, the architectural style guide included in the Draft 2016 Uptown Survey, and other online resources.

The Italianate style, along with the Gothic Revival, began in England as part of the Picturesque movement, a reaction to the formal classical ideals in art and architecture that had been fashionable for about two hundred years. The movement emphasized rambling, informal Italian farmhouses, with their characteristic square towers, as models for Italian-style villa architecture. The Italianate style dominated American houses constructed between 1850 and 1880. In America these Old World prototypes were variously modified, adapted, and embellished into a truly indigenous style with only hints of its Latin origin. Character defining features include two or three stories; low-pitched roof with moderate to widely over-hanging eaves having decorative brackets beneath; tall, narrow windows, commonly arched or curved above (although rectangular is also common); and windows frequently elaborated with crowns.

The Stick style also grew from the Picturesque movement, and is seen as a transitional style between Gothic Revival and Queen Anne. Unlike early Gothic Revival houses, the Stick style stressed the wall surface itself as a decorative element rather than merely as a plane with the principal decorative detailing applies at the doors, windows or cornices. In California, the Stick style was expressed differently, and is known as West Coast Stick, popular between c.1880 and c.1895. The most distinctive features of West Coast Stick is the square-sided-bay window, which was probably simpler to construct than its slant-sided Italianate predecessor. These bays are often accented with trim and finished with a false gable roof.

Indeed, Italianate and West Coast Stick homes can be so similar, that McAlester includes a discussion of how to differentiate the two styles on pages 336 and 337 of her book. Both feature brackets at the cornice line. The Italianate style typically features a short mansard roof; less detailing and trim work; and wood-sided bays with slanted sides. The West Coast Stick style typically features a flat or gabled roof; more detailing and trim work; and squared bays with paneling and detailing.

After much consideration, staff finds that the subject building lacks the more ornate detailing, spindlework, paneling, gables and pediments that are so indicative of West Coast Stick and Eastlake homes. The building appears to exhibit more of the features of Italianate architecture, with West Coast Stick influences seen in the squared, rather than slanted bay.

Significance Statement: The house continues to convey the historic significance of the Italianate style with West Coast Stick influences by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the styles including a low-pitch, short mansard roof with scalloped wood shingles; overhanging eaves with enclosed soffit and decorative carved brackets at the corners; 10-inch wood shiplap siding over wood frame construction; a two-story, squared projecting bay; and tall, 1-over-1 double hung wood frame and sash windows. Therefore, staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion C. The period of significance, c.1886-1913, captures the estimated date of construction and the relocation of the building to its current location.

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

Research into the construction of the property at 1625 Adams Avenue failed to conclusively identify a builder, designer or architect. Therefore, the property is not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion D.

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 1625 Adams Avenue 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 1625 Adams Avenue 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 San Diego Cable Railway Company Spec House #1 located at 1625 Adams Avenue be designated with a period of significance of c.1886-1913 under HRB Criterion C as a resource that embodies the distinctive characteristics of Italianate architecture with West Coast Stick influences. 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/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 **San Diego Cable Railway Company Spec House #1** (owned by Charles E. Tiano Trust 9-22-04, 1625 Adams Avenue, San Diego, CA 92116) located at **1625 Adams Avenue, San Diego, CA 92116**, APN: **445-033-21-00**, further described as BLK 26 LOTS 41 TO 43 W 50 FT /EXC ST/ 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 San Diego Cable Railway Company Spec House #1 on the following finding:

(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 the Italianate style with West Coast Stick influences and retains integrity to its c.1886-1913 period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits a low-pitch, short mansard roof with scalloped wood shingles; overhanging eaves with enclosed soffit and decorative carved brackets at the corners; 10-inch wood shiplap siding over wood frame construction; a two-story, squared projecting bay; and tall, 1-over-1 double hung 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.

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: _____
COURTNEY ANN COYLE, Chair
Historical Resources Board

APPROVED: JAN I. GOLDSMITH,
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: _____
CORRINE NEUFFER,
Deputy City Attorney