



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: October 13, 2016 REPORT NO. HRB-16-068

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board  
Agenda of October 27, 2016

SUBJECT: **ITEM #10 – Depew Building Company /Edward Depew Spec House #1**

APPLICANT: Marrs Family Living 1998 Trust represented by Vonn Marie May

LOCATION: 3305 Voltaire Street, Peninsula Community, Council District 2

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Depew Building Company /Edward Depew Spec House #1 located at 3305 Voltaire Street as a historical resource.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Depew Building Company /Edward Depew Spec House #1 located at 3305 Voltaire Street as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1939 under HRB Criteria C and D. The designation excludes the rear addition constructed in 1969. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

1. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the French Eclectic Style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1939 period of significance. Specifically, the resource displays a hipped roof, stucco cladding, asymmetrical façade, massive chimney, elaborated front entry and decorative features such as shutters, diamond-shaped windows and a broken cornice line.
2. The resource is representative of a notable work of Master Architect Edward Depew and retains integrity as it relates to the original 1939 design. The house is notable as an example of Depew's work in the French Eclectic Style demonstrating his skill for elegant design.

### 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 subject resource is a two-story single-family residence constructed in 1939 in the French Eclectic Style. The building is situated in the Roseville subdivision of the Peninsula Community on a raised corner lot with its primary façade facing Voltaire Street. The resource is located on APN 450-032-07.

The historic name of the resource, the Depew Building Company /Edward Depew Spec House #1 has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of the

Depew Building Company, who constructed the house as a speculation house and the name of Edward Depew, a Master Architect.

## ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Vonn Marie May which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria 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 3305 Voltaire Street did not reveal any information to indicate that the property exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's or Peninsula'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 3305 Voltaire Street 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 resource is a two-story single-family residence constructed in 1939 in the French Eclectic Style. The building is located in the Roseville subdivision of the Peninsula Community and is situated on an elevated corner lot. The main massing of the house is asymmetrical with a low pitched hipped roof constructed of wood shingles. The exterior is clad in stucco with a belt course surrounding the building that exaggerates the height of the first floor. An attached garage, original to the date of construction, is set back from the main façade on the west side. At the rear of the building are an original one-story section and a small two-story addition constructed in 1969.

The front façade of the house is asymmetrical in appearance with three bays. The central bay projects slightly from the main massing and the western most bay projects a few feet further. The farthest projecting portion of the façade features a large multi-lite bay window with metal roof. An 8-over-8 lite double hung window with shutters is located to the left of the entrance and two similar windows with shutters are located on the second story. An oversized wooden door is located in the central bay within a recessed front entry framed by stucco molding. Above the entry are two fixed diamond-shaped windows and a metal hanging light. Additionally, the cornice line is broken above the entry by a decorative arch. The east elevation features a dominant exterior chimney with decorative features at the top of the stack. Two large fixed windows flank either side of the chimney on the first floor. The addition is located on the rear façade and mimics the original portion of the house by continuing the belt course and roofline. The windows on the first floor of the addition, as well as the single-story original portion, are fixed single pane. The majority of the other windows on

the house are 8-over-8 double hung sash with the exceptions being 6-over-6 and 2-over-2 double hung as well as another single pane fixed window on the west façade. Shutters flank the windows on the front and side elevations of the building.

Several alterations have been made to the property since its construction in 1920. The addition was constructed at the rear of the house in 1969 and contemporary windows were added to the original rear portion of the house around this time. Additionally, photos from 1970 provided in the consultant report provide evidence that the bay window on the front façade has likely been altered at some time. The modifications do not have significant impacts to integrity of design, materials, workmanship or feeling, and the building retains integrity as it relates to architectural significance.

The French Eclectic Style was most popular after World War I between 1915 and 1945. The style was brought to America by soldiers who served in France and had become familiar with the architecture of French country homes. Examples of this style can be either symmetrical, asymmetrical or feature towers and may have formal Renaissance or informal country influences. Generally, there is a great variety in form and detailing within this style but a tall, steeply pitched hipped roof is the uniting factor. Other common features include brick, stone or stucco wall cladding; flared eaves at the roof-wall junction; dormers or windows that break the cornice line; and decorative door surrounds. Windows are generally double hung or casement and often have shutters. Evidence of other Renaissance styles is seen in the French Eclectic and can include massive chimneys, decorative half-timbering, arched openings and stone quoins.

Significance Statement: The house continues to convey the historic significance of the French Eclectic Style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style; including a hipped roof, stucco cladding, asymmetrical façade, massive chimney, elaborated front entry and decorative features such as shutters, diamond-shaped windows and a broken cornice line. 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.*

Edward Harold Depew, born in 1897, arrived in San Diego with his wife Dorothy in 1921. From the outset he was active in the building trade. He worked as an architect for the Ideal Building Company from 1925 to 1927. By 1928, he owned his own design-build firm. From the late 1920's through the 1940's he designed and built buildings throughout San Diego. Though capable of working in a variety of the eclectic styles popular at the time, it appears that Depew was most adept in the Spanish Eclectic style. In the late 1940s Depew gave up the contracting business and opened the Depew Marine Center, selling and repairing boats – said to be the first major yacht and marine sales center in San Diego. Depew's status as a Master Architect was established in 2005 with the designation of the Ena Shapley/Edward Depew House (HRB #721). Another example of Depew's work in the French Eclectic style, the Dr. Harry and Beryl Faulkner House (HRB #651), has previously been designated.

Significance Statement: The subject resource retains excellent integrity and continues to reflect Depew's original design, intent and aesthetic. The house is notable as an example of Depew's work in the French Eclectic Style demonstrating his skill for elegant design. Therefore, staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion D as a notable work of Master Architect Edward Depew.

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 3305 Voltaire Street 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 3305 Voltaire Street 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 Depew Building Company /Edward Depew Spec House #1 located at 3305 Voltaire Street be designated with a period of significance of 1939 under HRB Criterion C as a resource that exhibits the distinctive characteristics of French Eclectic Style; and HRB Criterion D as a resource that is representative of a notable work of Master Architect Edward Depew. The designation excludes the rear addition constructed in 1969. 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.



Suzanne Segur  
Assistant Planner



Kelley Stanco  
Senior Planner/HRB Liaison

SS/ks

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 **Depew Building Company/ Edward Depew Spec House #1** (owned by Marris Family Living 1998 Trust 03-13-98, 6588 BlueBonnet Drive, Carlsbad, CA 92011) located at **3305 Voltaire Street, San Diego, CA 92107**, APN: **450-032-07-00**, further described as BLK 175 LOTS 7 & 8 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 Depew Building Company/ Edward Depew Spec House #1 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 French Eclectic Style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1939 period of significance. Specifically, the resource displays a hipped roof, stucco cladding, asymmetrical façade, massive chimney, elaborated front entry and decorative features such as shutters, diamond-shaped windows and a broken cornice line. 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 Architect Edward Depew and retains integrity as it relates to the original 1939 design. The house is notable as an example of Depew's work in the French Eclectic Style demonstrating his skill for elegant design. 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 rear addition constructed in 1969.

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