



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: October 13, 2022 REPORT NO. HRB 22-038

HEARING DATE: October 27, 2022

SUBJECT: **ITEM 02 – ARTHUR AND BERTHA CORDTZ SPEC HOUSE #1**

RESOURCE INFO: [California Historical Resources Inventory Database \(CHRID\) link](#)

APPLICANT: Greenberg-Irving Family Trust 04-07-85 represented by Legacy 106, Inc.

LOCATION: 4290 Sierra Vista, 92103, Uptown Community, Council District 3
APN 443-270-10-00

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Arthur and Bertha Cordtz Spec House #1 located at 4290 Sierra Vista as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Arthur and Bertha Cordtz Spec House #1 located at 4290 Sierra Vista as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1911 under HRB Criterion C. The designation excludes the 2015 detached garage and the 1996 and 1986 additions constructed outside the period of significance. This recommendation is based on the following finding:

The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Mission Revival style architecture and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1911 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features a medium pitch hipped and flat roof form with curvilinear parapet, open eaves with decorative cut rafters, red s-shaped cement tile roof, asymmetrical primary façade, simple rectangular plan, stucco cladding, arched focal windows and an arched entry porch with a square pier.

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 1911 located on the northwest side of Sierra Vista in the Uptown Community.

The property was identified in the 2016 Uptown Community Plan Area Historic Resources 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 Arthur and Bertha Cordtz Spec House #1, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Arthur and Bertha Cordtz, who constructed the property as a speculation house.

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Legacy 106, Inc. 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 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 built in 1911 in the Mission Revival style architecture. The resource displays a central hipped roof with shed roof extending on two sides supported by exposed wooden rafters and balconies on each side with curvilinear shaped parapets. The home features an asymmetrical primary façade with an arched entry porch and a pair of large six part arched windows. Below the hipped roof on the second level, a central inset balcony with a double French door and arched sidelights. A wrought iron cantilevered balcony extends out over the front façade displaying its semicircular shape. The home is clad in stucco and has an interior stucco clad chimney. Fenestration consists of wood casement, fixed, double hung and diamond paned leaded fixed windows.

On the southwest elevation is a second pair of the large six part arched windows, they are identical to the pair on the primary elevation. The rear elevation displays three levels, revealing a partially below grade basement. A second wrought iron balcony extends out from a rear projecting overhang. A new detached garage is located to the rear of the lot and can be accessed from the driveway off of Sierra Vista.

The four arched windows, located on the front and southwest elevations, and the two wrought iron balconies, located on the front and rear elevations, were all salvaged and reused from the Diamond Carriage and Livery Company building. The Diamond Carriage and Livery Company Building was built in 1896 in the Mission Revival style and was demolished in late 1910 to make way for the construction of the Spreckels Theatre. The building was a two-story structure built in the Mission style, that took up the entire block along on D Street (now Broadway) between 1st Avenue and 2nd Avenue in downtown San Diego. This is an early and good example of "adaptive reuse" of architecturally significant features.

There have been a number modifications to the property since its date of construction, including: the addition of a pool and chain link fence in 1974, enclosure of the covered second-floor balcony on the south side, a second-floor rear side addition, several windows openings were modified and the roof was repaired, in 1986. In 1996; the basement was reconstructed, new deck and stairs, a new

detached garage, and an addition was constructed on the rear, which included the extension of the rear balcony and relocation of iron guardrail; in 2015, the basement and main level were remodeled, the rear deck was replaced and a new detached garage was constructed; and in 2016, a photovoltaic system was installed. In 2020, the owners worked with historic staff to restore the house per historical photos. This work included restoration of the roof, the trim detail on top and around the edges of the arched parapets on the Northeast elevation and an opening in the entryway porch. All work was approved by staff as consistent with the Secretary of Interior Standards. Additional modifications to the property include the addition of non-historic tile at the front porch entry at an unknown date. These modifications do not significantly impair integrity of design, materials, workmanship or feeling and the building retains integrity as it relates to architectural significance.

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 resource continues to convey the historic significance of the Mission Revival style architecture by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style including a medium pitch hipped and flat roof form with curvilinear parapet, open eaves with decorative cut rafters, red s-shaped cement tile roof, asymmetrical primary façade, simple rectangular plan, stucco cladding, arched focal windows and an arched entry porch with a square pier. Therefore, staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion C.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

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. 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 Arthur and Bertha Cordtz Spec House #1 located at 4290 Sierra Vista be designated as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1911 under HRB Criterion C as a resource that embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Mission Revival style architecture and retains integrity. The designation excludes the 2015 detached garage and the 1996 and 1986 additions constructed outside the period of significance.


Shannon Anthony
Senior Planner

SA/sa

Attachments:

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON 10/27/2022

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 10/27/2022, to consider the historical designation of the **Arthur and Bertha Cordtz Spec House #1** (owned by Greenberg-Irving Family Trust 04-07-85, 4290 Sierra Vista, San Diego, CA 92103) located at **4290 Sierra Vista, San Diego, CA 92103**, APN: **443-270-10-00**, further described as VL 20 (EX DOC4024REC68) 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 Arthur and Bertha Cordtz 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 Mission Revival style architecture and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1911 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features a medium pitch hipped and flat roof form with curvilinear parapet, open eaves with decorative cut rafters, red s-shaped cement tile roof, asymmetrical primary façade, simple rectangular plan, stucco cladding, arched focal windows and an arched entry porch with a square pier. 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 2015 detached garage and the 1996 and 1986 additions constructed outside the period of significance.

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:

BY: _____
TIM HUTTER, Chair
Historical Resources Board

APPROVED: MARA W. ELLIOTT,
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: _____
LINDSEY SEBASTIAN,
Deputy City Attorney

RECORDING REQUESTED BY
CITY OF SAN DIEGO
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

WHEN RECORDED MAIL TO

HISTORICAL RESOURCES BOARD
ATTN: HRB SECRETARY
1222 FIRST AVENUE, MS 501
SAN DIEGO, CA 92101

SPACE ABOVE THIS LINE FOR RECORDER'S USE

RESOLUTION NUMBER **N/A**

HISTORICAL DESIGNATION OF PROPERTY ON

4290 Sierra Vista, San Diego, CA 92103

ASSESSOR PARCEL NUMBER **443-270-10-00**

HISTORICAL RESOURCES BOARD NUMBER **0**