



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: March 14, 2024 REPORT NO. HRB-24-009

HEARING DATE: March 28, 2024

SUBJECT: **ITEM #3 – 3232 DOVE STREET**

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

APPLICANT: Charles and Megan Freundlich; represented by GPA Consulting

LOCATION: 3232 Dove Street, 92103, Uptown Community, Council District 3
APNs: 452-495-1000, 452-495-1100, 452-495-1200, 452-495-1300,
452-495-1400 and 452-495-15-00

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the property at 3232 Dove Street as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Do not designate the property located at 3232 Dove Street under any adopted HRB Criteria.

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 property was identified in the [2016 Uptown Community Plan Update Historic Resources Survey](#) and given a Status Code of 7R, "(Not evaluated)."

In order to be eligible for designation and listing on the City's Register, a resource must meet one or more of the City's designation criteria as specified in the Historical Resources Guidelines of the Land Development Manual and retain integrity as it relates to the significance of the resource. Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance, which requires an understanding of the physical features and characteristics that existed during the resource's period of significance. The National, California, and City of San Diego Registers recognize location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association as the seven aspects of historical integrity.

Although not all seven aspects of integrity need to be present for a property to be eligible for designation, the record must demonstrate that the property retains enough physical and design characteristics to reflect and convey the significance of the property. Each resource depends on certain aspects of integrity, more than others, to express its historic significance. Determining which of the aspects are most important to a particular property requires an understanding of the property's significance and its essential physical features. The [Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria](#) provide information regarding the City's designation criteria, as well as guidance on their application and how to evaluate the integrity of a resource.

ANALYSIS

The property located at 3232 Dove Street is a multi-story, single-family residential building originally constructed in 1908 as a one-story Craftsman style home and is located in the Uptown Community Planning Area on six parcels. Other buildings and structures present on site include a detached garage, teahouse, workout studio, and shed. The property is located on the west side of Dove Street in a residential neighborhood surrounded by similarly scaled homes. The property is in its original location.

Since its construction in 1908, the property has been modified substantially in the post-WWII period. A 1954 remodel added floor-to-ceiling windows, enlarged the kitchen and added a porch and a rear deck. In 1955, a new roof overhang for the door was added, and the detached garage and guest room were built, which later burned down in 1972. In 1961 and 1964, the back basement was added and expanded on the north and west corners of the house, respectively. A 1978 remodel enlarged the kitchen and a bedroom as well as the living room, and in 1979, a new detached garage was constructed. In 1990 the garage was altered to allow for more storage. Circa 1994, a 320 sq. ft pool and landscaping were added, including the paths along the property with ironwork rails, a tea room, yoga and meditation studio, workout room, and storage shed. The landscaping and hardscaping are attributed to Takendo Aarii and Sarah Brightwood, though no plans could be located for the exact planting and structures. The outbuildings are all small wooden structures stained to match the main house with large overhanging eaves and sloping roofs. In 2000, the basement was enlarged again. Solar panels and the Asian-inspired entryway were added in 2015. In 2023, the meditation and yoga studio, which was one of the buildings added in 1994, was demolished. Overall, the modifications and additions created a Japonesque aesthetic not present originally, no architect can be attributed with the design, and the modifications are not considered architecturally significant in their own right.

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by GPA Consulting, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criterion B. Staff disagrees and finds that the building is not eligible under any HRB Criteria. This determination is consistent with the [Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria](#), as follows.

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

The resource at 3232 Dove Street was bought by Deborah Szekely (née Shainman) and her husband, Edmond Bordeaux Szekely, in 1954. Deborah was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1922 and when she was 5 her family moved to Tahiti. Deborah married Edmond Bordeaux in 1940; that same year, the Szekelys opened the Rancho La Puerta spa in Tecate, Mexico, where they promoted ideas of holistic wellness and physical movement for health. After WWII ended, the couple moved back to the U.S. and purchased the house at 3232 Dove Street where they lived and raised two children until they divorced in 1969. Deborah continued to live in the house through 2014. In 1958, they opened the Golden Door spa in Escondido, which became popular with celebrities seeking a retreat from Los Angeles. The spas promoted her holistic health, physical activity, diet, and meditation philosophy through various health and wellness programs.

Deborah is active in San Diego's nonprofit scene, where she has founded several charities; including Children to Children, the Combined Arts and Education Council of San Diego, the Szekely Foundation for American Volunteerism, Eureka Communities, and the New American Museum, and served as the CEO and president of the Inter-American Foundation. She was also involved in local politics running for congress, serving on local election committees and as a delegate on the UNESCO Conference on Fitness in 1977 and the Council for Physical Fitness under several administrations. Deborah continues to be active in the wellness field through her involvement in the Rancho La Puerta spa, giving regular interviews on health and wellness, and having published a book as recently as 2022.

The report concludes that Deborah Szekely is significant for her contributions to the modern wellness movement with a period of significance from 1954-2014. Staff disagrees and finds that the Historic Resources Research Report does not sufficiently demonstrate what impact her philosophies have had on the development of the wellness movement. Per the *Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Designation Criteria*, a person cannot be considered historically significant under Criterion B by virtue of position/title, association, affiliation, race, gender, ethnicity or religion and owning a successful spa in itself is not a sufficient reason for being considered historically significant. It is not demonstrated in the report that her owning and operating spas in Escondido and Tecate contributed to the wellness field above and beyond the work of other spa owners at the time. While the achievements of Deborah Szekely are impressive, they are not demonstrably important to the history of San Diego in a way that surpasses her contemporaries in the wellness field.

The report also concludes that Szekely is significant for her association with political and civic organizations. Deborah's civic, volunteer, and advocacy work, which started in the 1970s, is ongoing, making it difficult to evaluate her accomplishments within their context. Given more time, perspective, and information supporting the significance of her work within her field, it is possible that Deborah Szekely may be found to be a historically significant individual, at which time the most appropriate representative resource can be identified.

Should Deborah Szekely be considered a historically significant individual, other properties, such as the Rancho La Puerta and Golden Door spas, exist and may better represent her accomplishments. Under Criterion B, the resource must directly reflect the person's most significant achievements. Szekely's work appears to be more directly tied to her extant spa properties. Therefore, because

insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate Szekely's significance within her field and to San Diego, insufficient time has passed to objectively evaluate her importance to her field, and other properties may be more significantly associated with her accomplishments should she be found to be historically significant, staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion B at this time. As the property is not significant under Criterion B, an evaluation of integrity as it relates to Criterion B is not relevant or required.

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 not nominated under HRB Criterion C, but a discussion of Criterion C is provided here. The property was originally constructed in 1908, likely in the Craftsman style, although not much documentation exists regarding the building's original appearance. The HRRR cites an interview with Deborah Szekely where she states that "the building was similar to several redwood cottages in the area" and that it had a "Japanese-style eaves and roof." The earliest available Sanborn Map from 1921 shows an east elevation covered porch attached to the building. Together, this information suggests that the building was most likely originally designed as a Craftsman style cottage with Asian-Eclectic influences; however, this cannot be confirmed by primary sources such as a historic photo. The building was heavily modified after Deborah Szekely took ownership in 1954, as described in the beginning of the Analysis Section.

In its current condition, the building features three distinct levels, with one level at street grade and two levels below street grade along a sloping landscape. It has an irregular, sprawling floor plan. The roof is hipped and covered with composition shingles. The eaves display a wide overhang and feature exposed, rounded rafter tails. The house is clad in horizontal wood siding. Fenestration consists of floor-to-ceiling wood fixed glass windows, wood casement windows, wood leaded glass fixed windows, and jalousie windows. Exterior doors consist of decorative wood doors, French doors, and metal doors.

Due to the lack of detailed information surrounding the building's original architectural design and the extensive documented post-WWII alterations staff does not recommend designation under 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 the staff's field check, it is recommended that the property located at 3232 Dove Street not be designated under any HRB Criteria.



Megan Walker
Associate Planner
City Planning Department



Suzanne Segur
Senior Planner/ HRB Liaison
City Planning Department

MW/sa/ss

Attachment(s):

1. Assessor's Parcel Map
2. Applicant's Historical Report under separate cover

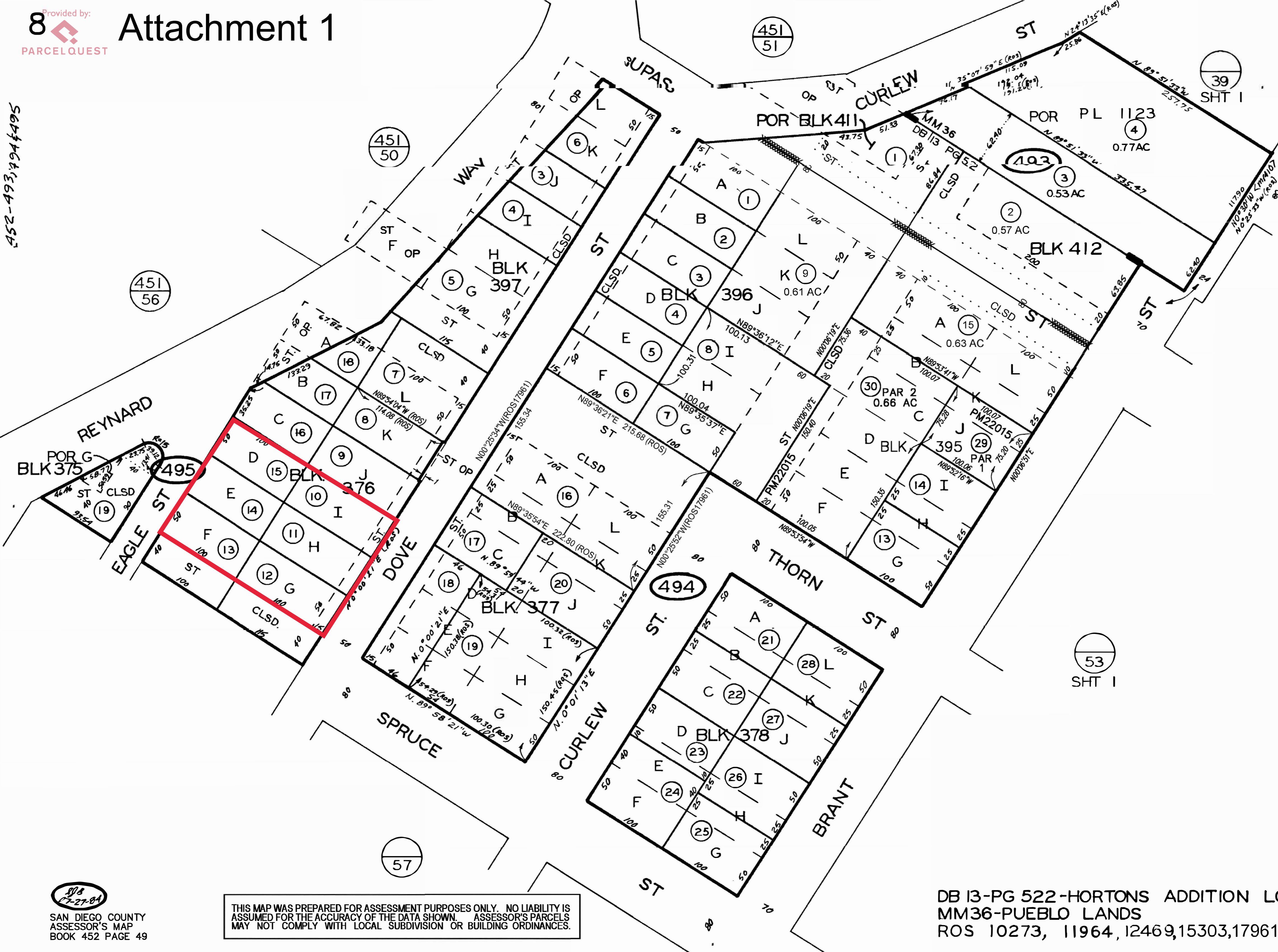
452-493,794,495

452-49

1"=100'

WALNUT AVE
 12/19/2023 SD

CHANGES				
BLK	OLD	NEW	YR	CUT
493	380-05406	3-4		
494	504-ALL 511-ALL	16-20	85	10079
495	503-ALL 502-01	7-19		
493	1&2	SAME & ST	06	5564
494	1,9&15	CLSD		
495	8	SAME & ST OP	17	4740
494	11 & 12	29 & 30	24	1086



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 7-27-01
 SAN DIEGO COUNTY
 ASSESSOR'S MAP
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THIS MAP WAS PREPARED FOR ASSESSMENT PURPOSES ONLY. NO LIABILITY IS ASSUMED FOR THE ACCURACY OF THE DATA SHOWN. ASSESSOR'S PARCELS MAY NOT COMPLY WITH LOCAL SUBDIVISION OR BUILDING ORDINANCES.

DB 13-PG 522-HORTONS ADDITION LOCKLING
 MM36-PUEBLO LANDS
 ROS 10273, 11964, 12469, 15303, 17961, 17987

Attachment 1