

San Diego LGBTQ Historic Sites Project

September 22, 2023

City of San Diego
Historical Resources Board
1222 First Avenue, MS 501
San Diego, CA 92101

RE: Historic Resources Board Agenda, September 28, 2023
Item-3: Benjamin F. Dillingham III House
4494 Tivoli Street, 92107
Report Number: HRB-23-029

The San Diego LGBTQ Historic Sites Project wholeheartedly supports the staff recommendation to designate the Benjamin F. Dillingham III House located at 4494 Tivoli Street as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1983 to 2017 under HRB Criterion B.

The residence retains its association with Ben Dillingham, a historically significant person in the LGBTQ community as well as an instrumental figure in the larger San Diego community. Ben's contribution to the quality of life in San Diego through his political, charitable and philanthropic endeavors, as well as and most importantly, his engagement, contributions and activism with the LGBTQ San Diego community at his home on Tivoli Street are widely recognized and acknowledged.

Ben Dillingham's championing of veterans in San Diego is an outgrowth of his Marine Corps service for which he was awarded the Bronze Star. The Veterans Wall of Honor at the San Diego's LGBT Center is co-named after Ben. His numerous awards bestowed by various organizations, LGBTQ and community and civic based, acknowledge and recognize his advocacy and fundraising on behalf of gay San Diegans during the AIDs epidemic.

Ben's home was the place for fundraisers, political discussion, organizing and strategizing how the lives, welfare and health of LGBTQ and all San Diegans could be improved. His appointment as an openly gay man as chief of staff to former mayor Maureen O'Connor was a milestone in San Diego politics. The designation of the Benjamin F Dillingham III house adds another LGBTQ historical resource to the city from a community that in the past has been overlooked and ignored for its contributions by individuals, places and social activism.

In conclusion, this property at 4494 Tivoli Street is unique to San Diego's LGBTQ history and should be designated under HRB Criterion B for its association with Benjamin F. Dillingham III.

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