



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: June 7, 2023 REPORT NO. HRB 23-017

HEARING DATE: June 22, 2023

SUBJECT: **ITEM #4 – TORREY APARTMENTS**

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

APPLICANT: Torrey Arms, LLC, represented by Heritage Architecture & Planning

LOCATION: 4260 Campus Avenue, 92103, Uptown Community, Council District 3
APN: 445-292-2300

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Torrey Apartments located at 4260 Campus Avenue as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Torrey Apartments located at 4260 Campus Avenue as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1924-1926 under HRB Criterion A. This recommendation is based on the following finding:

The resource is a special element of the historical, social, economic, aesthetic, and architectural development of the City of San Diego through its Hybrid Bungalow Court typology and retains integrity to its 1924-1926 period of significance. Specifically, the resource is a good example of a Hybrid Bungalow Court which features a combination of multifamily residential buildings from different time periods and architectural styles that represent this unique part of San Diego's historic built environment and reflects San Diego's response in addressing the housing shortage among the rapid population growth that occurred in the early 20th century.

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 property located on the west side of Campus Avenue in the University Heights neighborhood within the Uptown Community.

The property was identified in the [2016 Uptown Community Plan Area Historic Resources Survey](#) and given a Status Code of 5S3, "Appears to be individually eligible for local listing or designation through survey evaluation."

The historic name of the resource, the Torrey Apartments, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the specific name placed on the site during the construction that occurred between 1924-1926.

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report (HRRR) was prepared by Heritage Architecture & Planning which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria A and C. Staff concurs that the site is a significant historical resource under HRB Criterion A, but not HRB Criterion C. 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.

San Diego's growth between 1917 and 1930 can be largely attributed to the combined effects of the 1915-1916 Panama California Exposition and the growing military presence in the City. The Panama California Exposition attracted over 3.7 million visitors to San Diego, many of whom chose to relocate permanently. San Diego's population nearly doubled between 1910 and 1920, growing from 74,000 to more than 147,000.

With the increase in population, there became a need for housing. Looking for ways to address the housing shortage, representatives from San Diego attended the 1920 convention of the California Association of Commercial Secretaries which was held in Pasadena. At the convention, the bungalow court concept was recommended as a solution. The bungalow court, which appeared in San Diego in the late 1910s, was one way to address the housing shortage. The demand for housing to accommodate new residents and the falling cost of construction materials and labor contributed to a building boom in San Diego that began around 1923 and peaked in 1926.

Bungalow courts appealed to renters and small-scale developers alike. For renters, they offered greater privacy and independence than apartment buildings or boarding houses, which were seen as crowded and unhealthy. The relative proximity of neighbors and the typical placement of front entries facing a shared common space fostered a sense of security and community. Bungalow courts appealed to small-scale and novice developers because they offered a higher rate of return than single-family homes. They also had lower barriers to entry for investment in real estate than apartment buildings or flats, as they required no more construction knowledge than needed to build simple, wood-frame houses.

In addition to standard bungalow courts, unique variants of the bungalow court typology developed in San Diego, such as the hybrid bungalow court, allowed for repairing and improving the existing, older housing stock and adding units where possible. This development pattern resulted in grouping residential buildings from different periods and architectural styles within the same parcel.

As defined in the [Bungalow Court and Apartment Court Historic Context Statement](#) (P.62):

"Hybrid bungalow courts are those with a clear and distinct bungalow court on a property along with other buildings or building types. Examples may include those where existing buildings were moved or altered to build a bungalow court on the same property, or a bungalow court was constructed around existing buildings. They may be developments that included a bungalow court among other housing types, like duplexes or apartments, on the same lot. Some hybrid bungalow courts may have been built over time, so that the units reflect different architectural styles from different periods."

The Torrey Apartments is a good example of an early hybrid bungalow court typology with a period of significance of 1924-1926. Historical documents reflect the Queen Anne style resource built in 1892, was relocated onsite in 1924, to allow for the construction of the Spanish Colonial Revival bungalow court in 1926. The resource continues to exhibit a unique combination of multifamily residential buildings that represent different time periods, sizes, and architectural styles.

The resource also reflects San Diego's response to addressing the housing shortage in the 1920's, due to the increasing population that was largely attributed to the 1915-1916 California Exposition and military growth in the early 20th century.

Significance Statement: The resource is a special element of the historical, social, economic, aesthetic, and architectural development of the City of San Diego through its Hybrid Bungalow Court typology and retains integrity to its 1924-1926 period of significance. Specifically, the resource is a good example of a Hybrid Bungalow Court which features a combination of multifamily residential buildings from different time periods and architectural styles that represent this unique part of San Diego's historic built environment and reflects San Diego's response in addressing the housing shortage among the rapid population growth that occurred in the early 20th century. Therefore, staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion A.

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 Hybrid Bungalow Court and includes three buildings on the site: an 1892 three-story Queen Anne style apartment building and two narrow single-story buildings comprising a 1926 Spanish Colonial Revival style bungalow court. The hybrid bungalow court is set back from the public right of way behind a low brick wall on the east boundary. The Queen Anne apartment building is located at the rear of the site with the bungalow court sited in between the apartment building and Campus Avenue. The site can be accessed by a brick walkway from Campus Avenue.

The Queen Anne style apartment building has a rear-facing, U-shaped plan with a steeply pitched hipped roof; a lower cross gable; and an octagonal turret with a conical roof at the southeast corner. It features non-historic fish scale shingles and original tongue and groove siding; wood frame construction; and pier-on-post foundation. Fenestration consists of a combination of wood, vinyl, and aluminum windows in original and new openings.

The Spanish Colonial Revival bungalow court consists of two rectangular buildings that mirror each other with five attached units each. They feature a flat roof with a simple parapet; small entry canopies with composition shingles; smooth stucco cladding; and clay vents. Front entry doors

consist of a wood French door with side lites. Fenestration is primary comprised of wood frame and sash double-hung and hopper windows.

Modifications:

The Queen Anne style apartment building was originally built as a single-family residence on the site in 1892. The residence was originally located in the middle of the lot, with its primary façade facing east. In 1924, to allow for construction of a new bungalow court, the resource was moved to the rear of the lot. The primary façade was rotated 90 degrees to face south and its original L-plan was altered with a rear addition to create a U-plan. Two entry pop-outs and a raised concrete porch were added to the east façade and an entry porch was added on the south façade. After the relocation, the single-family residence was converted to a multi-unit apartment building.

The apartment building has been significantly altered since its 1892 construction, specifically, the relocation to the rear of the site altered its fenestration, cladding, orientation, and footprint. Other modifications documented after the move and at an unknown date per the circa 1965 photo in the HRRR (P.68) shows a simpler entrance to the apartments on the east façade without a window, than what it is present today, and the addition of fish scale shingles to the gables, upper level of the turret and entrance on the east façade. Modifications to the apartment building include vinyl and aluminum windows within the original and new openings on the South, West, and North façades. A bay window on east façade was turned into a door. Original doors have been replaced with French doors.

Modifications to the Spanish Colonial Revival bungalow court include the removal of the clay tile from the entry canopies and east facing window grilles, the tile was replaced with composition shingle. Wood grilles on the north building have been replaced with square supports. At a date unknown, through-wall air conditioning units and wrought iron bars to the windows were added. In 2017, all entry doors and side lites were replaced with wood multi-lite French doors and side lites.

The Sanborn Maps show a garage on the site prior to 1956, but it was demolished at a date unknown. Other changes to the site include the front brick wall, changes to the original court walkway from poured concrete to brick, and the site wall to the apartment building was wood siding (shown in the circa 1965 photo) but is now clad in a smooth stucco.

The cumulation of alterations to the buildings have significantly impacted character-defining features and impaired the buildings integrity of design, materials, workmanship and feeling. Due to this loss in integrity resulting from previous modifications, staff does not recommend 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 Torrey Apartments located at 4260 Campus Avenue be designated as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1924-1926 under HRB Criterion A as a special element of the historical, social, economic, aesthetic, and architectural development of the City of San Diego through its Hybrid Bungalow Court typology.


Shannon Anthony
Senior Planner

SA/lsn

Attachments:

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON 6/22/2023

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 6/22/2023, to consider the historical designation of the **Torrey Apartments** (owned by Torrey Arms LLC, c/o P H Property Management, 7880 Exchange Place, San Diego, CA 92037) located at **4260 Campus Avenue, San Diego, CA 92103**, APN: **445-292-23-00**, further described as BLK 132 LOTS 37 38 & 39 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 Torrey Apartments on the following findings:

(1) The property is historically significant under CRITERION A as a special element of the historical, social, economic, aesthetic, and architectural development of the City of San Diego through its Hybrid Bungalow Court typology and retains integrity to its 1924-1926 period of significance. Specifically, the resource is a good example of a Hybrid Bungalow Court which features a combination of multifamily residential buildings from different time periods and architectural styles that represent this unique part of San Diego's historic built environment and reflects San Diego's response in addressing the housing shortage among the rapid population growth that occurred in the early 20th century. 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:

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

4260 Campus Avenue, San Diego, CA 92103

ASSESSOR PARCEL NUMBER **445-292-23-00**

HISTORICAL RESOURCES BOARD NUMBER **0**