



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: October 12, 2023 REPORT NO. HRB-23-036

HEARING DATE: October 26, 2023

SUBJECT: **ITEM #5 – Robert and Clara West Spec House #1**

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

APPLICANT: Anthony Butler and Jessica Keith; represented by Landmark Historic Preservation

LOCATION: 3441 Cooper Street, North Park Community, Council District 3
APN 453-835-0500

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Robert and Clara West Spec House #1 located at 3441 Cooper Street as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Robert and Clara West Spec House #1 located at 3441 Cooper Street as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1929 under HRB Criterion C. The designation excludes the 2020 rear addition constructed outside of 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 Spanish Colonial Revival style and retains integrity from its 1929 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features an asymmetrical façade, a low-pitched tile roof with no eave overhang and exposed rafter tails, stucco exterior, recessed arched entry elaborated with quoining, clay attic vents, large divided lite focal window, red brick chimney, decorative screen and wood windows.

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 resource is a one-story residence with a basement and detached garage located in a residential neighborhood of the North Park Community.

The property was located within the boundary of the [2016 North Park Community Plan Area Historic Resources Survey](#), but was not identified in the survey because it was not evaluated.

The historic name of the resource, the Robert and Clara West Spec House #1, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Robert and Clara West, who constructed the house as a speculation house.

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Landmark Historic Preservation, 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 one-story, single family residence constructed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style in 1929. The resource's roof is mostly flat with a low parapet; however, the front section features a combination shed and gable tile roof with a slight eave overhang and exposed rafter tails. The northern primary elevation is asymmetrical with a large divided lite focal window on one side and a pair of casements on the other. The centrally located entrance is recessed within an arched opening surrounded by quoining. Wing walls elaborate each end of this façade which also features a decorative Moorish inspired screen. The western façade contains a tapered brick chimney flanked by a pair of windows. The sloping site exposes the basement level on the rear façade. The resource also features clay tile vents and a detached garage that is original to the date of construction.

There have been several modifications to the resource since its 1929 date of construction including the replacement of the original wood window sashes with aluminum inserts and the construction of a rear deck in 1970. A rehabilitation project was completed in 2020 which included a rear two-story addition at the location of the existing deck, restoration of the pair of aluminum windows on the front façade with wood casement windows and the replacement of the two aluminum windows flanking the chimney with wood windows. Aluminum sash replacements remain on the side and rear façade and are not readily visible. The appearance of the addition is minimal because the project was able to utilize the slope of the lot to add additional square footage on the basement level. The 2020 project was reviewed by historical resources staff and determined to be consistent with the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards. These modifications do not significantly impair integrity of design, material, workmanship or feeling and the building retains integrity as it relates to HRB Criterion C.

The Spanish Colonial Revival style uses decorative details borrowed from the entire history of Spanish architecture. Its vocabulary is influenced by Moorish, Byzantine, Gothic or Renaissance precedents. The style became popular after the Panama-California Exposition of 1915 and reached its height in the 1920's and early 1930's before rapidly declining in the 1940's. Identifying features include a low-pitched roof with little or no eave overhang, red tile roof covering, stucco exterior wall finishes, an asymmetrical façade and arches above doors and principle windows. Common decorative details are patterned tiles, carved stonework, large focal windows, wooden or iron window grilles, decorative vents and balconies.

Significance Statement: The house continues to convey the historic significance of the Spanish Colonial Revival style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style; including an asymmetrical façade, a low-pitched tile roof with no eave overhang and exposed rafter tails, stucco exterior, recessed arched entry elaborated with quoining, clay attic vents, large divided lite focal window, red brick chimney, decorative screen and wood windows, and retains integrity to the 1929 period of significance. 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.*

The subject property at 3441 Cooper Street was designed built by Robert West. West has not been established by the Historical Resources Board as a Master Architect, Designer or Builder, and there is insufficient information to designate him as such at this time. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion D. Eligibility under this criterion may can be reevaluated at a future date pending submittal of additional information and analysis.

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 Robert and Clara West Spec House #1 located at 3441 Cooper Street be designated with a period of significance of 1929 under HRB Criterion C as a good example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The designation excludes the 2020 rear addition constructed outside of the period of significance.



Suzanne Segur
Senior Planner/ HRB Liaison
City Planning Department

ks/SS

Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON 10/26/2023

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 10/26/2023, to consider the historical designation of the **Robert and Clara West Spec House #1** (owned by Anthony Butler & Jessica Keith Family Trust 12-03-20, 3441 Cooper Street, San Diego, CA 92104) located at **3441 Cooper Street, San Diego, CA 92104**, APN: **453-835-05-00**, further described as BLK F LOT 7 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 Robert and Clara West 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 Spanish Colonial Revival style and retains architectural integrity from its 1929 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features an asymmetrical façade, a low-pitched tile roof with no eave overhang and exposed rafter tails, stucco exterior, recessed arched entry elaborated with quoining, clay attic vents, large divided lite focal window, red brick chimney, decorative screen and wood windows. 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 2020 rear addition constructed outside of 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

3441 Cooper Street, San Diego, CA 92104

ASSESSOR PARCEL NUMBER **453-835-05-00**

HISTORICAL RESOURCES BOARD NUMBER **0**