



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: March 14, 2024 REPORT NO. HRB-24-013

HEARING DATE: March 28, 2024

SUBJECT: **ITEM #7 – Pear and Helen Pearson Spec House #1**

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

APPLICANT: Darren & Natalina Rettew; represented by Legacy 106, Inc.

LOCATION: 4343 Trias Street, Uptown Community, Council District 3
APN 443-211-0100

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Pear and Helen Pearson Spec House #1 located at 4343 Trias Street as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Pear and Helen Pearson Spec House #1 located at 4343 Trias Street as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1928 under HRB Criteria C and D. The designation excludes the 1969 addition. The designation includes the original garage with maid's quarters, the interior living room ceiling beams, and living room fireplace. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

1. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Spanish Colonial Revival style and retains integrity from its 1928 period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits an asymmetrical façade, red tile roof with little eave overhang, varied roof forms, central tower, stucco exterior, arched focal window, cantilevered second floor with decorative beams, clay tile attic vent, wood sleeping porch, wood paneled entry door, curved wing wall, decorative iron window grills, and wood windows. Both the living room ceiling beams and fireplace included in the nomination are original to the 1928 date of construction and are designed consistent with the Spanish Colonial Revival style of the residence.
2. The resource is representative of a notable work of Master Builder Pear Pearson, a prominent and accomplished building contractor responsible for the construction of many quality houses in San Diego, and retains integrity as it relates to the 1928 original design. Specifically, the resource retains excellent integrity and continues to reflect Pearson's original design, intent and aesthetic. The house is significant as an example of Pearson's residential work during a phase in his career in which he was primarily designing in the

Spanish Colonial Revival style. The resource also demonstrates the high quality of design and craftsmanship generally associated with Pearson.

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 Area Historic Resources Survey Report](#) 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 Pear and Helen Pearson Spec House #1, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Pear and Helen Pearson, who constructed the house as a speculation house and the name of Pear Pearson, a Master Builder.

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 4343 Trias Street is a two-story, Spanish Colonial Revival style single-family residential building constructed in 1928 in the Uptown Community Planning Area. Other buildings and structures present on site include a detached garage with maid's quarters. The property is located on a corner lot in the residential Mission Hills neighborhood. The property is in its original location.

Since its construction in 1928 the property has been modified. Before 1942, a brick extension was added to the existing chimney. Prior to 1968, the rear wood sleeping porch windows were replaced within the original opening. Additionally, the sleeping porch's decorative wood exterior was replaced with wood siding sometime after 1968. At an unknown date post 1968 the wood grill was removed from the arched window over the primary entry. In 1969, a patio on the southwest façade

of the house was infilled with a two-story, stucco-clad addition. In late 2023 several small restoration projects were completed by the current property owner, including the removal of a post 1968 garden window on the northeast façade and restoration of the original wood sash window in the existing opening. Additionally, two non-historic awnings on the front façade were removed. The awning removal is not documented in the Historical Resource Research Report; however, staff has provided photographic documentation in Attachment 3.

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Legacy 106 Inc., which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria C and D 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, Spanish Colonial Revival style residence constructed in 1928 by Master Builder Pear Pearson. The house is situated on a corner lot and is oriented towards the intersection of Trias and Hickory Streets. An original scored concrete walkway leads from the street to the primary entrance. The stucco-clad resource features asymmetrical massing and varied roof forms with clay tile roofing. The main portion of the house is two-stories and a one-story living room wing projects from the primary façade. These two parts of the house are visually connected by a one-and-a-half-story tower that contains an arched, wood-paneled front door. Two slender, arched wood windows with decorative iron grills flank the front door with another larger arched window above. The one-story living room wing features an arched focal window, decorative clay tile attic vent, and red mission tile roof with little eave overhang and exposed rafter tails. A curved wing wall and stucco chimney are also located on the southwest façade off the living room wing. The northwest portion of the main, two-story massing is covered by a mission tile hipped roof with little eave overhang. A flat roof with simple parapet covers the remainder of the building. On the primary façade, a small portion of the second story cantilevers out from the wall plane leaving decorative beams exposed below. Additional fenestration includes three-lite wood casement and wood sash windows. A second story wood sleeping porch with clay tile roof is located on the rear façade. A secondary, stucco clad structure contains the original garage and maid's quarters.

The interior of the living room features an open beam ceiling with faux corbels and a fireplace surround with Batchelder tiles. Both the ceiling beams and fireplace are original to the 1928 date of construction and are designed consistent with the Spanish Colonial Revival style of the residence and have been included by the property owner in the nomination.

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 1920s and early 1930s before rapidly declining in the 1940s. 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 principal windows. Common decorative details are patterned tiles, carved stonework, large focal windows, wooden or iron window grilles, decorative vents and balconies.

Of the seven aspects of integrity, design, materials, and workmanship are the most critical to the property's ability to convey significance under HRB Criterion C as a resource that embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The property, which has been modified as detailed in the beginning of the analysis section of this report, retains overall integrity of design, materials and workmanship despite the modifications. The modifications to the rear sleeping porch are minor and the structure is still able to visually read as a sleeping porch. The brick chimney extension, although visible, is necessary for safety reasons. The 1969 addition was constructed in a location that minimized both its visual appearance and impacts to the resource's character defining features. The removal of the decorative window grill is minor. Therefore, the property does retain integrity to its 1928 period of significance under HRB Criterion C.

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, red tile roof with little eave overhang, varied roof forms, central tower, stucco exterior, arched focal window, cantilevered second floor with decorative beams, clay tile attic vent, wood sleeping porch, wood paneled entry door, curved wing wall, decorative iron window grills, and wood windows. Both the living room ceiling beams and fireplace included in the nomination are original to the 1928 date of construction and are designed consistent with the Spanish Colonial Revival style of the residence. 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.

Pear Pearson was born in Sweden in 1890 and moved to the US in 1905. He and his brother, Master Builder John Pearson, moved to Colorado in 1906. Pear Pearson did carpentry work throughout Colorado until 1912, when he moved to San Francisco. He continued working as a carpenter and worked in steel, concrete, heating, plumbing, wiring, marble, bronze, painting, and designing. Pearson started working in San Diego in 1920. He built a variety of structures including commercial buildings, small and large residences, churches, and gymnasiums. Pearson's formal architectural education came from a correspondence school course in architecture.

Pearson's career in San Diego spanned several decades and he adapted his style to accommodate contemporary trends. His earlier work consisted of mostly smaller Craftsman style residences but by the 1930's he had begun to favor the popular Spanish Colonial Revival style on a larger scale. He also experimented in the Monterey and Colonial Revival styles by the later 1930's and 1940's. Pearson also constructed many Minimal Traditional houses that met the federal standards required for FHA loans in the years leading up to World War II. No matter what style he worked in, Pearson's designs were detailed and the houses were constructed with superior craftsmanship.

Pearson was established as a Master Builder by the HRB in 2001 with the designation of his personal residence, the Rear Admiral Charles Hartman/Pear Pearson House (HRB #606). At least seven of Pearson's works have been designated as historical resources by the City of San Diego Historical Resources Board.

- HRB #467- Leo R. Hoffman Residence (4230 Arista Street), 1948
- HRB #475- The Damarus/ Bogan House (3444 Granada Ave), 1922

- HRB #569– Forbes-Requa Model House (5318 Canterbury Drive), 1931
- HRB #606– Rear Admiral Charles Hartman/Pear Pearson House (3027 Freeman Street), 1935
- HRB #996– Frederick and Ada Sedgwick/Pear Pearson House (3602 Villa Terrace) 1922
- HRB #1081– Augustus and Laura Rehkopf/Pear Pearson House (4302 Adams Ave), 1921
- HRB #1439– Edwin and Anne Corwin/Pear Pearson House (5309 Canterbury Drive), 1931

Pearson and his wife, Helen, purchased the subject property in 1925 and completed construction of the residence in 1928 as a speculative property. The house is representative of Pearson’s custom residential work designed in the late 1920s during a phase in his career in which he was primarily designing Spanish Colonial Revival homes. The resource’s quality of design and detailing is typical of Pearson’s work.

Of the seven aspects of integrity, design, materials, and workmanship are the most critical to the property’s ability to convey significance under HRB Criterion D as a resource that represents the notable work of Master Builder Pear Pearson. The property, which has been modified as detailed in the beginning of the analysis section of this report, retains overall integrity of design, materials and workmanship despite the modifications. Additionally, the property retains most of the physical features and design quality attributable to Master Builder Pear Pearson. The modifications to the rear sleeping porch are minor and the structure is still able to visually read as a sleeping porch. The brick chimney extension, although visible, is necessary for safety reasons. The 1969 addition was constructed in a location that minimized both its visual appearance and impacts to the resource’s character defining features. The removal of the decorative window grill is minor. Therefore, the property does retain integrity to its 1928 period of significance under HRB Criterion D.

Significance Statement: The resource is representative of a notable work of Master Builder Pear Pearson, a prominent and accomplished building contractor responsible for the construction of many quality houses in San Diego. The resource retains excellent integrity and continues to reflect Pearson’s original design, intent and aesthetic. The house is significant as an example of Pearson’s residential work during a phase in his career in which he was primarily designing in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The resource also demonstrates the high quality of design and craftsmanship generally associated with Pearson. Therefore, staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion D as a notable work of Master Builder Pear Pearson.

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 Pear and Helen Pearson Spec House #1 located at 4343 Trias Street be designated with a period of significance of 1928 under HRB Criterion C as a good example of the Spanish Colonial Revival and Criterion D as a notable work of Master Builder Pear Pearson. The designation excludes the 1969 addition. The designation includes the original garage with maid's quarters, the interior living room ceiling beams, and living room fireplace.



Suzanne Segur
Senior Planner/ HRB Liaison
City Planning Department

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Attachment(s):

1. Draft Resolution
2. Interior ceiling beams and fireplace proposed for designation
3. November 2023 photo of Trias Street façade
4. Applicant's Historical Report under separate cover

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON 3/28/2024

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 3/28/2024, to consider the historical designation of the Pear and Helen Pearson Spec House #1 (owned by J L P Trust 09-25-15, 4343 Trias Street, San Diego, CA 92103) located at **4343 Trias Street, San Diego, CA 92103**, APN: **443-211-01-00**, further described as BLK 1 LOT 1 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 Pear and Helen Pearson 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 integrity from its 1928 period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits an asymmetrical façade, red tile roof with little eave overhang, varied roof forms, central tower, stucco exterior, arched focal window, cantilevered second floor with decorative beams, clay tile attic vent, wood sleeping porch, wood paneled entry door, curved wing wall, decorative iron window grills, and wood windows. Both the living room ceiling beams and fireplace included in the nomination are original to the 1928 date of construction and are designed consistent with the Spanish Colonial Revival style of the residence. This finding is further supported by the staff report, the historical research report, and written and oral evidence presented at the designation hearing.

(2) The property is historically significant under CRITERION D as a notable work of Master Builder Pears Pearson, a prominent and accomplished building contractor responsible for the construction of many quality houses in San Diego, and retains integrity as it relates to the 1928 original design. Specifically, the resource retains excellent integrity and continues to reflect Pearson's original design, intent and aesthetic. The house is significant as an example of Pearson's residential work during a phase in his career in which he was primarily designing in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The resource also demonstrates the high quality of design and craftsmanship generally associated with Pearson. 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 include the original garage with maid's quarters, the interior living room ceiling beams, and living room fireplace.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the designation shall exclude the 1969 addition.

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

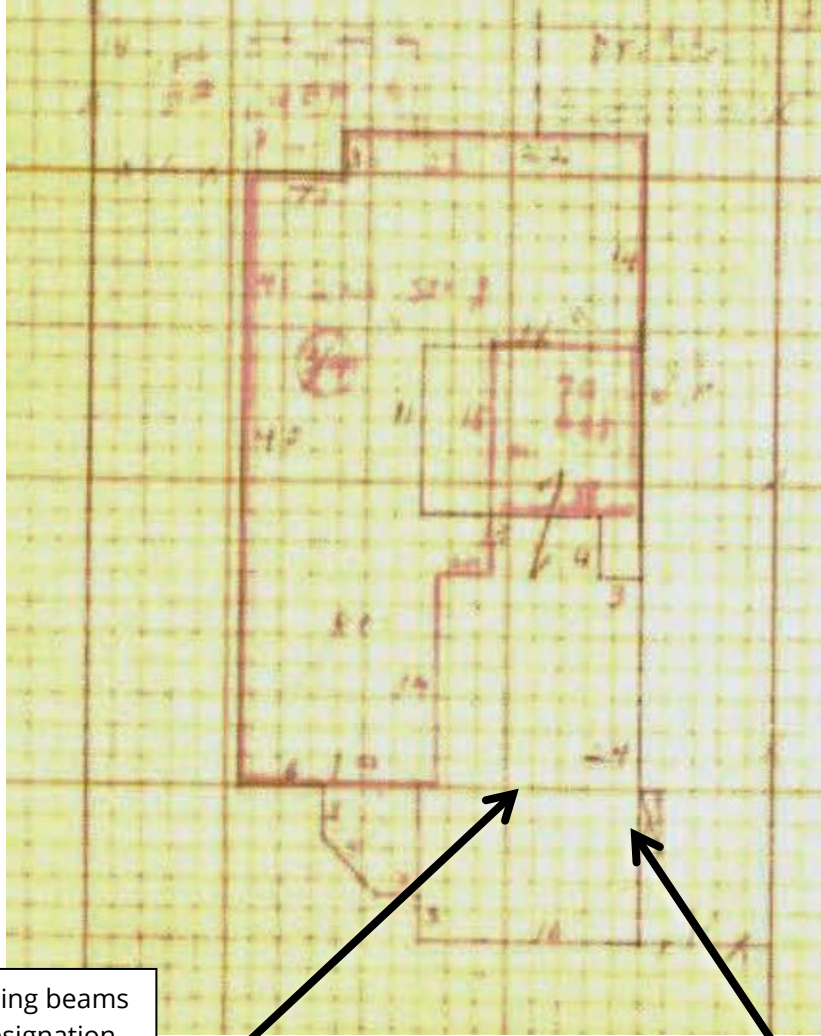
4343 Trias Street, San Diego, CA 92103

ASSESSOR PARCEL NUMBER **443-211-01-00**

HISTORICAL RESOURCES BOARD NUMBER **0**

Site Plan with Footprint

Ceiling Beams and Fireplace Included In Proposed Designation



Location of ceiling beams included in designation

Location of fireplace included in designation



November 2023 Photo
4343 Trias Street after Awning Removal

