



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: October 14, 2021 REPORT NO. HRB-21-057

HEARING DATE: October 28, 2021

SUBJECT: **ITEM #04 – Edwin and Anne Corwin/ Pear Pearson House**

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

APPLICANT: White Trust 06-24-14; represented by IS Architecture

LOCATION: 5309 Canterbury Drive, Kensington-Talmadge Community, Council District 9  
APN 440-042-0200

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Edwin and Anne Corwin/ Pear Pearson House located at 5309 Canterbury Drive as a historical resource.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Edwin and Anne Corwin/ Pear Pearson House located at 5309 Canterbury Drive as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1931 under HRB Criteria C and D. 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 a good level of architectural integrity from its 1931 period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits a low pitched, red tile roof with little eave overhang; stucco exterior; asymmetrical façade; arched, recessed front entry; stucco chimney; arched focal window; second floor balconies; decorative ironwork and wood windows.
2. The resource is representative of a notable work of Master Builder Pears Pearson and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the resource is significant as a residential example of Pearson's residential work during a phase in his career in which he was primarily designing Spanish Colonial Revival homes. The resource also demonstrates the high quality of design and craftsmanship generally associated with Pears 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 subject property is located in the Kensington neighborhood and contains a two-story, single-family residence and detached garage.

The property has not been identified in any historic surveys, as the subject area has not been previously surveyed.

The historic name of the resource, the Edwin and Anne Corwin/ Pear Pearson House, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Edwin and Anne Corwin who constructed the house as their personal residence and the name of Pear Pearson, a Master Builder.

## ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by IS Architecture, 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 was constructed in 1931 in the Spanish Colonial Revival style by Master Builder Pears Pearson. The body of the stucco house is two-stories and a one-story wing projects from the front façade. A low pitched, gable roof with red clay tile and a short eave overhang covers both the one and two-story sections. The resource is approached by a straight, scored concrete walkway and through an iron gate in a low, stucco wall original to the date of construction. The original wood front door is deeply recessed within an arch. Directly above the entrance is a small inset balcony with iron railing. Another inset balcony is also on the second floor of the front façade and is differentiated by the use of wooden posts and corbels as well as turned wood balusters. The one-story wing is accented by a stucco chimney and arched focal window with a short iron grill. Fenestration includes three lite wood casement windows on the front and side facades with some double hung wood windows at the rear. A scored concrete driveway leads to an original garage with stucco exterior and red clay tile roof.

Modifications to the property are few and include the replacement of the original garage door, a vinyl window replacement on the rear, and the infill of a window towards the rear of the driveway side of the house. Additionally, the original set of plans and transitional photos reveal that the gates in the stucco wall and ironwork at the small balcony and focal window have been replaced. A pool and spa was constructed in the backyard in 1986. These modifications do not significantly impair integrity of design, materials, workmanship or feeling 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 a low pitched, red tile roof with little eave overhang; stucco exterior; asymmetrical façade; arched, recessed front entry; stucco chimney; arched focal window; second floor balconies; decorative ironwork and wood windows. 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 Denver, 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 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). A total of five properties have been designated for an association with Pearson.

*Partial List of Notable Works:*

- HRB #467- Leo R. Hoffman Residence (4230 Arista Street), 1948
- HRB #475- The Damarus/ Bogan House (3444 Granada Ave), 1922
- 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), 1931

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 home but by the 1930's he had begun to favor the popular Spanish Colonial Revival style on a larger scale. He eventually designed homes in the Monterey and Colonial Revival styles by the later 1930's and 1940's. No matter what style he worked in, Pearson's designs were detailed and the houses were constructed with superior craftsmanship.

The resource located at 5309 Canterbury Drive was designed and built by Pears Pearson in 1931 for Edward and Anne Corwin. This is confirmed by the Notice of Completion and the title block on the original set of plans. The house is representative of Pearson's custom residential work designed in the 1930's during a phase in his career in which he was primarily designing Spanish Colonial Revival homes. The modifications listed above do not significantly impair integrity of design, material, workmanship or feeling as it relates to HRB Criterion D.

The subject resource also has an association with Master Landscape Designer Milton Sessions; however, it is not known what the original design actually was. Additionally, the front yard no longer has much vegetation and the backyard was significantly modified by the construction of the swimming pool in the 1980's. The original design no longer retains integrity. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation for an association with Milton Sessions.

Significance Statement: The subject resource retains excellent integrity and continues to reflect Pearson's original design, intent and aesthetic. The house is significant as a residential example of Pearson's residential work during a phase in his career in which he was primarily designing Spanish Colonial Revival homes. 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 Pears 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 Edwin and Anne Corwin/ Pear Pearson House located at 5309 Canterbury Drive be designated with a period of significance of 1931 under HRB Criterion C as a good example of the Spanish Colonial Revival and Criterion D as a notable work of Master Builder Pears Pearson.



Suzanne Segur  
Senior Planner/ HRB Liaison  
Development Services Department

ss/SS

Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A  
ADOPTED ON 10/28/2021

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 10/28/2021, to consider the historical designation of the **Edwin and Anne Corwin/ Pear Pearson House** (owned by White Trust 06-24-14, 5309 Canterbury Drive, San Diego, CA 92116) located at **5309 Canterbury Drive, San Diego, CA 92116**, APN: **440-042-02-00**, further described as LOT 338 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 Edwin and Anne Corwin/ Pear Pearson House 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 a good level of architectural integrity from its 1931 period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits a low pitched, red tile roof with little eave overhang; stucco exterior; asymmetrical façade; arched, recessed front entry; stucco chimney; arched focal window; second floor balconies; decorative ironwork 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.

(2) The property is historically significant under CRITERION D as a notable work of Master Builder Pears Pearson and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the resource is significant as a residential example of Pearson's residential work during a phase in his career in which he was primarily designing Spanish Colonial Revival homes. The resource also demonstrates the high quality of design and craftsmanship generally associated with Pears 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 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: \_\_\_\_\_  
DAVID MCCULLOUGH, 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

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SPACE ABOVE THIS LINE FOR RECORDER'S USE

RESOLUTION NUMBER **N/A**

HISTORICAL DESIGNATION OF PROPERTY ON

**5309 Canterbury Drive, San Diego, CA 92116**

ASSESSOR PARCEL NUMBER **440-042-02-00**

HISTORICAL RESOURCES BOARD NUMBER **0**