



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: September 12, 2024 REPORT NO. HRB-24-032

HEARING DATE: September 26, 2024

SUBJECT: **ITEM 4 – 637 Arenas Street**

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

APPLICANT: Donald and Shelline Bennett; represented by Urbana Preservation & Planning, LLC

LOCATION: 637 Arenas Street, 92037, La Jolla, Council District 1
APN: 351-151-1000

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the property located at 637 Arenas Street as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Do not designate the property located at 637 Arenas Street under any adopted HRB Criteria.

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

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 637 Arenas Street is a two-story, Colonial Revival style single-family residential building constructed in 1928 in the La Jolla Community Planning Area. Other buildings and structures present on site include a rear detached garage. The property is located on a flat lot to the south side of Arenas Street between Draper Avenue and La Jolla Boulevard. The property is in its original location.

Since its construction in 1928, the property has been modified as follows: a rear addition, which included a bathroom, laundry room, and bay window was constructed in 1983. In 2019 the rear garage was converted to a workshop and storage space. Between 2019 and 2022, the homeowners completed additional work which did not require a permit including alterations to the front portico involving the removal of a set of columns, changing the front portico steps from concrete to brick, and adding wrought iron railings, in addition the brick chimney was painted white during this time.

A Historical Resource Research Report (HRRR) was prepared by Urbana Preservation & Planning LLC, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criterion C. Staff disagrees and finds that the building is not eligible under any HRB Criteria. 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 property was built in the Colonial Revival style in 1928. The house features a low-pitched, side-gabled roof, horizontal wood siding, and a brick chimney on the west side of the house. The resource sits at street level with a brick path leading to the front portico. The second story features two sets of wood double hung windows with shutters with a small double hung window to the left. The asymmetrical primary façade features a front portico to the left side of the primary facade supported by two Doric columns, topped by a Juliet balcony with wood spindles. The right side of the primary façade has two sets of full-length wood casement windows with shutters. A detached garage done in the Colonial Revival style is to the rear of the house. The Fenestration consists of wood casement windows with a 4:4 lite pattern and double hung 1:1 and 4:1 windows with decorative shutters.

Following the Centennial Exposition of 1876 America experienced a rebirth of interest in its colonial past. Primarily popular from 1880 to 1955, Colonial Revival buildings reference the early English and Dutch homes of the Atlantic seaboard, particularly the Georgian and Federal styles. As with their prototypes, Colonial Revival structures generally have a symmetrical front façade with the principal areas of elaboration being entrances, windows, and cornices. Roofs can be hipped; gable or gambrel and some variations feature a center gable projecting slightly from the primary façade. One-story side wings with flat roofs are common. Windows are typically double-hung sash with multi-pane

glazing in one or both sashes and are commonly found in pairs, triples, or bay windows. Front-facing gambrel roofs were most common in earlier revival houses while side gambrels became popular in the 1920s and '30s.

The subject property only exhibits two of the six primary character-defining features: double hung and grouped windows, and a front portico. The asymmetrical façade, off-center entryway and minimal nature of the portico without decorative cornices or elaboration on the front entrance, and varied window forms are not typical of the Colonial Revival style. The modification done between 2019 and 2022 altered the portico, removing the double set of columns and changing the historic materials of the porch and railings which removed or altered the historic materials of the character defining feature of the house. Changes to the primary elevation have collectively impaired the building's integrity of design, materials, and feeling through removal of original features and alteration of the historic materials. The building as originally designed represented a minimal expression of Colonial Revival style, and the modifications to the few Colonial Revival style character-defining features of have further degraded the building's representation of the style.

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 Colonial Revival style. Although staff's position is that the building was never a resource that embodied the distinctive characteristics of the Colonial Revival style as required under Criterion C, the modifications, as detailed in the beginning of the analysis section of this report, further degraded the building's expression of the style and results in a loss of integrity of materials, design, workmanship, and feeling. The property does not embody the distinctive characteristics of the Colonial Revival style and does not retain critical aspects of integrity; and therefore 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 the staff's field check, it is recommended that the property located at 637 Arenas Street not be designated under any HRB Criteria



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City Planning Department

MW/SS

Attachment(s):

1. Applicant's Historical Report under separate cover