



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: November 7, 2024 REPORT NO. HRB-24-042

HEARING DATE: November 21, 2024

SUBJECT: **ITEM 4 – ALEDA BURDICK APARTMENT BUILDING**

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

APPLICANT: Janet M. Brant Family Trust 07-24-15 and Jennifer L. Brant; represented by Legacy 106, Inc.

LOCATION: 1615-1621 Myrtle Avenue, 92103, Uptown Community, Council District 3
APN 452-481-14-00

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Aleda Burdick Apartment Building located at 1615-1621 Myrtle Avenue as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Aleda Burdick Apartment Building located at 1615-1621 Myrtle Avenue as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1926 under HRB Criterion C. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Spanish Colonial Revival style architecture and retains integrity from its 1926 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features a flat roof and parapet, with a front hip and gabled roof with Mission tile, a symmetrical façade, medium sand stucco cladding, decorative friezes, wrought iron balconettes, and fenestration consisting primarily of original wood divided lite with keel-arch windows and doors and 1-1 double-hung windows of various sizes in single and paired groupings.

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](#) and given a Status Code of 5D3, "Appears to be a contributor to a district that appears to be eligible for local listing or designation through survey evaluation."

The historic name of the resource, the Aleda Burdick Apartment Building, has been identified as consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Aleda Burdick, who constructed the building as apartments.

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 1615-1621 Myrtle Avenue is a two-story, Spanish Colonial Revival style, multi-family residential building constructed in 1926 in the Uptown Community Planning Area. Other buildings and structures present on site include the detached rear garages. The property is located on the south side of Myrtle Avenue between Park Boulevard and Herbert Street, in a residentially zoned neighborhood. The property is in its original location.

Since its construction in 1926, the property has had minimal modification: between 1927 and 1996, the security bars on the small front windows were removed; between 1996 and 2005, small iron decorative planters were added under the same windows. At an unknown date, gutters were added.

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Legacy 106, Inc., which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria B, C and D. Staff concurs that the site is a significant historical resource under HRB Criterion C but not HRB Criteria B or D. This determination is consistent with the [Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria](#), as follows.

CRITERION B - Is identified with persons or events significant in local, state or national history.

The consultant report concludes that the subject property is eligible under Criterion B for being associated with Edith Forester, who resided at 1619 Myrtle Avenue between 1942 and 1945. Edith Forester was the executive secretary for the Red Cross of San Diego from 1931 to 1950. During her employment with the Red Cross, the organization's humanitarian efforts were expanded due to

WWII, and her job duties included assisting with the running of volunteer programs in support of the war effort.

According to the [Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria](#) (Criteria Guidelines), "a person would not be considered historically significant simply by virtue of position/title, association, affiliation, race, gender, ethnicity or religion." Although Forester held an important position, the HRRR does not demonstrate her importance beyond her job title. Additionally, the information contained in the report does not indicate that her achievements were demonstrably important to the history of San Diego in a way that surpasses her peers.

Furthermore, the [Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria](#) states "Criterion B is generally restricted to those properties that are associated with a person's important achievements" No other buildings or places connected to the work of Edith Forester are identified or analyzed in the report. No information is provided to show that Edith's work during her time at the Red Cross occurred in or related to the apartment at 1619 Myrtle Avenue. Without additional information on other locations which may be significant for their association with her work, or documentation linking the apartment to her achievements, it is not possible to establish 1619 Myrtle Avenue as the most appropriate location associated with Edith Forester. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion B.

As the property is not significant under Criterion B, an evaluation of integrity as it relates to Criterion B is not relevant or required.

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 resource is a two-story, residential apartment building constructed in 1926 in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The building features a predominately flat roof and parapet, with a front hip and gabled roof with Mission tile, a symmetrical façade, and medium sand stucco cladding. Each of the three gable sections has a pediment which features a decorative frieze. The second story of the residence features two projecting front-facing gables on the east and west ends of the primary façade, which are supported by large wood corbels and feature a set of tripartite keel-arch windows with a wrought iron balconette. The projecting gable bays are separated by a central set of tripartite windows with a keel-arch.

On the ground floor, a central projecting front-facing gable features two side-facing entry doors to the upper units and two small windows. Located at the far east and west of the projecting central gable are the entry doors to the lower bottom units, each with a front porch with a decorative iron lamp post set on a low stucco wall and a single full-length window with a keel-arch. Fenestration consists primarily of the original wood frame and sash 10-lite with keel-arch windows and doors on the primary and side elevations and the 1-1 double-hung wood frame and sash windows on the remaining elevations. The original detached four-car garage is located at the southern end of the parcel and is accessed off the alley.

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 minimally 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 iron security bars and the addition of cast iron planters and gutters do not impact the resource's character-defining features. Therefore, the property retains its integrity to its 1926 period of significance under HRB Criterion C.

Significance Statement: The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Spanish Colonial Revival style architecture and retains integrity from its 1926 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features a flat roof and parapet, with a front hip and gabled roof with Mission tile, a symmetrical façade, medium sand stucco cladding, decorative friezes, wrought iron balconettes, and fenestration consisting primarily of original wood divided lite with keel-arch windows and doors and 1-1 double-hung windows in of various sizes in single and paired groupings. 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 1615-1621 Myrtle Avenue was constructed by the Murray Brothers in 1926. The Historical Resources Board has not established the Murray Brothers as Master Architects, Designers or Builders. John and James Murray were born in Nova Scotia Canada, by 1923 both brothers had moved to San Diego. They founded their construction company by 1925 and dissolved it in 1928. John Murray continued to work independently and with others through the early 1940s. James Henry Murray is documented as a carpenter and millwright, John Rexford Murray was enlisted in the US military prior to joining his brother in San Diego and forming their construction firm. The report documents 25 building permits attributed to the brothers during their time as builders, and states that they relate to the Better Homes Program, Small Homes movement. The buildings discussed in the report are garages, the apartments at 1615-1621 Myrtle Avenue, a bungalow court, and smaller homes which includes two previously designated houses, the Rex and Alice Murray Spec House #1 at 4266 Arista St and the Omar and Sarah Gray House at 3116 McKinley St.

According to the Criteria Guidelines, "The work of a Master may be established by a combination of one or more of the following:

- The scope and excellence of their overall body of work, as it is understood.
- Quality of design and detailing excellence.
- The use of new or traditional materials in a new way resulting in a special or unique design expression.

- Special attention to work while under construction, basing much of the design refinements on field work and experience.
- Publication in trade journals and/or the popular press.
- Publication in scholarly journal articles or books.
- Being the subject of Master's thesis or Doctoral dissertations.
- Acknowledgement by design peers through formal awards and citations.
- Acknowledgement by the general public through formal awards, citations and commendations.
- Favorable reviews by professional architectural critics

The report does not provide information that meets any of these requirements to establish a Master Builder. Although the report identifies other buildings constructed by the Murray Brothers, the report does not provide documentation or analysis that speaks specifically to the scope and excellence of their overall body of work, quality of design and detailing excellence, use of new or traditional materials in a new way resulting in a special or unique design expression, or special attention to work while under construction. The report is also unable to identify any publication in trade journals, popular press, scholarly journals or books, or Master's thesis or doctoral dissertation, and does not identify any existing acknowledgement of the Murray Brothers' work by peers, by the general public via awards, citations and commendations, or by architectural critics.

The applicant's report states that previous Master Builder designations have been awarded in the past without the use of awards, trade journals and scholarly articles which are not as common for Master Builders and should not apply to the brothers as small scale builders. While this is true, a nomination must satisfy at least one of the requirements of the Criteria Guidelines listed above, and the report does not provide sufficient information or analysis to meet the requirements. While the Murray Brothers constructed small homes that were made popular during the period as part of the Small Homes movement, this in and of itself does not meet the requirements to establish them as Master Builders, nor even distinct amongst their peers.

Additionally, if the Murray Brothers' could be found to be Master Builders related to their work building small homes reflecting the Better Homes Program, 1615-1621 Myrtle Avenue is an apartment building and therefore does not embody or reflect this aspect of their work.

There is insufficient information provided in the report to establish James and John Murray as Master Builders at this time, as well as insufficient information to demonstrate how the property at 1615-1621 Myrtle Avenue would be representative of their notable work. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion D.

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 Aleda Burdick Apartment Building located at 1615-1621 Myrtle Avenue be designated with a period of significance of 1926 under HRB Criterion C as an example of Spanish Colonial Revival style architecture.



Megan Walker
Associate Planner



Suzanne Segur
Senior Planner/ HRB Liaison
City Planning Department

MW/sa/SS

Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON 11/21/2024

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 11/21/2024, to consider the historical designation of the **ALEDA BURDICK APARTMENT BUILDING** (owned by Janet M Brant Family Trust 07-24-15 and Jennifer L Brant, 4024 Ingalls Street, San Diego, CA 92103) located at **1615-1621 Myrtle Avenue, San Diego, CA 92104**, APN: **452-481-14-00**, further described as BLK 245 LOTS 26&27 ST CLSD ADJ & 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 ALEDA BURDICK APARTMENT BUILDING 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 architecture and retains integrity from its 1926 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features a flat roof and parapet, with a front hip and gabled roof with Mission tile, a symmetrical façade, medium sand stucco cladding, decorative friezes, wrought iron balconettes, and fenestration consisting primarily of original wood divided lite with keel-arch windows and doors and 1-1 double-hung windows of various sizes in single and paired groupings. 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: _____
JEANNE MACKINNON,
Deputy City Attorney