



PROCOPIO
525 B Street, Suite 2200
San Diego, CA 92101
T. 619.238.1900
F. 619.235.0398

STEVEN J. UNTIEDT
P. 619.515.3281
steven.untiedt@procopio.com

DEL MAR HEIGHTS
LAS VEGAS
PHOENIX
SAN DIEGO
SILICON VALLEY

February 26, 2025

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Historical Resources Board

Re: Agenda Item #1 - 310 San Fernando Street

Dear Board Members:

I am writing to urge you to designate as a historical resource the house located at 310 San Fernando Street, San Diego, California 92106, under adopted HRB Criteria A and C.

Our family resides at 345 San Gorgonio Street, which immediately adjoins the subject property to the north. The neighbor across the street from the subject property to the west, Marcie H. Rothman, and I have nominated the subject property for designation as a historical resource. Our Nomination Report, prepared by Landmark Historic Preservation, was deemed complete by the HRB staff on February 5, 2025.

Based upon the historical research set forth in our Nomination Report, we believe that this house, which was built in 1912, fully merits historic designation. The developer of the property would like to demolish this important community asset.

Accompanying this letter are two (2) photo exhibits:

Exhibit A – a 2019 photo (back when this process began) of the front of this historic home (facing east); and

Exhibit B – a 1916 photo of La Playa, depicting the back of this historic home (facing west), and its carriage house (which was previously demolished by the developer), in the lower right foreground.

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I am also attaching copies of (1) a letter dated June 10, 2019 from Save Our Heritage Organization (“SOHO”) supporting historical designation under Criterion C; (2) a letter from The La Playa Trail Association supporting historical designation; and (3) letters and e-mails dated earlier this month addressed to the Peninsula Community Planning Board from various other Point Loma residents, also supporting historical designation of this important home. Bruce Coons, on behalf of SOHO, will address you tomorrow. Finally, our consultant, Landmark Historic Preservation, will also address you tomorrow.

We believe that 310 San Fernando Street definitely qualifies for designation as a historical resource, under adopted Criterion A and Criterion C, for several reasons, including the following:

- The house was built by builder Ray R. Radford in 1912 for Dr. Winfield McKay and his wife Susan. Dr. Winfield McKay was the Medical Officer who worked (and lived) in the San Diego Quarantine Station in La Playa. In his role as the Quarantine Station's Medical Officer, Dr. McKay boarded vessels arriving in San Diego, and assessed the health of the crew and passengers to prevent anyone with a serious communicable disease from disembarking, and spreading the illness to the general population.
- Point Loma is one of San Diego's most historic neighborhoods, and this home is an important link to the early history of the community, and one of the very few preserved and intact homes from this period in the area.
- The home was one of the very first homes built in the La Playa area of Point Loma. None of the other very few homes shown in the accompanying 1916 photo have been preserved.
- The home represents an excellent example of the Prairie style of architecture, originated by the Chicago School of Master Architect Frank Lloyd Wright, which became popular with local architects and builders from about 1890 to 1915, but is now practically extinct in the La Playa neighborhood of Point Loma.
- As one of the very earliest remaining La Playa area homes built prior to the 1915 Panama-California Exposition, this historic home exemplifies the early 1900-1915 development period of La Playa's establishment as a residential community of San Diego.

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I am not qualified to opine on the architectural integrity of this property, but SOHO and Landmark Historic Preservation are indeed experts. It certainly appears to us that the alterations that have been made to this historic house are not major, either individually or in the aggregate, and some of them were made more than a 100 years ago! There are numerous precedents for designating a property as a historical resource with a period of significance of a few years, and we propose that the period of significance for this property should be 1912 to 1920. Moreover, just from a common sense perspective, the types of possible alterations described in the Staff's Report No. HRB-25-005, which was just issued last Friday (giving us only three business days to respond to it), should not disqualify this house from being designated as a historical resource under Criterion C.

Part of our attraction to the La Playa area of Point Loma was the historical homes, on large lots, which are part of our local community. This home, built in 1912, may very well be the oldest home still standing in La Playa. It would be a tragic loss to the character of our neighborhood if it was demolished or moved.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steven J. Untiedt". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Steven J. Untiedt

cc: Kiley Wallace, Landmark Historic Preservation (with attachments) (Via Electronic Mail)

Marcie H. Rothman (with attachments) (Via Electronic Mail)

Felix Tinkov, Esq. (with attachments) (Via Electronic Mail)

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