



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: April 14, 2025 REPORT NO. HRB-25-017

HEARING DATE: April 24, 2025

SUBJECT: ITEM #4 – Leo and Rose Greenbaum/ Ralph Hulburt and Charles Tifal House

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

APPLICANT: Bricnet Family Trust; represented by Landmark Historic Preservation

LOCATION: 3431 Vermont Street, Uptown Community, Council District 3
APN 452-450-24-00

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Leo and Rose Greenbaum/ Ralph Hulburt and Charles Tifal House located at 3431 Vermont Street as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Leo and Rose Greenbaum/ Ralph Hulburt and Charles Tifal House located at 3431 Vermont Street as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1925 under HRB Criteria C and D. The designation excludes the 1937 two-story rear addition, the 2020 rear addition and portico, and the 2020 south elevation addition built outside of the period of significance. 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 1925 period of significance. Specifically, the resource retains a low-pitched roof, red tile roof covering with no eave overhang, gabled, hipped, and flat roof planes, stucco exterior, asymmetrical façade, a wide asymmetrically tapered chimney on the front façade, multi-lite wood frame windows, and arches above the central door and windows.
2. The resource is representative of a notable work of Master Designer Ralph E. Hurlburt and Master Builder Charles H. Tifal and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the resource incorporates a subtle Spanish Colonial Revival design and stylistic building articulation with an irregular floor plan, a combination of roof styles, and arched detailing. The high integrity of design and workmanship clearly allow the association of the Master Designer and Builder to remain.

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 resource was previously proposed for nomination in 2010 under Criterion C and D and was docketed for the May 27, 2010 hearing. The property was indefinitely continued during the May 27, 2010 hearing after further research yielded a historic photo that displayed a change from a front gable-entry to a flat roof. After the restoration of the house through a permitted project in 2020, a new historical resource research report was written and submitted to the City Planning Department in 2024.

The property was identified in the [2016 Uptown Community Plan Update Historic Resource Survey](#) 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 Leo and Rose Greenbaum/ Ralph Hurlburt and Charles Tifal House has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Leo and Rose Greenbaum who constructed the house as their personal residence and the name of Ralph Hurlburt, a Master Designer and Charles Tifal, 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 3431 Vermont Street is a single-story, Spanish-Colonial Revival style single-family residential building constructed in 1925 in the Uptown Community Planning Area. Other buildings and structures present on site include a detached rear portico and detached garage. The property is located on the east side of Vermont Street in the Marston Hills neighborhood, north of Balboa Park. The property is in its original location.

Since its construction in 1925 the property has been modified as follows: In 1937 a two-story rear addition was added to the resource. Between 1937 and 1957 a semi-circular projecting south side

addition was also added to the resource. The property was reroofed in 1967 and 1975. A portion of the patio site wall on the front of the resource was removed prior to 2007. Prior to 2007, the front entryway was changed from a front gable to a flat roof, and a trellis was added to the front façade. In 2020, a rear remodel was permitted and the semi-circular southern addition was removed and replaced with a new addition that extended to the east to enclose an existing porch area. The rear changes in 2020 included the addition of bi-fold French doors in an existing wall door opening on the east facade, and the replacement of a single-door with French doors and sidelights on the 1937 addition's south façade. The 2020 project also included a new detached portico in the rear yard, the removal of the front trellis and the restoration of the front elevation entryway gable. The 2020 project was reviewed by Heritage Preservation staff and determined to be consistent with the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

A Historical Resource Research was prepared by Landmark Historic Preservation, 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 property was constructed in 1925 and is a Spanish Colonial Revival style, one and two-story, asymmetrical, irregularly shaped single-family residence with a single barrel clay tile roof, stucco siding, and concrete foundation. The resource has a wood frame, and a mixture of hipped, gabled, and flat roofs.

The western, primary, elevation or front of the structure facing Vermont Street has a centered, recessed entrance with the original single wood door with raised panels and is located within an arched projecting entryway. This section has a front facing gable roof and an arched portal area accessed by a concrete porch with two steps. The north portion of the front elevation contains a pair of rectangular shaped, wood framed, casement style multi-light windows with wood shutters flanking the windows. The south portion of the front elevation includes a pair of wood framed, multi-light, rectangular shaped French doors flanked by wood shutters. The asymmetrically tapered stucco-over-brick chimney is present on the front elevation as well.

The southern elevation contains a large, wood-framed, multi-lite, fixed-pane, reverse ogee arched shape window set in the section positioned under the gable. A small, circular vent is present above the window and below the peak of the side-gable roof. The western portion of the south elevation features wood-framed, multi-lite windows and two-concrete steps from an infilled porch.

The eastern, rear, elevation contains the two-story section of the resource with the second floor being added to the original one-story portion in 1938. The two-story portion is attached to the detached garage by a stucco wall and portico.

The detached garage is a one-story, two-car garage with a stucco exterior, flat roof, and a metal garage door.

Following the 1915-1916 Panama-California Exposition, the romantic ideal of Spanish and Latin American architecture was revived. What resulted was the Spanish Eclectic style which was the predominant style in Southern California between 1915 and 1940, significantly altering the architectural landscape until the Modernist movement took hold during and after WWII. The style uses decorative details borrowed from the entire history of Spanish architecture. These may be of Moorish, Byzantine, Gothic, or Renaissance inspirations, and unusually rich and varied series of decorative precedents. The style employed a variety of floor plans, as well as gabled, cross-gabled, gabled and hipped, hipped and flat roof forms with parapets. Other character defining features include Mission and Spanish clay tile; focal windows; arched windows and other openings; and accented entries.

The property, which has been modified as detailed in the beginning of the analysis section of this report, has not been modified to the extent that it no longer retains its significance as a high style example of a Spanish-Colonial Revival style residence. The construction of the 1938 addition does not impact any of the character defining features of the property. Although the addition was constructed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style, it's distinct from the original historic structure through its massing. The 2020 additions were permitted as consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and also involved the restoration of the front gable-entryway, removal of the wood trellis on the primary façade, and restoration of wrought iron awning holder and awnings, which helped restore integrity. Further, the change to the garage doors is separate and distinct from the original historic structure. The additions and minor alterations do not have a negative impact on the property's ability to convey its historic significance as a Spanish Colonial Revival style residence. Therefore, the property does retain integrity to its 1925 period of significance under HRB Criterion C.

Significance Statement

The resource 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 roof, red tile roof covering with no eave overhang, gabled, hipped, and flat roof planes, stucco exterior, asymmetrical façade, a wide asymmetrically tapered chimney on the front façade, multi-lite wood frame windows, and arches above central door and windows. The property retains integrity to its 1925 period of significance. 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 3431 Vermont Street was constructed in 1925 by Master Builder Charles H. Tifal and designed by Master Designer Ralph E. Hurlburt. Tifal was established as a Master Builder in 2003 with the designation of HRB Site #613 and Hurlburt was established as a Master Architect in 2001 with the designation of HRB Site #464.

Charles H. Tifal was born in 1882 in Wisconsin and relocated to San Diego in approximately 1920. In the early 20s, Hurlburt and Tifal designed and constructed structures, primarily high-end custom residences, in a myriad of styles. In 1942 Tifal was no longer working with Hurlburt but was partnered with Scott King. The firm of Tifal and King installed the Alvarado Road Pump House, cottage, and garage. Charles Tifal died at the age of 86 in 1968.

Houses built by Tifal on the San Diego Register include:

- HRB Site#311- Emmett G. O'Neill Residence, 2765 2nd Avenue
- HRB Site #613-Alfred LaMotte/Hurlburt and Tifal House, 3557 3rd Avenue
- HRB Site #697-Edwin and Rose Emerson/Hurlburt and Tifal House, 2645 28th Street
- HRB Site #824-Sam and Mary McPherson/Ralph E. Hurlburt and Charles H. Tifal House, 3133 28th Street
- HRB Site #904-Frederick and Helen Thompson/Charles H. Tifal House, 1232 Myrtle
- HRB Site #906-John Snyder/Ralph E. Hurlburt and Charles H. Tifal Spec House #1, 2315 Fort Stockton Drive
- HRB Site #933-John Snyder/Ralph E. Hurlburt and Charles H. Tifal Spec House #2, 4370 Trias
- HRB Site #1008-054-North Park Dryden Historic District Contributor, 3404 Pershing
- HRB Site #1011-Guilford H. and Grace Whitney House, 4146 Miller Street
- HRB Site #1089- John Snyder/Ralph E. Hurlburt and Charles H. Tifal Spec House #3, 4386 Trias Street HRB Site #1147- Edward and Emma Barrett/Charles Tifal House, 4156 Middlesex Drive
- HRB Site #1229- J.W. and Dora Fleming/Hurlburt and Tifal House, 2925 Cedar Street
- HRB Site #1276-004-South Park Historic District Contributor, 1335 28th Street
- HRB Site #1276-070-South Park Historic District Contributor, 1435 30th Street

Ralph E. Hurlburt was born in 1888 in Nebraska. He was trained by his grandfather in the construction trade. In 1916, he married and relocated to San Diego. Upon arrival, he was involved in real estate financing and law and later transferred to architectural design. Early in his career, Hurlburt partnered with builder Charles H. Tifal, a partnership that lasted until shortly before Hurlburt's death in 1942.

Houses designed by Hurlburt and listed on the local register include:

- HRB Site#311- Emmett G. O'Neill Residence, 2765 2nd Avenue
- HRB Site #464-The Wonder House of Stone, 4386 Adams Avenue
- HRB Site #523-James C. & Lillie Byers / Ralph E. Hurlburt House, 4230 Arguello Street
- HRB Site #613-Alfred LaMotte/Hurlburt and Tifal House, 3557 3rd Avenue
- HRB Site #697-Edwin and Rose Emerson/Hurlburt and Tifal House, 2645 28th Street
- HRB Site #824-Sam and Mary McPherson/Ralph E. Hurlburt and Charles H. Tifal House, 3133 28th Street
- HRB Site #906-John Snyder/Ralph E. Hurlburt and Charles H. Tifal Spec House #1, 2315 Fort Stockton Drive
- HRB Site #929- Ralph Hurlburt/ Alexander Schreiber Spec House # 1, 3917 Hawk Street
- HRB Site #932- Lucy Killea House, 3248 Brant Street
- HRB Site #933-John Snyder/Ralph E. Hurlburt and Charles H. Tifal Spec House #2, 4370 Trias
- HRB Site #948- Ralph Hurlburt/ Alexander Schreiber Spec House #2, 3907 Hawk Street
- HRB Site #1008-054-North Park Dryden Historic District Contributor, 3404 Pershing
- HRB Site #1089- John Snyder/Ralph E. Hurlburt and Charles H. Tifal Spec House #3, 4386 Trias Street HRB Site #1011-Guilford H. and Grace Whitney House, 4146 Miller Street
- HRB Site #1229-J.W. and Dora Fleming/Hurlburt and Tifal House, 2925 Cedar Street
- HRB Site #1276-004-South Park Historic District Contributor, 1335 28th Street
- HRB Site #1276-010-South Park Historic District Contributor, 1503 28th Street
- HRB Site#1281-34- Valle Vista Terrace Historic District Contributor, 4727 Panorama Drive

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 Designer Ralph Hurlburt and Master Builder Charles Tifal. The property, which has been modified as detailed in the beginning of the analysis section of this report, retains all the primary character defining features of the Master Builder and Master Designers original building, including front massing, original windows, front door, entryway, and arched elements. Therefore, the property does retain integrity to its 1925 period of significance under HRB Criterion D.

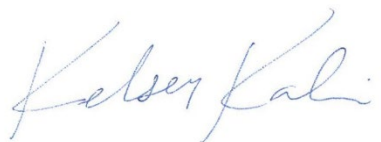
Significance Statement: The resource is a notable work of Master Designer Ralph E. Hurlburt and Master Builder Charles H. Tifal, in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The residence incorporates a subtle Spanish Colonial Revival design and stylistic building articulation with an irregular floor plan, a combination of roof styles, and arched detailing. The high integrity of design and workmanship clearly allow the association of the Master Designer and Builder to remain. Therefore, staff recommends designation of the property 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 Leo and Rose Greenbaum/ Ralph Hulburt and Charles Tifal House located at 3431 Vermont Street be designated as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1925 under HRB Criteria C and D. The designation excludes the 1937 two-story rear addition, the 2020 rear addition and portico, and the 2020 south elevation addition built outside of the period of significance.



Kelsey Kaline
Associate Planner
City Planning Department



Suzanne Segur
Senior Planner/ HRB Liaison
City Planning Department

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Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on , to consider the historical designation of the **Leo and Rose Greenbaum/ Ralph Hulburt and Charles Tifal House** (owned by Bricnet Family Trust 01-29-21, 3431 Vermont Street, San Diego, CA 92103) located at **3431 Vermont Street, San Diego, CA 92103**, APN: **452-450-2400**, further described as S 1/2 LOT 50 & LOT 51 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 Leo and Rose Greenbaum/ Ralph Hulburt and Charles Tifal House on the following findings:

(1) The property is historically significant under CRITERION C for its distinctive characteristics of the Spanish Colonial Revival style and retention of integrity from its 1925 period of significance. Specifically, the resource retains a low-pitched roof, red tile roof covering with no eave overhang, gabled, hipped, and flat roof planes, stucco exterior, asymmetrical façade, a wide asymmetrically tapered chimney on the front façade, multi-lite wood frame windows, and arches above the central door and 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 Designer Ralph E. Hurlburt and Master Builder Charles H. Tifal and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the resource incorporates a subtle Spanish Colonial Revival design and stylistic building articulation with an irregular floor plan, a combination of roof styles, and arched detailing. The high integrity of design and workmanship clearly allow the association of the Master Designer and Builder to remain. 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 exclude the 1937 two-story rear addition, the 2020 rear addition and portico, and the 2020 south elevation addition built outside of the period of significance.

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: HEATHER FERBERT,
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: _____
LINDSEY SEBASTIAN,
Deputy City Attorney