



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO  
**Historical Resources Board**

DATE ISSUED: September 13, 2012 REPORT NO. HRB-12-048

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board  
Agenda of September 27, 2012

SUBJECT: **Item #8 – Walter and Emilie Albrecht House**

APPLICANT: Ellen James represented by Legacy 106, Inc.

LOCATION: 535 San Geronio Street, Peninsula Community,  
Council District 2

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Walter and Emilie Albrecht House located at 535 San Geronio Street as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Walter and Emilie Albrecht House located at 535 San Geronio Street as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1941 under HRB Criterion C. The designation excludes the 455 square foot detached music room, constructed in 2008. This recommendation is based on the following finding:

The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of Colonial Revival architecture and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1941 date of construction and period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits a medium-pitched cross-gable roof with decorative wooden exposed rafter ends underneath the overhanging roof; shingle exterior siding; a recessed partial width front entry porch with slender support columns; large shed roofed bay window; prominent brick chimney; an L-shaped floor plan with a wide street façade and prominent horizontal massing; and window fenestration consisting of leaded diamond pane window sidelights, double-hung frame and sash windows, and windows with square multi-pane glazing and louvered shutters.

## 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 house is a two-story building with an attached double-car garage at the front of the structure, and is located on the east side of San Gorgonio Street within the Point Loma Neighborhood of the Peninsula Community.

The historic name of the resource, the Walter and Emilie Albrecht House, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of the original owners Walter and Emilie Albrecht, who had the house constructed as their personal residence.

## ANALYSIS

A historical resource research report was prepared by Legacy 106, Inc, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria B and C. Staff concurs that the site is a significant historical resource under HRB Criterion C but not B. 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.*

Malin Burnham was born in San Diego in 1927. After graduating from Stanford University in 1949, he immediately joined his father, Donald Burnham's real estate firm, John Burnham & Company. Along with his wife at the time, Lyra-Louise Burnham, Malin Burnham purchased the subject property in 1957 and resided there until 2006. In 1960, Malin became President of the company. In 1963, Malin Burnham formed the Sleepy Hollow Properties along with two other limited partners. In 1987, Sleepy Hollow Properties was renamed Burnham Pacific Properties, Inc. which focused primarily on commercial real estate in San Diego. From a young age, Burnham had been an avid yachtsman and in 1945, at the age of 17, he became the youngest skipper ever to win a World Championship in the Star Class. He was also the President and CEO of the Sail America Foundation, which sponsored and provided logistical support for the "Stars & Stripes" which was San Diego Yacht Club's entry in the America's Cup Competition in 1987. Malin Burnham has been a philanthropist for decades, focusing primarily on organizations benefiting San Diego. Burnham has received numerous awards and honors, including but not limited to the San Diego Chamber of Commerce's "Spirit of San Diego Award" in 1987, "Mr. San Diego Award" from the Rotary Club in 1998 and the "Spirit of Philanthropy Award/San Diego Outstanding Fundraising Volunteer" from the Association of Fundraising Professionals in 2010.

While Malin Burnham was clearly a successful businessman and generous philanthropist, there is insufficient information to demonstrate that he is a historically significant individual. He appears to be one of several people responsible for bringing the America's Cup Race to San Diego and building the Olympic Training Center, which are recent events. Mr. Burnham's contribution to commercial development and philanthropy in San Diego is not enough to warrant designation of the subject property under Criterion B. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion B.

*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 building is a two-story Colonial Revival house with an attached double-car garage constructed in 1941, and features a roughly L-shaped floor plan with a large rear patio courtyard area. The home is asymmetrical with prominent horizontal massing and features a medium-pitched cross-gable roof with decorative wooden exposed rafter ends underneath the overhanging roof. The roof is topped with a prominent brick chimney on the southern side of the gable end. The front façade features two gabled dormers with matching double-hung sash windows with six-over-six divided glazing. The main entryway is recessed with a shed roofed porch and arched underside roof beams held up with simple slender pillars. The paneled wooden front entry door has six panels and clear glazing built into the upper two panels. The door is flanked on both sides by multi-paned, diamond-shaped rectangular side lights with wooden surrounds. The attached double-car garage faces the street and features the original garage door. The entire exterior façade of the house is covered in wood shingle siding with the exception of the front entry porch area and rear covered patio area which contain vertical wood slat paneling. A painted brick chimney which is the entire height of the two-story structure is located on the south elevation. The rear elevation contains two shallow pitched shed roofs on the lower level that extend out on both sides of the center gable wing which creates the covered rear porch/patio area on the left side and an enclosed porch on the right side. Window fenestration consists of leaded diamond pane window sidelights, double-hung frame and sash windows, and windows with square multi-pane glazing and louvered shutters.

There is a detached gazebo structure as well as a 455 square foot detached music room in the rear patio courtyard area which were constructed in 2008. These additions are not attached to the existing house and do not adversely impact the integrity of the structure. The music room, which was constructed recently outside the period of significance is excluded from the designation.

The Colonial Revival style of architecture was popular between 1925 and 1945 during suburban growth because the style evoked patriotic memories of America's past, drawing inspiration from American architectural heritage. The era of the subject structure's design is much more simplified detailing, in contrast to earlier more elaborate detailing seen in some Colonial Revival styles. As noted by McAlester in "A Field Guide to American Houses," "the economic depression of the 1930's, World War II, and changing postwar fashions led to a simplification of the Colonial Revival style in the 1940's and 1950's. These later examples are more often of the side-gabled type, with simple stylized door surrounds or other details that merely suggest their colonial precedents rather than closely mirroring them."

The subject house conveys the historic significance of Colonial Revival architecture by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style, including a medium-pitched cross-gable roof with decorative wooden exposed rafter ends underneath the overhanging roof; shingle exterior siding; a recessed partial width front entry porch with slender support columns; large shed roofed bay window; prominent brick chimney; an L-shaped floor plan with a wide street façade and prominent horizontal massing. Therefore, staff recommends designation of the subject building under HRB Criterion C as a resource that embodies the distinctive characteristics of Colonial Revival architecture and retains integrity to the 1941 date of construction. The designation excludes the 455 square foot detached music room, constructed in 2008.

### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

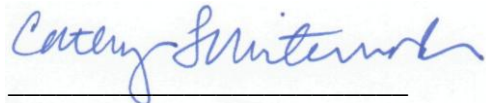
If the property is designated by the HRB, conditions related to restoration or rehabilitation of the resource may be identified by staff during the Mills Act application process, and included in any future Mills Act contract.

### CONCLUSION

Based on the information submitted and staff's field check, it is recommended that the Walter and Emilie Albrecht House located at 535 San Gorgonio Street be designated with a period of significance of 1941 under HRB Criterion C as a resource that embodies the distinctive characteristics of Colonial Revival architecture. The designation excludes the 455 square foot detached music room, constructed in 2008. 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.



Jeffrey E. Oakley  
Associate Planner



Cathy Winterrowd  
Assistant Deputy Director/  
HRB Liaison

JO/ks/cw

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A

ADOPTED ON 9/27/2012

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 9/27/2012, to consider the historical designation of the **Walter and Emilie Albrecht House** located at **535 San Gorgonio Street, San Diego, CA 92106**, APN: **532-441-01-00**, further described as BLK 150 LOT 2 NLY 75 FT & 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 Walter and Emilie Albrecht House on the following finding:

The property is historically significant under CRITERION C for its distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of Colonial Revival architecture and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1941 date of construction and period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits a medium-pitched cross-gable roof with decorative wooden exposed rafter ends underneath the overhanging roof; shingle exterior siding; a recessed partial width front entry porch with slender support columns; large shed roofed bay window; prominent brick chimney; an L-shaped floor plan with a wide street façade and prominent horizontal massing; and window fenestration consisting of leaded diamond pane window sidelights, double-hung frame and sash windows, and windows with square multi-pane glazing and louvered shutters. 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**. The designation excludes the 455 square foot detached music room, constructed in 2008.

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: N/A

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
JOHN LEMMO, Chair  
Historical Resources Board

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND  
LEGALITY: JAN I. GOLDSMITH,  
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
KEITH BAUERLE  
Deputy City Attorney