



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: September 13, 2012 REPORT NO. HRB-12-052

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board
Agenda of September 27, 2012

SUBJECT: **ITEM #12 – Franta Stewart Spec House #1**

APPLICANT: Craig and Merilee Wilsie represented by Legacy 106, Inc.

LOCATION: 5317 Wilshire Drive, Normal Heights Community, Council District 3

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Franta Stewart Spec House #1 located at 5317 Wilshire Drive as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Franta Stewart Spec House #1 located at 5317 Wilshire Drive as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1927 under HRB Criterion C. Interior elements included in the designation are the staircase tile and ironwork; the living room stenciled beams; and the fireplace surround, mantle and hearth. This recommendation is based on the following finding:

The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of Spanish Eclectic style architecture and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1927 period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits a combination of moderate-pitched barrel clay tile roof and flat roof with parapets raised at the corners; sand finish stucco; decorative tile surround at the original wood front door; and fenestration consisting of wood fixed, casement and double hung windows.

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 is a one and two story Spanish Eclectic style residence built in 1927 at the northeast corner of Wilshire Drive and 35th Street in the Mountain View Manor subdivision of the Normal Heights Community.

The historic name of the resource, the Franta Stewart Spec House #1, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Franta E. Stewart, who constructed the house as a speculation house.

ANALYSIS

A historical resource research report was prepared by Legacy 106, Inc., which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criterion C. Staff concurs that the site is a significant historical resource under HRB Criterion C. 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 building was constructed in 1927 in the Spanish Eclectic style and features a combination of tiled and flat roofing with parapets raised at the corners. Perched at the edge of a canyon, the front façade faces Wilshire Drive to the west and captures striking mountainous views to the east. The building's form is dominated by a moderate-pitched, side-gable roof of barrel clay tiles over the central two-story portion of the structure which is flanked by two single-story, flat-roofed projections at the north and south. A flat-roofed, two-story hexagonal volume projects eastward. Fenestration consists of wood fixed, casement, and 1-over-1 double hung windows.

At the front elevation, a low patio wall with stucco piers is embellished with wrought iron. Beyond, the front entry is deeply inset to give the appearance of massive adobe walls. The original paneled wood front door features original hardware, a central peep window and is surrounded by decorative colored tiles. Over the entry sits a covered balcony featuring a railing supported by lathe-cut spindles. A tapered stucco chimney with a punctured tile roof sits at the south elevation. The flat-roofed projection at the east elevation appears like a tower from Interstate 15 below.

The owner is also seeking designation of several interior features, including the scored concrete entry floor; the staircase with its decorative riser tile and wrought iron balustrade; the see-through staircase windows with wrought-iron grills; the dining room wall molding; the polychrome stenciled faux beams in the living room; the sculpted plaster fireplace surround and mantelpiece with tile hearth; and the cathedral and flanking windows in the living room. Designation of the scored concrete floor in the entry and the dining room wall molding is not supported because these are not considered significant features. The cathedral and flanking windows in the living room are part of the exterior structure being considered for designation and therefore do not require additional consideration as significant interior features. Designation of the staircase with its decorative riser tile and wrought iron balustrade; the see-through staircase windows with wrought-iron grills; the polychrome stenciled faux beams in the living room; and the sculpted plaster fireplace surround and mantelpiece with tile hearth is recommended as these features are considered highly representative of the Spanish Eclectic style interiors.

When the subject property was first nominated for designation, there were a number of vinyl windows in place at the first floor southwest corner of the house. These vinyl windows have now been removed and replaced with historically appropriate wood windows. Additionally, a modern aluminum screen door over the front door appears to have been removed and was not present at the time of staff's site visit. Still other modifications remain: the 1950s garage extension set under the tiled visor; the modern aluminum garage door; the wood lath utility shed at southwest corner; and the covered porch at the southeast corner. A portion of the flat-roofed projection on the east side of the property and the roof of the covered porch at the southeast are topped with panels for solar water heating. With the exception of the garage, these modifications are fairly well hidden from public view. The limited modifications do not alter the character defining features of the building or significantly impair the design, material, workmanship or feeling aspects of integrity as it relates to the 1927 date of construction.

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, an 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 subject house continues to convey the historic significance of Spanish Eclectic architecture by embodying the character defining features of the style including the combination barrel clay tile roof and flat roof with parapets, sand finish stucco, wood frame and sash windows, decorative spindle work on front balcony, and decorative tile work at the recessed front entrance. Therefore, staff recommends designation of the subject property under HRB Criterion C. Interior elements included in the designation are the staircase tile and ironwork; the living room stenciled beams; and the fireplace surround, mantle and hearth.

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.

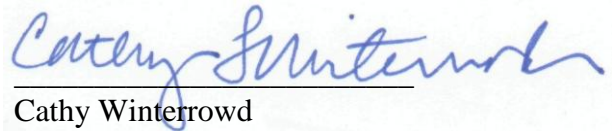
CONCLUSION

Based on the information submitted and staff's field check, it is recommended that the Franta Stewart Spec House #1 located at 5317 Wilshire Drive be designated with a period of significance of 1927 under HRB Criterion C as a resource that embodies the distinctive characteristics of Spanish Eclectic style architecture. Interior elements included in the

designation include the staircase tile and ironwork; the living room stenciled beams; and the fireplace surround, mantle and hearth. 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.



Camille Pekarek
Planning Intern



Cathy Winterrowd
Assistant Deputy Director/HRB Liaison

CP/cw

Attachments:

1. Draft Resolution
2. Interior Elements Proposed for Designation
3. 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 **Franta Stewart Spec House #1** located at **5317 Wilshire Drive, San Diego, CA 92116**, APN: **439-532-13-00**, further described as LOTS W & X 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 **Franta Stewart Spec House #1** 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 Spanish Eclectic style architecture and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1927 period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits a combination of moderate-pitched barrel clay tile roof and flat roof with parapets raised at the corners; sand finish stucco; decorative tile surround at the original wood front door; and fenestration consisting of wood fixed, casement and double hung windows. Interior elements included in this designation are the staircase tile and ironwork; the living room stenciled beams; and the fireplace surround, mantle and hearth. 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 shall include portions of the interior.

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

D.3 — Photographs with a Key Floor Plan (for interiors under consideration)

To be included in designation:

interior entry floor entry stucco walls, staircase, wrought iron staircase railing, see-through staircase windows with wrought iron grills, dining room walls and ceiling, living room ceiling faux beams with polychrome stenciling, fireplace surround with mantle and tile hearth, cathedral and flanking windows

