



HRB # 862

THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: November 21, 2007 REPORT NO. HRB-07-095

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board
Agenda of November 29, 2007

SUBJECT: **ITEM 14 – Alva H. Hjorth/Ben H. Johnson House**

APPLICANT: Ronald V. May, Legacy 106, on behalf of Olga Nazimova, owner

LOCATION: 4361 Argos Drive, Kensington-Talmadge Community, Council District 3

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Alva H. Hjorth/Ben H. Johnson House located at 4361 Argos Drive as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Alva H. Hjorth/Ben H. Johnson House located at 4361 Argos Drive as a historical resource under HRB Criterion C as a good example of Tudor style architecture and retaining a high level of integrity from its 1926 period of significance.

BACKGROUND

This item is being brought before the Historical Resources Board by Ron May of Legacy 106 on behalf of Olga Nazimova, the owner, who wishes to nominate the property as a historical resource. The building at 4361 Argos Drive is a single family residence in the Kensington-Talmadge community. It is a single story stucco with embedded half timber accent building with steeply pitched roof on concrete foundation built in the Tudor style in 1926.



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ANALYSIS

The applicant proposes designation of the residence under HRB Criteria A and C. Staff concurs that the site is a significant historical resource under HRB Criterion C, 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 indigenous materials or craftsmanship.

This one story stucco on wood frame single family residence was constructed in 1926 and rests on a concrete foundation with a detached garage in the rear. The building is situated at the apex of the curving road and provides a delightful view of the impressive Tudor architectural styling. The roof is steeply pitched front facing gable covered with composition shingles. The building exhibits a tall decorative brick chimney at the apex of the front gable, boasting darker clinker brick dispersed throughout and formed into a diamond-shaped design near the center. The front gable is characterized by vertical embedded half timber on both sides of the chimney, terminating on a horizontal board just below the roof eaves. Below and flanking the chimney are tall and narrow casement windows comprised of diamond panes separated by wooden muntins. Centered in the east elevation is an asymmetrical porch topped by a roof projection with half gable exhibiting embedded vertical boards in stucco. South of the porch is a projecting element with composition shingled hip roofed over four pairs of diamond pane casement windows. Stucco walls extend around the house. Due to the building siting and adjacent roadway geometry, both the north and east elevations are highly visible.

Other intact character defining features of this resource include original cast concrete steps with scoring to resemble cut stone, cast iron staircase railings, and wooden double casement windows along the east façade. The original detached garage exhibits a steep roof and similar Tudor styling as the house. A non-historic wood gate at the driveway obscures views of the garage. The existing landscape appears to be recent and not historically significant.

The Residential Building record indicates a 300 sq. ft. addition presumably to a rear bedroom and a 300 sq. ft. lath house constructed in the rear yard in 1946 and a kitchen remodel in 1969. These alterations do not appear to be visible from the street facing facades and do not detract from the architectural significance of the resource. Additional minor alterations include steel security bars on the west elevation facing the adjacent house, roof skylights on the west sloping portion of the roof, and steel security door at the front entrance obscuring the green panel door. Staff concurs with the consultant report that the alterations are consistent with the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards and do not adversely impact the historical and architectural significance of the resource.

As the subject property is a good example of Tudor architecture retaining a high level of integrity, staff recommends that that Board designate the Alva H. Hjorth/Ben H. Johnson House located at 4361 Argos Drive as a historical resource under HRB Criterion C.

CONCLUSION

Based on information submitted and the staff field check, it is recommended that the Board designate the Alva H. Hjorth/Ben H. Johnson House located at 4361 Argos Drive in Kensington, as a historical resource under HRB Criterion C, as a good example of 1926 Tudor architecture retaining a good level of integrity.

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.



Cathy Winterrowd
Senior Planner/Program Coordinator

Attachment: Applicant's Historical Report under separate cover