

CORONADO HISTORIC RESOURCE COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

August 18, 2004

A regular meeting of the Coronado Historic Resource Commission was called to order at 3:00 p.m., Wednesday, August 18, 2004, at the Coronado Police Department Emergency Operations Center, 700 Orange Avenue, Coronado, California by Chairperson Keith.

ROLL CALL:

MEMBERS PRESENT: Commissioners Keith, MacCartee, Draper, Wilson, and Herron

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: John Swanson, Assistant Planner
Linda Hascup, Administrative Secretary

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the Regular Meeting of August 4, 2004 were approved as amended.

The Minutes of the Special Meeting of August 5, 2004 were approved as submitted.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

None.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS AND OTHER MATTERS

There were no members of the public wishing to speak at this time.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:
APPLICATIONS FOR REVIEW

HR 17-04 **Sosnowski, Ronald & Barbara** – Request for a Historic Designation of the single family residence addressed as 1013 Adella Avenue located in the R-1A (Single Family Residential) Zone.

John Swanson, Assistant Planner, introduced the item as outlined in the agenda. He said that a building permit was issued for a dwelling and garage in 1926 as a replacement for an existing dwelling. The owners at the time were Catherine and Clara Braatz, and the contractor was O.W. Dorman. Only some minor alterations have occurred over the years to this English Eclectic style home. The applicant believes the home should be considered historic because of its architectural style and almost original condition, as well as that the contractor, O.W. Dorman was a very well known and active contractor and builder in the early history of Coronado.

Applicant, Barbara Sosnowski, 1013 Adella Avenue, said she grew up in Coronado and lived at 1016 Adella Avenue since 1963, which was also built by Mr. Dorman. She said her home is representative of what Coronado is to her. She doesn't want to see yet another home of this type of torn down and replaced by a bigger home. She would like to help keep a part of the Coronado she grew up in.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no members of the public wishing to speak at this time.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

Commissioner Wilson commented that this is a perfect house for designation and it is on a wonderful street. The other Commissioners were in agreement.

COMMISSION ACTION

COMMISSIONER WILSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE HR 17-04, REQUEST FOR HISTORIC DESIGNATION OF 1013 ADELLA AVENUE, WITH THE ADOPTION OF A RESOLUTION STATING THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

- A. THE PROPERTY MEETS THE 75-YEAR AGE REQUIREMENT;
- B. IT EXEMPLIFIES SPECIAL ELEMENTS OF THE CITY'S AESTHETIC HISTORY;
- C. IT IS ONE OF THE FEW REMAINING EXAMPLES IN THE CITY POSSESSING DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ENGLISH REVIVAL ARCHITECTURAL STYLE, AND IS VALUABLE FOR THE STUDY OF A TYPE,

PERIOD, OR METHOD OF CONSTRUCTION AND HAS NOT BEEN SUBSTANTIALLY ALTERED;

D. IT IS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NOTABLE WORK OF BUILDER O.W. DORMAN.

COMMISSIONER HERRON SECONDED THE MOTION.

AYES: Commissioners Keith, Draper, MacCartee, Wilson, and Herron

NAYS:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

The motion passed 5-0.

HR 18-04 **Pike and Jane Meade** - Request for a Historic Designation of the single family residence addressed as 1101 Star Park Circle located in the R-1A (Single Family Residential) Zone.

John Swanson, Assistant Planner, introduced the item as outlined in the agenda. He said that a building permit was issued on November 19, 1910 for construction of a garage in the rear of an already existing dwelling. The 1897 Lot Book listed a building as already in existence at that time, so the property can be dated at least 107 years old, and possibly older. The owner of the property in 1910 was Mrs. Helen S. Robinson. In 1913 owner George Posh had the dwelling repaired and improved, using contractor S. Chapin. Minor alterations and repairs over the years included the addition of a "Man's Room" in 1927, and in 1966 the garage was converted to a recreation room. The architectural style of the home can be considered to be Colonial Revival and it is in excellent condition.

Mr. Frank L. Baum, the creator of the story, *The Marvelous Land of Oz*, stayed frequently at the Hotel del Coronado, and lived at 1101 Star Park Circle during the winters of 1906 to 1910, and the home has become known as the "Wizard of Oz" house.

The applicant believes the property is historically significant because of the architectural style and its excellent condition, as well as the relation to author L. Frank Baum and contractor S.D. Chapin, who was a prolific contractor and builder in Coronado.

Applicant, Pike Meade, 1101 Star Park Circle, said he can guarantee the house acts as old as its 107 years. He produced photos of the home for the Commission to review. One photo showed the home in the background of the original Star Park before the other houses were built. Another couple of photos showed the passage of time and

proved there were no significant changes over the years. Mr. Meade noted that one photograph shows that the front porch was already in place at the turn of the century.

Commissioner Keith commented that the first photo is the same picture that was etched on brass for a historical information marker at Star Park Circle. She said she remembered when Star Park Circle was two-way all the way around the circle.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no members of the public wishing to speak at this time.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

Commissioner Keith commented that Mr. Baum's history in Coronado is well-known and is often referred to. She said that in fact the Library Board of Trustees recently has come up with the idea of putting a new glass panel between the new main lobby and the children's library. They adopted using the theme of the "Wizard of Oz" because of Mr. Baum's connection to Coronado.

She thought it was very interesting that the house on Star Park Circle is the only home Mr. Baum lived in that is still standing. Mr. Meade added that even the home Mr. Baum was born in and his Pasadena/Hollywood home dubbed "Ozcot" were torn down.

COMMISSION ACTION

COMMISSIONER DRAPER MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE HR 18-04 REQUEST FOR HISTORIC DESIGNATION OF 1101 STAR PARK CIRCLE, WITH THE ADOPTION OF A RESOLUTION STATING THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

- A. THE PROPERTY DOES MEET THE 75-YEAR AGE REQUIREMENT;
- B. IT EXEMPLIFIES SPECIAL ELEMENTS OF THE CITY'S ECONOMIC AND AESTHETIC HISTORY;
- C. IT IS IDENTIFIED WITH L. FRANK BAUM, AUTHOR OF THE "WIZARD OF OZ", WHO IS CONSIDERED TO BE SIGNIFICANT IN LOCAL, STATE, AND NATIONAL HISTORY; AND,
- D. IT IS ONE OF THE FEW REMAINING EXAMPLES IN THE CITY POSSESSING DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COLONIAL REVIVAL ARCHITECTURAL STYLE.

COMMISSIONER WILSON SECONDED THE MOTION.

AYES: Commissioners Keith, Draper, MacCartee, Wilson, and Herron
NAYS:
ABSENT:
ABSTAIN:

The motion passed 5-0.

NOI 6-04 **Wright, John and Nan** - Consideration of Notice of Intent to demolish the single family residence addressed as 1117 G Avenue and located in the R-1A (Single Family Residential) Zone.

John Swanson, Assistant Planner, introduced the item as outlined in the agenda. He said the applicants would like to demolish the existing one-story, 1,500 square foot structure to build a larger home. Because the house was constructed in 1915, over 75 years ago, they are required by a recently enacted ordinance to apply to the Historic Resource Commission. The Commission will then determine if the property does or does not meet the criteria for historic designation. The applicants do not believe their property meets the criteria.

Staff research shows that even though the architect was not listed on building permit records, the permit for construction was issued to Clara Sturges Johnson, the wife of architect William Templeton Johnson. The contractor was listed as S.D. Chapin, who was a very well known and active builder in Coronado's early days. The architectural style was known as the transitional ranch style.

Various permits were issued over the years including: a permit issued to Mr. A. Laing in 1926 for an unknown alteration; a 1958 permit issued to W.D. Mattott for the construction of a service porch; and in 1979 a permit to convert the front porch to living space was issued to P. Martin.

The property was rated a "3" in the 1980's Sourcepoint document as in good physical condition with minor modifications. The resolution drafted mentions positive qualities, but not enough for historic designation.

Applicant, Nan Wright, 754 J Avenue, said that she discovered in her research that there were several major modifications made to the home. In 1935 there was an extensive remodel that included foundation, framing, lathing, roofing, plumbing, gas, electrical and sewer work. In 1958 a service porch was added to the driveway side of the house, and in 1979 the front porch was enclosed to make a living room, and a fireplace added to the street side of the home. She said that most people who live here don't know this house exists. They think it is the one next door with the red door. She said the rooms are very small and not very livable and would like to build a two-story home.

Chairman Herron asked if Ms. Wright was aware that the dwelling is one of a cluster designed by William Templeton Johnson, or knew of the significance of the garden. Ms. Wright said she wasn't aware of who might have designed the garden; however she said the plan would be to orient the entrance of the new home to the garden as it is now. Ms. Herron said she knew that William Templeton Johnson was a neighbor of Kate Session and was friends with John Lohman who created the Serra Garden. She wondered if there was some connection there.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Martha Jordan, 1125 G Avenue, said she lives two houses down from the Wright's property. She bought her old house in 1988 after growing up in a historic district in Mission Hills. She said she has been concerned with the pace of demolitions in Coronado for a number of years. She wanted to point out that William Templeton Johnson is one of the most significant architects in San Diego, considered by many to be a genius. She mentioned several of his works, which include Balboa Park, San Diego Trust and Savings in downtown San Diego, the Fine Arts Gallery in San Diego, as well as many other structures in Mission Hills and Golden Hills. She said his work is famous for its scale and size of rooms. Even though this is a small house it is huge in its significance to Coronado, which is known for its historic background. She said that Coronado is losing its history with the loss of small gems such as this home. She said she was also concerned about the street and how a two-story house would affect the density of the block, its aesthetics and its unity. She said she believes the historic criteria are clearly met.

John Dawson, 708 E Avenue, spoke about the symmetry of the block of G Avenue and how each block has its own character. He said that since 1998 there has been constant construction on G Avenue. There are new dormers, second stories, bigger new homes, etc. He is disappointed to see so much building and was wondering if there couldn't be a break. Maybe it isn't possible in the commerce driven society that we live in. He would prefer to keep the symmetry that exists there now.

Pete Riddle, 1111 G Avenue, said he was speaking for himself and his wife, Betsy, who live in the previously mentioned house with the red door, right in the center of what he considers to be a three-house compound. He said he and Mrs. Riddle are reminded every day what a beautiful compound they live in and how the three homes complement each other. Passers by stop, look, and remark on the compound. He said this is a case of where the whole (the compound) is equal to more than the sum of its parts. He said he is distressed that an integral part of the complex might be destroyed.

Kathleen Suros, 1105 G Avenue, said she lives in the third of the three cottages in the complex which would be affected should demolition be granted. She has the same feeling as the Riddles that the grouping is a compound and that the garden, the buildings, and the scale are all intricately entwined and significant to one another. She

said William Templeton Johnson constructed the cottages, gardens, and the easements so they would be very compatible and aesthetic with each other. Irving Gill also incorporated the garden elements in some of his structures – the community garden idea, and easements across property lines for entrance and exits. Ms. Suros said the cottage atmosphere of the compound personifies Coronado and would certainly qualify as historic due to the style, the architect, and the contractor and should not be eligible for demolition. She said William Templeton Johnson designed several buildings around the block, facing Alameda, Ocean, and G Avenue, which would make it almost a district in itself of a significant architect and style. She suggested that the new owners not demolish the home and consider some other modification to suit their needs.

Nancy Splinter, 1027 G Avenue, said she lives a half block from the compound and was speaking to request denying the applicant's request. She said when she sees this house she sees it as one of a triplet of homes, where they are all different, but need each other for balance. She said it would be difficult to see one be torn down and have a two-story structure in its place. She said she thinks the roof lines were created the way they were for a purpose. All three homes are in the Sourcepoint document where it says they were owned and designed by William Templeton Johnson who is very significant. Ms. Splinter said that it might be better if people who are considering buying a historic structure come to the Commission before finishing the purchase to head off similar situations.

Page Harrington, Executive Director of Coronado Historical Association, 1100 Orange Avenue, said that in her research all of the permits she found for the compound houses listed either Clara Sturges Johnson or her husband, William Templeton Johnson as being the owners, and S.D. Chapin as being the contractor. Ms. Harrington said the property in question is extremely significant, not only for Coronado's history, but as part of architectural history. She said William Templeton Johnson studied city planning along with his architectural courses at Columbia during 1906 and 1907. He brought these ideas with him of how a site fits in with the community when he moved to Coronado with his family in 1912. She said he might have come to Coronado because he knew he could make his mark on the newly developing town, which was similar to what several other architects of the period were doing. Irving Gill was working on many compounds in San Diego and Los Angeles. It was a different style of house than William Templeton Johnson was designing, but a similar idea - a little cluster of homes that opened up onto the same courtyard so people could come out of their homes in the evening after a day of work and enjoy the wonderful landscaping and surroundings. Later on, Bernard Maybeck did the same thing in San Francisco, followed by Rudolph Schindler who created the Pablo Rivera compound in La Jolla. Ms. Harrington said the overall intent was clear and it would be a shame to lose that today. She agreed that at some point this neighborhood would make a wonderful historic district.

Chairman Keith asked if Ms. Harrington had any information on who lived in the other two homes, or if it was a family complex. Ms. Harrington said it doesn't appear to have

been a family compound, but was meant to be sold to other people to be a part of the compound.

John Wright, 747 J Avenue, said he doesn't want to alienate the neighbors and loves the neighborhood. He said he and his wife didn't think the home was still significant after learning of the alterations that had been made. After looking at the horrible condition of the home, the termites, sewer connection, etc. they thought it would be better to rebuild. He said he didn't think this was necessarily the best work of the architect, even though the three homes are cute together. He said they intend to bring back the style a little with a wraparound porch. The second floor would be mostly a master bedroom. There was an addition that in 1958 that blocked the garage and would have to be removed which would also help. He said when you begin to refurbish such an old home you find one problem after another and when you put that much into it you want to put in a good foundation, etc. He said they didn't want to ruin the three-house bungalow look and would like to bring it back closer to the old style.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

Chairman Keith cautioned the Commission that their job is to decide whether the home would be considered as historic just as if it were to come forward as a request for historic designation. If it does not meet the criteria then the demolition permit would be allowed. If it does meet the criteria then the home would be deemed historic.

Commissioner Draper said that if this was a perfect world the historic list would be complete, which would make this an easier job. She added that if allowable floor area ration was reduced and it would be helpful if the realtors became more educated about potential historic homes. She said that on the applicant's side she can appreciate that the home needs repair and that they should be able to have a home they can live in. Also the home is only listed as a three in the Sourcepoint and does not meet the State landmark of standards. She said it isn't a particularly notable work of the architect and isn't particularly valuable for a study of his work all by itself. However, William Templeton Johnson was very significant. One of his enduring passions was the community idea in a city. His wife was a principal "mover and shaker" and was instrumental in the development of Francis Parker School in Mission Hills. The central quad for the students was Johnson's mark and one of his overriding themes. The arts and crafts movement and being outdoors was also part of his themes. Ms. Draper said she is convinced he built the houses as a package deal and the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. She said she would have trouble allowing demolition.

Commissioner MacCartee said that the compound is to her quintessential Coronado. She said that everyone is attracted to the big homes on Ocean Boulevard, but Coronado is really a town of small, cottage-style beach homes. She said there is such a rich architectural heritage for such a small town. She entreated the applicants to request historic designation instead of demolition. She said there are many benefits to consider

that the Commission could help with. She said they know the bedrooms are too small and that there may need to be some alteration and perhaps an addition. She said she could not in good conscience agree with the request to demolish.

Commissioner Wilson said she agrees that the three homes were built as a compound and couldn't imagine a two-story home in its place, forever changing the envisioned three-part whole.

Commissioner Herron said the applicant can understand that the Commissioners are very proud of the town and its character. She said what brings people to Coronado is how it looks, the small town feel, the people. She said the Templeton Johnson's, Kate Session, and others were bedrock members of Coronado and so important to what the town is now. She said she it disturbs her to discuss what would basically be removing an arm from the compound.

Chairman Keith said she walked by the compound several times over the last few days, looking at it from several different angles. She said it is very difficult to separate house from the others. Then she looked at the application to see if the house could be considered historic on its own. She said she is convinced that William Templeton Johnson was the architect because it is representative of his style and there are not many examples remaining. There is a cluster of houses in the 700/600 block of A Avenue - the Herreshoff Court, and there was a cluster on Olive Avenue. She said she would have no problem approving designation if this was an application for designation, and she would find it very difficult granting a demolition permit. She agreed that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. She pleaded with the applicant to come back for help from the Commission. She said they would have the benefit of the historic building code as well as alternatives to some of the zoning considerations if they would consider making an alteration. She said she would love to work with applicant to maintain the essence of the block.

COMMISSION ACTION

COMMISSIONER DRAPER MADE A MOTION THAT THE HISTORIC RESOURCE COMMISSION MAKE A DETERMINATION THAT THE STRUCTURE ADDRESSED AS 1117 G AVENUE (NOI 6-04) MEETS THE CRITERIA TO BE DESIGNATED A HISTORIC RESOURCE, WITH THE ADOPTION OF A RESOLUTION STATING THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

- A. THE PROPERTY DOES MEET THE 75-YEAR AGE REQUIREMENT;
- B. IT DOES EXEMPLIFY SPECIAL ELEMENTS OF THE CITY'S SOCIAL, CULTURAL, AESTHETIC, AND ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY;

- C. IT IS IDENTIFIED WITH PERSONS, WILLIAM TEMPLETON JOHNSON AND CLARA STURGES JOHNSON SIGNIFICANT IN LOCAL AND STATE HISTORY;
- D. IT IS ONE OF THE FEW REMAINING EXAMPLES IN THE CITY POSSESSING DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COMPOUND THEME OF TRANSITIONAL RANCH ARCHITECTURE; AND,
- E. IT IS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE WORK OF NOTABLE ARCHITECT, WILLIAM TEMPLETON JOHNSON, AND BUILDER S.D. CHAPIN.

COMMISSIONER MACCARTEE SECONDED THE MOTION.

AYES: Commissioners Keith, MacCartee, Draper, Wilson, and Herron

NAYS:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

The motion passed 5-0.

There is an appeal period of 10 days.

HAP 3-04 **Dolgen, David & Ellen** - Request for Historic Alteration Permit for the single family dwelling addressed as 1045 Loma Avenue and located in the R-1A (Single Family Residential) Zone.
(CONTINUED TO SEPTEMBER 1, 2004)

HR 13-02 **City of Coronado** - Review of Application of Historic Designation of City Parks and Recommendation to the City Council.
(AGENDA ITEM CONTINUED TO A FUTURE HEARING)

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Commission Discussion Regarding the Formulation of a Historic Property Data List to Identify Potentially Historical Properties

Chairman Keith discussed the methodology of the background research on the microfilm. The Commission members discussed how much time it takes to do thorough research of the microfilm. The Commissioners agreed to keep working on the project. Ms. Keith said the City Council isn't expecting to see anything until the beginning of the year so there is some time. Commissioner Draper said that she believes the research is worthwhile and that they are able to correct some of the information that was presented in the Sourcepoint document.

Chairman Keith said that Councilmember Schmidt contacted the City Attorney to see if there was a way to accomplish a public meeting and tour of the homes on the list. It appears there might be a way to accomplish that. She said she would keep the Commission posted.

Discussion regarding size limitations for Historic Resource Designation Applications

The Commission continued the discussion on this item.

Commission Discussion Regarding the Public Outreach Program

Commissioner MacCartee reported that the script for the new slide show is almost complete. She said it should be ready for the next agenda.

Commissioner MacCartee said she would really like to get something together as an insert for the next CHA newsletter. Ms. Harrington said it would be getting ready to go out in October or so.

MISCELLANEOUS

Chairman Keith said she would like to discuss historic districts, the advantages and disadvantages, and possibly amending the historic preservation ordinance to include them.

Commissioner Herron said she would also like to discuss the philosophy of the difference between the criteria for designation and demolition. She said it appears it is much easier to make a case for historic designation than it is for demolition.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Tony A. Peña
Director of Community Development