



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: November 3, 2023 REPORT NO. HRB-23-040

HEARING DATE: November 16, 2023

SUBJECT: **ITEM #4 – Ralph Hurlburt/Alexander Schreiber Spec House #4**

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

APPLICANT: Marrero/Schroeder Trust 11-15-17; represented by Landmark Historic Preservation

LOCATION: 3914 Falcon Street, Uptown Community, Council District 3
APN 444-613-06-00

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Ralph Hurlburt/Alexander Schreiber Spec House #4 located at 3914 Falcon Street as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Ralph Hurlburt/Alexander Schreiber Spec House #4 located at 3914 Falcon Street as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1920 under HRB Criteria C and D. The designation excludes the detached, converted garage and the swimming pool. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

1. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of its character defining features of Craftsman style architecture and retains architectural integrity from its 1920 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features a low-pitched roof; unenclosed eaves with exposed rafters; exposed purlin beams, battered columns set on square piers that continue to the ground level; a partial-width front porch; and double-hung and cottage-style wood windows.
2. The resource is representative of a notable work of Master Builder Alexander Schreiber with a period of significance of 1920 and continues to reflect his original design and aesthetic. Specifically, the resource is a notable example of his work in the Craftsman style featuring a high-quality design built during a brief business partnership with Master Designer Ralph E. Hurlburt as a speculative house.

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 single-family home sited on a rectangular lot among other similarly scaled homes in the Hillcrest neighborhood.

The property was identified in the [2016 Uptown Community Plan Area Historic Resources Survey Report](#) 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 Ralph Hurlburt/Alexander Schreiber Spec House #4 has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the names of Ralph Hurlburt, the original owner of the house and Alexander Schreiber, an established Master Builder, who built the house as a speculative house.

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report 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.

Constructed in 1920, the subject property located at 3914 Falcon Street is a good example of a cross-gabled Craftsman bungalow and retains many of its character-defining features. Set above street grade, the property is one-story and rectangular in form. It features double front-facing gables with a partial-width front porch and battered columns over stucco piers that continue to the ground level. The roof is low-pitched with open eaves. Rafter tails and projecting purlin beams further accentuate the building. The property is clad in multi-width wood shingles and horizontal wood siding. A brick-end chimney is present along the north (side) elevation. A detached, converted garage is located at the rear of the lot.

The east elevation is the primary elevation, displaying most of the character-defining features. This elevation contains the gabled front porch. The porch is partially enclosed with side windows from circa 1940. The gable is detailed with vertical slat vents, exposed beams supporting plain vergeboards, and two battered columns with dentil details set on square stucco columns. Windows on this elevation are paired wooden double-hung cottage-style. The front door displays a single-paneled design. Side elevations contain wooden double-hung, casement, and fixed windows. The south (side) elevation contains a gable; this gable is similarly designed as the front gable with exposed beams with vergeboards and vertical slat vents. The rear façade contains contemporary sliding glass doors and a newer raised wood deck.

Modifications to the property include a front porch enclosure constructed in the 1940s (and partially removed in 2018), original extending rafter tails clipped and gutters installed sometime after the 1940s, swimming pool added at the rear yard in 2018, detached garage converted and modified in 2018, and rooftop solar panels added in 2022. In 2018-2019, Heritage Preservation staff approved a rehabilitation/restoration project that partially removed the front porch enclosure and added new sliding doors to the rear façade as consistent with the U.S. Secretary of Interior Standards. Overall, these modifications do not significantly impair the integrity of design, materials, workmanship or feeling and the building retains integrity as it relates to HRB Criterion C.

With origins in the British Arts and Crafts movement, which was born in response to the overly ornate Victorian aesthetic and the highly mechanized Industrial Revolution, Craftsman style architecture was popular in the United States largely between 1905 and 1930. Early examples by Greene and Greene were highly publicized in magazines, thus familiarizing the rest of the nation

with the style. Character defining features of Craftsman architecture include a low-pitched, gabled roof with wide, unenclosed eave overhang; exposed roof rafters; decorative beams or braces; full or partial-width porches supported by tapered square columns or pedestals; wood or stucco cladding; and wood frame and sash windows in fixed, double hung and casement varieties.

Significance Statement: The house continues to convey the historic significance of the Craftsman style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style, including a low-pitched roof; unenclosed eaves with exposed rafters; exposed purlin beams, battered columns set on square piers that continue to the ground level; a partial-width front porch; and double-hung and cottage-style wood windows. 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 was constructed in 1920 by Alexander Schreiber. Schreiber was a prolific builder and contractor in San Diego in the 1910s, and he constructed residential and commercial buildings in various styles, including Spanish Eclectic, Craftsman, and Prairie Style in the North Park, South Park, University Heights, Loma Portal, Encanto, and Mission Hills communities. Schreiber has been credited with building over 45 houses in Mission Hills, including Craftsman-style houses such as the M.B. and Ida Irvin/ Alexander Schreiber Spec House #1 (HRB #942), the M.B. and Ida Irvin/Alexander Schreiber Spec House #2 (HRB #1038), Alexander Schreiber Spec House #3 (HRB #762), the Alexander Schreiber Spec House #4 (HRB #772), and the Alexander Schreiber Speculation House #5 (HRB #1034).

Schreiber was also an early experimenter in the use of electricity in houses; his obituary credits him with building the first house in San Diego completely wired for electrical appliances. In 2002, the Historic Resources Board established Schreiber as a Master Builder with the nomination of Claude and Edna Woolman House (HRB #522). There are at least 15 properties individually listed on the local register that are attributed to Schreiber. Other Craftsman buildings constructed by Schreiber and designated historic by the Historical Resources Board include the Vida Rhodes/Alexander Schreiber House (HRB #1497) in North Park and the Alexander Schreiber Spec House #7 (HRB #1201) in South Park.

The subject property exhibits Alexander Schreiber's characteristic Craftsman style and it retains integrity to its 1920 date of construction. Therefore, staff recommends the designation of the subject property under HRB Criterion D.

Ralph E. Hurlburt, an established Mastered Designer, partnered with Alexander Schreiber to develop speculative residential buildings in San Diego, as previously noted in the designation of Ralph Hurlburt/Alexander Schreiber Spec House #1 (HRB #929), the Ralph Hurlburt/ Alexander Schreiber Spec House #2 (HRB #948), and Ralph Hurlburt/Alexander Schreiber Spec House #3 (HRB #1321). The subject property located at 3914 Falcon Street is a speculative development on land owned by Hurlburt and built by Schreiber. While the deed of the subject property indicates Hurlburt was the owner at the time of construction, no documentation was provided which showed Hurlburt's involvement in the design or the construction of the house when the original water and sewer permit was pulled by Alexander Schreiber. Therefore, staff cannot recommend the designation under HRB Criterion D as a notable work of established Master Designer Ralph Hurlburt at this time.

Significance Statement: The subject property continues to convey the historical significance of its association with Master Builder Alexander Schreiber with a period of significance of 1920 and reflects his original design and aesthetic. Specifically, the resource is a notable example of his work in the Craftsman style featuring a high-quality design built during a brief business partnership with Master Designer Ralph E. Hurlburt as a speculative house. Therefore, staff recommends designation 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 Ralph Hurlburt/Alexander Schreiber Spec House #4 located at 3914 Falcon Street as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1920 under HRB Criteria C as an example of the Craftsman style and under Criterion D as a notable work of Master Builder Alexander Schreiber. The designation excludes the detached, converted garage and the swimming pool.



Alvin Lin
Assistant 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 11/16/2023

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 11/16/2023, to consider the historical designation of the **Ralph Hurlburt/Alexander Schreiber Spec House #4** (owned by Marrero/Schroeder Trust 11-15-17, 3914 Falcon Street, San Diego, CA 92103) located at **3914 Falcon Street, San Diego, CA 92103**, APN: **444-613-06-00**, further described as BLK 74 LOTS 19 & 20 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 Ralph Hurlburt/Alexander Schreiber Spec House #4 on the following findings:

(1) The property is historically significant under CRITERION C for its distinctive characteristics through the retention of its character defining features of Craftsman style architecture and retains architectural integrity from its 1920 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features a low-pitched roof; unenclosed eaves with exposed rafters; exposed purlin beams, battered columns set on square piers that continue to the ground level; a partial-width front porch; and double-hung and cottage wood 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 Builder Alexander Schreiber with a period of significance of 1920 and continues to reflect his original design and aesthetic. Specifically, the resource is a notable example of his work in the Craftsman style featuring a high-quality design built during a brief business partnership with Master Designer Ralph E. Hurlburt as a speculative house. 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 detached, converted garage and the swimming pool.

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: MARA W. ELLIOTT,
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: _____
LINDSEY SEBASTIAN,
Deputy City Attorney

RECORDING REQUESTED BY
CITY OF SAN DIEGO
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

WHEN RECORDED MAIL TO

HISTORICAL RESOURCES BOARD
ATTN: HRB SECRETARY
1222 FIRST AVENUE, MS 501
SAN DIEGO, CA 92101

SPACE ABOVE THIS LINE FOR RECORDER'S USE

RESOLUTION NUMBER **N/A**

HISTORICAL DESIGNATION OF PROPERTY ON

3914 Falcon Street, San Diego, CA 92103

ASSESSOR PARCEL NUMBER **444-613-06-00**

HISTORICAL RESOURCES BOARD NUMBER **0**