



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: June 9, 2022 REPORT NO. HRB-22-019

HEARING DATE: June 23, 2022

SUBJECT: **ITEM #01 – Timothy and Thelma Perkins/ Ralph L. Frank House**

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

APPLICANT: HSU Family Trust 06-04-21; represented by Heritage Architecture and Planning

LOCATION: 4165 Miller Street, Uptown Community, Council District 3
APN 443-563-1000

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Timothy and Thelma Perkins/ Ralph L. Frank House located at 4165 Miller Street as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Timothy and Thelma Perkins/ Ralph L. Frank House located at 4165 Miller Street as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1946 under HRB Criteria C and D. The designation excludes the 2018 second story addition and rear porch enclosure. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

1. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Colonial Revival style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1946 period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits an asymmetrical front façade, combination hipped and gable roof, stone veneer and stucco exterior, belt course, rounded entry portico with classical columns, stone veneer chimney, bays containing metal frame windows, multi-lite wood frame double hung windows, wall dormers, and decorative shutters.
2. The resource is representative of a notable work of Master Architect Ralph L. Frank and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the resource is significant as an example of Frank's work in his signature style, Colonial Revival, and represents the architects shift towards modern design through the use of a visually differentiated front façade, stone veneer exterior, metal frame windows and a flat parapet roof over the one-story south wing.

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 subject resource is a two-story, single family residence with a detached garage located on a corner lot in the Mission Hills neighborhood of the Uptown Community.

The property was identified in the Uptown Community Plan Area Historic Resources Survey and given a Status Code of 5S3 "Appears to be individually eligible for local listing or designation through survey evaluation." Additionally, the property is a contributor to the Inspiration Heights Historic District which is listed on the National Register.

The historic name of the resource, the Timothy and Thelma Perkins/ Ralph L. Frank House, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Timothy and Thelma Perkins, who constructed the house as their personal residence and the name of Ralph L. Frank, a Master Architect.

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Heritage Architecture and Planning, 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.

The subject resource is a two-story, single family residence with detached garage designed in the Colonial Revival style by Master Architect Ralph L. Frank and constructed in 1946. The residence sits on the corner of Miller and Orizaba Streets, with the primary façade on Miller and the garage on Orizaba. The main façade is architecturally divided into three parts giving it the feel of a modern version of a colonial house. The northern most part of the primary elevation is covered by a low sloping, hipped roof and is clad with a stone veneer on the first floor with stucco above. A belt course, which divides the two exterior materials, is located just below the windows of the second floor, exaggerating the height of the first floor. A rounded entry portico with thin, classical columns is approached by a concrete path and a semi-circular set of stairs. The belt course extends across to the central portion of the primary façade which contains a wide, stone veneer chimney and exhibits a stucco exterior. A wall dormer flanks each side of the chimney on the second floor. The central portion is covered with a side gable roof. The southernmost portion of the Miller Street façade consists of a flat roofed, one-story wing with a bay that contains a metal framed window. A second bay with metal framed window is located on the Orizaba façade. The remainder of the windows on the historic structure are wood, double hung, multi-lite windows some which are flanked by decorative shutters. A gabled roofed addition at the rear of the house is visible from Orizaba Street. The detached, two story, three bay garage has a side gable roof and is clad in stucco.

Modifications to the property since its 1946 date of construction are few and consistent mostly of changes that were made during a 2018 remodel. The project was reviewed by historical resources

staff and determined to be consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. Alterations to the property in 2018 include a second story addition on the northern portion of the rear elevation, the enclosure of a porch on the rear façade by adding accordion style doors, the modification of a window to a French door on the southern portion of the east façade and the replacement of railing on the exterior garage stairs. Site improvements associated with the remodel include a retaining wall in the front yard and a pool with concrete patio at the rear. These modifications do not impair integrity of design, materials, workmanship or feeling as it relates to HRB Criterion C.

Following the Centennial Exposition of 1876 America experienced a rebirth of interest in its colonial past. Primarily popular from 1880 to 1955, Colonial Revival buildings reference the early English and Dutch homes of the Atlantic seaboard, particularly the Georgian and Adam styles. As with their prototypes, Colonial Revival structures generally have a symmetrical front façade with the principal areas of elaboration being entrances, windows and cornices. About ten percent of Colonial Revival houses have asymmetrical facades, a feature rarely seen on their colonial prototypes. Roofs can be hipped, gable or gambrel and some variations feature a center gable projecting slightly from the primary façade. Windows are typically double-hung sash with multi-pane glazing in one or both sashes and are commonly found in pairs, triples or bay windows.

Significance Statement: The house continues to convey the historic significance of the Colonial Revival style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style; including an asymmetrical front façade, combination hipped and gable roof, stone veneer and stucco exterior, belt course, rounded entry portico with classical columns, stone veneer chimney, bays containing metal frame windows, multi-lite wood frame double hung windows, wall dormers, and decorative shutters. 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.

Ralph Loren Frank was born in Kansas in 1898. He moved to San Diego in 1920 and began working as a salesman for the Grable-Francisco-Bleifuss Company, a real estate company. By 1926, he was working as a drafter for Ralph E. Hurlburt, while also designing houses on his own. By the mid-1930s, he was a partner with the firm Hurlburt, Frank & Slaughter. Frank was the firm's primary architectural designer, while Slaughter built the houses and Hurlburt sold them.

The firm designed and built several houses throughout San Diego for high-end clients including Rueben H. Fleet, Percy J. Benbough (mayor of San Diego from 1935 to 1942), and C. Arnholt Smith. While with Hurlburt, Frank & Slaughter, Frank was responsible for the design of the five houses in the small subdivision of Brookes Terrace in Marston Hills. He was equally as creative with interior design, planning the interiors for several houses by Hurlburt, Frank & Slaughter. He also designed 20 Southern California branches of the U.S. National Bank in partnership with Grant King.

Ralph Frank worked in many neighborhoods including Uptown, Mission Hills, Point Loma, La Playa and La Jolla, and in various architectural styles. Towards the beginning of his career Frank was known for his high-end Spanish style homes but he turned his focus to more cost-effective Colonial Revival and Monterey designs during the Great Depression. At the height of his career in the late 1930s thru the 1940s, Frank had developed a distinctive Colonial Revival style incorporating

elements of the Monterey and Ranch styles. He worked as an architect into his later years, shifting to styles more common during the midcentury. A partial list of Frank's notable works is below.

- HRB #718– Strawn House (3120 Owen Street), 1933
- HRB #722– Philip and Helen Gildred/Ralph Frank House (1025 Cypress Avenue), 1935
- HRB #869– T. Claude Ryan House (548 San Fernando Street), 1962
- HRB #881– Ralph Loren and Alice Mae Frank House (6003 Waverly Avenue), 1928
- HRB #896– C. Arnholt Smith/Ralph L. Frank House (2293 San Juan Road), 1936
- HRB #955– Willis and Jane Fletcher/Ralph L. Frank and Milton Sessions House (575 San Gorgonio Street), 1941
- HRB #987– Walter J. and Grace Ogden/Ralph L. Frank House (1007 Cypress Avenue), 1931
- HRB #1011– Guilford H. and Grace Whitney House (4146 Miller Street), 1927 (with Hurlburt, Tifal and Milton P. Sessions)
- HRB #1059– Dr. Franklin and Leone Lindemulder/Ralph Frank House (2251 San Juan Road), 1935
- HRB #1160– Alfred and Helen Cantoni/Ralph L. Frank and William B. Melhorn House (2412 Pine Street), 1964
- HRB #1206– Justin and Anastasia Evenson/Ralph L. Frank House (1041 Cypress Avenue), 1934
- HRB #1288– Howard and Helen Taylor House (605 San Fernando Street), 1956
- Frank Residence (2288 San Juan Road)

At least 12 of Frank's works have been designated as historical resources by the City of San Diego Historical Resources Board. They include the Philip and Helen Gildred/Ralph Frank House (HRB #722), which established him as a Master Architect by the HRB in 2005, the Ralph Loren and Alice Mae Frank House (HRB #881), and the C. Arnholt Smith/Ralph L. Frank House (HRB #896).

Ralph Frank designed the 4165 Miller Street property for Timothy and Thema Perkins in 1946 during the height of his career. While the building is designed in his signature Colonial Revival style, it is unique in its visual differentiation of the front façade and use of stone veneer. Additionally, the house exhibits Frank's evolution towards modern design through the selective use of metal frame, multi-lite windows and a flat parapet roof over the south wing.

Significance Statement: The subject resource retains excellent integrity and continues to reflect Frank's original design, intent and aesthetic. The house is significant as an example of Frank's work in his signature style, Colonial Revival, and represents the architects shift towards modern design through the use of a visually differentiated front façade, stone veneer exterior, metal frame windows and a flat parapet roof over the one-story south wing. Therefore, staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion D as a notable work of Master Architect Ralph Frank.

CRITERION E - Is listed or has been determined eligible by the National Park Service for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or is listed or has been determined eligible by the State Historical Preservation Office for listing on the State Register of Historical Resources.

The property at 4165 Miller Street has been listed on the National Register as a contributor to the Inspiration Heights Historic District. The property has not been individually evaluated for designation on either the National or State Registers. If the Inspiration Heights Historic District were

to come forward for nomination under HRB Criterion E, the 4165 Miller Street property would be eligible for designation as a contributing resource to the district. Therefore, the property is not currently eligible for designation under HRB Criterion E.

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 Timothy and Thelma Perkins/ Ralph L. Frank House located at 4165 Miller Street be designated with a period of significance of 1946 under HRB Criterion C as a good example of the Colonial Revival style and HRB Criterion D as a resource that is representative of a notable work of Master Architect Ralph L. Frank.



Suzanne Segur
Senior Planner/ HRB Liaison
Development Services Department

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Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER
ADOPTED ON 06/23/2022

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 6/23/2022, to consider the historical designation of the Timothy and Thelma Perkins/Ralph L. Frank House by HSU Family Trust 06-04-21, 4165 Miller Street, San Diego, CA 92103) located at **4165 Miller Street, San Diego, CA 92103**, APN: **443-563-1000-00**, further described as BLK 7 Lors 11 & 12 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.** , 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 Timothy and Thelma Perkins/Ralph L. Frank House 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 the Colonial Revival style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1946 period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits an asymmetrical front façade, combination hipped and gable roof, stone veneer and stucco exterior, belt course, rounded entry portico with classical columns, stone veneer chimney, bays containing metal frame windows, multi-lite wood frame double hung windows, wall dormers, and decorative shutters. 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 Architect Ralph L. Frank and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the resource is significant as an example of Frank's work in his signature style, Colonial Revival, and represents the architects shift towards modern design through the use of a visually differentiated front façade, stone veneer exterior, metal frame windows and a flat parapet roof over the one-story south wing. 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.** .

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the designation shall exclude the 2018 second story addition and rear porch enclosure.

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: _____
DAVID MCCULLOUGH, Chair
Historical Resources Board

APPROVED: MARA W. ELLIOTT,
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: _____
LINDSEY SEBASTIAN,
Deputy City Attorney