



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: September 9, 2021 REPORT NO. HRB-21-053

HEARING DATE: September 23, 2021

SUBJECT: **ITEM #04 – 1135 Devonshire Drive**

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

APPLICANT: Jones Family Trust 05-25-11; represented by Urbana Preservation & Planning, LLC

LOCATION: 1135 Devonshire Drive, Peninsula Community, Council District 2  
APN 530-033-03-00

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of 1135 Devonshire Drive as a historical resource.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Do not designate the property located at 1135 Devonshire Drive under any adopted HRB Criteria.

### 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 building is a two-story single-family home with a detached garage constructed in 1928-1929 in the Sunset Cliffs subdivision of the Peninsula community.

The property has not been identified in any historic surveys, as the subject area has not been previously surveyed.

### ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research was prepared by Urbana Preservation & Planning, LLC, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria A and C. Staff disagrees and finds that the building is not eligible under any HRB Criteria. This determination is consistent with the [Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria](#), as follows.

*CRITERION A - Exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's, a community's or a neighborhood's historical, archaeological, cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, landscaping or architectural development.*

The applicant asserts that the 1135 Devonshire Drive reflects a special element of the early development of the Sunset Cliffs tract with a period of significance of 1925-1930. However, staff disagrees. The property at 1135 Devonshire Drive is a relatively later construction within the Sunset Cliffs subdivision in 1928-1929 months before the onset of the Great Depression, which stymied the community's growth. The subject resource appears to only reflect development in the subdivision and does not do so to any greater extent than other homes built between 1925-1930 as part of the planned community of John P. Mills Organization, Inc. and the Pantages, Mills/ Shreve and Company. Although the applicant maintains that the subject property is part of a "noncontiguous group of elaborate and sizable Spanish Eclectic styled houses that were built at key intersections to serve as model homes for the fledgling Sunset Cliffs..." there is no documentation to show that this home was intended to serve as a model for the tract or to stimulate development. There is no evidence that the house was commissioned by the tract developers, nor was it featured in ads promoting the Sunset Cliffs subdivision. Furthermore, the research yielded no evidence that the property was built as a speculation house. Criterion A requires that a property is distinct among others of its kind or that surpasses the usual in significance, which 1135 Devonshire Drive is not. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation under Criterion A for cultural development or architectural development.

*CRITERION B - Is identified with persons or events significant in local, state or national history.*

Research into the owners and tenants of the property at 1135 Devonshire Drive did not reveal any individuals who could be considered historically significant in local, state or national history. Furthermore, no events of local, state or national significance are known to have occurred at the subject property. Therefore, the property is not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion B.

*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.*

1135 Devonshire Drive is a two-story single-family home with a one-story wing constructed in the Spanish Eclectic style, featuring an L-shaped floorplan, gable and hipped roofs with red terra cotta tiles and decorative copings/corner finials, smoother skip-trowel stucco, a second-floor balcony with turned wood banisters and columns, arched window groupings with decorative plasterwork, original stucco relief with flower box, and arched patio openings. Fenestration consists of three-part arched picture window groupings, four-over-four double-hung windows, and fixed rectangular picture windows. The building was constructed on a corner lot; its primary elevation faces westward and once provided a direct view of the Pacific Ocean. The parcel also contains a detached garage with Spanish eclectic features and elements of the original landscaping of juniper and palm trees.

Modifications include the 1951 construction of a perimeter wall along the Alhambra Street elevation, the 1952 installation of flagstone patio pavers, the demolition of the original detached garage, the construction of a replacement garage and a pool, and the installation of large picture windows along the ground floor south and east elevation. On the north elevation facing Alahambra Street, four original windows were infilled, and another window was modified with new glazing. A window

grouping was infilled on the east elevation of the second story at an unknown date; a second-floor window grouping along the south-facing rear elevation was replaced with a modern three-part casement and fixed window grouping at an unknown date; lastly, a rectangular casement and fixed window grouping on the west elevation first floor was replaced with vinyl windows at an unknown date.

As originally constructed, the subject property exhibited architectural elements of Spanish Eclectic architecture and continues to retain many of those features. However, the cumulative effect of the overall modifications to the fenestration impair the building's integrity of design, materials, workmanship, and feeling to the point that the building is no longer eligible under HRB Criterion C. These modifications include the infill of four windows on the secondary elevation along Alhambra Street, the infill of a second-floor window grouping on the east-facing side elevation, the installation of large picture windows on the ground floor of the south and east rear elevations, the alteration of a window grouping on the upper-level south elevation, and the vinyl window replacement on the west elevation first floor. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion C due to the collective impact to integrity from eleven window modifications.

*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 at 1135 Devonshire Drive was designed by Ray R. Radford. Radford has not been established by the Historical Resources Board as a Master Architect, Designer or Builder, and there is insufficient information to designate him as such at this time. Therefore, staff does not recommend 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 property located at 1135 Devonshire Drive be not be designated under any HRB Criteria due to lack of integrity.



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Junior Planner



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Senior Planner/ HRB Liaison  
Development Services Department

AL/eh/ss

Attachment(s):

1. Applicant's Historical Report under separate cover