



# CITY OF CORONADO

## CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

August 15, 2023

{{section.number}}a

### **PUBLIC HEARING: APPEAL OF THE HISTORIC RESOURCE COMMISSION DECISION THAT THE PROPERTY AT 335 ALAMEDA BOULEVARD MEETS THE CRITERIA TO BE DESIGNATED AS A HISTORIC RESOURCE**

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Grant the appeal and overturn the decision of the Historic Resource Commission that 335 Alameda Boulevard meets the criteria to be designated as a Historic Resource.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

Ordinance No. 1961 was adopted by the City Council on July 6, 2004, establishing a discretionary process to determine the historic significance of structures 75 years old or older in association with projects that include demolition or partial demolition. This discretionary process was amended with the adoption of Ordinance No. 2088 on December 18, 2018, and the Determination of Historic Significance review is regulated by Coronado Municipal Code Chapter 84.10.

On August 9, 2022, the property owner submitted a complete Determination of Historic Significance application for the property addressed as 335 Alameda Boulevard. At the meeting of October 19, 2022, the Historic Resource Commission held a public hearing on this item. Following the public hearing, a motion that the property meets the criteria to be designated as a Historic Resource was passed by a vote of 4-0-1, with Commissioner Bey absent (Attachment 2).

On October 28, 2022, Scott Moomjian, as representative for property owner Lisa Rigdon, submitted an appeal hearing form to the City Clerk's Office, appealing the decision of the Historic Resource Commission, specifically the designation of the property under Criteria C and D (Attachment 5). The appeal was scheduled for a City Council hearing on March 7, 2023, however on February 21, 2023, the appellant submitted additional materials, including a historic photograph, that had not previously been provided to staff, the Commission, or the consultant who prepared the historic resource report (Attachment 6). Staff requested an analysis of the additional information from the consultant, which was sent to the appellant in May of 2023 and is included as Attachment 7. The appellant subsequently requested August 15, 2023, as the date for the appeal to be considered by City Council.

#### **ANALYSIS:**

The City Council has established specific criteria for determining whether a property is a historic resource. In order to be designated as a historic resource, the home must meet at least two of the designation criteria per CMC Section 84.10.130.

The Commission's findings for the determination, the appeal assertion for each criterion, and the staff analysis of historic significance for the two Criterion that are under appeal are as follows:

#### **Criterion C**

Commission Finding - The Historic Resource Commission determined that the "dwelling on the property is an example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style, and exhibits many character-defining features of the style, including an asymmetrical façade; an L-shape plan; simple

rectangular massing; two stories in height; an outdoor courtyard; low-pitched cross-gabled roof; minimal eaves with little to no overhang; a red Mission (half-cylinder) clay tile roof; painted white stucco exterior walls; walls that extend into gable without a break; fenestration irregularly placed and recessed; a wrought iron balcony; an elaborate chimney top; and decorative vents.”

Appeal Assertion – In their appeal filed October 28, 2022 (attachment 5), the appellant asserts that the HRC erred in designating the property under Criterion C as an example of the Spanish Colonial style, exhibiting "many" character-defining features of the style, without substantial evidence, analysis, and/or evaluation, in violation of the Coronado Municipal Code and the Coronado Historic Designation Criteria Guidelines. The appellant also asserts that the Commission erred in designating the property under Criterion C as "substantial" alterations to the Property over the years preclude designation on this basis. Finally, the appellant asserts that the Commission erred in designating the property under Criterion C due to improper Commission discussion/deliberation regarding the effect of designation resulting in a diminution of Property value, and an inability to "sell" the Property at a future date. Additional information was submitted by the appellant on February 21, 2023 (Attachment 6). In this submittal, the appellant included photographs and a narrative in which they assert that the property has undergone “substantial” alterations, summarized as follows:

- At the corner of the southeast (rear) elevation and southwest (side) elevation, two second-floor vinyl windows with wood shutters exist, where there were originally wood windows with no shutters.
- Along the property line at the Alameda Boulevard frontage, a solid stucco site wall has been installed.
- At the southeast (rear) elevation, a fountain, patio enclosure, and barbeque have been installed.
- On the northwest (front) elevation, which is noted as the west elevation in the appellant's additional materials, a window visor has been removed from above the three arched windows at the second story, and original cut wood shutters have been removed from the first and second floor and replaced with louvered shutters, the original wood paneled front door has been replaced with a carved wood door, and the original mailbox adjacent to the front door has been removed.

The appellant asserts that these modifications contribute to the loss of feel, appearance, and character of the main elevation, as well as the loss of open space, setting, feeling, and Spanish Colonial Revival aesthetic of the property, adversely impacting integrity and precluding significance under Criterion C.

Staff Analysis – The City's Historic Designation Criteria Guidelines state that in order to be designated under Criterion C, a resource should be unaltered or minimally altered from the historic condition. When staff is considering whether modifications to a structure are substantial for the purposes of evaluation under Criterion C, the nature, extent, and visibility of the modifications are examined within the context of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and the unique situation applicable to the property under review. Properties are evaluated individually, and modifications that are considered adverse in some cases may be considered minor in other cases. However, in most cases, modifications associated with maintenance and repair, such as re-roofing in kind, or replacement in kind of deteriorated architectural details are considered routine and do not adversely impact historic significance. Likewise, additions or modifications to the rear of a structure or that are not visible from the public right of way, and additions or modifications that are consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards are generally considered minimal.

However, inappropriate changes to the front of a structure, additions that overwhelm the original structure, replacement of historic features with inappropriate replacement features, or numerous cumulative modifications that are not consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards are generally considered substantial and will negatively impact historic significance.

The consultant evaluated the building in advance of the HRC hearing and prepared a Historic Report recommending that the property meets Criterion C (Attachment 3). The consultant also reviewed the information submitted in February 2023 and prepared an addendum to the original Historic Report (Attachment 7), and recommends that the property is historically significant as an example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style, and exhibits many character-defining features of the style, including an asymmetrical façade; an L-shape plan; simple rectangular massing; two stories in height; an outdoor courtyard; low-pitched cross-gabled roof; minimal eaves with little to no overhang; a red Mission (half-cylinder) clay tile roof; painted white stucco exterior walls; walls that extend into gable without a break; fenestration irregularly placed and recessed; a wrought iron balcony; an elaborate chimney top; and decorative vents.

The consultant's evaluation of the integrity of the property, the permit history, Sanborn maps, and the dwelling's physical appearance, show the dwelling has seen some alterations from its construction date of 1926. Minor modifications include re-roofing in-kind, construction of a carport, and addition of a perimeter wall, all of which are routine and do not detract from the property's architectural integrity or significance. The window replacements that took place at the rear (southeast) and interior facing side (northeast) elevations are not visible from the street right-of-way. Alterations visible from the street right-of-way such as removal of a stucco visor over the second-floor window, replacement or removal of the original shutters, and replacement of the front door are not, in the consultant's opinion, substantial in nature. Replacement of the front door and shutters are reversible modifications.

In staff's opinion, the replacement of second-floor windows on the side and rear elevation, installation of the patio enclosure and amenities, and construction of a property line stucco site wall are not substantial modifications that adversely impact the property such that it does not meet Criterion C. However, the modifications to the front façade are visible from Alameda Boulevard and contribute to cumulative changes that result in a dwelling that can no longer be considered "unaltered or minimally altered". While it is true that the modifications to the front elevation can be reversed, the property owner cannot be compelled to reverse these changes, and the property must meet the designation criteria in its existing condition.

Staff recommends that if, after considering the information presented and received at the public hearing, the City Council agrees that the dwelling is substantially modified and does not meet Criterion C, then the appeal should be upheld and the designation overturned. However, if the City Council agrees that the record indicates that the modifications to the structure of the property are not substantial, then the property can be considered historically significant under Criterion C as an example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style.

#### Criterion D

Commission Finding - The Historic Resource Commission determined that the "dwelling on the property is an example of the notable work of the builder Oscar W. Dorman, as it is an important and remarkable demonstration of Dorman's understanding of the Spanish Colonial Revival style when compared with other works constructed by him; incorporates a combination of distinct character-defining features of the style; and continues to exemplify Dorman's original work as it is minimally modified and retains architectural and material integrity from the time of construction."

Appeal Assertion – In their appeal submitted on October 28, 2022, the appellant asserts that the HRC erred in designating the property under Criterion D as an "important or remarkable" example of the notable work of the builder, Oscar W. Dorman, without substantial evidence, analysis, and/or evaluation in violation of the Coronado Municipal Code and the Coronado Historic Designation Criteria Guidelines. The appellant also asserts that the Commission erred in designating the property under Criterion D due to improper Commission discussion/deliberation regarding the effect of designation resulting in a diminution of property value, and an inability to "sell" the property at a future date. The additional information submitted on February 21, 2023, includes information on the body of work of the builder, Oscar W. Dorman, and lists seven structures classified by the appellant as some variant of the Spanish Colonial Revival style containing similar character-defining features as the subject property. The appellant asserts that in comparison with the identified properties, 335 Alameda Boulevard does not appear to be notable.

Staff Analysis – The City's Historic Designation Criteria Guidelines state that in order to meet Criterion D, a property must be an example of the notable work of a builder, designer, architect, artisan, or landscape professional, and evidence would be needed to support that determination. The Coronado Municipal Code includes the following definition of Notable Work: notable work means an important or remarkable example from the body of work of a professional trained as a builder, designer, architect, artisan, or landscape professional.

The research and analysis by the consultant in the original Historic Report and the Addendum (Attachments 3, 7) conclude that the property is an example of the notable work of the builder, Oscar W. Dorman. The report notes that Dorman was a prolific builder in Coronado during the 1910s and 20s. The City's Register of Designated Historic Resources identifies ten properties constructed by Oscar Dorman that have been designated as Historic Resources. Of these, nine are designated under Criterion D as examples of Oscar Dorman's notable work, seven of which were constructed in variants of the Tudor style. Two of the nine properties designated under Criterion D, 757 Alameda Boulevard and 1024 Encino Row, were constructed in variants of the Spanish Revival style. The consultant notes that the subject dwelling displays different character-defining features of the Spanish Colonial Revival style, and notes that because Dorman typically designed in the Tudor style, the subject property can be considered rare and remarkable among his works. The consultant's opinion is that the property can be considered a notable representation of Dorman's work and is eligible for listing under Criterion D.

The Coronado Designation Criteria Guidelines provide guidance on the designation of a professional's notable works, stating all works by the professional are not presumed to be notable works, rather, notable works are a subset of a professional's body of work. Considering the number of dwellings that have already been designated as examples of Oscar Dorman's notable work and taking into account the cumulative modifications to 335 Alameda Boulevard, specifically the changes to the front façade, it is staff's opinion that the subject property does not rise to the level of "important or remarkable" within Dorman's large body of work as several details and features of the front façade are visibly and materially different from his original 1926 design.

If the City Council agrees that based upon the information provided in the application, the appeal, the consultant's report and addendum, and presented at the public hearing, that the property is an example of the notable work of Oscar W. Dorman, then the property is historically significant under Criterion D. However, if the City Council agrees that the record indicates that the dwelling does not exemplify the notable work of Oscar Dorman, then the appeal should be upheld and the designation overturned.

A property must meet two of the adopted designation criteria in order to be designated as a historic resource. Therefore, if the City Council finds that either Criterion C or D is met, but not both, the appeal must be upheld and the designation overturned.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

No impacts have been identified.

**ALTERNATIVE:**

The City Council may uphold, modify, or overturn the designation of the property.

**CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT:**

Not Applicable.

**PUBLIC NOTICE:**

Notice of this public hearing was published in the Coronado Eagle & Journal on August 2, 2023, and notices were mailed to all property owners within a 300-foot radius of the subject property.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. City Council Resolution No. 2023-34
2. Historic Resource Commission Resolution 31-22
3. Historic Research Report
4. HRC Meeting Action Minutes dated October 19, 2022
5. Appeal dated October 28, 2022
6. Additional information submitted February 21, 2023
7. Addendum to Historic Research Report
8. Declaration of Publishing and Public Notice

Submitted By: Community Development Department / Tricia Olsen