

November 13, 2017

FROM: DANIEL ZACK, AICP, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Development and Resource Management Dept.

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF A MILLS ACT HISTORICAL PROPERTY CONTRACT
FOR THE RISLEY HOME (HP#300) LOCATED AT 243 N. VAN NESS
AVENUE PURSUANT TO FMC 12-1706.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission hold a public hearing and recommend that the Director of Development and Resource Management enter into a Historical Property Contract for the Risley Home (HP#300) located at 243 N. Van Ness pursuant to FMC 12-1706.

BACKGROUND

The Risley Home is a Shingle style home which was constructed in 1904. Character defining features include five second story façade windows which have a multiple light diamond pattern upper pane (wood muntins) over a single pane of glass. Two very small rectangular stain glass windows are located on either side of these windows. A band of fish scale shingles run across the front gabled roof above the windows. The first floor façade bay window has four windows with the same pattern as that used on the second floor, thus diamond lattice work over a single pane. The home sits on a brick foundation with a brick walkway leading to the front entrance which faces south onto the porch. This wood and stained glass door appears new. Two French doors face east and lead onto the porch. The roof has a wide overhang on the north elevation. Also on the north side and set back from the façade is a second story addition with a shed roof and new windows. Also visible from the street is a one story deck across the rear elevation and a second story addition on the southwest corner of the home. An original granite hitching post is located on the park strip in front of the house and is a contributor to this resource.

The owners have requested to enter into a Historical Property Agreement (also known as a Mills Act contract) with the City.

Mills Act contracts are a very effective historic preservation tool. Such agreements provide for yearly property tax savings for the owner in exchange for a commitment to maintain and improve the historic character of the property. This Mills Act program was adopted by the City Council in 2016, and this proposal, if approved, will be part of the first group of contracts enacted under the program.

The minimum duration for a Mills Act Contract is 10 years. Once granted a Mills Act contract, a property owner saves approximately 40%-50% of the individual assessed tax

valuation of the property. The estimated loss of revenue to the City for a property valued at \$1,000,000 would be approximately at \$800 to \$1,000 per year.

In order to ensure compliance with the proposed program, staff and/or the Historic Preservation Commission conduct periodic inspections of the properties to verify that the agreed-to improvements are being made by the owner.

On October 30 Commissioner Halajian, as well as Amber Piona and Dan Zack of City staff, met with the owners on-site and reviewed their proposed 10 Year Improvement Plan of projects for maintenance and restoration of the historic character of the home. Commissioner Halajian and staff found the proposed plan to be appropriate the needs of the home and the goals of the program.

CEQA

The proposed historic designation seeks to insure the long-term preservation of the subject resource which is exempt from CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) review, per section 15331, Class 31 of the CEQA guidelines.

Attachment: Exhibit A - DPR Evaluation for the Risley Home
 Exhibit B – Proposed 10 Year Improvement Plan

State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
PRIMARY RECORD

Primary # _____
HRI # _____
Trinomial _____
NRHP Status Code _____

Other Listings _____

Review Code _____ Reviewer _____ Date _____

P1. Resource Name: The Eugene and Eleanor Risley Home

UPDATE

***P2. Location:** *a. County: Fresno

*b. USGS 7.5' Quad: Fresno South, 1963 Photorevised 1981, R20E, T14S

c. Address: 243 N. Van Ness Avenue, Fresno

d. Assessor's Parcel Number: 459-223-07

***P3a. Description:** This Shingle style home was included in the 2008 North Park Historic Survey (see attached forms). Since that date the new property owners have painted the stained shingles (as below). Additional character-defining features of this home not recorded in 2008 include: the five second story façade windows have a multiple light diamond pattern upper pane (wood muntins) over a single pane of glass. Two very small rectangular stain glass windows are located on either side of these windows. A band of fish scale shingles run across the front gabled roof above the windows. The first floor façade bay window has four windows with the same pattern as that used on the second floor, thus diamond lattice work over a single pane. The home sits on a brick foundation with a brick walkway leading to the front entrance which faces south onto the porch. This wood and stained glass door appears new. Two French doors face east and lead onto the porch. The roof has a wide overhang on the north elevation. Also on the north side and set back from the façade is a second story addition with a shed roof and new windows. Also visible from the street is a one story deck across the rear elevation and a second story addition on the southwest corner of the home. An original granite hitching post is located on the park strip in front of the house and is a contributor to this resource.

***P3b. Resource Attributes:** HP2 (Single-family residence) HP4 (detached garage) HP28 (Hitching post)

***P4. Resources Present:** ●Building ●Element of District



P5b Photo date: 30 November 2015

***P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources:** c1904
(Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, also subdivision of North Park 1902).

***P7. Owner and Address:**
Kim and Robert Thomas Herold
243 N. Van Ness Avenue
Fresno, CA 93701-1629

***P8. Recorded by:**
Karana Hattersley-Drayton, M.A.
Historic Preservation Project
Manager, City of Fresno

***P9. Date Recorded:** 1
December 2015

***P10. Survey Type:** Intensive

***P11. Report Citation:** Updated Evaluation of 243 N. Van Ness Avenue for Fresno's Local Register of Historic Resources.

***Attachments:** ●Primary and BSO Forms for 243 N. Van Ness prepared 17 January 2008 by Galvin Preservation Associates, Inc. for the City of Fresno's North Park Historic Survey.

State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

PRIMARY RECORD

Primary # _____

HRI # _____

Trinomial _____

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Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) _____

DPR 523A (1/95)

***Required information**

CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary # _____

HRI# _____

Trinomial _____

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Resource: The Eugene and Eleanor Risley Home, 243 N. Van Ness

*Recorded by: Karana Hattersley-Drayton, M.A.

*Date: 1 December 2015 ■ Continuation

Update continued:

The Risley Home is located on a .17 acre parcel on lots 30, 31 and the south ½ of Lot 29 in the North Park Subdivision. North Park was developed in 1902 on unplatted land that was owned by Carlton Curtis and later the Curtis Estate. In January 1902 William G. Uridge, a real estate entrepreneur in partnership with architect Benjamin G. McDougall recorded the North Park Addition with the County Recorder's Office. North Park quickly became one of the most affluent areas, as Fresno's elite residents moved north from L Street and the downtown area. Some of the first residents of this tract included Uridge who lived at 370 N. Van Ness and Benjamin McDougall, who lived at 314 N. Van Ness (North Park Historic Survey 2008:51-52).

It is possible that the Risley home was designed by McDougall who began his architectural studies in 1883 at the California School of Design and was subsequently trained by his father, Barnett McDougall. With Charles C. and George B. the three brothers worked together with their father as B. McDougall and Sons before forming their own firm, McDougall Brothers, with offices in San Francisco and Bakersfield. Circa 1900 Benjamin moved the Bakersfield office to Fresno and with his brothers was responsible for the 1901 Mission Revival style Helm Home on L Street, the Hanford Carnegie Library (1905), the Merced Security Savings Bank (1905) and many Fresno residences. After the 1906 earthquake the McDougall Brothers closed the Fresno office and Benjamin built an independent practice in San Francisco and the East Bay (John Edward Powell 1997).

Benjamin McDougall would have been conversant with the diversity of architectural styles that were popular in California at the time, and particularly so in the Bay Area. The "First Bay Tradition" (1890s-1920s) as developed by Ernest Coxhead, Willis Polk, A.C. Schweinfurth, Bernard Maybeck and later Julia Morga drew from a wide range of historical and contemporary precedents, including vernacular architecture and the Arts and Crafts aesthetic. The Arts and Crafts Movement was brought to California by Joseph Worcester, a Swedenborgian minister and amateur builder who built a house of redwood shingles in Piedmont in 1876. The use of unpainted redwood board and other ideas aroused interest of local architects and artists. By the 1890s and turn of the century the brown shingle style was fully evolved with notable examples A.C. Schweinfurth's 1898 Unitarian Church and Bernard Maybeck's Hillside Club (1906), both in Berkeley.

In New England in the 1880s the Shingle Style developed out of the Queen Anne "where the fondness for natural wood shingles reflected post-Centennial interest in American colonial architecture..." (What Style Is This:75). Character defining features of the New England Shingle style residence included cladding and roofing of continuous wood shingles, no corner boards, asymmetrical facades with steeply pitched roofs with extensive porches (McAlesters, 289).

The Risley Home is therefore a product of both the East and West Coast architectural traditions with its full shingled exterior, inset porch and steeply pitched cross-gabled roofs. The house apparently was formerly painted a light green was then resingled with natural stained wood and recently was painted the blue color seen today.

The home has had numerous additions over the years. The footprint depicted on the 1906 Sanborn indicates a 1½ story square plan with wide overhanging eaves on the north elevation, a bay window on the façade and one story porches on the south side (as today) and rear northwest corner. By 1919 the one story porch at the northwest corner was now a full two stories, and a one story room extended to the west from this porch, offset somewhat to the north to hug the parcel line, and a one story room had been added behind the side entrance porch. Curiously, the bay window on the façade was not depicted. A 1922

CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary # _____

HRI# _____

Trinomial _____

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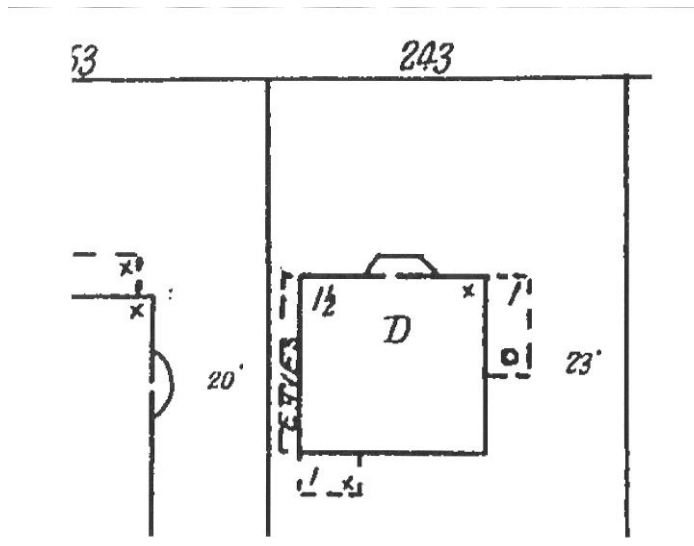
Resource: The Eugene and Eleanor Risley Home, 243 N. Van Ness

*Recorded by: Karana Hattersley-Drayton, M.A.

*Date: 1 December 2015 ■ Continuation

Update continued:

building permit was issued to the owner for an unspecified alteration valued at \$1,000. A permit for a 20x20' garage was issued in 1940. By 1948 the one story room added to the rear of the entry porch has been subdivided and the rear had been enlarged to become a full 2 stories. The bay window was not depicted on the façade... certainly lax detailing on the part of the map company survey team. By 1963 the home was now described as both a store and a dwelling.



1906 Sanborn:33

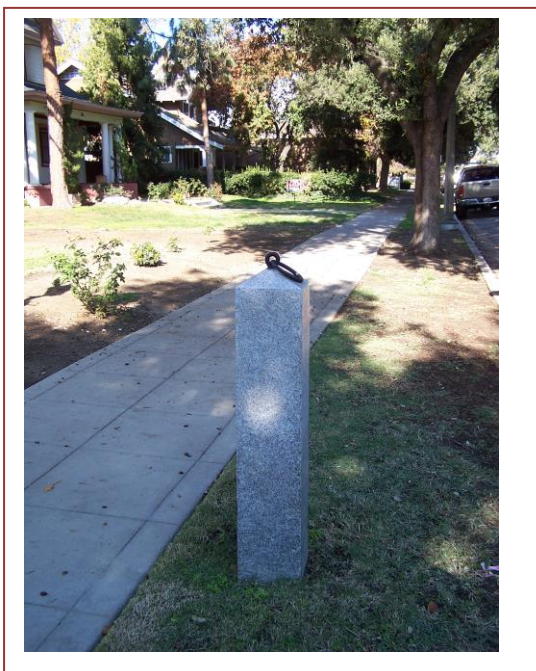
Thanks to the property owner, Kim Herold Esq., we have a good understanding of the early social history of this home. According to Ms. Herold's research, on June 17, 1902 the parcels (and several others) were sold to Harvey S. Hanson who was the rector of St. James Episcopal Church. William G. Uridge was a member of the church. On October 29, 1903 the Hansons sold the parcel to Eleanor Risley who in March 1904 transferred it to her husband Eugene W. Risley. Risley was a superior court judge and a city attorney. The home was probably constructed this year as the Risleys lived on site until the property was sold to E.V. Kelley on May 1, 1914. Kelley was a dried fruit broker and was involved in numerous real estate transactions. On November 14, 1919 Kelly sold the home to Cowan Sample. The Samples entertained frequently; in fact one of their daughters was married at the residence. In 1950 they sold to the Chong family who rented the house to the La Tienda Guild of Valley Children's for use as a thrift store from 1952 to 1966. The James family purchased the home in 1977 and the current owners purchased it in 2014 (Personal communication 30 November and 1 December 2015 with Kim Herold, Esq.)

The Eugene and Eleanor Risley Home is a rare example in Fresno of the Shingle style, as inherited both from the brown shingle tradition of the San Francisco Bay Area as well as from New England. Although the traditional natural shingles have been painted, the home still retains sufficient integrity to its period of significance (c1904-1950) to be eligible for listing on the Local Register of Historic Resources under Criterion iii. It is associated with at least two families of importance in Fresno's early history (Criterion ii) and is also an important contributor to a potential North Park Local and National Register Historic District (Criterion i). The extant hitching post in the park strip in front of the home is a contributor to this historic property.

*Recorded by: Karana Hattersley-Drayton, M.A.

*Date: 1 December 2015 ■ Continuation

Update continued:



*Granite hitching post on park strip at
243 N Van Ness.; façade of home
November 30, 2015.*

**243 NORTH VAN NESS AVENUE
FRESNO, CALIFORNIA 93701**

10 YEAR IMPROVEMENT PLAN

- 2018: Complete fencing and landscape on Northern edge of property.
- 2019: Maintain home and landscape as needed.
- 2020: Maintain home and landscape as needed.
- 2021: Maintain home and landscape as needed.
- 2022: Repaint home as needed. Maintain home and landscape as needed.
- 2023: Maintain home and landscape as needed.
- 2024: Maintain home and landscape as needed.
- 2025: Maintain home and landscape as needed.
- 2026: Maintain home and landscape as needed.
- 2027: Repaint home as needed. Maintain home and landscape as needed.

PREVIOUSLY COMPLETED PROJECTS: Repaired foundation on residence. Upgraded electrical and plumbing. Restored all windows on residence. Restored exterior and interior of residence. Restored exterior and interior of carriage house. Restored exterior and interior of garage. Exteriors were painted with Dunn Edwards historic paint colors. Large trees were removed. Restored hitching post. Low decorative iron fence was added to front yard. Front yard landscaping completed