

HABS _____ HAER _____ Ser. No. _____
UTM: A 492760 NR _____ SHL 3610980 Loc _____
C _____ D _____

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

IDENTIFICATION

Merle Becker House

1. Common name: Merle Becker House
2. Historic name: Richard Pray House
3. Street or rural address: 406 Church Street
City Chula Vista Zip 92010 County San Diego
4. Parcel number: 568-420-08
5. Present Owner: Merle H Becker Tr Address: 5353 Sweetwater Road
City Bonita, CA Zip 92002 Ownership is: Public _____ Private X
6. Present Use: residential Original use: residential

DESCRIPTION

7a. Architectural style: Colonial Revival

7b. Briefly describe the present *physical description* of the site or structure and describe any major alterations from its original condition:
Legal: Baird Sub, Lot 3, N 50' of S 240' of E 120' of W 255' of
This rectangular one story house has a medium, side-facing, clipped gable roof with a boxed cornice and cornice returns. An exterior brick chimney pierces the eave at the left end. A Palladian open porch is centered on the facade and features a curved underside and twin columns at each front corner as porch roof supports. The front door has sidelights. Horizontal clapboard siding sheaths the exterior of this home. The porch is flanked on the left by a set of three windows and on the right by one small window. Since houses of this style are often symmetrical, the small window on the right might represent an alteration. There is also a small addition on the right end of this house.



8. Construction date:
Estimated 1928 Factual _____
9. Architect unknown
10. Builder unknown
11. Approx. property size (in feet)
Frontage 60 Depth 120
or approx. acreage _____
12. Date(s) of enclosed photograph(s)
1985

13. Condition: Excellent ___ Good x Fair ___ Deteriorated ___ No longer in existence ___
14. Alterations: addition on right end
15. Surroundings: (Check more than one if necessary) Open land ___ Scattered buildings ___ Densely built-up x
Residential x Industrial ___ Commercial ___ Other: _____
16. Threats to site: None known x Private development ___ Zoning ___ Vandalism ___
Public Works project ___ Other: _____
17. Is the structure: On its original site? x Moved? ___ Unknown? ___
18. Related features: trees, shrubs

SIGNIFICANCE

19. Briefly state historical and/or architectural importance (include dates, events, and persons associated with the site.)
 Caroline Copeland owned Lot 3, Quarter Section 138, from 1911 to 1925, but the Copeland house was not on this parcel. Ralph Pray, a prominent real estate broker purchased the lot by 1926, and by 1928, had subdivided it. This house apparently was built in 1928, and Louise Pray, R. M. Pray's widow, retained ownership. Richard Pray and his wife, Bernice, lived here in 1935. Richard Pray listed his occupation as a rancher. Families that rented this house included Milton and Loretta Price in 1929 (he was a steam shovel operator) and Harry Eichler, a draftsman, and his wife, Clara, in 1930 and 1931. The design of the porch on this house is quite rare in Chula Vista and demonstrates the interest in the Colonial Revival style in the late 1920s. Although there might have been some alterations, the home generally retains integrity of design and materials. Historical significance is added by the former ownership by the Pray family, one of the best known and prominent families in the city.

20. Main theme of the historic resource: (If more than one is checked, number in order of importance.)
 Architecture 1 Arts & Leisure _____
 Economic/Industrial ___ Exploration/Settlement _____
 Government ___ Military _____
 Religion ___ Social/Education 2

21. Sources (List books, documents, surveys, personal interviews and their dates).
 City directories
 CV Tax Assessment Rolls
 Water records

22. Date form prepared 9-8-1985
 By (name) K Webster
 Organization City of Chula Vista
 Address: P.O.Box 1087
 City Chula Vista Zip 92012
 Phone: 691-5101

Locational sketch map (draw and label site and surrounding streets, roads, and prominent landmarks):