



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: November 3, 2022 REPORT NO. HRB-22-047

HEARING DATE: November 17, 2022

SUBJECT: **ITEM #06 – Ida Loper/A.L. and A.E. Dennstedt Building Company House**

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

APPLICANT: David J & Jennifer L Cieslak; represented by IS Architecture

LOCATION: 4505 Long Branch Av, Peninsula Community, Council District 2
APN 448-685-10-00

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Ida Loper/A.L. and A.E. Dennstedt Building Company House located at 4505 Long Branch Avenue as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Ida Loper/A.L. and A.E. Dennstedt Building Company House located at 4505 Long Branch Avenue as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1937 under HRB Criterion C and D. The designation includes the detached garage and the original rock perimeter wall. The designation excludes the detached 1961 guest house, the west elevation enclosed porch, and the east elevation trellis structure, all constructed outside the period of significance. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

1. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Spanish Colonial Revival style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1937 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features an asymmetrical façade, low-pitched mission half-barrel roof, sand stucco exterior, front patio spindles, paneled wood front door, and a decorative window grille and niche. Custom features include steel, and wood, corner windows.
2. The resource is representative of a notable work of Master Builder the A.L. and A.E. Dennstedt Building Company and retains integrity to its original 1937 design, intent, and aesthetic. A.L. and A.E. Dennstedt were accomplished builders of custom houses and are responsible for the construction of many quality houses in the City, some of which have been historically designated. Specifically, the house is representative as a notable example of the company's residential work in the Spanish Eclectic style with custom features.

BACKGROUND

This item is being brought before the Historical Resources Board in conjunction with a preliminary review application to determine whether or not the building is historically significant as part of a constraints analysis for future development. Located in Point Loma Heights, the parcel contains a single-family home with a detached garage and a detached guest house.

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

The historic name of the resource, the Ida Loper/A.L. and A.E. Dennstedt Building Company House, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Ida Grace Loper, who constructed the house as their personal residence, and the name of the A.L. and A.E. Dennstedt Building Company, an established Master Builder.

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by IS Architecture, 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 property was constructed in 1937 in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. Situated above street grade, the building is surrounded by an original rock perimeter wall that runs along Guizot Street and Long Branch Avenue. The house was built with a generally rectangular floor plan and hipped roofs lined with terra cotta red mission tiles. Along the roof, rafter tails are present on all elevations. The building is sided with ubiquitous stucco with a light sand texture.

The north elevation is the primary elevation, featuring a front patio with a recessed entry and a tile roof. The patio features concrete steps and a metal railing that leads to a solid stucco balustrade. Two wooden spindles support the patio cover. Spanish Colonial Revival details along this façade include a wrought iron grille over inset square niches. The east and west extremes contain corner windows, which are custom details. These custom windows include large fixed glazing and casement sash. A picture window with shutters is located on this façade. The east elevation contains one-over-one double-hung windows and a window box. At the southern edge, recessed, is the final corner window. A trellis structure runs along this elevation, as does a short stucco wall connecting to the garage. The garage features a shed extension, a Mission half barrel roof, and tile coping along the parapet. The garage door is a modern paneled sectional garage door. The south, rear elevation contains two wooden doors and aluminum double-hung windows. The west elevation features a stucco-finished chimney and a brick-sided enclosed porch. The enclosed porch is on a separate roof plane and contains a tripartite window grouping.

Modifications to the property include the construction of a detached guest house in 1961, a west elevation enclosed porch and east-elevation wood trellis structure between 1953 and 1964, and an undated east-elevation aluminum window replacement. Overall, these modifications do not

significantly impair the integrity of design, materials, workmanship or feeling as it relates to HRB Criterion C.

The Spanish Colonial Revival style uses decorative details borrowed from the entire history of Spanish architecture. Its vocabulary is influenced by Moorish, Byzantine, Gothic or Renaissance precedents. The style became popular after the Panama-California Exposition of 1915 and reached its height in the 1920's and early 1930's before rapidly declining in the 1940's. Identifying features include a low-pitched roof with little or no eave overhang, red tile roof covering, stucco exterior wall finishes, an asymmetrical façade and arches above doors and principle windows. Common decorative details are patterned tiles, carved stonework, large focal windows, wooden or iron window grilles, decorative vents and balconies.

Significance Statement: The house continues to convey the historic significance of the Spanish Colonial Revival style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style; including an asymmetrical façade, low-pitched mission half-barrel roof, sand stucco exterior, front patio spindles, paneled wood front door, and a decorative window grille and niche. Custom features include steel, and wood corner windows. 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.

Brothers A.L., C.A., E.L. and A.E. Dennstedt, originally from Minnesota, sold real estate in the Midwest in the early part of the 20th century until the market collapsed in 1923. In 1926, they moved to San Diego and established the Dennstedt Company. They hired skilled architectural drafter Henry Landt to be the director of drafting. The company built custom houses, mostly in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. By 1929, the Dennstedt Company had built hundreds of houses, and were advertising themselves as the largest homebuilder in San Diego. They were known for building high-quality custom houses of different sizes, hiring skilled craftsmen and retaining those employees long-term. Henry Landt also kept the company at the cutting edge of innovations in the field. They adopted the business strategy of buying vacant lots in existing subdivisions, finding buyers who were willing to contract with them to build a house on the lot, and offering clients financing for both the lot purchase and home construction costs. In this way, they became prolific builders of custom houses. They also constructed hotels and other commercial buildings.

In 1933, A.L. sold his interest in the company as a result of a dispute with his brothers, likely over whether to enter the tract housing market and work with low-cost FHA loans. In 1934, A.L. recruited Henry Landt and his brother A.E to join him in forming the "A.L. and A.E. Dennstedt Building Company." A.L. and A.E. continued to build custom houses, using their method of selling lots to clients who were willing to contract with them to build their houses. They never built tract housing, but they eventually began building speculation houses for clients with FHA loans. One of their projects was the Reynard Hills subdivision, which exhibits a variety of architectural styles including Spanish Eclectic, Monterey, Cape Cod, and Old English. The company lasted until 1941, at which point residential construction largely stopped as the US entered World War II, and Landt became a construction engineer for Convair.

The A.L. & A.E. Dennstedt Building Company was established as a Master Builder in 2007 when the

Historical Resources Board designated the Hazel Weir/Dennstedt Company House/Mut kula xuy/Mut lah hoy ya Site #4, HRB #818.

The subject property was constructed by Master Builder A.L. and A.E. Dennstedt Building Company in 1937 for original owner Ida Loper. The Spanish Colonial Revival style building demonstrates the high quality of design and craftsmanship seen in the company's other known works that are historically designated.

Significance Statement: The subject resource is representative of a notable work of Master Builder A.L. and A.E. Dennstedt Building Company and retains integrity to its original 1937 design, intent, and aesthetic. A.L. and A.E. Dennstedt were accomplished builders of custom houses and are responsible for the construction of many quality houses in the City, some of which have been historically designated. Specifically, the house is representative as a notable example of the company's residential work in the Spanish Colonial Revival style with custom features. Therefore, staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion D as a notable work of Master Builder the A.L. and A.E. Dennstedt Building Company.

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 Ida Loper/A.L. and A.E. Dennstedt Building Company House located at 4505 Long Branch Avenue be designated with a period of significance of 1937 under HRB Criterion C as an example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style and Criterion D as a notable work of Master Builder the A.L. and A.E. Dennstedt Building Company. The designation includes the detached garage and the original rock perimeter wall. The designation excludes the detached 1961 guest house, the west elevation enclosed porch, and the east elevation trellis structure, which are all constructed outside the period of significance.



Alvin Lin
Assistant Planner

al/SS



Suzanne Segur
Senior Planner/ HRB Liaison
Development Services Department

Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON 11/17/2022

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 11/17/2022, to consider the historical designation of the **Ida Loper/A.L. and A.E. Dennstedt Building Company House** (owned by David J & Jennifer L Cieslak, 4505 Long Branch Avenue, San Diego, CA 92107) located at **4505 Long Branch Avenue, San Diego, CA 92107**, APN: **448-685-10-00**, further described as BLK 2 LOTS 23 & 24 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. 0**, 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 Ida Loper/A.L. and A.E. Dennstedt Building Company 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 Spanish Colonial Revival style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1937 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features an asymmetrical façade, low-pitched mission half-barrel roof, sand stucco exterior, front patio spindles, paneled wood front door, and a decorative window grille and niche. Custom features include steel, and wood, corner windows. 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 notable work of Master Builder the A.L. and A.E. Dennstedt Building Company and retains integrity to its original 1937 design, intent, and aesthetic. A.L. and A.E. Dennstedt were accomplished builders of custom houses and are responsible for the construction of many quality houses in the City, some of which have been historically designated. Specifically, the house is representative as a notable example of the company's residential work in the Spanish Eclectic style with custom features. 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. 0**.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the designation shall include the detached garage and the original rock perimeter wall.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the designation shall the detached 1961 guest house, the west elevation enclosed porch, and the east elevation trellis structure, all constructed outside the period of significance.

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

DRAFT

RECORDING REQUESTED BY
CITY OF SAN DIEGO
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

WHEN RECORDED MAIL TO

HISTORICAL RESOURCES BOARD
ATTN: HRB SECRETARY
1222 FIRST AVENUE, MS 501
SAN DIEGO, CA 92101

SPACE ABOVE THIS LINE FOR RECORDER'S USE

RESOLUTION NUMBER **N/A**

HISTORICAL DESIGNATION OF PROPERTY ON

4505 Long Branch Avenue, San Diego, CA 92107

ASSESSOR PARCEL NUMBER **448-685-10-00**

HISTORICAL RESOURCES BOARD NUMBER **0**