



Ocean Beach Historical Society

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August 28, 2021

Historical Resources Board

City of San Diego

Development Services Department

To Whom it May Concern:

On behalf of the Ocean Beach Historical Society, I would like to recommend that the lovely Spanish Eclectic – Revival style home, known as the J. R. Elliott Residence, at 1135 Devonshire Drive, be approved for historic designation. The 1928 home is one of the best and earliest examples of the Mediterranean style villa imagined by developer John P. Mills for his Sunset Cliffs subdivision in the mid 1920s. I happen to have had some personal familiarity with this home, for some 60+ years, having grown up on Devonshire Drive myself.

The Pantages, Mills and Shreve Company had acquired the large ocean front parcel from the estate of Sporting Goods Magnate, former star pitcher, and real estate speculator Albert G. Spalding. Spalding had named the area Sunset Cliffs, and had developed a picturesque and fanciful park along the ocean as a destination for visitors to the Panama California Exposition of 1915. The home at 1135 Devonshire Drive is immediately above what Spalding called the Albert G. Spalding Esplanade.

Architect and designer Ray Bradford had designed and built another beautiful and prominent Spanish Eclectic style home in Ocean Beach, two years prior, at the top of Del Monte Avenue on the southwest corner of Guizot Street. 1135 Devonshire Drive was one of only a handful of the Mediterranean Villas, envisioned for Sunset Cliffs, built prior to 1930 when the stock market crash, and subsequent great depression wiped out Pantages, Mills and Shreve. Most of the Sunset Cliffs subdivision was developed in the post-World War 2 years and consisted of much more modest dwellings. Growing up in the 1960s, "The Old Spanish Houses" were the stuff of myth and legend for neighborhood children, a mysterious link to our neighborhood's distant past.

Well known Ocean Beach physician Dr. Donald Coleman was the resident owner of 1135 Devonshire Drive for several decades. On a personal note, Dr. Coleman happened to be our family physician when I was a kid, and one of his boys was a schoolmate of mine.

As a historical Society, OBHS supports the preservation of our community's older homes. As one of the few and very first of the Sunset Cliffs Spanish Eclectic style homes, and in its lovely original condition, we fully support historic designation for 1135 Devonshire Drive.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric L. DuVall

President, Ocean Beach Historical Society



Save Our Heritage Organisation
Protecting San Diego's architectural and cultural heritage since 1969

Thursday, September 16, 2021

City of San Diego
Chair McCullough, Historical Resources Board & staff
202 C Street
San Diego, CA 92101

Re: September 23, 2021 agenda -Items 1 and 4

Chair McCullough, Board members & staff,

Item 1: 3535 1st Ave, Century Plaza Towers/William Krisel Condominiums: Save Our Heritage Organisation (SOHO) concurs with the staff report and finds this International style resource with Contemporary elements significant under Criterion C and D for architecture and as the notable work of Master Architect William Krisel. Character-defining features include the rectilinear form with Post and Beam construction, flat roof with short eaves, linear and aluminum-framed windows, open cantilevered balconies, internal and external connection with a recessed entry.

Item 4: 1135 Devonshire Drive: SOHO disagrees with the staff report and finds this c.1928-29 Spanish Eclectic style home significant under Criterion A for an association with the pre-Depression era development aesthetic of the Sunset Cliffs tract, as envisioned by Pantages, Mills and Shreve Co. SOHO also finds this resource significant under Criterion C as an excellent example of the style and period of development.

Significant under Criterion A, this house is a special historical, architectural and aesthetic element of the community as one of the last "Mediterranean Riviera" inspired homes built within the Sunset Cliffs tract prior to the Great Depression. Conceived by the tract's developers (Pantages, Mills, and Shreve Co.) to be "the Riviera of America," these custom designed-buildings were to meet a minimum improvement value, be light in color, and have red tile or gravels roofs. Designed by architect Ray R. Radford and located at a prominent intersection on a highly visible parcel, the Elliot Residence serves as an example of the scale, character and topographical compatibility envisioned for this Riviera-inspired tract that substantially halted during the 1930s as a result of the Depression. Although development didn't entirely stop during the 1930s, the Depression signifies the end of this original Mediterranean-inspired vision and changed the stylistic trajectory of this Sunset Cliffs community. The neighborhood's architecture illustrates there was little built during the 1930s and 1940s, but this picked back up during the 1950s and 1960s when Ranch and Mid-Century styles were popular. Therefore, 1135 Devonshire is one of the last custom-built homes within the Sunset Cliffs tract representing the original architectural and aesthetic intent of this development.

Additionally, the 2005 HRB determined non-contiguous custom homes built within this tract and associated with the "Mediterranean Riviera" aesthetic of Pantages, Mills & Shreve Company to be historically significant as "important community development." Collectively, the custom homes built as a result of their vision capture the intended aesthetic for this first "Mediterranean Riviera" development period, which substantially halted due to 1930s financial hardships. A special historical, architectural and aesthetic element

of the Sunset Cliffs neighborhood, combined with its high level of design and integrity, this resource is significant under Criterion A.

Also significant under Criterion C for its Spanish Eclectic style and period of development, this home is prominently located, highly visible on multiple facades, and orientated toward the intersection. Character defining features of this high-style home include the asymmetrical massing and L-shaped floor plan, hip and gable roofs clad in a unique terra cotta tile, stucco exterior, misc. terra cotta details including coping and corner finials, focal arched window groupings, and a second story balcony with carved posts and exposed beams. A custom-built home where multiple facades are highly visible, San Diego is fortunate that prior modifications did not impact the primary-façade or its various character-defining features. Further, many of the modifications identified within the report are reversible under the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. While modifications to the grounds have occurred, such as the perimeter wall and pool, these do not detract from the integrity or significance of the resource. Last, the Juniper and Palm trees remaining from the original landscaping are a rare element that illustrates how landscape too contributed to this "Riviera of America" vision. 1135 Devonshire continues to convey a high-level of architectural design through the form, massing, orientation, and number of remaining intact features. Together, these illustrate the strong level of integrity that remains.

Warranting designation by the HRB, 1135 Devonshire is significant under Criteria A and C as a special element that contributes to the original Mediterranean Riviera-inspired vision for the Sunset Cliff tract and as an excellent example of the Spanish Eclectic style and period of development.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amie Hayes". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Amie Hayes
Senior Historic Resources Specialist
Save Our Heritage Organisation