



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: June 13, 2013 REPORT NO. HRB-13-030

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board
Agenda of June 27, 2013

SUBJECT: **ITEM #9 – Russell and Rosemary Lanthorne/Homer Delawie House**

APPLICANT: Doris Lew represented by Marie Burke Lia

LOCATION: 7520 Mar Avenue, 92037, La Jolla Community, Council District 1

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Russell and Rosemary Lanthorne/Homer Delawie House located at 7520 Mar Avenue as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Russell and Rosemary Lanthorne/Homer Delawie House located at 7520 Mar Avenue as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1963 under HRB Criteria C and D. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

1. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Modern Post and Beam style of architecture and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1963 period of significance. Specifically, the resource retains its direct expression of the structural system, horizontal massing, flat roof with deep overhangs, floor to ceiling glass, vertical wood siding, minimal use of load bearing walls, absence of applied decoration, and strong interior/exterior connections.
2. The resource is representative of a notable work of Master Architect Homer Delawie and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the resource reflects Delawie's dedication to the Modernist style and the Post and Beam style specifically.

BACKGROUND

This item is being brought before the Historical Resources Board in conjunction with the owner's desire to have the site designated as a historical resource. The single-family house is located on a down sloping lot overlooking La Jolla and the Pacific Ocean. The garage of the subject house is attached at the roof on street level while the main portion of the house is below grade.

The historic name of the resource, the Russell and Rosemary Lanthorne/Homer Delawie House has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Russell and Rosemary Lanthorne, who constructed the house as their personal residence and the name of Homer Delawie, the Master Architect who designed it.

ANALYSIS

A historical resource technical report was prepared by Marie Burke Lia which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria A, C and D. Staff concurs that the site is a significant historical resource under HRB Criteria C and D but not HRB Criterion A. This determination is consistent with the *Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria*, as follows:

CRITERION A - Exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's, a community's or a neighborhood's historical, archaeological, cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, landscaping or architectural development.

The applicant's technical report states that the subject property is significant under HRB Criterion A as a resource that exemplifies special elements of San Diego's development in La Jolla during the 1960s with the use of the Modern Post and Beam style on previously unbuildable hillside lots. The applicant does not discuss why this is a special element of La Jolla's development or how this property exemplifies or reflects this special element. Due to the lack of comparative analysis or documentation, staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion A.

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.

Constructed in 1963, this Modern Post and Beam single family residence maintains a rectangular floor plan with flat roof and deep overhangs supported by squared wooden beams. The exterior is clad in vertical wood siding and stucco at the sides and lower level. Full height glass windows and sliding doors are found on the east and west elevations creating an integral outdoor and indoor space. The house is built on a very steep sloping lot sited to take advantage of sweeping views of La Jolla and the Pacific Ocean.

The two-car garage, clad in vertical wood siding and stucco is the only part of the house visible from street level and is attached to the main house at the northeast corner of the tar and pebble roof. The flat roof also holds numerous skylights for additional interior light. The main entrance, a frosted glass sliding door, is located in a small concrete entry courtyard below grade which is accessed by a steep wooden staircase from the driveway and garage above. Within the entry courtyard, a privacy wall next to the entrance blocks off the living room courtyard on the other side. The living room courtyard is differentiated from the entry with a wood plank floor. To the right of the entry courtyard, a set of concrete steps sit below the garage and lead down to the lower level of the house. The west (rear) façade of the house features a wide bank of floor to ceiling windows and glass sliding doors across the entire wall that access a wood deck

overlooking La Jolla. Vertical wood beams divide the windows and doors creating the repetitive geometry that defines the Post and Beam style. A small stucco wall is present at the north end of this wall of glass.

The only known modification made to the house is the replacement of the steps that lead from the garage to the main floor of the house. These steps were originally constructed with concrete and metal as seen in historic photos however, they have been rebuilt with wood and railings on each side of the stairs. This alteration does not significantly impact the overall integrity of the house.

The San Diego Modernism Context Statement identifies 1950-1970 as the period for Post and Beam architecture, which is characterized primarily by direct expression of the structural system, usually wood or steel frames; horizontal massing; flat or shallow pitch roofs with deep overhangs or no parapet; and floor-to-ceiling glass. The style is characterized secondarily by repetitive façade geometry; minimal use of solid load bearing walls; absence of applied decoration; strong interior/exterior connections; open interior floor plans; and exterior finish materials that usually include wood steel and glass. The Context Statement notes the relative rarity of the style, and identifies expression of the structural system through expansive floor-to-ceiling glass and wood or steel framing as critical elements to conveying the style.

The house continues to convey the historic significance of Post and Beam architecture by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style, as detailed in the Modernism Context Statement. The subject building exhibits all of the primary and secondary character defining features of Modern Post and Beam architecture and limited modifications have not impaired the property's overall integrity. Therefore, staff recommends designation of the property under HRB Criterion C as a resource that embodies the distinctive characteristics of Modern Post and Beam architecture with a 1963 period of significance.

CRITERION D - Is representative of a notable work of a master builder, designer, architect, engineer, landscape architect, interior designer, artist or craftsman.

Homer Delawie was born in 1928 and raised in Santa Barbara, California. At the age of 17, Delawie enlisted and served the Navy at the end of World War II. After the war, while working for the U.S. Forest Service as a firefighter, Delawie was guided towards a career in architecture by Veterans Administration tests. Delawie went on to enroll at California Polytechnic College in San Luis Obispo where he was part of the second graduating class in the school of architecture. Delawie was the first graduate of the school to receive his license and go on to practice architecture.

Delawie worked for firms in Fresno and Modesto before being offered a job at Lloyd Ruocco's firm at the Design Center in San Diego. While on vacation in San Diego, Delawie was driving up Fifth Avenue and was intrigued by Ruocco's Design Center and decided to contact the office and was later offered a job. After just one and a half years with Ruocco, Delawie became a partner at the firm. One of his first projects was a studio for Channel 10, the most advanced television station in the country. In 1961, after three years, Delawie went on to open his own firm in Old

Town and for 40 years, Delawie designed over sixty residences, many civic landmarks, as well as many public and military projects.

Projects designed by Delawie and his firm have received over 65 design awards. In 1973, Delawie received the Cal Poly School of Architecture Distinguished Alumni Award and the National Urban Land Institute and the California and San Diego chapters of the AIA have awarded Delawie their highest honors. Delawie also received Service Citations in 1972 and 1973 from the AIA, a Presidential Citation in 1997 and a Lifetime Achievement Award in 1997. Twice, the Department of Defense awarded Delawie its highest award.

Delawie served on several local boards including the Museum of Man, the Children's Museum and the UCSD Board of Overseers. He was active in historic preservation through involvement with the San Diego Historical Society and the City of San Diego Historical Resources Board. In 2003, Save Our Heritage Organization presented him with a Lifetime Achievement Award for his work in preserving the works of local Modern architects. Delawie served on the planning commission for 13 years and served on the Historic Resources Board for 8 years.

Other HRB Sites designed by Delawie include the following:

- HRB Site #844, Louis and Bertha Feller/Homer Delawie House
- HRB Site #845, Delawie Residence III – The Village
- HRB Site #905, Delawie Residence II

The County of San Diego Historic Site Board has recognized Delawie's Dr. Mel Goldzband Residence (4709 La Rueda) as a County of San Diego Landmark.

The Modern Post and Beam style residence at 7520 Mar Avenue is a notable work of Master Architect Homer Delawie and exemplifies his dedication to the Modernist Style. Therefore, staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion D.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

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.

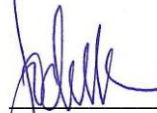
CONCLUSION

Based on the information submitted and staff's field check, it is recommended that the Russell and Rosemary Lanthorne/Homer Delawie House located at 7520 Mar Avenue be designated with a period of significance of 1963 under HRB Criteria C and D for embodying the distinctive characteristics of Post and Beam style of architecture and for being a notable work of Master Architect Homer Delawie. 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.



Sarah Vonesh
Planning Intern



for
Cathy Winterrowd
Assistant Deputy Director/HRB Liaison

SV/ks/cw

Attachments:

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON 6/27/2013

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 6/27/2013, to consider the historical designation of the **Russell and Rosemary Lanthorne/Homer Delawie House** (owned by Doris A. Lew, 7520 Mar Avenue, San Diego, CA 92037) located at **7520 Mar Avenue, San Diego, CA 92037**, APN: **350-672-05-00**, further described as LOT 6 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 Russell and Rosemary Lanthorne/Homer Delawie 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 Modern Post and Beam style of architecture and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1963 period of significance. Specifically, the resource retains its direct expression of the structural system, horizontal massing, flat roof with deep overhangs, floor to ceiling glass, vertical wood siding, minimal use of load bearing walls, absence of applied decoration, and strong interior/exterior connections. 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 Master Architect Homer Delawie and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. 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 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: N/A

BY: _____
JOHN LEMMO, Chair
Historical Resources Board

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND
LEGALITY: JAN I. GOLDSMITH,
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: _____
CORRINE NEUFFER,
Deputy City Attorney