



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: May 8, 2025 REPORT NO. HRB-25-021

HEARING DATE: May 22, 2025

SUBJECT: **ITEM #4 – Heinz and Elizabeth Poppendiek/Russell Forester House**

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

APPLICANT: Bishoy and Engy Said Family Trust 08-07-20; represented by BFS  
Environmental Services

LOCATION: 7834 Esterel Drive, La Jolla Community, Council District 1  
APN 346-600-12-00

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Heinz and Elizabeth Poppendiek/House  
located at 7834 Esterel Drive as a historical resource.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Heinz and Elizabeth Poppendiek/Russell Forester House located at 7834 Esterel Drive as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1965 under HRB Criteria C and D. The designation excludes the 2020 – 2022 east and west elevation additions. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

1. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the International style and retains integrity from its 1965 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features a flat roof, lack of applied ornament, horizontal bands of flush windows, asymmetrical facades, square corners, and exterior brick veneer siding.
2. The resource is representative of a notable work of Master Architect Russell Forester and retains integrity to its 1965 period of significance. Specifically, the property reflects Master Architect Russell Forester's original design, intent and aesthetic. It is a notable example of Forester's International designs for a single-family residence in the 1960s.

### 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 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 Heinz and Elizabeth Poppendiek/Russell Forester House, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Heinz F. Poppendiek and Elizabeth S. Poppendiek, who constructed the house as their personal residence, and the name of Russell Forester, an established Master Architect.

In order to be eligible for designation and listing on the City's Register, a resource must meet one or more of the City's designation criteria as specified in the Historical Resources Guidelines of the Land Development Manual and retain integrity as it relates to the significance of the resource. Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance, which requires an understanding of the physical features and characteristics that existed during the resource's period of significance. The National, California, and City of San Diego Registers recognize location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association as the seven aspects of historical integrity.

Although not all seven aspects of integrity need to be present for a property to be eligible for designation, the record must demonstrate that the property retains enough physical and design characteristics to reflect and convey the significance of the property. Each resource depends on certain aspects of integrity, more than others, to express its historic significance. Determining which of the aspects are most important to a particular property requires an understanding of the property's significance and its essential physical features. The [\*Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria\*](#) provide information regarding the City's designation criteria, as well as guidance on their application and how to evaluate the integrity of a resource.

## ANALYSIS

The property located at 7834 Esterel Drive is a two-story, International style single-family residence constructed in 1965 in the La Jolla Community Planning Area. Other structures present on the site include a pool and patio area. The property is located on a corner lot among similarly scaled residences. The property is in its original location.

Since its construction in 1965, the property has been modified as follows: In 1966, the lower level was finished; between c. 1980 and 2003, a flat roof addition with skylights was added to the existing west elevation balcony. In 2019, City staff approved a Process 3 Site Development Permit (required for work within the La Jolla Shores Planned District) for a residential addition and a new detached companion unit at the subject property. Staff reviewed the proposed east and west elevation additions and determined that the project scope was consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. Between 2020 and 2022, an addition and remodel project added to the property's east and west elevations, and the subterranean basement was expanded, consistent with the prior discretionary permit approval; however, the companion unit was not built. The west elevation addition occurred both at the basement and the upper level, whereas the east elevation addition occurred only at the upper level. A new balcony further projects from the west elevation addition. To necessitate egress requirements, some south elevation and west elevation fixed windows were altered in their existing openings to allow for new casement sashes. This construction project also reglazed existing windows with laminate glass. A pool and patio/deck were constructed in the rear yard in 2021. The east and south yard hardscape were also replaced. Staff determined the

aforementioned 2020 – 2022 construction work to be consistent with the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation. Other modifications include the installation of rooftop solar equipment and the addition of a garage door to the carport, which occurred between 2022 and 2024.

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by BFS Environmental Services, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria B, C, and D. Staff concurs that the site is a significant historical resource under HRB Criteria C and D, but not HRB Criterion B. This determination is consistent with the [Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria](#), as follows.

*CRITERION B - Is identified with persons or events significant in local, state or national history.*

The Historical Resource Research Report found the original owner and longtime resident, Dr. Heinz F. Poppendiek, as a significant individual under HRB Criterion B. However, staff disagrees.

Dr. Heinz F. Poppendiek was born in Germany in 1919 and later moved to California with his family. After graduating from high school in Long Beach, he obtained a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from UC Berkeley in 1943. He married Elizabeth Poppendiek that same year, and both Poppendieks worked at the university.

In 1946, Heinz Poppendiek moved with his family to UCLA, where he pursued a doctoral program in mechanical engineering, obtaining the degree in 1949. In 1953, while teaching as a professor, he accepted a new position as an engineer at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee, where he worked in the Reactor Engineering Division. His work focused on heat transfer and friction in flowing liquids. In 1956, he and his family moved to La Jolla, and Poppendiek worked at the John Jay Hopkins Laboratory, part of the General Atomic Division of the General Dynamics Corporation. Poppendiek was appointed as the Director of Applied Research for the San Diego Branch of the Geophysics Corporation of America, a multidisciplinary physical research firm.

In 1961, Poppendiek founded a research and development firm named Geoscience, Ltd and served as its president. The company was involved in nuclear, space, and biophysics research.

*The San Diego Union* reported that the firm's research and development efforts involved neutron diffusion, heat transfer, fluid dynamics, mass transfer, atmospheric turbulence, rarefied gas and magneto-fluid dynamics, electro-magnetics, physical metallurgy fluid flow stability, heat transfer in liquid metals, radiation weaponry studies, micrometeorological work, and blood/organ preservation studies. Funding for these research contracts originated from various federal agencies, private defense corporations, and local organizations.

Between 1960 and 1962, Poppendiek and his company received multiple grants to fund research on electromagnetic blood pump machines. He completed building the blood pump in 1965.

In the same decade, the Office of Naval Research, an agency within the Department of Defense responsible for supporting public research, awarded Poppendiek's company various grants to investigate the thermal properties of frozen biological materials and the mechanisms influencing Rankine heat engine cycle liquid metal systems. The Atomic Energy Commission, a post-World War II agency responsible for directing and controlling the development of the peaceful uses of nuclear

energy, also awarded Geoscience, Ltd. multiple contracts for studies related to nuclear power space systems.

In 1964, Poppendiek presented his paper on heat transfer and friction in flowing liquids to the United Nations International Conference on Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy in Geneva, Switzerland.

In 1968, Poppendiek and his wife founded the Thermonetics Corporation, which produced electrical apparatus such as heat flux transducers.

Several patents credit Poppendiek for his role as an inventor. Examples of these patent include techniques in the monitoring of radioactive material leakage (1988), measuring of the R-value of installed insulation (1980), measuring metabolic heat release of animals or humans in an enclosure (1995), measuring the flow of two-component mixtures (1986), testing heat insulation materials (1980). He also invented a heat pump heat-flow sensing to defrost (1986), a ventilator hood system for metabolic studies (1989), geothermal heat flux transducers (1977), and a gamma ray flux measurement system (1993).

The [Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria](#) specify that a historical resource may qualify under HRB Criterion B if it is associated with individuals whose specific contributions to history can be identified and documented. Persons significant in our past refer to individuals associated with San Diego whose activities, achievements, and contributions are demonstrably important within the City, state, or nation.

Evaluating the information provided in the report, staff determined that insufficient information was provided to establish Dr. Heinz F. Poppendiek as a significant individual under HRB Criterion B. While the report revealed Poppendiek's inventions and his research in blood pump machines, and his company's research in various disciplines of physical science, nuclear science, thermodynamics, and medicine, the report did not sufficiently assess the impacts or the results of these research and development efforts. For example, while Poppendiek developed and constructed a blood pump machine in 1965, it is unclear how this new instrument has impacted the medical field. Similarly, it is unclear how he and his company's research have benefited physical science, nuclear science, astrophysics, or other related fields. Without additional analysis to assess the results of these research and development initiatives, staff is unable to determine whether these undertakings qualify as "activities, achievements and contributions" that are "demonstrably important within the City, state, or nation." Therefore, staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion B. As the property is not significant under Criterion B, an evaluation of integrity as it relates to Criterion B is not relevant or required.

*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 designed in the International Style. The building is roughly L-shaped. The roof is flat with stucco eaves, generally without overhang or parapets. A metal gutter wraps around the stucco eave of the roof. A portion of the original chimney is visible atop the roof. The building's exterior is primarily clad in brick masonry veneer, with bands of stucco present on the north elevation and as trim below large windows on the south and west elevations.

The east elevation exhibits a one-story form. It is the entry elevation, featuring the primary entrance of a wooden door with full-height sidelines. Windows along this elevation are also full-height in groupings of wooden fixed and aluminum awning types.

The south elevation faces St. Tropez Place, which terminates to the west in a cul-de-sac. This elevation reveals the property's two-story form, showcasing a lower story with a carport that is now enclosed by a garage. This elevation is clad chiefly with brick veneer and interrupted by regular sections of glass and stucco. Fenestration consists of large wood fixed glass and outswing metal casements.

The west elevation faces the rear yard. The southern half of this elevation contains bands of large vertical windows, decorative wood trim fins, and brick masonry veneer. The northern half of this façade contains a covered balcony with large metal sliding glass doors and stucco siding. The north elevation, which faces the neighboring structure, is sided in stucco and features a casement and fixed window set, sliding metal glass doors, a metal door with vertical bars, and a set of stairs.

While the report identified the property as International style with Post-and-Beam influences, the property lacks critical aspects of the Post-and-Beam Style — a direct expression of the structural system and the minimal use of load-bearing walls, which allows for the expansive use of glass. The subject property does not readily exhibit its structural system, and there is no evidence suggesting minimal use of load-bearing walls. Per the approved 2022-2024 construction plans, steel beams and posts are present at the west end of the property. However, these structural steels are new construction and are present at the location of the new addition. These features are limited, not part of the original design, and do not contribute to the Post-and-Beam architectural expression. As such, the property does not embody Post-and-Beam stylistic influence. Instead, it only embodies the International style. International style characteristics are expressed through its building form, strong corners, limited exterior ornamentation, masonry facades, and bands of flush windows.

The International style was a major worldwide architectural trend of the 1920s and 30s and reflects the formative decades of Modernism before World War II. Although the International style originated in Western Europe, it transcended any national or regional identity because International style architecture made no reference to local vernaculars or traditional building forms. The style quickly migrated to the United States as architects from Europe fled before WWII. In Los Angeles, immigrant architects Rudolph Schindler and Richard Neutra were instrumental in popularizing the International style. The emergence of International style architecture in San Diego came later, with most examples built after 1935. The International style is characterized by a radical simplification of form and a complete rejection of ornament. Common features of International style architecture include square and rectangular building footprints, simple cubic or extruded rectangular forms, horizontal bands of windows, and strong right angles. Predominant building materials include concrete, smooth stucco, brick, and glass.

Of the seven aspects of integrity, design, materials, and workmanship are the most critical to the property's ability to convey significance under HRB Criterion C as a resource that embodies the distinctive characteristics of the International Style. The property, which has been modified as detailed at the beginning of the analysis section of this report, continues to embody the distinctive, original characteristics of the International Style. Specifically, between 2020 and 2024, Heritage Preservation Staff approved a building permit and a construction change, which included a rear yard

patio/deck, an addition to the east elevation, and an addition to the west elevation. The location of the addition was chosen to preserve the resource's character-defining features, including the two stories of large windows with fins on the west façade and the building's flat roof with no overhang. To meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, Heritage Preservation staff required that new additions to the building be differentiated. Staff approved the use of a 1/3 running bond pattern on the east addition, which contrasts with the original running bond pattern on the original building; the west addition was constructed with a stucco exterior. The additions are compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features of the original building. The new casement windows were required by California building codes for egress windows from bedrooms. Staff approved a treatment that retained important character-defining and highly visible features, including the original east elevation entry and flat roof, as well as the south and west elevation full-height window openings. Therefore, the property does retain the integrity of design, materials, and workmanship to its 1965 period of significance under HRB Criterion C.

Significance Statement: The house continues to convey the historic significance of the International style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style, including a flat roof, lack of applied ornament, horizontal bands of flush windows, asymmetrical facades, square corners, and exterior brick veneer siding. 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.*

The subject property was designed in 1965 for the Poppendieks by established Master Architect Russell Forester, as evidenced by undated building construction plans bearing his name on the title block.

Russell Isley Forester was born in Idaho but moved to La Jolla as a child. He graduated from La Jolla High School in 1938. He began his architectural career in the mid-1940s as a draftsman for Lloyd Ruocco in the Army Corps of Engineers. In 1948, Forester opened his own offices in La Jolla as a freelance architectural designer. During this period, he designed at least four houses, all in a relatively traditional style. In 1950, Forester was inspired by Ruocco to begin his formal study of architecture at the Institute of Design in Chicago. Here, he was mentored by Mies Van Der Rohe, who was popularizing the International style in the United States. When Forester returned to San Diego around 1951, he began designing in Modernist styles. He is credited with helping to introduce the International style to San Diego. During the 1950s, Forester designed several modernist structures in La Jolla and participated in the design of airports, a naval base, hospitals and California First Bank buildings. He also designed the first Jack-in-the-Box restaurant, which opened in 1951. He went on to design several more of the restaurants in the Googie/Futurist style, and these are his best-known commercial projects. He also worked in numerous other Modernist styles, including Streamline Moderne, Minimal Traditional, Custom Ranch, Organic Geometric, and Post-and-Beam. As his career progressed, Forester shifted from working on relatively modest houses to larger houses and commercial projects. He received his architectural license in 1960.

At least eight of Forester's works are currently designated as historical resources by the City of San Diego Historical Resources Board. They include the Dr. Harold C. & Frieda Daum Urey/Russell Forester House (HRB #528), which established him as a Master Architect by the HRB in 2002, the Park Prospect Condominiums/Russell Forester Building (HRB #992), the Edmund and Elsie

Herman/Russell Forester House (HRB #1042), and the Max and Louise Gross/Russell Forester House (HRB #1371).

Of the seven aspects of integrity, design, materials, and workmanship are the most critical to the property's ability to convey significance under HRB Criterion D as a resource that represents the notable work of Master Architect Russell Forester. The property, which has been modified as detailed at the beginning of the analysis section of this report, retains the integrity of design, materials, and workmanship, as described under the Criterion C integrity analysis. Therefore, the property does retain integrity to its 1965 period of significance under HRB Criterion D.

Significance Statement: The subject resource retains integrity to the 1965 period of significance and continues to reflect Master Architect Russell Forester's original design, intent, and aesthetic. It is a notable example of Forester's International designs for a single-family residence in the 1960s. Therefore, staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion D.

### CONCLUSION

Based on the information submitted and staff's field check, it is recommended that the Heinz and Elizabeth Poppendiek/Russell Forester House located at 7834 Esterel Drive as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1965 under HRB Criteria C and D. The designation excludes the 2020 – 2022 east and west elevation additions.



Alvin Lin  
Associate Planner  
City Planning Department



Suzanne Segur  
Senior Planner/HRB Liaison  
City Planning Department

AL/ss

Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A  
ADOPTED ON

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 5/22/2025, to consider the historical designation of the **Heinz and Elizabeth Poppendiek/Russell Forester House** (owned by Bishoy and Engy Said Family Trust 08-07-20, 5966 Carnegie Street, San Diego, CA 92122) located at **7834 Esterel Drive, San Diego, CA 92037**, APN: **346-600-1200**, further described as LOT 17 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 Heinz and Elizabeth Poppendiek/Russell Forester 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 International style and retains integrity from its 1965 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features a flat roof, lack of applied ornament, horizontal bands of flush windows, asymmetrical facades, square corners, and exterior brick veneer siding. 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 Russell Forester and retains integrity to its 1965 period of significance. Specifically, the property reflects Master Architect Russell Forester's original design, intent and aesthetic. It is a notable example of Forester's International designs for a single-family residence in the 1960s. 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 exclude the 2020 - 2022 east and west elevation additions.

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: \_\_\_\_\_  
KRISTI BYERS, Chair

Historical Resources Board

APPROVED: HEATHER FERBERT,  
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
LINDSEY SEBASTIAN,  
Deputy City Attorney

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