



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: October 9, 2025 REPORT NO. HRB-25-049

HEARING DATE: October 23, 2025

SUBJECT: **ITEM #3 – 2660-2666 FIRST AVENUE**

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

APPLICANT: Scott A. Moomjian; represented by IS Architecture

OWNER: San Diego American Indian Health Center, Inc.

LOCATION: 2660-2666 First Avenue, Uptown Community, Council District 3
APN 452-706-0600

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the property located at 2660-2666 First Avenue as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Do not designate the property located at 2660-2666 First Avenue under any adopted HRB Criteria.

BACKGROUND

This item is being brought before the Historical Resources Board in accordance with [SDMC Section 123.0202](#) and [Section II of the Historical Resources Board Procedures](#) because a nomination was filed by Scott A. Moomjian to designate the property, which is owned by San Diego American Indian Health Center, Inc. and located at 2660-2666 First Avenue, as a historic resource.

The property was located within the boundary of [the 2016 Uptown Community Plan Area Historic Resources Survey Report](#), but was not identified in the survey because it was not evaluated.

On November 29, 2023, in accordance with [SDMC Section 143.0212](#), Heritage Preservation staff conducted a potential historical review for the subject property via a multiple-discipline preliminary review application (record number PRJ-1099623) and determined that the subject property is not significant under any HRB Criteria based on the review of the Assessors Building Record and a current photo survey of the property. On September 9, 2024, Scott A. Moomjian filed for a single-discipline preliminary review application (record number PRJ-1123461) for a potential historical review, which revealed the original architects as the firm of Lloyd Ruocco and Homer Delawie, both

established Master Architects. On October 14, 2024, after evaluating the submitted materials, Heritage Preservation staff reaffirmed their determination that the subject property is not significant under any HRB Criteria. On October 31, 2024, Scott A. Moomjian filed an Individual Historical Resource Nomination application for the property. Months later, in April of 2025, the property owner altered the property by removing wood details from the east and south elevations and replacing the east elevation horizontal band of windows. Subsequently, a member of the public initiated a Building & Land Use Enforcement investigation request (record number CE-0534485), alleging that the April 2025 work violated the San Diego Municipal Code. The Development Services Department investigated the allegations and concluded that no violations occurred, and permits were not required for the work. The investigation was closed in August 2025.

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.

BUILDING CONDITION EVALUATION

This nomination originates from a member of the public under SDMC §123.0202. The "current" or "present" condition of a property, where its nomination originates under [SDMC §123.0202](#), refers to the property's condition when a Historical Resource Research Report or similar documentation, prepared pursuant to the Historical Resources Guidelines, is submitted for a decision to the Historical Resources Board. It does not refer to the property's condition when the report was initially submitted to Heritage Preservation Staff for a completeness check. In considering the designation of the property located at 2660-2666 First Avenue, the Historical Resources Board should evaluate the building's "current" condition as it exists when the nomination is submitted to the Board, inclusive of the alterations which occurred to the property in April 2025.

ANALYSIS

The property at 2660-2666 First Avenue is a one-story commercial office building with a basement-level parking garage, constructed in 1959 in the Uptown Community Planning Area. It is located in the Bankers Hill neighborhood among mid- and low-rise residential and commercial buildings and immediately abuts Maple Canyon Open Space. The property is in its original location.

Since its construction in 1959, the property has been modified as follows: A 1960 wood screening skirt fence that wraps around the north, east, and south elevations was added; The roof was repaired in 1975 which removed existing false parapets; In 2003, ADA upgrades were implemented which included a new entry concrete ramp and new storefront glazing at the east and north elevations. In April 2025, the east and south elevation sunshade wood overhang was removed, leaving only the metal hangers intact. The original east elevation horizontal band of aluminum slider and louvre windows was also replaced with fixed glazing in the existing opening. Lastly, a majority of the east and south elevation 1960 wood screening skirt fence was removed. A permit was not required for the April 2025 work.

IS Architecture prepared a Historical Resources Research Report dated October 2024 and a letter with attachments dated September 11, 2025. The report and letter conclude that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria C and D. Staff disagrees and finds that the building is not eligible under any HRB Criteria. 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.

Research into the history of the property at 2660-2666 First Avenue did not reveal any information to indicate that the property exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's or Uptown's historical, archaeological, cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, landscaping or architectural development. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion A. As the property is not significant under Criterion A, an evaluation of integrity as it relates to Criterion A is not relevant or required.

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

Research into the owners and tenants of the property at 2660-2666 First Avenue did not reveal any individuals who could be considered historically significant in local, state or national history. Furthermore, no events of local, state or national significance are known to have occurred at the subject property. Therefore, the property is not eligible for 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 property is a one-story commercial medical building with an open basement-level parking area. It has a rectangular plan. It is located on a sloping grade and is supported by a steel frame. The roof is flat with minimal eave overhang and contains unscreened HVAC equipment. Metal sunshade hangers project from all four elevations at the roof line, although only the north and west elevations are lined with wood slat sunshades because the east and south elevation wood slats were removed. The building is clad in smooth stucco. A band of metal windows, located high on the walls, is present at the north, east, and west elevations. The main entry is accessible through a concrete ramp at the

east (street) elevation. The entry is elaborated with a full-height storefront glazing system. A recessed exit is located at the south elevation and accessible through a flight of stairs.

The Historical Resources Research Report finds the property significant under HRB Criterion C “as a unique expression of the Mid-century Modernist International Style with the influence of the Modernist Post-and-Beam substyle.” However, staff disagrees with this finding and does not find the property to rise to the level of significance to be individually eligible as a good example of any architectural style.

The [*2007 San Diego Modernism Historic 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 the expression of the structural system through expansive floor-to-ceiling glass and wood or steel framing as critical elements to conveying the style.

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 prior to 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. The [*2007 San Diego Modernism Historic Context Statement*](#) identifies flat roofs (cantilevered slabs or parapets), lack of applied ornament, horizontal bands of windows, and asymmetrical facades as primary character-defining features of the style. Secondary features include square corners, steel sash windows (typically casement), corner windows, and common exterior materials of concrete, brick, and stucco.

As originally designed, the property displayed several primary and secondary character-defining features of the proposed International style; however, it did not embody the distinctive characteristics of the style. The subject property has a flat roof, although the flat roof is formed neither by cantilevered slabs nor parapets. It has a horizontal band of flush windows, asymmetrical facades, square corners, and stucco cladding. It does not contain steel sash windows or casement windows. Corner windows are expressed in a limited manner, confined only to the northeast and northwest corners. Most importantly, in its original form, the property does not exhibit a “lack of applied ornament” because of its inclusion of an elaborated wood sunshade structure. Similarly, the redwood skirt fence by the original architects, which was displayed prominently at the street elevation, is a feature that functions both as a parking screen and an applied ornament. The intentional implementation of wood projections demonstrates that the property, in fact, exhibits the use of applied ornaments. This design contradicts the International style philosophy of a radical simplification of building facades. Therefore, the property does not embody the distinctive characteristics of the International Style in its original design. In its current condition, with wood

details removed from the east and south elevations, the property displays a “lack of applied ornament.” However, this configuration was caused by contemporary alterations and bears no relationship to the ca. 1935-1955 International style period of significance. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion C for the International style.

While the property exhibits some character-defining features of the Post-and-Beam style, such as horizontal massing, a flat roof, and full-height storefront glazing at the entry, it has a limited embodiment of the style due to its lack of expansive use of floor-to-ceiling glass and lack of indoor/outdoor connections. Furthermore, by concealing the steel frame structural system behind solid stucco walls, the property does not directly exhibit the structural system. The steel frame is only visible at the garage level and below, and was further obscured by the wood skirt fence in its original design. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion C for the Post-and-Beam style.

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 proposed International Style with Post-and-Beam Influences. Staff's position is that the building was never a resource that embodied the distinctive characteristics of the International or Post-and-Beam style as required under Criterion C. Additionally, if the building did embody the distinctive characteristics of International or Post-and-Beam style, the modifications detailed at the beginning of the analysis section of this report degraded the building's expression of its architecture and resulted in a loss of integrity of materials, design, and workmanship. The property does not embody the distinctive characteristics of the proposed International style with Post-and-Beam influences and does not retain critical aspects of integrity. Therefore, staff does not recommend 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 property was designed by the firm of Lloyd Ruocco & Homer Delawie (Ruocco & Delawie), as evidenced by the title block of the original building construction plans. Lloyd Ruocco and Homer Delawie are both established Master Architects.

Lloyd Pietrantonio Ruocco was born in Maine in 1907 and moved to Canada as a baby. In 1923, he and his family moved to Southern California, first to LA, then to Long Beach, and finally to San Diego. While attending San Diego High School, Ruocco took an architectural drawing class and entered a contest run by Richard Requa for an original home design. Ruocco's design was so unusual that he was awarded a special third prize and a chance to meet Requa. After attending San Diego State College for one term, Ruocco was hired by the office of Requa and Jackson. He then decided to study architecture at UC Berkeley. While at Berkeley, Ruocco was exposed to the Beaux Arts tradition but favored the designs of Le Corbusier, Gropius, Mies van der Rohe and Wright. After graduating from Berkeley in 1933, Ruocco returned to San Diego. He worked for Requa again on the County Administration Building, as well as a model town exhibit for the 1935 California Pacific International Exposition. During World War II, Ruocco worked as an architectural drafter for the U.S. Public Works Office. Ruocco built the Lloyd Ruocco Design Center (HRB #434) in 1950 to serve as the offices for his firm and his wife Ilsa's interior design firm and as a place to mentor young architects, including Homer Delawie. Ruocco and Delawie went on to form a partnership in 1958, which lasted until

around 1961. Ruocco planned to travel internationally in 1960 and 1961, and Delawie agreed to run the firm in his absence.

Ruocco has been called the second most significant Modernist architect in San Diego architectural history (after Irving Gill). Ruocco, along with several other San Diego Modernist architects, was instrumental in establishing the Post-and-Beam style. Characteristics of Ruocco's work include an economy of materials, extensive use of glass to create the visual effect of transparency; simple wood beams; the inclusion of small, private places with lighting, nooks, and window seats; floor-to-ceiling cabinetry of fine wood; walls and ceilings made from redwood; Masonite floors; intricate landscape relationships; sliding panels; and flat roofs with wide eave overhangs. Ruocco was also an advocate for social change and sound city planning. In 1961, he founded Citizens Coordinate for Century Three (C-3), an organization that advocates for strong city planning. He was also a founding member of the San Diego County Creativity Research Committee and a member of the San Diego City Urban Renewal Commission. In 1974, he was elected to the American Institute of Architects (AIA) College of Fellows.

At least nine of Ruocco's works have been designated as historical resources by the City of San Diego Historical Resources Board:

- HRB #434 - Lloyd Ruocco Design Center, 1950 (established him as a Master Architect in 2000)
- HRB #911 - James Don & Rita H. Keller/Lloyd Ruocco House, 1948
- HRB #1228 - Jackson Johnson III/Lloyd Ruocco & Homer Delawie House, 1961
- HRB # 1271 - Park Garden Apartments/Lloyd Ruocco & Homer Delawie Building, 1960
- HRB #1297 - Robert and Alma Lard/Homer Delawie & Lloyd Ruocco House, 1965
- HRB #1340 - Ruth Smith & Louise Neece /Lloyd Ruocco & Homer Delawie Duplex, 1960
- HRB #1491 - Donald and Gladys Clitsome/Lloyd Ruocco House, 1938
- HRB #1494 - Jerome and Joyce Shaw/Lloyd Ruocco House, 1966
- HRB #1511 - Dr. Paul A. Libby/Lloyd Ruocco House, 1967

Homer Delawie was born and raised in Santa Barbara, California, and after serving in the Navy, he enrolled in California Polytechnic College in San Luis Obispo, becoming an architect in 1951. While working in Northern California, he took a vacation in San Diego and discovered the Lloyd Ruocco Design Center. Intrigued by the building, Delawie decided to contact Lloyd Ruocco. Shortly after, Ruocco invited Delawie to work for his firm. One of Delawie's first projects in San Diego was to design the headquarters building for Channel 10. After working with Ruocco for a few years, Delawie started his own firm in 1961. He designed homes overlooking Mission Valley, Mission Hills, and Point Loma. Three of these homes were built for his family, and many of his designs reflect the Post-and-Beam architecture.

Delawie served on several local boards for many years, including the Museum of Man, the Children's Museum, and the UCSD Board of Overseers. From 1969 to 1982, Delawie served on the City's Planning Commission. He also served on the Historical Resources Board for eight years and was involved with the San Diego Historical Society. Delawie's career was diverse, and his list of works includes the Reuben H. Fleet Space Theater expansion, the James R. Mills Building, the Shark Exhibit at SeaWorld, and the Scripps Ranch High School.

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. The National Urban Land Institute and the California and San Diego chapters of the AIA have awarded Delawie their highest honors. From the AIA, Delawie received Service Citations in 1972 and 1973, a Presidential Citation in 1997, and a Lifetime Achievement Award in 1997. Twice, the Department of Defense awarded Delawie its highest award. In 2003, Save Our Heritage Organization presented him with a Lifetime Achievement Award for his work in preserving the works of local Modern architects. At least eight of Delawie's works have been designated as historical resources by the City of San Diego Historical Resources Board:

- HRB #844 - Louis & Bertha Feller/Homer Delawie House, 1962
- HRB #845 - Delawie Residence III - The Village, 1975
- HRB #905 - Delawie Residence II, 1963
- HRB #1105 - Russell and Rosemary Lanthorne/Homer Delawie House, 1963
- HRB #1228 - Jackson Johnson III/Lloyd Ruocco & Homer Delawie House, 1961
- HRB #1271 - Park Garden Apartments/Lloyd Ruocco and Homer Delawie Building, 1960
- HRB #1340 - Ruth Smith and Louise Neece/Lloyd Ruocco and Homer Delawie Duplex, 1960
- HRB #1441 - Delawie #1/Boxcar House, 1958

The [Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria](#) state that for a resource to be eligible for designation under HRB Criterion D, it must represent the notable work of a Master. Additionally, the property must express a particular phase in the development of the Master's career, an aspect of their work, or a particular idea or theme in the craft. Not all examples of a Master's work are eligible, and Criterion D requires that the resource be representative of the notable work of the Master, as demonstrated in the nomination.

The report concludes that the property is eligible under HRB Criterion D as a "notable representation of the collaborative commercial work of Master Architects Lloyd Ruocco & Homer Delawie." Specifically, it asserts that the property is a rare commercial example of the early collaborative work of the two architects, and that it "exemplifies the combined influences each architect had on the other, as well as their interests in the International Modern Style and the Modern Post-and-Beam substyle, a genre with which both architects would become highly associated." Staff disagrees with the report's conclusion, finding that the property is not representative of Lloyd Ruocco and Homer Delawie's notable collaborative work.

The report does not elaborate on how the property "expresses a particular phase in the development of the Master's career, an aspect of their work, or a particular idea or theme in the craft." The assertion that the property "exemplifies the combined influences each architect had on the other" is unsubstantiated. It is possible that both Lloyd Ruocco and Homer Delawie have influenced each other in their three-year partnership. However, this assertion does not explain how the subject property demonstrates that influence. It is well established that Lloyd Ruocco designed in the International style and the Post-and-Beam style, and some of his works were designated as historical resources. Homer Delawie, on the other hand, is notable for his implementation of Post-and-Beam designs, often featuring a direct expression of the structure, large glass panes, and vertical wood siding. In contrast, the subject property features a uniform stucco façade, which is more associated with Ruocco's design rather than Delawie's. The original wood sunshade is also a feature adopted from Lloyd Ruocco Design Center (HRB #434). Delawie's design language is not

apparent in the subject property. Delawie's typical design at the time featured prominent exposed support posts visible on the exterior walls and embodied Post-and-Beam characteristics, such as through the original design of the Boxcar House (HRB #1441, built 1958); this design language was not implemented in the subject property, as its steel support posts are concealed within stucco walls. The report notes that the use of aluminum windows instead of steel windows was "Delawie's push to incorporate mass-market and standard off-the-shelf materials." However, there is no indication from documentary evidence that this design decision was Delawie's rather than Ruocco's. As such, it is not evident how the subject property demonstrates any design influences from Delawie, and it is not clear if any of Delawie's influence on Ruocco is demonstrated through the design of this property.

Not all examples of a Master's work are eligible for designation under HRB Criterion D. The subject property is not a good representative example of Ruocco & Delawie's notable work, either individually or through their partnership. Individually, Ruocco is notable for his International style and Post-and-Beam style designs. Similarly, Delawie is notable for his Post-and-Beam designs, especially residential examples. As described under HRB Criterion C analysis above, the property does not embody any specific architectural style evaluated under the [2007 San Diego Modernism Historic Context Statement](#) and therefore does not reflect International or Post-and-Beam designs that Ruocco and Delawie are notable for. Thus, this property is not representative of Ruocco & Delawie's notable work and is not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion D.

Three Ruocco & Delawie properties, all residential and Contemporary-styled, were designated as historical resources by the HRB – HRB #1228, HRB #1271, and HRB #1340. Historical landmark HRB #1228 is a single-family home that was designated as a resource that possesses many of the signature characteristics that represent Lloyd Ruocco and Homer Delawie's distinguished bodies of work, both in their independent architectural practices and during their partnership. HRB #1271 is a low-rise apartment building that was designated as a rare example of Ruocco and Delawie's work in multifamily residences, both in their independent architectural practices and during their partnership. Similarly, HRB #1340 was designated as a rare example of a duplex designed by Ruocco and Delawie, both in their independent architectural practices and during their partnership.

The report identifies the subject property as a rare example of Ruocco & Delawie's known, collaborative commercial work. However, a rare example still needs to represent a notable work of the Masters' to be eligible for designation under HRB Criterion D, as demonstrated in the nomination. Staff disagrees with the report's findings that the property is representative of Lloyd Ruocco and Homer Delawie's notable work.

Furthermore, In contrast to the three Ruocco & Delawie properties that were designated as historical resources (HRB #1228, HRB #1271, and HRB #1340), the subject property does not retain integrity of design, materials, and workmanship, due to the alteration of its original entry, removal of original east and south elevation wood sunshade, non-in-kind replacement of horizontal band of metal slider and louvre windows with fixed glazing, and removal of the 1960 wood skirt fence. Removal of the 1960 wood skirt fence impaired integrity under HRB Criterion D because, while this fence was not an original feature, it was designed by the original Ruocco & Delawie and was added only one year after the subject property was built. As such, it was strongly associated with the original construction. Staff disagrees with the report's conclusion that the building retains integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. Staff finds that the property was never eligible for

designation under HRB Criterion D, either in its October 2024 condition or the current condition. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion D.

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 the staff's field check, it is recommended that the property located at 2660-2666 First Avenue not be designated under any HRB Criteria.



Alvin Lin
Associate Planner
City Planning Department



Suzanne Segur
Senior Planner/HRB Liaison
City Planning Department

AL/ss

Attachment(s):

1. Applicant's Historical Report dated October 2024, under separate cover
2. IS Architecture letter dated September 11, 2025 "RE: 2660-2666 First Avenue San Diego, Historic Integrity Analysis Post April 2025 Demolition Activities"