



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: October 8, 2025 REPORT NO. HRB-25-048

HEARING DATE: October 23, 2025

SUBJECT: **ITEM #2 – 306 SEA LANE**

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

APPLICANT: 306 Sea Lane, LLC; represented by BFSa Environmental Services

LOCATION: 306 Sea Lane, La Jolla Community, Council District 1
APN 351-016-1600

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the property located at 306 Sea Lane as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Do not designate the property located at 306 Sea Lane under any adopted HRB Criteria.

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.

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 306 Sea Lane is a two-story, Spanish Colonial Revival style single-family residential building constructed in 1925 in the La Jolla Community Planning Area. Other buildings and structures present on site include a detached garage and shed. The property is located in the residential Barber Tract neighborhood one block east of the Pacific Ocean. The property is in its original location.

Since its construction in 1925 the property has been modified as follows: Between 1925 and 1946 (likely circa 1928 per building permits) a second story addition was constructed on the west elevation. Between 1925 and 1946 another second story addition with a flat roof was constructed over the north wing and the first-floor courtyard loggia was enclosed. The kitchen was expanded to the north and exterior stairs were added between 1925 and 1957. The concrete shed and planter box in the northeast corner of the property were constructed sometime between 1926 and 1950. In 1957 the exterior stairs on the north façade were enclosed. The driveway and a carport were added to the eastern end of the property in 1962, and the site wall was modified around the same time. The red tile patio between the shed and the carport was added between 1956 and 1966. Aluminum sliding glass doors were added to the loggia and the wood brackets were removed between 1935 and 2005. In 2005 Heritage Preservation staff reviewed and determined a rehabilitation project to be consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The scope of work for the 2005 project included the removal of the loggia's aluminum doors and restoration of the wood brackets, the partial removal of the circa 1928 second story addition to create a terrace at the northwest corner of the residence, a second story addition over the north wing, replacement of the parapeted portion of the roof with a hipped roof, the construction of a roof covered patio and chimney on the east façade, the conversion of windows to doors on the east façade, repair of the stucco band on the west wing, the conversion of the carport to a garage and the infill of the original garage door on the west façade with a solid wall and stained glass windows. In 2025, the applicant restored lintels and the original garage's door on the west façade. Additionally, the Assessor's Building Record indicates that the windows were "metal sash casement;" however the current windows are wood. It is unclear if the windows were originally metal or if they had been modified prior to the creation of the Building Record in 1964. Either way, the windows were changed back to wood sometime between 1964 and 2005. Gutters were also added sometime after 1970.

A Historical Resource Technical Report was prepared by BFS Environmental Services, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria C and D. Staff disagrees and finds that the property is not significant under any HRB Criteria. 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 resource is a two-story single-family residence constructed in 1925 in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The residence has a U-shaped floor plan situated around a central courtyard enclosed on the south end by a stucco site wall. The building features a stucco exterior and a combination gable, shed and hipped red tile roof with little eave overhang. There is no front yard setback and the building's exterior walls are adjacent to the sidewalk. The modest main entrance is located on the south façade of the west wing and is flanked by two small stained glass windows with wrought iron grills. Above the entrance, on the original portion of the second story, is a pair of wood casement windows with an iron balconet. The circa 1928 second story addition is visible from the west façade and distinguished by a row of small, three lite wood windows accentuated by a molded stucco sill. A portion of the of the first floor of the west façade is recessed and features a pair of French doors with an iron Juliet balcony. The northern portion of this façade features the original location of the attached garage with a small terrace above. In the courtyard, the north wall features a heavy timber glass enclosed loggia with decorative brackets and a red tile roof. Above the loggia is a balcony with an iron railing. The east façade features the covered patio which is accessed from the house by a row of French doors. A small lawn separates the main house from the garage, red tile patio and shed.

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 principal windows. Common decorative details are patterned tiles, carved stonework, large focal windows, wooden or iron window grilles, decorative vents and balconies.

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 Spanish Colonial Revival style. The property, which has been modified as detailed in the beginning of the analysis section of this report, has been modified to the extent that the property can no longer be considered an example of the period style. The property has had several periods of modifications; however, some of the work does not have a major impact on the property's integrity of design, materials and workmanship. The 1928 second story addition was constructed shortly after the residence was built and is within the period of significance for the Spanish Colonial Revival style and is designed consistent with that style. Although the loggia was enclosed, it was done in a way that maintained the original wood material, preserving its appearance and form. The 2005 project was determined to be consistent with the Standards and included work that restored the building to its period of historic significance, such as removing the 1925-1946 addition to the northwest corner, replacing the aluminum sliders in the loggia with historically appropriate doors and restoration of the loggia's wooden brackets. The 2005 second story addition preserved the building's U-shaped form and incorporated the previous stair enclosure under its hipped roof. The covered porch on the east façade is distinct from the historic building and does not impact its overall form. The doors added to the east façade utilized existing window openings to minimize the removal of historic material. The infill of the original garage on the west façade was mitigated by 2025 work which added faux doors and lintels to mimic the appearance of the historic garage. The addition of a carport and its subsequent 2005 enclosure did not have a major impact on the property's integrity because it was constructed in an appropriate location on

the east side of the property. The modification that had the most significant impact on integrity is the replacement of the residence's windows. According to the Assessor's Building Record, the windows were either originally metal casement or were changed to metal casement sometime before 1964. At an unknown date, the windows were changed to wood; however, due to a lack of early photographic documentation of the building or original building plans, it is not known if this change was based on the residence's original design or if the wood windows were introduced at this time. The replacement of all windows on the property with a different material and potentially a different lite pattern results in an impact to integrity of design, material, and workmanship as it relates to HRB Criterion C. Therefore, based on the window modifications, the property does not retain integrity to its 1925 period of significance under HRB Criterion C and staff does not recommend designation under Criterion C.

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

According to building permits published in the *Evening Tribune*, the 306 Sea Lane property was designed by Master Architect Herbert Palmer in 1925 for Elizabeth Venus. The circa 1928 second story addition was built by proposed Master Builder Charles D. Larkins.

Herbert "Herbie" E. Palmer was born in Sandringham, England, in 1879. His mother was a lady-in-waiting at the court of Queen Victoria and his father was rumored to be the Prince of Wales, who became known as King Edward VII.

In 1912, Palmer came to the US and began working as an engineer in Maryland. He then moved to New York, where he practiced architecture. In 1923, he married Florence Buchanan and the two moved to La Jolla, where they established their professional practice as "Palmer and Palmer, architects and builders." They built several houses in La Jolla before they divorced in 1926. After the Palmers dissolved their personal and professional relationship, they both established independent architectural design/build practices. Florence has been established by the City of San Diego's Historical Resources Board as a Master Designer.

Herbert Palmer designed numerous houses in La Jolla and specialized in the Mediterranean Revival style. His designs emphasized outdoor activity areas such as garden courtyards and terraces. Palmer believed residences should provide protection from the natural world as well as the social evils of society, help release women from the drudgery of household work, provide a sense of privacy, and express the character of the occupants. A sense of balance between beauty and functionality was important to him.

Palmer intended to open an architecture school in La Jolla, but this plan became infeasible due to the Great Depression. The La Jolla Beach and Tennis Club was built on the intended site. However, between 1927 and 1932, he built the Casa de las Joyas (HRB #1067, known locally as the Taj Mahal), which was intended to be the residence of the school's president (who would be Palmer). He used the house as his personal residence for several years.

At least five of Palmer's works have been designated as historical resources by the City of San Diego Historical Resources Board. They include the McClintock Storage Warehouse/Bekins Bldg. (HRB #145), the Darlington House (HRB #327), the Ella Strong Denison House (HRB #400), the H.R. and

Olga McClintock/Herbert Palmer & Milton Sessions House (HRB #866), the Casa de las Joyas (HRB #1067) and the Herbert York/Herbert Palmer House/ Casa de los Amigos (HRB#1481).

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 Herbert Palmer. The property, which has been modified as detailed in the beginning of the analysis section of this report, no longer retains integrity of design, materials, and workmanship due to window modifications as described above for Criterion C. Additionally, while the period of significance under Criterion C could be expanded to capture the construction of the circa 1928 second story addition which was also designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style, that is not the case for Criterion D as the circa 1928 addition was not designed by Palmer and results in a loss of integrity due to its location on a primary façade. Therefore, the property does not retain integrity to its 1925 period of significance under HRB Criterion D and staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion D as a notable work of Master Architect Herbert Palmer.

The historic report proposes to establish Charles D. Larkins as a Master Builder with the current nomination; however, Larkins can only be linked to the construction of the circa 1928 second story addition and the addition does not rise to the level of significance to be considered a notable example of Larkins' work. Therefore, staff does not recommend the establishment of Larkins as a Master Builder at this time and does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion D as a notable work of Charles D. Larkins.

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 property located at 306 Sea Lane not be designated under any HRB Criteria.

Suzanne Segur
Senior Planner/ HRB Liaison
City Planning Department

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Attachment(s):

1. Applicant's Historical Report under separate cover