



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: July 21, 2016 REPORT NO. HRB-16-045

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board  
Agenda of July 28, 2016

SUBJECT: **ITEM #11 – Jackson Johnson III/Lloyd Ruocco & Homer Delawie House**

APPLICANT: Christopher and Genevieve Wood Family Trust represented by Heritage Architecture & Planning

LOCATION: 8272 El Paseo Grande, 92037, La Jolla Community, Council District 1

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Jackson Johnson III/Lloyd Ruocco & Homer Delawie House located at 8272 El Paseo Grande as a historical resource.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Jackson Johnson III/Lloyd Ruocco & Homer Delawie House located at 8272 El Paseo Grande as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1961 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 Modern Contemporary style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its period of significance. Specifically, the resource retains its strong, moderate-pitch gabled roof form with wide overhanging eaves and distinctive clerestory windows; T1-11 vertical siding and stucco cladding; floor to ceiling windows/doors; a roof form with cut-out openings to form courtyard areas; and a detached rear yard garage.
2. The resource is representative of a notable work of Master Architects Lloyd Ruocco and Homer Delawie and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the resource 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.

### 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 is located in the La Jolla Shores neighborhood in a predominantly single family area in close proximity to the beach.

The building is located on APN 346-222-05-00. 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 Jackson Johnson III/Lloyd Ruocco & Homer Delawie House has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Jackson Johnson III who constructed the house as his personal residence and the names of Lloyd Ruocco and Homer Delawie, Master Architects.

## ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Heritage Architecture and Planning which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria C and D and Staff concurs. 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.*

Constructed in 1961 in the Modern Contemporary style, the subject house is characterized by a low pitched gable roof sheathed with wood shingles and featuring deep overhangs on all sides. The roof is cut away in multiple locations to form open-air semi-enclosed courtyards providing the interior living room and master bedroom with private garden space. The exterior walls are sheathed with vertical T1-11 siding and stucco.

The main entrance to the house is located on the east façade and recessed on the wall plane. The entrance features a double door with yellow glass side lights. The north façade features the gable end with clerestory windows and the off center CMU chimney. The south façade provides access to the garage and a small fenced yard. The gable end at the south façade is similar to the north elevation. The west façade of house is features floor to ceiling windows that allow visibility of the ocean from the living room area. Similar floor to ceiling windows are also located in the bedrooms.

As discussed in the *San Diego Modernism Historic Context Statement*, the Modern Contemporary sub-style was a popular design style for tract communities in the 1950s and 1960s. While clusters of Contemporary tracts retaining integrity should be considered for potential designation as districts, custom residential examples like the subject property may be eligible for individual designation. The style is primarily characterized by strong roof forms typically with deep overhangs; large windows, often aluminum framed; and non-traditional exterior finishes. The subject property exhibits all the primary character-defining features of the style: strong roof form, large windows, and non-traditional exterior finishes. Some of the secondary character-defining features that the house exhibits are found in the angular massing; and distinctive triangular forms seen especially in the gable ends.

The subject house retains its integrity from its 1961 period of significance. Modifications to the subject house appear to be limited and include the replacement of some windows in their original openings. Therefore, staff recommends designation of the subject property under HRB Criterion C.

Significance Statement: The house continues to convey the historic significance of the Modern Contemporary style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style; including a strong, moderate-pitch gabled roof form with wide overhanging eaves and distinctive clerestory windows; T1-11 vertical siding and stucco cladding; floor to ceiling windows/doors; a roof form with cut-out openings to form courtyard areas; and a detached rear yard garage.

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

Lloyd Ruocco was born in 1907 in Portland, Maine. His parents moved to Canada while Lloyd was still a baby. In 1923, his family moved to southern California, first to Los Angeles then to Long Beach and finally ending up in San Diego. While attending San Diego High School, Lloyd 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 obtained a job with the office of Requa and Jackson. Then he decided to attend the University of California at Berkeley graduating in 1933. While at Berkeley, Ruocco was exposed to the Beaux Arts tradition but favored the designs of Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe and Frank Lloyd Wright. Returning to San Diego after graduating from Berkeley, Ruocco worked for Requa again on the County Administration Building.

Lloyd Ruocco has been called, after Irving Gill, the second most significant Modernist architect in San Diego architectural history. A proponent of the Modernist International Style, Ruocco, is one of the most innovative and community minded architects that San Diego has ever produced, regarded as San Diego's "No. 1 designer and thinker" during the 1950's and 1960's.

From 1958 – 1961, he formed a partnership with Homer Delawie. During this time, they designed the Children's Zoo and Geodesic Dome at the San Diego Zoo in Balboa Park. During the 1960's, Ruocco mentored young architects in the Design Center building. In 1974, he was elected to the College of Fellows of the American Institute of Architects.

Ruocco was also an advocate for social change and sound city planning. In 1961, Ruocco founded Citizens Coordinate for Century 3, an organization which continues to a leadership role in promoting strong city planning today. Ruocco was also a founding member of the San Diego County Creativity Research Committee and a member of the San Diego City Urban Renewal Commission.

Notable Lloyd Ruocco Design:

HRB Site #434 – The Lloyd Ruocco Design Center (3601-3635 Fifth Avenue) designated under Criterion D, Lloyd Ruocco

Homer Delawie was born and raised in Santa Barbara, California. In 1945, at the age of 17, he enlisted in the Navy. After the war, he returned to Santa Barbara and spent a year with the US Forest Service as a firefighter. Searching for a career, the Veterans Administration tests pointed him toward architecture. Delawie enrolled at California Polytechnic College in San Luis Obispo and became part of the second graduating class in the school of architecture. Delawie was the first graduate of the school to receive his license to practice architecture. Working for three years in Fresno and Modesto, while on vacation in San Diego, he was driving up Fifth Avenue and discovered the Design Center. Intrigued by the design he decided to contact Lloyd Ruocco. Two days later

Ruocco's partner called Delawie asking him to move to San Diego to work for the firm. One of his first projects was to work on a studio for Channel 10, the most advanced television station in the country. After working with Ruocco for only a year and a half, Delawie was asked to be a partner in the firm. After working with Ruocco for three years, Delawie started his own firm in 1961.

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.

Delawie worked with primary school aged children for many years teaching them color, form and texture. He also worked with high school aged children, lecturing on city planning and environmental issues. For more than 20 years, Delawie's firm invited classes from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo into the office to experience a day in the life of the firm.

Serving on several local boards for many years, Delawie has been part of the Museum of Man, the Children's Museum and the UCSD Board of Overseers. He has also been continuously 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.

Notable Homer Delawie Design:

Dr. Mel Goldzband Residence (4709 La Rueda), County of San Diego Local Register of Historic Resources, designated under Item V (b3), Modern architecture, Master Architect Homer Delawie

Significance Statement: The subject property, 8272 El Paseo Grande, is the work of Master Architects Homer Delawie and Lloyd Ruocco. The subject house is a good example of the Modern Contemporary style and 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. As such, staff recommends designation of the Jackson Johnson III/Lloyd Ruocco & Homer Delawie House, as a significant historical resource, under HRB Criterion D.

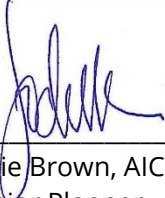
#### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

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 Jackson Johnson III/Lloyd Ruocco & Homer Delawie House located at 8272 El Paseo Grande be designated

with a period of significance of 1961 under HRB Criteria C as a good example of Modern Contemporary style and Criteria D as a notable work of Lloyd Ruocco and 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.



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Jodie Brown, AICP  
Senior Planner



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Kelley Stanco  
Senior Planner/HRB Liaison

JB/ks

Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A  
ADOPTED ON 7/28/2016

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 7/28/2016, to consider the historical designation of the **Jackson Johnson III/Lloyd Ruocco & Homer Delawie House** (owned by Christopher and Genevieve Wood Family Trust 07-12-13, 221 Neptune Avenue, Encinitas, CA 92024) located at **8272 El Paseo Grande, San Diego, CA 92037**, APN: **346-222-05-00**, further described as BLK 34 LOT 22 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 Jackson Johnson III/Lloyd Ruocco & Homer Delawie House on the following findings:

(1) The property is historically significant under CRITERION C for its distinctive characteristics of a Modern Contemporary style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1961 period of significance. Specifically, the resource retains its strong, moderate-pitch gabled roof form with wide overhanging eaves and distinctive clerestory windows; T1-11 vertical siding and stucco cladding; floor to ceiling windows/doors; a roof form with cut-out openings to form courtyard areas; and a detached rear yard garage. 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 Architects Lloyd Ruocco and Homer Delawie and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the resource 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. 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: JAN I. GOLDSMITH,  
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
CORRINE NEUFFER,  
Deputy City Attorney