



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: January 14, 2021 REPORT NO. HRB-21-010

HEARING DATE: January 28, 2021

SUBJECT: **ITEM #13- Dorrit and Albert Wright House**

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

APPLICANT: Smith and Irene Patel Revocable Trust represented by Urbana Preservation and Planning, LLC

LOCATION: 8445 Avenida de las Ondas, La Jolla Community, Council District 1
APN 346-132-10-00

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Dorrit and Albert Wright House located at 8445 Avenida de las Ondas as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Dorrit and Albert Wright House located at 8445 Avenida de las Ondas as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1955 under HRB Criterion C. The designation excludes the northeast addition, the southeast addition, the added parapet and Japanese inspired gate above and to the right of the garage which were constructed outside the period of significance. This recommendation is based on the following finding:

The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of Post and Beam and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1955 period of significance. Specifically, the resource retains the direct expression of the wood structural system; U-shaped structure; shallow pitched roof with deep overhang; wood cladding; floor-to-ceiling glass; and the absence of applied decoration.

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 subject resource is a one-story single-family home located in the La Jolla Community Plan area and is located on the east side of Avenida de las Ondas on a parcel that slopes downwards to the street.

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, Dorrit and Albert Wright House, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Dorrit and Albert Wright, who constructed the house as their personal residence.

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Urbana Preservation and Planning, LLC, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria C and D. Staff concurs that the site is a significant historical resource under HRB Criterion C, but not HRB Criterion D. 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 located at 8445 Avenida de las Ondas was constructed in 1955 in the Post and Beam style on a raised, sloped parcel on the eastern side of the street. The property is a U-shaped single-family residence with a basement that features asymmetrical façades, a low-pitched gable roof with a wide overhanging eaves clad in composite shingles with decorative skylights throughout. The exterior of the house shows the direct expression of the wood structural system with its vertical paneled redwood walls and posts containing sliding glass, wood doors and large, fixed frameless glass windows. The subject property is representative of the Post and Beam style and features many of the primary character defining features such as direct expression of the structural system, wood window frames; horizontal massing; shallow pitch roof with deep overhangs; and floor to ceiling glass. Additional Post and Beam character-defining features found on this property include geometric forms; minimal use of the load bearing walls; minimal applied decorations; and exterior finishes of both wood and glass.

The south façade faces the driveway and contains the main entrance, garage, and a Japanese style gate to the back yard. Behind the wall attached to the gate is a set of stairs leading to two doors made of glass with wood trim. The two-bay garage features wooden doors and a parapet roof deck on top. The roof deck expands west to give coverage over the brick paved walkway leading to the main entrance and the side of the garage along this walkway has row of fixed, ribbon windows. The front door is also made of similar, vertical red wood planks and has a decorative porthole window. To the left of the entrance is the roof's gable end, which is filled with fixed windows at the top and a series of fixed and casement windows that wrap around the central support of the U-shaped resource. The west façade faces the street and features a long two-step porch as well as walls with the top half being a combination of fixed and casement windows and the bottom half being vertical red wood panels, with a set of sliding glass doors on either side of the brick chimney. Along this side gable is a second set of eaves extending out from the trusses which wraps around the chimney. A wall of windows continues around to the north façade and the gable end filled with fixed windows. Just beneath these fixed windows is a L-shaped overhang the covers the exterior steps leading to the basement as well as series of four additional windows. Three of those windows are comprised of awning and casement windows, and the left most window is a large dual casement. Out towards the east extends the master suite which features a porthole window and large dual casement windows facing west, as well as a combination of casement, awning, and dual casement windows facing north. The east façade is wrapped around a brick paved courtyard. At the far righthand side of the east elevation is the gable

end of the master suite. Glass fills in the gable end, but the roof extends further out than the other gable ends and is supported by a central post. Under the gable are two dual casement windows and under the left side gable is another dual casement window along with the start of continuous floor-to-ceiling glass doors and windows that wrap around the entire façade. Above the east façade is a separate extended overhang that matches the overhang on the west façade. On the left side of the courtyard is the rear of the garage which features one narrow casement window, two vertical panel wood doors, and the steps that lead to the guest room addition and roof deck.

Several modifications have been made to the subject resource since its construction in 1955, including the construction of a studio between 1973-1998 along the southeast elevation and a master bedroom and office addition along the northeast elevation completed in 2000. Additional alterations include the construction of a Japanese inspired gate to the side of the garage at an unknown date, replacement of the original shake roof with composite shingles in 2000, and the replacement of two sets of French doors facing the courtyard with two single doors with a portion infilled to match the existing vertical redwood siding. In 2013, Historical Resources staff worked with the owners and approved the addition of a parapet above the garage consistent with the Secretary of Interior's Standards. There are several discrepancies between the original plans and the existing features, including two sliding doors on the west elevation, the conversion of the garage from an open carport, and casement windows existing where jalousie windows were illustrated. It is unknown if these alterations were made during the construction process or after the 1955 period of significance. Due to the relative rarity of examples of the Post and Beam style in San Diego, these small impacts to integrity of design, materials, workmanship and feeling do not rise to the level of significance to impair eligibility for designation under HRB Criterion C.

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.

Significance Statement: The house continues to convey the historic significance of the Post and beam style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style, including direct expression of the wood structural system, U-shaped structure, shallow pitched roof with deep overhang; wood cladding, floor-to-ceiling glass, and the absence of applied decoration.

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

The Historical Resources Research Report proposes Theodore Paulson as a Master Architect. Paulson was born in Albert Lee, Minnesota in 1911, but moved to live with family in San Diego after being orphaned in 1917. Educated in Engineering at the University of Minnesota, Paulson would return to San Diego in 1940 to work first as an aeronautical engineer, and later as a draftsman and structural engineer for Morley Golden and Walter Trepte's company Golden-Trepte Construction Company, as

well as Master Architect, Clyde Haufbaur. By 1957 Theodore Paulson was a registered architect in California and continued to work for Haufbaur from 1963-1973, and then Haufbaur, Humphrey, and Worthington from 1974-1980 before retiring at the age of 84.

Theodore Paulson could potentially be a good candidate for a proposed Master Architect, but not at this time. Although the report compiled a detailed history of Paulson's life and a small list of his individual works, an analysis of the identified properties specifically identifying their unique characteristics and character defining features would be necessary to gain a better understanding of what would allow him rise to the level of eligibility to be considered a Master Architect. More information regarding the properties designed specifically by Paulson would be needed to evaluate the significance of his work. Additionally, Paulson worked with Master Architect Clyde Haufbaur between 1953 to 1973, and currently it is hard to distinguish which properties he was associated with during his duration at the company. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion D at this time.

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 1980 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 Dorrit and Albert Wright House located at 8445 Avenida de las Ondas be designated with a period of significance of 1955 under HRB Criterion C as a good example of a Post and Beam style house. The designation excludes the northeast addition, the southeast addition, and the parapet and Japanese inspired gate above and to the right of the garage which were constructed outside the period of significance.



Megan Bacik
Junior Planner



Suzanne Segur
Senior Planner/ HRB Liaison
Development Services Department

MB/el

Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER
ADOPTED ON 1/28/2021

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 1/28/2021, to consider the historical designation of the Dorrit and Albert Wright House (owned by , 8445 Avenida de las Ondas, La Jolla, CA 92037) located at **8445 Avenida de las Ondas, La Jolla, CA 92037**, APN: **346-132-10-00**, further described as LOT 27 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. ,** 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 Dorrit and Albert Wright 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 Post and Beam and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1955 period of significance. Specifically, the resource retains the direct expression of the wood structural system; U-shaped structure; shallow pitched roof with deep overhang; wood cladding; floor-to-ceiling glass; and the absence of applied decoration. 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. .**

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the designation shall exclude the northeast addition, the southeast addition, the added parapet, and Japanese inspired gate above and to the right of the garage which were constructed outside the period of significance.

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: _____
DAVID MCCULLOUGH, Chair
Historical Resources Board

APPROVED: MARA W. ELLIOTT,
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: _____
LINDSEY SEBASTIAN,
Deputy City Attorney