



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: January 12, 2017 REPORT NO. HRB-17-003

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board  
Agenda of January 26, 2017

SUBJECT: **ITEM #6 – Rees-Stealy Medical Clinic**

APPLICANT: HG Fenton represented by Scott A. Moomjian, and Brian F. Smith & Associates

OWNER: Sharp Healthcare

LOCATION: 2001 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Uptown Community, Council District 3

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Rees-Stealy Medical Clinic located at 2001 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue as a historical resource.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Rees-Stealy Medical Clinic located at 2001 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1926 under HRB Criterion A, 1926-1961 under HRB Criterion B, and 1926-28, 1938, and 1965 under HRB Criteria C and D. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

1. The resource is a special element of the City's historical development and retains integrity to its 1926 period of significance. Specifically, the resource is associated with the establishment and growth of the Rees-Stealy Medical Clinic which introduced a fundamentally new approach to the practice of medicine and treatment of patients. Among many other ground-breaking achievements, the clinic was the first medical facility in San Diego to incorporate an interdisciplinary approach to medicine, a practice very rarely, if ever conducted before that time.
2. The resource is identified with Drs. Clarence Rees and Clair Stealy, historically significant persons, and retains integrity for that association. Specifically, the resource housed the professional offices of Drs. Rees and Stealy during their most productive times in their careers from 1926-1961 for Rees and 1926-1956 for Stealy. Rees and Stealy were very prominent and influential San Diego doctors responsible for the establishment of the historically significant Rees-Stealy Medical Clinic.
3. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of Spanish Eclectic, Art Deco and Modern Contemporary styles and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its respective 1926-1928, 1938, and 1965 dates of

construction and periods of significance. Specifically, the resource was constructed in three distinct phases, each embodying the historic characteristics of its respective style, without impeding the other sections of the building.

4. The resource is representative of a notable work of Master Architects Louis Gill and Homer Delawie and retains integrity as it relates to the original designs. Specifically, the resource is a unique example of a work that has distinctively evolved over time at the hands of more than one Master Architect, reflecting the significance of the facility which it housed, as well as the quality design and skill of those architects. The work of Gill is represented by two major sections of the building in the Spanish Eclectic and Art Deco styles (1926-28, 1938), and Delawie's work in the Modern Contemporary style (1965) completes the building's development as the third and final section. The resource possesses the signature characteristics that represent both Gill and Delawie's distinguished bodies of work.

## BACKGROUND

This item is being brought before the Historical Resources Board in conjunction with a Preliminary Review application to determine whether or not the building is historically significant as part of a constraints analysis for future development. The property is a large building constructed in three distinct parts between 1926 and 1965 on the east side of 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue between Hawthorn Street and Grape Street in Horton's Addition of the Uptown Community. For clarity and consistency with the applicant's report, the three distinct parts of the building are referred to as Sections A (1926-28), B (1938), and C (1965) in the analysis which follows.

The building is located on APN 533-205-03-00. The property was identified in the 2015 Uptown Historic Survey and given Status Code of 5S3, "*Appears to be individually eligible for local listing or designation through survey evaluation.*"

The historic name of the resource, the Rees-Stealy Medical Clinic, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy. It reflects the name of its historical use or tenant and the historic name of the building established by the original owner.

## ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Brian F. Smith & Associates, which concludes that the resource is not significant under any HRB Criteria. Staff disagrees, and finds that the site is a significant historical resource under HRB Criteria A, B, C, and D. 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.*

Before becoming a premier Sharp affiliated medical group, and known as one of the largest and most comprehensive medical groups in San Diego County, the enterprise for which the subject property was originally constructed, was first known as the Rees-Stealy Medical Clinic. The facility

was founded in 1926 by Drs. Clarence Rees and Clair Stealy, and originally contained offices for surgeons, doctors of internal medicine and general practitioners.

The Rees-Stealy Medical Clinic was a pioneering outpatient and medical research facility in San Diego conceived with a heavy influence by the ground-breaking Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, which was the first multispecialty practice in the United States. Accordingly, the Rees-Stealy Medical Clinic was the first medical facility in San Diego to incorporate an interdisciplinary approach to medicine, a practice very rarely, if ever, conducted before that time. Before the establishment of the Rees-Stealy Clinic, few group practices existed in the country. At that time, doctors practiced general medicine and specialists could only be accessed in hospitals. As the first multi-specialty clinic in San Diego, the Rees-Stealy Clinic brought general practitioners and specialists together, and was the first facility to require a centralized chart for each patient. This new method established a network of doctors in one location who could consult with one another over patient care, paving the way to the standard of patient care most utilized today.

The Rees-Stealy Medical Clinic was at the forefront of the medical industry in San Diego in other ways, as further detailed in the applicant's report, leading the way in establishing San Diego's first private medical library and pulmonary laboratory; the first to use a computer in a medical office; and among the first to require new physicians be board certified. The clinic was a founding member of the American Association of Medical Clinics, now called the American Medical Group Association, in its continued efforts to elevate the standards of medical practice, promote research, and share knowledge in its advocacy of group medicine.

The applicant's report indicates that the property is significant as a special element of San Diego's historical development for its association with the establishment of the Rees-Stealy Medical Clinic, however dismisses the overall eligibility of the building as a whole since it concludes that the final addition to the property identified as Section C is not eligible under any HRB Criteria. Staff disagrees with this assessment and finds that the additions to the initial construction do not significantly impact the building's eligibility under HRB Criterion A for its association with the establishment of the Rees-Stealy Medical Clinic. While the resource is technically considered a single building with one address, the initial construction identified as Section A and the subsequent additions identified as Sections B and C read as very distinct parts, each with its own architectural style. Each Section does not disturb the other two as it is stylistically and visually independent. Furthermore, all three Sections were constructed explicitly for the Rees-Stealy Medical Clinic as it grew to meet its increasing needs undoubtedly as a result of continued success as a pioneering medical facility providing quality care to San Diegans. The building's growth over time is a demonstration of the Clinic's significance and, accordingly, its eligibility under Criterion A.

In regard to the building's period of significance as it relates to Criterion A, the applicant's report identifies a period of significance as 1926-1938, marked by the initial clinic construction, to the date of its first expansion with the construction of Section B. Staff finds this proposed "end date" for the period of significance under Criterion A inappropriate. For a historic designation under Criterion A based on the significance of the function the medical facility serves in the community, an "end date" based on the facility's first expansion is inappropriate since it is understood that the facility continued to serve the function for which it is significant beyond that date, and its expansion is a direct reflection of the facility's success in performing that function. An "end date" based on the build date of the final expansion to Section C in 1965, would be similarly inappropriate – as would a

date based on the clinic's occupation of the building on the whole. Alternatively, as the Rees-Stealy Clinic lives on as Sharp Rees-Stealy Medical Group, a date range of 1926-present would extend the period of time into the indefinite future without knowing whether the medical group will continue to serve its significant function. Staff finds that a Criterion A period of significance represented by a date range is inappropriate and does not take into account the clinic's ongoing significance to the community. Therefore, staff has identified the period of significance under Criterion A as 1926, signifying the clinic's original construction and founding principles which have brought it acclaim in the medical field.

Significance Statement: The subject property is a special element of San Diego's historical development surpassing the usual in significance by reflecting the founding and growth of the Rees-Stealy Medical Clinic, a pioneering medical facility and San Diego's first to incorporate an interdisciplinary approach to the practice of quality medicine. The building is distinct among others of its kind and retains good integrity of association in its entirety by reflecting the success of the clinic as it grew over time, becoming the fixture of San Diego's medical industry that it is today. Therefore, staff recommends designation of the subject property under HRB Criterion A.

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

Dr. Clarence Rees was born in Weaverville, California in 1891. Rees first practiced medicine in San Diego beginning in 1915 after completing his formal education in Los Angeles at Harvard Military School and University of Southern California Medical School. After serving as an assistant in surgery at Mercy Hospital, Rees was eventually named a fellow of the American College of Surgeons in 1922.

While continuing his medical practice in San Diego, Rees also travelled a good deal for continued study and observation in the field. Most notable among his travels were numerous trips to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester Minnesota, from which he gained a close familiarity with the Mayo Clinic's surgeons and doctors as well as their administrative and research oriented approaches to medicine. This exposure likely influenced his future accomplishments in San Diego.

Dr. Clair Stealy was born in Charlotte, Michigan in 1890 and graduated from the University of Michigan, College of Medicine in 1916. After interning in Freeport, Illinois, he served 23 months in the United States Army Medical Corps before arriving in San Diego in 1919. In his medical practice, Stealy initially focused on general practice as well as obstetrical work and surgery. Eventually he turned to internal medicine.

Stealy worked in the American National Bank Building where he eventually met Rees, who was working in the same building at that time. Rees and Stealy developed a close relationship as they shared their views on medical practice with one another – both were interested in implementing innovative techniques in the practice of medicine. In 1923, Rees and Stealy formed a partnership and opened a combined practice at 415 Elm Street, very near to where their future clinic at the subject property would be built.

The historical significance of Dr. Clair Stealy has already been established with the historic designation of the Dr. Clair Stealy House (HRB Site #672) located at 1847 Altamira Place under both HRB Criteria B and C. It should be noted that the adopted HRB Criteria Guidelines directs evaluators to determine the resource that is best identified with a historically significant person, and that the

designation of the Dr. Clair Stealy House occurred in 2004 at a time when these Criteria Guidelines had not yet been adopted. At this time, staff finds that the subject clinic building is the best resource associated with the significance of Dr. Stealy as it is the long-time location of his professional offices.

The Rees-Stealy Medical Clinic opened its doors in 1926 at the subject property. As detailed in the applicant's report, the clinic brought on many accomplished physicians and engaged unique and effective techniques in its group practice. The clinic was highly innovative and San Diego's first medical facility incorporating a multidisciplinary approach to the practice of medicine. The facility grew over time and evolved to become one of San Diego's largest and highly acclaimed medical groups. Beginning at the clinic's founding in 1926, both Rees and Stealy worked at the subject property for lengthy portions of their most productive periods in their careers. Dr. Rees worked at the clinic from 1926 to his retirement in 1961, while Dr. Stealy worked there until his untimely death at the clinic in 1956.

Significance Statement: The resource is identified with Drs. Clarence Rees and Clair Stealy, historically significant persons, and retains integrity for that association, as they operated the Rees-Stealy Medical Clinic at this address from 1926-1961 (Rees) and 1926-1956 (Stealy) during the heights of their careers as influential San Diego doctors and co-founders of the Rees-Stealy Medical Clinic. Among many other ground-breaking achievements, the Rees-Stealy Medical Clinic was San Diego's first medical facility to incorporate an interdisciplinary approach to the practice of medicine, and ultimately grew to become one of San Diego's largest and most acclaimed medical groups. Therefore, staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion B.

*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 large medical clinic building constructed in three distinct parts. For clarity and consistency with the applicant's report, these parts are referred to as Sections A, B and C.

#### Building Section A

Section A is located at the south end of the property and was constructed initially as a single story clinic building in 1926, designed by Master Architect Louis Gill. Shortly thereafter by 1928, a remodel and second story addition was constructed – also designed by Louis Gill. Section A is a two-story, Spanish Eclectic style building with a rectangular plan form occupying the extreme southwest corner of the block. The building presents asymmetrical primary and secondary façades. The building's rounded corner is marked by a distinct round tower element which rises above the two-story wings on either side. This tower has a Mission clay tile roof with moderate eave overhang and decorative exposed rafter tails. The west and south wings are topped by shed roof forms also of Mission clay tile, and with a straightforward stucco cornice at the enclosed eave overhangs. Architectural details providing visual interest to these two elevations include a variety of arched openings, balconies with decorative wrought iron railings, and multi-lite French doors. A recessed entry at the west elevation is marked by a projecting gabled roof cover, arched opening, and single doorway with 6-lite sidelights. A hipped roof penthouse unit is positioned behind the tower element. The building is clad in a smooth stucco finish. Fenestration is abundant throughout and consists primarily of multi-lite wood casement windows appearing in groups of three or two.

Section A of the building was initially constructed in 1926 and effectively completed in 1928 with its largest additions that were not only designed by the original architect, but also done very shortly after initial construction to meet the needs of the clinic it housed. These very early modifications have gained significance in their own right and allow the building to convey its Spanish Eclectic style as designed by the original architect.

Modifications to Section A are fairly limited and are generally not considered to have significant impact to the building's integrity or its ability to convey the significance of its Spanish Eclectic style. The majority of the building's windows are original, while some window sets have been replaced with metal framed units primarily within original openings. As noted in the applicant's report and in the circa 1938-65 photo provided in the report, undated alterations included the enclosure of four arched openings on the south elevation including the corner entrance. The enclosure of these openings did not require the removal of a significant amount of original historic fabric and were completed in such a way as to retain the original arches along the wall's surface. The treatment of these four arches preserved the basic integrity of these character-defining features. Finally, in 1935, Gill designed a small nurses' quarters addition to the east side of the penthouse.

Following the 1915-1916 Panama-California Exposition, the romantic ideal of Spanish and Latin American architecture was revived. What resulted was the Spanish Eclectic style which was the predominant style in Southern California between 1915 and 1940, significantly altering the architectural landscape until the Modernist movement took hold during and after WWII. The style uses decorative details borrowed from the entire history of Spanish architecture. These may be of Moorish, Byzantine, Gothic, or Renaissance inspirations, and unusually rich and varied series of decorative precedents. The style employed a variety of floor plans, as well as gabled, cross-gabled, gabled and hipped, hipped and flat roof forms with parapets. Other character defining features include Mission and Spanish clay tile; focal windows; arched windows and other openings; and accented entries.

Section A continues to convey the historic significance of the Spanish Eclectic style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style; including asymmetrical primary and secondary façades; smooth stucco cladding; distinct rounded tower element over the two-story massing; varied roof forms with Mission clay tile; decorative stucco arches and cornice detailing; balconies and wrought iron railings; accented entries and feature windows; and fenestration consisting primarily of groups of multi-lite wood casement windows. Limited modifications occurring after its 1926-1928 period of significance are visible yet can be distinguished from original construction and do not significantly impair its ability to convey its Spanish Eclectic style. Therefore, Section A is eligible for designation under HRB Criterion C.

### *Building Section B*

Several years after construction of Section A, Louis Gill was again employed to design Section B to further expand the growing demands of the clinic in 1938. This expansion occurred as a single, distinct addition to the north end of Section A. Rather than design the expansion in the same Spanish Eclectic style fully incorporated into the original clinic, Gill designed Section B in an updated, more modern style for the time.

Section B is a three story Art Deco style commercial building of steel reinforced concrete with a very smooth painted or plastered exterior surface. The building has a rectangular plan form and a flat roof with parapet. The primary (west) elevation is symmetrically arranged with a strong vertical emphasis. Five vertical columns of steel casement window pairs are arranged with single hopper windows. The columns of window sets are separated by colossal pilasters with stylized capitals that evoke a possible Egyptian Revival influence. A repeating, geometric motif marks the top of the parapet, with a distinct zigzag profile combined with concave and convex surfacing. A similar type of geometric contouring occurs in the decorative spandrels between the windows. The outer corners of the building offer further vertical emphasis and delineation between it and other Sections of the building using a small corner detail mimicking the pilasters.

The Art Deco style was first evidenced at the Exposition Internationale de Artes Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes in Paris, France in 1925 to celebrate the coming of the machine and technology age. Among the distinctive characteristics of the Art Deco style that are employed in the structures are: smooth wall surfaces, usually of stucco; vertical pilasters and columns with vertical striations, located at the corners and intermittently throughout the façades; stylized keystone elements between the vertical columns and pilasters; zigzags, chevrons and other stylized motifs as decorative elements; and towers or other vertical projections to provide a vertical emphasis.

Section B retains very good integrity as no direct modifications to it have been noted. Section B continues to convey the historic significance of the Art Deco style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style; including smooth exterior walls surfaces; plentiful geometric detailing; and a strong vertical emphasis provided by columns of steel casement windows with decorative spandrels, as well as colossal pilasters with stylized capitals. As a structure designed to read as a standalone building, Section B is eligible for designation under HRB Criterion C.

### *Building Section C*

In 1965, Master Architect Homer Delawie designed the building's final expansion at the north end of the block. Section C was designed in the Modern Contemporary style. The building is a three story commercial structure of steel reinforced concrete, clad in a medium sand finish stucco, and exhibits a simple rectangular plan form. The building is characterized by horizontal massing and a strong flat roof form. The majority of the stark primary façade features distinct vertical slits with narrow glazing going up the full height of the building and presented at regular intervals across the length of it. A single wider column of glazing is present at the north end of the primary façade. At the south end, a massive roof overhang is present over a large recessed portion of the building with immense assembly of aluminum framed windows reaching the full height of the building. As with Sections A and B, Section C reads as an independent building, and this area of massive glazing at first seems like an impressive entrance, but in fact currently operates only as an exit.

The Modern Contemporary style was ubiquitous in San Diego during the 1950s and 1960s as a style for commercial buildings and streetscapes. The adopted San Diego Modernism Historic Context Statement lists primary character defining features of the Contemporary style as strong roof forms including flat, gabled, shed, or butterfly, typically with deep overhangs; large windows, often aluminum framed; and non-traditional exterior finishes including vertical wood siding, concrete block, stucco, flagstone and mullion-free glass. The style is characterized secondarily by angular massing, sun shades, screens or shadow block accents; attached garages or carports for homes;

split-level design, especially on sloped residential sites; horizontally oriented commercial buildings; distinctive triangular, parabolic, or arched forms; “eyebrow” overhangs on commercial buildings; and integrated, stylized signage on commercial buildings. The subject building exhibits all of the primary and some of the secondary character defining features of a Contemporary style commercial building.

Despite staff's initial request for further evaluation of Section C as a Modern Contemporary style commercial building, the applicant's report maintains a Brutalist classification for this portion of the building. Staff disagrees and does not find Section C to be a good example of the Brutalist style. While the building is large and rectangular, it is not especially monumental in its scale, and more importantly, the building does not exhibit an exposed and expressive structural system, nor is exposed concrete used as an exterior building finish.

Section C retains very good integrity as no direct modifications to it have been noted. Section C continues to convey the historic significance of the Modern Contemporary style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style; including horizontal orientation; strong flat roof form; large aluminum framed windows particularly at the south end; stucco exterior cladding; sun shade provided by a deep roof overhang at the south; angular massing; and distinct vertical slit windows. As a structure designed to read as a standalone building, Section C is eligible for designation under HRB Criterion C.

#### Building Summary

While the applicant's report acknowledges at the outset that Sections A, B, and C were “each designed separately as a stand-alone building, and as such, each may be evaluated as an individual building,” the report concludes that “because Section C is not eligible for listing under any HRB Criteria, the 2001 Fourth Avenue structure as a whole is not eligible for listing.” The report indicates that the addition of Section B to Section A constitutes a significant impact to the integrity of Section A, stating that the massing, scale and design of Section B are not compatible with that of Section A. Staff disagrees, and finds that Section B was designed to be stylistically independent from the original building, and reads wholly as a separate, standalone structure, even though direct access to it is made from the interior of Section A. The same can be said about Section C – it reads as a separate structure and its design even provides an area at the south end that may be interpreted as its own entrance. As is typically seen with commercial structures in urban settings, separate buildings are regularly built immediately adjacent to one another, on a shared property line. Sections B and C very simply read as just another building on a separate property. The construction of Sections B and C, therefore, do not overwhelm Section A stylistically or in terms of scale and massing – they are their own structures with their own significance under Criterion C.

The three distinctive Sections of the subject building offer an exceptional display of popular architectural styles over time, with one section building on another without necessarily impeding the previous section, all to accommodate the growth of the Rees-Stealy Medical Clinic as it established itself as a fixture of the medical industry in San Diego. Overall, the building is incredibly unique in this respect, presenting a very unusual pattern of development over a period of almost forty years.

Significance Statement: The subject resource continues to convey the historic significance of the Spanish Eclectic, Art Deco, and Modern Contemporary styles by embodying the historic



characteristics associated with the styles as read within the three distinct Sections of the building. Therefore, staff recommends designation of the property under HRB Criterion C with a period of significance of 1926-28, 1938, and 1965.

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

Louis Gill was born in Syracuse New York in 1885. After graduating from Syracuse University in 1911, Gill worked alongside his uncle, Irving Gill, from 1912 to 1919. After establishing his own architecture practice, Louis Gill became a prolific architect in his own right and was responsible for or otherwise involved in the design of many very prominent commercial buildings, apartments, churches and homes throughout San Diego and Coronado, some of which have been designated historic. Gill worked almost exclusively in the Spanish Eclectic and Mission Revival styles. Aside from his many contributions to San Diego's architectural heritage, Gill is also recognized for his participation in a variety of professional organizations including the San Diego Chapter of the A.I.A. and the California State Board of Architectural Examiners. Of his many San Diego works, at least ten have been added to the local historic register, with some designated expressly as notable works of Gill's.

Master Architect Louis Gill designed both Sections A and B of the subject property. As noted previously, Section A of the building was initially constructed in 1926 and effectively completed in 1928 with its largest additions designed by the original architect and completed very shortly after initial construction. The applicant's report dismisses outright the eligibility of Section A under HRB Criterion D because of the remodels and additions made by Gill subsequent to the initial 1926 date of construction. Staff disagrees, and finds that the modifications made by the Master shortly after construction, particularly those made by 1928, to be a comprehensive redesign and full incorporation of major additions to the initial single story clinic building, all of which have gained significance in their own right as a notable example of his work in the Spanish Eclectic style for a prominent medical facility building. Section B was designed as a stylistically independent addition to the Section A which does not impair the integrity of Section A since it reads as a separate building. Section B has gained significance in its own right as an excellent example of the Master's work in the Art Deco style, and even calls to mind somewhat similarly designed portions of the County Administration Building (HRB Site #203) at 1600 Pacific Highway, built around the same time, and which Gill had a hand in designing.

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. 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. After working for architecture firms in Fresno and Modesto, Delawie came to San Diego to work at Lloyd Ruocco's firm at the Design Center. 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 went on to receive over 65 design awards.

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.

Master Architect Homer Delawie designed the third and final Section to the subject building in 1965, Section C, which reads as a structure independent of the other two Sections. Designed in the Modern Contemporary style, the building is unique among his works already on the local register, which are primarily wood-clad Modern Post and Beam style residences. While Section C of the subject building is not of the Post and Beam style, its repetitive façade geometry made with vertical slits made in stucco across its west elevation is a familiar feature in his known residential works.

Significance Statement: The subject resource retains good integrity and continues to reflect the original design, intent and aesthetics conceived by Master Architects Louis Gill and Homer Delawie. The building is notable as a unique example of a work that has distinctively evolved over time at the hands of more than one Master Architect, reflecting the significance of the facility which it housed, as well as the quality design and skill of those architects. Therefore, staff recommends designation of the subject resource under HRB Criterion D with a period of significance of 1926-28, 1938, and 1965.

*CRITERION E - Is listed or has been determined eligible by the National Park Service for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or is listed or has been determined eligible by the State Historical Preservation Office for listing on the State Register of Historical Resources.*

The property at 2001 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue has not been listed on or determined eligible for listing on the State or National Registers. Therefore, the property is not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion E.

*CRITERION F - Is a finite group of resources related to one another in a clearly distinguishable way or is a geographically definable area or neighborhood containing improvements which have a special character, historical interest or aesthetic value or which represent one or more architectural periods or styles in the history and development of the City.*

The property at 2001 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue is not located within a designated historic district. Therefore, the property is not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion F.

#### 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 Rees-Stealy Medical Clinic located at 2001 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue be designated under HRB Criteria A, B, C, and D; with a period of significance of 1926 under HRB Criterion A as a special element of San Diego's historical development; 1926-1961 under HRB Criterion B for its association with Drs. Clarence Rees and Clair Stealy; 1926-28, 1938, and 1965 under HRB Criterion C as a resource that exhibits the distinctive characteristics of the Spanish Eclectic, Art Deco, and Modern Contemporary styles; and 1926-28, 1938, and 1965 under HRB Criterion D as a resource that is representative of a notable work of Master Architects Louis Gill 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.



Camille Pekarek  
Associate Planner



Elyse W. Lowe  
Deputy Director

CP/ks/el

Attachments:

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A  
ADOPTED ON 1/26/2017

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 1/26/2017, to consider the historical designation of the **Rees-Stealy Medical Clinic** (owned by Sharp Healthcare, 8695 Spectrum Center Court, San Diego, CA 92123) located at **2001 4th Avenue, San Diego, CA 92101**, APN: **533-205-03-00**, further described as BLK 242 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 Rees-Stealy Medical Clinic on the following findings:

(1) The property is historically significant under CRITERION A as a special element of the City's historical development and retains integrity to its 1926 period of significance. Specifically, the resource is associated with the establishment and growth of the Rees-Stealy Medical Clinic which introduced a fundamentally new approach to the practice of medicine and treatment of patients. Among many other ground-breaking achievements, the clinic was the first medical facility in San Diego to incorporate an interdisciplinary approach to medicine, a practice very rarely, if ever conducted before that time. 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 B as a resource that is identified with Drs. Clarence Rees and Clair Stealy, historically significant persons, and retains integrity for that association. Specifically, the resource housed the professional offices of Drs. Rees and Stealy during their most productive times in their careers from 1926-1961 for Rees and 1926-1956 for Stealy. Rees and Stealy were very prominent and influential San Diego doctors responsible for the establishment of the historically significant Rees-Stealy Medical Clinic. This finding is further supported by the staff report, the historical research report, and written and oral evidence presented at the designation hearing.

(3) The property is historically significant under CRITERION C for its distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of Spanish Eclectic, Art Deco and Modern Contemporary styles and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its respective 1926-1928, 1938, and 1965 dates of construction and periods of significance. Specifically, the resource was constructed in three distinct parts, each embodying the historic characteristics of its respective style, without impeding the other sections of the building. This finding is further supported by the staff report, the historical research report, and written and oral evidence presented at the designation hearing.

(4) The property is historically significant under CRITERION D as a notable work of Master Architects Louis Gill and Homer Delawie and retains integrity as it relates to the original designs. Specifically, the resource is a unique example of a work that has distinctively evolved over time at the hands of more than one Master Architect, reflecting the significance of the facility which it housed, as well as the quality design and skill of those architects. The work of Gill is represented by two major sections of the building in the Spanish Eclectic and Art Deco styles (1926-28, 1938), and Delawie's work in the Modern Contemporary style (1965) completes the building's development as the third and final section. The resource possesses the signature characteristics that represent both Gill and Delawie's distinguished bodies of work. 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: \_\_\_\_\_  
COURTNEY ANN COYLE, Chair  
Historical Resources Board

APPROVED: MARA W. ELLIOTT,  
CITY ATTORNEY

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