



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: June 13, 2019 REPORT NO. HRB-19-026

HEARING DATE: June 27, 2019

SUBJECT: **ITEM #8 – Ruth Smith and Louise Neece/ Lloyd Ruocco & Homer Delawie Duplex**

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

APPLICANT: Christopher J Kearns; represented by IS Architecture

LOCATION: 8015-8017 El Paseo Grande, La Jolla Community, Council District 1
APN 346-363-0700

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Ruth Smith and Louise Neece/ Lloyd Ruocco & Homer Delawie Duplex located at 8015-8017 El Paseo Grande as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Ruth Smith and Louise Neece/ Lloyd Ruocco & Homer Delawie Duplex located at 8015-8017 El Paseo Grande as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1960 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 the Contemporary style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1960 period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits a strong triangular form, low-pitched gable roof with exposed rafters, vertical wood and stucco exterior, large carport, courtyards, obscured entries and aluminum windows and doors.
2. The resource is representative of a notable work of Master Architects Homer Delawie and Lloyd Ruocco and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the resource is notable as a rare example of a duplex designed by Ruocco and Delawie, 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 subject resource is a duplex located on an interior lot in the La Jolla Shores neighborhood.

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 Ruth Smith and Louise Neece/ Lloyd Ruocco & Homer Delawie Duplex, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Ruth Smith and Louise Neece, who constructed the house as their personal residence and the name of Lloyd Ruocco and Homer Delawie, Master Architects.

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by IS Architecture, 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.

The subject resource is a one-story duplex constructed in 1960 in the Contemporary style. The primary façade is dominated by a carport with a front facing gable roof which gives the structure a triangular form. T1-11 siding covers the exterior of the front façade while the rear and sides are predominately stucco. Behind the large carport are entry courtyards for each of the units. The main massing of the house is covered by a low-pitched gable roof with little eave overhang and exposed rafters. Fenestration includes aluminum sliding doors and windows.

Modifications to the property include the infill of the original patios on the side elevations and the removal and replacement of fences and gates at the front of the duplex during a 1989 remodel. These modifications do not significantly impair integrity of design, materials, workmanship or feeling.

Unlike earlier styles which are generally defined by exterior decorative details, the Contemporary style focused on interior spaces and their relation to the outdoors. Emphasis was placed on integrating the indoors with the outdoors by utilizing windows and exterior living areas such as balconies and courtyards. The style was popular in San Diego in the 1950's and 1960's largely because it could be easily adapted to hillside lots. Character defining features include strong roof forms with deep overhangs and exposed beams; large, aluminum framed windows; non-traditional exterior finishes including vertical wood siding, concrete block, stucco and flagstone; sun shades, screen or shadow block accents; broad masonry chimneys; and distinctive triangular, parabolic or arched forms. Contemporary houses often incorporate angular massing; attached carports or garages; courtyards or balconies; obscured or recessed entries; and split-level designs.

Significance Statement: The house continues to convey the historic significance of the Contemporary style and retains integrity from its 1960 period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits a strong triangular form, low-pitched gable roof with exposed rafters, vertical wood and stucco exterior, large carport, courtyards, obscured entries and aluminum windows and doors. Therefore, staff recommends designation of the subject property 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.

Lloyd Ruocco was born in 1907 in Portland, Maine. 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. 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 perform 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. 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.

Homer Delawie was born and raised in Santa Barbara, California. In 1945, he enlisted in the Navy and after the war he returned to Santa Barbara to spend a year working with the US Forest Service as a firefighter. Searching for a career, 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. While on vacation in San Diego in 1958, he was driving up Fifth Avenue and discovered Ruocco's 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. Delawie left his partnership with Ruocco and 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. Delawie has received Service Citations in 1972 and 1973, a Presidential Citation in 1997 and a Lifetime Achievement Award in 1997 from the AIA. The Department of Defense has twice awarded Delawie its highest award.

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.

Ruocco and Delawie's partnership lasted from 1958 to 1961. Ruocco planned to travel internationally in 1960 and 1961 and Delawie agreed to run the firm in his absence. The building permit application for the Ruth Smith and Louise Neece/ Lloyd Ruocco & Homer Delawie Duplex "Ruocco and Delawie" as the architect but neither are specifically called out as the designer.

Both Ruocco and Delawie worked on a variety of projects which included residential, institutional, commercial, religious, educational and civic buildings. Although both architects designed many single-family homes in San Diego there are very few examples of their work in multifamily and duplex buildings. The property at 8015-8017 El Paseo Grande is notable as a rare example of a duplex designed by Ruocco and Delawie.

Significance Statement: The subject property, is the work of Master Architects Homer Delawie and Lloyd Ruocco. The subject property is notable as a rare example of a duplex designed by Ruocco and Delawie, both in their independent architectural practices and during their partnership. As such, staff recommends 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 staff's field check, it is recommended that the Ruth Smith and Louise Neece/ Lloyd Ruocco & Homer Delawie Duplex located at 8015-8017 El Paseo Grande be designated with a period of significance of 1960 under HRB Criteria C as a good example of the Contemporary style and Criteria D as a notable work of Lloyd Ruocco and Homer Delawie.



Suzanne Segur
Senior Planner

Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON 6/27/2019

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 6/27/2019, to consider the historical designation of the Ruth Smith and Louise Neece/ Lloyd Ruocco & Homer Delawie Duplex (owned by Christopher J Kearns, 400 W 55th Street #18B, New York, NY, CA 10019) located at **8015-8017 El Paseo Grande, San Diego, CA 92037**, APN: **346-363-07-00**, further described as BLK 8 LOT 14 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 Ruth Smith and Louise Neece/ Lloyd Ruocco & Homer Delawie Duplex 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 the Contemporary style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1960 period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits a strong triangular form, low-pitched gable roof with exposed rafters, vertical wood and stucco exterior, large carport, courtyards, obscured entries and aluminum windows and doors. 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 Homer Delawie and Lloyd Ruocco and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the resource is notable as a rare example of a duplex designed by Ruocco and Delawie, 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:

BY: _____
DAVID MCCULLOUGH, Chair
Historical Resources Board

APPROVED: MARA W. ELLIOTT,
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: _____
LINDSEY SEBASTIAN,
Deputy City Attorney