



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: August 8, 2019 REPORT NO. HRB 19-031

HEARING DATE: August 22, 2019

SUBJECT: **ITEM #6 – Mat Heller/Richard Requa and Herbert Jackson House**

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

APPLICANT: Mark and Anna Sayer represented by Marie Burke Lia

LOCATION: 3131 Zola Street, Peninsula Community, Council District 2  
APN 450-292-19-00

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Mat Heller/Richard Requa and Herbert Jackson House located at 3131 Zola Street as a historical resource.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Mat Heller/Richard Requa and Herbert Jackson House located at 3131 Zola Street as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1928 under HRB Criteria C and D. The designation excludes the single-story addition on the west elevation constructed outside of the period of significance. This recommendation is based on the following finding:

1. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Spanish Colonial Revival style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its period of significance. Specifically, the resource features a low-pitch hipped and gable/shed roof of Mission clay tile; smooth stucco exterior; clay tile vents and tile mosaics; iron balcony; chimney with elaborated top, asymmetrical primary façade; deep-set front entry with a ceramic tile surround, decorative entry wood door; and fenestration primarily of multi-lite and single-lite wood windows.
2. The resource is representative of the notable work of Master Architects Richard Requa and Herbert Jackson and retains integrity to its 1928 date of construction. Specifically, the resource represents the early development of the “Southern California style”, which was inspired after Requa’s trip to the Mediterranean in 1926.

## 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 two-story, single-family residence constructed in 1928 in the Spanish Colonial Revival style on the southwest corner of Zola and Evergreen Streets in the Peninsula Community. The property is sited on the hillside giving the property views of San Diego Bay.

The property was identified as part of the Quieter Home Program (QHP) and determined to be a potential contributor to the potential National Register Loma Portal Historic District.

The historic name of the resource, the Mat Heller/Richard Requa and Herbert Jackson House, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Mat Heller, who constructed the house as his personal residence and the names of Master Architects, Richard Requa and Herbert Jackson.

## ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Marie Burke Lia which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria B, C and D. Staff concurs that the site is a significant historical resource under HRB Criteria C and D but not HRB Criterion B. This determination is consistent with the [Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria](#), as follows.

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

Mathias (Mat) Heller moved from Missouri to San Diego with his wife Leonora (Lulu) Beck in 1884, where he worked as a clerk in his father-in-law's grocery store. In 1892, Heller purchased the grocery store from his father-in-law and began working on expanding the business. Heller's business acumen and loyalty to his family and employees helped him create a business that was as successful as it was profitable. With 42 stores, "Heller's Money Savings Stores" became San Diego's first major grocery chain. In 1929, Heller sold the grocery business to MacMarr chain, which was later absorbed by Safeway. Heller was also known for his philanthropy, giving both his time and money to local charities.

While Mat Heller was a successful entrepreneur, he does not rise to the level of significance necessary for designation. It should also be noted that the property located at 3131 Zola was built in 1928, a year prior to sale of the company, and would not be the location most significant with Heller's accomplishments. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation under 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 two-story single-family residence with an attached garage built in 1928 in the Spanish Colonial Revival Style. The building is of standard wood frame construction on a concrete foundation, with a smooth stucco exterior. The building features a low-pitch hipped and gable/shed roof of Mission clay tile with modest eave overhang and exposed rafter tails. The building's main entry and primary façade faces east on Zola Street. The prominent balcony features an iron balustrade with decorative wood supports and is accessed via two eight-light wood double doors at the second story of the primary façade. The balcony is supported by rough-hewn wood beams and posts. Below the balcony and set at an angle is the deep-set front entry with a ceramic tile surround and decorative wood entry door.

Fenestration consists primarily of multi-lite and single-lite wood windows. Other decorative features include clay tile vents, a wrought iron balcony on the south elevation, and three tile mosaics located on the north and east elevations. Additionally, there are two stuccoed chimneys, one on the first floor with an elaborated top and one on the second floor. The original two-car garage is located on the north elevation and is accessed via Evergreen Street.

Modifications include a single-story addition on the west elevation circa 1946, a pool and fencing added in 1967; a wishing well, fountain, and garage door replacements were all added to the property at an unknown date, and in 2013, in-kind wood window and door replacement as part of the Quieter Homes Program. These modifications do not significantly impair integrity of design, materials, workmanship or feeling and the building retains integrity as it relates to architectural significance.

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, wing walls, and arches above doors and principle windows. Common decorative details are patterned tiles, carved stonework, large focal windows, wooden or iron window grilles, decorative vents and balconies.

Significance Statement: The resource continues to convey the historic significance of the Spanish Colonial Revival style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style including a low-pitch hipped and gable/shed roof of Mission clay tile; smooth stucco exterior; clay tile vents and tile mosaics; iron balcony; chimney with elaborated top, asymmetrical primary façade; deep-set front entry with a ceramic tile surround, decorative entry wood door; and fenestration primarily of multi-lite and single-lite wood windows. Therefore, staff recommends designation 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.*

Richard Requa was born in Rock Island, Illinois in 1881. He grew up in Nebraska and was trained as an engineer. In 1900, he and his family relocated to San Diego and although he did not attend

architecture school, he trained under Master Architect Irving Gill, one of the early Modernists in San Diego. Gill was known for simplifying his designs, reducing ornamentation, and focusing on the mass and shape of a building. In 1912, he partnered with another Gill trained architect Frank Mead. Together they continued a refinement of Gill's interpretation of indigenous architectural design based on Mediterranean and Southwest styles that – owing to similar materials, climate and terrain – were appropriate for San Diego. Requa and Mead were heavily influenced by the Panama-California Exposition designs and began an intense study of 15th through 18th century Spanish and Mexican architectural styles, Native American southwestern pueblos, and 11th through 14th century Moorish architecture. During this time Requa developed an architectural style that emphasized outdoor living and capturing sunlight with the incorporation of French doors and expansive windows placed on south and west-facing elevations of buildings.

Herbert Jackson graduated from Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania with a degree in structural engineering. His early work was for a railroad company in the Midwest until he moved to San Diego in 1909. He worked as an independent architect before joining Mead and Requa in 1915.

In 1920, Requa became a licensed architect and left his partnership with Mead. Subsequently, Jackson joined Requa. The firm of Requa and Jackson became the architects of choice during the booming 1920's and their style, which Requa named Southern California architecture, dominated the San Diego scene.

The report indicates that the original landscape was designed by Master Landscape Architect Milton Sessions. The applicant has not provided enough information to determine if the landscape is a notable work of Master Landscape Architect Milton Sessions to support designation under Criterion D. If the property owner wishes to return to the Historic Resources Board with additional analysis at a future date to support designation under HRB Criterion D, they may do so.

Significance Statement: The subject property was constructed in 1928 by Master Architects Richard Requa and Herbert Jackson following Requa's first trip to the Mediterranean in 1926. Requa used his trip as inspiration for what he named "Southern California style". Combined with the residence's Spanish Colonial Revival detailing, numerous windows and simple detailing, the resource represents the early development of "Southern California style". As such, the house remains as a notable example of the work of Master Architects Richard Requa and Herbert Jackson. Therefore, 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 Mat Heller/Richard Requa and Herbert Jackson House located at 3131 Zola Street be designated as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1928 under HRB Criteria C and D as a resource that embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Spanish Colonial Revival style architecture and retains integrity. The designation excludes the single-story addition on the west elevation constructed outside of the period of significance.

  
Shannon Anthony  
Junior Planner

  
Anna McPherson  
Program Manager

SA/ap

Attachments:

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A  
ADOPTED ON 8/22/2019

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 8/22/2019, to consider the historical designation of the **Mat Heller/Richard Requa and Herbert Jackson House** (owned by Mark and Anna Sayer, 3131 Zola Street, San Diego, CA 92106) located at **3131 Zola Street, San Diego, CA 92106**, APN: **450-292-19-00**, further described as PAR 1 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 Mat Heller/Richard Requa and Herbert Jackson 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 the Spanish Colonial Revival style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1928 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features a low-pitch hipped and gable/shed roof of Mission clay tile; smooth stucco exterior; clay tile vents and tile mosaics; iron balcony; chimney with elaborated top, asymmetrical primary façade; deep-set front entry with a ceramic tile surround, decorative entry wood door; and fenestration primarily of multi-lite and single-lite wood windows, 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 Richard Requa and Herbert Jackson and retains integrity to its 1928 date of construction. Specifically, the resource represents the early development of the "Southern California style", which was inspired after Requa's trip to the Mediterranean in 1926. 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 designation shall exclude the single-story addition on the west elevation constructed outside of 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: N/A

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
DAVID MCCULLOUGH, Chair  
Historical Resources Board

APPROVED: MARA W. ELLIOTT,  
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
LINDSEY SEBASTIAN,  
Deputy City Attorney