



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: October 10, 2019 REPORT NO. HRB-19-038

HEARING DATE: October 24, 2019

SUBJECT: **ITEM #5 – Alan LeMay/William Wahrenberger Spec House**

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

APPLICANT: Tammy Manse; represented by Legacy 106, Inc.

LOCATION: 2166 Pine Street, 92103, Uptown Community, Council District 3
APN 443-250-29-00

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Alan LeMay/William Wahrenberger Spec House located at 2166 Pine Street as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Alan LeMay/William Wahrenberger Spec located at 2166 Pine Street as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1929-1936 under HRB Criterion B, and a period of significance of 1927 under HRB Criteria C and D. The detached writer's cabin shall be included in the designation, while the deck and storage shed built in 1977 shall be excluded. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

1. The resource is identified with Alan LeMay, a historically significant person, and retains integrity for that association. Specifically, the resource is the home that LeMay owned and lived in from 1929 to 1936, formative years of his prolific career as a novelist, author, and screenwriter. The home also features a rear detached writer's cabin built specifically for the purpose of having a quiet, private place to work.
2. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of Spanish Eclectic architectural style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1927 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features an asymmetrical façade, low-pitched gabled roof with a slight eave overhang covered in red clay Mission-style roof tiles, focal windows on the gable, an arched doorway, wood windows, stucco chimney, clay tile vents and a decorative stucco finish.
3. This resource is representative of a notable work of Master Builder William F. Wahrenberger and retains integrity as it relates to the original 1927 design. Specifically, the resource is notable as an early example of Wahrenberger's work in the Spanish Eclectic style.

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 a one-story single-family residence located in Mission Hills.

The property was identified in the 2016 Uptown Community Plan Area Historic Resources Survey Report and given a Status Code of 5D3, "Appears to be contributor to a geographic district that appears eligible for local designation through survey evaluation."

The historic name of the resource, the Alan LeMay/William Wahrenberger Spec House, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Alan LeMay, who is a historically significant individual, and the name of William Wahrenberger, an established Master Builder.

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Legacy 106, Inc., which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria B, 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 B - Is identified with persons or events significant in local, state or national history.

Alan LeMay was a prolific author whose many novels and short stories greatly influenced the Western genre. Four of his novels were adapted into major motion pictures, including *Thunder in the Dust* (1934), which was written in 1934 during his time at 2166 Pine Street and later adapted into the 1950 film *The Sundowners*. The novel LeMay is best known for is *The Searchers*, published in 1954 and adapted into a film in 1956. Directed by John Ford and starring John Wayne, *The Searchers* is cited by many as a landmark film in the Western genre and was selected for preservation in the National Film Registry by the United States Library of Congress in 1989.

Born in Indianapolis, Indiana, on June 3, 1899, LeMay's first published work was a short story in 1919. After experiencing some success with his short stories, LeMay's career reached new heights with the publishing of his first novel in 1926. Along with his wife Esther and young daughter Joan, LeMay relocated to San Diego in 1928 in order to be closer to the source material for the Westerns he was now writing.

Prior to purchasing 2166 Pine Street in 1929, the LeMays briefly lived in two other San Diego residences. Between 1928 and 1929, the LeMays lived in a small beach cottage at 305 Playa del Sur in La Jolla, which was demolished, and a Mission Hills rental home located at 3633 Dove Court. Although the 3633 Dove Court home is extant, the LeMays rented the home for less than one year and does not relate the career development of Alan LeMay as closely as 2166 Pine Street. The LeMays did move to a 20-acre ranch in Santee after selling the 2166 Pine Street home in 1936, but that property was sold in 1937 and the home was demolished.

The significance of 2166 Pine Street is due to home's association with Alan LeMay's extremely productive early years in San Diego. In 1930, LeMay had the detached writer's cabin built at the rear of 2166 Pine Street. LeMay published nine novels and over ninety short stories while living at 2166 Pine Street, averaging twenty publications a year. This prolific output illustrates the significance of LeMay's time at 2166 Pine Street. Although later success as a screenwriter eventually took him to Los Angeles, there are no Los Angeles-area residences that are as closely associated with the life and career of Alan LeMay.

Significance Statement: Alan LeMay was an author, novelist, and screenwriter who produced a number of successful works which established him as a significant figure in the Western genre. Le May resided at 2166 Pine Street from 1929 to 1936 and it is the only extant property in San Diego which can be closely associated with him during a particularly prolific period in his professional life. The 1930 detached wooden writer's cabin built behind the main house further illustrates the property's important association with LeMay and his career. Therefore, staff recommends designation of the subject property 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 resource is a one-story single-family home constructed in 1929 in the Spanish Eclectic style. The home has an asymmetrical primary façade with two roof forms. A red clay tiled low-pitched gabled roof is on the front, and a flat roof with a stucco parapet covers the rear of the home and the original attached one-car garage. The home is clad in a hand-finished stucco.

The front façade features a stucco chimney flanked on both sides by deeply inset focal windows. On the far left side of the gable, a non-historic garden shed style structure, site wall, and wooden side gate are visible but differentiated from the main historic structure. Due to the asymmetrical home's positioning on its rectangular lot, the main façade faces Pine Street at a slight angle. The non-historic elements do not detract from the historic integrity due to the non-prominent location and visible differentiation.

On the right side of the gable, a raised entry porch is covered by clay tiled shed roof supported by rusticated wooden beams. The entry patio features an arched doorway with recessed solid wooden front entry door with original metal hardware and a set of two wooden French doors in the original openings. To the right of the covered porch, the roof is flat with a parapet. Clay tile attic vents and original divided-light wooden casement windows are found on all elevations of the home.

Modifications to the property include a deck and side shed built in 1977. A project to repair, remodel, and restore the residence began in 2017 after a kitchen fire. The project was approved as consistent with the Secretary of the Interior Standards by Historical Resources staff and included replacing a double side window with a pair of French doors based on historical photos. The remodel project also included differentiation of the side shed, site wall, and gate, all of which are excluded from this designation. These modifications do not significantly impair integrity of design, materials, workmanship or feeling and the building retains integrity as it relates to architectural significance.

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, an 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.

Significance Statement: The house continues to convey the historic significance of the Spanish Eclectic style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style, including an asymmetrical façade, low-pitched gabled roof with a slight eave overhang covered in red clay Mission-style roof tiles, focal windows on the gable, an arched doorway, wood windows, stucco chimney, clay tile vents and a decorative stucco finish. 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.

William Fredrick Wahrenberger was born in Colorado in 1892 to John J. and Emilie Wahrenberger. The family relocated to San Diego in 1910. His father became Secretary of the Bay City Construction Company in 1911. William was a draftsman and followed his father into the construction business, working with him until his father's death in 1918. Although William Wahrenberger designed many houses, his occupation is listed as contractor and he never obtained an architect's license.

William designed all the homes he built and completed some of the interior finish work himself. The houses that he designed and built are found throughout San Diego, including Mission Hills, Inspiration Heights, Fleet Ridge, La Jolla, Loma Portal and Point Loma. Since he constructed houses for more than a half-century, his work evolved, employing several styles including Craftsman, Colonial Revival, and Modern. Hallmarks of William Wahrenberger's work were high-quality design and solid functional construction that utilized appropriate detailing and built-ins, and openings that introduced natural light into the interior of each house. The large, comfortable rooms flowed together, a feature that makes the houses very livable and functional even under today's standards.

Wahrenberger's status as a Master Builder was established in 2004 with the designation of HRB #680, 4277 Trias Street. There are currently seven of Wahrenberger's works designated on the San Diego Register.

Wahrenberger constructed the home at 2166 Pine Street in 1929. The property is an example of Wahrenberger's work in the Spanish Eclectic style and helps to illustrate the breadth of his work over the fifty-year span of his career.

Significance Statement: The subject resource retains excellent integrity and continues to reflect Wahrenberger's original design, intent and aesthetic. The house is notable as an example of Wahrenberger's early work in the Spanish Eclectic style. Therefore, staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion D as a notable work of Master Builder William F. Wahrenberger.

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 Alan LeMay/William Wahrenberger Spec House located at 2166 Pine Street be designated with a period of significance of 1929 to 1936 under HRB Criterion B as a resource that is identified with historically significant author, novelist, and screenwriter Alan LeMay; under HRB Criterion C with a period of significance of 1927 as a resource that exhibits the distinctive characteristics of the Spanish Eclectic style and under HRB Criterion D as a resource that is a notable work of Master Builder William F. Wahrenberger. The designation includes the detached writer's cabin closely associated with Alan LeMay's professional career. The designation excludes a storage shed and rear deck built in 1977.



Jamie Kennedy
Senior Planner
Development Services Department



Suzanne Segur
Senior Planner
Development Services Department

JK/lk/ss

Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON 10/24/2019

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 10/24/2019, to consider the historical designation of the Alan LeMay/William Wahrenberger Spec House (owned by Tammy Manse, 2166 Pine Street, San Diego, CA 92103) located at **2166 Pine Street, San Diego, CA 92103**, APN: **443-250-29-00**, further described as Lot 3 of Mission Hills Resubdivision No. 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 Alan LeMay/William Wahrenberger Spec House on the following findings:

(1) The property is historically significant under CRITERION B for its association with author, novelist, and screenwriter Alan LeMay. Specifically, the resource is the home that Alan LeMay owned and lived in from 1929 to 1936, formative years of his prolific career. 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 C for its distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Spanish Eclectic style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1927 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features an asymmetrical façade, low-pitched gabled roof with a slight eave overhang covered in red clay Mission-style roof tiles, focal windows on the gable, an arched doorway, wood windows, stucco chimney, clay tile vents and a decorative stucco finish. 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 D as a notable work of Master Builder William F. Wahrenberger. The property retains integrity as it relates to the original 1927 design. Specifically, the resource is notable as an early example of Wahrenberger's work in the Spanish Eclectic style. 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 include the rear detached writers cabin.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the designation shall exclude the detached storage shed and rear deck.

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:

APPROVED: MARA W. ELLIOTT,
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: _____
DAVID MCCULLOUGH, Chair
Historical Resources Board

BY: _____
LINDSEY SEBASTIAN,
Deputy City Attorney

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