



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: February 13, 2020 REPORT NO. HRB 20-009

HEARING DATE: February 27, 2020

SUBJECT: **ITEM #10 – Howard and Jewel Morin/Dennstedt Company House**

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

APPLICANT: Schottlaender Trust represented by Legacy 106, Inc

LOCATION: 1411 Torrance Street, 92103, Uptown Community, Council District 3
APN 451-242-02-00

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Howard and Jewel Morin/Dennstedt Company House located at 1411 Torrance Street as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Howard and Jewel Morin/Dennstedt Company House located at 1411 Torrance Street as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1936 under HRB Criteria C and D. The designation excludes the 1973 rear additions and the modified garage. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

1. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Spanish Eclectic style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1936 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features a stucco exterior, clay tile roof, a front facing gable façade with a picture window and decorative grill, large divided lite wood windows and a recessed entryway.
2. The resource is representative of a notable work of Master Builder, the Dennstedt Company and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the resource reflects Dennstedt Company's commitment to quality, craftsmanship and affordability as seen in a custom home.

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 located in the southern

portion of the Mission Hills neighborhood of the Uptown community and features a single-family residence with a detached garage at the rear.

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

The historic name of the resource, the Howard and Jewel Morin/Dennstedt Company House has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Howard and Jewel Morin, who constructed the house as their personal residence and the name of the Dennstedt Company, a Master Builder.

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Legacy 106, 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 property was constructed in the Spanish Eclectic style and features an irregular floor plan with its massing wide to the street. The front façade features both shed and front facing gable roof forms clad in clay tiles and along the north elevation features a large double hung, decorative lite wood window with an attached wood sunscreen. The main entrance along this elevation is recessed and surrounded by two decorative brackets. It is accessed from the street by a poured and scored concrete stairway with a modern railing that leads to a modern tiled landing and a modern front door. The other window along this façade is a large, divided lite picture window which sits on top of a small raised wall situated below shallow extended eaves with wood rafter ends. The east elevation contains three double hung wood windows, a smooth stucco exterior and a simple parapet. The west elevation features a chimney clad in stucco, an oriel window with three double hung, decorative lite windows, a projecting window box, and the same simple parapet as the east elevation. The south elevation features a stucco parapet, two rear additions with a combination of wood and aluminum windows and doors.

Modifications to the property are minor and include two rear additions that were completed in 1973. These additions feature modern windows and sliding rear doors that differ from the original structure. Other changes to the property include the exterior modifications of the garage such as a modern metal door and the addition of a side carport. Modifications that are visible to the street include the addition of red tiles along the entrance way steps, the addition of a decorative metal railing, a modern gutter, a new entryway door, and the use of a stucco texture that differs from the front and side elevations. While the stucco textures vary from elevation to elevation, the original texture is visible and the modern stucco does not drastically differ in its finish. These modifications do not impair integrity of design, materials, workmanship or feeling as it relates to Criterion C.

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.

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 a stucco exterior, clay tile roof, a front facing gable façade with a picture window and decorative grill, large divided lite wood windows and a recessed entryway. Therefore, staff recommends designation of the subject resource 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.

The Dennstedt Company was established as a Master Builder in 2007 with the designation of HRB Site #818, the Hazel Weir/Dennstedt Company House/Mut kula xuy/Mut lah hoy ya Site #4. The Dennstedt Company has built eleven other properties designated on the City's Historical Register including: HRB #892, the Jean P. Hampton/A.L. & A.E. Dennstedt Building Company Spec House #1 located at 7015 Vista del Mar Avenue; HRB #1006, the Lt. Earl and Mildred De Long/William H. Wheeler/A. L. and A. E. Dennstedt House located 4990 Westminster Terrace; and HRB #1124, Jean P. Hampton/A.L. & A.E. Dennstedt Building Company Spec House #1 located at 4600 Kensington Drive.

The Dennstedt brothers came to San Diego from Minnesota in 1924 and soon began their careers as builders. They became well known as a design-build company producing high quality custom homes with financing options. By the mid-1930s, the Dennstedt Company split and the resulting companies continued in custom home construction. The Dennstedt Company produced houses in the Spanish Eclectic, Mexican Hacienda, Tudor, English Monterrey and Ranch styles in San Diego communities including North Park, Talmadge, Kensington, La Jolla and Point Loma, as well as in Escondido and La Mesa. With several iterations of the firm name, the firm continued until 1988.

The subject property is a significant example of the Dennstedt Company's work as it retains a high level of integrity to its original 1936 design. While the majority of the Dennstedt Company's Spanish Eclectic properties on the City's register are grand in massing, this property exemplifies their broad range of work and highlights their attention to craftsmanship and detail on a modest scale.

Significance Statement: The house continues to convey the historic significance of Master Builder, the Dennstedt Company by embodying the historic characteristics associated with their construction technique such as high-quality details including decorative brackets, wood sunscreen, and multi-lite wood windows.

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 Howard and Jewel Morin/Dennstedt Company House located at 1411 Torrance Street be designated with a period of significance of 1936 under HRB Criteria C and D. The designation excludes the 1973 rear additions and the modified garage.



Emma Haggerty
Associate Planner



Suzanne Segur
Senior Planner

EH/ss

Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON 2/27/2020

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 2/27/2020, to consider the historical designation of the Howard and Jewel Morin/Dennstedt Company House (owned by Schottlaender Trust 11-11-05, 1411 Torrance Street, San Diego, CA 92103) located at **1411 Torrance Street, San Diego, CA 92103**, APN: **451-242-02-00**, further described as BLK 5 LOT 7 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 Howard and Jewel Morin/Dennstedt Company 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 Eclectic style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1936 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features a stucco exterior, clay tile roof, a front facing gable façade with a picture window and decorative grill, large divided lite wood windows and a recessed entryway. 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 Builder, the Dennstedt Company and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the resource reflects Dennstedt Company's commitment to quality, craftsmanship and affordability as seen in a custom home. 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 two 1973 rear additions and the modified garage.

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