



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: August 13, 2020 REPORT NO. HRB-20-040

HEARING DATE: August 27, 2020

SUBJECT: **ITEM #14 – Ray and Clytie Kahler/ Dennstedt Company House**

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

APPLICANT: Ryan and Melanie Knoy represented by Johnson & Johnson

LOCATION: 4885 Hart Drive, Kensington-Talmadge Community, Council District 9
APN 465-242-12-00

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Ray and Clytie Kahler/Dennstedt Company House located at 4885 Hart Drive as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Ray and Clytie Kahler/Dennstedt Company House located at 4885 Hart Drive as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1937 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 Spanish Eclectic style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1937 period of significance. Specifically, the resource maintains a light-colored stucco asymmetrical exterior; low-pitched red clay Mission tiled gable roof; flat roof with parapet walls; prominent archways; wood and black metal details; wood windows; clay pipe vents; partially enclosed courtyard; and an elaborate chimney top.
2. The subject resource retains integrity and continues to reflect the Dennstedt Company's original design, intent and aesthetic. The house is notable as an example of the Dennstedt Company's work because it exhibits the high level of craftsmanship characteristic of their work in custom Spanish Eclectic style single-family residences.

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 on Hart Drive

north of Argos Drive in Kensington neighborhood of the Kensington-Talmadge Community and contains a single-story single-family residence.

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 Ray and Clytie Kahler/Dennstedt Company House, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Ray and Clytie Kahler, who constructed the house as their personal residence, and the Dennstedt Company, a Master Builder.

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Johnson & Johnson, 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 Spanish Eclectic one-story single-family residence with a tandem garage and carport attached to the main house by a wide covered breezeway that was constructed in 1937. It features a combined hipped and gabled clay tile roof over the house and carport; a flat parapet roof over the garage; prominent archways; wood windows and doors; asymmetrical front façade; stuccoed exterior walls; wood and black metal details; and painted bullnose rafter tails along the straight eaves that have hollow clay block attic vents in between. The house is in a U-shape, and interlocks with an enclosed U-shaped courtyard along its left side and back facades.

The east façade features a carport in front of the one car garage with a squared entry facing the street. A side gabled roof covered in Mission red clay tiles covers the carport. The garage is topped with a flat parapet roof. To the left is a covered front porch with two arched openings in the wall separating the porch from the carport, and a singular arched opening facing the street.

The main house wall includes a squared entry door for the house, an arched entry door for the breezeway, and a large wood window with a fixed three-lite middle sash with two outer three-lite casements on the sides. In between the two doors is a decorative wood grill set in a square opening with a sliding painted wood panel that closes the opening from inside. To the right of the covered patio are two fixed steel frames windows with a nine-lite pattern. The square chimney on the north facade is visible from the street. One-third of the chimney's body comes out from the side gabled roof, and at the top it has two decorative horizontal lines of narrow clay tiles around the entire perimeter spaced approximately 12" apart. In between the lines on each side are two X's created from narrow clay tile within the rectangular openings. Wood three-lite casement windows flank both sides of the chimney. To the right side of the chimney, underneath the no-eave gable are three clay pipe attic vents. Further down, the roof becomes a cross gable with four wood windows under the short eaves. From closest to the street is a picture window with four lite fixed center and four-light

casements on either side, a shallow bay window, twin double hung windows grouped together, a wood door, a frosted three-lite window and a double four-lite casement window.

Along the south elevation, on the wall of the carport are two windowless square openings facing a short wall covered in stucco that leads back to the one door gated entry of the enclosed U-shaped courtyard. The door is metal and black painted. Inside the court is a paved patio. The interior of the south wall exhibits a large, black-painted, metal wall decoration. The north facade's interior wall has a rounded entry with a clay tile covered roof that protrudes out from the house into the patio area. The entry consists of two wooden four-lite French doors. Both sides of the doors have two three-lite casement windows that are the same height as the doors. Between this entry and the arched opening into the courtyard side of the wide, covered breezeway is double casement window with a four-lite pattern. In the covered breezeway is red clay tile covered floor and a square fireplace along the garage-side wall. On the opposite side is a wooden French doorway entry and a double casement window with a four-lite pattern. The wall they are on angles into the house, creating a triangular space. Between the breezeway and the garage is a set of cement stairs with a metal, black painted gate at the bottom, that leads up to the flat roof top above the garage. On the left side of the stairs are metal, black painted details, one of which is a small stained glass window, which can be seen from inside the breezeway, to the right of the fireplace. On the interior's east façade is a double wooden french doorway entry with a four-lite pattern. To the right of these doors is single, wood casement window with three-lite pattern.

Passing two wooden casement windows with a four-lite pattern and a cover crawl space vet well, topped by a shed roof, the courtyard wraps around to the west façade. This elevation is topped by multiple low pitch clay tile roof forms. Under the hipped roof on the right side is several feet of windowless wall, which has a large, black-painted, metal wall decoration that matches the one on the interior of the south wall and two cover crawl space vet wells. A small hipped roof comes out from the gable end for about four feet. Two four-lite casement windows sit at the southwest corner of the pop-out; one on each wall of the corner. To the right of the corner windows are two wooden casement windows with a three-lite pattern. Between the gable-end and the top of the hipped roof are four clay pipe vents.

Modifications to the resource since its 1937 date of construction include repairs following a 1964 canyon fire. These repairs consist of the rebuilding of the stucco-covered wall in front of the east façade and the stuccoing of a south facing wood beam on the portico. At an unknown date a wood floor was put over the flat roof behind the parapet walls on top of the garage. 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, 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 a light colored stucco asymmetrical exterior; low-pitched red clay Mission tiled gable roof; flat roof with parapet walls; prominent archways; wood and black metal details; wood windows; clay pipe vents; partially enclosed courtyard; and an elaborate chimney top. 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.

The subject resource is a known work of Master Builders, the Dennstedt Company. The Dennstedt Company is an essential element of San Diego's home building production from the 1920's-1940's; the 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 brothers came to San Diego from Minnesota in 1924 and soon began their careers as builders. The original Dennstedt Company produced high-end custom homes in San Diego from 1926-1933. After 1933 the company was left to A.L and A.E Dennstedt, whom continued in custom home construction and financing for working class buyers. 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. Under several iterations of the firm's name, the firm continued until 1988.

The Kahlers hired the Dennstedt Company to construct the subject resource in 1937, at a point when the company had become adept in the construction of Spanish Eclectic style residences.

Significance Statement: The subject resource retains integrity and continues to reflect the Dennstedt Company's original design, intent and aesthetic. The house is notable as an example of the Dennstedt Company's work because it exhibits the high level of craftsmanship characteristic of their work in custom Spanish Eclectic style single-family residences. 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 Ray and Clytie Kahler/Dennstedt Company House located at 4885 Hart Drive be designated with a period of significance of 1937 under HRB Criterion C as a good of example of the Spanish Eclectic style and HRB Criterion D as a notable work of Master Builders, the Dennstedt Company.



Megan Bacik
Junior Planner

MB/ss



Suzanne Segur
Senior Planner
Development Services Department

Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON 8/27/2020

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 8/27/2020, to consider the historical designation of the Ray and Clytie Kahler/Dennstedt Company House located at **4885 Hart Drive, San Diego, CA 92116**, APN: **465-242-12-00**, further described as LOT 410 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 Ray and Clytie Kahler/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. Specifically, the resource maintains a light-colored stucco asymmetrical exterior; low-pitched red clay Mission tiled gable roof; flat roof with parapet walls; prominent archways; wood and black metal details; wood windows; clay pipe vents; partially enclosed courtyard; and an elaborate chimney top. 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 the Dennstedt Company and retains integrity as it relates to the original design and 1929 period of significance. Specifically, the resource reflects the Dennstedt Company's original design, intent and aesthetic. The house is notable as an example of the Dennstedt Company's work because it exhibits the high level of craftsmanship characteristic of their work in custom Spanish Eclectic style single-family residences. 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