



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: January 9, 2014 REPORT NO. HRB-14-006

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board
Agenda of January 23, 2014

SUBJECT: **ITEM #12 – Dr. Hans and Ruth Seuss/Dale Naegle House**

APPLICANT: Simon Lewis and Elizabeth Pritscher-Lewis represented by Scott A. Moomjian

LOCATION: 2680 Greentree Lane, La Jolla Community, Council District 1

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Dr. Hans and Ruth Seuss/Dale Naegle House located at 2680 Greentree Lane as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Dr. Hans and Ruth Seuss/Dale Naegle House located at 2680 Greentree Lane as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1965-1966 under HRB Criteria C and D. The two-story addition constructed in 1975 does not reflect the aesthetic of the original design, and shall be excluded from the designation. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

1. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of Post and Beam architecture with Ranch Hacienda influences and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1965-1966 period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits a long “L”-shaped floorplan; a primarily flat roof with deep eave overhang over a covered courtyard walkway; concrete block construction; fenestration consisting of large panes of glass in wood frames with operable wood panels below; and a strong connection between the indoors and the courtyard, making the courtyard an extension of the house.
2. The resource is representative of a notable work of Master Architect Dale Naegle and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the resource is a rare example of Naegle’s work, combining his Post and Beam aesthetic with a Ranch Hacienda influence in the sprawling L shape, resulting courtyard, and covered walkways.

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 home set on a large cul-de-sac lot in the residential subdivision of La Jolla Farms.

The historic name of the resource, the Dr. Hans and Ruth Seuss/Dale Naegle House has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of the original owners who constructed the house as their personal residence and the name of the Master Architect who designed the home.

ANALYSIS

A historical resource research report was prepared by Scott A. Moomjian, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria B, C and D. Staff concurs that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria C and D, but not 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.

The subject house was constructed in 1965-1966 for owners Dr. Hans Suess and his wife Ruth. Suess earned his Ph.D. in chemistry from the University of Vienna in 1935. During World War II, he was part of a team of German scientists studying nuclear power and was advisor to the production of heavy water in a Norwegian plant. In 1950, Suess immigrated to the United States to conduct research in the field of cosmochemistry.

In the mid 1950s, not many scientists were concerned that humanity was adding carbon dioxide gas (CO₂) to the atmosphere by burning fossil fuels. The suggestion that this would change the climate had been abandoned decades earlier by nearly everyone. A particularly simple and powerful argument was that the added gas would not linger in the air. Most of the CO₂ on the surface of the planet was not in the tenuous atmosphere, but dissolved in the huge mass of water in the oceans. Obviously, no matter how much more gas human activities might pour into the atmosphere, nearly all of it would wind up safely buried in the ocean depths. There was a hidden flaw in this argument, which was discovered as an indirect consequence of work at the University of Chicago by Willard Libby and his collaborators who, in the 1950s, were busy with an exciting new technique — the use of radioactive carbon-14 to find the age of ancient materials.

The new techniques were co-opted for CO₂ research by Suess, who left the Chicago group for a research post at the U.S. Geological Survey. Suess and his colleagues simply wanted to find how carbon cycled through the atmosphere. By December 1955 Suess was recruited for the faculty of Scripps Institution of Oceanography and had joined forces with oceanographer Roger Revelle, combining their separate areas of expertise to study carbon-14 in the oceans. Together, they discovered that the peculiar chemistry of seawater prevents it from absorbing all CO₂ produced. Their 1957 paper published in *Tellus*, an international peer-reviewed journal aiming to promote the exchange of knowledge about meteorology from across a range of scientific sub-disciplines, is now widely regarded as the opening shot in the global warming debates. In 1958, Suess

became one of the four founding faculty members of the University of California, San Diego where he established a laboratory at UCSD for carbon-14 determinations. Suess remained at UCSD as Professor until 1977 and as Emeritus Professor thereafter. He passed away in 1993, and his family continued to own the subject property until 2012.

Although Suess does appear to be a historically significant individual, particularly in regard to his research related to global warming, Suess constructed the property 8 years after the publication of the Tellus paper, and within the last 12 years of his active professorship. Additionally, the faculty housing he resided at from 1958-1964 at 29 Discovery Way is located on the UCSD campus and is extant. Therefore, because the property is not directly associated with Suess' work on the Tellus paper and global warming research, or with the early establishment of UCSD, staff does not recommend 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 subject property located at 2680 Greentree Lane was constructed between 1965 and 1966 in the Post and Beam style with Ranch Hacienda influences. The building features a long "L"-shaped floorplan; a primarily flat roof with deep eave overhang over a covered courtyard walkway; concrete block construction; and a concrete foundation. A small mansard roof with clay tiles projects just above the flat roof near the corner of the "L" configuration. From the street, visibility is limited to the garage and site wall that surrounds the main courtyard. An entry gate adjacent to the garage leads to the courtyard. Fenestration along the inner courtyard consists of large panes of glass in wood frames with operable wood panels below. These windows dominate the walls along the inner courtyard, emphasizing the connection between the indoors and the courtyard and making the courtyard an extension of the house.

Modifications consist of a two-story addition on the rear, north end of the house. Designed by Naegle in 1975, the addition has a limited physical and visual impact to the original design of the house. In 2012-2013, the enclosure of a window and creation of a new door opening on the west, rear side of the house was reviewed and approved by staff as consistent with the Standards. The modification left the original sill intact, and is reversible.

The San Diego Modernism Context Statement identifies 1950-1970 as the period for Post and Beam architecture, which is characterized primarily by direct expression of the structural system, usually wood or steel frames; horizontal massing; flat or shallow pitch roofs with deep overhangs or no parapet; and floor-to-ceiling glass. The style is characterized secondarily by repetitive façade geometry; minimal use of solid load bearing walls; absence of applied decoration; strong interior/exterior connections; open interior floor plans; and exterior finish materials that usually include wood, steel and glass. The Context Statement notes the relative rarity of the style, and identifies expression of the structural system through expansive floor-to-ceiling glass and wood or steel framing as critical elements to conveying the style.

The subject building exhibits all of the primary and secondary character defining features of Post and Beam architecture. The rear two-story addition, although not characteristic of Post and Beam

architecture, has a small footprint, and a limited physical and visual impact to the building. Other modifications are minor and do not alter the character defining features of the building or significantly impair the design, materials, workmanship or feeling aspects of integrity as it relates to the 1965-1966 date of construction. The house continues to convey the historic significance of Post and Beam architecture by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style, as detailed in the Modernism Context Statement. Additionally, the long, “L” shaped floor plan, covered walkway and courtyard space evoke a Ranch Hacienda influence. Therefore, staff recommends designation of the subject building under HRB Criterion C as a resource that embodies the distinctive characteristics of Post and Beam architecture with Ranch Hacienda influences and retains integrity to the 1965-1966 period of significance. The two-story addition constructed in 1975 does not reflect the aesthetic of the original design, and shall be excluded from the designation.

CRITERION D - Is representative of a notable work of a master builder, designer, architect, engineer, landscape architect, interior designer, artist or craftsman.

Dale Naegle was born in 1928 in Los Angeles and spent his childhood years in Van Nuys, California. He relocated to Los Angeles to attend the University of Southern California, graduating with a Bachelor of Architecture degree in 1954. Upon graduation, he moved to San Diego and began his architectural career, partnering with Mr. Coffey from 1956 to 1960 and Mr. Malone from 1962-1965. His firm was called Dale Naegle and Associates, or Naegle and Associates, from 1965-1991.

Naegle specialized in residential architecture ranging from low income affordable housing to luxury single-family residences. However, he was also involved in retail, office buildings and several other building types, as well as land planning. His structures influenced the built environment of downtown La Jolla, and his “Shopkeeper Homes” in La Jolla Shores promoted mixed-use development and affordable housing. Naegle designed structures primarily throughout California and the southwest, but also in Florida, Washington state and Mexico City. He was licensed to practice architecture in California, Nevada, Arizona, Washington, Florida and nationally (NCARB); and was recognized as a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects. His early work, including his own homes as well as the Papperfort and Mills Residences in La Jolla, were photographed by architectural photographer Julius Shulman and published extensively.

Naegle was established as a Master Architect in 2005 with the designation of HRB Site #702 located at 7105 Country Club Drive. He was also noted as a prominent architect in the San Diego Modernism Context Statement in 2007. The subject property, designed by Naegle in 1965/66, is a rare example of his work, combining his Post and Beam aesthetic with a Ranch Hacienda influence in the sprawling L shape, resulting courtyard and covered walkways. Therefore, staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion D. The two-story addition constructed in 1975, although designed by Naegle, does not reflect the aesthetic of the original design, and shall be excluded from the designation.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

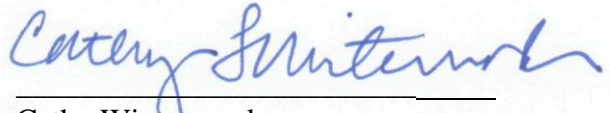
If the property is designated by the HRB, conditions related to restoration or rehabilitation of the resource may be identified by staff during the Mills Act application process, and included in any future Mills Act contract.

CONCLUSION

Based on the information submitted and staff's field check, it is recommended that the Dr. Hans and Ruth Seuss/Dale Naegle House located at 2680 Greentree Lane be designated with a period of significance of 1965-1966 under HRB Criterion C as a resource that embodies Post and Beam architecture with Ranch Hacienda influences, and Criterion D as the work of Master Architect Dale Naegle. The two-story addition constructed in 1975 does not reflect the aesthetic of the original design, and shall be excluded from the designation. 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.



Kelley Stanco
Senior Planner



Cathy Winterrowd
Interim Deputy Director/HRB Liaison

KS/cw

Attachments:

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A

ADOPTED ON 1/23/2014

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 1/23/2014, to consider the historical designation of the **Dr. Hans and Ruth Suess/Dale Naegle House** (owned by Simon Lewis and Elizabeth Pritscher-Lewis, 2680 Greentree Lane, San Diego, CA 92037) located at **2680 Greentree Lane, San Diego, CA 92037**, APN: **342-092-13-00**, further described as LOT 34 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 Dr. Hans and Ruth Suess/Dale Naegle House on the following findings:

(1) The property is historically significant under CRITERION C as a resource that embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of Post and Beam style architecture with Ranch Hacienda influences and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1965-1966 period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits a long "L"-shaped floorplan; a primarily flat roof with deep eave overhang over a covered courtyard walkway; concrete block construction; fenestration consisting of large panes of glass in wood frames with operable wood panels below; and a strong connection between the indoors and the courtyard, making the courtyard an extension of the house.

(2) The property is historically significant under CRITERION D as a resource that is representative of a notable work of Master Architect Dale Naegle and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the resource is a rare example of Naegle's work, combining his Post and Beam aesthetic with a Ranch Hacienda influence in the sprawling L shape, resulting courtyard, and covered walkways.

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 excludes the two-story addition constructed in 1975, which does not reflect the aesthetic of the original design.

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: _____
JOHN LEMMO, Chair
Historical Resources Board

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND
LEGALITY: JAN I. GOLDSMITH,
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: _____
CORRINE NEUFFER,
Deputy City Attorney