



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: March 12, 2010 REPORT NO. HRB-10-013

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board
Agenda of March 25, 2010

SUBJECT: **ITEM #8 – Page Manor/Walter Keller House**

APPLICANT: Courtier-Escalante Revocable Trust, represented by Legacy 106

LOCATION: 3580 Jennings Street, Peninsula Community, Council District 2

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Page Manor/Walter Keller House located at 3580 Jennings Street as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Page Manor/Walter Keller House located at 3580 Jennings Street as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1910 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 Prairie style architecture and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1910 period of significance.
2. The resource is representative of a notable work of Master Architect Walter Keller and retains integrity as it relates to the original design.



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 house is a one and two story Prairie style residence built in 1910 in a residential subdivision of the Peninsula community.

The historic name of the resource, the Page Manor/Walter Keller House, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and includes the name of Page Manor, the name given to the house by original owners William and Elizabeth Page for publicity purposes, and the name of Walter Keller, a Master Architect.

ANALYSIS

A historical resource research report was prepared by Legacy 106, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria A, B, C and D. Staff concurs that the site is a significant historical resource under HRB Criteria C and D, but not HRB Criteria A and B, as follows:

CRITERION A - Exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's, a community's or a neighborhood's historical, archaeological, cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, landscaping or architectural development.

The applicant's report states that the house is significant "as a contributor to San Diego's Point Loma community history, the social history of the Silver Gate Avenue residential community, and the interwoven relationship between the Theosophical Society and the surrounding residential neighborhoods on Point Loma, and the early plans to hold an exposition in San Diego to celebrate the opening of the Panama Canal." While staff agrees that the history of the subject property contributes to our understanding of all of these aspects of San Diego history, there is insufficient evidence to support that the house is a special element of these aspects of development, or that all of these aspects of development are significant to San Diego's history. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion A.

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

The applicant's report states that the house is significant for its association with William Page, original owner of Page Manor. Page was a highly influential and well-connected newspaper man and publisher in Fort Wayne, Indiana. The applicant's report details the numerous social and political connections and appointments there. Page visited San Diego on several occasions while managing the interests of Albert G. Spalding. Page moved his family to San Diego in 1910 and managed Spalding's campaign for U.S. Senate that same year. Page continued to move in prominent and influential circles once in San Diego. Working with architect Walter Keller, Page formed the Aggricrete Company, which sold cast cement hollow construction tiles. The product was developed and marketed in the years following the 1906 San Francisco earthquake as being a fireproof product. The subject house was built using the Aggricrete product and was heavily advertised by Page and Keller. The tile factory operated out of Point Loma, apparently for a brief

period of time. Page moved from the subject property to Mission Hills in 1921 and died the following year. While the information in the report indicates that Page may be a historically significant individual in Indiana, there is limited information about his activities and achievements in San Diego during his ten years here, or whether he is truly significant in San Diego history. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation 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 one and two story house at 3580 Jennings Street was built in 1910 in the Prairie style and features medium pitched hipped roofs with composite shingles; overhanging eaves with exposed rafters; and stucco covered Aggricrete hallow tile walls. The Residential Building Record notes that the foundation is made of the same tile, although the consultant report indicates that the foundation is cast concrete. The entry is centered on the east façade at the slightly recessed porch. To the right, a two story tower at the northeast corner captures views of the water. Two chimneys accented with clinker-brick are located on the south façade, one more ornate than the other. A third, unaccented chimney is located on the north façade. Fenestration consists of single-pane casement windows and double hung wood windows. Decorative leaded glass upper sashes are present on some windows.

No modifications have occurred to the house itself, other than recent restoration work completed by the current owners. Accessory structures have been added and removed from the site over the years, and a detached guest house and two-car garage are located at the west end of the property. Portions of the original, larger lot were subdivided and sold off years ago.

The house embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Prairie style and retains integrity from its 1910 date of construction. 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.

Walter Keller was established by the HRB as a Master Architect in 2002 with the designation of HRB Site 557 in Mission Hills. In addition, Keller designed the Simon Levi Building, HRB Site #177, although he was not recognized as a Master Architect at that time. The subject building is notable as Keller's first residential project using his new Aggricrete product that he marketed out of Point Loma. In addition, the house is a fine example of Prairie style architecture and one of a finite group of buildings which he designed in San Diego during his brief time here from 1909/10-1916.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

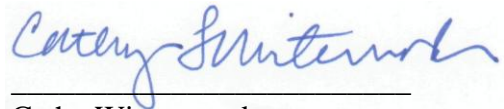
If the property is designated by the HRB, conditions related to restoration or rehabilitation of the resource may be identified by staff during the Mills Act application process, and included in any future Mills Act contract.

CONCLUSION

Based on the information submitted and staff's field check, it is recommended that the Page Manor/Walter Keller House be designated under HRB Criterion C as a resource which embodies the distinctive characteristics of Prairie style architecture with a 1910 period of significance; and HRB Criterion D as a notable work of Master Architect Walter Keller. 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 Saunders
Senior Planner



Cathy Winterrowd
Principal Planner/HRB Liaison

KS/cw

Attachment(s): Draft Resolution
Applicant's Historical Report under separate cover

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON 3/25/2010

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 3/25/2010, to consider the historical designation of the **Page Manor/Walter Keller House** (owned by Courtier Escalante Revocable Trust, 3580 Jennings Street, San Diego, CA 92106) located at **3580 Jennings Street, San Diego, CA 92106**, APN: **531-580-05-00 and 531-580-06-00**, further described as Lot 2, Map 3302, Easterly 85 feet of Leonard Heights dated September 22, 1955, 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 Page Manor/Walter Keller House on the following findings:

(1) The property is historically significant under CRITERION C as it embodies distinctive characteristics of Prairie style architecture through the retention of character defining features and retains architectural integrity from its period of significance, the construction date of 1910. Specifically, the house retains a one and two story configuration; features medium pitched hipped roofs; overhanging eaves with exposed rafters; stucco walls; clinker-brick chimneys; and fenestration consisting of single-pane casement windows and double hung 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; and

(2) The property is historically significant under CRITERION D as a notable work of Master Architect Walter Keller. Specifically, the subject building is notable as Keller's first residential project using his new Aggricrete product that he marketed out of Point Loma; is a fine example of Prairie style architecture; and is one of a finite group of buildings which Keller designed in San Diego during his brief time here from 1909/10-1916. 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: N/A

BY: _____
JOHN LEMMO, Chair
Historical Resources Board

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

BY: _____
NINA FAIN
Deputy City Attorney