



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: March 12, 2015 REPORT NO. HRB-15-016

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board
Agenda of March 26, 2015

SUBJECT: **ITEM #8 – 1641 Crespo Drive**

APPLICANT: Donald Brown II and Jane Mallory represented by Marie Burke Lia

LOCATION: 1641 Crespo Drive, La Jolla Community, Council District 1

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the property located at 1641 Crespo Drive as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Do not designate the property located at 1641 Crespo Drive under any adopted HRB Criteria.

BACKGROUND

This item is being brought before the Historical Resources Board in conjunction with a proposed building modification or demolition of a structure of 45 years or more, consistent with San Diego Municipal Code Section 143.0212. The building is a multi-level asymmetrical Modern Contemporary single family home located on APN 350-541-10-00 in the residential subdivision of Luddington Heights. The property was located within the boundary of the 2004 Draft La Jolla Survey, but was not identified in the survey, for unknown reasons.

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Kathleen Crawford of the Office of Marie Burke Lia, which concludes that the resource is not significant under HRB Criteria, and staff concurs. This determination is consistent with the *Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria*, 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.

Research into the history of the property at 1641 Crespo Drive did not reveal any information to indicate that the property exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's or La Jolla's historical, archaeological, cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, landscaping or architectural development. 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.

Research into the owners and tenants of the property at 1641 Crespo Drive did not reveal any individuals who could be considered historically significant in local, state or national history. Furthermore, no events of local, state or national significance are known to have occurred at the subject property. Therefore, the property is not eligible for 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 subject building is a single family home constructed in 1959 in the Modern Contemporary style, and features an asymmetrical, irregularly-shaped (triangular), multi-level plan; flat roofs with wide eave overhangs and exposed rafters; board and batten and unreinforced concrete block over wood frame construction; and a concrete and brick foundation supporting the floor joists and subfloor. The house, which is set into the hillside, is constructed in three levels. The bottom level is the garage level, and contains a fold-up wood garage door flanked by pairs of wood framed casement windows. The main level above, which is set flush with the garage level below, features an expansive deck that spans the width of the façade, with large fixed windows and single-lite wood frame French doors with sidelights providing access to the projecting deck. The third level, which is set-back from the main level, features two pairs of single-lite wood frame French doors with sidelights providing access to another deck over the main level. A concrete block chimney is located on the west façade near the front of the house. The main entry is set down the west, side façade and is accessed via a stair and walkway. Remaining fenestration on the house consists of wood and aluminum-framed single-lite windows, predominantly casements.

A number of modifications have occurred since the building's construction, most significantly in 2003-2005. Most notably, the main entrance was altered from its original configuration. As originally designed and constructed, the entry door was set on and flush with the west wall of the building, under a projecting triangular porch cover supported on a board and batten wall and two wood posts. The entry was modified to enclose the area under the triangular porch cover and relocate the entry from the west wall to the enclosure, creating a foyer. The original opening that the door was set in was demolished to allow the foyer to open onto the living space. In addition to the alteration of the main entry, the garage façade was also modified. As originally designed and constructed, the east and west corners served as storage space. These were modified and enclosed to provide additional habitable space.

At the east corner, the façade that originally featured one rectangular and two narrow, vertical window openings was modified to two pairs of large single-lite casement windows. At the west corner, the façade that originally featured a recessed wall was brought forward slightly and modified to include two pairs of large single-lite casement windows. At the front façade of the

main level, windows and doors were replaced with dual-glazed units; and at the east side elevation, windows and doors were modified to accommodate a new deck. Some of these modifications, primarily the modification of the main entry, have a significant singular impact on character-defining elements of the building and its original design. Other modifications, including the garage level alterations and east side elevations also have a cumulative impact on the character-defining features and overall integrity of the building as it relates to design, materials, workmanship and feeling.

As discussed in the San Diego Modernism Historic Context Statement, the Modern Contemporary sub-style was a popular design style for tract communities in the 1950s and 1960s. While clusters of Contemporary tracts retaining integrity should be considered for potential designation as districts, custom residential examples like the subject property may be eligible for individual designation. The style is primarily characterized by strong roof forms, typically with deep overhangs; large windows, often aluminum framed; and non-traditional exterior finishes. Secondary characteristics include angular massing; sun shades, screens or shadow block accents; attached garages or carports; and split-level design.

The subject property as originally designed exhibited the primary and secondary character-defining features of the style. However, the significant alterations noted, including the demolition, addition, and relocation/reorientation at the main entry and the additions and modifications at the garage level, have significantly compromised the original design of the building, resulting in a loss of integrity of design, materials, workmanship and feeling so critical to conveying architectural significance. Therefore, staff does not recommend 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 property was designed by Master Architect John Lloyd Wright in 1959. The second son of world-renowned architect Frank Lloyd Wright, John was born in Oak Park, Illinois on December 2, 1892 and came to San Diego when only 18 years old. Initially, he worked with his brother Lloyd Wright, but quickly began designing residences as a draftsman for the Pacific Building Company. In 1912, he worked for architect Harrison Albright, designer of the Spreckels Building and the U. S. Grant Hotel, and was associated with the Wood House in Escondido and the Workingman's Hotel in San Diego (now the Golden West Hotel). During that time he became a charter member of the San Diego Symphony Orchestra and a member of the Rowing Club.

In 1913 he moved back to the Midwest to work for his father, relocating to Tokyo to supervise construction of the Frank Lloyd Wright -designed Imperial Hotel. In 1916, he invented the popular children's' toy, "Lincoln Logs". He went on to design a line of educational children's' toys for Marshall Fields Department Stores, including "Wright Blocks" based on his father's work in modular masonry. Shortly thereafter, he moved to Long Beach, Indiana where he became the designated "town" architect, designing the city hall, schools and a number of downtown buildings. In 1946, he returned to San Diego and taught architecture at the University of California extension.

John Lloyd Wright was a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and received the AIA Gold Medal in 1969, given annually to the country's most outstanding architect. He represented the AIA at the International Congress of Architects in Rome in 1955. He was an author, a teacher and an inventor of note. He was established as a Master Architect by the Historical Resources Board in 2000 with the designation of HRB Site #432. Since then, one additional property, HRB Site #768, was designated under Criterion D as a representative example of his notable work.

The subject property as originally designed was representative of John Lloyd Wright's notable work. However, the significant alterations noted, including the additions and modifications at the garage level, and in particular the demolition, addition, and relocation/reorientation at the main entry, have significantly compromised the original design of the building, resulting in a loss of integrity of design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association so critical to conveying significance as the work of a Master. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion D.

CRITERION E - Is listed or has been determined eligible by the National Park Service for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or is listed or has been determined eligible by the State Historical Preservation Office for listing on the State Register of Historical Resources.

The property at 1641 Crespo Drive has not been listed on or determined eligible for listing on the State or National Registers. Therefore, the property is not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion E.

CRITERION F - Is a finite group of resources related to one another in a clearly distinguishable way or is a geographically definable area or neighborhood containing improvements which have a special character, historical interest or aesthetic value or which represent one or more architectural periods or styles in the history and development of the City.

The property at 1641 Crespo Drive is not located within a designated historic district. Therefore, the property is not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion F.

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 property located at 1641 Crespo Drive not be designated under any HRB Criteria. 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/HRB Liaison

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Attachment:

1. Applicant's Historical Report under separate cover