



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: October 8, 2015 REPORT NO. HRB-15-048

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board
Agenda of October 22, 2015

SUBJECT: **ITEM #15 – John and Joan Lightner/Roy Drew House**

APPLICANT: Dennis and Jennette Shay Living Trust represented by Scott A. Moomjian

LOCATION: 420 Silvergate Avenue, Peninsula Community, Council District 2

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the John and Joan Lightner/Roy Drew House located at 420 Silvergate Avenue as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the John and Joan Lightner/Roy Drew House located at 420 Silvergate Avenue as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1965-1969 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 Modern Post and Beam style architecture and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1965-1969 period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits a direct expression of the wood frame structural system; strong horizontal massing; moderately-pitched roof with deep overhangs; floor-to-ceiling windows; vertical redwood siding and fenestration providing repetitive façade geometry; an absence of applied decoration; and a rectilinear, modular plan form.
2. The resource is representative of a notable work of Master Architect Roy Drew and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the resource is representative of Drew's principles of Modernist residential design in the Post and Beam style, and demonstrated a skilled emphasis on simplicity within a natural setting.

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 resource is a one-story single-family residence built in 1965-1969 in the Modern Post and Beam style on the north side of a

private drive, west of Silvergate Avenue, in the Pueblo Lands of San Diego in the Peninsula Community.

The building is located on APN 532-380-12-00. 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 John and Joan Lightner/Roy Drew House, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of John and Joan Lightner, who constructed the house as their personal residence and the name of Roy Drew, a Master Architect.

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Scott A. Moomjian, 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 one-story Modern Post and Beam single-family residence with attached garage originally built in 1965. The building is of standard wood frame construction on a concrete foundation, built with a modular, "H" shaped plan form. The building is sited on a large rectangular lot with a south-facing primary elevation. With a strong horizontal emphasis, the moderately-pitch gabled roof is sheathed in asphalt shingle to mimic the original wood shingle, and exhibits wide eave overhang and prominent exposed rafters and beams. The building's modularity is expressed through the vertical redwood siding with battens. Fenestration consists largely of metal casement windows and sliding glass doors placed in harmony with the modular vertical siding. Of particular note are vast floor-to-ceiling windows seen at the living room at the southeast portion of the building. The long, low primary elevation is interrupted by a broad brick chimney and a wood trellis leading to the pair of wood entry doors. To the west, asphalt paving leads to the seamlessly attached garage with matching vertical wood siding.

At the northwest corner of the building is a bedroom and bathroom addition designed the building's original architect, Roy Drew. This 1969 addition was fully integrated into the original structure, incorporating the same materials and design elements seen throughout. Having been designed by the original architect and not long after the initial construction, the 1969 addition is determined to have gained historical significance in its own right. The resource's period of significance (1965-1969) has therefore been extended to include this 1969 addition.

The resource retains excellent integrity, with exterior modifications limited only to the replacement of the original wood shingle roof with a sympathetic asphalt shingle. The roof replacement was completed as part of a 2014 rehabilitation project reviewed and approved as consistent with the US Secretary of the Interior's Standards by City staff.

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.

Significance Statement: The house continues to convey the historic significance of the Modern Post and Beam style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style; including a direct expression of the wood frame structural system; strong horizontal massing; moderately-pitched roof with deep overhangs; floor-to-ceiling windows; vertical redwood siding and fenestration providing repetitive façade geometry; an absence of applied decoration; and a rectilinear, modular plan form. 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.

Roy Drew was born in 1913 and raised in Pasadena, California. After beginning his career working in the offices of architect Myron Hunt in Los Angeles, Drew completed his graduate degree in architecture from Yale University and enlisted in the Navy at the onset of WWII. After completing his military service, Drew joined the architectural firm of Paul Haynes in Los Angeles in 1946. While there, he met his friend and future business partner, Robert Mosher. The firm of Mosher Drew Architects opened in San Diego in 1948. Largely known for incorporating modernist principles into his designs, Drew's residential and commercial works emphasized simplicity, attention to detail, room for future growth, and a healthy respect for natural settings. Drew's reputation and career had advanced considerably by the 1960s, and he is presently recognized as a pivotal figure in San Diego's Modernist movement.

Of his many works within the City of San Diego, only one Drew-designed resource has been historically designated by the HRB: the Conrad-Arrington House (HRB Site #460) located at 809 San Antonio Place and built in 1949. Drew was established as a Master Architect by the HRB in 2001, at the time of the Conrad-Arrington House's designation.

The subject property was designed by Master Architect Roy Drew in 1965. True to his inclination to incorporate room for future growth into his designs, Drew later designed the 1969 bedroom and bathroom addition to allow the occupants more indoor living space.

Significance Statement: The subject property retains excellent integrity to its original design and contributes to a greater understanding of Drew's overall body of work. It is an excellent example of Drew's custom home design in the Modern Post and Beam style. As a low horizontal mass carefully sited within the mature landscape, the property expresses a simple modularity, and has been allowed to expand over time under the direction of Drew's thoughtful, Modernist principles

of design. Therefore, staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion D as a notable work of Master Architect Roy Drew.

The applicant's report further recommends designation under Criterion D as a notable work of Norman Dennstedt. The original 1965 structure was built by the Norman T. Dennstedt Building Company according to the Notice of Completion. While A.L. and A.E. Dennstedt have been established as masters, Norman Dennstedt has not been established by the Historical Resources Board as a Master Architect, Designer or Builder, and there is insufficient information provided to designate him as such at this time. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion D as a notable work of Norman Dennstedt.

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 Joan Lightner/Roy Drew House located at 420 Silvergate Avenue be designated with a period of significance of 1965-1969 under HRB Criterion C as a good example of the Modern Post and Beam style, and Criterion D as a notable work of Master Architect Roy Drew. 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.



Camille Pekarek
Associate Planner



Kelley Stanco
Senior Planner/HRB Liaison

CP/ks

Attachments:

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON 10/22/2015

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 10/22/2015, to consider the historical designation of the **John and Joan Lightner/Roy Drew House** (owned by Dennis C. and Jennette S. Shay Living Trust 08-03-11, 420 Silvergate Avenue, San Diego, CA 92106) located at **420 Silvergate Avenue, San Diego, CA 92106**, APN: **532-380-12-00**, further described as LOT 104 (EX N 250 FT) W 111.50 FT OF E 697 FT OF N H 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 John and Joan Lightner/Roy Drew 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 Modern Post and Beam style architecture and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1965-1969 period of significance. Specifically, the resource exhibits a direct expression of the wood frame structural system; strong horizontal massing; moderately-pitched roof with deep overhangs; floor-to-ceiling windows; vertical redwood siding and fenestration providing repetitive façade geometry; an absence of applied decoration; and a rectilinear, modular plan form. 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 Architect Roy Drew and retains integrity as it relates to the original 1965-1969 design. Specifically, the resource is representative of Drew's principles of Modernist residential design in the Post and Beam style, and demonstrated a skilled emphasis on simplicity within a natural setting. 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: JAN I. GOLDSMITH,
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: _____
CORRINE NEUFFER,
Deputy City Attorney