



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

# Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: June 9, 2011 REPORT NO. HRB-11-040

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board  
Agenda of June 23, 2011

SUBJECT: **ITEM #12 – Lt. Earl and Mildred De Long/William H. Wheeler/A. L. and A. E. Dennstedt Co. House**

APPLICANT: Conover Living Trust represented by Legacy 106, Inc.

LOCATION: 4990 Westminster Terrace, Kensington-Talmadge Community, Council District 3

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Lt. Earl and Mildred De Long/William H. Wheeler/A. L. and A. E. Dennstedt Co. House located at 4990 Westminister Terrace as a historical resource.

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Lt. Earl and Mildred De Long/William H. Wheeler/A. L. and A. E. Dennstedt Co. House located at 4990 Westminister Terrace as a historical resource with a 1935 period of significance under HRB Criteria C and D, including the courtyard and interior elements. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

1. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of Spanish Eclectic style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1935 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features a tower entrance, an outdoor courtyard with a covered patio and tile aquarium, a Mission clay tile



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roof with exposed rafters, smooth sand textured stucco exterior, handcrafted iron & wood decorative grilles, wrought iron gates, wood framed eight paned casements and double hung windows, the original faux shutters and the original Dutch door and hardware. Interior elements included in the designation are the entry vestibule with stenciled detailing, exposed beams and entry pendant; the doorbell chimes; the entry hall pendant; the Dutch entry door and hardware; and the exposed beams and corbels in the living room.

2. The resource is representative of a notable work of Master Architect William H. Wheeler and Master Builders A. L. & A. E. Dennstedt Company and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the resource exhibits a unique U-shaped design with an outdoor courtyard and is one of the first in the style designed by Master Architect William H. Wheeler and built by Master Builders A. L. & A. E. Dennstedt Company. In addition, the resource features several master influences, including the handcrafted wrought iron grilles and gates, the exposed wood beams that still remains with faux-stained finish and decorative stenciling, the tower entrance, the entry vestibule, breezeway and outdoor courtyard, and the living room's 2" wide oak flooring laid with the plank effect.

## 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 at 4990 Westminster Terrace in the Kensington Manor Unit 1 community of San Diego. The house sits at the southeast corner where Norfolk Terrace and Westminster Terrace intersect, just west of Kensington Drive, in a single-family residential community.

The historic name of the resource, the Lt. Earl and Mildred De Long/William H. Wheeler/A. L. and A. E. Dennstedt Co. House, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of the original owner, who had the house designed as their personal residence by Master Architect William Wheeler, and constructed by Master Builders A. L. & A. E. Dennstedt Building Co.

## ANALYSIS

A historical resource research report was prepared by Legacy 106 Inc., which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria C and D. Staff concurs that the site is a significant historical resource under HRB Criteria C and D. 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.*

This Spanish Eclectic residence was built in 1935 and features, a one-story, U-shaped floor plan, which surrounds an outdoor courtyard with a covered patio and an outdoor tile aquarium. The red clay tile roof has several pitch heights. The roof is high-fired tile made by Angulo Roof Tile

Works Factory based out of Santa Barbara and exhibits a high level of quality in its design. Two metal finial acorns are present at the ridgeline and the gable roof. The exterior is sheathed with smooth sand finish stucco.

The north elevation features several character defining elements, which include the clay tile covered tower entrance with a curved stucco cornice, and clay attic vents. The arched entryway is unique in that two decorative wrought iron gates open to the breezeway leading to the main house and courtyard; this element is typical of the style and is influenced by Cliff May's architectural designs. The mail slot, street address plaque, hanging doorbell chimes, beamed ceiling and light fixtures within the entryway all remain intact from the date of construction, contributing to the high level of architectural integrity. The Dutch front door retains its original faux-stained finish and ornamental hardware.

The northwest elevation features several unique elements typical of this style. A pop out window covered by a rounded stucco hood sits on a clay tile sill and is decorated with long vertical grilles. The wrought iron grilles composed of several handcrafted metal circles covering the recessed double hung windows are also character-defining elements of this style. The chimney exhibits master influences in its tapered stucco with soft rounded shoulders, capped with decorative clay flue pots, and is modeled after adobe houses.

The courtyard exhibits a covered patio with decorative beams and corbels, an outdoor tile aquarium, two patio sconces, a garden wall and gate, with a tile border surrounding the patio. California Clay Products aka Calco, a company based out of National City in the 1930's made the tile surrounding the aquarium. The courtyard area is unique to this architectural style and represents a character-defining feature for this resource.

The attached garage features overhanging eaves with exposed rafter tails and the original sliding doors. At some point, the faux stained finish with decorative stenciling on the garage doors was painted over. Also, revealed on the architectural drawings was the presence of a Hollywood driveway that was filled in. The scoring from the Hollywood driveway is still visible and could be reversed.

The owner proposed to designate several interior elements as part of the historic designation, which includes the entry vestibule with stenciled detailing on ceiling and exposed beams, two entry pendants, the doorbell chimes, and the entry Dutch door and hardware. Other proposed interior elements are two master bedroom sconces; the bedroom hall pendant; four living room sconces; the dining room chandelier; the exposed beams and corbels with original stenciling in the living room; and the hooded plaster fireplace. When considering designation of interior elements, staff must consider future regulation and enforcement. In addition, staff must also consider whether the elements proposed are unique and significant to the specific resource and if not, designation is not recommended. Based on the approved HRB procedures on interior designation, bathroom and kitchen areas are not supported due to potential upgrades. Designation of private and large interior areas, are also not supported due to the difficulty in regulation. Staff does not support designation of the two master bedroom sconces, the bedroom hall pendant, the four living room sconces, the dining room chandelier and the hooded plaster fireplace. The sconces and pendants throughout the living space and dining room chandelier are considered

minor features and are not unique to this resource. The hooded plaster fireplace was altered with the addition of non-historic tile and therefore does not reflect its original design. Staff recommends designation of (1) the entry vestibule with stenciled detailing, exposed beams and entry pendant, (2) the doorbell chimes, (3) the entry hall pendant, (4) the Dutch entry door and hardware and (5) the exposed beams and corbels in the living room. Please see attached floor plan and photo key. These interior elements are significant to the Spanish Eclectic style and are recommended for designation under HRB Criterion C.

Minor modifications have occurred to this resource since the date of construction, that include the remodel of the guest quarters which entailed, enclosing a rear access door, the demolition of an interior wall for a larger living space and a south facing window was enclosed and relocated to face the courtyard. In addition, the faux-stained finish with decorative stenciling was painted over on the exterior shutters, garage doors, and some of the interior wood elements. A non-historic tile border was added to the fireplace at an unknown date. During restoration of the resource, the owners' had the weather vane reconstructed to match the original one that had deteriorated.

The subject property embodies the character defining features of Spanish Eclectic style and retains integrity to its 1935 date of construction. Therefore, staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion C. Interior elements included in the designation are (1) the entry vestibule with stenciled detailing, exposed beams and entry pendant, (2) the doorbell chimes, (3) the entry hall pendant, (4) the Dutch entry door and hardware and (5) the exposed beams and corbels in the living room.

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

Master Builders A. L. & A. E. Dennstedt Co. built the residence at 4990 Westminster Terrace and hired Master Architect William H. Wheeler to design the home with an outdoor living influence; this is one of the earliest residences designed in the Spanish Eclectic style by Wheeler and built by the A. L. & A. E. Dennstedt Co. In relation to Wheeler's career, this property represents a later period in his career and reflects the transition from the 1920's Spanish Eclectic style to the 1930's Spanish Eclectic style influenced by Master Architect Cliff May and the Estudillo House in Old Town.

Influenced by Cliff May's introduction of the Spanish between 1932-1939, the A. L. & A. E. Dennstedt Co. was inspired to construct this style of home for their own family, although due a delay in construction, they were unable to build their own home in this style but did construct them for other families including the De Long's home. The original owners and the A. L. & A. E. Dennstedt Co. advertised this specific home as a model home in the "San Diego Union Tribune" labeled as "A Preview Showing", for interested homeowners to view the A. L. & A. E. Dennstedt Co. level of quality in the construction of 4990 Westminster Terrace. This advertisement further contributes to the documentation of the high level of integrity in design and building elements for this resource. Also the residence features several master influences, including the handcrafted wrought iron grilles and gates, the exposed wood that still remains with a faux-stained finish and decorative stenciling, the Andalusian style tower entrance, the

entry vestibule, breezeway, and outdoor courtyard, beamed ceilings and the living room's 2" wide oak flooring laid with the plank effect.

Therefore, staff feels this resource is significant under HRB Criterion D, as representative of a notable work of Master Architect William H. Wheeler and Master Builders A.L. and A. E. Dennstedt Company.


#### 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 Lt. Earl and Mildred De Long/William H. Wheeler/A. L. and A. E. Dennstedt Co. House located at 4990 Westminster Terrace be designated with a period of significance of 1935 under HRB Criteria C and D, including the courtyard and interior elements; for the retention of character defining features of the Spanish Eclectic style and as a representative of a notable work of Master Architect William H. Wheeler and Master Builders A.L. and A. E. Dennstedt Company. Interior elements included in the designation are (1) the entry vestibule with stenciled detailing, exposed beams and entry pendant, (2) the doorbell chimes, (3) the entry hall pendant, (4) the Dutch entry door and hardware and (5) the exposed beams and corbels in the living room. 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.

  
Terra King  
Planning Intern

  
Cathy Winterrowd  
Principal Planner/HRB Liaison

TK/cw

Attachment(s):

1. Draft Resolution
2. Floor plan and photo key of interior elements
3. Applicant's Historical Report under separate cover

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A  
ADOPTED ON 6/23/2011

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 6/23/2011, to consider the historical designation of the **Lt. Earl and Mildred De Long/William H. Wheeler/A. L. and A. E. Dennstedt Co. House** (owned by Conover Living Trust 07-25-00, 4990 Westminster Terrace, San Diego, CA 92116) located at **4990 Westminister Terrace, San Diego, CA 92116**, APN: **440-372-09-00**, further described as BLK 5 LOT 9 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 Lt. Earl and Mildred De Long/William H. Wheeler/A. L. and A. E. Dennstedt 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 Spanish Eclectic style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1935 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features a tower entrance, a courtyard with a covered patio and tile aquarium, a Mission clay tile roof with exposed rafters, a smooth sand textured stucco exterior, handcrafted iron & wood decorative grilles and wrought iron gates, wood framed eight paned casements and double hung windows, the original faux shutters and the original Dutch door and hardware. 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 William H. Wheeler and Master Builders A. L. & A. E. Dennstedt Company and retains integrity as it relates to the original design. Specifically, the resource exhibits a unique U-shaped design with an outdoor interior courtyard and is one of the first in the Hacienda style designed by Master Architect William H. Wheeler and built by Master Builders A. L. & A. E. Dennstedt Company. In addition, the resource features several master influences, including the handcrafted wrought iron grilles and gates, the exposed wood that still remains with faux-stained finish and decorative stenciling, the tower entrance, the entry vestibule, breezeway and outdoor courtyard, and the living room's 2" wide oak flooring laid with the plank effect. 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**. Interior elements included in the designation are (1) the entry vestibule with stenciled detailing, exposed beams and entry pendant, (2) the doorbell chimes, (3) the entry hall pendant, (4) the Dutch entry door and hardware and (5) the exposed beams and corbels in the living room.

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

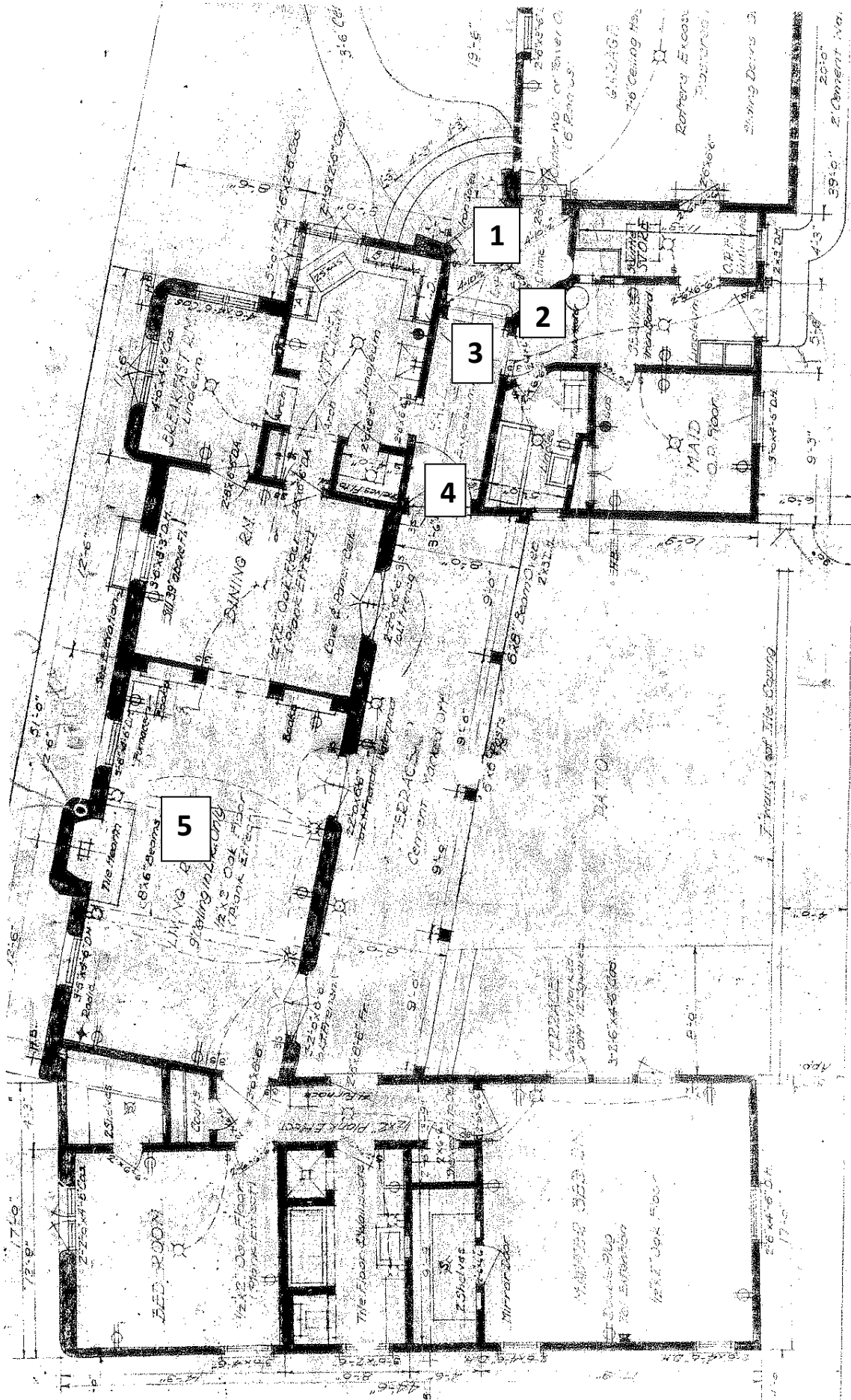
BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
KEITH BAUERLE  
Deputy City Attorney

4990 WESTMINSTER TERRACE

Lt. Earl and  
Mildred De  
Long/William  
H. Wheeler/A.  
L. and A. E.  
Dennstedt Co.  
House

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Floor Plan and Photo Key  
of Interior Elements



RESIDENCE FOR LEO W. S. FAR. 20 DE LOVE  
 1079 5th St. S. BLDG. CO.  
 SAN DIEGO, CALIF.  
 5165 5th St. S. BLDG. CO.  
 SAN DIEGO, CALIF.



(1) The entry vestibule with stenciled detailing, exposed beams and entry pendant



(2) The doorbell chimes



(3) The entry hall pendant



(4) The Dutch entry door and hardware



(5) The exposed beams and corbels in the living room



(5) Continued

