



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: July 12, 2024 REPORT NO. HRB-24-028

HEARING DATE: July 25, 2024

SUBJECT: **ITEM #5 – 2265 Juan Street**

RESOURCE INFO: [California Historical Resources Inventory Database \(CHRID\) link](#)

APPLICANT: Lee Family Living Trust; represented by Landmark Historic Preservation

LOCATION: 2265 Juan Street, Uptown Community, Council District 3
APN 443-520-11-00

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the property located at 2265 Juan Street as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Do not designate the property located at 2265 Juan Street under any adopted HRB Criteria.

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 was identified in the [2016 Uptown Historic Resources Survey Report](#) and given a Status Code of 7R, "Identified in Reconnaissance Level Survey: Not evaluated."

In order to be eligible for designation and listing on the City's Register, a resource must meet one or more of the City's designation criteria as specified in the Historical Resources Guidelines of the Land Development Manual and retain integrity as it relates to the significance of the resource. Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance, which requires an understanding of the physical features and characteristics that existed during the resource's period of significance. The National, California, and City of San Diego Registers recognize location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association as the seven aspects of historical integrity.

Although not all seven aspects of integrity need to be present for a property to be eligible for designation, the record must demonstrate that the property retains enough physical and design characteristics to reflect and convey the significance of the property. Each resource depends on

certain aspects of integrity, more than others, to express its historic significance. Determining which of the aspects are most important to a particular property requires an understanding of the property's significance and its essential physical features. The [Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria](#) provide information regarding the City's designation criteria, as well as guidance on their application and how to evaluate the integrity of a resource.

ANALYSIS

The property located at 2265 Juan Street is a one-story with basement, Minimal Traditional style single-family residential building constructed in 1935 in the Uptown Community Planning Area. Other buildings and structures present on site include a 1967 detached garage set back from the residence. The property is located on a grade that slopes towards the rear (southwest) and side (northwest) elevations causing the basement to be exposed. The property is in its original location.

Since its construction in 1935, the property has been modified as follows: 1941 addition of approximately 532 ft² building footprint at northwest side elevation set flush with the primary facade, 1947 rear addition which infilled an existing side porch and door at the southeast corner of the property, c.1940s~1957 addition of stairs and exterior door at northwest elevation at the rear, c.1950s demolition of the original detached garage, 1967 new detached garage construction, c.2009~2011 ledgestone veneer addition to existing brick pilasters and its subsequent c.2020 restoration, c.2009~2011 front yard circular driveway addition, and 2016 rooftop solar panel addition. Undated alterations include two rear elevation window sash replacement in original window openings with non-original glass block, one set of rear elevation double-door replacements, and gutters added to the front elevation. The 1935 historical photo and the 1940 Sanborn map suggest that the property was originally one story. The Assessors Building Record shows that the rear elevation "Shop" and "Storage" portions of the building were not physically assessed in 1957 but existing by the 1964 assessment, suggesting that these are additions/alterations. A permit for alterations was announced by the *San Diego Evening Tribune* in 1936 for alterations, but the extent of this work is unknown.

A Historical Resource Research Report (HRRR) was prepared by Landmark Historic Preservation, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria B, C, and D. Staff disagrees and finds that the building is not eligible under any HRB Criteria. 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 property located at 2265 Juan Street was occupied by Joseph F. Sinnott and Carolyn W. Sinnott from 1935 to 1989 and 1935 to 2007, respectively. The applicant asserts that Joseph F. Sinnott is a significant individual under HRB Criterion B; however, staff disagrees.

Joseph F. Sinnott was born in Philadelphia in 1905 and moved to Coronado at the age of 23 after attending Harvard University and graduating with a degree in Electrical Engineering in 1929. In that same year, he began his career with the San Diego Consolidated (a precursor to the San Diego Gas and Electric, or SDG&E). Sinnott worked as a meter tester, instrument inspector, engineer, chief design engineer, system planning engineer, chief design engineer, Vice President of Engineering in 1961, Company Vice President in 1962, and Company President and Chief Executive Officer from

1963 to 1971. He retired in 1971 after completing 41 years of service. Newspaper records also show that Sinnott held leadership positions in the San Diego Chamber of Commerce, California State Highway Commission, San Diego Hospital Association, San Diego Civic Facilities Corp, Sharp Memorial Hospital board, and the Natural History Museum board.

A *San Diego Union* article from October 21, 1970, titled "Sinnott Retiring As SDG&E Chief" cites the following as "some of the most significant development in the company's nine-decades" which occurred "during Sinnott's management..."

- Activation of the San Onofre nuclear generating station (SONGS) jointly owned by SDG&E and Southern California Edison Co (SCE)
- Introduction of liquified natural gas as a cold weather reserve and as a motor vehicle fuel
- Construction of the 21-story headquarters building located at 101 Ash Street in downtown San Diego in 1968
- Joining in a project for development of a generating station in a southern Utah coal field
- Sponsoring research in fish breeding, lightweight batteries for powering cars, and new types of nuclear generating systems.

The HRRR additionally attributes the following accomplishments to Sinnott:

- Enlargement of several existing electrical power substations
- Construction of several major electrical transmission substations

Although the report credits these achievements to Sinnott's leadership, insufficient information has been provided that speaks to Sinnott's direct involvement in the aforementioned developments. In addition, it is unclear if these developments yielded lasting impacts on local history to be qualified as significant achievements. Specifically, official records show that the SONGS facility was developed by Southern California Edison Co (SCE), an electricity utility provider, and Westinghouse Electric Corp, who sought to build a pressurized water reactor plant "Coast nuclear Station" in 1961. SCE submitted a facility license application to the US Atomic Energy Commission for the SONGS project in February 1963. Later in June, a revised arrangement was made which required SDG&E to pay for 20% cost of the plant and changed the site name to the "San Onofre nuclear generating station."¹ All of this development occurred prior to Joseph Sinnott's election as an SDG&E executive in September 1963. The US Atomic Energy Commission granted the facility operating license DPR-13 for SONGS in 1968. The HRRR did not provide sufficient details to demonstrate how Joseph Sinnott was responsible for the "activation" of the SONGS or how the activation of SONGS is significant in its own right, as SCE appears to be the originator and operator of this facility throughout its history. Other developments such as the construction of 101 Ash Street, the sponsorship of fish breeding research, lightweight battery electric cars, and new types of nuclear-generating systems have not been demonstrated to be "achievements and contributions to the history of San Diego, the state, or the nation."

The HRRR notes that SDG&E experienced record growth under Sinnott's tenure. Specifically, the company achieved "the best earning growth rates among California's four largest utilities from 1963 through 1968," and by 1970, it had nine consecutive years of record earnings. The HRRR does not elaborate on why the record earnings of a public utility company are a significant achievement or contribution to local history. The construction of major electrical transmission substations and the

¹ U.S. Government Printing Office, Annual Report to Congress of the Atomic Energy Commission for 1963 (1964).

enlargement of several existing substations are regular responsibilities of a utility company to accommodate a growing population and, thus, a growing utility userbase; these developments are not significant in their own rights. Per the [Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria](#), a person cannot be considered historically significant under Criterion B simply by virtue of position/title, and the HRRR would need to demonstrate that Sinnott's achievements are beyond what was expected of him as the Chief Executive Officer of SDG&E. As such, insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate Joseph F. Sinnott as a historically significant individual under HRB Criterion B.

Additionally, the [Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria](#) states that "[c]riterion B is generally restricted to those properties that are associated with a person's important achievements" and "[t]he best representatives are properties associated with the person's productive life." Under Criterion B, the resource must directly reflect a person's most significant achievements. Sinnott's achievements appear to be more directly tied to his extant workplaces. Should Joseph F. Sinnott be considered a historically significant individual, other properties may be better associated with his productive life and accomplishments compared to the subject property at 2265 Juan Street. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion B for Joseph F. Sinnott at this time. As the property is not significant under Criterion B, an evaluation of integrity as it relates to Criterion B is not relevant or required.

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 was originally built in the Minimal Traditional style with Colonial Revival influences in 1935. The building is F-shaped in plan and is one story in height at the front entry and contains a basement level. The low-pitched cross-gabled roof is covered with composition shingles. The roof exhibits shallow eave overhang. Exterior siding consists of vertical wood beadboard with stucco present on the lower portion of the building facade.

The northeast elevation, facing Juan Street, is the primary elevation. This elevation features the primary entrance, which is decorated with an accentuated but restrained Colonial Revival surround and leads to a paneled wood entry door with louvered side shutters. A five-faced bow window with wooden divided-lite double hung windows and decorative cornice projects from the front gable and is set on a red brick base. A pair of red brick pilasters flank the bow window. The building façade is wide to the street at this elevation and features divided-lite double-hung wood windows of various sizes with decorative shutters. The southeast elevation, facing the driveway, consists of divided-lite wooden double hung windows of various sizes and patterns. The northwest elevation, consisting of a two-story gable design, is devoid of ornamentation besides wooden divided-lite double hung windows (some with shutters). The rear elevation is mostly two stories in height; the original 1935 rear elevation features double hung wood windows with divided-lites, paneled doors with lites, and a divided-lite French door. Along the 1941 addition, this façade includes a covered porch with full height square columns, a multi-lite French door with sidelites, a large divided-lite picture window, and divided-lite double hung wood windows. The rear of the building also features a set of wood stairs and an open deck over a one-story massing. Windows along the elevations facing the rear deck includes a wooden bay window with divided lites, glass blocks in two original window openings, a tripartite wood window set, and double hung wood windows with divided lites.

The detached garage was built in 1967 in the Contemporary style and features a flat roof, extending wooden beams, wood siding, and a brick exterior.

The HRRR identified the subject building in both the Colonial Revival style and the Custom Ranch style and found the property eligible for designation under HRB Criterion C for both of those styles. Staff disagrees, finding the property ineligible for designation under the proposed styles.

The subject property in its original 1935 condition most closely resembles the Minimal Traditional style as defined by the [2007 Citywide Modernism Historic Context Statement](#), exhibiting three of four primary character defining features, including a low-pitched gabled roof with shallow overhangs, simplified details of a limited extent reflecting traditional or modern themes (Colonial Revival in this case), and traditional building materials emphasizing the street façade. It also features two of four secondary character defining features, i.e., modestly sized wood framed windows, occasionally one large picture window, and a detached front-facing garage set back from the house. It's flat accentuated front entry surround with a paneled door, divided-lite double hung windows with shutters, bow window, and brick pilaster detailing are indicative of a Colonial Revival influence.

Minimal Traditional style buildings reflect traditional architectural forms and eclectic styles, but generally display simpler and less extensive decorative architectural detailing of the previous Revival styles. Minimal Traditional house are usually modest in scale with one level, although there are some two-story examples. Common decorative features include smaller, simple front porches, chimneys, and low pitch shallow eave roofs. Pre-War examples reference Moderne and older styles, and usually have a detached garaged. Post-War examples often integrate the garage and reflect the emerging Contemporary trends. Though sometimes employing brick or stone materials, this was the first style to typically delete the expensive treatment from the side and rear facades, reflecting the frugal times. The style is most prevalent in residential construction, but is also common in small scale commercial, retail and office uses. Minimal Traditional style houses are usually clustered together, especially in the 1940s residential neighborhoods, although they can also be found separately as later infill in previously developed neighborhoods of Craftsman bungalow and earlier styles.

The property was substantially modified in 1941 with a side addition that nearly doubled the length of the primary building façade parallel to the street and added a basement. Furthermore, changes to the rear and southeast side including alterations made in 1947, c.1940s~1957, and c. 1957~1964 as mentioned in the modification section of the staff report have collectively impaired the building's integrity of design, materials, and feeling. The building no longer resembles a compact-sized building with minimal corners and simple plan, which is an important character-defining feature of the original Minimal Traditional style building. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation under Criterion C for the Minimal Tradition style due to the substantial alterations.

The subject property in its current condition exhibits some features of the Custom Ranch style. However, the subject property not only predates the Custom Ranch c.1950~1975 period of significance but also only exhibits two of the four primary character-defining features: horizontal massing, wide to the street; and custom details. The wide horizontal massing was created by the 1941 addition, a non-original feature. This addition, built by Olmstead Construction Company six years after initial construction, is not a transformative or comprehensive redesign of the 1935 Minimal Traditional residence. Overall, the subject property does not embody the character-defining

features of the Custom Ranch style, and staff does not recommend designation under Criterion C for the Custom Ranch style.

The Custom Ranch style of architecture was popular between 1950 and 1975 and is differentiated from Tract Ranch homes because they were typically custom-designed with a specific client in mind. The Ranch style became the era's most prevalent type of residential construction in San Diego. Custom Ranch Homes are generally more lavish than their tract counterparts, but like Tract Ranch housing, materials and detailing are generally traditional. Primary character defining features include horizontal massing, wide to the street; usually single-story; custom details such as wood shutters, large wood windows, or large prominent brick or stone chimneys; and prominent low-sloped gabled or hipped roofs with deep overhangs. Secondary character defining features include a sprawling floor plan frequently "L" or "U" shaped around a central courtyard; large attached carports or garages; and expensive building materials such as wood shingle roofing, wood siding, brick, stone, and adobe which are usually much more generous in materials and craftsmanship than tract homes.

Of the seven aspects of integrity, design, materials, and workmanship are the most critical to the property's ability to convey significance under HRB Criterion C as a resource that embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Minimal Traditional style. The property, which has been modified as detailed in the beginning of the analysis section of this report, does not retain integrity of materials, design, workmanship, and feeling of the Minimal Traditional style. Therefore, the property does not retain integrity to its 1935 period of significance 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 and built in 1935 by the firm of Hurlburt, Frank and Slaughter, which consists of Master Designer Ralph E. Hurlburt, Master Architect Ralph L. Frank, and James C. Slaughter, a designer and builder. The HRRR specifically attributes the design to Master Architect Ralph L. Frank. In 1941, Master Builder Olmstead Building Company led by Lester Olmstead constructed a side addition. In 1967, Master Architect Richard George Wheeler designed the detached garage.

Ralph E. Hurlburt was born in 1888 in Nebraska. He was trained by his grandfather in the construction trade. In 1916, he married and relocated to San Diego. Upon arrival, he was involved in real estate financing and law and later transferred to architectural design. Early in his career, Hurlburt partnered with builder Charles H. Tifal. They primarily worked on high-end custom residences and specialized in the Tudor Revival and Spanish Eclectic styles. Their Tudor Revival houses often featured extensive and elaborate use of brick and stone, large chimneys, arched doors or focal windows dominating the front façade, and half timbering that was nearly flush with the wall plane. This nearly flush half timbering created a more authentic appearance than that found on most Tudor Revival houses from the same time period. Their Spanish Eclectic houses often featured round decorative iron attic vents in one or more gable ends, oversized beams timbers and lintels (usually rough or hand hewn), and a large arched front window. In addition to these two styles, they built in the French Eclectic, Craftsman, and Italian Renaissance Revival styles, and sometimes used North African and American Pueblo design elements. Around 1926, Hurlburt and Tifal published a promotional booklet entitled *Distinctive Homes*, which showcased their work in a variety of Eclectic

styles. Although he did not have formal training in architecture, Hurlburt was responsible for designing numerous homes in the La Mesa and San Diego areas. He built in a variety of San Diego neighborhoods, including Kensington, the Marston Hills subdivision, Mission Hills, Point Loma, and Uptown. By the mid-1930s, Hurlburt was a partner in the firm Hurlburt, Frank, and Slaughter, Inc. He died in 1942. The Historical Resources Board established Ralph E. Hurlburt as a Master Designer in 2001 during the designation of HRB #464. At least 18 of Hurlburt's works have been designated as historical resources by the City of San Diego Historical Resources Board.

Ralph Loren Frank was born in Kansas in 1898. He moved to San Diego in 1920 and began working as a salesman for the Grable-Francisco-Bleifuss Company, a real estate company. By 1926, he was working as a draftsman for Ralph E. Hurlburt, while also designing houses on his own. By the mid-1930s, he was a partner with the firm Hurlburt, Frank & Slaughter. Frank was the firm's primary architectural designer, while Slaughter built the houses and Hurlburt sold them. The firm designed and built several houses throughout San Diego for high-end clients including Rueben H. Fleet, Percy J. Benbough (mayor of San Diego from 1935 to 1942), and C. Arnholt Smith. While with Hurlburt, Frank & Slaughter, Frank was responsible for the design of the five houses in the small subdivision of Brookes Terrace in Marston Hills. He was equally as creative with interior design, planning the interiors for several houses by Hurlburt, Frank & Slaughter. He also designed 20 Southern California branches of the U.S. National Bank in partnership with Grant King. In order to cope with the economic hit of the Depression, Frank and Hurlburt transitioned from Spanish Eclectic styles to the simpler, more cost-effective "American" styles promoted by the FHA to meet demands for affordable housing, such as Colonial Revival and Cape Cod. Ralph Frank worked in many neighborhoods including Uptown, Mission Hills, Point Loma, La Playa and La Jolla, and in various architectural styles. He worked as an architect into his later years, shifting to styles more common during the midcentury. The Historical Resources Board established Ralph L. Frank as a Master Architect in 2005 during the designation of HRB #881. At least 12 of Frank's works have been designated as historical resources by the City of San Diego Historical Resources Board.

Of the seven aspects of integrity, design, materials, and workmanship are the most critical to the property's ability to convey significance under HRB Criterion D as a resource that represents the notable work of Ralph E. Hurlburt or Ralph L. Frank of Hurlburt, Frank and Slaughter. The property, which has been modified as detailed in the beginning of the analysis section of this report and further discussed under Criterion C evaluation, does not retain integrity of materials, design, workmanship, and feeling as it relates to its original design. Therefore, the property does not retain integrity to its 1935 period of significance under HRB Criterion D for its association with Master Designer Ralph Hurlburt and Master Architect Ralph Frank.

Lester Olmstead was born in Ohio in 1890. He first gained experience in construction while serving as a Quartermaster Corps Service Sergeant and as a supervisor of a carpentry shop in San Francisco during World War I. In 1924, Olmstead joined C.H. Martinez and Charles W. Brown to form the Brown-Olmstead Building Company. In 1928, the company dissolved and Olmstead created his own company, the Olmstead Building Company. The company built custom houses primarily in the Spanish Eclectic style, as well as the Craftsman style. Olmstead built numerous residences in Point Loma, Kensington, Mission Hills, and East San Diego, although few of his buildings have survived. Olmstead is most known in San Diego for his work on the DeWitt C. Mitchell American Legion Hall Post 201 (HRB #525), built in the Spanish Eclectic style. He also worked on the Naval Training Center in Point Loma, the Naval Airfield on North Island, and the Lindbergh Field Terminal and Ryan

Aeronautical buildings that were located on Pacific Highway. The Historical Resources Board established Olmstead as a Master Builder in 2002 during the designation of HRB #525. At least three of Lester Olmstead's works have been designated as historical resources by the City of San Diego Historical Resources Board.

The 1941 addition on 2265 Juan Street constructed by Master Builder Lester Olmstead is mostly undifferentiated, continuing the original siding and window design along the northeast, primary elevation. The addition introduced full-height columns at the rear elevation. These full-height columns resemble some of Ralph L. Frank's designs, such as that of 3210 Owen Street (HRB #718) and 1041 Cypress Avenue (HRB #1206). However, there is no evidence to connect the 1941 addition to the original 1935 building in terms of a planned and coordinated design. And there is no evidence that the 1941 addition was designed by Ralph L. Frank. Thus, the addition should be evaluated on its own as a work of Olmstead Building Company only. The 1941 addition is not representative of notable example of Olmstead's work. Olmstead Building Company is notable for its complete residential, commercial, and institutional projects, not residential additions. The addition does not express a particular phase in the development of the master's career, an aspect of his work, or a particular idea or theme in the craft. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion D as a notable work of Master Builder Olmstead Building Company.

Richard George Wheeler, the son of Master Architect William Henry Wheeler, was born on June 30, 1917. Following his graduation from San Diego High School in 1935, Wheeler attended San Diego State University (SDSU) for three years before transferring to UC Berkeley where he received a degree in architecture in 1941. Only months after his graduation, Pearl Harbor was attacked and the US entered World War II. Wheeler applied for a commission in the Navy, which was granted in 1942. After the war, Wheeler returned to work for his father at Wheeler & McGowan, Architects and Engineers. In 1947, he received his architectural license and left Wheeler & McGowan to open his own firm. The office started out with primarily residential commissions, but quickly diversified to include commercial and medical buildings. At his young firm, Wheeler mentored locally acclaimed architects Tom Tucker, Hal Sadler, Ed Bennett, Gayne Wimer and Roger Matthews. In the late 1950s, the firm changed its name to Richard G. Wheeler, AIA, & Associates, A Division of Charles Luckman Associates (later the Luckman connection was dropped). The firm grew to eventually employ forty architects, engineers and support staff. Wheeler retired in January of 1989 and passed away in May of the next year. At retirement, Wheeler estimated that his firm designed approximately 400 buildings in his 41 years of practice. The breadth of Wheeler's career as an architect spanned from 1947 to 1989, beginning with the design of custom residences and evolving to include numerous modern institutional and commercial buildings. Wheeler was established as a Master Architect by the Historical Resources Board with the 2021 designation of 3551 Garrison Street, HRB #1415, which was constructed in 1955 in the Custom Ranch style. In 2022, the Board designated 2354 Pine Street as a historical resource as HRB #1445 under HRB Criterion D as a notable example of Wheeler's early 1952 residential work in the Custom Ranch style.

The 1967 Contemporary style detached garage designed by Richard George Wheeler is not significant under HRB Criterion D as a notable work in its own right. It does not exhibit design features seen in Wheeler's residential works, such as custom windows and prominent roof designs. Wheeler is also not notable for designing singular residential garages. The garage does not express a particular phase in the development of the master's career, an aspect of his work, or a particular

idea or theme in the craft. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation of the garage under HRB Criterion D as a notable work of Master Architect Richard George Wheeler.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

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. 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 the staff's field check, it is recommended that the property located at 2265 Juan Street not be designated under any HRB Criteria.



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AL/ss

Attachment(s):

1. Applicant's Historical Report under separate cover