



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: March 13, 2025 REPORT NO. HRB-25-010

HEARING DATE: March 27, 2025

SUBJECT: **ITEM #4 – 2726 Angell Avenue**

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

APPLICANT: Jeskie Gray Family Trust; represented by Ginger Weatherford

LOCATION: 2726 Angell Avenue, University Community, Council District 6
APN 347-270-21-00

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the resource located at 2726 Angell Avenue as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Do not designate the property located at 2726 Angell Avenue 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 located within the boundary of the [2022 University Community Plan Area Focused Reconnaissance Survey](#) but was not identified in the survey because it was not individually 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 2726 Angell Avenue is a single-story, Contemporary style single-family residential building constructed in 1962 in the University Community Planning Area. The property is located on the north side of Angell Avenue, adjacent to the Rose Canyon Open Space Park. The property is in its original location.

Since its construction in 1962 the property has been modified as follows. In 1972 the carport was converted to a garage which included the construction of curved concrete block walls, glass block transom windows, a side access door, and automatic garage doors. A back shed roof with post supports was constructed between 1966 and 1978. The parabolic sunshade on the roof was removed between 1986-1987. The privacy sidelights on the front entry wall leading to the courtyard were replaced with glass blocks, and glass blocks were installed in the horizontal gap between the front entryway and the roof on the front façade, between 1972-2011. In 2020, the wood front door and garage doors were replaced with metal and glass doors. The metal frame kitchen window was replaced with a vinyl window in the original opening in 2020. Similarly, the sliding metal frame sliding glass doors were replaced with vinyl frame sliding doors in their original openings except for the sliding door on the rear elevation to the west of the kitchen window. The rear west sliding door was reduced in size. A sliding glass door on the south elevation of the courtyard was replaced with a fixed picture window in 2020 and replaced with a vinyl sliding door in 2023. In 2021, the shed roof back patio was replaced with a flat roof pergola. Further, the front walkway design was changed at an unknown date.

A Historical Resource Research was prepared by Ginger Weatherford, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criteria A, B, C, 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 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 report concludes that the property is significant under Criterion A as a special element of aesthetic development for achieving the top 1962 Horizon Home contest award for design and merchandising alongside influencing at least 3 similar concrete houses by 1963, and as a special element of engineering development for innovative engineering practices during construction.

According to [the Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria](#) (Guidelines), a resource must exemplify or reflect special elements of development, and must be distinct among others of its kind or surpass the usual in significance. For each aspect of development, the resource should exemplify or reflect a special element of that development which

either maintains an established precedent or itself be the model for development. For aesthetic development, this is development that is associated with an “artistic arrangement in theory or practice”. For engineering development significance may include professionally applied standards or design ingenuity within engineering disciplines.

According to the historical resource research report, the home was built for the Horizon Home program. The Horizon Home program, initiated in the early 1960s by the Portland Cement Association (PCA), aimed to promote innovative residential designs utilizing concrete as a primary building material. This initiative sought to enhance home design while showcasing the versatility and benefits of concrete construction. Each year, the PCA invited architects to design and construct homes primarily using concrete. Outstanding designs were recognized with awards and featured in PCA publications, serving as inspiration for future residential projects. Throughout the United States, hundreds of these Horizon Homes were built. In San Diego, 2726 Angell Avenue, 5708 Abernathy Way, and 6130 Calle Veracruz are known to have been constructed for the program.

While the home is reflective of the history of the Horizon Homes Contest in San Diego, there is not enough scholarly evidence at this time to conclude that the resource is a special element of aesthetic development under Criterion A as a property that influenced the design of future buildings. Contemporary resources occurred prior to and after the contest. Similarly, there are numerous examples of builders across periods in San Diego architectural history who used a speculative house as a model to build other examples of that house. A duplicate house is located at 2608 Angell Avenue; however, the influence of the subject resource on one other property is not enough to label it as a special element of development. Therefore, staff does not find the property to be significant under Criterion A as a special element of aesthetic development at this time.

Engineering wise, the building utilizes post-tension concrete methods which allows for minimal load bearing walls. The roof is a concrete slab 10 in. thick, weighing 145-tons, that was placed on top of the floor slab on the ground and lifted into position by hydraulic jacks onto the four supporting concrete columns. A 12 ft. square hole is left in the center of the roof slab to provide light and air over the central courtyard. The roof slab has a clear span of 36 ft. in both directions, with 12-ft. cantilevers accomplished by the use of prestressing and post-tensioning. The concrete is so tightly squeezed together by this method that no special roofing material is required, as the concrete does not crack and is impermeable to water. The ends of the cables were left exposed as a decorative element. While the engineering of the house is described in the report, not enough supporting information is presented that establishes the significance or ingenuity of the house. It is not established if this is the first house to showcase that design element. Therefore, staff does not find the property to be significant under Criterion A as a special element of engineering development at this time.

At this time, staff does not have enough information to support designation under HRB Criterion A. As the property is not significant under Criterion A, an evaluation of integrity as it relates to Criterion A is not relevant or required. However, even if the eligibility of the resource under Criterion A was clearly established in the HRRR, the modifications detailed at the beginning of this report have significantly impacted integrity of design, materials, workmanship, association and feeling, all of which are important to conveying the proposed significance.

The infill of the carport is a substantial alteration that significantly impacts the primary façade of the resource. The original design, as published by the Horizon Contest, is no longer readable. Further, the curved design of the garage walls mimics a key character defining feature in a way that adds false historicity to the façade. The historic massing of the resource has been changed, resulting in significant loss of integrity for design, then secondarily; materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Front facade openings (both doors and windows) have similarly been changed and moderately impact integrity of design and materials. Overall, a lack of integrity would not support any potential significance under Criterion A.

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

The report concludes that the resource is significant under Criterion B for its association with the Horizon Homes Program national contest. Staff disagrees. Eligibility under Criterion B for an event or events significant in local, state, or national history, involves first determining the importance of the event, second determining the length and nature of the event's association with the resource under study and its period of significance, and third comparing the resource to any other resources that may be associated with the event to determine if the resource is significant under Criterion B.

As described above in Criterion A, 2726 Angell Avenue was designed for the Horizon Homes Program national contest. The house was photographed by Julius Shulman and featured in the Horizon Homes for Better Living publication from the Portland Cement Association. By January 1963, more than 45,000 people had toured the award-winning masonry house which started accepting visitors in October 1962, a plethora of newspaper articles about the house were published between August 1962 and November 1963.

While the house has a direct link to the Horizon Homes Program, the contest itself is not a significant event in local history. Concrete and contemporary style homes were already present in the San Diego architectural record at the time of the contest. The contest was used as a marketing tool by the concrete industry and the report did not showcase that the contest demonstrably impacted the San Diego architectural landscape.

Furthermore, research into the owners and tenants of the property at 2726 Angell did not reveal any individuals who could be considered historically significant in local, state or national history. Therefore, the property is not eligible for designation under HRB Criterion B. 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 report concludes that the resource is significant under Criterion C as a good example of Contemporary architecture with Post-and-Beam influences. 2726 Angell is a single-story, single-family resource with concrete construction. The resource features a concrete block exterior, horizontal massing and a flat roof.

The south elevation is the main façade of the dwelling, facing Angell Avenue. A scored concrete driveway allow access to the garage and front entry area. A curved concrete block wall contains two metal and glass garage doors. A concrete block wall curves again as the wall runs north within the entry patio area. Along the top of this east facing garage wall are five rectangular shaped windows framed with wood moulding. A wood door to the garage is present in the northwest corner under the fifth window. Glass blocks surround the concrete block wall along the entry wall between the patio and the courtyard. To the right of this wall is the wide, floor-to-ceiling front door with glass block sidelight.

The west facing concrete block wall is void of fenestration. This west facing concrete block wall curves around to the southeast in front of the primary bedroom window, creating a privacy wall. Behind the curved concrete block privacy wall is a floor-to-ceiling fixed window, framed in wood moulding. Continuing the south elevation to the east of the window, the remaining section of concrete block wall is void of fenestration and curves around to the east elevation, creating a privacy wall for the primary bedroom's wall of windows and sliding glass doors on the east elevation. The tall concrete block wall on the east property line curves around to the south to meet up with the curved privacy wall on the southeast corner.

The side elevations feature concrete block construction and a mix of wood-framed and vinyl full-length window and sliding doors.

The rear of the resource has a mix of floor-to ceiling wood and vinyl picture window and sliding glass doors. A large, square, wood framed, floor-to-ceiling fixed picture window is present in the northeast corner, followed by a vinyl framed sliding glass door, and another large, square, wood framed, floor-to-ceiling fixed picture window. To the west of this window is a section of the elevation clad in vertical wood siding. A large, square, vinyl framed, fixed picture window is present under the roofline but does not extend to the ground. Two rectangular panes of glass flank the fixed picture window and slide open horizontally. Next to this set of windows is a vinyl framed sliding glass door. A flat piece of wood acts as a sidelight on the west side of the sliding glass doors. To the west of this section is a sconce on the remaining portion of concrete block which extends to the northwest corner void of fenestration. The rear of the resource also has a pool, pool deck, and wood trellis structure.

Unlike earlier styles which are generally defined by exterior decorative details, the Contemporary style focused on interior spaces and their relation to the outdoors. Emphasis was placed on integrating the indoors with the outdoors by utilizing windows and exterior living areas such as balconies and courtyards. The style was popular in San Diego in the 1950's and 1960's largely because it could be easily adapted to hillside lots. Character defining features include strong roof forms with deep overhangs and exposed beams; large, aluminum framed windows; non-traditional exterior finishes including vertical wood siding, concrete block, stucco and flagstone; sun shades, screen or shadow block accents; broad masonry chimneys; and distinctive triangular, parabolic or arched forms. Contemporary houses often incorporate angular massing; attached carports or garages; courtyards or balconies; obscured or recessed entries; and split-level designs.

According to the [San Diego Modernism Historic Context Statement](#), Contemporary style domestic architecture examples are common in post-war housing in San Diego. The evaluation criteria for the Contemporary style in the *Modernism Historic Context Statement* indicate that good examples of the

style that retain a high degree of integrity should be considered for individual designation, especially if the model design is associated with a significant architect. Due to the somewhat limited supply of unaltered examples, retention of all character-defining features may not be necessary for listing, if comparative analysis demonstrates that the building retains a relatively high degree of integrity compared to other extant examples.

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 Contemporary style. The property, which has been modified as detailed in the beginning of the analysis section of this report, retains location and setting. The infill of the carport is a substantial alteration that significantly impacts the primary façade of the resource. The original design, as published by the Horizon Homes Contest, is no longer readable. Further, the curved design of the garage walls mimics a key character defining feature in a way that adds false historicity to the façade. The historic massing of the resource has been changed, resulting in significant loss of integrity for design, then secondarily; materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Front facade openings (both doors and windows) have similarly been changed and moderately impact integrity of design and materials. Taken together, all modifications significantly impact character defining features and present a false sense of history, resulting in a loss of integrity to the 1962-1972 period of significance under HRB Criterion C.

As originally constructed, the subject resource featured many characteristics of the Contemporary style such as angular massing, a flat roof, concrete block exterior, and large windows; however, the resource has been significantly modified to the point where it lacks integrity of design, materials and workmanship as it relates to HRB Criterion C. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion C due to a lack of integrity.

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 at 2726 Angell was designed by Henry Hester and Robert Jones in 1962. Henry Hester has been established by the Historical Resources Board as a Master Architect.

Hester was born in Oklahoma in 1928 and attended high school in San Diego after moving here with his family. He served in the Coast Guard during WWII, and later earned a bachelor's degree in architecture from the University of Southern California. After moving to La Jolla, Hester was mentored by William F. Cody and Master Architect Lloyd Ruocco. Hester designed various structures, such as single-family homes, apartments, and commercial buildings. His designs earned him local and national AIA Awards. Notably, his 1958 design of 3200 6th Avenue (HRB #801) features floor-to-ceiling doors and windows, block-like balconies, and rectangular cutouts that bring light into the interior. Henry Hester's work spans California, Arizona, Colorado, Florida, and New Mexico. During his career, Hester has partnered with architects William F. Cody, Ronald K. Davis, Robert E. Jones, and even other established Master Architects like Frederick Liebhardt. Hester semi-retired in the 1970s and limited his work to custom residential projects.

Henry Hester designed the subject resource at a mid-point in his career, in 1962. One of Henry Hester's more notable works was the luxury apartment near Balboa Park at 3200 6th Avenue (mentioned earlier). In 1957, Hester designed the Martin and Enid Gleich/Henry Hester House (HRB

#1143), located at 5120 Norris St. This home was designed in the Post and Beam style and was documented in the Life Magazine in 1958, and famous architectural photographer Julius Schulman photographed it. The American Institute of Architects San Diego later recognized Hester's work at 5120 Norris St. with the Award of Excellence. The resource property was designed in a unique contemporary style and the original design showcased Hester's expertise with modern form, materials, and style. As originally constructed, the property was a notable work of Master Architect Henry Hester. In addition to featuring many design elements frequently associated with Henry Hester, the resource also won a design award from the Horizon Homes Contest. However, the property has been significantly modified to the point where it no longer retains integrity as a resource that reflects the design intent and aesthetic of Hester. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion D as a notable work of Master Architect Henry Hester due to a lack of integrity.

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 a master architect. Although 2726 Angell Avenue showcases some elements of a Hester design, including the unique Contemporary design, the resource no longer retains integrity of feeling, design, materials, workmanship, and association. Specifically, the infill of the carport which was done outside of the period of significance severely impacts the front façade of the resource and detracts from feeling, design, workmanship, and therefore association with Hester. The infill of the carport borrowed design elements from the original design which does not allow for differentiation between the original resource and the later garage. Further, the addition of the garage limits the structural expression of the house. Other alterations, including the glass block addition to the front entry wall and the change from wood to metal front door further diminish integrity of materials and design to a lesser extent, but contribute to a cumulative loss of integrity. Therefore, the property does not retain integrity to its 1962-1972 period of significance under HRB Criterion D.

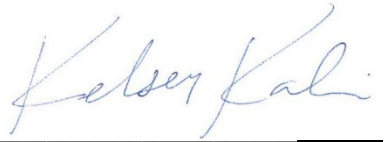
Staff notes that Robert Jones is also credited as an architect on this project. It is unknown how much of the design was Jones versus Hester, and Jones has not been established by the Historical Resources Board as a Master Architect, Designer or Builder, and there is insufficient information to designate him as such at this time. Therefore, staff cannot recommend designation under HRB Criterion D for an association with Robert Jones.

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 staff's field check, it is recommended that the property located at 2726 Angell Street not be designated under any HRB Criteria.



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Attachment(s):

1. Applicant's Historical Report under separate cover