



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: March 13, 2025 REPORT NO. HRB-25-011

HEARING DATE: March 27, 2025

SUBJECT: **ITEM #2 – Rose Vollmer/ Richard Lareau Rental House**

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

APPLICANT: City of San Diego; represented by Heritage Architecture & Planning

LOCATION: 4101 Lomaland Drive, Peninsula Community, Council District 2
APN 532-510-0600

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Rose Vollmer/ Richard Lareau Rental House located at 4101 Lomaland Drive #2 as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Rose Vollmer/ Richard Lareau Rental House located at 4101 Lomaland Drive #2 as a historical resource with a period of significance of circa 1966 under HRB Criteria C and D. The designation excludes the structures located at 4101 Lomaland Drive #1 and associated garage and converted storage unit, 4101 Lomaland Drive #3, 4101 Lomaland Drive #4 and associated shed. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

1. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Contemporary style and retains integrity from its circa 1966 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features a low-sloping side gable roof with wide overhanging eaves and exposed rafters, large wood framed windows, non-traditional exterior finishes including vertical wood siding and concrete slump block, recessed primary entry, and an attached carport.
2. The resource is representative of a notable work of Master Architect Richard Lareau; a prominent and accomplished architect responsible for the design of many quality residential, religious, institutional, educational and commercial buildings in the City; and retains integrity as it relates to the original circa 1966 design. Specifically, the resource is one of his earlier residences in the Contemporary style that expresses a quality of design and attention to detail generally associated with his work.

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 property located at 4101 Lomaland Drive is located in the Peninsula Community Planning Area on the eastern portion of Sunset Cliffs Natural Park adjacent to the Point Loma Nazarene University campus. The land was formerly part of Katherine Tingley's Theosophical Institute. The parcel is located at the top of a hill that overlooks the Pacific Ocean and contains four single-family residential structures, a detached garage, a converted storage unit and a shed. The residence known as 4101 Lomaland Drive #1, sits on the northern portion of the parcel and is a single-story, vernacular cottage with an estimated construction date between 1910 and 1921. The detached garage and converted storage unit are associated with 4101 Lomaland Drive #1. The central portion of the parcel contains 4101 Lomaland Drive #2, a one-story, Contemporary style residence constructed circa 1966. The southern portion of the parcel contains 4101 Lomaland Drive #3 and #4. Unit #3 is a one-story, Contemporary style residence constructed circa 1972. Unit #4 was constructed circa 1979 as an attachment to Unit #3, forming a duplex. The shed is located to the east of Unit #4.

The property was previously evaluated in a 2003 report prepared by ASM Affiliates, Inc., *Historic Evaluation of Eight Buildings for the Sunset Cliffs Natural Park Master Plan, San Diego, California*. The ASM report concluded that Lomaland Drive #1 was eligible for designation on the California Register under Criterion A for its association with the Point Loma Theosophical Society and on the San Diego Register under Criterion A as a special element of San Diego's social history, Criterion B for its association with the Theosophical movement and Criterion F as one of a finite group of buildings associated with the Theosophical Society. 4101 Lomaland Drive #2, #3 and #4 were not evaluated in the ASM Affiliates report, as they were less than 40 years old at the time of the evaluation. [The San Diego Modernism Context Statement](#) was not adopted until 2007 and was available for use as an evaluation tool at the time of assessment.

The 2025 Historical Resource Technical Report (HRTR) prepared by Heritage Architecture and Planning evaluated all four buildings and concludes that 4101 Lomaland Drive #1, #3 and #4 are not significant under any California Register or San Diego Register criteria. The HRTR concluded that the 4101 Lomaland Drive #1 property is not significant under HRB Criterion A due to a lack of evidence that confirms ASM Affiliates' assumption that the building was constructed by joining two former Theosophical Institute cabins. The Heritage HRTR also concluded that the ASM Affiliates report did not adequately evaluate 4101 Lomaland Drive #1 under Criterion B and did not provide a basis for its assertion under this criterion. Additionally, the HRTR found that 4101 Lomaland Drive #1 is not eligible under Criterion F as part of a district associated with the Theosophical Institute because no such district exists. In 1976 five former Theosophical Institute buildings; including the Spaulding Home, the Greek Theatre, the Beaver Home, the Lotus Home and Madame Tingley's Home; were designated as HRB #112. These buildings were designated at the same time and under the same HRB number for their association with the Theosophical Institute; however, a historic district was not established at that time. The Heritage HRTR also determined that 4101 Lomaland Drive #3 and #4 were not eligible under Criteria C or D due to modifications which resulted in a loss of integrity. Heritage Preservation staff concurred with the conclusions of the 2025 Heritage Architecture & Planning report that 4101 Lomaland Drive #1, #3 and #4 were not significant under any criteria and cleared those buildings from further review. Staff also concurred with the conclusions of the 2025 Heritage Architecture & Planning report that 4101 Lomaland Drive #2 is eligible for designation under HRB Criteria C and D, and have forwarded this building to the Board to consider designation.

The historic name of the resource, the Rose Vollmer/ Richard Lareau House #2, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Rose Vollmer who constructed the house as a rental property and the name of Richard Lareau, a Master Architect.

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

As noted previously, 4101 Lomaland Drive #2, located in the Point Loma Community Planning Area, is a Contemporary style single family home constructed in 1966 and shares a parcel with 4101 Lomaland Drive #1, #3 and #4. Since its construction in 1966 the 4101 Lomaland Drive #2 property has had no known modifications other than the replacement of the rear door.

A Historical Resource Technical Report was prepared by Heritage Architecture and Planning, which concludes that 4101 Lomaland Drive #2 is significant under HRB Criteria C and D and staff concurs. The report did not find any other structures on the parcel significant under any HRB Criteria. 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 4101 Lomaland Drive #2 residence was designed in the Contemporary style by Richard Lareau for Rose Vollmer and constructed circa 1966. The building is one-story with a low-pitched side gable roof with wood shingles. The roof features wide, overhanging eaves with exposed rafters. The east and north facades feature a concrete slump block exterior while the west and south facades are primarily clad in unpainted vertical wood siding. The primary entrance is located on the east façade and is obscured by a vertical wood grille. The entrance has a stone tile walkway with a spiral shell design on each tile. An attached carport is located at the southeastern corner of the building. The west façade features large, wood framed windows and a wood deck overlooking the Pacific Ocean.

Other fenestration includes wood framed windows in fixed, double hung, slider and casement varieties.

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.

Of the seven aspects of integrity, design, materials, and workmanship are the most critical to 4101 Lomaland Drive #2's ability to convey significance under HRB Criterion C as a resource that embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Contemporary style. The resource has no known modifications other than a replacement door on the west façade and continues to retain integrity of design, materials and workmanship. Therefore, the property does retain integrity to its circa 1966 period of significance under HRB Criterion C.

Significance Statement: 4101 Lomaland Drive #2 continues to convey the historic significance of the Contemporary style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style; including a low-sloping side gable roof with wide overhanging eaves and exposed rafters, large wood framed windows, non-traditional exterior finishes including vertical wood siding and concrete slump block, recessed primary entry, and an attached carport. 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.

Richard John Lareau was born in Bremerton, Washington and moved to Chula Vista at a young age. After graduating high school, Lareau enrolled in military service after which he began attending classes at San Diego State University. Eventually, he transferred to UC Berkeley, where he earned bachelor's and master's degrees in architecture. Lareau eventually returned to San Diego where he felt there would be more business opportunities in a city with few licensed architects. Starting his professional career in the offices of Kitchen and Hunt and later working for Paderewski, Mitchell and Dean, he eventually opened his own office on 6th Avenue in 1957. By 1965 the office moved to Nimitz Boulevard where he continued to practice until his passing in 2022. Lareau taught at the University of California Extension and California Western University and played an active role in the community through his associations with the Pont Loma Planning Group, American Institute of Architects and the San Diego Chamber of Commerce.

Early in his career, Lareau served as the campus architect for Cal Western (currently Point Loma Nazarene) and grew his practice by taking on a number of residential commissions. These early residential works include the Jack Bone House located at 1914 Guy Street in Mission Hills and the Michael and Clara Brown House located at 5645 Taft Avenue which is currently designated as HRB

#1246. Lareau's residences are generally designed in the Post and Beam or Contemporary styles and signature characteristics include flat roofs, wide overhanging eaves, projecting beams and the extensive use of glass. As the firm grew, Lareau expanded his commissions to include religious structures, commercial buildings, public schools and institutional buildings. Notable works in San Diego include the Mission Bay Visitor's Center, the Cal Western Science Building, the master plan for the United States International University and his own office in the Centre West Building in Point Loma. Lareau's design philosophy was based around expressing the structure of a building and the architect expressed an affinity for circular buildings. Lareau was established as a Master Architect by the City of San Diego's Historical Resources Board with the designation of the Rose Vollmer/ Richard Lareau House located at 4515 Ladera Street as HRB #1344.

Lareau designed 4101 Lomaland Drive #2 for Rose Vollmer circa 1966 and 4101 Lomaland Drive #3 circa 1972. He also designed the nearby Post and Beam style 4515 Ladera Street, HRB #1344, for Vollmer in 1964. Unit #2 is notable as an example of Lareau's early residential work in the Contemporary style and demonstrates the high quality of design seen in his other works.

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 Master Architect Richard Lareau. The 4101 Lomaland Drive #2 building has no known modifications other than a rear door replacement and continues to retain integrity of design, materials and workmanship. Therefore, the property does retain integrity to its circa 1966 period of significance under HRB Criterion D.

Significance Statement: The resource located at 4101 Lomaland Drive #2 is representative of a notable work of Master Architect Richard Lareau, a prominent and accomplished architect responsible for the design of many quality residential, religious, institutional, educational and commercial buildings in the City. Specifically, the resource is one of his earlier residences in the Contemporary style that expresses a quality of design and attention to detail generally associated with his work. Therefore, staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion D.

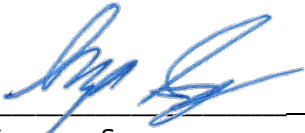
OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

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 Rose Vollmer/ Richard Lareau Rental House located at 4101 Lomaland Drive #2 be designated with a period of significance of circa 1966 under HRB Criterion C as an example of the Contemporary style and Criterion D as a notable work of Master Architect Richard Lareau. The designation excludes the

structures located at 4101 Lomaland Drive #1 and associated garage and converted storage unit, 4101 Lomaland Drive #3, 4101 Lomaland Drive #4 and associated shed.



Suzanne Segur
Senior Planner/ HRB Liaison
City Planning Department

SS/ks

Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on , to consider the historical designation of the **Rose Vollmer/ Richard Lareau Rental House** (owned by City of San Diego, 1200 Third Avenue, Suite 1700, San Diego, CA 92101) located at **4101 Lomaland Drive, San Diego, CA 92107**, APN: **532-510-0600** further described as LOT 145 DOC171878REC72 IN 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 Rose Vollmer/ Richard Lareau Rental 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 the Contemporary style and retains integrity from its circa 1966 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features a low-sloping side gable roof with wide overhanging eaves and exposed rafters, large wood framed windows, non-traditional exterior finishes including vertical wood siding and concrete slump block, recessed primary entry, and an attached carport. 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 Richard Lareau; a prominent and accomplished architect responsible for the design of many quality residential, religious, institutional, educational and commercial buildings in the City; and retains integrity as it relates to the original circa 1966 design. Specifically, the resource is one of his earlier residences in the Contemporary style that expresses a quality of design and attention to detail generally associated with his work. 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 designation shall exclude the structures located at 4101 Lomaland Drive #1 and associated garage and converted storage unit, 4101 Lomaland Drive #3, 4101 Lomaland Drive #4 and associated shed.

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:

BY: _____
TIM HUTTER, Chair
Historical Resources Board

APPROVED: HEATHER FERBERT,
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: _____
LINDSEY SEBASTIAN,
Deputy City Attorney