



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: March 9, 2023 REPORT NO. HRB-23-010

HEARING DATE: March 23, 2023

SUBJECT: **ITEM #2 – Lloyd and Raymona Swortwood Spec House**

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

APPLICANT: Justin M. Rutherford; represented by Scott A. Moomjian

LOCATION: 7390 Via Capri, La Jolla Community, Council District 1
APN 352-165-05-00

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Lloyd and Raymona Swortwood Spec House located at 7390 Via Capri as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Lloyd and Raymona Swortwood Spec House located at 7390 Via Capri as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1961-1962 under HRB Criterion C. The designation includes the 1962 addition designed by established Master Architect Russel Forester. The designation excludes the 1962 pool. This recommendation is based on the following finding:

The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics through the retention of character defining features of the Contemporary style and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its 1961-1962 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features a strong flat roof form with wide overhanging eaves, vertical wood siding, floor-to-ceiling fixed and jalousie windows, floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors that emphasize integrating the indoors with the outdoors, an obscured primary entry, a courtyard, and an attached carport.

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. Located on a corner lot, the subject resource consists of a one-story residence with views oriented towards the Pacific Ocean.

The property has not been identified in any historic surveys, as the subject area has not been previously surveyed.

The historic name of the resource, the Lloyd and Raymona Swortwood Spec House, has been identified consistent with the Board's adopted naming policy and reflects the name of Lloyd C. and Raymona C. Swortwood, who constructed the house as a speculation house.

ANALYSIS

A Historical Resource Research Report was prepared by Scott A. Moomjian, which concludes that the resource is significant under HRB Criterion C, and staff concurs. This determination is consistent with the [*Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria*](#), as follows.

CRITERION C - Embodies distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period or method of construction or is a valuable example of the use of natural materials or craftsmanship.

The subject property was built in 1961, with an addition and pool constructed in 1962. The building is single-story in height with a horizontal massing and is oriented parallel to Via Capri. The floor plan is irregular, and the overall form is asymmetrical. The property features a flat roof with widely overhanging eaves. The house is clad in vertical wood siding and stucco. A recessed, attached two-vehicle carport is located on the east elevation, facing the street.

The east (northeast) elevation features the driveway, the recessed primary entrance, and hardscaping. A prominent flat overhang projects from the façade, forming the carport cover. A series of posts support this flat overhang. Two rectangular roof penetrations are directly before the entrance door, allowing in natural light. This floor-to-ceiling door is flanked on one side by a sidelite. Along this elevation towards the north, a "garden room" without a roof cover is present and connected to the master bedroom. This garden room is surrounded by tall wood-siding-clad walls. Lastly, a floor-to-ceiling sliding glass door is present along the southern portion of the façade.

The north (northwest) elevation features a similar roof projection which forms an overhang. This façade comprises almost entirely of floor-to-ceiling windows, a character-defining feature, thus creating a window wall. A wood-siding-clad wall projects from this elevation and extends into the backyard. The southwest and southeast (courtyard) elevations feature expanses of floor-to-ceiling glass, including fixed glazing, louvered windows, and sliding glass doors. The subject property's design underscores a strong indoor-outdoor connection.

The courtyard facades of the 1962 bedroom addition are clad in stucco and exhibit comparatively restrained glass use. The design is compatible yet differentiated from the original construction. Because this addition was designed by established Master Architect Russel Forester and was built less than a year after the construction of the original portion of the house, it is included in the period of significance. The 1962 pool has been modified and does not contribute to the Contemporary style and is therefore excluded from designation.

Modifications to the property include the 1962 addition, pool, and hardscape improvements; the 1981 fireplace addition; Undated changes include the infilling of the northeast elevation "utility court" space and the painting of the originally unpainted wood siding. Between 2021 and 2023, Historical Resources staff approved a remodel project comprised of interior modifications and a new exterior door opening on the northeast elevation. The owner also restored a jalousie window, replaced the roof, and restored the entrance door. The entry hardscape steps and the courtyard

concrete hardscape have also been modified recently, and the pool was resurfaced. Overall, these modifications do not significantly impair the integrity of design, materials, workmanship, or feeling as it relates to HRB Criterion C.

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.

Significance Statement: The house continues to convey the historic significance of the Contemporary style by embodying the historic characteristics associated with the style; including a strong flat roof form with wide overhanging eaves, vertical wood siding, floor-to-ceiling fixed and jalousie windows, floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors that emphasize integrating the indoors with the outdoors, an obscured primary entry, a courtyard, 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.

The subject property at 7390 Via Capri was designed by Roger Matthews and built by Richard L. Hamlin. Neither Roger Matthews nor Richard Hamlin have been established by the Historical Resources Board as a Master Architect, Designer or Builder, and there is insufficient information to designate them as such at this time. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion D for Roger Matthews or Richard L. Hamlin.

The building includes a 1962 addition designed by established Master Architect Russel Forester. However, the addition's small scale and simple design do not represent a notable work of Forester's. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion D for Master Architect Russel Forester.

According to a 1970 *Sunset Magazine* article, the site contains a landscape design by Wimmer and Yamada (landscape designer Harriett Wimmer and established Master Landscape Architect Joseph Y. Yamada). However, because little to no plant materials from this period remain, the landscape retains very little integrity. Therefore, staff does not recommend designation under HRB Criterion D for Master Landscape Architect Joseph Y. Yamada.

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 Lloyd and Raymona Swortwood Spec House located at 7390 Via Capri be designated with a period of significance of 1961-1962 under HRB Criterion C. The designation includes the 1962 addition designed by established Master Architect Russel Forester. The designation excludes the 1962 pool.



Alvin Lin
Assistant Planner



Suzanne Segur
Senior Planner/ HRB Liaison
Development Services Department

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Attachment(s):

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

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON 3/23/2023

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 3/23/2023, to consider the historical designation of the Lloyd and Raymona Swortwood Speculation House (owned by Justin M. Rutherford C/O C B Kriebel, PO Box 9096, San Diego, CA 92038) located at **7390 Via Capri, San Diego, CA 92037**, APN: **352-165-05-00**, further described as LOT 24 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 Lloyd and Raymona Swortwood Spec 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 a good level of architectural integrity from its 1961-1962 period of significance. Specifically, the resource features a strong flat roof form with wide overhanging eaves, vertical wood siding, floor-to-ceiling fixed and jalousie windows, floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors that emphasize integrating the indoors with the outdoors, an obscured primary entry, a courtyard, 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.

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 include the 1962 addition designed by established Master Architect Russel Forester.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the designation shall exclude the 1962 pool.

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: MARA W. ELLIOTT,
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: _____
LINDSEY SEBASTIAN,
Deputy City Attorney

RECORDING REQUESTED BY
CITY OF SAN DIEGO
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

WHEN RECORDED MAIL TO

HISTORICAL RESOURCES BOARD
ATTN: HRB SECRETARY
1222 FIRST AVENUE, MS 501
SAN DIEGO, CA 92101

SPACE ABOVE THIS LINE FOR RECORDER'S USE

RESOLUTION NUMBER **N/A**

HISTORICAL DESIGNATION OF PROPERTY ON

7390 Via Capri, San Diego, CA 92037

ASSESSOR PARCEL NUMBER **352-165-05-00**

HISTORICAL RESOURCES BOARD NUMBER **0**