

HISTORIC RESOURCE COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

Regular Meeting

April 4, 2007

The regular meeting of the Coronado Historic Resource Commission was called to order at 3:11 p.m., Wednesday, April 4, 2007, at the Coronado City Hall Council Chambers, 1825 Strand Way, Coronado, California, by Chairperson MacCartee.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Commissioners Crenshaw, Herron, MacCartee, O'Brien and Wilson

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Ann McCaull, Associate Planner
Martha L. Alvarez, Recording Secretary

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

There was no separate Director's Report.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS AND OTHER MATTERS

Chairperson MacCartee reported that an article appeared in the Sunday paper about an inventory taking place uptown. The inventory contains about 4,000 homes on the list.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

NOI 4-07 **STANLEY AND ELIZABETH PARKER FAMILY TRUST** – Notice of Intent to Demolish the single family residence addressed as 723 A Avenue and located in the R-1A (Single Family Residential) Zone.

Director McCaull introduced the staff report as outlined in the agenda. In accordance with Chapter 70.22 of the Municipal Code, a "Notice of Intent to Demolish" Permit application is required to be filed with the City for the proposed demolition of a structure that is 75-years of age or older. The purpose of the application and public hearing is for the Commission to determine whether the structure to be demolished meets the criteria to be deemed a historic resource and if there would be opportunities for saving the structure rather than demolition. If the structure does not meet the criteria, then the applicant can proceed with demolition.

The application notes that the property has been on the market for over two years. While the original intent was to save the dwelling, most potential buyers have inquired whether the structure could be demolished. Since the structure is over 75 years of age, the owners have filed a Notice of Intent to Demolish Permit Application so that a determination could be made regarding the structure's historical significance and whether the structure could be demolished.

The Stanley and Elizabeth Parker Family Trust is the owner of the property located at 723 A Avenue. The site contains a two story single family dwelling with an attached carport and swimming pool in the rear yard. The parcel is 64' wide and 125' deep totaling 8,000 square feet. City records do not indicate when the original dwelling was constructed however a sewer permit was issued for a dwelling in 1903 so it is presumed that the residence is 104 years old.

This property and dwelling are known as being part of the original A. P. Stephens estate, commonly referred to as the Stephens-Terry estate. The estate had over an acre of land and contained a prominent three story dwelling with over 14,000 square feet of living area and a detached carriage and caretaker's house for the man dwelling. The main dwelling, addressed as 711 A Avenue, remains today and is probably one of the most prominent and architecturally significant buildings within the community due to its extraordinary size and architectural uniqueness, and for being designed by noted architects Irving Gill and Will Hebbard.

The structure being considered with the Notice of Intent to Demolish permit application was the carriage and caretaker's house for the significant main dwelling on the estate. City records do not indicate this structure was designed by Gill and Hebbard nor does the Historic Resource Inventory completed by Source Point. However, according to the Journal of San Diego History Volume 33, Number 1 of 1987 prepared by Kathleen Flanigan, her research notes the structure was designed by William Hebbard.

City records indicate alterations have occurred to 723 A Avenue since its original construction. At some point, the structure was altered from a carriage house/caretaker's cottage to become a more livable dwelling. In 1933, a permit was issued for alterations to the dwelling. The owner at that time was General M.O. Terry and the contractor was Emil Johnson. In 1950, a permit was issued to Alex B. Spence to remodel the dwelling. These alterations had a construction cost of \$5,000. In 1964, a permit was issued to repair the dwelling due to fire damage. The owner at the time of these repairs was S. Parker.

It appears the subject property was separated from the original estate in 1952 when a new dwelling was constructed between the prominent residence and modified carriage house. The construction of the new dwelling between the two structures significantly altered the original estate compound and configuration. Additionally, the new structure constructed between the two older buildings had a completely different architectural style and was very incompatible with the design of the original homes on the estate furthering the demise of the original estate grounds.

The Historic Resource Inventory completed in the 1980's by Source Point gave this building a historical value rating of 2H. A rating of 2 indicated the structure should be a candidate for inclusion on the Coronado Historical Register and was built before 1942; was in excellent physical condition; was almost entirely unmodified from original exterior appearance; had substantial architectural significance; and would qualify as a contributing structure to a potential historic district. The "H" designation indicated the structure was listed on the Coronado Historical Association's Register.

The applicant, Susan Probasco, 16 Montego Court, gave a brief overview of the request and made herself available to answer questions. Ms. Probasco said she does not want to tear down the house but instead would like to find someone who could bring it to a livable standard of what most people would want if they moved into the home. Ms. Probasco said she is referring to the

wiring, plumbing and brick work, which was built with sand from the beach. All the bricks are now losing the grout in between them so one can actually see inside the home between the bricks and the woodwork. Also, the upstairs room configurations were not originally bedrooms but instead contained a kitchen, dining room, living room and one or two bedrooms. For example, some of the rooms do not have closets. The question is how does one take the space and reconfigure it so that it can be used to build a nice upstairs area or single family dwelling. In addition, all the downstairs floors were never leveled out. To remodel the kitchen would require that the floor be raised to make it even with the other floors. This may be one of the reasons that when persons visit the house, they comment that they would like to tear down the house and start over.

Vice Chair Wilson asked if the existing large windows were where the garage used to be located.

Ms. Probasco said yes.

Commissioner Herron asked if the house has been on the market for two years.

Ms. Probasco said the house has been on the market since July of 2005.

Commissioner Herron asked the applicant if she was aware of historically sensitive realtors that have persons interested in buying historic homes.

Ms. Probasco said that their agent is interested in historic homes and has been trying to convince persons to remodel instead of demolish.

Vice Chair Wilson said there are realtors who specialize in selling older houses.

Ms. Probasco said she would pass this information on to her agent. Ms. Probasco said that the main issue is that the house needs to be sold.

Vice Chair Wilson asked if the applicant has considered lowering the price.

Ms. Probasco said that the selling price is the same as comparable houses that were selling about four or five years ago. There have been some offers from potential buyers contingent upon having a demolish permit. The structure was not originally a home so much of it is very dysfunctional in terms of a person's modern day way of wanting to have things in the home.

Chairperson MacCartee asked if the home was rented out.

Ms. Probasco said that her son and his wife are living in the home as caretakers before leaving overseas.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no members of the public wishing to speak at this time.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

Vice Chair Wilson said it is a wonderful house and it concerns her that it may be torn down because it is an intrinsic part of the other house even if it is no longer adjacent to the other house. She feels that the house is historically important.

Commissioner Herron agreed and said that she believes there are persons who want to maintain, refurbish or restore an older home. She feels that the applicant should be able to find a buyer.

Commissioner Crenshaw agreed and said that it is a structure that equates to Coronado's historic homes and she would be very concerned if they did not keep it.

Commissioner O'Brien said that his firm has taken a look at the house to see if it is a potential restoration project. He finds the property very intriguing and shares the owners' concerns about the functionality of the house. However, he feels that it could be made functional. He understands the applicant's needs but also feels that this is an important house. Mr. O'Brien suggested that the item be continued to the next Commission meeting in order to give the applicant time to consider other options.

Chairperson MacCartee agreed and said that there are many benefits available should the applicant wish to consider designating the home as an historic resource. Ms. MacCartee asked the applicant if she would like to continue the item for two weeks in order to consider other possible option.

Ms. Probasco agreed with the Commission however she wishes to resolve this matter as soon as possible because of limited resources and a pending equity loan that must be repaid.

Vice Chair Wilson asked if the applicant could rent out the house for the summer.

Ms. Probasco said it was a consideration but would require too much of a financial investment in order to make it rentable.

Commissioner O'Brien asked the applicant if she would agree to continue the item for two weeks.

Ms. Probasco said she was agreeable with continuing the item for two weeks.

Vice Chair Wilson said it was in the applicant's best interest to wait more than two weeks because the sense of the Commission would be to deny the request.

Ms. Probasco asked about what property owners do with houses that cannot be torn down and do not sell.

Chairperson MacCartee said that if the Commission denies the request, the applicant has the option of appealing the decision to the City Council.

COMMISSION ACTION

CHAIRPERSON MACCARTEE MADE A MOTION TO CONTINUE THE ITEM TO THE NEXT REGULAR HISTORIC RESOURCE MEETING OF APRIL 18, 2007, TO ALLOW TIME FOR THE OWNER TO EXPLORE OTHER POSSIBLE OPTIONS FOR THE STRUCTURE.

COMMISSIONER HERRON SECONDED THE MOTION.

AYES: Commissioners Crenshaw, Herron, MacCartee, O'Brien, and Wilson.
NAYS: None.
ABSENT: None.
ABSTAIN: None.

The motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

There is a 10-day appeal period.

HAP 6-07 SHAW WAGENER AND DEBORAH HEITZ – Request for Historic Alteration Permit for site changes to the historically designated property addressed as 1156 Isabella Avenue and located in the R-1A (Single Family Residential) Zone to include the addition of 2' tall wrought fencing above the existing 3' tall brick wall along the perimeter of the site. The height of the wall along the front property line also involves exceptions to the zoning ordinance.

Director McCaull introduced the staff report as outlined in the agenda. On July 6, 2005, the Commission adopted Resolution HR 27-05 approving restoration work to the historic residence along with additions to the dwelling. On November 15, 2006, the Commission approved proposed safety guard rails and building colors for the structure. As the restoration of the residence has progressed, an additional design element has been proposed for the property which staff has determined requires Commission direction.

F Avenue is considered the front property line for this corner lot. The zoning ordinance restricts the height of fences along the front property line to a maximum of 4' in height. Fences that are setback 5' from the property line are permitted to exceed the 4' height limitation. The proposed alteration to the existing wall does not comply with zoning regulations and requires consideration and approval by the Commission. Additionally, a very small portion of the fence will be located in the sight triangle required for residential corner lots where fences are constructed. The site triangle requirement is intended to provide improved pedestrian and vehicular safety at corner locations by minimizing the vertical obstructions above 3' in height in the site triangle. The area of encroachment is quite small and given the openness of the wrought iron along with the stop sign location off F Avenue does not appear to be a significant safety issue by Engineering.

A letter was received via email by Carl Stoley, who lives on an adjoining property, who indicated a general preference that no wrought iron be used. However, if wrought iron is added, he expressed concern that additional vegetation may be planted and would obscure his ocean view. Director McCaull said that there is no view corridor ordinance and typically they do not

monitor vegetation on private property as it is administratively very difficult to monitor.

The applicant's representative, Russ Prentice, Tekton Master Builders, 1013 Park Place, gave a brief overview of the project and made himself available to answer questions. Mr. Prentice said that the applicants have expressed concern about the heavy foot traffic during the summer although they do not have huge security concerns. However, they would like more of a barrier other than a 3 foot wall. They are proposing that the proposed safety guard rails be black in color.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Bruce Coons, Executive Director of Save Our Heritage Organization, 2476 San Diego Avenue, asked if this was a Mills Act property.

Director McCaull said it was not; however, the applicant has submitted a Mills Act application, and on the Commission's next agenda, they will be requesting a special exception to the Mills Act Program, which will be considered by City Council.

Mr. Coons said that most Mills Act contracts require public visibility of the resources. This type of request would violate the spirit of the Mills Act and encourages plantings behind it that would obscure the building. Many Mills Act jurisdictions regulate plantings including the City of San Diego. Mr. Coons asked that the Commission deny the request.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

Vice Chair Wilson said she did not think the request was a good idea. Based on the Prairie architectural style, which is quite severe, and the fact that it is a Gill house, she feels that adding wrought iron to this type of architecture would be a big mistake. She would not be inclined to approve the request.

Commissioner Herron said she has never been in favor of wrought iron. She concurs with Vice Chair Wilson.

Commissioner Crenshaw agreed.

Commissioner O'Brien said that no property owner in Coronado has taken a stronger effort in preserving a house than the applicants. Mr. O'Brien said that the applicants bought into the program and have far exceeded his expectations on what anyone would do with this property. Further, Ocean Boulevard is a nightmare during the summer as a homeowner. In addition, the house is under the Mills Act program at this time. He said that considering everything the applicants have done and their circumstances on the street in that location, he will support their request.

Vice Chair Wilson said that the Commission has given the applicant many benefits and feels that the applicant has had much support from the Commission.

Commissioner Herron said she understood the privacy issue of Ocean Boulevard. It is a very difficult location during those few months; however, she feels there may be an alternative to wrought iron.

Chairperson MacCartee said that consideration should be given to the property owners so that they can comfortably live in their homes. When the wall was built, Ocean Boulevard was not a thoroughfare as it is today. Ms. MacCartee said she did not feel that the applicant was asking for too much and consideration should be given to the home's location.

Commissioner Crenshaw said one will still be able to view the home because there is space between the house and the fence.

Commissioner Herron said she was not concerned with the view and understands that privacy is a quality of life issue. She is not pleased with the wrought iron.

Vice Chair Wilson said she thought it was a safety issue.

Chairperson MacCartee said there is wrought iron on the balcony.

Mr. Prentice said that the wrought iron on the balcony is a life safety issue. This is primarily security driven. The choice for wrought iron was because one can see through it. One of the problems of the wall is that it is the perfect sitting height.

Chairperson MacCartee asked about lowering the height of the wall so that one cannot sit on the wall.

Vice Chair Wilson said she did not like the wrought iron.

Commissioner Herron said that she could live with the height being 5 feet as long as there is no shrubbery or growth on it.

Mr. Prentice asked if 18 inches in height would be more acceptable.

Commissioner Crenshaw asked about the shrubbery.

Mr. Prentice said he has had a running dialogue with the neighbor. There was an issue with the trellis and fountain and it has been successfully resolved. Mr. Prentice agreed that he would review with the neighbor any proposed plantings.

Commissioner Crenshaw asked if his intent was to cover the wrought iron with vines.

Mr. Prentice said no.

Vice Chair Wilson asked if a caveat could be given that there be no planting.

Chairperson MacCartee said yes, although she understands it is difficult to regulate.

Commissioner Herron said that the wrought iron fence could be softened with planting so that

the wrought iron is not a standout.

Mr. Prentice said that planting would also block the property owner's view. He understands that the proposed planting is low.

Commissioner O'Brien asked if the wrought iron fence design, a Jansen picket with spear, would have been appropriate for a fence 100 years ago.

Mr. Prentice said that it is solid but would have to ask the architect.

Chairperson MacCartee asked about the color of the railing on the building.

Mr. Prentice said it is proposed to be black but the applicant did not feel that it was working very well and suggested a gray color.

Director McCaull said that when the Commission approved the railing for the building, a brown color was approved.

Mr. Prentice agreed.

Commissioner Crenshaw said that the railing should be a brown color.

COMMISSION ACTION

COMMISSIONER CRENSHAW MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE HAP 6-07 REQUEST FOR HISTORIC ALTERATION PERMIT FOR SITE CHANGES TO THE HISTORICALLY DESIGNATED PROPERTY ADDRESSED AS 1156 ISABELLA AVENUE TO INCLUDE THE ADDITION OF 2' TALL WROUGHT FENCING ABOVE THE EXISTING 3' TALL BRICK WALL ALONG THE PERIMETER OF THE SITE, AS SUBMITTED, WITH THE CONDITION THAT THE WROUGHT IRON COLOR IS BROWN.

THE FOLLOWING FINDINGS WERE MADE:

- A. THAT THE PROPOSED ALTERATION IS CONSISTENT WITH THE PURPOSE AND INTENT OF THIS CHAPTER, THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION ELEMENT AND THE GENERAL PLAN.
- B. THE PROPOSED ALTERATION WILL NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE HISTORICAL, ARCHITECTURAL OR AESTHETIC VALUE OF THE HISTORIC RESOURCE.
- C. THE PROPOSED ALTERATION WILL RETAIN THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS THAT MAKE THE HISTORIC RESOURCE SIGNIFICANT.
- D. THE PROPOSED ALTERATION WILL NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE HISTORIC RESOURCE'S RELATIONSHIP TO ITS SURROUNDINGS AND NEIGHBORING HISTORIC RESOURCES.
- E. THE PROPOSED ALTERATION WILL COMPLY WITH THE SECRETARY OF INTERIOR'S STANDARDS AS SET FORTH IN SECTION 106 OF THE NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT OF 1966.

COMMISSIONER O'BRIEN SECONDED THE MOTION.

AYES: Commissioners Crenshaw, Herron, O'Brien, and MacCartee.
NAYS: Commissioner Wilson.
ABSENT: None.
ABSTAIN: None.

The motion passed with a vote of 4-1.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

HR 14-04 CITY OF CORONADO – Discussion regarding Draft Demolition Permit Review List to replace the existing Ordinance that uses a 75-year criteria as a trigger mechanism for the Notice of Intent to Demolish Permit process. This List includes single family, multiple family, and non-residential properties.

The Commission proceeded to review the list of potential properties and made a determination as to which properties should be kept, reviewed further, or eliminated from the list.

Public Comment

Bruce Coons, Executive Director, SOHO, 51 Aruba Bend, suggested that the Commission visit residences located on B and C Avenues.

Commission Discussion

Commission discussion ensued.

Commission Action

The Commission adopted the Mission Statement with the approved changes.

VICE CHAIR MACCARTEE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MISSION STATEMENT AS SUBMITTED.

AYES: Commissioners Crenshaw, Herron, O'Brien, MacCartee and Wilson.
NAYS: None.
ABSENT: None.
ABSTAIN: None.

COMMISSIONER CRENSHAW SECONDED THE MOTION.

The motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

The Commission agreed to visit the residences located at 333, 334, 340, 448, 510, 534, 555, 577, 653, and 856 B Avenue, and 156, 425, 545, 551, 555, 569, 641, and 823 C Avenue, as well as the Catholic Church, to determine if these properties should be added to the List.

The Commission agreed to visit all properties listed on Churchill Place and Encino Row for review at the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:59 p.m.

Tony A Peña
Director of Community Development