

HISTORIC RESOURCE COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES

Regular Meeting

February 15, 2006

The regular meeting of the Coronado Historic Resource Commission was called to order at 3:02 p.m., Wednesday, February 15, 2006, at the Coronado City Hall Council Chambers, 1825 Strand Way, Coronado, California, by Chairperson Keith.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Commissioners Draper, Herron, Keith, MacCartee, and Wilson

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of January 4, 2006, were approved as amended.

The special minutes of January 13, 2006, were approved as amended.

The minutes of January 18, 2006, were approved as amended.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. McCaull reported that about one year ago, the Commission reviewed a request for a Notice of Intent to Demolish permit application for the property at 803 San Luis Rey, a very small cottage. The Commission at that time made a finding that the home did not meet the criteria to be designated as an Historic Resource, allowing for the future demolition of the home. It was indicated by the property owner that he would try to find a location within the community to relocate the structure. He has been unsuccessful and he will be proceeding very soon with the demolition request.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS AND OTHER MATTERS

There were no members of the audience wishing to speak.

Chairperson Keith thanked those Commissioners that were present at the dedication of the plaque to Patty Schmidt and Sally Krummenacher in Centennial Park. Public Services Director Huth was present at the dedication and asked that the Historic Resource Commission create wording for plaques in other historic parks in town. She indicated that Vice Chair MacCartee would communicate this information to Mr. Huth. The City will then have the plaques made and installed in the historic parks.

## PUBLIC HEARINGS

**HR 1-06**     **MR. AND MRS. MARTIN BROWN** – Request for Historic Designation of the single family residence addressed as 834 Tolita Avenue and located in the R-1A (Single Family Residential) Zone.

This item was deferred to later in the meeting.

**HRPA 1-06**   **MONTALBANO FAMILY TRUST** – Request for Historic Resource Preservation Agreement for the historically designated property addressed as 541 Ocean Boulevard and located in the R-1A (Single Family Residential) Zone.

Ms. McCaull introduced the staff report as outlined in the agenda. On November 16, 2005, the property was designated as an historic resource - the 70<sup>th</sup> residence within the community. One of the benefits of having property designated historic is that the property owner can apply for the Mills Act Agreement, which is entered into between the property owner and the City, where the owner agrees to preserve the home for at least a 10-year period of time and in exchange the property owner is entitled to property tax reductions. The Commission considers the proposed improvements for the structure during the 10-year period, with the recommendation going to City Council, who then makes the final decision on the Historic Preservation Mills Act Agreement. During the course of this agreement, the applicant is not proposing significant improvements. Much restoration has recently occurred on the property. The applicant is proposing to power-wash the home every two years or so. When the Mills Act Program was adopted by Council, a fiscal cap was placed on the program, which means that only a certain number of applications can be accommodated each year. The fiscal cap is \$10,000. With this agreement, the City would see an estimated property tax revenue reduction of about \$3,500. There is a backlog of 18 applications for Council approval and this agreement would be added to the list. The Commission tries to accommodate as many applications each year given the date the agreement was submitted, the historical significance of the property and lastly, the fiscal impact on the City.

Dr. Frank Montalbano, 541 Ocean Boulevard, stated that after obtaining historic designation, his family decided to strengthen their belief that this home should be preserved for a long period of time. By applying for the Mills Act, he feels he is guaranteeing another ten years of preservation to his home. In addition, the tax benefits gained by the Mills Act will no doubt act as an incentive for future potential buyers to continue to support the preservation agreement.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

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

## COMMISSION DISCUSSION

None.

COMMISSION ACTION

COMMISSIONER DRAPER MADE A MOTION TO FORWARD THE HISTORIC RESOURCE PRESERVATION AGREEMENT APPLICATION TO THE CITY COUNCIL WITH THE APPROVED LIST OF IMPROVEMENTS FOR 541 OCEAN BOULEVARD (HRPA 1-06) AS FOLLOWS: GENERAL MAINTENANCE OF THE RESIDENCE.

COMMISSIONER KEITH SECONDED THE MOTION.

AYES: Commissioners Draper, Herron, Keith, MacCartee and Wilson.  
NAYS: None.  
ABSENT: None.  
ABSTAIN: None.

The motion passed 5-0.

**HR 1-06**     **MR. AND MRS. MARTIN BROWN** – Request for Historic Designation of the single family residence addressed as 834 Tolita Avenue and located in the R-1A (Single Family Residential) Zone.

Chairperson Keith stated she would be stepping down from the dais as she lives within 300 feet of the affected property under discussion. Vice Chair MacCartee chaired the meeting.

Ms. McCaull introduced the staff report as outlined in the agenda. Mr. and Mrs. Brown are the current owners of the property. The site is 40' wide and 80' deep, totaling 3,200 square feet. The site does not have alley access. It contains a two story residence with an attached garage. The owners are applying for historic designation. If they do receive historic designation, they plan to return before the Commission and apply for an Alteration Permit for some improvements to the dwelling including an expansion on the second story and a roof deck. The roof deck would not comply with current Code requirements and they would be requesting some relief from the Code regulations. The home was built in 1913; it is 93 years old. City records do not clearly identify the contractor or the architect of record. There was an inventory completed in the 1980 of over 1,300 homes and that inventory indicated that the Davis Brothers were the contractors but it is not clear whether they were the contractors for the dwelling or the contractors for the sewer permit that was issued at that time. There have been a few alterations to the home. In 1917, a sleeping porch was added to the residence, and in 1934 a permit was issued for some alterations to the dwelling. It is not clear whether the alterations occurred to the exterior or the interior of the home. In 1976, a permit was issued for interior remodeling. The home has a Craftsman bungalow architectural style with exterior wood shingles with windows with trim, exposed rafter tails, and open front porch. The application notes that the second floor exhibits the "airplane bungalow" character.

The applicant, Martin Brown, 834 Tolita Avenue, clarified that the home is owned by the family trust and was purchased about two years ago. They would like to retain the home as close as it is to its current look, however, some upgrades are necessary. The second floor does not have heat and it is very uncomfortable and cold in the winter. It is about 1,300 square feet and is not suitable for his family. They would like to expand it and keep it consistent with the original design. They are also proposing to add a roof deck to the rear of the home and have been

working with architect Kevin Rugee since July, 2005.

Commissioner Herron asked if the roof deck was the only remodel to the house.

Mr. Brown responded no, he is proposing to add 280 square feet of additional space, so that the back half of the second floor would be expanded the full width of the house.

Commissioner Herron said that in the past, she has tried to focus on the privacy of the individuals in the neighborhood. Mr. Brown's roof deck overlooks two of the neighbors' homes. Ms. Herron asked if Mr. Brown would consider eliminating the proposed roof deck.

Mr. Brown said that the proposed roof deck was not the major part of the remodel. He said there are many other roof decks in the neighborhood and he would like to have a roof deck and thinks it is consistent with other homes in the neighborhood. He does not feel that the roof deck should be an issue in terms of whether it looks down on other people's back yards because the second floor already does.

Commissioner Herron stated she would not be granting a variance because she did not feel that the roof deck was pivotal in order to get the most quality of life from his home.

Mr. Brown asked Commissioner Herron if the roof deck was affecting the ability for the home to be designated as historical.

Commissioner Herron stated her understanding is that Mr. Brown is coming before the Commission with a request for historic designation with a caveat.

Vice Chair MacCartee asked if the Commission could first address whether the structure meets the criteria for historic designation. If designated, she understands that the applicant would then be returning before the Commission for alterations. The Commission, at this meeting, can give the applicant a preliminary review about future proposed alterations. The applicant can then decide if he wishes to pursue historic designation.

Mr. Brown clarified that historical designation is not the most important issue for them. The most important issue is to try to maintain the look of the home - historical designation is secondary. What he is asking for is to have a roof deck at the rear of the property instead of the front of the property as it does make a difference. He feels it is important to talk about the designation and alterations at the same time. The issue is not so much the historical designation as it is whether they can obtain a variance on where they would like to place the roof deck. If they cannot, he will look at other alternatives.

Commissioner Wilson stated she felt there was a misunderstanding from the beginning. She referred to the letter to the Commission signed by Mr. and Mrs. Brown, which states, "If the home cannot be designated as historic because of the nature of the changes we are proposing..." and said that it has nothing to do with whether or not the Commission declares the home historic.

Declaring it historic today is very important to the Commission. For that reason, what he plans to do in the future does not have nearly as much bearing as what the Commission needs to find in order to find it historic – and that is why they are here today.

Vice Chair MacCartee said that the Commission has never had an applicant appear with this type of a request where one issue hinges on the other for designation. She requested an opportunity to hear from the architect and the public, and then discuss it further.

The architect, Kevin Rugee, 1024 Isabella Avenue, clarified that the applicant is asking, first, for comments on whether the house meets the requirements to be designated historic. Second, he is asking for feedback on the proposed design. He does not expect that a decision must be made today. He and the applicant have reviewed many design options. He understands that the current zoning allows residents to have roof decks. The owner is entitled to have that. He is not entitled to have the roof deck pushed back as far as they are proposing and the reason they are proposing the roof deck to be pushed back is so that they don't significantly change the look of the house. There will be a stair that is visible and there may be other options with regarding to the location of the stair. The home is a charming, small bungalow and the applicant wishes to enhance that look.

Commissioner Wilson said that it was her understanding that the RSIP criteria standard prohibited roof decks within the setback.

Mr. Rugee clarified that what the RSIP did was push the location of the allowable roof deck that one could build to the front of the lot. Previously a person could place the roof deck anywhere over the footprint of the house. What the RSIP did was push it forward. The requirement is fifty percent of the lot depth, so one has to come from the rear of the property forward 40 feet before one can have a roof deck.

Commissioner Wilson said that the reason the RSIP was changed was for privacy reasons.

Mr. Rugee agreed.

Commissioner Draper asked if Mr. Rugee had talked to the applicant's neighbors about the proposed roof deck.

Mr. Rugee said that question was better directed to the applicant; he had not personally spoken with the neighbors.

Commissioner Herron thanked Mr. Rugee for the informative letter regarding the "airplane bungalow." She feels that this home is historic and we are very lucky to have it in our community. She asked if the proposed roof deck and stairway stand out and are different from the rest of the structure.

Mr. Rugee agreed and said that one can see the stair. They are trying to place the stair in a location where they can access the roof deck without having to go through an adjoining bedroom.

They looked at different locations for the stair and the one location the applicant chose was running it out on the side of the building. There may be some design compromises to make the stair less visible.

Commissioner Draper said she also appreciated the information. She feels it is a charming cottage and would like to see it designated historic. She asked if Mr. and Mrs. Brown chose not to go in that direction and they want to proceed with the roof deck, would they need a variance and how would proceed to obtain that variance?

Mr. Rugee responded that they would have to push the roof deck forward – something they do not wish to do as they do not want to change the look of the home.

Ms. McCaull clarified that once a property is designated historic, one of the benefits is that the applicant can apply to the Commission to obtain relief from the Code. The decision is made based on how compatible it is with the existing dwelling. On the other hand, if the property is not designated historic, they could apply to the Planning Commission for a variance for relief from the Code, but there are State law findings that have to be met in order for that variance to be granted. One has to show that the property is unique due to its size, location warranting special relief from the Code, and that the granting of the variance would not be a special privilege others in the vicinity do not enjoy. It is much more difficult to get a variance based upon that required criteria than it is if a home is designated historic and they go before the Commission.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Sally Krummenacher, 1104 Isabella Avenue, said that her property abuts the Brown property at its rear 40' depth. Although the existing garage has always presented a zero side yard setback at the rear of their property, she and her husband are in favor of designating the property as an historic resource. It appears to be a fine example of the cottage type housing so representative of historic Coronado. Mr. Rugee has prepared a sensitive and tasteful second floor addition enhancing the property and has the charm of the airplane bungalow. They do, however, reject the provision for the roof deck and outside stair on the left side of the structure because it will compromise the privacy of both neighbors on the adjoining two lots.

Michael Iverson, 1100 Isabella Avenue, said that their property abuts the Brown property. He agrees with the Krummenachers about the sensitivity to privacy. However, he feels that the option of placing the roof deck in the front of the home would change the appearance and he would rather support historic designation and the proposed roof deck.

#### COMMISSION DISCUSSION

Commissioner Wilson expressed concern that future changes of the property was being tied into the minds of both the audience and the Commissioner to whether or not the home was declared historic. She was more concerned whether the home met the standards to be declared historic; she did not feel it did as it only meets the age criteria.

Commissioner Herron stated that she would like to designate the home as historic.

Commissioner Draper said that the home meets the criteria to be designated historic. It exemplifies the special elements of the City's social and architectural, economic view. It is also one of the few remaining examples of distinctive characteristics of a style that has not been substantially altered.

Vice Chair MacCartee said that she agreed with Commissioners Draper and Herron. She finds that the home meets the criteria because of its architectural style and because it reflects not only the architectural history of Coronado, but the social and cultural history as well. She asked the Commissioners to comment on their preliminary views on whether or not the alterations would be acceptable.

Commissioner Wilson said that she would not support future alteration as presented today.

Commissioner Herron stated that she would not support future alterations as presented today.

Commissioner Draper said that she would not support future alterations as presented today.

Vice Chair MacCartee asked the Commissioners where they would find the room to compromise or discuss – would it be the staircase or the roof deck?

Commissioner Herron responded that she felt strongly about the roof deck and privacy issues.

Commissioner Herron said that she had concerns about the roof deck and stairwell but agreed with the applicant and architect's view that having the roof deck in the front would destroy the look of the house in the front. She was open to considering a different alternative.

Vice Chair MacCartee asked Mr. Brown if he wished to continue the item for two weeks.

Mr. Brown responded yes, he would like to continue the item.

The item was continued to the next meeting of March 1, 2006. No action was taken.

#### MISCELLANEOUS

None.

#### DISCUSSION ITEMS

##### **Discussion regarding the Historic Preservation Program (no report)**

Ms. McCaull commented that the overall focus of the Historic Preservation Program is how it relates to the draft Demolition Permit Review List that was created. There was to be a public meeting on the List and that meeting was cancelled. Through the direction of the City Council, the Commission is being asked to go back and take another look at the List. The List currently contains over 600 properties. The City Council wants the Commission to do a number of things: (1) Remove all properties from the list that are less than 75 years old (over 100 properties would be removed); (2) Further reduce the number of homes on the list (the City Council was originally anticipating about 250 or more properties); (3) All Commissioners are able to participate in the

deliberations for the list. Given the amount of interest by the public about the List, they may go back to the current process which states that if a home is 75 years or older, they are subject to the Demolition Permit process. The Commission originally communicated to the City Council that the process was working and the City Council asked the Commission for a List. She has received over 40 inquiries by the public – some persons did not want their homes on the list, others did, and some just asked for information on the process. She did encourage persons that did not want their homes on the list to send a letter to staff which would be shared with the Commission. She has received 11 letters from property owners to be taken off the list.

Commissioner Wilson asked Ms. McCaull when she was given direction because the City Council has not met on this issue and it has not been discussed in public.

Ms. McCaull said she was recently given direction by the City Manager's office.

Commissioner Wilson asked how the number of properties can be reduced because it is a moving target. She felt that the public should have an opportunity to express their opinion/concerns.

Chairperson Keith asked that the item be placed on the next agenda. She clarified that research has not been done on every home on the list as it is very time consuming. She suggested a brief look at which homes meet the 75-year age criteria or significantly historic in some manner. She also said that the City Council had authorized that the Commission look at the Source Point as a basis for updating the list to assist in the criteria. She asked staff to bring back an updated list.

Commissioner Herron commented that the alternative is to keep the process the same.

Commissioner Wilson said that the easiest way to update the list is to remove all properties 75 years of age and newer. The next step is to make the public aware is that the list only reflects a "potential" for historic designation. The list as it currently stands represents less than 7 percent of the housing stock in Coronado.

Chairperson Keith stated that the information she had received from the City Manager is that the number of homes on the List should be about 250.

### **Discussion regarding the Historic Preservation Newsletter**

Ms. McCaull reminded the Commission that the next newsletter will be distributed in the Coronado Currents in May, 2006. The deadline for the newsletter is March 24.

General discussion ensued on the newsletter format and content.

### **Discussion regarding the Coronado Cottage Conservancy (no report)**

Vice Chair MacCartee invited everyone to attend the Open House at 909 J Avenue, to be held on Sunday, February 26.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:27 p.m.

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Tony A Peña  
Director of Community Development