

HISTORIC RESOURCE COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES

Regular Meeting

November 15, 2006

The regular meeting of the Coronado Historic Resource Commission was called to order at 3:09 p.m., Wednesday, November 15, 2006, at the Coronado City Hall Council Chambers, 1825 Strand Way, Coronado, California, by Chairperson Keith.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Commissioners Draper, Keith, MacCartee and Wilson

MEMBERS ABSENT: Commissioner Herron

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of November 1, 2006 were approved as amended.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

There was no separate Director's Report.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS AND OTHER MATTERS

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

PUBLIC HEARINGS

**HR 19-06**     **STEVEN AND GISELE RENLY** – Request for Historic Designation of the single family residence addressed as 568 I Avenue and located in the R-1AE (Single Family Residential) Zone.

This item was continued, at the applicant's request, to a future meeting.

MISCELLANEOUS

**HAP 3-06**     **WAGENER & HETIZ** – Commission direction regarding proposed safety guard rails and building colors for the historically designated residence addressed as 1156 Isabella Avenue and located in the R-1A (Single Family Residential) Zone.

Ms. McCaull introduced the staff report as outlined in the agenda. Staff is requesting direction regarding the proposed safety guard rails and colors for the historically designated residence. The restoration of the project is proceeding and a few issues have arisen that require direction from the Commission. The first issue regards the property owner's desire to add safety guard rails on top of some existing balconies on the building. Currently, there is a brick wall above the

balcony, but it is only 24 inches tall. Additionally, the width of the brick wall serves as a sitting area. There are legitimate concerns by the property owners and the contractor that someone could sit in that area and fall over. The applicant is proposing that a decorative black metal rail be added to the balcony for a total height of 3 feet above the surface floor of the balcony. The second item regards the color of the building. The Ordinance is not specific as it pertains to colors on historically designated buildings. Usually when a project comes before the Commission with proposed restoration work, there is discussion about colors and materials. With this situation, the owners are contemplating slight changes in the colors, and staff felt it would be appropriate to bring the item before the Commission for input rather than allow the project to proceed.

Chairperson Keith asked if the Building Department has requested that the railings be installed.

Ms. McCaull responded no.

The applicant's representative, Russell Prentice, 1013 Park Place, said he understood that, because of the historic designation, they were exempt from a life safety issue. He has not confirmed this information with the Building Department.

Ms. McCaull said they are able to use the Historic Building Code.

Commissioner Wilson asked if any thought had been given to extending and raising the brick work which would be more consistent with the façade.

Mr. Prentice said it was not considered because it would be such a change to the look of the house.

Commissioner Wilson said that 12 inches of metal would also be a real change.

Vice Chair McCartee said she did not like the idea of extending the brick work because, although she understands the safety issue, she prefers to add something that can be removed.

Commissioner Draper said she understood that the new handrails would be installed around the garage area.

Mr. Prentice said that handrails would be added around the pool area and is included in the plans. It is made of wrought iron and is a spear design.

Commissioner Draper said she did not mind the design as it is within keeping of the structure and can certainly understand the safety issue.

Mr. Prentice said that the idea is to keep it as minimal as possible.

Chairperson Keith said she likes the iron because it shows that it is different from the house. She can understand the safety concerns because 24 inches is significantly low.

Commissioner Wilson asked if the French doors open out on either of the balconies.

Mr. Prentice responded yes.

Commissioner Wilson said she did not want anyone to be unsafe but wished that there were a better solution than installing metal railings.

Mr. Prentice said he understood that the idea was to downplay it as much as possible.

Commissioner Wilson asked about the color of the proposed railing.

Mr. Prentice said it would be black in color, but it could be painted brown as it would probably blend in better.

Commissioner Wilson said she liked the brown or the green.

Chairperson Keith said she liked the brown rather than the green.

Commissioner Wilson asked if it would be powder-coated.

Mr. Prentice said that powder-coating the railings when it is so close to the beach would cause problems. He felt that an epoxy paint would be fine.

Commissioner Draper said she liked the idea about the iron and felt the brown color would be less noticeable.

The Commission agreed that there were no issues in painting the house with the proposed colors.

Commissioner Wilson asked if the green color would be applied to the garage door and the front door.

Mr. Prentice said the owners have decided to keep the front door in the wood finish.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

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

#### COMMISSION DISCUSSION

None.

#### COMMISSION ACTION

COMMISSION DRAPER MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE HAP 3-06 HISTORIC ALTERATION PERMIT, AS SUBMITTED, WITH THE CONDITION THAT THE RAIL IS PAINTED BROWN TO MATCH THE WOOD TRIM EXTERIOR. THE APPLICANT IS REQUIRED TO RETURN BEFORE THE COMMISSION SHOULD ANOTHER COLOR BE PROPOSED.

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 MACCARTEE SECONDED THE MOTION.

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

The motion passed with a vote of 3-0.

**HAP 12-06**    **SUSAN AND SCOTT MCMILLAN** – Commission direction regarding proposed change to windows on rear elevation of the historically designated residence addressed as 1045 Loma Avenue and located in the R-1A (Single Family Residential) Zone.

Ms. McCaull introduced the staff report as outlined in the agenda. This property was designated as an historic resource. The Commission has issued several alteration permits for the site. One of the alteration permits included a condition that any existing wood windows or doors that are replaced be replaced in kind with wood. The owner's representative, Steven McGill contacted staff indicating the owners are interested in changing some of the windows from wood to either metal or vinyl cladding over wood. The owners have narrowed down their request and all of the existing and new windows and doors along Loma Avenue and Star Park would be wood. They are requesting a change of all of the windows along the rear elevation that would not be visible from the public right of way. They would prefer the windows not be wood because the openness to the salt air, wind and rain. The Commission's position in the past has been that if there are wood windows or wood doors on an historic building, they should be changed out in kind. It seems to be very consistent throughout the region. The Commission has allowed for areas of a building that are not visible from the public right-of-way to not have wood. Steve McGill is not present today but he has sent a representative.

The applicant's representative, Guy Oliver, San Diego, displayed two samples of Marvin windows, one with a wood interior/exterior with no cladding, and another made of wood with aluminum cladding on the exterior.

Chairperson Keith asked how many windows were involved.

Mr. Oliver said that the change would involve the entire rear elevation of the house.

Commissioner Draper asked if it would include both stories.

Mr. Oliver responded yes.

Commissioner Keith asked if the reason for the request had to do with maintenance issues.

Mr. Oliver said the request was based on maintenance and performance issues. As the wood windows weather, they tend to warp and become difficult to operate.

Commissioner Wilson asked if this change would include the French doors.

Mr. Oliver responded yes.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

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

#### COMMISSION DISCUSSION

Commissioner Wilson said she was not inclined to agree that cladding is good because the Commission has held other applicants to the standard that was set, which is replacement of wood windows in kind.

Commissioner Draper agreed. This is one of the most prestigious homes in the entire town and the Commission has been consistent in requesting wood windows be replaced in kind. This house demands wood windows on the exterior.

Vice Chair MacCartee agreed. There have been many benefits granted to this home to make it work. She feels it is important to keep the wood windows in order to maintain the integrity of the house.

Chairperson Keith said it has been the policy of the Commission to require wood windows. She did not feel anything was presented showing why there should be an exception to the policy.

#### COMMISSION ACTION

COMMISSIONER WILSON MADE A MOTION TO DENY HAP 12-06 HISTORIC ALTERATION PERMIT, AS SUBMITTED.

THE FOLLOWING FINDINGS WERE MADE:

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

COMMISSIONER DRAPER SECONDED THE MOTION.

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

The motion passed with a vote of 4-0.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

**Discussion regarding the Historically Designated Residence and associated Historic Alteration Permit issued for improvements and restoration work to the residence addressed as 834 Tolita Avenue and located in the R-1A Single Family Residential Zone.**

Chairperson Keith stepped down from the dais during the discussion because she lives within 300 feet of the affected property. Vice Chair MacCartee chaired the meeting.

Ms. McCaull reported that the Commission continued this item from the November 1, 2006, meeting to allow an opportunity for staff to confer with the City Attorney, and for a subcommittee of the Commission to meet with the architect/contractor/owner to discuss possible options as to how the project could be processed.

Based upon input from the City Attorney, staff has had an opportunity to discuss various options available in terms of the project's progression. Due to time constraints the subcommittee was not able to meet with the contractor and architect, but independent discussions did occur. There are a few different options for the Commission's discussion:

Scenario I would allow the contractor to proceed with the project as originally approved allowing for the structural upgrades to the remaining framing of the dwelling including a new foundation as called out on the plans. It would also allow construction of the roof deck as

originally approved. The structure would remain “historic” although simply having the historic designation would not require that the Commission award a historic plaque or that the City Council approve a future Mills Act Agreement. It would not be appropriate or legal for the Commission to allow the Historic Alteration Permit to proceed as originally approved with exceptions to the Code and then act to remove the designation. The designation is necessary to receive the reduced setback for the roof deck. Additionally, the owner has testified that he will build a “new” type of dwelling rather than the current design if the zoning exceptions are not allowed. The current design is compatible in scale and character with the existing neighborhood.

Scenario II would not allow the project to proceed. The Commission would hold a hearing and determine the structure is no longer historic. The finding that the extent of work completed at the site destroyed the historic significance of the structure would trigger environmental review in accordance with the CEQA. Typically the demolition of an historic structure is considered a significant environmental act and triggers an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). This would have financial impacts on the owner of the property to go through the EIR process, and ultimately, the mitigation for the loss of the structure would most likely be to reconstruct the house, as it existed prior to the demolition. This approach causes significant delays and ultimately results in a very similar condition as Scenario I.

Scenario III would involve the complete demolition of an historic resource and the owner would be allowed to build a brand new dwelling including a roof deck. This would also trigger CEQA and the need for an EIR and analysis for appropriate mitigation for the loss of the historic resource. The appropriate mitigation would be determined through the EIR review process and input from the public and a qualified historic consultant would be paid for by the property owner to prepare the EIR.

Scenario IV would allow the owner to demolish the entire structure and then proceed, rather than have the owner structurally retrofit the dwelling as originally called out on the plans. This proposal would represent a change in the circumstances of the project originally approved and would change the type of environmental review that would be completed. The project change would trigger more review than a Categorical Exemption due to the demolition of the structure. The most likely process would be an Environmental Impact Report and incorporation of mitigation measures for the loss of the structure. Most likely the structure would be required to be rebuilt per its original condition.

Staff recommends that the project proceed as outlined in Scenario I, and that this item be scheduled on a future agenda as a discussion item regarding the Commission’s policy with respect to remodels / restoration / demolitions of historically designated structures and the non-issuance of a plaque or Mills Act Agreement.

#### Public Comment

Sally Kruppenacher, 1104 Isabella, said that the integrity of the Commission, the Ordinance that established it and the authority to enforce it are being challenged. The Commission needs to establish a clear and enforceable standard to stop all demolition not specified by a particular alteration permit. Any additional requested demolition must only proceed after authorization by a City inspector. If this Commission approves the unauthorized demolition of an historically

designated structure which had received waivers based on that designation, then the Commission is in a very compromised position. The discussion today will establish a precedent for all future applications.

Kevin Rugee, 1024 Isabella Avenue, said that Scenario I is the most realistic option in order to allow the project to proceed and allow additional demolition to install new framing members, which is imperative. It will also allow the owner to rebuild the home as it originally looked. It will have the wood windows and shingles and will have a new structure. The character of the neighborhood will remain the same. New floor framing will be added to support the existing second floor, which is currently supported by a 2X6 beam, and headers (beams) will be installed above the windows which will require removal of the cripple wall and shorts studs above the window opening with new studs below it. The intention is to keep the existing framing where possible and add new framing next to it. Other than that, the options are minimal. It is a difficult situation but there may be other homes of this vintage which will most likely come before the Commission in the future.

Commissioner Draper asked at what point did the contractor realize that they were exceeding the alteration permit requirements. Was the cause of this situation due to a lack of language in the alteration permit, or was there a point in time where he could of stopped work sooner?

Mr. Rugee responded that there probably was a point but suggested that more definitive criteria on the plans were needed in terms of a note or legion that describes what can or cannot be done. There was a demolition permit to remove all interior finishes. At that point, the problems could have been found and a determination could have been made to return before the Commission. That was not done. It was inevitable with this type of older home that the exterior finishes had to be removed and the home retrofitted. Hopefully, something can be done in the future to make it clearer on the plans. He would be glad to work with staff in developing something like that.

Commissioner Draper asked if the applicant supports Scenario I.

Mr. Rugee said the applicant is present in the audience and supports Scenario I.

Jeanne Bauers, 920 F Avenue, said she was raised in this home, which was in her family for 60 years. She made major repairs to the home in the 1980's including plumbing and wiring. A new porch, roof, chimney, kitchen, and two bathrooms were added. What concerns her most about the proposition is that the owner has stripped the home down to such an extent. This home was meant to be a beach cottage not a mansion so it was never built very sturdy. She does not understand how the owner can maintain historic designation when the house has been torn down.

Ralph Taylor, RB Taylor Construction, 810 Country Club Lane, agreed with Mr. Rugee that a better plan of demarcation is needed in the plans. For example, the plans did not state that he could not remove the shingles. He is not aware of any method to be able to seal up the home from the inside when there is a lack of weatherproofing under the shingles or flashing around the windows. There was one note that stated, "Existing shingles to remain," which pointed to one small area on the side of the house. There were no other notes stating the shingles had to be saved. He felt that the only way to save the building was to take it down to the finishes. He still considers this project a restoration. He will save as much of the old framing which is

considerable. There will be new framing against the old framing to bring it up to today's Code requirements. Headers also need to be added. He feels that 90-95 percent of the roof framing can be saved although there is some rot on the roof that needs to be addressed. He urged the Commission to approve Scenario I.

### Discussion Items

Vice Chair MacCartee said that this is the first time this has happened and new criteria is needed in order to work with these types of small homes. From a historical point of view, many homes in Coronado were not meant to last. They were built as beach cottages and have no basements, or proper foundations. Lumber was difficult to obtain so it was used sparingly. These problems are unique to Coronado's small bungalow and cottages and is a new issue the Commission has had to face. This item will be placed on a future agenda. She would also urge the Commission to consider accepting Mr. Rugee's offer to assist in findings ways to deal with this type of problem in the future.

Commissioner Wilson said her biggest concern with Scenario I is that it proposes no impact on the historic resource. Categorical exemption for CEQA purposes was processed based upon the project having no reasonable possibility of a significant effect on the environment. There has been a significant impact. She agrees that Mr. Taylor is a great builder but he proceeded as if his mission was to build a safe, sturdy new home. She understands that person should not live in an unsafe home but feels the home was safe for all of those years. This cottage was declared historic and she feels that the integrity of the Commission rests on the decision today. If the Commission declares a home historic and the home is torn down and a reproduction is built, the Commission's integrity in giving the historic designation is in question. She also feels that the Commission is not in the reproduction business. She feels that the Code needs to be looked at for demolition permits. According to the Municipal Code, demolition means "any act that destroys in whole or in part the exterior of the historic resource." She cannot believe that Mr. Rugee did not know that. Demolition partial means "pulling down, destruction or removal of a substantial portion of the exterior of the building which defines and contributes to the historic character of the structure." There is language in the Code which requires the owner to return the building, structure, or property to the same condition that it was. The owner cannot do that at this point because that option has been removed. She feels that at a future date, discussion must include penalties. Unfortunately for the owner, the penalty is that their project has been delayed. The Commission's task is to determine what is historic and what is not historic. She contends that they no longer have an historic structure.

Commissioner Draper said this is the first time the Commission has been presented with this type of situation. In the worse case scenario, the owner would rebuild something similar. This would require a great deal of time and the owners and contractors would be "punished." She does not know how much responsibility she has in not allowing them to know more about how far they could proceed. She would certainly want to say that the home would not be allowed an historic plaque or the Mills contract. She would also like to make it very clear in future findings that this would not be a new standard that was being set by the Commission. She is leaning towards Scenario I because she does not feel that they realized the extent of what was happening, and when they did, it was too late.

Vice Chair MacCartee said that during her meeting with Mr. Brown, he offered two choices. One was to save his home and make some changes, including a roof deck. The other choice, if the first choice was not approved, was to demolish the house and rebuild. She felt that the home was worth having the Commission and the owners work together as it would benefit the neighborhood, the immediate neighbors and keep the character of Coronado. She was one of two Commissioners who encouraged the Browns to keep the historic designation and work with the Commission in accomplishing what he wanted to do with his home. Had the contractor, Mr. Taylor, returned before the Commission and communicated that there was an enormous problem, she would have been more than willing to work with him. That did not happen and it made many people very upset. She does not believe that she has hurt the integrity of this Commission and feels that the project should be allowed to continue. These types of homes are very difficult to save. She feels that they are punishing the owners for something that no one saw coming. She understands that the home will no longer be historic in the sense that it will not be the original wood, but she does not see how it could have lasted much longer from what she understands from staff and contractor. She feels the new home will be a good addition to the neighborhood. She supports historic preservation and will support Scenario I.

Commissioner Draper asked if the footprint would remain the same size, with the exception of the roof deck.

Vice Chair MacCartee said that everything the Commission originally approved will be kept.

Commissioner Wilson said that her reference to precedent has been taken personally. She understands that Vice Chair MacCartee is one of the greatest preservationists that they have. However, she still feels that the integrity of the Commission demands that the house be deemed not historic. The architect is paid to know that they should not have taken the home down to the studs. This Commission decides what is historic and what is not historic, and they are left to decide if the studs are historic.

Vice Chair MacCartee asked if it was a better option to completely demolish the home.

Commissioner Wilson said the Commission determined the home was historic. Will the Commission now determine that the home is an historic reproduction?

Vice Chair MacCartee said that it is important to go to a new level. She did not feel that the precedent should be set with Mr. and Mrs. Brown. Once the criteria is spelled out, a precedent can be set. She does not feel that the best option is to demolish the home and punish the owners just to make a point.

Commissioner Draper said that the property owners are awaiting a decision. She will give the owners the benefit of the doubt and hopes that in the next few months, the Commission can develop stringent guidelines.

Joe Dittler, Director of the Coronado Historical Association, 1034 Encino Row, relayed his experience in historic preservation. At the Maritime Museum, he was involved in restoring San Diego's first pilot vessel, built in 1906. The historic vessel had more than 90 percent of the original wood peeled off in order to restore it. From his experience, he understands that

sometimes historic structures must be stripped down in order to restore it.

Michael Iverson, 1100 Isabella, said the house was very rickety. He was not surprised that the shingles were removed because he is familiar with the house. He displayed for the Commission two pieces of shingles. One shingle was very old and worn and the other showed the amount of paint that had previously been applied. He feels that it is unlikely that a good coat of paint could have been applied to the old shingles without stripping them. He also questioned at what point history is lost in the process of an alteration. He feels that the project should go forward.

Ms. McCaull stated for the record that the meeting requires a forum. There are three members present but under the Historic Resource Ordinance, an affirmative vote of three members is required in order for the Commission to take action today.

Commissioner Wilson said that she found Mr. Iverson's comment's interesting but speaking as a realtor, she understands that when a person purchases a property in California, there is an obligation by the realtor to disclose to the potential buyer certain information about the home, especially issues with older homes.

Mr. Rugee asked the Commission for clarification on the possible scenario if the request is denied.

Ms. McCaull said that if there is no affirmative vote to proceed with one of the scenarios, there will be a failure to take action and the item will be continued to a future meeting where there may be a full quorum.

#### COMMISSION ACTION

COMMISSIONER MACCARTEE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE SCENARIO I, TO ALLOW THE PROJECT AT 834 TOLITA TO PROCEED AS ORIGINALLY APPROVED ALLOWING FOR THE STRUCTURAL UPGRADES TO THE REMAINING FRAMING OF THE DWELLING INCLUDING A NEW FOUNDATION AS CALLED OUT ON THE PLANS AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE ROOF DECK AS ORIGINALLY APPROVED WITH THE HISTORIC ALTERATION PERMIT, WITH THE CONDITION THAT THE COMMISSION WILL NOT AWARD AN HISTORIC PLAQUE OR RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF A FUTURE MILLS ACT AGREEMENT.

COMMISSIONER DRAPER SECONDED THE MOTION.

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

The motion failed with a vote of 2-1.

The item was continued to the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Historic Resource Commission.

**Discussion regarding the Historic Preservation Newsletter (no report)**

Ms. McCaull reported that the deadline for the Commission's newsletter to be submitted to the City Manager's office is December 4, 2006.

**Discussion regarding the Commission's Holiday Schedule for December 2006 (no report)**

The Commission agreed not to cancel the meetings in December, unless there is lack of a quorum.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:44 p.m.

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Tony A Peña  
Director of Community Development