

HISTORIC RESOURCE COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

Regular Meeting

May 5, 2010

The regular meeting of the Coronado Historic Resource Commission was called to order at 3 p.m., Wednesday, May 10, 2010, at the Coronado City Hall Council Chambers, 1825 Strand Way, Coronado, California, by Chairperson Crenshaw.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Crenshaw, Jones, O'Brien (arrived 3:31 p.m.), Ryan, St. Denis

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Tricia Olsen, Associate Planner
Ann McCaull, Senior Planner
Martha L Alvarez, Recording Secretary, Minutes Preparer

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of April 7, 2010, were approved as amended.

The minutes of April 21, 2010, were approved as submitted.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Olsen reported that at the City Council meeting of May 4, the City Council presented Historic Preservation plaques to property owners with historically designated structures; presented a Proclamation declaring May as National Historic Preservation Month to the Coronado Historical Association, Coronado MainStreet, and the Historic Resource Commission; and approved, under Consent, amendments to the Historic Preservation Code relating to the Mills Act Program, CEQA, and Historic Alteration Permits (Code Exceptions and Expiration Dates).

Commission's Summer Schedule. The Commission agreed to cancel the meetings of July 21 and August 4, 2010.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS AND OTHER MATTERS

Commissioner Ryan asked staff to summarize the Memorandum from Community Development Director Rachel Hurst to Mayor and City Council regarding Solar Panel Legislation.

Ms. Olsen responded that the Memorandum, based on the City Attorney's opinion, states the "rule of thumb" is that unless there is a solar panel installation proposed as part of a larger project, it will not need approval by the Historic Resource Commission.

Commissioner Ryan requested that this item be placed on a future agenda for further discussion by the Commission.

COMMISSION ACTION

COMMISSIONER RYAN MADE A MOTION TO PLACE ON A FUTURE AGENDA AN ITEM REGARDING “HISTORIC RESOURCE COMMISSION DISCUSSION REGARDING SOLAR PANELS.”

COMMISSIONER CRENSHAW SECONDED THE MOTION.

AYES: Crenshaw, Jones, Ryan, and St. Denis.
NAYS: None.
ABSENT: O’Brien.
ABSTAIN: None.

The motion passed with a vote of 4-0.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

HAP 2010-04 TOM AND LESLIE ADAMS – Request for Historic Resource Alteration Permit for alterations to the historically designated residence addressed as 1116 Loma Avenue located in the R-1A (Single Family Residential) Zone.

Ms. Olsen introduced the staff report as outlined in the agenda.

Commissioner Ryan disclosed that he and his wife were the owners of the subject property from 1977 to 1987. They deeded the property and easement to Save Our Heritage Organization (SOHO) for a three-quarter façade easement in perpetuity, which means that the front and two sides cannot be changed. Mr. Ryan said he has no current financial interest in the property.

The applicant’s representative, Dorothy Howard, 420 H Avenue, gave a brief overview of the request, and answered questions of the Commission.

Commissioner St. Denis asked if this is a Mills Act home.

Ms. Howard replied yes.

Commissioner St. Denis asked about the proposed urethane corbels, and clarified that Mills Act homes are not allowed to use any type of plastic materials in the exterior of the property. However, Mills Act homes are allowed to install at the rear of the property clad windows, preferably in a wood material.

Ms. Howard responded that the windows are made of aluminum clad and not vinyl.

Commissioner St. Denis asked if the corbels can be changed to a wood material.

Ms. Howard replied yes.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Caroline Murray, 770 Coronado Avenue, thanked Commissioner St. Denis for clarifying that clad windows are allowed in Mills Act homes per the program's stipulations.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

Commissioner Ryan said he had no issues with the clad windows as they were not visible from the street. He stated he was in favor of the request.

Commissioner Jones agreed. She said she supports the request that wood material be used for the corbels and clad for the windows.

Commissioner St. Denis referenced a letter received from a neighboring property owner, Constance Turner, who asked that "as a courtesy to the neighbors, a request is made that all of the new windows be able to be open so that cross ventilation be available to the three adjoining properties. With stationary windows on the right and left sides of the back porch, cross ventilation will not be possible. With windows that can be opened, air circulation will be available to all of the affected properties." Ms. St. Denis asked if the windows have been fixed so it does not create a safety issue for passersby.

Ms. Howard responded that the rear facing encasement windows do open, and the three lower west-facing windows in front of Ms. Turner's property can be made operable; however, they must be fixed so that the edge of the windows do not cause a safety issue. The east facing windows in front of the driveway have a similar issue that must be fixed. If all windows are open, there will be cross ventilation.

Commissioner St. Denis asked if the lower windows can be made into awning windows.

Ms. Howard said her only concern with this type of window is the projection of the awnings (about 10 inches) which may also create a safety issue. She pointed out, however, that the French doors located in this area are operable.

Commissioner Ryan stated that, given the choice, he would have opted to install the casements. He questioned the neighbor's unusual request in asking the property owner to keep their windows opened or closed. He did not feel it was appropriate for the Commission to insist that the windows be operable.

Commissioners Jones and Crenshaw agreed.

Commissioner St. Denis added that it was a wonderful project.

COMMISSION ACTION

COMMISSIONER ST. DENIS MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE REQUEST AS SUBMITTED, WITH THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

1. All urethane (plastic) material proposed to be used in the project will be replaced with wood.
2. Clad (aluminum) windows are approved for use as presented.

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 RYAN SECONDED THE MOTION.

AYES: Crenshaw, Jones, Ryan, and St. Denis.
NAYS: None.
ABSENT: None.
ABSTAIN: O'Brien.

The motion passed with a vote of 4-0.

There is a 10-day appeal period.

DISCUSSION

Commission consideration to re-prioritize the property addressed as 1112 Churchill Place on the Mills Act waiting list (continued from the meeting of June 3, 2009).

Ms. Olsen introduced the staff report as outlined in the agenda. She then clarified that the Commission should first determine, as a policy matter, whether to consider re-prioritization requests for all properties on the Mills Act waiting list before discussing whether the subject property should be re-prioritized.

Caroline Murray, 770 Coronado Avenue, asked that the Commission not support the request by the owner to re-prioritize the property on the Mills Act waiting list. Ms. Murray did not feel there was sufficient evidence to acknowledge that Joseph Falkenham and Irving Gill were the architects. Ms. Murray said it would be unfair to the property owners currently on the waiting list who have waited patiently and whose architects are of record.

Pat Montalbano, 541 Ocean Blvd., said her Mills Act property would be impacted if the list is re-prioritized. She stated she has been on the waiting list since 2006. She also questioned the very "soft" documentation which supports the possibility that this may be an Irving Gill home. She felt that the documentation supports a good deal of speculation and suggested possible future legal issues should the Commission recognize the property as an Irving Gill.

John Elkins, 1112 Churchill Place, said his research and documentation suggest that Joseph Falkenham, and not Irving Gill, is the architect.

Commissioner St. Denis asked if the home was built 130 years ago, circa 1877, as identified in the Mills Act prioritization background information document.

Mr. Elkins said his home was built in 1893, not 1877.

Commissioner Jones stated that she did not support re-prioritizing homes on the Mills Act waiting list as it is unfair to the property owners currently on the list. She felt that the Commission would be "opening a big can of worms" should they choose to change their policy at this time.

Commissioner St. Denis said she believes this home was definitely not designed by Gill, as this home was built the year before Gill joined Falkenham. She did not feel comfortable re-prioritizing a home especially when there are property owners who have been, in good faith, waiting on the list. Ms. St. Denis said she would only consider this request if signed plans by Irving Gill, William S. Hebard, or Richard Requa were presented.

Mr. Elkins clarified that the home did not begin construction until 1894, with completion nearing the same year. Messrs. Gill and Falkenham were partners at that time.

Commissioner Ryan stated that the Commission should always be open to review new information presented by a property owner if the information is factual and provable.

Vice Chair O'Brien stated that he would not support making a policy change at this time as the Commission previously determined that the waiting list was accurate. He said he would not feel comfortable re-prioritizing the list.

Chairperson Crenshaw agreed. She stated that policy is policy and should be followed indefinitely. She did not support re-prioritizing the list as there was much public dismay when this was done once before.

Commissioner Ryan said that in Mr. Elkins case, there appears to be no new facts presented because there is a lack of documentation on the owner's part.

Chairperson Crenshaw suggested that the Commission not re-prioritize Mills Act homes already on the waiting list based on new knowledge.

Commissioner Jones commented that re-prioritizing the waiting list does a disfavor to those property owners who are already on the list and who have done their research. All facts must be presented at the time the applicant is requesting consideration for Mills Act. Ms. Jones said she was confident that the architect for this property was Falkenham; however, there is no evidence supporting this fact.

Mr. Elkins asked how many homes will be affected if the waiting list is re-prioritized. He mentioned that some homes on the list do not have a ranking in a specific area, namely in the category of an architect or builder. He stated that, unfortunately, in 1895, all of the historical records held for Mr. Falkenham were destroyed and shortly thereafter, he disappeared.

Commissioner Jones noted that at a previous Mr. Elkins presented a significant amount of information based on an extensive research of his property. She acknowledged that although the information was convincing, there was no documentation to support the facts as presented.

Mr. Elkins said it was unfortunate that the historical documents on his property were missing.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated that the Commission received Mr. Elkins application submittal in 2007 and his benefits are scheduled to commence in 2013. There are currently six applications dated 2005 and 2006 which are listed ahead of Mr. Elkins home. If the waiting list is re-prioritized, it would mean that Mr. Elkins would receive benefits one year earlier. Ms. Crenshaw stated that she would not support changing the policy.

Commissioner Jones referenced a letter from Dr. Mark Zimmerman and his family, 1111 Flora Avenue, asking that the Commission deny the request for re-prioritization.

Commissioner Ryan reiterated that the Commission should not deny a property owner the right to present new information as this action may not be fulfilling the Commission's scope. Mr. Ryan proposed a policy whereby the Commission would review modifications to the original application; however, a strict rule book would be kept when reviewing new information.

Chairperson Crenshaw agreed; however, she also reiterated that documented proof must be presented by the property owner as part of the new policy.

Commissioner Ryan suggested that the Commission communicate to future applicants that all pertinent information must be presented to the Commission at the time of the request in order to avoid re-prioritization issues at a later date. Mr. Ryan said he would agree to a policy that requires a property owner to show documented proof as part of the request for reconsideration.

COMMISSION ACTION

VICE CHAIR O'BRIEN MADE A MOTION THAT THE COMMISSION WILL NOT, AS A MATTER OF POLICY, RE-PRIORITIZE HOMES ON THE MILLS ACT WAITING LIST AFTER THEY HAVE BEEN SELECTED AND PLACED IN THE QUEUE.

CHAIRPERSON CRENSHAW SECONDED THE MOTION.

Commissioner St. Denis suggested that the motion include the words "...barring documented verifiable proof that will add to the historical significance of a resource, our policy is not to re-prioritize once we have done so."

Ms. McCaull noted for the Commission's consideration that it is incumbent that the property owners submit all necessary information when they apply for a designation or Mills Act. In this situation, Mr. Elkins did not apply for the designation or the Mills Act; it was the previous property owner who did so. The previous property owner chose not to complete a thorough research on the property and failed to provide the City with a complete application by which to prioritize the property. Ms. McCaull believes that when a future property owner presents new information and requests that the property be re-prioritized on the list, which in turn may affect other properties that were previously prioritized, it should not place a burden on the City.

Commissioner St. Denis reiterated that the information must be verifiable. This was not possible in Mr. Elkin's case.

Ms. McCaull said it will become staff's responsibility to analyze and make a determination as to whether the new information being presented by a property owner is verifiable before it is placed on the agenda for Commission consideration. This places staff in a difficult situation.

Commissioner Jones stated that the burden of proof rests with the property owner when an application for Mills Act is submitted. A future owner of the property may conduct further research; however, the applicant has the responsibility to provide complete information. Ms. Jones said she is uncomfortable with the request.

Commissioner St. Denis commented that additional information provided by a future property owner enriches the home's historicity. She considers this information to be a separate issue from the home's ranking on the waiting list.

AYES: Crenshaw, Jones, O'Brien, and St. Denis.
NAYS: Ryan.
ABSENT: None.
ABSTAIN: None.

The motion passed with a vote of 4-1.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

Rachel A. Hurst, Director of Community Development,
Redevelopment & Housing Services