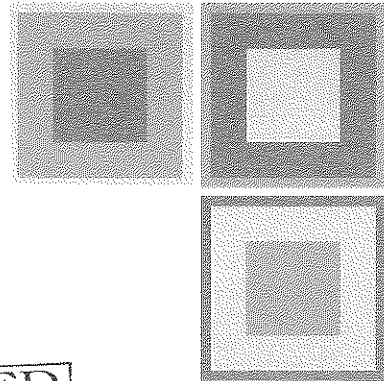




NAPA COUNTY LANDMARKS

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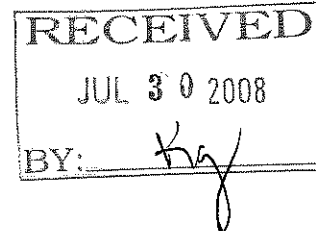
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Napa County Landmarks protects a living record of the past for the edification and enjoyment of future generations by promoting the saving and appreciation of irreplaceable historic buildings and sites through educational programs, public policy advocacy, research, and technical assistance.

Landmarks is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation.

July 28, 2008

Ken McNab, Planner
City of Calistoga
1232 Washington St.
Calistoga, CA 94515



Re: Preservation Action Committee review
Francis House stabilization and selective demolition plan
1403 Myrtle Street, Calistoga, CA

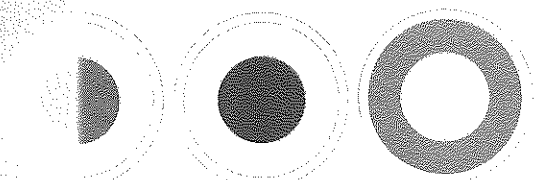
Dear Mr. McNab:

At the request of the City of Calistoga, The Napa County Landmarks, Inc. (NCL) Preservation Action Committee (PAC) met on June 25, 2008 to review the Francis House stabilization and demolition plan. It is our understanding that a project application for an inn on this site will be submitted. Naomi Miroglio AIA of Architectural Resources Group (ARG - consulting historical architect), project architect Paul Kelley, structural engineer Tim Heiman and Calistoga Planner Ken McNab presented the initial stabilization and selective demolition plan. The members of the PAC who reviewed the project were Chair Mary Ellen Boyet, Juliana Inman AIA, Jerry Dodd, Cynthia Ripley AIA, Stephen Cuddy AIA, George Boyet, and Wendy Ward. After the initial presentation, the committee met to discuss the plans and make findings to be included in a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) analysis for the proposed work.

Background

The Francis House is a national register listed property in the City of Calistoga that has endured decades of neglect, yet still stands. This property has earned "hall of shame" recognition from Napa County Landmarks after being perennially listed on the Landmarks "Ten Threatened Treasures" list. A full historical report on the property, its integrity and significance has been prepared by ARG. ARG has documented the current condition of the property. In spite of its poor condition, it retains a high degree of integrity.

According to the project's architect, the owner's intent is to abide by the Secretary of the Interior Standards for work proposed. The project plans and the project architect indicate that this is a stabilization and demolition plan in advance of a project application and in order to get a weather proof roof on the Francis House before onset of the next rainy season, and to remove attractive nuisances created by the derelict building ruins on site. The project applicant indicates that the work will not "advance" the project before entitlements from the City of Calistoga. As a result, this stabilization plan has been reviewed using *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation and Guidelines for Preserving Historic Buildings*.



We recommend that the City of Calistoga reference compliance with *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation and Guidelines for Preserving Historic Buildings*, in the design review conditions and/or negative declaration for the project. The project in this submittal is only the stabilization and selective demolition plan. Compliance with these guidelines avoids any negative impacts on the existing building to remain. In the final project application, we anticipate that there will be substantial additional work on the building and site and that *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* will be used in the project review. For the purposes of this first review, we have used the more limited "Preservation" instead of the "Rehabilitation" standards since any new work is only for structural stabilization.

Review

The California Register regulations define "integrity" as "the authenticity of an historic resource's physical identity, evidenced by the survival of characteristics that existed during the resource's period of significance" (State Office of Historic Preservation, 1997). These regulations specify that integrity is a quality that applies to historic resources in seven ways: **location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association**. A property must retain **most** of these qualities to possess integrity.

The PAC reviewed plans to demolish two cottages (the "yellow house" and the "white house"), a shed, and non-historic additions to the Francis House. The PAC concurs with the opinion on integrity, significance and condition by Architectural Resources Group and supports the findings of ARG historians. The PAC also agrees with findings that the Yellow house and shed, the Blue house, the White house, and the Bungalow are not National Register eligible.

The PAC also concurs with the recommendation to demolish the non-historic rear additions to the Francis House.

According to *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation and Guidelines for Preserving Historic Buildings*:

"In Preservation, the options for replacement are less extensive than in the treatment, Rehabilitation. This is because it is assumed at the outset that building materials and character-defining features are essentially intact, i.e, that more historic fabric has survived, unchanged over time. The expressed goal of the **Standards for Preservation and Guidelines for Preserving Historic Buildings** is retention of the building's existing form, features and detailing. This may be as simple as basic maintenance of existing materials and features or may involve preparing a historic structure report, undertaking laboratory testing such as paint and mortar analysis, and hiring conservators to perform sensitive work such as reconstituting interior finishes. Protection, maintenance, and repair are emphasized while replacement is minimized."

The second part of a preservation plan includes:

"The guidance for the treatment **Preservation** begins with recommendations to identify the form and detailing of those architectural materials and features that are important in defining the building's historic character and which must be retained in order to preserve that character. Therefore, guidance on **identifying, retaining, and preserving** character-defining features is always given first. The character of a historic building may be defined by the form and detailing of exterior materials, such as masonry, wood, and metal; exterior features, such as roofs, porches, and windows; interior materials, such as plaster and paint; and interior features, such as moldings and stairways, room configuration and spatial relationships, as well as structural and mechanical systems; and the building's site and setting."

The guidelines further recommend stabilization measures which are important with this project:

"Deteriorated portions of a historic building may need to be protected through preliminary stabilization measures until additional work can be undertaken. **Stabilizing** may include structural reinforcement, weatherization, or correcting unsafe conditions. Temporary stabilization should always be carried out in such a manner that it detracts as little as possible from the historic building's appearance. Although it may not be necessary in every preservation project, stabilization is nonetheless an integral part of the treatment **Preservation**; it is equally applicable, if circumstances warrant, for the other treatments."

For the purposes of this proposed stabilization plan, the final recommendations of the guidelines for preservation include:

"If repair by stabilization, consolidation, and conservation proves inadequate, the next level of intervention involves the **limited replacement in kind** of extensively deteriorated or missing parts of features when there are surviving prototypes (for example, brackets, dentils, steps, plaster, or portions of slate or tile roofing). The replacement material needs to match the old both physically and visually, i.e., wood with wood, etc. Thus, with the exception of hidden structural reinforcement and new mechanical system components, substitute materials are not appropriate in the treatment **Preservation**. Again, it is important that all new material be identified and properly documented for future research. If prominent features are missing, such as an interior staircase, exterior cornice, or a roof dormer, then a Rehabilitation or Restoration treatment may be more appropriate."

All eight of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation and Guidelines for Preserving Historic Buildings* should be met in the stabilization plan. Included with this review are the eight standards.

Analysis

Work described in the schematic drawings conforms to *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation and Guidelines for Preserving Historic Buildings*. Included with the comment is a citation of the Standard or guideline language involved:

1. A property will be used as it was historically, or be given a new use that maximizes the retention of distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships. Where a treatment and use have not been identified, a property will be protected and, if necessary, stabilized until additional work may be undertaken.

The interior of the Francis House has been decimated by water intrusion from lack of roof maintenance. As a result of seasonal water soaking, the interior plaster has completely failed. During the wet season, the wet fallen plaster has lain on the existing floors, causing structural failure of the floor joists. Removal only would leave exterior walls vulnerable to collapse, so bracing is required.

2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The replacement of intact or repairable historic materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.

Removal of intact or repairable historic materials is not proposed, except as required for structural repairs. Historic fabric to be removed will be documented, stored, replaced or replicated as required in the preservation plan.

3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Work needed to stabilize, consolidate, and conserve existing historic materials and features will be physically and visually compatible, identifiable upon close inspection, and properly documented for future research.

The stabilization plan includes an extensive assessment and documentation of existing conditions and materials. Some materials are too damaged to remain, but have been documented for purposes of future replacement or restoration.

4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.

Non-historic additions to the rear of the Francis House will be removed. These additions have no historic significance and do not contribute to the National Register listed property, either in the initial nomination or in the current re-evaluation of significance.

5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.

Some interior woodwork will be removed in this project. Since the floor system has failed, these finishes will be documented, stored and either re-installed or replaced using the guidelines.

6. The existing condition of historic features will be evaluated to determine the appropriate level of intervention needed. Where the severity of deterioration requires repair or limited replacement of a distinctive feature, the new material will match the old in composition, design, color, and texture.

Documentation of existing materials has been completed. The preservation plan provides for storage or replication of original materials depending on condition during the stabilization work.

7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.

Inappropriate chemical or physical treatments are not proposed in the plan.

8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

Standard City of Calistoga archeological protection conditions should be included as project conditions of approval.

Recommendations

We recommend continued monitoring of the rehabilitation plan by a qualified historical architect as construction documents are submitted and as the project is built to assure that conditions are properly carried out. No additional mitigation measures are recommended other than standard archaeological measures if the project is approved.

Conclusions

The Napa County Landmarks' Preservation Action Committee finds that the stabilization and selective demolition plan complies with ***The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation and Guidelines for Preserving Historic Buildings*** and that no negative impact under the California Environmental Quality Act will result from the project. This project will enhance the site by assuring the preservation of the National Register Francis House.

Respectfully submitted,



Juliana Inman
President, Napa County Landmarks, Inc.
Member, NCL Preservation Action Committee

cc: Paul Kelley
Naomi Miroglio, ARG
Board of Directors
Preservation Action Committee
File