



NAPA COUNTY LANDMARKS

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Napa County Landmarks fosters a living record of the past for the edification and enjoyment of future generations by promoting the survey 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.

Erik V. Lundquist, Associate Planner
Planning and Building Department
City of Calistoga
1232 Washington Street
Calistoga CA 94515

February 3, 2010

Dear Mr. Lundquist,

The Preservation Action Committee of Napa County Landmarks had the pleasure of reviewing the Palmer House project on January 27. Nine committee members were in attendance, including a preservation architect, a structural engineer, a member of Napa's Cultural Heritage Commission and others with considerable preservation experience. The home owners, Bob Fiddaman and Susan Hoffman were present as was their architect, Juliana Inman, AIA. Ms. Inman is, as you may know, the President of Landmarks and a member of the PAC. After presenting the project to the Committee, she withdrew with the owners during our deliberations.

We are delighted that the owners are proposing to return this historic Calistoga house to its original use as a single-family dwelling, and also by their stated concern to do this in keeping with the Secretary of the Interiors Standards.

As the interior changes seemed to us appropriate for the change in use, we concerned ourselves mainly with the exterior alterations.

- Early pictures and the evidence of remaining brackets justify the addition of shutters.
- The owners may decide to add cresting to the roof, since early drawings indicated that cresting existed at one time.
- We approved the proposed colors for the exterior, as well as the replacement of three windows with conforming (one over one) wood windows.

Being that the upper part of the house is visible from Pioneer Park, the house in effect has two major façades, one from the street and one from the park. Our major concern is that changes made should not affect the view of the house from those two vantage points. That concern was whether new construction would differentiate from the old, and whether HVAC and solar panels on the roof would be visible.

This house has been added to and remodeled a number of times over the years. We concluded that the small proposed addition on the east is being added to a fairly modern expansion to the historic home and resolves a rather awkward connection. The owners assured us that their intention is to place HVAC and solar panels (if feasible) in such a way that they would not intrude on the view of the house. The engineer on our committee commented that he doubted solar panels would be functional anyway, because of the number of trees around the house.

It is rare that we look at a restoration project for an historic property, especially one involving a lot of work, without making some suggestions for improvement of design. But we really did not find anything significant to criticize. We look forward to seeing the completed project.

For more information, please contact Mary Ellen Boyet at 707-224-6639 or Stephen Cuddy, AIA, at 707-261-1700.

Sincerely,

Marie Doicini, Executive Director
Napa County Landmarks