



Staff Report and Recommendations

Agenda of September 20, 2021, Item 12b

County of Ventura • Resource Management Agency • Planning Division

800 S. Victoria Avenue, Ventura, CA 93009-1740 • (805) 654-5042 • vcrma.org/divisions/planning

I. APPLICANT/PROPERTY OWNER:

Property Owner: Anne Crawford and Dudley DeZonia
4106 Thacher Road
Ojai, CA 93023

Applicant/Architect: Odom Stamps
Stamps & Stamps
318 Fairview Avenue
South Pasadena, CA 91030

II. REQUEST:

A request to designate property located at 1340 McNell Road and 4106 Thacher Road, Ojai, CA 93023, collectively known as Bella Vista Ranch, as Ventura County Landmark No. 180 (Cultural Heritage Ordinance (CHO) §1365-5) and a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) (CHO §1366) for a mix of new construction, demolition activities, interior and exterior alterations, and various site improvements to the existing two-story, 5,374-square-foot, single-family residence located at 4106 Thacher Road, Ojai, CA 93023 (Site of Merit). The project would result in an additional 689 square feet of habitable space for a total of 6,063 square feet. (Supervisory District 1 – LaVere) (Case No. CH21-0012).

III. LOCATION AND PARCEL INFORMATION:

1340 McNell Road and 4106 Thacher Road, Ojai, CA 93023 (unincorporated Ventura County)

Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APNs): 029-0-020-310, 029-0-020-260, and 029-0-020-320

Historic Designation: Site of Merit

Common/Historic Name: Bella Vista Ranch

The Bella Vista Ranch property consists of three contiguous parcels with two street addresses totaling 20.72 acres within the Rural General Plan land use designation and Rural Exclusive (RE) 5-acre Zone. The parcels are located east of McNell Road and south of Thacher Road and are historically associated and held under common ownership. Figure 1 depicts the location of the property in the broader vicinity and Figure 2 provides a closer aerial image of the property. Figures 3, 4, 5, and 6 provide images of the structures on site, consisting of the 4106 Thacher Road residence, 1340 McNell Road residence, barn, and implement shed, respectively.

Figure 1 – Regional Vicinity

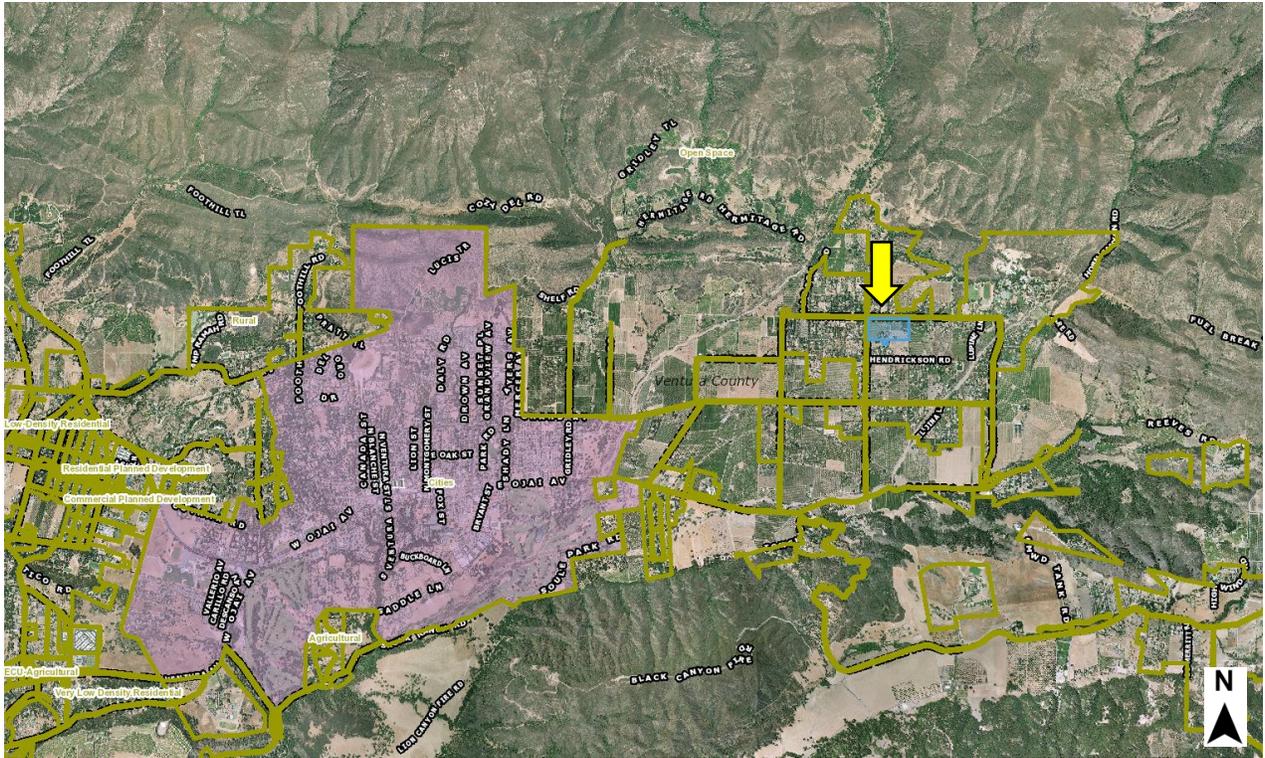


Figure 2 – Aerial View of Site

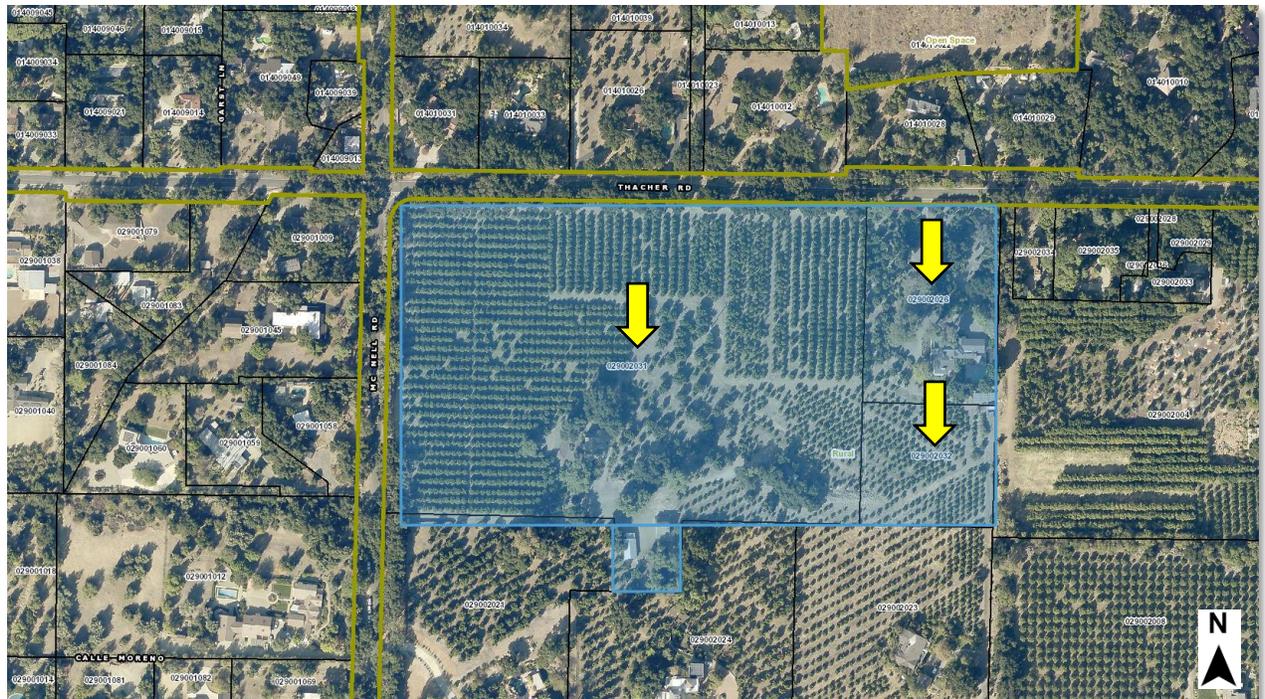


Figure 3 – Residence at 4106 Thacher Road



Credit: San Buenaventura Research Associates (SBRA)

Figure 4 – Residence at 1340 McNeil Road



Credit: SBRA

Figure 5 – Barn



Credit: SBRA

Figure 6 – Implement Shed



Credit: SBRA

IV. PROJECT SCOPE:

The applicant requests the Cultural Heritage Board (CHB) designate property located at 1340 McNell Road and 4106 Thacher Road, Ojai, CA 93023, collectively known as Bella Vista Ranch, as Ventura County Landmark No. 180 and approve a COA for a mix of new construction, demolition activities, interior and exterior alterations, and various site improvements to an existing two-story, single-family residence with a situs address of 4106 Thacher Road, Ojai, CA 93023 (Site of Merit). The existing residence contains 5,374 square feet, including the attached garage. The proposed project is described across the site plans, elevations, section views, and perspectives included in Exhibit 1 – Architectural Plan Set. The proposed scope of work is summarized as follows:

- Partial demolition of the existing single-family residence, attached bonus room, garden structure, and miscellaneous site walls;
- Conversion of an existing utility room and a portion of existing garage space to habitable space along with an existing breezeway and construction of a single-story rear addition with exterior materials to match existing, for a total increase of 689 square feet. The total proposed square footage for the house and garage will be 6,063 square feet;
- Removal of the low sloping rolled composition roof on the 1966 living room addition located at the front (western) and side (southern) elevations and replacement with a low hip standing seam metal roof supported by new brick pilasters and wood posts with decorative wood trim to match existing;
- Fenestration pattern alterations, including the removal and replacement of windows and doors on the side elevations (northern and southern);
- Installation of new garage door;
- New paint finish on the exterior of the residence;
- Construction of a new 308-square-foot cabana (an open sided gazebo) and barbecue area along with a new patio and decorative stone garden walls, a new outdoor fireplace, an upgrade to the existing pool, and perimeter fencing;
- Construction of new entry and wood posts at the lath house and repair of broken boards as required for a new finish;
- Construction of a new condenser concrete slab at the northeast corner of the property for placement of four condenser units and a hydronic pump;
- Relocation of the ground-mounted photovoltaic solar panels as necessary;
- Construction of decomposed granite (DG) paving pathways around the residence and installation of stone veneer over CMU garden/retaining walls; and
- Interior improvements consisting of (1) staircase relocation, (2) dining room alterations (addition of shelving, modification of window, and squaring off/enclosing corner angled door), (3) living room alterations (removal of the modern brick fireplace and wood log storage box and replacement with new

stone fireplace, new bookcase cabinets, new columns at interior entrance, and new beams and wainscoting), (4) addition of a fireplace to the master bedroom, featuring an antique mantel and brick hearth, (5) new hardwood plank flooring throughout most of the residence and new antique terra cotta tile in the bathrooms and kitchen, and (6) various changes to cabinetry, ceilings, and walls due to reconfiguration of kitchen, bathrooms, and pantries.

Additional views of the existing residence are contained in Exhibit 2 – Photo Exhibit. Information regarding proposed colors, material, and product selections is included in Exhibit 3 – Architectural Cut Sheets – Material and Product Selections.

V. PROPERTY DESCRIPTION:

The Bella Vista Ranch property consists of the following structures and features:

- A one-story Folk Victorian-style residence at 1340 McNell Road (built in 1890);
- A two-story California Bungalow-style residence at 4106 Thacher Road (built circa 1910), as well as a swimming pool (built 1968), garden shed, and lath house (built circa 1972);
- A barn (built circa 1915);
- An implement shed (built circa 1900); and
- Other features on the property include a horse corral near 1340 McNell Road, stone retaining walls and a stone barbeque near 4106 Thacher Road, two square-stone entrance posts adjacent to the driveway to 4106 Thacher Road, citrus and avocado orchards, and additional landscape features such as mature Oak trees and other specimen trees.

The subject property was first documented in the 1985 County of Ventura Cultural Heritage Survey Phase III: Ojai - 1985 (“1985 Survey”) prepared by Judith Triem (Refer to Exhibit 4 – Bella Vista Ranch DPR Form). This survey assigned a National Register evaluation code of “3D” to the 4106 Thacher Road residence, denoting potential eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as part of a district and a code of “4a” to the 1340 McNell Road residence, denoting potential eligibility as a Ventura County Landmark.

In June 2021, the property owner’s consultant, San Buenaventura Research Associates (SBRA), completed a historic resources report (HRR) for the Bella Vista Ranch property, encompassing three parcels and inclusive of the residences at both 4106 Thacher Road and 1340 McNell Road, the barn, and the implement shed (Refer to Exhibit 5 – Historic Resources Report).¹ All substantive information regarding the

¹ Triem, Judy and Mitch Stone, San Buenaventura Research Associates (SBRA), *Historic Resources Report, Bella Vista Ranch, 1340 McNell Road/4106 Thacher Road, Ojai*, June 18, 2021. All substantive information

characteristics, history, and significance of the property generally comes from this report, unless otherwise noted.

A description of the structures, including character-defining features and known alterations, is included as follows:

- Residence at 1340 McNeill Road. The residence is a single-story Folk Victorian-style farmhouse located on an unpaved private drive on the east side of McNeill Road.
 - Features: The residence features two main front gables joined in the center by a side-facing gable. Extending from the gable is a shed roof covering the front porch. The porch is supported by chamfered wood columns. Under the front gables are boxed beams and fish-scale shingles. The decorative features are the Eastlake detailing found on the doors with sunburst design and on the brackets under the eaves on the side porch. The house is on a raised stone foundation and is covered with shiplap siding. The windows are tall and narrow, single- and double-hung wood windows with flat wood casings, with some windows containing flashed glass. There are four fireplaces with two brick chimneys punctuating the rooflines. Interior features include high ceilings with beams and wide beaded board in some rooms, four brick fireplaces with wood mantles and surrounds, paneled walls and doors, wood floors and baseboards, decorative bull's eye molding surrounding windows, wood built-in cabinets in living areas, and original hardware.
 - Alterations: The rear eastern elevation shows evidence of the following additions and alterations: (1) a hipped roof addition has been added to the center of the rear elevation; (2) a shed roof addition is located adjacent to the north. Half of this elevation originally featured a screened-in porch that has since been enclosed; and (3) the house originally contained a wraparound porch on the front and southern side elevations and a gabled wing at the southeast corner of the house that are no longer extant (both features were removed prior to 1960).
- Residence at 4106 Thacher Road. The residence is a two-story 5,374-square-foot California Bungalow farmhouse located on a rock-lined paved driveway that leads to a circular driveway in front of the house and another driveway to the garage.
 - Features: The residence has an irregular plan and features a side-facing gable roof broken by a front intersecting gable. A long, recessed front porch is supported by a low brick wall and square wood columns and extends around the south side of the house. The porch has a beaded board ceiling and wooden floors. Under the porch eaves and along the

side of the house is a decorative frieze with a raised wood design and classical detailing. The house is covered with clapboards and shingles and knee brackets are located under the eaves. Windows are multi-paned, double hung, with tapered wood molding. Interior features include wood floors and wood wainscoting, plate rails and picture rails. Built-in glass fronted cabinets with square capped posts above separate the entry/foyer and the dining room. The doors throughout the house are all wood five paneled doors with original hardware. The large front door features three vertical narrow glass panes and three small square panes above. The upstairs features a dark wood carved railing at the top of the stairs. All of the three upstairs bedrooms and bathroom are covered with beaded board on portions of the ceiling and walls and the hallway features a number of built-in cabinets.

- Alterations: In 1996, a 480-square-foot living room addition, designed by Ojai architect Chalfant Head, was constructed off the southern elevation and a covered porch to match the original in most details was built on both the front (western) and side (southern) elevations (Refer to Exhibit 6 – 1960s Plot Plan and Exhibit 7 – Residential Building Record). This flat-roofed addition necessitated the removal of a bay window and wall in the entry/foyer to provide an entrance into the new living room area and also included the construction of a large modern brick fireplace and hearth on the southern wall of the addition. The new eastern wall of the living room addition was angled toward the kitchen. Windows in the addition were large, fixed plate glass extending across the front porch. A sliding glass door was added at the other end of the front porch into the master bedroom, a new stairway in the foyer was added to the second floor, and windows in the dormers were slightly enlarged. In 1972, alterations designed by Beverly Hills architect Edwin William Tell included removal of the angled wall on the living room addition and enlargement of the room to create the straight wall with French doors leading out to the patio seen today. The original free-standing garage/carport was also removed and a new three car garage built attached to the eastern end of the house as part of an I-shaped addition containing a breakfast nook. A small, flat-roofed storage room, now referred to as a bonus room, was also built at the southeast corner of the house prior to this time. Other major changes on the interior include the reconfiguration of bedrooms to include additional closet space and bathrooms, reconfiguration of the kitchen, and addition of a small dining area as well as rooms for storage. Further, the upstairs stairway has been reconfigured three times.
- Barn. The barn is a two-story, tall gable roof with one-story shed roofs on either side, typical of the Western barn style. The barn is covered with board and batten siding and rests on a concrete foundation with swinging barn doors on the front and side of the building. A one-story hipped roof section is attached to

- the rear corner of the barn. The interior of the barn features redwood beams, heavy, wide horizontal plank walls divided into horse stalls, and concrete floors.
- Implement shed. The shed is one-story structure with a corrugated gable roof. It is open on one side and supported by square posts with V brackets. The shed is covered with wide vertical board siding and rests directly on the ground.

VI. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

All three parcels of this property were once part of a larger 80-acre parcel purchased by Thomas R. McNell in 1890 from Rinaldo D. Jackson, who patented the homestead claim to these public lands. Thomas Robert McNell was born in Belfast, Ireland on October 17, 1824 and emigrated to New York when he was seventeen years old. McNell ultimately found great financial success in New York City's hospitality business which allowed him to purchase a number of properties, including properties in the Ojai Valley where he had wintered. McNell apparently was never a permanent or long-term resident of the Ojai Valley, but altogether he invested in over 160 acres of land in the valley to raise citrus, one parcel of which was the 80 acres on McNell Road. Why he was drawn to the valley is uncertain, but it may have been on account of the health of his daughter, Clara McNell Spader. She and McNell's son-in-law, Louis Spader, came to Ojai with their son Thomas Gilbert in 1889. The residence on the property at 1340 McNell Road was apparently built by McNell for them around 1890, and the property, which takes in a view of the Ojai Valley, was named Bella Vista Ranch. On one of his early visits to the Ojai Valley in 1892, McNell brought along his eighteen-year-old grandson William C. Hendrickson from New York to help manage his properties.

During Spader's residence on the property, he also invested in other land in the Ojai Valley to raise fruit and by 1893 he was reported to be growing citrus on 14 acres. The California climate failed to improve Clara's health and she died in October 1893. Tragedy soon befell the family again when on May 14, 1896, his son Thomas died at the age of ten years old. Two years later, Louis Spader married Ojai Valley resident Henrietta Wheeler and continued his ranching activities in the area. Following these events, the relationship between McNell and Spader deteriorated and McNell insisted he vacate the subject property. In 1900, Spader ultimately lost the right to occupy the subject property through court action.

William Hendrickson, who had begun to help manage McNell's 160 acres of land in 1892, left in 1896 to help manage a forty-acre vineyard in Fresno, also owned by McNell. He returned to the Ojai Valley in 1898 to continue managing his grandfather's ranches. In 1905, he married Marion Carne whose family lived west of McNell Road on Carne Road. In 1900, after Louis Spader lost his claim to a portion of the property, Hendrickson took over management of the property and probably lived in the 1340 McNell Road residence. William and Marion later built a house northeast of the earlier house at 4106 Thacher Road.

William Hendrickson inherited his grandfather's 80-acre property upon McNell's death in 1919, along with the other four parcels his grandfather owned in the Ojai Valley totaling approximately 327.25 acres. After William's death in 1943, Marian continued to live in their house on Thacher Road until her death in 1958. They had no children, and the property was distributed out of the Hendrickson estate to Robert and Elizabeth O'Neill. Robert O'Neill was a nephew of William Hendrickson and a native of New York. Either before or at this time the property was divided and reduced from 80 acres to 40 acres and the O'Neills enlarged the house to accommodate their five children. In 1972, the family returned to the East Coast and the property was sold to Ronald and Helayne White, aspiring ranchers, in 1972. Until this time, the property had been owned continuously for a total of 82 years by Thomas McNell and his descendants. The White family sold the subject property totaling 20.72 acres to the present owners in 2019; by that time, the Whites had divided the property into several parcels.

VII. EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE:

County of Ventura Landmark

The Cultural Heritage Board (CHB) must find that the proposed Landmark satisfies one of the criteria noted below in Section 1365-5(a) of the CHO:

- 1) *It exemplifies or reflects special elements of the County's social, aesthetic, engineering, architectural or natural history;*
- 2) *It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Ventura County or its cities, regional history or the cultural heritage of California or the United States;*
- 3) *It is associated with the lives of persons important to Ventura County or its cities, California, or national history;*
- 4) *It has yielded or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of Ventura County or its cities, California or the nation.*
- 5) *It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values;*
- 6) *Integrity: Establish the authenticity of the resource's physical identity by evidence of lack of deterioration and significant survival of the characteristics that existed during its period of importance. This shall be evaluated with regard to the retention of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.*

Bella Vista Ranch (consisting of both 1340 McNell Road and 4106 Thacher Road) is significant for its reflection of the settlement and agricultural development of the Ojai Valley as one of the more intact examples of a ranching property from this period, particularly during the latter decades of the 19th century and early 20th century (Criterion 1). Further, it is associated with the development of citrus as an important crop in the Ojai Valley (Criterion 2). Following successful efforts beginning in the 1870s to grow citrus and other orchard crops in the Ojai Valley, much of this area

would be settled by homesteaders who experimented with citrus and a variety of other tree and row crops. Moreover, the residence at 1340 McNell Road embodies the distinctive characteristics of a late Victorian-period ranch house from the 1890s, the residence at 4106 Thacher Road embodies the distinctive characteristics of a California Bungalow farmhouse built circa 1910, and the Western-style barn and implement shed reflect the agricultural character of early 20th century agricultural buildings (Criterion 5).

The period of significance for the 1340 McNell Road residence is determined to be 1890 to 1971; this is the period where the property functioned as the Bella Vista Ranch, a citrus ranch owned by three generations of the McNell family. The period of significance for the 4106 Thacher Road residence was determined to be 1910 to 1966; this is the period where the property was occupied by descendants of the McNell family who continued to farm the property and raise citrus until alterations were made to the residence.

An evaluation of the property's integrity in the HRR determined the following:

- Location: The property retains integrity of location as the features have not been moved.
- Design: The remaining features from the historic period are the two residences, the barn and the implement shed. Both residences have undergone some alterations since their original construction; the porch and a rear wing have been removed at the 1890 residence (1340 McNell Road), likely prior to the mid-1950s, and the 1910 residence (4106 Thacher Road) underwent a number of design changes and additions in the 1960s and 1970s, primarily to the southern and eastern elevations, enlarging the footprint of the residence substantially. The proposed project would involve an addition and further design changes. Based on the past and proposed alterations, the property's integrity of design appears to be reduced.
- Setting: The rural setting from the period of significance remains intact.
- Materials: The integrity of materials for the residences appear to remain largely intact except for where the described alterations have occurred.
- Workmanship: Determined not applicable.

Based on the above, the property is determined to be significant under Ventura County Landmark Criterion 1, 2 and 5. Moreover, the property appears to retain most aspects of integrity. Since it is not required to meet an integrity threshold in order to be eligible as a Ventura County Landmark, the property appears eligible for listing based on these criteria. The contributing features are the two residences, barn, and implement shed. The non-contributing features are the swimming pool, shed and lath house. Lastly, the property appears to meet the additional designation standards required by CHO § 1365-6 as it contains interest to the general public; there are no foreseeable costs to the County in designating the subject site as a County Landmark; and the designation shall not infringe upon the rights of the Property Owner as this designation

is being requested by the Property Owner. The property will continue to be subject to the requirements of the Ventura County Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance and CHO.

VIII. CHO ANALYSIS AND STAFF CONCLUSIONS:

The Ventura County Cultural Heritage Ordinance (CHO) § 1366, requires that the Cultural Heritage Board issue a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) in the case of proposed demolition activities at a Site of Merit. The COA is an authorization which indicates that any proposed action, including maintenance, alteration, restoration, rehabilitation, remodeling, addition, change of use, demolition, subdivision, or relocation of a designated or potentially eligible Cultural Heritage Site will not adversely affect the designated Cultural Heritage Site’s values or unduly compromise the eligibility of a potential site to become a designated Cultural Heritage Site.

CHO Section 1366-3 requires that the CHB use the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings (“Secretary’s Standards”) in their evaluation of the property and the proposed scope of work. CHB Staff determined the standards for rehabilitation are appropriate for this request and evaluated the proposed scope of work against these standards. Each one of the applicable Secretary’s Standards is outlined in the table below with corresponding comments from CHB Staff.

Standards	Staff Comments
#1 A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.	The proposed scope of work is limited to the residence at 4106 Thacher Road. The residence will continue to be used as a single-family residence following implementation of the proposed project. Staff determined that this Standard has been met.
#2 The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.	The Secretary’s Standards ² encourage the retention of historic features that contribute to the interpretation of the significance of a historic property and, when appropriate, repair of materials and limited replacement of deteriorated or missing parts rather than full replacement. The applicant proposes a number of alterations at the 4106 Thacher Road residence, including the rebuild and extension of the roof of the living room

² Weeks, Kay D., *The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties: with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring & Reconstructing Historic Buildings*, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, revised 2017, pg. 140.

Standards	Staff Comments
	<p>addition, demolition of the flat-roofed addition at the rear southeastern corner (bonus room), removal and replacement of windows and doors on side (northern and southern) elevations, construction of a new cabana, barbecue, fireplace, and other site improvements, and interior changes, including relocation of the staircase and alterations to the dining room, living room, master bedroom, kitchen, bathroom, and pantries.</p> <p>According to the HRR prepared for the residence, the residence embodies the distinctive characteristics of a California Bungalow farmhouse. Following implementation, the residence would retain distinctive features of this style, including the side-facing gable roof with front intersecting gable; recessed front porch, including beaded board ceiling and wooden floors, supported by a low brick wall and square wood columns; decorative frieze under the porch eaves and along the side of the house; exterior clapboards and shingles and knee brackets located under the eaves; and the large front door featuring three vertical narrow glass panes and three small square panes above.</p> <p>The purview of cultural heritage review is limited to the exterior of the property, unless it is subject to a historical property contract (Mills Act contract). In such cases, proposed alterations to interior, character-defining features are reviewed for their consistency with the Secretary’s Standards. The property owner has indicated an interest in ultimately entering a Mills Act contract. As part of the currently proposed scope of work, interior, character-defining features would be retained, such as wood wainscoting, plate rails and picture rails; built-in glass fronted cabinets with square capped posts above; wood, five-paneled doors with original hardware; the dark wood carved railing at the top of the stairs; beaded board on portions of the ceiling and walls upstairs; and built-in upstairs hallway cabinets.</p> <p>The removal and replacement of windows and doors on side (northern and southern) elevations would largely be limited to those that were part</p>

Standards	Staff Comments
	<p>of the 1972 addition and are located on less prominent elevations of the residence. Further, new and replacement windows are proposed to be wood clad, in keeping with the architectural values of the residence. However, some of the windows proposed to be removed appear to be original, making these particular alterations appear inconsistent with this Standard. Original materials and features should be retained and repaired wherever possible.</p> <p>Therefore, Staff determined the scope of work is generally consistent with this Standard, with the exception of the removal of original windows.</p>
<p>#3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.</p>	<p>It does not appear that conjectural design features from other historic properties or inappropriate time periods are proposed to be added to the property with the intent of creating a false sense of historical development. As noted above in Staff Comments to Standard #2, the purview of cultural heritage review is limited to the exterior of the property, unless it is subject to a historical property contract (Mills Act contract). In such cases, proposed alterations to interior, character-defining features are reviewed for their consistency with the Secretary’s Standards. The property owner has indicated an interest in ultimately entering a Mills Act contract. As part of the currently proposed scope of work, interior, character-defining features would be retained.</p> <p>Therefore, Staff determined this Standard has been met.</p>
<p>#4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.</p>	<p>There do not appear to be changes to the property that have acquired historic significance in their own right. The most significant changes occurred with the 1966 living room addition designed by Chalfant Head, a known master architect, and the 1972 bonus room addition and other remodeling. However, these changes were completed outside the period of significance for the residence and do not appear to have acquired historic significance in their own right.</p>

Standards	Staff Comments
	Therefore, Staff determined this Standard is not applicable to the proposed scope of work.
#5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.	<p>The proposed scope of work is limited to the residence at 4106 Thacher Road. According to the HRR prepared for the residence, it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a California Bungalow farmhouse. Following implementation, the residence would retain distinctive features of this style, as cited previously.</p> <p>The removal and replacement of windows and doors on side (northern and southern) elevations would largely be limited to those that were part of the 1972 addition and are located on less prominent elevations of the residence. However, some of the windows proposed to be removed appear to be original. Original materials and features should be repaired and retained wherever possible. Therefore, these particular alterations appear inconsistent with this Standard.</p> <p>Therefore, Staff determined the scope of work is generally consistent with this Standard, with the exception of the removal of original windows.</p>
#6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.	<p>The removal and replacement of windows and doors on side (northern and southern) elevations would largely be limited to those that were part of the 1972 addition and are located on less prominent elevations of the residence. However, some of the windows proposed to be removed appear to be original. Original materials and features should be repaired and retained wherever possible. Therefore, these particular alterations appear inconsistent with this Standard.</p> <p>Therefore, Staff determined the scope of work is generally consistent with this Standard, with the exception of the removal of original windows.</p>
#7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be	No such treatments are currently proposed. Therefore, Staff determined this Standard is not applicable to the proposed scope of work.

Standards	Staff Comments
undertaken using the gentlest means possible.	
#8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.	The property is not located within an area of known or likely archeological resources. Therefore, Staff determined this Standard is not applicable to the proposed scope of work.
#9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.	<p>A new addition is most appropriately located where its visibility from the primary views of the historic building is minimized.³ This is often a rear or obscure elevation. Inherent in all of the guidance is the concept that an addition needs to be subordinate to the historic building. The size, scale, and massing of a new addition all pertain to the addition’s overall volume and three-dimensional qualities.⁴ Taken together, size, scale and massing are critical elements for ensuring that a new addition is subordinate to the historic building, thus preserving the historic character of a historic property.⁵</p> <p>The proposed new roof material at the living room addition complies with this standard as it is sufficiently distinguishable from the original to create differentiation but seeks to be compatible with the historic materials using a modern metal product with color matching the adjacent existing roof. The scale and proportion appear to be in keeping with the rest of the building. Also, the low profile of the roof would reduce visual impacts.</p> <p>The proposed garden retaining walls, steps, and fencing at the north elevation appear relatively simple in design and would use materials compatible with the historic building.</p> <p>The proposed one-story gable roof, wing addition at the southeast portion of the residence would replace a previous addition and add 689 square feet of habitable space to the residence. The exterior of the addition would be in keeping with the architectural style of the main residence and</p>

³ National Park Service, Technical Preservation Services, “New Additions to Historic Buildings,” <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/applying-rehabilitation/successful-rehab/additions.htm>.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

Standards	Staff Comments
	<p>contain a gable roof with clapboard siding, as well as wood entablature and exposed rafter tails to match existing. However, the design of the proposed addition extends the wall plane of the existing building and risks unification of the two volumes into a single architectural whole.</p> <p>In some cases, separating the addition from the historic building with a simple, small-scale architectural hyphen⁶ or connector can reduce the visual impact of large addition to a historic building.⁷ Another way of minimizing the impact of a new addition to an historic building is to offset it or step it back from the mass of the historic building. It is important that the new structure is clearly differentiated and distinguishable as a new addition so that the identity of the historic structure is not lost altogether in a new and larger composition.⁸ The historic building must be clearly identifiable and its physical integrity must not be compromised by the new addition. The northern (side) elevation maintains this differentiation and the changes would be located at the southern (rear side) elevation and are less noticeable. Nevertheless, this alteration appears partially inconsistent with this Standard.</p> <p>In addition, exterior, ground-mounted air conditioning (A/C) condenser units are proposed to be located in the vicinity of the northeast corner of the residence. Without screening, these units appear to detract from the historic setting of the property at the north elevation.</p> <p>Based on the above, Staff determined the scope of work is partially inconsistent with this Standard.</p>
<p>#10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form</p>	<p>The design of the proposed addition extends the wall plane of the existing building and risks unification of the two volumes into a single architectural whole. Such a design may preclude</p>

⁶ A hyphen is defined as the connecting link between a main building and an outlying wing. (*Dictionary of Architecture*).

⁷ National Park Service, Technical Preservation Services, “New Additions to Historic Buildings,” <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/applying-rehabilitation/successful-rehab/additions.htm>.

⁸ Ibid.

Standards	Staff Comments
<p>and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.</p>	<p>the ability to remove the addition in the future while maintaining the essential form of the residence as the identity of the historic structure may be lost in a new and larger composition. The northern (side) elevation maintains this differentiation and the changes would be located at the southern (rear side) elevation and are less noticeable. Nevertheless, this alteration appears partially inconsistent with this Standard.</p> <p>The proposed garden retaining walls, steps, and fencing at the north elevation could be removed in the future while maintaining the essential form of the main residence. Thus, this proposed alteration appears consistent with this Standard.</p> <p>Based on the above, Staff determined the scope of work is partially inconsistent with this Standard.</p>

IX. STAFF ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION:

Based on the above considerations, the proposed scope of work appears partially consistent with the Secretary’s Standards. Following implementation of the project, the residence would retain distinctive features of its California Bungalow farmhouse style and both exterior and interior character-defining features would be maintained. Of notable exception, the following proposed actions appear inconsistent with the Secretary’s Standards:

- The proposed one-story gable roof, wing addition at the southeast portion of the residence would extend the wall plane of the existing building and risk unification of the two volumes into a single architectural whole. The northern (side) elevation maintains a sense differentiation between the main residence and later additions. The proposed changes would be located at the southern (rear side) elevation and are less noticeable; however, the alteration appears inconsistent; and
- The proposed removal and replacement of windows and doors on side (northern and southern) elevations would largely be limited to those that were part of the 1972 addition and are located on less prominent elevations of the residence. However, some of the windows proposed to be removed appear to be original. Original materials and features should be repaired and retained

wherever possible. Therefore, these fenestration pattern alterations appear inconsistent.

- The proposed location of exterior, ground-mounted air conditioning (A/C) condenser units in the vicinity of the northeast corner of the residence. Without screening, these units appear to detract from the historic setting of the property at the north elevation.

Based on the above, Staff recommend the CHB adopt the following conditions related to the scope of work in order to better conform to the Secretary's Standards:

- **Recommended Condition #1: Rear Addition.** The proposed design shall separate the addition from the historic building by utilizing a simple, small-scale architectural hyphen or connector, offsetting the addition or stepping it back from the mass of the historic building, or minimizing visual impacts through other similar means. With implementation of this condition, the addition shall be clearly differentiated and distinguishable as a new addition so that the identity of the historic structure is not lost altogether in a new and larger composition. Prior to issuance of a zoning clearance, the applicant shall submit revised plans for Staff review.
- **Recommended Condition #2: Fenestration Pattern.** The applicant shall retain the existing pattern of fenestration by avoiding to the greatest extent feasible removal and/or replacement of any original windows. Prior to issuance of a zoning clearance, the applicant shall submit revised plans for Staff review.
- **Recommended Condition #3: Landscaping.** The applicant shall screen all exterior ground-mounted air conditioning (A/C) units with landscaping to reduce visual impacts. Prior to issuance of a zoning clearance, the applicant shall submit revised plans for Staff review.

With adoption and adherence to the above-recommended conditions, Staff determined the project would conform to the Secretary's Standards. Further, with adoption and adherence to the above-recommended conditions, the project would neither adversely affect the significant architectural features nor adversely affect the character of historical, architectural or aesthetic interest or value of the site, pursuant to the requirements of CHO Section 1366-3(a).

X. OPPORTUNITY TO SHOW HARDSHIP:

At the CHB public hearing on this matter, if desired, the property owner is provided the opportunity to present facts and evidence demonstrating a failure to grant the requested COA would cause an economic hardship as provided by CHO §1366-3(d).

XI. HEARING NOTICE AND PUBLIC COMMENTS:

A public notice was sent by electronic mail and U.S. mail to the property owner of the subject property not less than fifteen days prior to the date of this hearing (Exhibit 8 – 15-Day Public Hearing Notice). No public comment regarding this item has been received to date.

XII. CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA):

CHB Staff has determined that the designation of the Property as a Ventura County Landmark is Categorically Exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15308 of the State CEQA Guidelines as an action taken by a regulatory agency for the protection of the environment. As a result of this determination, a finding of exemption is recommended for adoption by the CHB.

XIII. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

Pursuant to CHO Section 1366, the following sets of actions are available to the CHB. Staff is recommending the CHB approve the COA with inclusion of the recommended conditions identified above and take the following actions regarding designation:

A. To Approve Designation as a Ventura County Landmark:

1. **CONDUCT** public hearing, **RECEIVE** oral and written testimony, and **CONSIDER** the Planning Division Staff report and all exhibits and attachments hereto;
2. **FIND** that the designation of the Property as a Landmark is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15308 as an action taken by a regulatory agency for the protection of the environment;
3. **FIND** that the Property Owner was given a 15-day notice in accordance with CHO §1365-2, and that the Property Owner concurs with the designation by the CHB of Bella Vista Ranch as Ventura County Landmark No. 180, and placement of said designation in County lists;
4. **FIND** that the Bella Vista Ranch property meets County Landmark Criteria 1, 2, 5, and 6 as required by CHO §1365-5(a), and the additional standards required by CHO §1365-6 based on the substantial evidence in the staff report and all exhibits and attachments hereto; and,

5. **ADOPT** CHB Resolution No. 2021-2 (Exhibit 9) approving the designation of the Bella vista Ranch site located at 1340 McNell Road and 4106 Thacher Road, Ojai, CA 93023, identified as Assessor's Parcel Numbers 029-0-020-310, 029-0-020-260, and 029-0-020-320, and consisting of the residence at 1340 McNell Road, residence at 4106 Thacher Road, barn, and implement shed, as Ventura County Landmark No. 180.

B. To Approve the COA:

1. **CONDUCT** public hearing, **RECEIVE** oral and written testimony, and **CONSIDER** the Planning Division Staff report and all exhibits and attachments hereto;
2. **FIND** that the proposed project, with the added conditions set forth above in section IX, meets the requirements of the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards*;
3. **FIND** that the proposed project, with the added conditions set forth above in section IX, will neither adversely affect the significant architectural features nor adversely affect the character of historical, architectural or aesthetic interest or value of the site, in accordance with Ventura County Cultural Heritage Ordinance §1366-3(a);
4. Based on the preceding evidence and analysis, **APPROVE** the Certificate of Appropriateness (CHO §1366) with the conditions set forth above in section IX, determined necessary to conform to the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards* and CHO Section 1366-3.

C. To Deny the COA:

1. **CONDUCT** public hearing, **RECEIVE** oral and written testimony, and **CONSIDER** the Planning Division Staff report and all exhibits and attachments hereto;
2. **FIND** that the proposed project does not meet the requirements of the Ventura County Cultural Heritage Ordinance and the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards*; and,
3. Based on the preceding evidence and analysis, **DENY** the Certificate of Appropriateness (CHO §1366).

Prepared by:



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Reviewed by:



Tricia Maier, Manager
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Exhibits:

- Exhibit 1 – Architectural Plan Set
- Exhibit 2 – Photo Exhibit
- Exhibit 3 – Architectural Cut Sheets – Material and Product Selections
- Exhibit 4 – Bella Vista Ranch DPR Form
- Exhibit 5 – Historic Resources Report
- Exhibit 6 – 1960s Plot Plan
- Exhibit 7 – Residential Building Record
- Exhibit 8 – 15-Day Public Hearing Notice
- Exhibit 9 – CHB Resolution No. 2021-2