



Staff Report and Recommendations

Agenda of May 9, 2022, Item 7b

County of Ventura • Resource Management Agency

800 S. Victoria Avenue, Ventura, CA 93009-1740 • (805) 654-2478 • www.vcrma.org/divisions/planning

I. APPLICANT/PROPERTY OWNER:

Property Owner: 2464 E Ojai Ave LLC
10600 Wilshire Blvd #1900
Los Angeles, CA 90024

Applicant: Mark Ross
356 Eric Place
Thousand Oaks, CA 91362

Architect: Bestor Architecture
2030 Hyperion Ave
Los Angeles, CA 90027

II. REQUEST:

A request for a Certificate of Review (COR) from the Cultural Heritage Board (CHB) (Ventura County Cultural Heritage Ordinance [CHO] §1364-12) for the refurbishment and repair of existing structures at St. Joseph's Health and Retirement Center, located at 2464 E. Ojai Avenue, Ojai, CA 93023. The scope of work is intended to partially abate Planning Violation PV21-0017 and includes remediation of water damage, dry rot, asbestos, and lead. No additional building square footage is proposed. (Case No. CH22-0003).

III. LOCATION AND PROPERTY INFORMATION:

2464 E. Ojai Avenue, Ojai, CA 93023 (unincorporated Ventura County)
Assessor's Parcel Number (APN): 028-0-120-130
Historic Designation: Site of Merit
Common/Historic Name: St. Joseph's Convalescent Hospital, Edward L. Wiest Residence

The subject property consists of approximately 8.72 acres within the Rural and Open Space land use designations and Residential Exclusive (RE) 10-acre and Agricultural Exclusive (RE) 40-acre Zones, in addition to the Temporary Rental Units and Ojai Valley Dark Sky overlay zones. The subject property is the location of a residence and associated accessory buildings constructed circa 1915-1927 by the Edward Weist family.¹ These buildings were altered and adapted for use as a convalescent hospital beginning in 1955. Two hospital buildings were added to the property in 1959, and a chapel constructed in 1981. In total, the property contains ten buildings constructed

¹ Triem, Judy, and Mitch Stone, San Buenaventura Research Associates, *Historic Resources Report, Phase 1 and 2, 2464 E. Ojai Avenue, Ojai, Ventura County, CA*, April 14, 2022.

between 1915 and 1982. These structures are described in additional detail in Section IV: Project Scope.

The property consists of a variety of architectural types and periods.² The earlier Villa Giuseppe structures, consisting of a 1915 residence and barn/stables, are stylistically indistinct due to a series of alterations that may have begun in the 1920s.³ Other structures, including the Weist Residence, Pool House, Garage/Shop, Garage/Storage, and Doll House, were built in 1927 and loosely follow the English Revival style, a period revival architectural styles popular during the 1920s, also known as Tudor Revival.⁴ Hospital buildings constructed in 1959 were Modern in architectural style as originally designed. One was altered in 2015 to the Spanish Revival style.⁵

IV. PROJECT SCOPE:

The proposed scope of work consists of refurbishment and repair of existing structures at St. Joseph's Health and Retirement Center. It is intended to partially abate Planning Violation PV21-0017, which was issued due to modification of structures without the appropriate land use entitlements or Building and Safety permits. The work completed without permits included partial removal of windows and doors, partial removal and installation of siding and roofing, removal of hardscaping/landscaping, and interior remodeling. The scope of work includes remediation of water damage, dry rot, asbestos, and lead. In addition, other proposed site improvements include new wood decking and concrete walkways. No additional building square footage is proposed.

Refer to Exhibit 1 and Exhibit 2 for proposed plans and design specifications. In addition, refer to Exhibit 2 for photos of the property prior to alteration and Exhibit 4 for existing photos of the property. The scope of work is described per building as follows:⁶

Building Name	Known Previous Alterations	Proposed Scope of Work
1. Villa Giuseppe (two structures [residence and barn/stables], 1,030 sq. ft. and 1,475 sq. ft., respectively)	Stucco exterior and structural interior.	Interior improvements, new porch screens, and new and restored exterior doors and windows.
2. Chapel (1,600 sq. ft.)	Confessional added in 1998.	Interior improvements and new and restored exterior doors and windows.

² Ibid.
³ Ibid.
⁴ Ibid.
⁵ Ibid.
⁶ Ibid.

Building Name	Known Previous Alterations	Proposed Scope of Work
3. Weist Estate (4,750 sq. ft.)	Several known alterations, including at the rear. Porches were enclosed at both the western portion of the eastern wing and along the western wing. A number of window and door opening were also altered, opened, or closed. In addition, the historic wood shingle roof was replaced with asphalt shingles. A portion of the exterior cladding was recently removed down to the studs, particularly on the western wing and the western elevation of the eastern wing.	Interior improvements and new and restored exterior doors and windows.
4. Pool Room (540 sq. ft.)	A number of undocumented changes have occurred. Some alterations or infill apparently occurred between the cabaña and dormitory wings. Aluminum windows were added either in new or existing window openings. These later windows have for the most part been removed recently for building renovations, along with portions of the stucco cladding.	Interior improvements and new and restored exterior doors and windows.
5. Pool House (2,830 sq. ft.)	A number of undocumented changes have occurred. Some alterations or infill apparently occurred between the cabaña and dormitory wings. Aluminum windows were added either in new or existing window openings. These later windows have for the most part been removed recently for building renovations, along with portions of the stucco cladding.	Interior improvements, removal of unpermitted extension between pool room and pool house, upgraded roof structure between pool room and pool house, removal and repair of porch enclosure, and new and restored exterior doors and windows.
6. Garage/Shop (970 sq. ft.)	Enlargement of the building footprint.	Interior improvements and new and restored exterior doors and windows

Building Name	Known Previous Alterations	Proposed Scope of Work
7. Garage/Storage Building (610 sq. ft.)	None apparent.	
8. Doll House (476 sq. ft.)	Addition 1957.	Interior improvements and new and restored exterior doors and windows
<i>The Skilled Nursing Facility and the Assisted Living Facility are not included within the scope of the current application.</i>		

V. HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE:

The subject property was evaluated in a Historic Resources Report prepared by San Buenaventura Research Associates in April 2022.⁷ Based on the evaluation, the property was determined eligible for designation as a County of Ventura Landmark and district. Previously, the subject property was documented in the *July 1985 Cultural Heritage Survey Phase III: Ojai Valley* DPR 523 form (Exhibit 4 – Survey Evaluation) prepared by Ms. Judith P. Triem. The Edward L. Wiest Residence was assigned a “4C” National Register Status Code by the reviewer, denoting conditional eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. On December 12, 2000, the Ventura County Board of Supervisors designated the subject property as a Site of Merit. At that time, all surveyed sites given a National Register Status code of 1 through 5 in existing and newly adopted historic surveys were designated Sites of Merit as part of a larger County-initiated code amendment intended to protect historic resources.

According to the Historic Resources Report, the property was found significant for its reflection of the following two elements of County history (Landmark Criterion #1): 1. the development of agriculture (circa 1915-1955), and 2. the development of the retirement and assisted living communities in the Ojai Valley (1956-1972).⁸ In addition, the property was found significant for its reflection of the aforementioned events, both of which made significant contributions to the broad patterns of Ventura County (Landmark Criterion #2).⁹ Specifically, the following buildings were found to be contributing to a potential district: Villa Giuseppe, Weist Residence, Pool House, garage/storage, Doll House, Hospital, and Chapel.¹⁰ An appropriate period of significance for the residential use of the property is 1915 to 1955; for the hospital use, 1955 to circa 1980.¹¹

VI. CHO ANALYSIS:

⁷ Ibid.
⁸ Ibid.
⁹ Ibid.
¹⁰ Ibid.
¹¹ Ibid.

The Ventura County Cultural Heritage Ordinance (CHO) § 1364-12, requires that the Cultural Heritage Board review, comment, and provide advice on proposed projects for permits to construct, change, alter, modify, remodel, remove, or significantly affect any Designated Cultural Heritage Sites or those potentially eligible for such of designation (i.e., Conduct a Review).

CHB Staff has determined that the *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings* (SOI Standards)¹² may be helpful to the CHB in conducting its analysis of the subject property. CHB Staff has determined the standards for rehabilitation are appropriate for this request and evaluated the proposed scope of work against the relevant standards below.

Standards	Staff Comments
<p>#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.</p>	<p>On June 21, 1955, the Board of Supervisors granted Special Use Permit No. 368 for a convalescent and nursing home. The subject property will continue to be used consistent with the terms of the Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance and applicable land use permits.</p> <p>Staff determined this Standard has been met.</p>
<p>#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.</p>	<p>The Secretary’s Standards¹³ 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.</p> <p>The work completed without permits included partial removal of windows and doors, siding, roofing, and interior remodeling. It would have been recommended to retain the original fenestration and materials prior to their replacement in order to assess their suitability for repair rather than replacement. Consequently, the removal of these features, prior to assessing their condition, did not fully meet Standard 2.</p>

¹² National Park Service, *The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards.htm>.

¹³ 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>In addition, the applicant proposes various alterations to fenestration which have been begun without permits, including the installation of both new windows and doors and infill of previously existing windows and doors. The proposed new window and door replacements appear to use suitable contemporary materials that reflect some aspects of the existing appearance (refer to Exhibit 2). However, changing the number, location, size or glazing pattern of windows and doors, through cutting new openings or blocking-in windows, is generally not recommended.</p> <p>Staff determined this Standard has not been fully met.</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>Conjectural design features are not proposed to be added to the historic property (i.e. changes that are intended to make the new construction look more historic than it actually is). The exterior work proposed generally involves the refurbishment of existing doors and windows and the installation of new window and door replacements that appear to use suitable contemporary materials.</p> <p>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 were some changes and alterations made to the original ranch buildings for adaptation to the hospital use that may have gained significance in their own right, as described in Exhibit 3. Therefore, it may be appropriate to retain these alterations if documentation of the previous conditions is unavailable. The proposed project generally conforms with this approach.</p> <p>Staff determined this Standard has been met.</p>
<p>#5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.</p>	<p>The work completed without permits included partial removal of windows and doors, siding, roofing, and interior remodeling. It would have been recommended to retain the original fenestration and materials prior to their replacement in order to assess their suitability for repair rather than replacement. Consequently, the removal of these features, prior to assessing their condition, did not fully meet Standard 5.</p>

Standards	Staff Comments
	<p>Staff determined this Standard has been partially met.</p>
<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>	<p>The work completed without permits included partial removal of windows and doors, siding, roofing, and interior remodeling. It would have been recommended to retain the original fenestration and materials prior to their replacement in order to assess their suitability for repair rather than replacement. Consequently, the removal of these features, prior to assessing their condition, did not fully meet Standard 6.</p> <p>Reproduction of the original design and materials should take place where repair of original materials is infeasible, and replacement with suitable contemporary materials where reproduction is infeasible. The proposed project generally conforms with this approach.</p> <p>Staff determined this Standard has been partially met.</p>
<p>#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.</p>	<p>This Standard is not applicable to this project.</p>
<p>#8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.</p>	<p>This Standard is not applicable to this project.</p>
<p>#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>	<p>No additions or new construction are proposed.</p> <p>As mentioned previously, it would have been recommended to retain the original fenestration and materials prior to their replacement in order to assess their suitability for repair rather than replacement. For exterior alterations, reproduction of the original design and materials should take place where repair of original materials is infeasible, and replacement with suitable contemporary materials where reproduction is infeasible. The proposed project generally conforms with this approach.</p> <p>In addition, the applicant proposes various alterations to fenestration which have been begun</p>

Standards	Staff Comments
	<p>without permits, including the installation of both new windows and doors and infill of previously existing windows and doors. The proposed new window and door replacements appear to use suitable contemporary materials that reflect some aspects of the existing appearance (refer to Exhibit 2). However, changing the number, location, size or glazing pattern of windows and doors, through cutting new openings or blocking-in windows, is generally not recommended.</p> <p>Based on the above, Staff determined this Standard has been partially met.</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 and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.</p>	<p>No additions or adjacent new construction are proposed. This Standard is not applicable to this project.</p>

VII. STAFF CONCLUSION:

Based on the above considerations, the proposed scope of work appears partially consistent with the Secretary’s Standards. As mentioned previously, the work completed without permits included partial removal of windows and doors, siding, roofing, and interior remodeling. It would have been recommended to retain the original fenestration and materials prior to their replacement in order to assess their suitability for repair rather than replacement. Consequently, the removal of these features, prior to assessing their condition, does not fully meet the Secretary’s Standards. In addition, the applicant proposes various alterations to fenestration which have been begun without permits, including the installation of both new windows and doors and infill of previously existing windows and doors. The proposed new window and door replacements appear to use suitable contemporary materials that reflect some aspects of the existing appearance. However, changing the number, location, size or glazing pattern of windows and doors, through cutting new openings or blocking-in windows, is generally not recommended.

Based on the above, Staff recommends the CHB adopt the following recommendations related to the scope of work in order to better conform to the Secretary’s Standards:

- **Recommendation #1: Fenestration Pattern.** The applicant should retain the existing pattern of fenestration by avoiding to the greatest extent feasible the construction of window and door openings where they did not exist previously and the filling in of existing windows and doors.
- **Recommendation #2: Qualified Architectural Historian.** The applicant should retain a qualified architectural historian meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards¹⁴ to prepare a comprehensive evaluation of the property's character-defining features. The historic architect should assess and determine which altered and former character-defining features should be restored or implemented, which features should be maintained and repaired, and which features can be changed to be consistent with the Secretary's Standards. The scope of the historic architect's review should include character-defining features and their details. The historic qualified architectural historian should prepare a report of their findings and provide the report to CHB Staff. Recommendations identified therein should be implemented by the applicant in order to be consistent with the Secretary's Standards.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

No public comment regarding this item has been received to date.

IX. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

Staff is recommending the CHB take the following actions regarding the request:

1. **CONDUCT** public hearing, **RECEIVE** oral and written testimony, and **CONSIDER** the Planning Division Staff report and all exhibits and attachments hereto; and
2. **REVIEW** and **COMMENT** on the proposed project in accordance with CHO §1364-12 based on the preceding evidence and analysis.

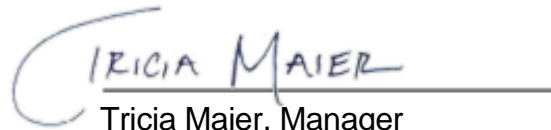
¹⁴ *Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines, Professional Qualifications Standards,* https://www.nps.gov/history/local-law/arch_stnds_9.htm.

Prepared by:



Dillan Murray, Assistant Planner
Ventura County Planning Division
(805) 654-5042

Reviewed by:



Tricia Maier, Manager
Planning Programs Section
(805) 654-2685

Exhibits:

- Exhibit 1 – Proposed Plans and Photos
- Exhibit 2 – Architectural Cut Sheets, Material and Product Selections, and Photos
- Exhibit 3 – Historic Resources Report
- Exhibit 4 – Survey Evaluation