



Staff Report and Recommendations Agenda of June 12, 2023, Item 6d

County of Ventura • Resource Management Agency

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I. APPLICANT/PROPERTY OWNER:

Applicant/Architect: Kevin Sheppard
Bestor Architecture
2030 Hyperion Ave
Los Angeles, CA 90027

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

II. REQUEST:

A request for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) (CHO §1371) from the CHB for a mix of demolition and rehabilitation 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 is limited to the Kugler Hall and Care Center buildings. No new structures or additional building square footage is proposed. (Case No. CH23-0017).

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 Health and Retirement Center

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

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

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.

² *Ibid.*

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 type of revival architectural style popular during the 1920s, also known as Tudor Revival.⁴ Hospital buildings constructed in 1959 were Modern in architectural style as originally designed. The Kugler Hall building was altered in 2015 to the Spanish Revival style.⁵

IV. PROJECT SCOPE:

The proposed scope of work consists of a mix of demolition and rehabilitation 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 limited to the Kugler Hall and Care Center buildings and no additional building square footage is proposed. 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.

At its May 9, 2022 hearing, the CHB approved a Certificate of Review (COR) for the following scope of work:

- A request for a Certificate of Review (COR) from the CHB 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).

At that time, the project was limited to the rehabilitation of buildings on the northern portion of the property constructed circa 1917-1927 (buildings A, B, D, E/F, G and H, corresponding to the Historic Resources Report).

In order to partially abate the ongoing violation case at the subject property, the applicant has returned with a separate scope of work. The proposed scope of work calls for the removal of 12,459 square feet from the Kugler Hall building and the rehabilitation of the remaining 1,548 square feet at its southern end. Also proposed is the demolition of a non-permitted shade structure attached to the Care Center building (former hospital). Refer to Exhibit 1 for proposed plans and elevations. In addition,

³ Ibid.
⁴ Ibid.
⁵ Ibid.

refer to Exhibit 2 for photos of the subject structures, Exhibit 6 for a description of the project, Exhibit 7 for Architectural Cut Sheets and Product Selections, and Exhibit 8 for Digital Material Boards.

| Building Name | Known Notable Alterations | Proposed Scope of Work |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| 1. 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. | Not included in proposed scope of work. |
| 2. 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. | Not included in proposed scope of work. |
| 3. 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 | Not included in proposed scope of work. |

| Building Name | Known Notable Alterations | Proposed Scope of Work |
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| | 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. | |
| 4. Doll House (476 sq. ft.) | Addition 1957. Interior improvements and new and restored exterior doors and windows. | Not included in proposed scope of work. |
| 5 and 6. 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. | Not included in proposed scope of work. |
| 7. Chapel (1,600 sq. ft.) | Confessional added in 1998. Interior improvements and new and restored exterior doors and windows. | Not included in proposed scope of work. |
| 8. Garage/Shop (970 sq. ft.) | Enlargement of the building footprint. Interior improvements and new and restored exterior doors and windows. | Not included in proposed scope of work. |
| 9. Garage/Storage Building (610 sq. ft.) | None apparent. | Not included in proposed scope of work. |
| 10. Care Center | None. | The proposed demolition of a non-permitted shade structure attached to the Care Center (former hospital), as well as a canopy over a walkway connecting the Care Center and Kugler Hall buildings. |
| 11. Kugler Hall | Extensive exterior alterations 2015. | The proposed removal of 12,459 square feet of this building and the |

| Building Name | Known Notable Alterations | Proposed Scope of Work |
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| | | rehabilitation of the remaining 1,548 square feet at its southern end. |

V. HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE:

The subject property was evaluated in a Historic Resources Report prepared by San Buenaventura Research Associates in April 2022 (Exhibit 3).⁶ 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* 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).⁷ 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).⁸ 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.⁹ An appropriate period of significance for the residential use of the property is 1915 to 1955; for the hospital use, 1955 to circa 1980.¹⁰

San Buenaventura Research Associates (SBRA) prepared addendums to the Historic Resources Report to incorporate additional information on May 20, 2022 and May 12, 2023 (Exhibits 4 and 5, respectively). The May 2022 Phase 1 and 2 Report from SBRA determined the Kugler Hall building to be a non-contributor to the eligibility of the

⁶ Ibid.
⁷ Ibid.
⁸ Ibid.
⁹ Ibid.
¹⁰ Ibid.

property.¹¹ This conclusion was based on the extensive alterations to this building that took place in 2015 in the course of its being converted to long-term convalescent care use. A concrete tile hipped roof was added over the original flat roof, two arched, attached entry tower features were added to the eastern elevation and one to the southern elevation of the eastern wing, and an arched arcade was added to the northern elevation of the eastern wing. These alterations thoroughly changed its appearance and architectural style (Exhibit 5).

VI. CULTURAL HERITAGE ORDINANCE ANALYSIS:

When your Board reviewed proposed alterations on this site in May 2022, no substantial building demolition was proposed. Therefore, only a Certificate of Review was required. The scope of work proposed for this area of the property requires that the CHB provide a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) due to proposed demolition activities at a Site of Merit. Ventura County Cultural Heritage Ordinance (CHO) §1371-4 provides 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 its 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 exterior scope of work against the relevant standards below. Pursuant to CHO §1371-4(a), using the Secretary’s Standards as a guide, the CHB shall approve the COA if it can be found that the proposed work will neither reduce the significant architectural features nor reduce the character of historical, architectural, or aesthetic interest or value of the site.

| Standards | Staff Comments |
|---|---|
| <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>New construction is most appropriately located where its visibility from the primary views of the historic building is minimized.¹² This is often a rear or obscure elevation. Inherent in all of the guidance is the concept that new construction needs to be subordinate to the historic building. The size, scale, and massing of new construction all pertain to the construction’s overall volume and three-dimensional qualities.¹³ Taken together, size, scale and massing are critical elements for ensuring that new construction is subordinate to the historic</p> |

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² National Park Service, Technical Preservation Services, “New Construction within the Boundaries of Historic Properties,” <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/taxincentives/new-construction-in-historic-properties.htm>.

¹³ Ibid.

| Standards | Staff Comments |
|------------------|--|
| | <p>building, thus preserving the historic character of a historic property.¹⁴</p> <p>The May 2022 Phase 1 and 2 Report from SBRA determined the Kugler Hall building to be a non-contributor to the eligibility of the property.¹⁵ This conclusion was based on the extensive alterations to this building that took place in 2015 in the course of its being converted to long-term convalescent care use.¹⁶ A concrete tile hipped roof was added over the original flat roof, two arched, attached entry tower features were added to the eastern elevation and one to the southern elevation of the eastern wing, and an arched arcade was added to the northern elevation of the eastern wing.¹⁷ These alterations thoroughly changed its appearance and architectural style.¹⁸ According to SBRA, the proposed partial demolition of this noncontributing/ineligible building will not adversely impact the previously determined eligibility of the property.¹⁹</p> <p>The proposed new construction at the Kugler Hall building is limited to the southern portion of the building and located some distance from the contributing buildings to the historic significance of the property. This placement has the effect of limiting visibility of the new construction from primary viewpoints in the vicinity of contributing buildings.</p> <p>The project also involves the removal of a free-standing gable-roofed shade structure covering a patio within a courtyard of the Care Center building. This shade structure does not appear on the original architectural plans for the building and thus its removal would not adversely impact this building’s ability to convey its significance as a</p> |

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Mitch Stone, San Buenaventura Research Associates, *Historic Resources Report Addendum 2*, May 12, 2023.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

| Standards | Staff Comments |
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| | <p>contributor to the eligible district.²⁰ Cumulatively, SBRA found the proposed alterations to the property will not adversely impact the property's previously determined eligibility.²¹</p> <p>Based on the above considerations, CHB staff determined the scope of work is consistent 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 and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.</p> | <p>Integrity is defined as the ability of a property to convey its historical significance, or the authenticity of a property's historic identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics and materials that existed during the property's historic or pre-historic period of significance. A property would typically possess several (although not necessarily all) of the following seven aspects of integrity, as defined in National Register Bulletin 15, to convey its significance: Location, Design, Setting, Materials, Workmanship, Feeling, and Association.²²</p> <p>The proposed new alterations to the Kugler Hall building are substantive enough to appear to preclude the ability to remove or reverse the changes in the future while maintaining the essential form and integrity of the building. However, as mentioned previously, the Kugler Hall building was determined to be a non-contributor to the eligibility of the overall historic property.</p> <p>The project also involves the removal of a free-standing gable-roofed shade structure covering a patio within a courtyard of the Care Center building. This shade structure does not appear on the original architectural plans for the building and thus its removal would not adversely impact the building's ability to convey its significance as a contributor to the eligible district.²³</p> <p>Based on the above considerations, CHB staff determined the scope of work is consistent with this Standard.</p> |

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ventura County Ordinance Code, Article 5 of Chapter 3 of Division 1, Section 1363.

²³ Ibid.

| Standards | Staff Comments |
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VII. STAFF CONCLUSION:

Based on the above considerations, the proposed scope of work appears 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. However, as mentioned previously, the Kugler Hall building was determined to be a non-contributor to the eligibility of the overall historic property. The proposed alterations to the Care Center building involve the removal of features not included on the original architectural plans for the building or determined significant in their own right. Thus, the proposed alterations to the Care Center building would not adversely impact the building’s ability to convey its significance as a contributor to the eligible district.²⁴

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

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

IX. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

CHB staff recommends 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;
2. **FIND** whether the proposed project meets the requirements of the Ventura County Cultural Heritage Ordinance Section 1371-4(a); and
3. If the requisite finding can be made based on the preceding evidence and analysis, **APPROVE** the Certificate of Appropriateness (Cultural Heritage Ordinance [CHO] §1371) with any Cultural Heritage Board or staff recommendations determined necessary to better conform to the *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards*.

²⁴ Ibid.

Prepared by:



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

Reviewed by:



Tricia Maier, Manager
Planning Programs Section
(805) 654-2464

Exhibits:

- Exhibit 1: Proposed Plans and Elevations
- Exhibit 2: Photo Exhibit
- Exhibit 3: Historic Resources Report, April 14, 2022
- Exhibit 4: Historic Resources Report Addendum 1, May 20, 2022
- Exhibit 5: Historic Resources Report Addendum 2, May 12, 2023
- Exhibit 6: Project Description
- Exhibit 7: Architectural Cut Sheets and Product Selections
- Exhibit 8: Digital Material Boards