



Historic Resources Review Board

Legistar File Number: 23-913

December 07, 2023

Introduced: 11/30/2023

Current Status: Agenda Ready

Version: 1

Matter Type: General Agenda Item

PLN230203 - COUNTY OF MONTEREY (PORTER-VALLEJO MANSION)

Public hearing to consider a recommendation to the Monterey County Planning Commission for a Use Permit to allow alterations to a historic resource (Porter Vallejo Mansion), including repair and replacement of roofing, siding, and 10 windows; repair and relocation of mechanical equipment including exterior screening to hide the equipment; replacement of the front porch decking; mothballing of a detached water tower; and associated site improvements including removal of a trellis, fencing and play equipment, and installation of a three foot tall perimeter picket fence.

Project Location: 29 Bishop Street, Royal Oaks (Assessor's Parcel Number 117-323-013-000)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Historic Resources Review Board (HRRB) adopt a resolution recommending that the Planning Commission:

1. Find that repair and rehabilitation of the historic property qualifies for a Class 31 categorical exemption pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15331; and
2. Approve of a Use Permit to allow alterations to a historic resource (Porter Vallejo Mansion), including repair and replacement of roofing, siding, and windows; repair and relocation of mechanical equipment including exterior screening to hide equipment; replacement of front porch decking; repairs to front railing; mothballing of a detached water tower; and removal of a trellis, fencing and play equipment.

SUMMARY

The Porter Vallejo Mansion is a historic site listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and is being used as the Pajaro Branch of Monterey County Free Libraries. The mansion is significant under NRHP Criterion B for its association with John Porter, who was a major force in the development of the Pajaro Valley; and under NRHP Criterion C for its remodeled design by Architect William Weeks, which transformed the home into a Queen Anne style while retaining its original Gothic Revival features. A detached water tower is also on the site and is a contributing structure to the site's significance.

County Public Works, Facilities, and Parks (public works) are proposing repair and rehabilitation to address water intrusion and flooding issues from the recent 2023 Pineapple Express storm, and to adapt the building to be more resilient to flood risk in the future. This work includes removing and elevating the mechanical equipment (which was previously located in the basement); replacing the roofing; and removing and repairing/replacing portions of the siding and windows. As proposed, the siding would be removed on all elevations, the shell of the building waterproofed and flashing would be installed on the windows. As much of the original siding as possible would be installed back on the

final structure (with the exception of the southern elevation of a 1924 addition to the mansion, whose siding will be salvaged to replace any siding on the other elevations damaged beyond repair, and will be replaced with a thermally modified wood). Associated site improvements include removal of a non-historic trellis and play equipment, mothballing of a historic water tower, and installation of a three foot tall perimeter white picket fence.

The project was heard by the Historic Resources Review Board (HRRB) on October 5 and November 2, 2023. At the October 5, 2023, the HRRB expressed concern that the original siding may be damaged in the process of removing it, and requested analyses of both what siding could be re-used/salvaged and exactly which windows would require replacement. The HRRB continued the hearing on the item to a date certain of November 2, 2023 with direction to provide this additional information. A window inventory was incorporated into the project plans and the applicants provided estimates of which elevations would use original siding (north and east), and which would require partial or full replacement (west and south). Additional requests from the HRRB included confirming the base flood height and clarifying the proposed waterproofing and sloping changes at the front porch roof. There was additional discussion regarding the siding, windows, and flood elevation at the November 2, 2023 meeting, and the HRRB continued the hearing on the item to a date certain of December 7, 2023, with the request that a phase II historic assessment be prepared to address these questions.

Meg Clovis prepared a phase II historic assessment for the project (**Attachment D**), which concluded that the would be consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, with the recommendations detailed in her report. These recommendations are incorporated into conditions 1 through 3 of the draft resolution (**Attachment A**). The site review ad hoc subcommittee also met onsite on November 29, 2023 and discussing the possibility of including monitoring/progress reports as an additional condition, which can also be incorporated at the HRRB's discretion. The phase II historical report also refers to the 2021 Secretary of the Interior's "Guidelines on Flood Adaptation for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings" as well as National Parks Service Preservation Briefs 6, 9, 16, 31, 39, and 45.

The phase II historic assessment replaces the previous Historical Narrative prepared by RIM Architects. As this narrative includes elements that are no longer current (such as use of Anderson replacement windows), it has not been re-attached to this report, but is still available on the County's website Accela Citizen Access under the project file PLN230203 with the name "LET_LARSEN_PLN230203_082823".

The Historic Resources Review Board (HRRB) ad hoc site review subcommittee also conducted a site visit on November 29, 2023 together with public works staff, planning staff, and the project historian. The potential for a monitoring condition during construction operations was discussed, as well as that the western face of the 1924 addition may be used for additional salvaged siding material if the southern face is insufficient to replace any siding on the other elevations that are too damaged to re-install. However, the analysis below reflects the current historical report **Attachment D**.

DISCUSSION

Historic Significance

The Porter Vallejo Mansion is a historical home of John Porter, whose role as a significant figure within the Pajaro community as a businessman and community leader falls under Criterion B of the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). In the 1870s, John Porter moved the one and a half story residence from the Vallejo property to its current location and hired Architect William Weeks to remodel the home into a 23-room, three-story house. This remodel is also significant as an example of the early architectural work from Weeks and meets Criterion C of NRHP. The Porter Vallejo Mansion is notable for Week's ability to convert the home into the Queen Anne style while maintaining the home's original Gothic Revival features. The house is listed on the National and Monterey County historical registers and has been used as the Pajaro Branch Library since 1996.

Historic Residence Scope

The project proposes to remove the existing mechanical equipment and ductwork from the basement and installation of new low profile equipment throughout the building interior to allow the equipment to be permanently located 1'-0" above the level of the base flood per FEMA Code of Federal Regulations, Section 44 CFR 59.1. Relocating utilities above established flood risk levels is recommended by the Secretary of the Interior's (SOI) Guideline on Flood Adaption for Rehabilitating Historic buildings. The proposed equipment will have one single exterior penetration per unit, totaling seven penetrations. The location of the units have been placed to maintain the integrity of the building's seismic upgrades and minimize the visual impact on the exterior; none are located on the primary façade. Previous versions of the project plans proposed three exterior heat pumps that will be located on concrete pads around the perimeter of the building. This has been revised to two pumps on a single pad behind the south elevation of the building within a lattice screening enclosure.

There is evidence of water intrusion at the exterior envelope. Proposed work includes removing and replacing the roofing, removing existing ship lap siding, waterproofing the building envelope and installing flashing around the windows, and re-installing/replacing the siding. The existing 1874 siding on the north elevation scored to give the appearance of masonry is in good condition and will be cleaned/remain in place. Windows will be repaired if possible. If the windows are too damaged, the applicant is proposing to rebuild the wood double-hung windows custom milled to match the exiting windows. There are a total of 78 windows on the building, 68 of which are in fair to good condition and can be cleaned and repaired where needed. 10 windows are in poor condition and will need to be replaced. Previous iterations of the proposed project plans including replacing portions of the west and entire south façade with a thermally modified wood, while the remaining facades would have their siding removed and re-installed. This has been changed so that only the south face of a non-contributing 1924 addition would have its siding removed and replaced with a thermally modified wood product. The remaining ship lap siding will be catalogued, numbered, stored in a dry place, cleaned, repainted, and re-installed, with the exception of individual members that are damaged beyond repair. Siding removed from the 1924 addition would be salvaged and used to replace these damaged members. The thermally treated wood is proposed due to its durability and can be custom milled to match the profile of the existing shiplap siding. Trim will be cleaned and repaired; any trim damaged beyond repair will be replaced in kind. The exterior will be repainted to match the existing colors.

The non-original front porch decking is deteriorated, and the project would replace it with a thermally modified wood product that matches the existing decking's patterns and dimensions. A non-historic

lattice below the deck would also be replaced, and the front railing will be cleaned using the gentlest means possible and re-painted.

Site Improvements Scope

Due to its current deterioration, the applicants are proposing mothballing the water tower until a new use for it can be identified. Proposed mothballing will be consistent with National Park Service Preservation Brief 31, the work will include structurally stabilizing the building, repairing and coating the siding, installing new corner trims to secure the siding, and cleaning up the exterior. New flashing and a metal cap will be installed to cover an existing opening on the roof where the (now removed) water tower tank was located. The building will be secured from break-ins and vandalism.

Recommended Condition of Approval No. 2 would require the applicant to provide a report detailing how they complied with the mothballing plan.

Additional site improvements will include removing the children's play equipment, chain link fence, and wood trellis and replacing them with a hardscape/landscaped community space and installation of a three-foot-tall white picket fence.

Historic Impact Analysis

The historic report (**Attachment D**) reviewed the project for consistency with the Secretary of the Interior's (SOI) Standards for Rehabilitation. The historical report also refers to the "Guidelines for Flood Adaptation for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings", A National Parks Service publication intended to provide information about how to adapt historic buildings to be more resilient to flooding risk in a manner consistent with the SOI Standards for Rehabilitation; and the National Parks Service Preservation Briefs 6, 9, 16, 31, 39, and 45. The report concluded that standards 3, 8, and 9 were not applicable to the project; the project would be consistent with standards 1, 2, 4, and 10 as proposed; and that the project would be consistent with standards 5, 6, and 7 with the recommendations contained in the report, which are discussed below.

Standard 5 states that "Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize the property will be preserved." The project proposes to preserve these elements. The roofing being replaced is non-original and was installed in 1993. 68 of the 78 windows are being cleaned or repaired, while the 10 windows damaged beyond repair would be replaced with windows custom milled to match the existing ones. As ship-lap siding is being removed from the façade for the installation of the waterproofing membrane and window flashing each piece will be catalogued, numbered, stored in a dry place, cleaned, repainted, and re-installed. Preservation Brief 39 states that vapor impermeable barriers in cold and moderate climates generally help slow unwanted vapor diffusion. However, it does recommend that a ventilation channel be installed behind siding when a vapor barrier is installed. Recommended condition No. 3 would require that the applicant include this ventilation channel.

Standard 6 states that "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."

- The scored siding on the front elevation that resembles masonry will be cleaned in place. As stated above, all the ship-lap siding on all elevations will be removed for the installation of a water proofing membrane. The ship-lap will then be re-installed with the exception of individual pieces that are damaged beyond repair and the south elevation of a non-contributing 1924 addition. The siding on this elevation will be salvaged and used to replace any ship lap boards on other elevations that are damaged beyond repair, and a thermally modified siding will be installed on that face.
- The non-original front porch decking is deteriorated, and the project would also replace it with a thermally modified wood product that matches the existing decking's patterns and dimensions. Both the substitute siding and decking would be in accordance with National Parks Service Preservation Brief 16 regarding substitute materials which states that, "when using a substitute material it is critical that it match the historic material in all its visual and physical properties to preserve the historic character of the building and minimize the impact on its integrity."
- Of the 78 windows on the property 34 are in good condition and can be cleaned with the gentlest means possible, 34 are in fair condition and would be repaired, and 10 are in poor condition and would require custom replacement in kind. The historic report recommended consulting Preservation Brief 9 for window repair.
- Where possible all decorative elements shall repaired rather than replaced. If replacement is deemed necessary for any decorative element the replacement shall match the old in design, color, texture, and if possible, materials. The historic report further recommended consulting and Preservation Brief 45 for appropriate wood replacement on any decorative elements that require it and guidance on wood porch preservation.

Recommended Condition No. 1 details the process for the siding removal and incorporates Preservation brief 16 in relation to the siding. Adhering to preservation Brief 45 for any decorative features and the decking, Preservation Brief 16 for the substitute decking material, and Preservation Brief 9 for the window repair is incorporated into recommended Condition No. 3.

Standard 7 states that "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." Several of the character defining features will be cleaned using the gentlest means possible, including the scored siding resembling masonry on the front façade, decorative shingles, ornamental trim, and deck components such as railings. National Parks Service Preservation Brief 6 defines the "gentlest means possible," and Condition No. 3 would require that cleaning be done with the gentlest means possible as defined by this preservation brief, and that the definition be included on the project plan set.

CEQA

CEQA Guidelines section 15331 categorically exempts projects limited to the maintenance, repair, stabilization, rehabilitation, restoration, preservation, conservation, or reconstruction of historical resources in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. The project consists of the repair and rehabilitation of a historic property,

consistent with the intent of this exemption, and none of the exceptions from CEQA guidelines section 15300.2 apply in this case:

- Class 31 exemptions are not qualified by their location;
- Repairing and rehabilitating a historic property would not contribute to a cumulative environmental effect;
- There are no unusual circumstances associated with the project that would create the reasonable possibility of a significant environmental effect;
- The project would not cause damage to scenic resources within view of a state scenic highway;
- The project is not on a hazardous waste site listed pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code; and
- The project would not cause a substantial adverse change to a historical resource.

Prepared by: Hya Honorato, Assistant Planner x5173

Reviewed and approved by: Philip Angelo, Associate Planner

The following attachments are on file with HCD:

Attachment A - Draft Resolution

Attachment B - Project Plans

Attachment C - National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form

Attachment D - Phase II Historical Assessment

cc: Historic Resources Review Board Agenda Distribution List; Hya Honorato, Planner; Phil Angelo, Associate Planner; Florence Kabwasa-Green (PWFP, County of Monterey), Applicant; Sylvia Larsen (RIM Architects), Agent; Meg Clovis, Project Historian; Planning File PLN230203