



County of Monterey

Item No.1

Historic Resources Review Board

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PLN240186 - MOSS RICHARD F & BETTINA E MOSS TRS

Public hearing to consider a request to add the "McDonald House" to the Monterey County Register of Historic Resources; and a Historic Property (Mills Act) Contract for the property at 55 Encina Drive, Carmel Valley (Assessor's Parcel Number 187-041-042-000).

Project Location: 55 Encina Drive, Carmel Valley, CA 93924

RECOMMENDATION:

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

- 1) Project qualifies for a Class 31 categorical exemption pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15331, and that none of the exceptions from Section 15300.2 apply;
- 2) Chief of Planning determine that the property at 55 Encina Drive Carmel Valley would qualify for a Historic Property Contract should it be listed on the Monterey County Register of Historic Resources;
- 3) Board of Supervisors list of the "McDonald House" on the Monterey County Register of Historic Resources; and
- 4) Board of Supervisors approve said Historic Property Contract.

SUMMARY:

The property contains a single-family residence, the McDonald house, which the property owners are requesting be listed on the Monterey County Register of Historic Resources and that a Mills Act contract be approved for the property. The Mills Act contract application includes a proposed work plan generally keeping with the intent of the Mills Act, including rehabilitation and maintenance activities that restore and maintain the residence.

DISCUSSION:

The property is an approximately 6.27 acre lot on Encina Drive west of Laureles Grade developed with a single-family residence with an attached garage and pool, constructed in 1972 and 1973, respectively. A building permit (23CP03997) has also been issued to construct a detached 964 square foot accessory dwelling unit on the property on May 17, 2024.

Historic Register Eligibility

Monterey County Code section 18.25.070 states that a site may be designated on the Monterey County Register of Historic Resources if it meets the criteria for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR), or any of the listed local criteria in section 18.25.070.A through C. In this case a phase I historic report (**Attachment 2**) was prepared by Kent L. Seavey using the Department of Parks and Recreation form (DPR) 523 which concludes that the residence on the property is eligible for listing under

CRHR criteria 2, “*Associated with the lives of persons important to local, California or national history*” for its association with architect noted Mark Mills, and CRHR criteria 3, “*Embodyies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values*” as an excellent and intact example of Wrightian Organic design principles as expanded by Mills.

Mark Mills (1927-2007) received his degree in architectural engineering from the University of Colorado, after which, having hearing of Frank Lloyd Wright’s work, contacted him. He became of Wright’s Taliesen apprentices in Arizona, and between 1944 and 1948 lived in a tent in the desert while helping to build the Taliesen West school. Mills was, “taken by one of Wright’s Sunday lectures on the nature of ‘seashells as housing produced by god.’ Wright noted that even though the shell was finite there was never a limit on the design possibility that the forms infinite variety could lend,...” (Seavey, HCD-Planning File No. LIB240172, 2023).

A number of Mills designs took inspiration from this seashell concept and other forms of nature, including the subject residence; the 1972 “Fan-shell Beach House” in Pebble beach, which appears eligible for the CRHR as noted in the Pebble Beach Historic Context Statement (Past Consulting LLC, 2013); and the 1969 “June Haas House,” which is listed on the Monterey County Register of Historic Resources (HCD-Planning File No. REF230016, 2023). “It was said of him [Mark Mills] that he was ‘an architect of an individual subtlety, rarely repeating designs. Each structure is unique and tailored to the landscape and client.’” (Seavey, HCD-Planning File No. LIB220321, 2021) A 2009 Architectural Digest issue referred to him as “as one of the world's top architects.”

The “McDonald House” is an excellent example of Mills organic designs and retains a high degree of integrity. A one wood framed and cinderblock residence, clad in vertical redwood siding, it has a hip and gable roof system clad in cementation shingles and two cinderblock chimneys. Its character defining features include its:

- Curvilinear shape;
- Use of cinder block and vertical redwood siding as exterior wall-cladding;
- Extensive glazing including multiple skylights extending portions of fenestration into the cementation roof;
- The redwood lath finish of the residence’s interior ceiling, a main design feature; and
- Pie-shaped pool and terrace, which provides an expansive view of the natural landscape setting.

Mills Act Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for a Historic Property (Mills Act) contract, five criteria detailed in Monterey County Code section 18.28.080.A must be met. The project is consistent with criteria 2 through 4, and would be consistent with criteria 1 and 5 should the Board of Supervisors list the property on the Monterey County Register of Historic Resources concurrent with approval of the Mills Act contract.

Criteria 1: “*The property that is the subject of the application is a qualified historical property as defined by this Chapter.*”

To be considered a “qualified historical property,” the property must be individually listed on

the local, state, or national historic registers; or be a contributing structure in a historic district. While the home is not presently listed on one of these registers, as discussed above the home is eligible for listing under California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) CRHR criteria 2 for its association with architect noted Mark Mills, and CRHR criteria 3, as an excellent and intact example of Wrightian Organic design principles as expanded by Mills. The Mills Act contract application was accompanied by a letter dated June 21, 2024 signed by property owners Richard and Bettina Moss requesting that the home be listed on the Monterey County Register of Historic Resources, and should the Board of Supervisors list the residence on the historic register, this criteria would be met.

Criteria 2, 3, and 5 and Work Program Review

These criteria are discussed together due to their overlapping nature, with 2 being based on the County's local policies and regulations, 3 the Secretary of the Interior's standards, and 5 the Mills Act Chapter of Monterey County Code. The details of the work program are also discussed for HRRB's review.

Criteria 2, *"The application is consistent with the County's historic preservation goals and policies, as set forth in the County's General Plan and ordinances."*

Criteria 3, *"The application is consistent with the applicable Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, the rules and regulations of the Office of Historic Preservation of the California State Parks Department, and the California Historical Building Code."*

Criteria 5, *"The application is consistent with the requirements of this Chapter."*

Staff reviewed the application and found it consistent with the applicable policies of the 2010 General Plan and the requirements of Monterey County Code (MCC) Chapter 18.25. Staff also conducted a site visit on August 27, 2024, inspecting the reviewing the property and the work program activities to ensure consistency with the Mills Act requirements. The property meets the criteria for a historic resource as defined in MCC Chapter 18.25.070, the proposed work activities assure the rehabilitation and preservation of the historic resource consistent with PS-12.12 and 12.13, and the Mills Act contract aligns with County general plan policy PS-12.6 encouraging historic preservation incentives.

Pages 1-7 of the work plan include an annual breakdown of activities. A summary table of all activities is on Pg. 8 of the work plan, with written descriptions on 9-12. Tasks 1-11 are rehabilitation activities while tasks 13-15 are general maintenance activities. Many of the rehabilitation's tasks are recommendations of a home inspection report prepared for the property dated 6/4/2024 by Inspector: Paul Murrer, License # 2000320.

Rehabilitation Tasks

Tasks 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 generally consist of repair and maintenance activities to the exterior building envelope, including repair, patching, and adding flashing to exterior walls; roof tile repair; replacement of gutters and downspouts; replacing/repairing exterior windows and adding window vents, screens, sealing and caulking; and repairing wood rot in the jamb of the overhead garage door. Tasks 8 - 10 consist of upgrades to the buildings electrical,

mechanical, and plumbing systems, including replacing outdoor receptacles which are not GFCI protected, adding a drip leg to the residence's gas supply line, adding exhaust fans to bedrooms, and replacing the water heater, as it appears to be at the end of its service life and its enclosure shows signs of leaking. All of these tasks relate to the rehabilitation and maintenance of the historic resource.

The window and repair/replacement scope of Tasks 4 and 11 will warrant additional detailed review with a Design Approval. Maintaining the fenestration of a structure can be critical for retaining its integrity, which includes original materiality and workmanship as well as design. However, staff met with the applicant, their architect, and their historian on site and discussed the work program. The architect described the plan for wood framed windows was to remove the original frames, widen the internal channel for the windows so that double paned glass could be used, and re-construct the window frames using the original materials. Modern double paned / insulated glass would improve the energy efficiency of the residence, lengthening its useful life. In this case staff thought this was a generally appropriate alteration, while care should be taken to ensure that the wood frames are preserved through construction.

Task 7 is a landscaping design, which includes improvements/repair to the property gates and fence, repair of an existing bunker, ensuring site runoff be adequately diverted from the lot. The wind break and bunker are both original features of the residence and diversion of runoff is one of the elements recommended in the home inspection report.

Maintenance Tasks

Tasks 12 - 15 are regular maintenance activities for the home and surrounding property, including grounds maintenance and tree trimming, and home inspections every other year. All of these tasks appear generally keeping with the intent of maintain the historic residence and its setting.

Criteria 4: "The fair market value of the property that is the subject of the application is equal to or less than the valuation limits set forth in Section 18.28.040.C of this Chapter, unless an exception has been granted pursuant to this Chapter."

A Residential Appraisal Report was prepared by Gerald F. Enders of Independent Real Estate Research, Inc. (Certification #AG041310). The report assessed the fair market value of the property as \$2,400,000, less than the \$3,000,000 valuation limit for residential properties.

Work Plan and Estimated Financial Impact

The 10-year rehabilitation and maintenance has a total estimate of \$430,150 in activities over the initial 10-year contract term. \$122,200 of this is in recurring maintenance activities, and \$307,950 is one time rehabilitation activities.

Based on the property's 2023 - 2024 tax bill, the Proposition 13 assessed value of the property is \$1,872,720 while the total tax obligation for that year was \$20,024.26. The estimated property taxes based on the Mills Act tax savings worksheet are \$426.48, resulting in an approximate tax savings (or loss of revenue) of \$19,597.78. Over a period of 10 years this would be a savings of \$195,977.80 dollars.

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 listing a property on the County of Monterey historic register and approving a historic property contract to allow the on-going maintenance and preservation of a historic home, consistent with the intent of this exemption.

None of the exceptions from CEQA guidelines section 15300.2 apply in this case:

- Class 31 exemptions are not qualified by their location;
- Approving the historic register listing and contract 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: Phil Angelo, Senior Planner

Reviewed by: Craig Spencer, Acting HCD Director

The following attachments are on file with Housing and Community Development:

Attachment 1 - Draft Resolution

Attachment 2 - Phase I Historic Report (DPR 523 Form, LIB240172)

Attachment 3 - 10-Year Rehabilitation and Maintenance Plan

Attachment 4 - Landscape Site Plan

Attachment 5 - Site Photos dated August 27, 2024

Attachment 6 - Original Floor Plan, Site Plan, and Elevations