

ANALYSIS

Background:

The subject property is 4.82 acres at 5190 Vine Hill Road in Sebastopol. The property contains the following structures: 1) Main House (ca 1882 or earlier); 2) Carriage House (ca 1900) that consists of a small residence, storage area, and small garden; 3) Cottage; 4) Picnic Shelter; 5) Barn; 6) contemporary Pole Barn; and 7) large stone and concrete terrace enclosed by a low stone wall. The property is referred to as Bushnell Ranch, Pitkin Ranch, and Jones Tree Farm.

At its April 1, 2008 meeting, the Landmarks Commission reviewed the first phase of a proposed project for the main house on the subject property that consisted of expanding the existing deck and adding 780 square feet on one floor to include a family room and bathroom. The second phase of the project was to add a second floor and loft. The Commission commented that the scale and mass of the addition is too large, and directed the applicant to scale-down the mass of the addition based on their comments and return to the Commission for review of the revised project plans. The minutes of the April 1, 2008 meeting are in EXHIBIT C.

At its May 21, 2008 meeting, the Landmarks Commission reviewed the revised project plans, which included a front elevation of less mass and a lower roof. The Commission discussed the differences between the historic and current photos of the property, which show that alterations to the exterior of the main house had been made after the subject property had been designated an Historic Landmark. The Applicant clarified that the alterations to the main house had been made by the previous property owner. Staff and the Commission determined and the Commission discussed, that these alterations to the main house were made without building permits or review by the Landmarks Commission. The Commission discussed that these previous alterations to the main house were inconsistent with the Secretary of the Interior's standards. The Commission questioned and discussed whether the main house and overall property retained enough integrity for the property to remain an Historic Landmark. The Applicant stated that the property owner feels that the HD Zoning is not fair, and asked if the HD Zoning could be removed from the property. Staff explained that a Zone Change application to remove the HD Zoning could be filed.

The Commission was not able to recommend approval of the proposed project because it did not meet the Secretary of the Interior's standards. The Commission continued the item to a date uncertain, and told the Applicant that the Commission could informally review revisions to the proposed project at any of its meetings. The minutes of the May 21, 2008 meeting are in EXHIBIT D.

The Applicant filed an application for a Zone Change to remove the HD Zoning from the subject property on February 2, 2009 (EXHIBIT A). The application included an Historic Resource Report on the subject property dated December 2008 prepared by Diana J. Painter, Ph.D. (EXHIBIT B). The Historic Resource Report concludes that the subject property does not retain sufficient integrity to be a significant historic resource under California Register of Historical Resources criteria:

- "The house retains integrity of location and setting and, for the most part, integrity of materials. It does not retain integrity of design, workmanship, feeling or association. Therefore, the house does not retain sufficient integrity as an individual resource to be recognized under Criteria 3." (page 7)
- "The farmstead as a district has two contributing elements, two non-contributing elements due to loss of integrity, and three non-contributing elements due to their age. It therefore does not retain sufficient integrity to retain its associations with Amasa Bushnell and as an example of an early farm complex. Each of the buildings today, with the exception of the barn, has a residential component, and the picnic shelter and terrace are clearly later additions intended for recreational use. The property's apparent use as an extended family compound and a country property in the last half of the twentieth century has contributed to its changed appearance and loss of association with its agricultural past." (page 8)

Project Description:

The proposed project is a Zone Change to remove the HD Zoning from the subject property.

DISCUSSION OF ISSUES

Issue #1: **Appropriateness of Request**

The Historic Resource Report on the subject property prepared by Diana J. Painter, Ph.D. dated December 2008 concludes that the subject property does not retain sufficient integrity to be a significant historic resource under California Register of Historical Resources criteria. Therefore, the property no longer qualifies as a Sonoma County Historic Landmark.

Issue #2: **Landmarks Commission Review**

Removal of the HD Zoning would remove the designation of Sonoma County Historic Landmark from the subject property, and allow the property owner to make exterior alterations to the main house and other buildings on the property without review and approval of the Landmarks Commission.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Landmarks Commission recommend that the Planning Commission recommend approval of the Zone Change to remove the HD Zoning from APN 078-060-017.

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

EXHIBIT A: ZCE09-0003 Application

EXHIBIT B: Historic Resource Report

EXHIBIT C: April 1, 2008 Landmarks Commission Meeting Minutes

EXHIBIT D: May 21, 2008 Landmarks Commission Meeting Minutes