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Pasolivo

FEBRUARY 27, 2014



PLANNING DEPARTMENT HEARINGS
AGENDA ITEM: #6 - WILLOW CREEK
DATE: APRIL 17, 2015
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PLANNING DEPARTMENT HEARINGS

AGENDA ITEM: #6 - WILDLIFE WEEK

DATE: APRIL 17, 2015

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Pasolivo

FEBRUARY 27, 2014



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SPRINTMENT HEARINGS

#6 - WILLOW CREEK
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MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 17, 2015

TO: Mandi Pickens, Kirk Consulting

FROM: Michael Hibma, M.A., RPH, Architectural Historian; Andrew Pulcheon, M.A., RPH, AICP, Principal, LSA Associates, Inc.

SUBJECT: Draft Response to Comments on the California Register of Historical Resources Eligibility Evaluation of the Pasolivo Barn

This memorandum was prepared by LSA Associates, Inc. (LSA), Architectural Historian Michael Hibma, who meets the Secretary of the Interior's *Professional Qualification Standards* for history and architectural history (36 CFR Part 61). The memorandum responds to points raised by a local resident who expressed concerns regarding the proposed demolition of a circa 1925 barn in the Pasolivo project area. In September 2013, LSA prepared a *Phase I Archaeological Survey and Historical Assessment* of the proposed Pasolivo Project. The study identified four built environment resources 50 years old and older in the project area, one of which was the subject barn. Based on background research and field observations, LSA evaluated the eligibility of the resources for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) eligibility evaluations. LSA concluded that none of the resources appeared eligible for inclusion in the California Register due to a lack of significant historical associations.

The concerns expressed regarding cultural resources focus solely on the barn, which was recorded as a rectangular, 6,500-square-foot, wood-framed barn with a two-story central section flanked by single story, shed-roofed cribs on the east and west façades. The barn is located approximately 350 feet east of Vineyard Drive. Records at the North County Branch office of the San Luis Obispo County Assessor and Recorder indicate that this Pasolivo property was once in operation as a dairy, with Assessor records depicting several buildings and structures (several now demolished) associated with dairy production. The concerns expressed are based on the barn's architectural qualities, age, use of local materials, design, and an association with King Vidor, a noted early Hollywood producer, director, and screenwriter who owned the barn as part of his larger 1,500-acre ranch from 1946 until his death in 1982. The study prepared by LSA concluded that the barn did not appear eligible for inclusion under any of the California Register criteria due to a lack of significant associations and was not a historical resource as defined at California Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21084.1

ELIGIBILITY EVALUATION

The California Register eligibility evaluation of the barn is summarized below according to the significance criteria contained in PRC Section 5024.1.

Criterion 1: Is it associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage?

LSA's research indicated that although the barn is associated with a pattern of events that has been significant in local history (agricultural development in the Adelaida area), the barn does not have an important association with that pattern of events.

Criterion 2: Is it associated with the lives of persons important in our past?

Research indicated that the barn is located on a portion of a larger ranch that was once owned by King Vidor, an early Hollywood producer, director, and screenwriter. Vidor's ranch, at the height of its geographic extent, comprised approximately 1,500 acres, of which the project area was a small part (seven acres).

Research did not indicate that Vidor constructed or commissioned the construction of the barn, or that it served as part of an administrative or operational headquarters for his ranch. The barn appears to be part of a satellite complex associated with the day-to-day operation of the Willow Creek Ranch, and it is not associated with his productive life as a prominent Hollywood producer, director, and screenwriter.

Criterion 3: Does it embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represent the work of an important creative individual, or possess high artistic values?

Architecture in the project area parallels trends elsewhere in San Luis Obispo County during the 20th century. The barn possesses the general characteristics of a utilitarian design, a style well represented in the existing building stock of northwest San Luis Obispo County and the Central Coast. Research and field observations indicate that it reflects a design and use of materials that are indicative of a vernacular expression, that which utilized common techniques prevalent in rural carpentry. The utilitarian design and configuration indicates that this barn was used as a multi-purpose building to house or contain a variety of typical agricultural operations; as such, the barn does not represent the work of an important creative individual or possesses high artistic value.

LSA conducted a windshield review of the local area to identify other examples of barn architecture as a comparative basis for the evaluation. As a comparative example, LSA considered the barn identified by Bertrando (2005) at the Kentucky Ranch, an equestrian facility located at 8355 Vineyard Drive that "appears to be have operated from about 1950 to 2000" (LSA 2013:23). The Kentucky Ranch Barn, a Gothic-arch roof horse barn built circa 1925, appeared eligible for inclusion in the California Register under Criterion 3 as an example of "particular barn construction technique that was part of the evolution of barn design during the Twentieth Century" (LSA 2013:23).

The subject barn does not possess any of the distinguishing characteristics expressed by the Kentucky Ranch Barn.

Criterion 4: Has it yielded, or may it be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history?

The utilitarian design has been well documented in agricultural literature, which has been extensively published and is widely available. For this reason, additional study of the barn would not yield information important to history.

Eligibility Conclusion

Due to a lack of historical significance, the barn does not appear eligible for inclusion in the California Register, nor does it qualify as a historical resource for the purposes of CEQA.

COMMENT RESPONSES

The concerns raised by Claudia Webster in an email to Dr. Daniel Krieger dated February 28, 2015, are presented below and followed by a response.

Comment 1: *A local contractor, Jack Hanauer, a local contractor tried to speak out at a planning department hearing about the unique nature of the barn on the property. He said it was the only barn in the area that he knew of that was built with local oak.*

Response: It was common for utilitarian agricultural buildings and structures to use local materials in their design and construction due to ready availability and low cost.

Comment 2: *The posts are actual tree trunks.*

Response: The barn was heavily damaged during the San Simeon Earthquake of December 2002; following the earthquake, the barn's entire superstructure was rebuilt with lodge poles set in circular concrete supports (LSA 2013:20).

Comment 3: *He (Jack Hanauer) also said it was unique because of its construction (the roof is level, of course, but it is 10' higher on one side [sic] than the other).*

Response: The barn's roof is not configured as described in the above comment. The barn is covered by an end-gabled, medium-pitched, full-length central two-story portion symmetrically flanked by a full-length single story, shed-roofed cribs on the east and west façades. In LSA's opinion, the visual signature of the barn is common to other types of barns in the local area and Central Coast.

Comment 4: *He (Jack Hanauer) also said it was in very good shape as it has a new foundation and repair work done in 2005.*

Response: LSA concurs with this statement; the barn is in good condition and recent repairs noted are evident. However the barn's structural (and altered) condition does not add associative qualities as a historical resource.

Comment 5: *We know that it was originally a dairy barn.*

Response: LSA concurs with this statement regarding the barn's history based on archival research. It is common for utilitarian buildings such as barns to be repurposed to meet the needs of different owners.

Comment 6: *We know that at one time it was owned by King Vidor.*

Response: LSA concurs with this statement regarding the barn's ownership history based on archival research. LSA's research also indicated that Vidor began amassing property in the Las Tablas/Adelaida area in the 1940s and was still expanding his holdings when he acquired lands containing the project area in 1946. At its greatest extent, Vidor's holdings covered 1,500 acres. LSA's chain of title research at the San Luis Obispo County recorder indicated that the barn and project area was owned by Johannes C. and Mildred L. Thiele, who, in 1946, sold the land that included the project area to King Vidor; Vidor owned the land until his death in 1982 (San Luis Obispo Recorder, 1944). In 1977, Vidor transfers ownership of his lands to the King Vidor Trust (San Luis Obispo County Recorder 1977). Four years later, the trustees of Vidor's estate sold the land to Karen Guth and Charles Applebaum.

National Register Bulletin 15, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, provides guidance developed by the National Park Service that explains how to apply the criteria in evaluating properties that may be significant in local, State, and national history. This guidance is acknowledged as relevant in the application of California Register criteria due to the similarity between the registration programs (cf. PRC 5024.1(c)). In discussing the application of Criterion B (Criterion 2 of the California Register), Bulletin 15 states:

Properties eligible under Criterion B are usually those associated with a person's productive life, reflecting the time period when he or she achieved significance. In some instances this may be the person's home; in other cases, a person's business, office, laboratory, or studio may best represent his or her contribution. Properties that pre- or post-date an individual's significant accomplishments are usually not eligible.

King Vidor is best known for his association with the early 20th century history of Hollywood. In his career as a director, producer, and screen writer, his filmography covers over 70 films, the bulk of which were made between 1913 and the mid-1940s. The association with Mr. Vidor and the project area appears to have begun near the end of his main productive period in the film industry. No evidence was found that linked the barn with any of his movies as a prop, set, or housing any movie equipment. Mr. Vidor did not reside in an area in proximity to the barn.

Comment 7: *I was also able to obtain a document from the county that shows it in existence in 1900. That makes it older than the Octagonal barn which has been preserved.*

Response: LSA did not identify the reference document during background research. LSA's build date estimate of 1925 is based on information from San Luis County Assessor records, architectural characteristics, and historical USGS topographic maps.

Regardless of the potential difference in construction dates, the earlier date (if accurate) does not appear to be determinative with respect to the barn's status. Based on archival research and field

observations, the barn does not possess the associative significance or distinctive architectural qualities to confer significance under California Register Criterion 1 through 4.

Comment 8: *The planning department just says it [the barn in the project area] is historically insignificant.*

Response: LSA agrees with this assessment.