



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

Memorandum

DATE: February 26, 2014

MEMO TO: MROSD Board of Directors

THROUGH: Stephen Abbors, General Manager

FROM: Ariel Shaw, Planner I

SUBJECT: Hawthorns Historic Complex at Windy Hill Open Space Preserve

This memorandum has been prepared to inform the full Board of recent progress regarding the Hawthorn Historic Complex located at Windy Hill Open Space Preserve.

During FY2013-14, the District hired Knapp Architects to conduct surveys and data research of the land and structures associated with the Hawthorn Historic Complex at Windy Hill Open Space Preserve. The following two reports are now complete and include details on the survey information and findings for the site: (1) Historic Resource Study and (2) Structure Conditions Assessment

On February 18, 2014, the Planning and Natural Resources Committee (PNR) reviewed and accepted the key findings of each report. With the reports in hand, the District is now poised to begin exploring partnership opportunities for the future rehabilitation, reuse, and maintenance of the Hawthorn Historic Complex. To this end, the PNR agreed to have these reports available to the public and posted on the District website for reference to interested persons and potential viable partners. Copies will also be posted at the Town of Portola Valley Town offices for public review. Summaries of the key findings are attached as Attachments 1 and 2. Full copies of the reports are available on the District website.

With the goal of moving forward with partnership development and knowing that time is of the essence given that the buildings continue to be exposed and impacted by the various elements, the PNR also reviewed and accepted the General Manager's proposed partnership development approach. This approach streamlines the typical partnership proposal process and reduces the upfront burden for potential proposers by following an incremental request for information. This partnership approach begins with the release of a Request for Letters of Interest (RLOI) to solicit potential partnerships and conceptual proposals for the restoration, reuse and maintenance of the Hawthorn Historic Complex. The RLOI would provide background information about the site, set parameters for potential partnerships, identify minimum partner requirements, and identify District responsibilities and plans for the property. Letters of Interest may propose reuse of all or portions of the historic complex. These Letters of Interest would serve as the starting point of discussions with potential partners to determine if the conceptual proposals are viable, consistent with the District's mission and goals for the property, and consistent with the historic character of the site and Town restrictions. Only "concept-level" proposals rather than full detailed proposals would be requested at this time. Staff would then review the proposals and engage in

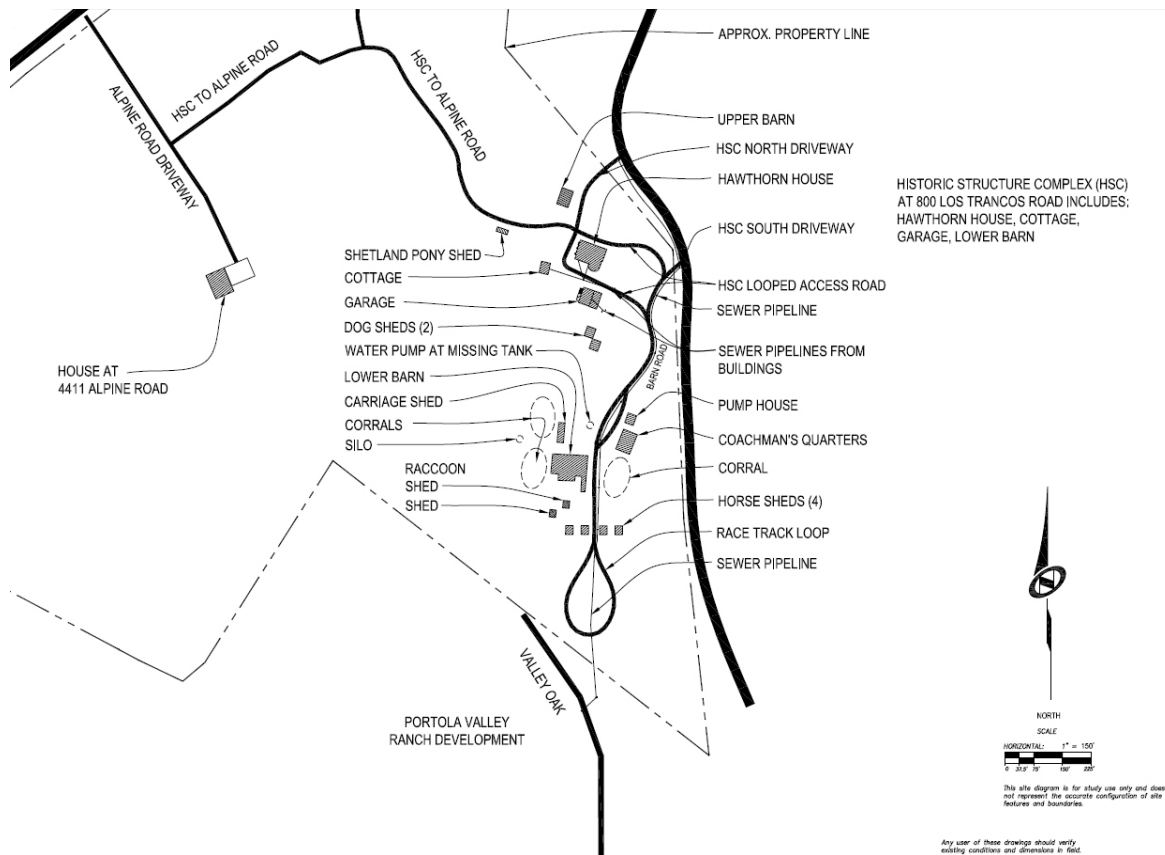
discussions with the proposers. Once viable candidates are identified, the District would then request more detailed information. Staff will be working with the PNR to narrow the potential pool of viable partners, identify a recommended partner(s) and subsequently forward PNR's recommendation to enter into a potential partnership agreement to the full Board for review and consideration. If no viable partners are identified, staff would identify other potential land management options for the historic complex and return to the PNR with a different recommended approach.

**HAWTHORN PROPERTY
WINDY HILL OPEN SPACE PRESERVE**

HISTORIC RESOURCE STUDY – SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

A Historic Resource Study was completed by Knapp Architects and Denise Bradley in the summer of 2013 for the Hawthorn Historic Complex, located on the Hawthorn Property within Windy Hill Open Space Preserve in the town of Portola Valley, California. A summary of the key findings from the Historic Resource Study are provided below.



Hawthorn Historic Complex map, courtesy of Knapp Architects

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS:

- 1. The Hawthorn Historic Complex (HHC) as a whole appears eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, broad patterns of history, at the local level. No one structure is deemed historically significant alone. The HHC demonstrates importance in the areas of:**
 - a. Agriculture
 - b. Architecture
 - c. Social History

2. **The HHC retains a remarkable and unique level of historic integrity**, even though some of the buildings and landscape features are in poor condition.
 - a. **The HHC remains relatively intact since the 1920s.** The Allen family purchased property in 1886 from the Martinez family. It was a small portion of the Martinez's Rancho El Corte de Madera. The Allen family sold to the Woods family in 1916. Woods completed additions and renovations to the estate in the 1920's. Since that time, little to no upgrades have occurred and the estate is relatively intact, closely resembling its appearance in the 1920s. The result is a high level of historic integrity, providing a strong sense of time and place.
 - b. Integrity features include:
 - i. Location
 - ii. Design
 - iii. Setting
 - iv. Workmanship
 - v. Feeling
 - vi. Association

3. **The Hawthorn HHC meets the definition of a Historic District Resource under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).**

4. **Specific Historic & Cultural Defining Features include:**
 - a. **Excellent example of the "Gentleman's Farm":**
 - i. Serves as an example of small farming estates that merged agricultural uses and recreational activities.
 - ii. Lifestyle attracted middle and upper class families of San Francisco to the peninsula – facilitated by the development of the railroad.
 - iii. Cultural / landscape defining features of the Gentlemen's farm that are still extant at Hawthorn include:
 - Hawthorn House -built by Allen family in 1886-87
 - Barn - age unknown; likely built by Allen family at same time as House
 - Cottage - age unknown; assumed to pre-date House
 - Olive Orchard – planted by Allen family
 - Road System - gravel/dirt roads appear to all be of original Allen family period
 - Stone walls – appear to be constructed by Allen family
 - Fences – from both Allen and Woods family era
 - b. **Woods Era use of HHC reflects the change in pattern of settlement** on the peninsula from summer and weekend retreat to full-time residence. Although the Woods family retained a home in San Francisco, they eventually settled full time at Hawthorn.



Hawthorn House, Allen era, north façade. Credit: G.T. White, 1893, Town of Portola Collection

5. The HHC includes a number of **primary and secondary structures, as well as landscape features that lend significance to the site as a Historic District.**

- a. Primary structures:
 - i. Hawthorn House
 - ii. Cottage
 - iii. Garage
 - iv. Lower Barn
- b. Secondary structures:
 - i. Upper Barn
 - ii. Shetland Shed
 - iii. Dog Sheds
 - iv. Carriage Shed
 - v. Pump House
 - vi. Coachman's Quarters
 - vii. Raccoon Sheds
 - viii. Horse Sheds
- c. Landscape features:
 - i. Natural Topography – how structures/facilities were developed into site contours
 - ii. Olive Grove
 - iii. Clustering of Structures
 - iv. Internal Road network
 - v. Rock walls & edging
 - vi. Free-standing brick oven

HAWTHORN PROPERTY
WINDY HILL OPEN SPACE PRESERVE

STRUCTURE CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT – SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

A Structure Conditions Assessment (SCA) was completed by Knapp Architects in 2014 for the Hawthorn Historic Complex, located on the Hawthorn Property within Windy Hill Open Space Preserve in the town of Portola Valley, California. The historic structures on this property have not been inhabited, utilized, nor maintained for many years and have sustained considerable deterioration. Documentation of their general design and construction condition is essential to inform future development of the site as a whole, as well as improvements to individual structures. The SCA focuses on the conditions of the historic site and the four major structures that are located within it. A primary objective of the SCA is to provide information to potential partners who are assessing the viability of rehabilitation and reuse of the site and structures.

The SCA assumes that the California Historical Building Code (CHBC) may be applied so that the historic fabric can be maintained to the greatest extent possible; application of the regular California Building Code (CBC) may otherwise jeopardize the historic integrity of the site. (Note: use of the CHBC would need to be evaluated by potential partners if use thereof facilitates their proposed site reuse; local jurisdictions would need to be consulted to determine application of the CHBC versus CBC). Code requirements will vary depending on the rehabilitation and reuse plans proposed for the site.

A summary of the SCA findings are provided below.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS:

A. Site Conditions

1. The site is in considerable disrepair; landscaping and structures have not been maintained for decades.
2. Site Access – the HHC is accessed from two entry drives off Los Trancos Road.
 - The entry drives will need to be widened and site-lines assessed, and repaved with compacted aggregate baserock.
 - The larger network of roads would need to be assessed for improvement on a case-by-case basis.
3. Surface Drainage
 - Improvements will be required to address erosion control and the potential for runoff to Los Trancos Creek.
4. Site Utilities
 - Electrical - PG&E service is available on site; new services would need to be installed at structures and service extended.
 - Sewer – the House, Garage and Cottage appear to have formerly been on a septic system; although a sewer main runs through the site, there is no current hook-up to this system. Depending on proposed rehabilitation and reuse plans, the site could be either served by a new septic system or connected to the sewer main.

- Water – no existing water source exists on site. A new water service would be required and is available from a water main located in Los Trancos Road.
- Gas – no existing gas service exists on site. A new gas service could be extended from the main in Los Trancos Road. Depending on the proposed rehabilitation and reuse plans, propane may be an option.

5. Site geology and structural stability

- The House and Garage are set on stable, unconsolidated granular material and the Cottage is underlain by stable bedrock.
- There is the potential for strong to very strong ground shaking due to a seismic event on one of the nearby faults.
- Structures have evidence of some distress as a result of undersized footings and settlement.
- New foundations should be reset on stable or engineered backfill with adequate depth and adequate drainage.

B. Primary Structures

1. Hawthorn House

- Built in 1887
- Fair condition; good candidate for reuse

2. Garage

- Built in 1916
- Fair condition; good candidate for reuse

3. Cottage

- Built in early 1880s
- Fair-to-poor condition; stabilize for exterior viewing

4. Lower Barn

- Built in early 1880s
- Fair-to-poor condition; stabilize for exterior viewing

C. Recommendations for primary structures:

1. Replace roofs with new asphaltic roofing that matches the aesthetic of original shingles.
2. Strengthen roof framing.
3. Repair external additions and staircases that have deteriorated.
4. Repair or replace siding and shingles and repaint structures; match historic aesthetic.
5. Repair doors and windows and replace broken glazing.
6. Repair and refinish interior walls, ceilings, and floors as necessary, matching historic standards.
7. Implement pest intrusion and prevention measures.
8. Reinforce or replace foundations and bring up to code.
9. Replace deteriorated, inadequate, or dangerous system components in all structures with new electrical, plumbing, heating and ventilations systems.
10. Potentially add HVAC systems to the Cottage and Barn if reuse is planned.
11. Retain and repair historic lighting and plumbing fixtures when feasible. Select new fixtures that are compatible with the historic building.

D. Hawthorns Secondary structures and outbuildings – all secondary structures have been deemed to be in either poor condition or deteriorated, and many have already collapsed; these structures pose a long-term maintenance issue as well as fire and safety concerns.

1. Upper Barn
2. Coachman's Quarters
3. Pump House
4. Silo
Sheds

E. Recommendations for secondary structures/outbuildings

1. Photo-document each structure
2. Demolish most of the outbuildings.



Hawthorns House circa 2013; photo courtesy of Knapp Architects