

Staff Report and Recommendations Agenda of October 13, 2025, Item 7b

County of Ventura • Resource Management Agency

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I. APPLICANT/PROPERTY OWNER:

Applicant/Property Owner: Southern California 2022 Properties, LLC
4130 Arrowhead Circle
Westlake Village, CA 91362

II. REQUEST:

A request for a recommendation regarding landmark designation and adoption of a Mills Act contract for a property located at 119-127 S D Street, Oxnard, CA 93030. (Case No. CH24-0026).

III. LOCATION AND PROPERTY INFORMATION:

119-127 S D Street, Oxnard, CA 93030
Assessor's Parcel Number (APN): 202-0-044-020
Historic Designation: undesignated, determined eligible for landmark listing
Common/Historic Name: Schuster Court

The subject property is a 0.32-acre parcel containing a 9-unit courtyard apartment complex originally built in 1942. The complex was built as part of a postwar population boom that created an urgent need for housing throughout Southern California. The property is an example of the "u-parti" form of courtyard apartment complex, which is defined by building masses enclosing a courtyard on three sides with an opening facing the street.

IV. PROJECT SCOPE:

On August 18, 2025, City of Oxnard staff forwarded to CHB staff a request for a recommendation regarding landmark designation (Exhibit 2) and adoption of a Mills Act contract for a property located at 119-127 S D Street, Oxnard, CA 93030. The property owner requested to enter into a Mills Act contract with the City of Oxnard for the potential benefit of property tax savings in exchange for continued preservation of the subject property. On September 5, 2025, CHB staff visited the subject property and provided recommendations regarding potential work items to include in the contract's Ten-Year Rehabilitation Plan. Landmark designation is a required prerequisite in order for the property owner to be eligible to enter into a Mills Act contract. In accordance with Section 1365-1 et seq. of Ventura County Ordinance No. 4604 and Resolution 10,135 of the City of Oxnard, the Oxnard City Council is the final authority for landmark designation and adoption of a Mills Act contract. Refer to Figure 1 for a historical view of the subject property and Figure 2 for a contemporary view.

Figure 1 – Historical View of Subject Property, c. 1955



Credit: San Buenaventura Research Associates

Figure 2 – Contemporary View of Subject Property, 2024



Credit: San Buenaventura Research Associates

V. PROPERTY DESCRIPTION:

The subject property was evaluated in a Historic Resources Report (“Historic Report”) prepared by San Buenaventura Research Associates on August 26, 2024 (Exhibit 1).¹ According to the Historic Report, the original 7-unit courtyard apartment complex was completed on the property in 1942 by and for general contractor Albert E. Schuster and his wife, Amanda Egbert Schuster. Schuster advertised the production of his designs to his clients, and consequently very likely designed this project for himself.² The westernmost one- and two-story building in the complex was originally constructed as a single unit residence, which the owners occupied until selling the property to Albert J. and Elise Jourdan of Santa Paula in 1944. The new owners apparently also lived in the single unit residence. The property was sold again in 1953 to Harry J. and Louise Savage, who split the rear building into two units in 1955. The rear unit was later modified into three units, bringing the total number of units to nine.³

Historical Background

The Town of Oxnard was laid out in 1898 on the lands of John G. and Aranetta Hill. It was primarily a neighborhood of single-family homes during the early years. With the 1920s housing boom, multifamily housing units began to make an appearance, primarily in the form of courtyard housing.⁴ Between 1920 and 1950, approximately fifteen such properties were developed throughout the city. Today, only about seven remain, including the subject property. Two of these courtyard complexes are designated as landmarks. The courtyard at 521 S. F Street was designated in 2010 and 534-42 S. F. Street in 2014 on the basis of their significance as a type of residential construction (courtyard housing).⁵

VI. SIGNIFICANCE:

According to the Historic Report, the subject property is significant for its reflection of the postwar multifamily housing boom in Southern California (Criterion 1) and as an example of courtyard housing built in the Minimal Traditional architectural style, a commonly employed style during the immediate prewar and postwar period (Criterion 3).⁶ The Minimal Traditional style incorporates familiar design elements derived from historical architectural styles into otherwise Modern buildings; characteristic features

¹ *Historic Landmark Nomination, 119-127 S. D Street, Oxnard, Ventura County, CA, San Buenaventura Research Associates, August 26, 2024*

² Ibid.
³ Ibid.
⁴ Ibid.
⁵ Ibid.
⁶ Ibid.

of this style observed at the subject property include its hipped roof with intersecting gables, shallow eaves, and wood drapery patterns.⁷

According to the Historic Report, the apartment complex has retained sufficient integrity to convey its significance as an example of courtyard housing in Oxnard. Some changes have been made over the years, including the removal of original windows and the addition of walkway railings. An appropriate period of significance for the property extends from when it was completed in 1942 through the alterations made in 1955 to divide the rear building into a duplex.⁸

VII. MILLS ACT PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS:

The requested Mills Act Contract is a formal agreement between the City of Oxnard and the property owner for a minimum term of ten years. The contract automatically renews each year on its anniversary date and another year is added to the effective term of the contract. The contract runs in perpetuity with the land unless non-renewed by the property owner. The contract is transferred to new owners when the property is sold and is binding on all successive owners.

Minimum Preservation Standards

The property owner agrees to restore, repair, maintain, and protect the property for the life of the contract in accordance with the specific historic preservation standards and conditions identified in the proper maintenance of the property (Exhibit 4, Contract Exhibit C). The proposed ten-year rehabilitation list (Exhibit 4, Contract Exhibit D) for the subject property describes the property owner's intent to restore, rehabilitate, and maintain the interior and exterior character-defining elements of the property in accordance with the *Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. A sample Mills Act contract is provided for reference in Exhibit 4. The City of Oxnard will prepare a final version, formatted according to city standards, for presentation at the City Council hearing on this request.

Inspections and Monitoring Requirements

On behalf of the City of Oxnard, County staff inspects Mills Act properties every five years to ensure proper maintenance and rehabilitation work is completed pursuant to the terms of the contract. The initial ten-year term is the period of time in which the rehabilitation projects should be completed. In addition, property owners are required to complete an annual self-certification process in order to update the County on their progress of rehabilitating and maintaining the property.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

The authority of the Cultural Heritage Board (CHB) as it relates to Mills Act contracts is set forth in Ventura County Cultural Heritage Ordinance, adopted by reference by the City of Oxnard. Specifically, Ordinance Section 1365-8 allows the CHB to make recommendations regarding applications for and administration of historical property contracts (i.e. Mills Act contracts) for properties located in the City of Oxnard to the Oxnard City Council. The Oxnard City Council is the final decision-making body for the adoption of the contract. The CHB may recommend modifications to the Mills Act contract to incorporate different or additional preservation or rehabilitation projects in the Ten-Year Rehabilitation Plan as deemed necessary, or may vote to recommend denial of the Mills Act contract if the CHB finds that the property is not eligible. The CHB does not have the authority to revise the Mills Act contract language and incorporate new conditions, though it would be feasible to include such recommendations in their resolution to the Oxnard City Council, should the majority of CHB members agree.

It's worth noting that all future alterations to the structure, including to interior character-defining features, will require issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness from the CHB or CHB staff.

VIII. STAFF CONCLUSION:

The evidence provided in Exhibit 1 and this staff report supports making the findings under Ordinance Section 1367(a) that the Schuster Court property is eligible for designation as a Ventura County landmark. In addition, the evidence provided in Exhibit 1 and this staff report supports making the additional designation findings in Ordinance Section 1367-1 as the site has historic character, value, and interest to the general public, there are no foreseeable costs to the County in designating the subject property as a Ventura County landmark, and the designation shall not infringe upon the rights of the property owner as the designation does not affect allowable land uses and the property owner has requested this designation. Therefore, CHB staff recommends the CHB recommend the Oxnard City Council approve the request for Ventura County landmark designation.

IX. HEARING NOTICE AND PUBLIC COMMENTS:

A public notice was sent by U.S. mail to the property owner of the subject property not less than fifteen days prior to the date of this hearing in accordance with Ordinance Section 1366-2, which requires such notice prior to landmark designation (Exhibit 3 – 15-Day Public Hearing Notice).

No public comment regarding this item has been received to date.

X. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

Staff is recommending the CHB take the following actions regarding the request:

1. **CONDUCT** public hearing, **RECEIVE** oral and written testimony, and **CONSIDER** the Planning Division staff report and all exhibits and attachments hereto;
2. **CERTIFY** that the Cultural Heritage Board has reviewed and considered this staff report and all exhibits hereto, and has considered all comments received during the public comment process;
3. **FIND** that the property owner was given a 15-day notice (Exhibit 3) in accordance with Ordinance Section 1366-2, and that the property owner consents to landmark designation and placement in County lists;
4. **FIND** that the Schuster Court property meets Landmark Criterion 1 and 3 as required by Ordinance Section 1367(a), and the additional standards required by Ordinance Section 1367-1 based on the substantial evidence in the staff report and all exhibits and attachments hereto;
5. Based on the preceding evidence and analysis, **FIND**, through adoption of a Resolution (Exhibit 5), that the CHB recommends to the Oxnard City Council the designation of the Schuster Court property as Ventura County Landmark No. 184;
6. **APPROVE** findings one through four as follows:
 1. Southern California 2022 Properties, LLC possesses and owns real property located at 119-127 S D Street, Oxnard, CA 93030;
 2. The property is a qualified historical property that is privately owned, not exempt from property taxation and is being considered for designation as Ventura County Historical Landmark No. 184;
 3. The owner desires to carry out the relevant purposes of the California Government Code for the entire site, the buildings' interior and exterior, and all structures thereon; and
 4. The owner desires to limit the use of the historical property to retain its characteristics as a property of historical significance; and
7. **ADOPT** a Resolution (Exhibit 5) recommending that the Oxnard City Council approve a Mills Act Historical Property Contract for the subject property.

The Cultural Heritage Board's recommendation will be acted upon by the Oxnard City Council within 90 days from the time when the Cultural Heritage Board adopts a recommendation (Ordinance Section 1369-4). Until such time, the property owner is

prohibited from defacing, demolishing, adding to, altering, or removing any feature of the subject property.

Prepared by:



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Exhibits:

Exhibit 1 – Historic Resources Report, dated August 26, 2024

Exhibit 2 – Property Owner Request for Landmark Designation

Exhibit 3 – 15-day Public Hearing Notice

Exhibit 4 – Sample Mills Act Contract

Contract Exhibit A – Legal Description

Contract Exhibit B – List of Significant Character Defining and Historic Features

Contract Exhibit C – Mills Act Minimum Standards for Maintenance, Use, and Preservation

Contract Exhibit D – Mills Act Ten-Year Rehabilitation Plan

Exhibit 5 – CHB Resolution No. 2025-13 to the Oxnard City Council