I. APPLICANT/PROPERTY OWNER:

Applicant/Property Owner: Glenn Sutherland
P.O. Box 263
Carpinteria, CA 93014

II. REQUEST:

A request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for after-the-fact replacement of windows at a 12-unit apartment complex located at 534-542 S. F Street, Oxnard, CA 93030 (Ventura County Landmark #173: McColm Manor Apartments). (Case No. CH23-0040).

III. LOCATION AND PROPERTY INFORMATION:

534-542 S. F Street, Oxnard, CA 93030
Assessor's Parcel Number (APN): 202-0-121-080
Historic Designation: Ventura County Landmark #173
Common/Historic Name: McColm Manor Apartments

The subject property consists of a 12-unit, two-story courtyard complex with detached garage buildings.[1] The property is known as a fine example of a 1950 "u-parti" form of courtyard apartment complex in the City of Oxnard and has an active Mills Act Historical Property Contract.

IV. PROJECT SCOPE:

The proposed scope of work consists of after-the-fact replacement of windows at a 12-unit apartment building. In 2022, the current property owner replaced all of the remaining original light steel casement windows with vinyl clad windows without permit authorization, which subsequently triggered a city code violation case. According to the property owner, the previous windows were deteriorated and partially inoperable. Refer to Exhibit 1 for a site plan and elevations, including current photos of the apartment building.

This request was previously reviewed by the CHB at their hearing on November 13, 2023. At that time, a consensus of CHB members favored replacing the vinyl windows, in whole or in part. The property owner's previous representative indicated a willingness to identify a suitable replacement window for the vinyl windows, one that would retain more of the historical design, color, texture, and other visual qualities of what existed previously. The CHB took no action on the request and continued the

[1] San Buenaventura Research Associates, *534-42 S. F Street Determination of Eligibility for Designation as a City of Oxnard Historic Landmark,* October 11, 2013.

item to a future date uncertain. Following this meeting, Board Members Blum and Fernandez accompanied the property owner's previous representative to a window store to identify a suitable replacement window. At this stage, the property owner no longer intends to replace the vinyl windows with a suitable replacement, and instead requests after-the-fact authorization of the vinyl windows.

V. SIGNIFICANCE AND BACKGROUND:

The McColm Manor Apartments were evaluated for historical significance by San Buenaventura Research Associates in October 2013 (Exhibit 2). Based on the historic resources evaluation, the property was found eligible for Ventura County Landmark designation under Criteria 1 (it exemplifies or reflects special elements of the County's architectural history) and 4 (it embodies elements of architectural design, details, materials or craftsmanship which represents a significant structural or architectural achievement or innovation). The property was designated as Ventura County Landmark #173 on December 8, 2014. A Mills Act Historical Property Contract was approved for the property on December 2, 2014 (Exhibit 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. The Hill Residence, located west of the subject property, was built in the 1870s on a 630 acre ranch owned by John G. and Aranetta Hill.[2]

The Hills arrived in Ventura County in 1868 and purchased land from Thomas Scott, owner of Rancho El Rio de Santa Clara. John G. Hill died in 1904. It is believed his wife Aranetta died in 1925, the same year that the Eastwood-Lathrop Subdivision was recorded and opened on the former lands of the Hill property, just south and west of the boundaries of the Town of Oxnard. The boundaries of the subdivision are Fifth Street on the north, Seventh Street on the south, G Street on the west and E Street on the east.[3]

With the 1920s housing boom, multifamily housing units began to make an appearance, primarily in the form of courtyard housing. Between 1920 and 1950 approximately fifteen such properties were developed throughout the city. As of 2013, only about seven were known to remain.[4]

The 12-unit courtyard housing complex at 534-542 South F Street known as McColm Manor was completed in 1950 for Ralph C. and Sofia McColm. Ralph Carter McColm

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2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

was born in Kansas in 1893, practiced as a chiropractor in Washington in the late 1920s, and moved to Southern California with his wife in the late 1940s. They lived in Ojai and Santa Barbara and invested heavily in real estate and real estate development around Ventura County. In late 1949, they purchased two adjacent parcels in the Eastwood and Lathrop Subdivision from Edgar and Martha Johnson. The property was owned by the McColm family until at least the 1970s.[5]

Architectural Background

The property is an example of the "u-parti" form of courtyard apartment complex construction. One of the most common and characteristic of the courtyard types built in Southern California, the u-parti is defined by building masses enclosing a courtyard on three sides with an opening facing the street. The courtyard in this housing type is often "completed with a thin wall screen connecting the two front bars of the U," a detail seen in this property.[6]

The buildings' style is Minimal Traditional, a popularized form of the Modern style that incorporates familiar design elements derived from historical architectural styles into otherwise Modern buildings. The low-pitched, hipped roof, boxed eaves and faux shutters seen on this property are representative of this approach.[7]

The designer of the courtyard apartment complex is undocumented. The buildings were constructed by the Bergseid Construction Company, a large and prolific Ventura-based contracting firm. The apartments of McColm Manor provided housing to a variety of working-class Oxnard residents. The one-bedroom units were apparently mostly rented to single residents, with a particular emphasis on the professions populating Ventura County during the immediate postwar period. Residents during the 1950s included members of the military, teachers, and nurses.[8]

The property consists of two, two-story apartment buildings and two single-story garage buildings. The two residential buildings have L-shaped plans and are arranged symmetrically on the site. Together with the brick wall at the front (west side) of the property, a U-plan courtyard apartment complex is formed. The residential buildings feature low-hipped roofs with shallow boxed eaves. The windows previously consisted of pairs of four-by-one light steel casements and tripartite four-by-one light casements with transoms over, with shallow sills and no framing. There are also window openings at the street-facing elevation filled with six-by-five glass block. All of the street-facing windows feature single, louvered, faux shutters on one side of the window opening. These faux shutters appear to be original to the building and were identified as a

5 Ibid.
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.

character-defining feature of the property. Ground floor entries are located above low concrete stoops. Second floor entries are accessed via stairways leading to common balconies. There are wood frame pergolas supported by pipe columns over the balconies. The pergolas are currently covered with clear corrugated panels. The stairways feature stucco balustrades topped with steel pipe handrails.[9]

Two single-story, 3-bay garages are oriented towards the alley to the rear (east side) of the property. The garages are also stucco-clad with hipped roofs. There is a grass lawn in the central courtyard as well as a grass lawn separating the buildings and walls from the sidewalk. There are many low foundation plantings and shrubs both within and outside of the courtyard. Several mature palm trees are located between the apartment complex and the sidewalk.[10] A pergola was previously located over the courtyard entrance.

Alterations/Changes

At the time of evaluation in 2013, the interior of the apartment complex retained original cabinets and tile counters in the kitchen and bathrooms, as well as original flooring (of unknown wood type and condition) beneath the contemporary laminate flooring. In addition, the exterior of the courtyard apartment was found to retain substantial integrity although some changes are known to have occurred, consisting of the following:[11]

- A couple of the exterior shutters have been replaced with similar (vinyl) but not identical types;
- The low brick planters at either side of the entry walkway have been modified to create brick pilasters;
- A freestanding pergola originally located over the entry to the courtyard has been removed;
- A two-story, grid-like, wood screen between the apartment buildings at the rear of the courtyard has been removed;
- The landscaping has changed over time; and
- Plastic corrugated sheets added to the top of the second story balconies' wood frame pergolas.

In 2022, the current property owner replaced all of the remaining original light steel casement windows with vinyl clad windows. Figure 1, below, shows the apartment complex with the new windows. This alteration removed a key character-defining

9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid.

feature[12] and appears to have substantially reduced the historic integrity[13] of the property. The property owner has applied for after-the-fact authorization of this alteration. Refer to Figure 2 and Figure 3 below for views of the subject property prior to this alteration. Exhibit 4 conditions additional photos of the property's current condition.

Figure 1 – View of property in 2023 following window alteration (looking east)

Figure 2 – View of property in 2020 prior to window alteration (looking southeast)

Figure 3 – View of property's central walkway in 2020 prior to window alteration (looking east)

Mills Act Contract

A Mills Act Historical Property Contract between the property owner and the City of Oxnard was approved for the property on December 2, 2014 (Exhibit 3). The contract is binding to the property and inherited by any subsequent owners, including the current property owner. As part of the contract, the owner agreed to preserve, restore, and rehabilitate the property in conformance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings* ("Secretary's Standards"), among other requirements. Based on the most recent staff inspection of the property on March 11, 2020, staff found that rehabilitation work outlined in the contract's Ten-Year Rehabilitation remained, in whole or in part, for Years 4, 7, 8, and 10 (Exhibit 3). Self-certification materials submitted in subsequent years showed that Year 7 and Year 8 items were also completed. Remaining items to be accomplished include building a pergola over the courtyard entrance to restore it to its original

condition and re-roofing all four buildings, the apartments buildings and garages. Refer to Figure 4 for a historical photo showing the showing original wall configuration, pergola, screen, and faux window shutters.

Figure 4 – Western elevation, showing original wall configuration, pergola, and screen (1981)

Source: San Buenaventura Research Associates

In exchange for reduced annual property taxes with the adopted Mills Act contract, the property owner agrees to preserve, restore, and rehabilitate the subject property according to the Secretary's Standards. The City of Oxnard may cancel the contract and impose financial penalties if it determines the owner has failed to restore or rehabilitate the property in the manner specified in the contract.

VI. CULTURAL HERITAGE ORDINANCE ANALYSIS:

The scope of work requires a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) from the CHB. Ventura County Cultural Heritage Ordinance (Ordinance) §1371-4 provides that the CHB use the Secretary's Standards in its evaluation of the property and the proposed

scope of work. CHB staff determined the standards for rehabilitation are appropriate for this request and evaluated the scope of work against the relevant standards below.

Using the Secretary's Standards as a guide, the CHB shall approve the COA for any proposed work on the site if one of the standards identified in Ordinance §1371-4 can be met. The relevant standard for this request is that the work will neither reduce the significant architectural features nor reduce the character of historical, architectural, or aesthetic interest or value of the site. Pursuant to Ordinance §1371-4(d), the COA may be approved if the applicant presents facts and clear evidence, as described therein, demonstrating that failure to approve the request for a COA will cause a hardship because of conditions peculiar to the structure or other feature involved, or damage to the property owner is unreasonable in comparison to the benefit conferred to the community.

Standards	**Staff Comments**
#1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.	The property will continue to be used as a multi-family residence. Staff determined that this Standard has been met.
#2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.	The Secretary's Standards[14] encourage the retention of historic features that contribute to the interpretation of the significance of a historic property and, when appropriate, repair of materials and limited replacement of deteriorated or missing parts rather than full replacement. It would have been preferable to retain the steel casement windows to assess the feasibility of repairing rather than replacing this key character-defining feature. Based on photographic evidence, it is not clear that replacement was a suitable treatment as opposed to retaining and repairing the windows, including restoring mechanical functionality, repainting muntins, and replacing glazing as needed. Moreover, vinyl-clad windows are not a suitable replacement and do not match the previous windows in terms of design, color, texture, materials, and other visual qualities. This alteration appears to have substantially reduced the historic integrity of the property.

[14] Weeks, Kay D., *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties: with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring & Reconstructing Historic Buildings*, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, revised 2017, pg. 140.

Standards	**Staff Comments**
	Staff determined that this Standard has not been met.
#3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.	It does not appear that conjectural design features from other historic properties or inappropriate time periods are proposed to be added to the property with the intent of creating a false sense of historical development. Staff determined that this Standard has been met.
#4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.	There do not appear to be changes to the property that have acquired historic significance in their own right. Staff determined that this Standard has been met.
#5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.	The steel casement windows that were removed were a key character-defining feature of the subject property. This appears to have substantially reduced the historic integrity of the property. Staff determined that this Standard has not been met.
#6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.	As mentioned previously, it would have been preferable to retain the steel casement windows to assess the feasibility of repairing rather than replacing this key character-defining feature. Based on photographic evidence, it is not clear that replacement was a suitable treatment as opposed to retaining and repairing the windows, including restoring mechanical functionality, repainting muntins, and replacing glazing as needed. Moreover, vinyl-clad windows are not a suitable replacement and do not match the previous windows in terms of design, color, texture, materials, and other visual qualities. This alteration appears to have substantially reduced the historic integrity of the property. Staff determined that this Standard has not been met.
#7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.	Not Applicable.
#8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If	Not Applicable.

Standards	**Staff Comments**
such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.	
#9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.	Window replacements, if determined appropriate, shall match the historic in terms of configuration, materials, details, and finish. The vinyl-clad windows are not a suitable replacement and do not match the previous windows in terms of design, color, texture, materials, and other visual qualities. This alteration appears to have substantially reduced the historic integrity of the property. Staff determined that this Standard has not been met.
#10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.	Integrity is defined as the ability of a property to convey its historical significance, or the authenticity of a property's historic identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics and materials that existed during the property's historic or pre-historic period of significance. A property would typically possess several (although not necessarily all) of the following seven aspects of integrity, as defined in National Register Bulletin 15, to convey its significance: Location, Design, Setting, Materials, Workmanship, Feeling, and Association.[15] The window replacements appear to maintain the same opening locations and dimensions as existed historically. Therefore, if replaced or removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would appear to be unimpaired. Based on the above considerations, staff determined that this Standard has been met.

VII. STAFF CONCLUSION:

Based on the above considerations, the scope of work does not appear consistent with the Secretary's Standards. It would have been preferable to retain the steel casement windows to assess the feasibility of repairing rather than replacing this key character-defining feature. Based on photographic evidence, it is not clear that replacement was a suitable treatment as opposed to retaining and repairing the windows, including restoring mechanical functionality, repainting muntins, and

[15] Ventura County Ordinance Code, Article 5 of Chapter 3 of Division 1, Section 1363.

replacing glazing as needed. Moreover, vinyl-clad windows are not a suitable replacement and do not match the previous windows in terms of design, color, texture, materials, and other visual qualities. This alteration appears to have substantially reduced the historic integrity of the property.

Based on the above, CHB staff recommends the CHB adopt the below recommendation related to the scope of work in order to better conform to the Secretary's Standards.

- **Recommendation #1: Window Replacement**. The applicant should install new windows to match the historic windows to the extent feasible based on photographic documentation in terms of configuration, materials, details, and finish in order to be more compatible with the overall historic character of the building. Please note that projects affecting the exterior of a designated Cultural Heritage Site are subject to Cultural Heritage Board or Cultural Heritage Board staff review and approval prior to work commencing. In addition, for a Cultural Heritage Site subject to a Mills Act contract, any change affecting the interior character-defining features thereof are subject to review and approval. Work must meet all relevant Building Code and Zoning Ordinance requirements and the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.

If the applicant does not agree with the above recommendation and incorporate it into the project, CHB staff does not believe that the required findings to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness can be made (Cultural Heritage Ordinance §1371). Because the applicant clearly indicated that he does not agree to implement the above recommendation, CHB staff recommends denial of the Certificate of Appropriateness.

As mentioned previously, as part of the adopted contract, the property owner agrees to preserve, restore, and rehabilitate the subject property according to the Secretary's Standards. The City of Oxnard may cancel the contract and impose financial penalties if it determines the owner has failed to restore or rehabilitate the property in the manner specified in the contract. The City of Oxnard staff is responsible for enforcing the terms of the Mills Act contract and has been informed of the window replacement at this site.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

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

IX. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

CHB staff recommends 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. **FIND** that the proposed project does not meet the requirements of the Ventura County Cultural Heritage Ordinance §1371-4; and

3. Based on the preceding evidence and analysis, **DENY** the Certificate of Appropriateness (Cultural Heritage Ordinance §1371).

Prepared by:

Dillan Murray, Senior Planner
Ventura County Planning Division
(805) 654-5042

Reviewed by:

Tricia Maier, Manager
Planning Programs Section
(805) 654-2464

Exhibits:

Exhibit 1: Site Plan and Elevations
Exhibit 2: DPR Form 523, October 11, 2013
Exhibit 3: Mills Act Contract
Exhibit 4: Supplemental Photos