

## Staff Report and Recommendations

### Agenda of June 8, 2026, Item 5a

#### County of Ventura • Resource Management Agency

800 S. Victoria Avenue, Ventura, CA 93009-1740 • (805) 654-2478 • [rma.venturacounty.gov/divisions/planning/](http://rma.venturacounty.gov/divisions/planning/)

#### **I. APPLICANT/PROPERTY OWNER:**

**Applicant:**

Eric Hawkins  
HA+MA Architects  
8800 Venice Boulevard #303  
Los Angeles, CA 90034

**Property Owner:**

Shane and Monica Evangelista Family Trust  
1388 Orange Road  
Ojai, CA 93023

#### **II. REQUEST:**

A request for a Certificate of Review pursuant to Cultural Heritage Ordinance Section 1372 for the conversion of an existing 2,256-square-foot agricultural barn into a 1,640-square-foot single-family residence at 1388 Orange Road, Ojai, CA 93023, a designated Site of Merit. The project includes a 166-square-foot partial addition on the west elevation, replacement of all wood siding on the second story, installation of new windows and doors, new exterior wall sconces, and the addition of a new skylight. (Case No. CH26-0014).

#### **III. LOCATION AND PROPERTY INFORMATION:**

1388 Orange Road, Ojai, CA 93023 (unincorporated Ventura County)  
Assessor's Parcel Number (APN): 014-0-040-200  
Historic Designation: Ventura County Site of Merit  
Common Name: Stetson Ranch - Rancho Los Encinos

The approximately 51.9-acre property contains an existing 2,256-square-foot agricultural barn situated within an open rural landscape, surrounded by natural grassland, mature trees, and citrus orchards. The large stone and redwood board and batten barn dates to approximately the 1890s. It is rectangular in form with a two-story gable roof portion on one side and a longer gable roof portion on the other side that slopes to one story. The lower stone walls have several window and door openings. A shed roof supported by wood posts extends along one side, and the structure rests on a stone foundation. The barn is historically associated with the H. E. "Guy" Stetson citrus ranch, established in 1896 and known for its long period of family ownership and its ties to the Ojai Orange Association. The ranch's original main residence and secondary 1890s residence are no longer present, leaving the barn as the primary surviving historic resource on the property.

Figure 1 depicts the location of the project site in the broader vicinity; Figure 2 provides a closer image of the project site; and, Figure 3 shows the historic barn in its current condition.



Figure 1 – Regional Vicinity

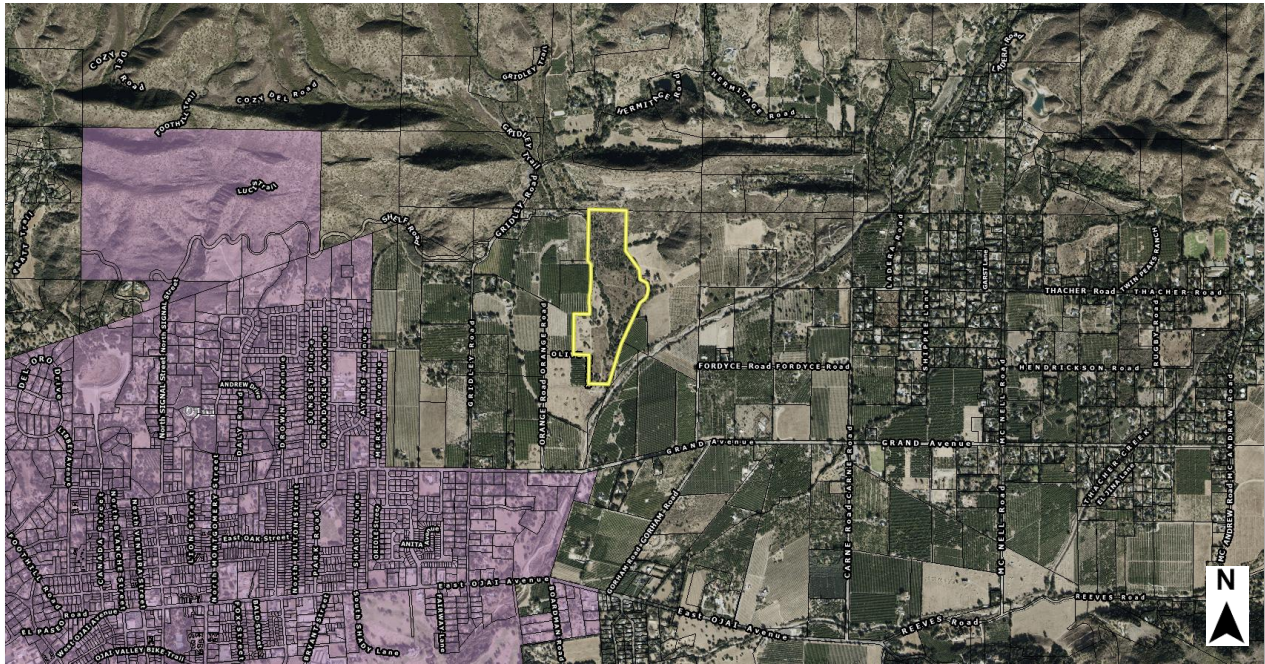


Figure 2 – Aerial View of Site

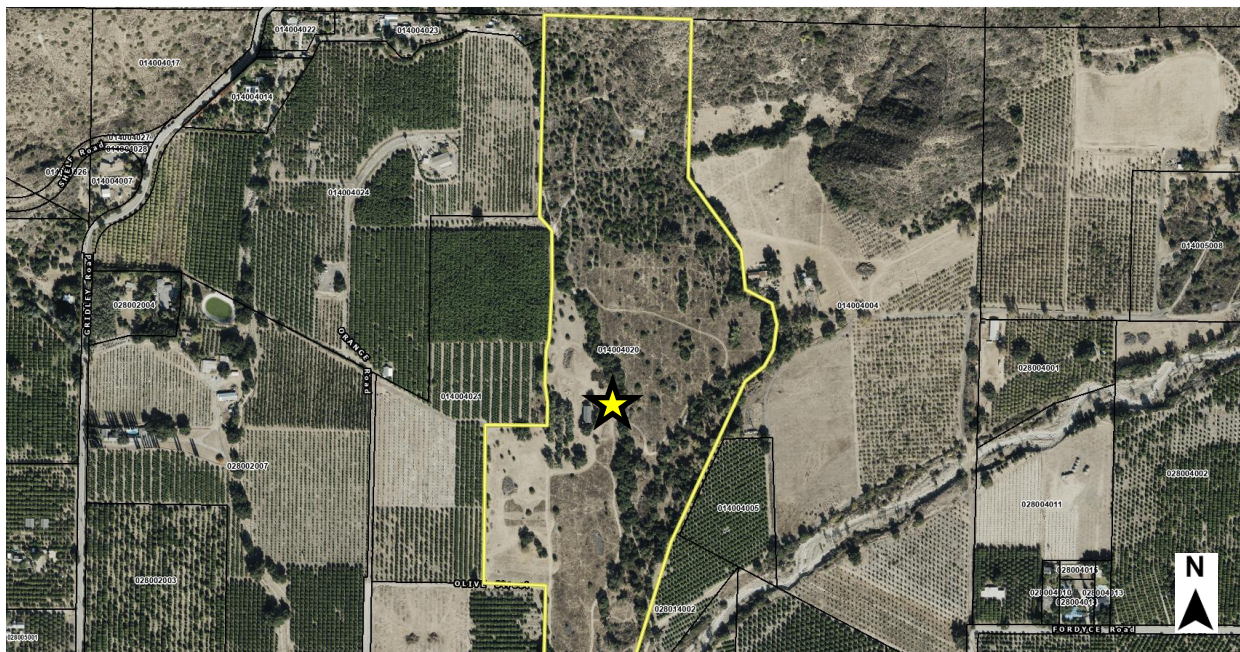




Figure 3 – Existing Barn



Source: HA+MA Architects

#### IV. **PROJECT SCOPE:**

The applicant requests a Certificate of Review pursuant to Cultural Heritage Ordinance Section 1372 for the conversion of an existing 2,256 square foot agricultural barn into a 1,640 square foot single family residence at 1388 Orange Road, Ojai, a designated Site of Merit (Case No. CH26-0014). The project includes a 166-square-foot partial addition on the west elevation with a standing seam metal roof, and the construction of a new cobblestone patio off the north elevation. Additional exterior work includes new Gendai siding with Warranted Acrylic Coating in black, Styleline aluminum windows and doors in black, new exterior wall sconces, and a new skylight. The proposal would replace all existing windows and doors, fill some existing openings, and introduce new enlarged openings in locations where none previously existed. Figure 4 illustrates the proposed site plan, while Figures 5 and 6 show the proposed building elevations.

The project was first reviewed at the May 26, 2026, CHB hearing. At the hearing, the CHB requested more information on the existing property and deferred any action until a future date. Specifically, the CHB requested photos showing any alterations made

### Figure 4 – Proposed Site Plan

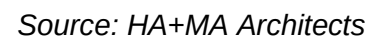
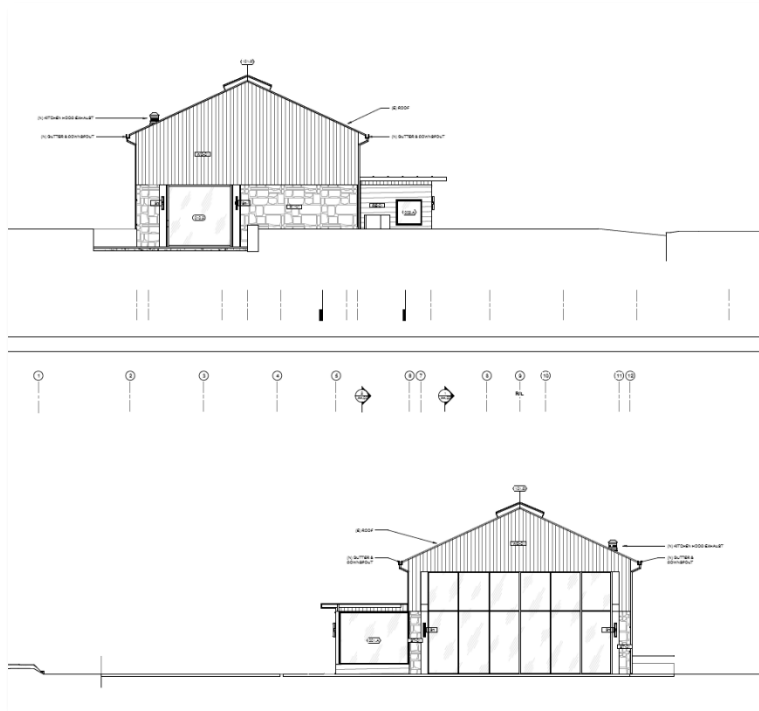
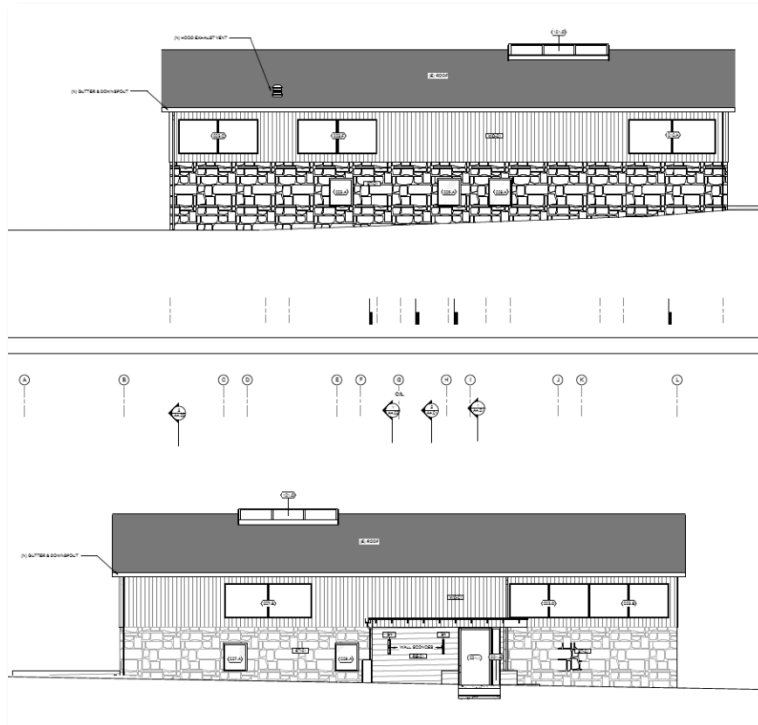


Figure 5 – Proposed Elevations (North and South)



Source: HA+MA Architects

Figure 6 – Proposed Elevations (East and West)



Source: HA+MA Architects

## **V. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:**

The Stetson Ranch, also known as Rancho Los Encinos, was documented in the 1985 Phase III Ojai Valley Cultural Heritage Survey prepared by San Buenaventura Research Associates (Exhibit 2).<sup>1</sup> The ranch is historically significant as the H. E.

“Guy” Stetson citrus ranch, established in 1896 and associated with the early citrus industry in the Ojai Valley. The property originally contained the main residence, a converted barn, and an additional residence dating to the 1890s. Guy Stetson’s son, Guy T. Stetson, and his family occupied the ranch until the 1950s. The property was later purchased by Frank Noyes, who converted the barn into an office, and Mrs. Noyes operated the Live Oak School in the house and barn between 1956 and 1971. The ranch changed ownership again in approximately 1977 when acquired by Los Angeles City Councilmember Alfonso Bell, and it was subsequently sold in 1982 to David Cooper. Guy Stetson also served for many years as president of the Ojai Orange Association. The ranch’s original main residence and the secondary 1890s residence are no longer extant, leaving the barn as the primary surviving historic resource on the property.

According to documentary evidence provided by the applicant team (Exhibit 1), several alterations have been made to the barn since the 1985 historic survey. Notably, a vehicle and equipment bay on the east elevation has been removed; the upper floor was replaced, likely within the last 10 to 15 years, along with installation of a new truss system; portions of the wood siding have been replaced over time with various materials; and sections of the stone perimeter wall have been repaired, replaced, or otherwise modified.

## **VI. CULTURAL HERITAGE ORDINANCE ANALYSIS:**

Ventura County Cultural Heritage Ordinance Section 1372 requires that the Cultural Heritage Board (CHB) provide a Certificate of Review in the case of a permit application to construct, change, alter, modify, or remodel in a manner a Site of Merit that affects the exterior character-defining features or integrity of the site.

Ordinance Section 1372-2 provides that the CHB uses 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”) in its evaluation of the property and the proposed scope of work. The Certificate of Review process consists of voluntary recommendations for the applicant’s consideration in order to better conform to the Secretary’s Standards. CHB staff determined the standards for rehabilitation are appropriate for this request and evaluated the proposed scope of work against the relevant standards below. Each

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<sup>1</sup> San Buenaventura Research Associates, *Phase III Ojai Valley Cultural Heritage Survey*, 1985.

one of the applicable Secretary's Standards is outlined in Table 1 below with corresponding comments from CHB staff.

**Table 1 – Secretary of the Interior's Standards Consistency**

| <b>Standards</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>Consistent?</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>#1</b> 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.                                                                             | No. The proposed residential use is generally compatible with the historic form and scale of the barn. However, the project includes changes that exceed minimal intervention, including substantial alterations to the fenestration pattern through replacement of all openings, the filling of an existing opening, and the introduction of new and larger ones. For these reasons, the project does not fully meet Standard 1.                                                                                                                            |
| <b>#2</b> 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.                                     | No. The project retains the overall form and massing of the historic barn, but several proposed interventions affect the building's distinctive materials and character-defining features. The introduction of new siding, the full replacement of all windows and doors, the filling of an existing opening, the creation of larger new openings, and the west-side addition all alter features and spatial relationships that contribute to the property's historic character. As a result, the project does not fully meet this standard.                 |
| <b>#3.</b> 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. | Not Applicable. No such treatments are currently proposed. Therefore, Staff determined this Standard is not applicable to the proposed scope of work.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>#4.</b> Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.                                                                                                                                       | No. There are no changes to the property that have acquired historic significance in their own right. Therefore, Staff determined this Standard has been met.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>#5.</b> Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.                                                                                                                | No. The barn retains some characteristic historic elements, including its overall form and stone foundation, but several proposed interventions affect features and finishes that reflect the building's original construction. The project replaces all existing windows and doors, alters original opening locations and sizes, installs new siding, and adds a new west elevation addition, which collectively diminish the visibility and integrity of distinctive historic workmanship. For this reason, the project does not fully meet this standard. |

| <b>Standards</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>Consistent?</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>#6.</b> 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.                                              | No. Most of the project's interventions involve replacement rather than repair, including the full replacement of existing windows and doors and changes to the exterior wall materials. The proposal does not document deterioration that necessitates replacement, and the new features do not match the historic design, materials, or configuration of the original openings. As a result, the project does not meet this standard.                                               |
| <b>#7.</b> Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.                                                                                                                                                                    | Not Applicable. No such treatments are currently proposed. Therefore, Staff determined this Standard is not applicable to the proposed scope of work.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>#8.</b> Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Not Applicable. Substantial ground disturbance is not currently proposed. Therefore, Staff determined this Standard is not applicable to the proposed scope of work.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>#9.</b> 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. | No. The proposed west elevation addition and the substantial changes to window and door openings alter historic materials and disrupt spatial relationships that characterize the barn. Although the new work is visually distinct and uses contemporary materials, the scale of the altered fenestration pattern and the introduction of new exterior finishes reduce compatibility with the barn's historic appearance. As a result, the project does not fully meet this standard. |
| <b>#10.</b> 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.                                                                                                                                                                  | No. The proposed west elevation addition and the changes to the exterior openings introduce new construction that alters the building's historic envelope and exterior wall configuration. Because the work requires removal of existing materials and enlargement or infill of openings, these changes would not be fully reversible without impairing the barn's essential historic form. As a result, the project does not fully meet this standard.                               |

## **VII. STAFF CONCLUSIONS:**

Based on the above analysis, the proposed scope of work is not consistent with the Secretary's Standards. While the proposed residential conversion represents a compatible use, several components of the project exceed the level of minimal change anticipated under the Standards. The project introduces substantial alterations to the



fenestration pattern, including replacement of all windows and doors, the filling of an existing opening, and the creation of new and larger openings in locations not supported by documentary evidence. These changes affect character-defining features and spatial relationships that contribute to the barn's historic significance.

In addition, the proposal includes full replacement of window assemblies without documentation that repair is infeasible. Although the proposed Styline aluminum units share some visual qualities with the existing windows, they do not fully match the historic material or configuration. Staff generally recommends in-kind wood replacement units in order to closely match original features. However, the proposed units may be acceptable for a rehabilitation project if the historic proportions and dimensions are maintained.

Based on the extent of alterations to historic materials and the fenestration pattern, as well as the absence of evidence supporting replacement rather than repair, staff conclude that the project is inconsistent with the Secretary's Standards.

Based on the above, staff recommends the CHB adopt the following recommendations related to the scope of work to better conform to the Secretary's Standards:

- **Recommendation #1: Fenestration Pattern.** The applicant should retain the existing pattern of fenestration by avoiding to the greatest extent feasible construction of the window and door openings where they are not documented to have existed previously. Proposed plans should be revised accordingly after reconsidering project goals.
- **Recommendation #2: In-Kind Window Replacement.** The applicant should utilize replacement windows matching the original in appearance as closely as possible, including in terms of design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Proposed plans should be revised accordingly after reconsidering project goals.

#### **VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

One public comment has been received from the San Buenaventura Conservancy (Exhibit 3). The comment raised concerns that the May 26, 2026, staff report lacked information about the significance of the barn and that additional information was needed. In addition, the comment stated that if the barn is determined to be historically significant, the proposed project does not meet the Secretary's Standards and should be scaled back. As noted above, the applicant provided additional information, which CHB staff reviewed and determined did not alter their original assessment. Staff found that the barn's overall integrity appears to remain intact and that, overall, it retains

sufficient integrity; therefore, the recommendations outlined in Section VII of this report remain unchanged.

**IX. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

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; and
2. **REVIEW** and **COMMENT** on the proposed project in accordance with Cultural Heritage Ordinance Section 1372 based on the preceding evidence and analysis.

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Reviewed by:



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Exhibits:

- Exhibit 1 – Proposed Plans and Elevations (Revised)
- Exhibit 2 – Historic Survey Evaluation
- Exhibit 3 – Public Comment, San Buenaventura Conservancy