

State of California -- The Resources Agency  
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION  
**PRIMARY RECORD**

Primary # \_\_\_\_\_  
HRI # \_\_\_\_\_  
Trinomial \_\_\_\_\_  
NRHP Status Code \_\_\_\_\_

Other Listings \_\_\_\_\_  
Review Code \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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\*Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Hofsas House Hotel

P1. Other Identifier: Hofsas House Hotel

\*P2. Location:  Not for Publication  Unrestricted

\*a. County Monterey

and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary)

\*b. USGS 7.5' Quad Monterey Date 2012 T ; R ; ¼ of ¼ of Sec ; Mount Diablo B.M.

c. Address San Carlos 2 NW of 4th City Carmel by the Sea Zip 93921

d. UTM: (Give more than one for large and/or linear resources) Zone ; mE/ mN

e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, etc., as appropriate)

APN 010-124-014; Blk. 34, lots 5,7,9,11 & 14; APN 010-124-001, Blk. 34, lots 1 & 3

\*P3a. Description: (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting and boundaries)

Between 1923 and 1933, four buildings were constructed on lots 7, 9, 11, and 12 on San Carlos Street, 2 NW of Fourth Avenue. In 1943 the two-story residence on lot 9 was remodeled into apartments. In May 1948 Harry Hofsas purchased the property and then granted the cottages to his brother, Fred, and his wife Donna in July. Donna and Fred started to remodel the cottages into a complex of rental rooms and apartments. In 1956 they demolished two of the residences on lots 7 and 12 to create a parking lot. In January 1957 they built a four-story, 25-unit motel and swimming pool. In 1967 Donna built the eight-unit detached North Wing on lots 1 and 3, after demolishing two apartment buildings on those parcels. Donna Hofsas used Bavarian themed details for the 1957 hotel and remodeled the two pre-1957 cottages to match. The front elevation of the Hofsas House Hotel extends along San Carlos Street. The reception area of the southern two-story section was one of the existing buildings, as evidenced by Robert Jones' site plan for the project. This area was enlarged to the south (continued p. 3)

\*P3b. Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) HP5, Hotel/Motel

\*P4. Resources Present:  Building  Structure  Object  Site  District  Element of District  Other (Isolates, etc.)



P5b. Description of Photo: (View, date, accession #) Front Elevation, 05/2023

\*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources: 1957, 1968  Historic  
 Prehistoric  Both  
Building Permits

\*P7. Owner and Address:

Hofsas House Hotel  
POB 1195

Carmel, CA. 93921

\*P8. Recorded by: (Name, affiliation, and address)

Meg Clovis  
14024 Reservation Rd.  
Salinas, CA 93908

\*P9. Date Recorded: 08/2023

\*P10. Survey Type: (Describe)  
Intensive

\*P11. Report Citation: (cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none.") 2001 Carmel City-Wide Survey, DPR by Kent Seavey. No paper records. Verbal reference and reference in the building file.

\*Attachments:  NONE  Location Map  Sketch Map  Continuation Sheet  Building, Structure and Object Record  
 Archaeological Record  District Record  Linear Feature Record  Milling Station Record  Rock Art Record  
 Artifact Record  Photograph Record  Other (List)

**BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD**

\*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Hofsas House Hotel

- B1. Historic Name: Hofsas House Hotel
- B2. Common Name: Hofsas House Hotel
- B3. Original Use: Hotel
- B4. Present Use: Hotel

\*B5. **Architectural Style:** Bavarian-Themed Vernacular

\*B6. **Construction History:** (Construction date, alteration, and date of alterations) BP#445: Addition to cottage (1938); BP#1016: 2-story building remodeled into apartments (1943); BP#2986: Demolish 2 residences for parking lot (1956); BP# 2996 Build 4-story hotel (1957); BP# 3058 Build swimming pool (1957); BP# 4748 Build 8-unit North Wing (1968). See p. 4 for additional permits.

\*B7. **Moved?** xNo Yes Unknown **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Original Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

\*B8. **Related Features:** Parking lot, pool

**B9a. Architect:** Robert R. Jones, Cleve Dayton, George Willox **b. Builder:** Ralph Stean, Helm & Savoldi

\*B10. **Significance:** Theme: N/A **Area:** Carmel by the Sea

**Period of Significance:** N/A **Property Type:** Building **Applicable Criteria:** N/A

(Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Address integrity.)

In 1949 Donna J. Hofsas (1902-1981) and Frederick L. Hofsas (1897-1989) moved to Carmel from Los Angeles. Donna was a film actress with Fox Studios and Fred was an accountant. Fred's brother, Harry, granted four cottages he had purchased on San Carlos Street to the couple. Donna and Fred started remodeling the cottages into apartments. By 1951 they were renting rooms and apartments in their advertised Hofsas House Hotel. Donna managed the rentals while Frederick continued his work as an accountant. In 1957 they built a Robert Jones designed four story Bavarian-themed motel and incorporated two of the old buildings into the new complex. Fred, who was an amateur artist, designed a mosaic coat of arms for the hotel, with the creed "Otium Cum Dignitate" (Leisure with Dignity). Donna asked her friend, renowned artist Maxine Albro, to paint murals on the inside wall of the porte cochere. Donna and Fred divorced in 1960 and Donna continued to operate the Hofsas House Hotel until her death. The hotel is still owned and operated by her descendants.

Architect **Robert R. Jones** (1911-1989) designed the four-story motel. Born in Berkeley, Jones was educated at the University of California, Berkeley before (continued p. 6)

B11. Additional Resource Attributes (List attributes and codes):

\*B12. **References:**

Carmel Context Statement & Historic Preservation Ordinance

*Sacramento Bee*, 9/3/2012, p. 10

Building File, Carmel Planning Dept.

National Register Bulletin 15

Polk's City Directories, Harrison Memorial Library

U.S. Census & Voter Registration Records

TGIF Guide.com

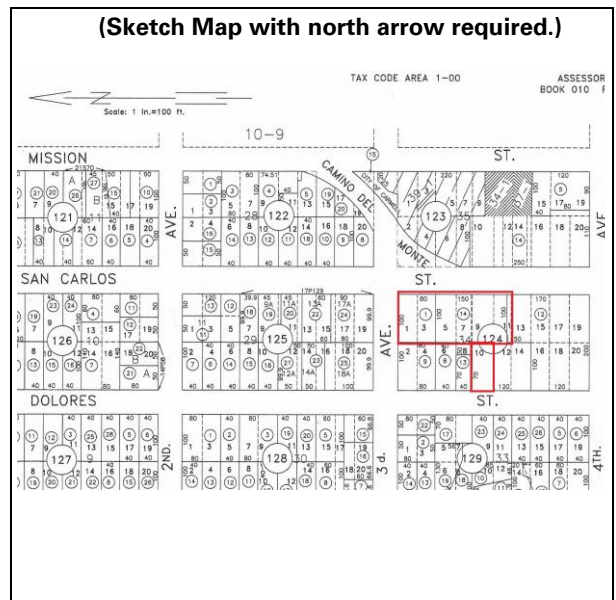
Donna Hofsas Obit., *Carmel Pine Cone*, 7/16/1981, p. 26

B13. Remarks

\*B14. **Evaluator:** Meg Clovis

\***Date of Evaluation:** 08/2023

(This space reserved for official comments.)



**P3a. Description (continued):**

to create the porte cochere. A front-facing, clipped gable roof sweeps to the south to cover the porte cochere. The roof has wide, overhanging eaves and visible rafters. Pink stucco covers the exterior walls and provides contrast for the decorative half-timbering used on both floors (the buildings were originally painted beige, per the Planning Commission's request, so they would not look as large). A plant-covered balcony extends from the second floor. Vertical diamond paned windows are used on both floors. Floral murals surround the second-floor windows. Maxine Albro's mural of Bavarian peasants is located on the interior wall of the porte cochere.



Three, front gable dormers are located on the 1957 portion of the San Carlos Street elevation. Each dormer has two small diamond pane casement windows that flank inset floral murals. A chimney is located at the intersection of the cross gable. Pink stucco and half-timbering covers the exterior walls and the Hofsas House coat of arms, created by Fred Hofsas, is located at intervals along the first-floor wall.

Figure 1: Front elevation of Hofsas House, looking northwest from San Carlos Street.

A steep driveway leads down from San Carlos Street to the rear and lower level of the property. The main hotel is centered between the remodeled older residences within the complex and the 1968 North Wing. Rising four stories from the parking lot, each level of the 1957 hotel has a balcony which extends across the entire floor. The balcony has a Bavarian-style, band sawn wood railing and the balcony is divided into separate porches for each room. Each room has a door onto the porch and a window. Flights of exterior stairs connect each level.

The two-story, 1968 building to the north of the 1957 building has an L-shaped plan and cross gable roof with wide, overhanging eaves and clipped gables. Hotel rooms are located on the upper floor while a meeting room and a covered parking area are located on the ground level. The same pink stucco and half timbering is used on the exterior. Other details from the 1957 building are incorporated into the North Wing such as the gabled dormers<sup>1</sup>, and the band sawn railings used for the exterior

<sup>1</sup> The 1968 building's gabled dormers have murals painted between each casement window. The murals are similar to Maxine Albro's original murals however they were not painted by her since she died in 1966. There is no record of who painted the murals for the 1968 North Wing.

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\*Recorded by Meg Clovis

\*Date 08/2023

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walkways and balconies. To the south of the rear parking lot is a cluster of buildings that were part of the original, pre-1957 hotel complex. Pink stucco covers the exterior walls, but half timbering is not used.

A pool and large parking area (with another automobile entrance off of Dolores Street) are located on the lower level of the property. Landscaping throughout the complex is minimal except along the driveway which leads from San Carlos Street to the covered parking under the North Wing.

The Hofsas House Hotel was established when Carmel's reputation as a tourist attraction was on the rise. Many hotels, inns, and motels were built between 1947 and 1963 and these establishments reflect a wide range of architectural styles and themes. The 1957 section of the hotel was designed by Robert Jones, who is best known for his contemporary designs. The project contractor was Ralph Stean, who specialized in post-adobe style homes. The north wing was designed by San Jose architect Cleve Dayton, the same architect who designed Donna Hofsas' house with the parabolic roof, located off of Dolores Street. By May 1968 George Willcox had taken over the project, working with contractors Helm and Savoldi.

The Hofsas House is a conglomeration of buildings cobbled together over four decades. Following is a timeline of alterations and additions:

- May 1948: Harry Hofsas purchases cottages (currently rooms 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10)
- May 1948: New basement added to two-story building on lot 9 (BP# 1604)
- June 1948: Bathroom and living room addition to two-story building on lot 9 (BP# 1625)
- August 1948: Two-story building's basement remodeled into bedroom and bath on lot 9 (BP# 1660)
- 1952: Building additions (currently rooms 20, 21, 30 and 31)
- March 1952: New apartments added to existing building on lot 9 (BP#2283)
- May 1952: Apartment addition to lot 13 (BP# 2315)
- June 1952: Porch roof addition to Lot 11 (BP# 2337)
- December 1956: Demolition permit for two old residences to create a parking lot for hotel (BP# 2986)
- January 1957: Construction of 4-story main hotel building with 21 units, night manager's apartment and laundry room
- May 1957: Addition of 5 units to existing 25 units (BP# 3044)
- June 1957: Build swimming pool (BP# 3058)
- November 1959: Remodel bath and hallway in duplex on lot 8 (BP# 3458)
- November 1967: North wing constructed with 8 units, banquet room, kitchen, and two dry saunas (BP# 4748)
- January 1968: Tar and gravel roof replaced with shakes and roof structure changed to provide 4" minimum pitch on lot 11 (BP# 4744)
- 1974: New office added over back office of the lobby and stairs redesigned from the 4<sup>th</sup> floor to the parking lot (BP# 74-101)
- June 1977: Stairs replaced on the north side of the main building (BP# 77-132)
- November 1978: Repair of failed retaining wall (BP# 78-192)

**CONTINUATION SHEET**



Figure 2: North wing looking southwest from San Carlos Street.



Figure 3: View of hotel's porte cochere with mural and family shield, looking southwest from San Carlos Street.

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**B10. Significance (continued):**

relocating to the Monterey Peninsula to work for architect Robert Stanton. Jones opened his own architectural firm in 1939 designing house plans for war housing and FHA apartments. By the war's end, Jones had opened additional offices in Merced and Oxnard. On the Peninsula, his firm designed 27 canneries and reduction plants, as well as public buildings for the Monterey Peninsula Airport. His Modernist design for the Monterey Airport Administration Building won a major design award from the Smithsonian Institute. He also designed the Elks Lodge in Monterey. In Carmel he designed All Saints Episcopal Church and the Carmel Youth Center. He designed numerous residences in the area and was known for his flat-roofed, Modern style. Robert R. Jones is included in Carmel's Historic Context Statement.

**Ralph Leo Stean** (1918-2004) was the contractor for the 1957 Hofsas House Hotel project. Stean was a Carmel Valley developer and contractor who worked on the Monterey Peninsula from the mid-1940s to the 1970s. Early on he specialized in building Post-Adobe residences. Ralph Stean is listed in Carmel's Historic Context Statement.

**Cleveland Dayton** (1919 - 2012) prepared the preliminary plans for the North Wing, which was built in 1968. Dayton was an architect with the Creative Design Company, a San Jose firm. The North Wing's plans were revised by **George Legge Willox** (1903 – 1968), a Carmel architect who is best known for his design of the Church of the Wayfarer. Born in Scotland,<sup>2</sup> and raised in Canada, Willox graduated with a degree in architecture from the University of Michigan. He moved to Carmel from Los Angeles and joined Robert Stanton's firm as head designer. He eventually opened his own architectural practice. Willox served on Carmel's Planning Commission for fourteen years and was appointed to the California State Planning Commission by Governor "Pat" Brown. Willox is included in Carmel's Historic Context Statement.

The contracting firm of **Helm and Savoldi** constructed the North Wing. Walter Helm (1914-1998) graduated in 1938 with an engineering degree from the University of Arizona. He settled in Carmel in 1945, working as a carpenter. Helm became a licensed contractor and partnered with Michigan-native and former pro-wrestler Clem Savoldi (1909 – 1999) to form the Helm-Savoldi contracting firm. Helm and Savoldi built hundreds of custom homes on the Monterey Peninsula, working with such notable architects as Henry Hill, Jon Konigshofer, and Walter Burde. Helm and Savoldi are not included in Carmel's Historic Context Statement.

<sup>2</sup> George Willox Obituary, *Carmel Pine Cone*, August 20, 1968.

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Donna Hofsas asked her friend **Maxine Albro** (1903-1966) to paint murals on the inside wall of the porte-cochere. She also did three paintings for the reception area. Maxine Albro was a nationally known muralist, mosaic artist and sculptor. She was one of America's leading female artists, and one of the few women commissioned under the New Deal's Federal Art Project. During that time, she executed the California agricultural workers mural in Coit Tower. She became a leader in the California muralist movement and her work can be found in the collections of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, MoMA, and the National Gallery of Art, among others. She and her husband moved to Carmel in 1938 and she lived in Carmel until her death. She was named an honorary life member of the Carmel Art Association and served on Carmel's first Art Commission. Besides the Hofsas House Hotel, her work can be seen locally at Santa Catalina School.<sup>3</sup>

Figure 4: Photo of Maxine Albro courtesy of the Carmel Art Association.

In 1961 a glowing review of the Hofsas House Hotel stated:<sup>4</sup>

"Hofsas House is something new under Carmel's sun. It's on a curve of the road leading into the village at San Carlos and Fourth. It's right out of a picture book with gay murals of peasants dancing under a smiling sun and diamond paned windows, touched by the flicker of patio torches. A page out of Bavaria with king sized beds, jeweled and gold telephones, a delightful, heated swimming pool sheltered from the ocean breezes, yet a view of ocean on each of its four levels."

Evaluation for Significance

Historians use National Register Bulletin 15<sup>5</sup> as a guide when evaluating a property's significance whether on a local, state, or national level. As a first step, to determine whether or not a property is significant, it must be evaluated within its historic context and the City of Carmel's Historic Context Statement<sup>6</sup> provides this context. The City of Carmel's Historic Preservation Ordinance (Section 17.32.040) reiterates the role of *National Register Bulletin 15* in the evaluation of historic resources.

<sup>3</sup> Maxine Albro Obituary. *Carmel Pine Cone*. 7/28/1966, p. 19.

<sup>4</sup> *Biggs News*, 11/3/1961, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> National Register Bulletin 15. *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. National Park Service. 1998.

<sup>6</sup> *Historic Context Statement: Carmel-by-the-Sea (Draft)*. Approved by the City Council December 6, 2022.

**CONTINUATION SHEET**

Adopted eligibility criteria are modeled on the California Register’s four criteria with the addition of specific qualifications for Criterion Three (Section 17.32.040.D).

The Hofsas House Hotel is not eligible under **Criterion One (Event/Association)** despite its association with the development of business and tourism in Carmel. The Hofsas House Hotel is one of dozens of tourist-serving accommodations built in Carmel during the 1950s and 1960s. Per Carmel’s Historic Context Statement, “Properties associated with business and tourism exist in abundance throughout Carmel. Significant examples should retain a high degree of integrity. Significance would be enhanced by association with prominent members of the business community and with specific businesses or business types that were pivotal in the town’s economic development” (p. 31). The Hofsas House Hotel’s significance is not enhanced by its association with Donna Hofsas, who did not distinguish herself from others in the same business (see Criterion Two).

For a property to be listed under **Criterion Two (Important Person)** it must be associated with a person who is considered significant within Carmel’s historic context. An individual must have made contributions or played a role that can be justified as significant and the contributions of the individual must be compared to others who were active, prosperous, or influential in the same sphere of interest. Carmel had over fifty hotels, inns, and motels that were in operation at the same time Donna Hofsas was managing the Hofsas House Hotel. There is no indication in the historical record that Mrs. Hofsas played an outstanding role within the tourism community when compared to her peers. Maxine Albro painted the murals on the exterior walls of the Hofsas House Hotel, but her life achievements would be better represented by her own home which was located on Santa Rita between Fourth and Fifth Avenues. The Hofsas House Hotel is not eligible for listing in the Carmel Inventory of Historic Resources under Criterion Two.



Figure 5: Rear elevation of 1957 hotel looking northeast.



**CONTINUATION SHEET**

A property is eligible under **Criterion Three (Design/Construction)** if it, "embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values." Carmel's Historic Preservation Ordinance includes additional qualifications for eligibility under Criterion Three. An historic resource eligible under California Register Criterion Three (per Carmel's Ordinance) should meet at least one of the following four criteria:

1. Have been designed and/or constructed by an architect, designer/builder, or contractor whose work has contributed to the unique sense of time and place recognized as significant in the Historic Context Statement.

*The 1958 hotel building was designed by Robert R. Jones and constructed by Ralph Stean, who are both listed in Carmel's Historic Context Statement. Jones is best known for his contemporary designs and Stean is best known for his post-adobe residences. The 1968 North Wing was initially designed by Cleveland Dayton, re-designed by George Willox, and built by Helm and Savoldi. George Willox is the only creative individual out of the three who is listed in Carmel's Historic Context Statement. Per Bulletin 15, a property is not eligible as the work of a master simply because it was designed by a prominent architect. "The property must express a particular phase in the development in the master's career, an aspect of his or her work, or a particular idea or theme in his or her craft." None of the architects or builders associated with the Hofsas House Hotel could claim that the design and/or construction of this hotel was a defining moment in their careers, so this criterion is not applicable.*

2. Have been designed and or constructed by a previously unrecognized architect, designer/builder, or contractor if there is substantial, factual evidence that the architect, designer/builder, or contractor contributed to one or more of the historic contexts of the City to an extent consistent with other architects, designer/builders or contractors identified within the Historic Context Statement.

*This criterion is not applicable.*

3. Be a good example of an architectural style or type of construction recognized as significant in the Historic Context Statement.

*Bavarian-themed vernacular commercial buildings are not recognized as significant in Carmel's Historic Context Statement.*

4. Display a rare style or type for which special consideration should be given. Properties that display particularly rare architectural styles and vernacular/utilitarian types shall be given special consideration due to their particularly unusual qualities. Such rare examples, which contribute to diversity in the community, need not have been designed by known architects, designer/builders, or contractors. Rather, rare styles and types that contribute to Carmel's unique sense of time and place shall be deemed significant.

*There are several examples of vernacular style buildings with various thematic attributes in Carmel. The Hofsas House Hotel does not display a rare style of architecture and cannot be considered eligible under this criterion.*

**California Register Criterion Three (Design/Construction)** has three parts as follows:

A property is eligible if it 1) embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, 2) represents the work of a master, or 3) possesses high artistic values.

The Hofsas House Hotel does not meet the first part of California Register Criterion Three because it does not embody the distinctive characteristics of a particular style of architecture. As evidenced by the lengthy list of building permits over a four decades, the hotel complex is an assemblage of disparate components, rather than a cohesive stylistic vision.

Although designed and constructed by architects and contractors recognized as significant in Carmel's Historic Context Statement, the Hofsas House Hotel is not representative of their best work. The hotel does not meet the second part of Criterion Three.

The Hofsas House Hotel does not meet the third part of Criterion Three because it does not possess high artistic values and it does not express aesthetic ideals or design concepts.

The California Register's **Fourth Criterion (Information Potential)** is generally reserved for archeological sites. There is no evidence in the historical record that the Hofsas House Hotel meets the eligibility requirements for Criterion Four.



Integrity

Integrity is defined as the ability of a property to convey its significance. There are seven aspects of integrity including location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. To retain integrity a property must retain several if not most aspects. If a property does not meet any of the eligibility criteria, then integrity is not a consideration as part of the evaluation for historical significance.

Figure 6: North wing looking northeast.

**CONTINUATION SHEET**

Summary

To be eligible for the Carmel Inventory a resource must represent a theme in the Context Statement, retain substantial integrity, be at least 50 years old, and meet at least one of the four criteria for listing in the California Register. The Hofsas House Hotel does not represent a theme in the Context Statement. The Hofsas House Hotel does not retain substantial integrity. The Hofsas House Hotel is over 50 years old. The Hofsas House Hotel does not meet any of the California Register criteria. In summary, Bulletin 15, the Carmel Historic Context Statement, the Carmel Historic Preservation Ordinance, and the historical record support the conclusion that the Hofsas House Hotel is not eligible for listing in the Carmel Inventory of Historic Resources.



Figure 7: Mosaic shield created by Frederick Hofsas.