

**Carmel-
by-the-Sea****Nova Romero <nromero@ci.carmel.ca.us>**

Some more historic guidance

Linda L. Smith <[REDACTED]>
To: Nova Romero <nromero@ci.carmel.ca.us>

Wed, Feb 26, 2025 at 7:44 AM

Dear Nova,

Would you please send this letter and attachments to the mayor, city council and staff for tomorrow's meeting. And would you also copy it to all the various commissions and staff as well? Many thanks.

Linda L Smith

[REDACTED]

Carmel, CA 93921

Dear Mayor Byrne and Council Members,

I am a fourth generation Carmelite who still lives in the 700 sq ft cottage built by Mike Murphy for my grandmother in 1905 on 2 1/2 lots of forest. My father spent much of his life here and I grew up here. My grandmother was one of the original group of natural beauty loving Bohemians who came in those early halcyon days and set the tone and direction for Carmel that brought it world renown. It was meant to be a town where people lived simply in community, close to the beautiful nature that surrounded it...amidst the ever present scent and music of the ocean and pine forest. Our homes were small and our pines were beloved, and our business people were members of the community who loved the Place and wanted to preserve it as much as did the artists and musicians and writers and thinkers who envisioned the town. Over time it's been a fight to preserve that beautiful vision and most of it has been lost unfortunately to the money god. We have wandered so far from our original purpose. Our forest and neighborhoods have suffered tremendous loss and degradation. It's unclear what to do.

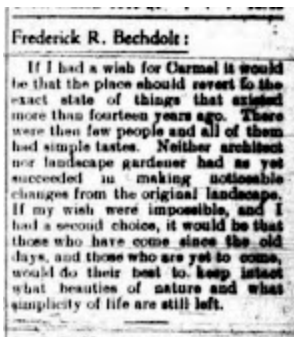
I thought some reminders of the past struggles Carmelites have gone through would be helpful and provide some inspiration, so here are a few gems from history for you to read. It's a steep learning curve for those who haven't been here long, and even for many who have, to understand what it really is that has made Carmel so unique. And of course, the type of person who lived here in the beginning was of a different nature, less materialistic. Which is why Carmel became the unique place it is, with a message for the world worth heeding. Our founders were more visionary than even they knew. "Live simply that others may simply live" rings more and more urgently true for us humans. If we do what is right for Nature we will be doing what is right for us, who are a part of Nature.

The last attachment is a brief visual tour through some photos and clippings that speak to Carmel's original Monterey Pine Forest, the very historic existence of which has been questioned. Since our forest is a part of the larger native Monterey Pine Forest of the Monterey Peninsula, and Carmel was the only community, other than Pebble Beach, that embraced it as an essential part of its character, this misunderstanding needs correcting.

Sincerely yours,
Linda L Smith

[REDACTED]

8 attachments



Fred Beckdolt real Carmel 1921-10-26.jpg
93K



Gunnar Norberg Carmel has no prototype CPC 02.7.1974110324.jpg
242K



The Village Watch Advice tp Developers Stanley Marcus Aug 1987 2
img20240917_08303374.jpg
1033K



Carmel Civic League Revival CPC 12.8.1921 highlighted.pdf
390K



Frank Papa Devendorf passing Carmel Pine Cone October 12,1934.pdf
350K



Carmel Statement of Policy Carmel Pine Cone 6.20.1947 highlighted.pdf
634K



The Village Watch Editorial Issue 1 Aug 1987.pdf
1968K



Carmel MP Forest historic documentation compressed annotated.pdf
7562K

**Carmel-
by-the-Sea**

Nova Romero <nromero@ci.carmel.ca.us>

Public Comment for City Council Special Meeting / Workshop on 2/27

Will Rei [REDACTED] >
To: cityclerk@ci.carmel.ca.us

Wed, Feb 26, 2025 at 9:03 PM

Hello,

My name is Will Rei and I would like to submit the following as public comment for the City Council's Special Meeting / Workshop on Thursday 2/27/25. I plan to join the meeting via Zoom to give this comment in real time, however I chose to also submit it in writing in case I'm unable to be on the meeting call at the time for public comments:

Thank you for reviewing my comment. My name is Will Rei, and I'm writing on behalf of my family, which owns a home in Carmel by the Sea. I would like to take this opportunity to formally request that the council end the moratorium on new submissions for Mills Act contracts for Carmel by the Sea's historic homes.

As I mentioned, we have a family home in Carmel by the Sea, called Graystone. My grandmother grew up in Carmel (attending Sunset Elementary and Santa Catalina HS), and she and my grandfather bought the home in 1985 intending to spend time close to my great grandparents, and eventually retire there. Though they did not retire there permanently, Graystone has been our favorite family retreat since it came into our lives, which includes my *whole* lifetime. The home is ideally suited for a Mills Act contract, as my family has carefully maintained the 1928 Whitcomb-designed home for 40 years, and it has been a part of the Inventory of Historic Resources for at least 23 of those years. In the inventory it is listed as the Bliss-Hubbell House, but my grandfather George so loved the home that he named it in honor of my grandmother, Gray.

My grandmother passed last March, leaving the home to my mother and my uncle, and also triggering a property tax re-assessment. As you can imagine, this means a significant increase in the property tax basis. I understand from my messages with the council that one consideration for a Mills Act agreement has been whether or not the owner has been able to maintain the property in the past without the aid of such a contract. While this has mostly been the case for Graystone in the past, the property tax on the home for 2025 will be about 6 times higher than 2024, making an extremely significant impact on our ability to maintain and enjoy the home ourselves. We recognize that a Mills Act contract represents a decrease in tax revenue for the City, but I'd like to note that even with a contract in place, the City still stands to receive at least double the property tax revenue from this home as it did prior to last year's reassessment.

Our goal is to keep and steward the home for the entire family to continue to use for generations to come, and we believe that a Mills Act contract with the City is the best mechanism for us to ensure we can do so. We hope that the council recognizes this and is able to help fulfill this goal.

We are happy to answer any questions you might have, or to give more context.

Thank you,
Will Rei
[REDACTED]

ODE TO MISSION PRESERVE

Beneath the sky so vast and wide,
Where ancient trees in silence bide,
The whispering pines, the oaks so tall,
Stand strong against the greedy sprawl.

Let not the saw nor axe draw near,
To steal the green we hold so dear.
Let not the roads, the endless sound,
Disturb the peace of sacred ground.

The deer still wander, light of tread,
Where woodland paths in quiet spread.
The hawk still soars on winds so free,
It's cry a call—protect this sea.

Of emerald leaves and shaded streams,
Where time moves slow in golden beams,
No flashing lights, no blaring sound,
Just nature's hush, the purest ground.

So guard these woods, defend their grace,
Keep the Preserve a most cherished place.
Not for pavement, noise, or greed,
But for the life that stills has needs.

Jim and Peggy Grossett



Carmel, Ca 93923

Preserve the Preserve Association

Dear Carmel-by-the Sea Mayor, Council and Community,

Our group is “Preserve the Preserve” from the 93923 and 93921 Carmel community. We love the Mission Trail Preserve and advocate for the best path to protecting it for the Carmel community. Besides a few tiny parks, we have only one substantial green space for all Carmel to enjoy. An essential component of “residential character” is maintaining the nature that defines it. The beach and forest are sacred spaces that enrich and inspire us. We need quiet, local places where residents can escape the bustle and reconnect with the power of nature that heals us all.

The Flanders house/mansion is not nature. It has been the source of much controversy and consumed so much of the Carmel community’s money and precious time. It was the will of the people and voted on by Carmel residents to sell Flanders for these reasons. Why then are there proposals to encourage the commercial use of Flanders yet again? Why must Carmel accept any “control” of Flanders for 99 years by any specific “non-profit”, which could increase impacts, costs and liabilities for the Carmel community? How would a Carmel resident hear waves crashing, birds singing, or one’s own quiet contemplation, with an event in the heart of the park? The birds know best when to listen to this velvet moment.

Carmel has considerable impacts coming with mandatory additional housing. Carmel has many venues, hotels and restaurants for events. We have exactly one Preserve, that must be protected for the health and character of the community.

We oppose any added impact to Mission Trail Preserve through the “commercial use” of the Flanders mansion/house. This would include non-profits that could need to trade “use” for ongoing funding. Impact could foreseeably expand over time and forever violate the essence of the Preserve. We support the sale or long-term lease of Flanders as R1 residential use only, with unfettered access for all through the Preserve, including all areas immediately surrounding Flanders. This would ensure preserving the Preserve for all the community to enjoy.

Preserve the Preserve

Many families in the 93921 and 93923 community.

ptpcarmel@gmail.com

To: Carmel by the Sea City Mayor and City Council members,

We are writing this letter to raise our concerns about the Flander's estate being used for any type of special event.

To give a bit of background, I was raised in Carmel and my grandmother worked for Mrs. Flanders as her private nurse for several years. My mother grew up with the staff and family, attending small gatherings there until Mrs. Flander's passed away. Although we live on Hatton Road, we consider Carmel by-the-Sea to be our village as well. We frequent and support the businesses and shops, walk to town daily and I published the first children's book set in Carmel by-the-Sea, as a thank you for all the memories and comfort the village has given our family. I am also a former restaurant owner and event planner and have seen it all when it comes to things that can go wrong when you combine people and certain elements. My husband is a retired military officer.

We would like to address several concerns we have regarding any events that may take place at the estate as a part of the proposals being considered.

ROAD SAFETY- Residents of Hatton Road deal with very fast, unsafe traffic conditions on a daily basis. Unlike the village, where there are ample stop signs to slow drivers, there is only one at the very bottom of Hatton. We also do not have an active police presence as the village does. This enables drivers to use our small winding road as a speedway. Most any person who walks the road will tell you it is unsafe, as there are no sidewalks and you must move out of the way and be aware of people driving too fast for the conditions. Due to Carmel High School commuters, construction, people who are trying to use it as a shortcut when the freeway is backed up or there is an accident, the road has become way too fast and congested for its original use. When there are any cars parked on the road, it becomes one lane, and it's even more dangerous for pedestrians and drivers. The curve right at the entrance to the Flander's estate is a blind one and dangerous. If we choose to walk there, we must walk on the Flander's side, since cars coming up Hatton will not see us as they turn the corner. Many of us choose to walk during the slower traffic times, which is typically early evening and weekends when school, construction and commuting are lessened. These happen to also be the most popular times to host events. You should not walk on Hatton Road in the dark, and most visitors will be parking on Hatton and walking back to their cars in the dark, unaware of how dangerous this is and possibly impaired from alcohol.

We have nearly been hit by cars in the middle of the day several times, so I very much want this warning of safety to be on the public record. If someone does get hit then consider yourselves

warned. I believe without stop signs, speedbumps, and with increased traffic and visitors and trucks using the road at all hours, it is only a matter of time until someone will be injured.

FIRE DANGER- People like to smoke at events. If they are a smoker and they are drinking, they want to smoke cigarettes, marijuana or a cigar and will find a place to do it. It is rare that they take their butts with them or find a place to safely dispose of them. Employees who smoke typically smoke right before entering work, during breaks and immediately after work before they get into their cars. Since I assume smoking will only be allowed outdoors, this presents an obvious fire hazard for our entire area. Even if you make the estate a non-smoking area, it will not stop someone from lighting up, especially if they are intoxicated. They will just go where they cannot be seen or go smoke on the street by their car. Our residents are having difficulty even obtaining or keeping fire insurance and we are doing everything to try and lessen our chances of a fire. Visitors who attend events will not be as aware and cautious of our surroundings.

Let's say a fire were to start at 9:00 pm during a 75 person event on a slightly windy night. You would have an excess of 40-50 cars with frantic guests, some intoxicated and staff trying to get out on Hatton Road. Many of them not knowing our area at all. There are many homes surrounding Flanders and they are mainly owner occupied in this area, with many elderly and families. In addition, you would have residents trying to flee, if they are lucky enough to have any warning. Some would be asleep as well. All using the same road as the first responders who are trying to drive past them on Hatton to reach the fire. It will take additional emergency personnel several minutes to reach the fire and begin to put it out if they can get past all of cars. In just a few minutes, with some wind, the devastation can be swift and devastating. If the roads back up or there is an accident or residents do not have adequate warning, there can also be loss of life. We simply do not have necessary access and exit points to handle large crowds, vehicles and disasters. If we have learned nothing else from the Palisades fire, it's that limited access and exit roads are a recipe for devastation. Traffic will back up trying to cross the freeway and turning onto Ocean Avenue which may force people to leave their vehicles behind. Without any street lights or sidewalks, people are also in danger of being hit by cars. Then you add the threat of the fire spreading to homes through the forest and down towards the mission. The thought of our residents having to flee their homes or vehicles, potentially lose their homes and pets, because we agreed to host events for someone else's financial gain is unimaginable. For those of us that remember the Pebble Beach fire and how quickly it spread, there is no reason it cannot happen here.

EVENT STAFFING- Many people do not understand the basic set up of what goes into an event. I will give an example of a 100-person event. These numbers were given to me by an event planner. Weddings are typically 5-6 hours minimum plus several hours prior and after for set up

and take down. Figure at least ten employees setting up plus vendors, so that is ten cars right there. Figure at least half the guest count of cars. Support services such as rental trucks, food trucks, beverages, bartending, sound, lighting, florals and decorations will all drive in and out, often before and after each event.

SOUND POLLUTION- At many other events locations noise is a significant issue and is very disruptive. Event planners use decibel readers to measure sound from live music and DJ's when there is a sound ordinance or complaints from neighbors. If the decibel level is above a certain number the music must be turned down, but it still does not really work. At our location on Hatton Road, we hear every event from The Forest Theatre, Carmel High, traffic from Ocean Avenue and Highway 1. Sound travels here and we can hear car doors slam down the street. With events, residents will constantly be hearing car doors slamming, people talking and laughing on the street, car alarms, cars turning around and have headlights shining into some of our windows up until midnight if an event ends at 10:00 pm.

Does the Flanders Estate have a sound ordinance in place? If not, will one be established?

LAW ENFORCEMENT- We do not have significant law enforcement in our area to manage an event location. Consider falls, drug and alcohol issues, fender benders, accidents, sound complaints, arguments, lost or stolen items, fires and other injuries.

VENUE SHORTAGE- There is an extreme shortage of event venues on the Monterey Peninsula, and our area is a very desirable destination for events of all types. Due to the location and uniqueness, this venue will be booked nonstop year-round. Weddings are no longer a weekend only event. They often take place any day of the week because most people are traveling here and making this a vacation. To maximize peak times, venues often try to schedule two events in a day. Such as a day wedding, brunch or lunch followed by a different evening event.

I cannot speak for the Flanders family but I do know they built their home to stand the test of time, not sit vacant for fifty years in disrepair and then be used as financial gain for others. We talk so much about preserving historical places because of the age, architect or style of home. What about preserving the intention of why the structure was created in the first place and respecting and honoring the family and what they endured and contributed to our area. They could have lived anywhere and they chose to live in the middle of a quiet forest, to raise their family. I believe they would not want their home used as a monetary vehicle that would negatively impact all of their neighbors near and far and potentially cause injury or a fire.

I also advise against comparing it to Sunset Center, The Forest Theatre and The Golden Bough. Those venues are in the city limits and were created as event locations. They also have their share of challenges but have decades of experience on how to best handle them.

WILDLIFE- This area is a tranquil nature area and trail, with active wildlife. Racoons, skunks, feral cats, rabbits, rats and mice, mountain lions, bobcats, etc. All just feet from visitors inhabiting their homes. If these animals feel threatened they will either attack or flee into our neighborhoods. We already have issues with racoons and skunks ending up in our backyards and mountain lions walking our streets. The nocturnal animals will also be impacted with evening events and people coming and going late into the night.

We are not Carmel-by-the-Sea citizens and we are a block outside of the village. But we are more impacted by this estate than most residents of the village. This will not negatively affect someone living on Dolores Street or down by the beach. It will negatively impact Hatton Fields, and the streets whose homes are along the other side of the park. If there is an injury or a fatality, everyone will feel bad, but if they vote for events to take place knowing the risks, then they are just as guilty. If there is a fire after all of the warnings, then we all lose. Not to mention the wildlife, air quality, possible loss of human life, pets, properties, etc.

The city has had over fifty years to develop a plan and has allowed a magnificent home to decay. Sell it and use the money for fire safety, the police department, or other much needed projects.

Let's end this waste of time and money once and for all.

Kirsten and Jean-Paul Tarman

Hatton Rd.

Carmel, CA 93923