

September 14, 2020

Phase Two Report for the Downie Museum Building and Carmel Mission Basilica Forecourt (APN 009 531 003), Carmel-by-the-Sea, CA.

Executive Summary

The current application to rehabilitate the Carmel Mission Basilica Forecourt and Downie Museum is part of a larger effort initiated five years ago. At that time Historian Kent Seavey evaluated the proposed plans for consistency with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and concluded that the plans met the Standards for Rehabilitation. The plans were subsequently approved by the Historic Resources Board (May 18, 2015) and the Planning Commission (July 8, 2015). Only a portion of the proposed improvements were completed before the Design Approval expired. The Mission is now ready to continue the project and has submitted slightly modified plans for the Downie Museum Building and Basilica Forecourt. The evaluation of those plans in relation to the Standards for Rehabilitation is the focus of this report. Because the Forecourt is considered a designed cultural landscape, the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for Rehabilitating Cultural Landscapes¹ is also referenced in this evaluation.

The Carmel Mission was listed as a National Historic Landmark in 1962 and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1967. It is also included in the Carmel Historic Resource Inventory and on the California Register of Historic Resources. As a historic resource, the Carmel Mission is subject to review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Generally, under CEQA, a project that follows the Standards for Rehabilitation contained within the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties is considered to have mitigated impacts to a historic resource to a less-than-significant level (CEQA Guidelines 15064.5).

Project Description

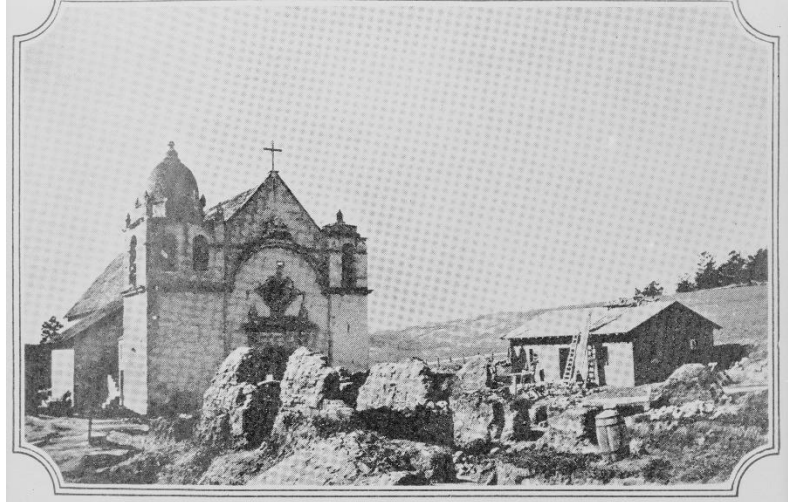
The Downie Building remodel will focus on removing the existing non-ADA compliant restrooms and adding two new non-gender ADA compliant single-use restrooms. This will create more exhibit space within the Downie Museum. The building will also be seismically retrofitted. Forecourt improvements include adjusting grades to create accessible paths of travel and replacing the existing paving in the Forecourt with new paving that matches the Quadrangle paving. This will include constructing a ramp that will connect the courtyard to the fountain, gardens, and Downie Museum. A new gate will be added in the non-historic plaster wall to provide a pedestrian entry. A sloped walkway will be constructed leading to the main parking lot and an enhanced gathering area in front of the Museum Store. This will require the removal of two parking spaces.

¹ *The Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes.* National Park Service, 1996.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

Compliance Evaluation

The proposed work on the Downie Museum and Basilica Forecourt are reviewed separately below for compliance with the Rehabilitation Standards. The Standards are indicated in italics, followed by a discussion regarding the project's consistency or inconsistency with each Standard.



The Downie Museum Building in 1921. HABS Photograph

Rehabilitation is defined as “the process of returning a building or buildings to a state of utility through repair or alteration, which makes possible an efficient use while preserving those portions of the building and its site and environment which are significant to its historic, architectural, or cultural values.” (36 CFR 67.2(b)).

The Downie Museum Building

The Downie Museum Building was commissioned by Father Ramon Mestres in 1919. Construction was completed in 1921 and the building was used as quarters for visiting priests. On October 11, 1980 the building was dedicated as the Harry Downie Museum, in honor of the Mission's famed restorer. A storage area was added to the western elevation around 1960, according to the Historic Structure Report for the Mission Basilica. ²

The building's character-defining features include:

- Adobe walls
- Roof including peeled log rafters, redwood planks and clay tiles
- Window openings
- Footprint of 1921 building
- Stone fireplace designed by Jo Mora

Standard One

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 building has been used as a museum for the past forty years and will continue to function as a museum. The proposed work is consistent with Standard One.

² *Carmel Mission Basilica Historic Structures Report*. Architectural Resources Group, August, 2010.

Standard Two

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 the property will be avoided.

Two interior adobe walls will be removed which will facilitate the expansion of the museum space. The location of the walls will be delineated by darker tiles. One window on the west elevation will be filled in to accommodate the relocation of the restrooms from inside the Downie Museum to the later addition. The window is not on a primary elevation and the interior walls are not distinctive features. Their removal will not damage the historic character of the property.

The restroom floor elevation is currently seven inches higher than the main building and one option is to lower the restroom floor to be on-grade with the main building. This option will require that the two doors on the north elevation be lowered and the new accessible path will be installed at that level. The wood headers over both doors will be retained but plastered over, and new, matching wood headers will be installed below the current headers. The stairs on the north elevation will be reworked as well. Neither leaving the restroom area at its current level nor lowering it will affect the character of the property. The proposed work is consistent with Standard Two.

Standard Three

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 historical properties, will not be undertaken.

No conjectural features or architectural elements from other properties will be used in the rehabilitation of the building. The proposed work is consistent with Standard Three.

Standard Four

Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.

Changes to the buildings have been minimal save for the later, storage room addition on the west elevation. The storage rooms will be repurposed as restrooms. The proposed work is consistent with Standard Four.

Standard Five

Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.

The building will be seismically retrofitted through core drilling which is a vertical reinforcement system that relies on drilling a continuous vertical core that is filled with steel reinforcing rods and grouting to resist in-plane or out-of-plane bending. This is a method recommended for unreinforced masonry buildings such as the Downie Museum by Preservation Brief 41³ The seismic retrofit is a preventive measure that will protect the building's distinctive features, finishes, construction techniques, and

³ Preservation Brief 41. *The Seismic Retrofit of Historic Buildings*. National Park Service, 2016.

craftsmanship. The core drilling method will not destroy any character-defining features and the proposed work is consistent with Standard Five.

Standard Six

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.

Project plans note that any damaged wood members will be repaired with epoxy rather than replaced. If replacement is necessary, then wood elements will be replaced “in kind”, to match type, texture, and dimensions. In addition, plans indicate that any adobe bricks that are completely fractured, disintegrate or come loose when preparing the surface will be reset or replaced with similar bricks. The proposed work is consistent with Standard Six.

Standard Seven

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.

This Standard is not applicable.

Standard Eight

Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place.

A separate study of archeological resources on the property was prepared by Archeological Resources Management in 2015⁴. The evaluation found traces of faunal shell fragments in the flower beds and it was recommended that an archeologist be on site to monitor earthmoving activities. This recommendation is consistent with Standard Eight.

Standard Nine

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.

There will be no new additions or related new construction on the exterior. The bathrooms will be removed from the inside of the Museum building and new ADA compliant restrooms will be installed in the storage area on the west elevation. A new wrought iron railing will be added to the upper landing that leads into the building on the south elevation. Preservation Brief 32⁵ recommends that railings installed for accessibility should be simple in design and distinguishable from other historic features. It is recommended that the Historic Resources Board review the design of the railing for visual compatibility.

⁴ *Cultural Resource Evaluation for the Proposed Parking Lot and Other Improvements at the Carmel Mission.* Archeological Resource Management, 2015.

⁵ Preservation Brief 32. *Making Historic Properties Accessible.* National Park Service, 1993.

All other exterior alterations, such as installing accessible doors, are minor and the proposed work is consistent with Standard Nine.

Standard Ten

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.

The project includes the regrading and improvements to the adjacent Basilica Forecourt. However, these plans will not affect the essential form or integrity of the Downie Museum and its environment will be unimpaired. The proposed work is consistent with Standard Ten.

The Basilica Forecourt

In 1936 Harry Downie started improvements on the Basilica Forecourt, focusing on regrading the site so rainwater did not flow into the church during the rainy season. He added a raised garden and fountain. The stones that edge the flowerbeds are remnants from the foundations of old mission buildings. According to the Historic American Landscape Survey report completed for the Mission by the National Park Service in 2010, the Forecourt's paving of exposed aggregate with brick bands dates to the 1970s although it more likely dates to 1960 when the Quadrangle was paved. The Forecourt's character-defining features include:

- Forecourt spatial organization
- Pathway circulation system
- Stone-bordered flowerbeds
- Design of the elevated garden
- Statue of Father Serra
- Stone walls with integral timber benches
- Fountain



The Basilica Forecourt in 1936. HABS Photograph

Standard One

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 Forecourt, as designed by Harry Downie, has served as an entry plaza into the Basilica for close to a century and it will continue to function as such. The proposed work is consistent with Standard One.

Standard Two

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 the property will be avoided.

The Forecourt paving (c. 1960) will be removed for the regrading of the eastern section. The paving is not considered a distinctive feature and is outside the period of significance. The regrading will improve drainage and will allow the site to meet ADA requirements. Once work is completed the Forecourt paving will be reinstalled to match the Quadrangle paving which also dates to the 1960s improvements. A ramp will be constructed to connect the Forecourt to the fountain, raised gardens, and Downie Museum. The plans for the ramp meet Preservation Brief 32 recommendations as the ramp is in scale with the Downie Museum and garden and it's visually compatible.

One large garden bed on the front elevation of the Downie Museum will be reduced in size to a two-foot bed bordered by a stone retaining wall with a stone cap. This will increase Forecourt space but will have little to no impact on the overall historic character of the property. Plans also indicate that other garden beds in the raised garden area may be reduced by up to two feet to facilitate accessibility and pedestrian movement. It is recommended that the Historic Resources Board review the final plans to ensure that this change does not impact the historic character of the garden area. The proposed work requires minimal change to distinctive materials and all character-defining features, spaces, and spatial relationships will remain unchanged. The proposed work is consistent with Standard Two.

Standard Three

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 historical properties, will not be undertaken.

No conjectural features from other properties will be used in the rehabilitation of the Forecourt. The proposed work is consistent with Standard Three.

Standard Four

Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.

The first improvements to the Forecourt were initiated by Harry Downie in 1936 and his basic plan and garden design will remain unchanged. The proposed work is consistent with Standard Four.

Standard Five

Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.

Distinctive materials such as the stones that border the garden beds will be preserved. The proposed work is consistent with Standard Five.

Standard Six

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.

The fountain in the elevated garden area will be replastered and restored which is an appropriate treatment. The wood in the built-in benches will be replaced. This treatment is acceptable based on the Cultural Landscape Guidelines which allow the replacement of deteriorated materials and features as long as the same material is used (wood) and the new design is compatible with the historic landscape. The failing adobe wall (which is not a character-defining feature) adjacent to the Museum Store will be replaced with a lower, concrete wall. Salvaged material from the original wall will be reused, such as the tile. Project plans indicate that the replacement wall will be plastered to match the original. This match should include color and texture. The proposed work is consistent with Standard Six.

Standard Seven

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.

This Standard is not applicable.

Standard Eight

Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place.

As previously mentioned, Archeological Resource Management reviewed the project area and found traces of faunal shell fragments in the garden beds within the project area. They recommended that archeological monitoring be carried out during all earthmoving activities associated with the project. This recommendation is consistent with Standard Eight.

Standard Nine

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.

The non-historic concrete walkways will be replaced with new paving to match the Forecourt paving but without brick bands. Plans indicate that new curbs will be installed around the garden, along the new ramp, and in the location of the new pedestrian entrance. Two steps will be added to the stairs leading to the Downie Museum entrance. New, pedestrian gates will be installed in the wall next to the Museum Store (see Sheet A-12)⁶. The new gates will be differentiated from the adjacent existing gates and will be compatible in terms of materials (wood), design, size, scale, and proportion. The proposed work is consistent with Standard Nine.

Standard Ten

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.

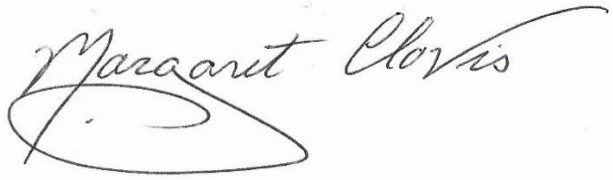
⁶ "Carmel Mission Downie Building and Forecourt" project plans prepared by Franks and Brenkwitz dated 5-15-20 and consisting of 12 sheets.

The new curbs, ramp, walkway materials, gate, and wall, if removed in the future, will not impair the essential form and integrity of the Forecourt. The proposed work is consistent with Standard Ten.

Conclusion

The proposed project meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the Secretary of Interior's Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes. The project can be considered as having less than a significant level of impact on the historic resource.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Margaret Clovis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping flourish at the end.

Margaret Clovis