



County of Santa Cruz

Department of Community Development and Infrastructure

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HISTORIC RESOURCE COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

AGENDA: September 8, 2025

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Proposal to delist three no longer existing historic structures and one structure that has been significantly modified to such an extent that it no longer is a viable historic or architectural resource.

These structures are currently listed in the County Historic Inventory and include the Alba School in Ben Lomond, Sea Breeze Tavern in Aptos, the Discoveryland Preschool in Live Oak, and the Santa Cruz Inn Motel (previously the Stardust Motel) also in Live Oak. The HRC will consider this matter and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors that it approves these four delistings. Associated with these delistings will be rezoning three of the four properties to remove the “-L” historic landmark designation. The rezoning will be implemented through a separate review process that involves the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors.

BACKGROUND

The County’s Historic Inventory needs to be updated on occasion to accommodate historical resources that heretofore have not been included in the Inventory and perhaps should be, or existing historical resources to be considered for higher or lower NR ranking, and historic resources that no longer exist that should be removed from the Inventory; the Inventory is an evolving document. Today we are considering only the four aforementioned historic resources that either no longer exist or their character ceases to be of historic or architectural value and should therefore be delisted. The DPR 523 Forms for these structures are included herein as exhibits.

ANALYSIS

County Code Section 16.42 applies to these four properties whereby findings only must be prepared per 16.42.050(E).

Alba School in Ben Lomond (12400 Alba Way - APN 078-01-105 – NR5) was destroyed by fire in the CZU fire complex in 2019.

Sea Breeze Tavern in Aptos (101 Esplanade – APN 042-15-123 – NR5) was gutted by fire in June 2020. The County issued a demolition permit for this Sea Breeze Tavern on March 22, 2021; Sea Breeze was demolished on May 4, 2021.

VMH Christian School and Discoveryland Preschool in Live Oak (427 Capitola Road – APN 026-09-154 – NR5) was once the site of the Twin Lakes School at 510 Rodriguez Road. It was demolished in 2014.

Santa Cruz Inn (2950 Soquel Drive – APN 026-03-113 – NR6) motel still stands but since 1986 has undergone remodels that have resulted in its historical and architectural viability being diminished to such an extent that, in a 2004 review of this property (part of an Inventory-wide evaluation of the entire Inventory), it was recommended that this Inn be removed from the Inventory. Unlike the three aforementioned properties, this property does not have the “-L” historic landmark zoning designation and so will not be subject to rezoning. Furthermore, none of the NR6 properties in the county have the “-L” historic landmark zoning designation.

Per Santa Cruz County Code (SCCC) 16.42.050(E)(2), findings are required for delisting a property from the Historic Inventory.

(a) That the proposed historic resource, or group of structures, or features thereof no longer have significant cultural, architectural, or engineering interest or value of an historical nature, because either the structure no longer exists or has been determined to no longer have historical, architectural viability; and

(b) That approval or modified approval of the application to delete a historic resource is consistent with the purposes and criteria of the County’s historic preservation policies set forth in this chapter SCCC 16.42, and the historic resources policies of the General Plan.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The project is exempt from CEQA. A site designated in a local register of historic resources is presumed to be historically significant unless the preponderance of the evidence demonstrates that the site is not historically significant. (Public Resources Code §21084.1)

Three of the four structures no longer exist and in 2004 another property (the Santa Cruz Inn) was determined by the County’s consultant that it no longer has historical and architectural integrity due to remodeling and due to the change in setting and the environment.

CEQA Guidelines 15378(b)(5) states a “project” that does not include “Organizational or administrative activities of governments that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes to the environment”. Therefore, the proposed delistings are not subject to CEQA.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Being that there are no structures on the properties, the delisting will have no financial impacts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Review the staff report and findings;
2. Direct staff to carry forward the HRC recommendation to delist the Alba School in Ben Lomond, Sea Breeze Tavern in Aptos and the Discoveryland Christian preschool in Live Oak to the BOS; and

Exhibits

A. DPR 523 Forms for three properties