

Hi Craig:

Here are a few items that were covered during a teleconference that I had with representatives of the city of Ojai, the architect, the owners, and the Architectural Resources Group in reviewing the "Historic Resources Report" that had been prepared on the Hotel El Roblar.

1. I was selected to be the representative of the Ojai Valley Museum and because of my educational background and service to the city as a commissioner on the Ojai Historic Preservation Commission for 25 years I was one who would be able to give an accurate account of this building's past. Prior to this meeting, I received no instructions from the museum, city, or the OHPC. My observations were independent of all entities involved in this meeting.

2. It was interest to me that this early structure was not being discussed for its lack of landmark status. Because the venerable old hotel had not received such recognition, a different agency will be the lead on the project. It should be noted that not long after the city organized along the lines of the government model of today, the Ojai Historic Preservation Commission was formed and given the task of selecting historic properties that needed to be protected, preserved, and noticed. The City of Ojai, along with other municipalities nationwide became a participant in this movement and agreed to be regulated by the U.S. Department of the Interior in selecting historic structures. Paramount among the rules, the building needed to faithful to its original design. When the commission started to make a list of eligible buildings, the El Roblar was not included because of a wave of remodels that rendered a very different look than the original. Even though the El Roblar, with its rich history as a center of the social fabric of the City of Ojai, it did not make the cut. Today however, after a lot of the objectional portions are peeled back, the El Roblar stands a chance as an Ojai landmark.

3. I made a point in the discussion about the hotel's original construction and how close to the original date, would we need to be. I contend that in the case of a hostelry structure that the date be somewhat flexible. If a hotel, once built, finds itself inadequate, a change would be in order. Often, design changes, if kept reasonable and compatible to the original should be up for consideration. This happened to the El Roblar when it was determined that the hotel needed to be enlarged. The result was an extension of the south facade and a turn to the north on Ventura Street was made. Architecturally, it was a slight change. This new project should be able to accommodate this historic

action. When I spoke to the team from Architectural Resources they also recognized the “original” concept.” I believe that a discussion on the subject of “addition vs. alteration” would be useful.

4. The three out buildings to the rear of the main structure should all lose the gable roofs and be recreated with stucco siding to be in the style of the rest of the buildings.

5. When I was asked about my opinion about which of the two plans that I preferred, I had mixed feelings. Design Option One pales to my sense of design. especially when I look just beyond to the east and see the historic Arcade. Option One is trying to capture the look and feel of the romantic and robust Arcade. Have you ever walked the Arcade at Christmas under the glow of the lanterns? Option One is diminutive compared to its would be neighbor across Signal Street. When I drive into Ojai and see the little arcade first, it is like “the tail wagging the dog.” Also, if you step across Ojai Avenue and look at this Option, you see a row of arches tacked onto the front of a delightful old hotel...It was an addition like this years ago, that hid the beauty of the El Roblar. Option Two, while satisfying some of the portions of the Secretary of the Interior Standards, is just plain unattractive. Like Option One, it also has the problem of a plain feature tacked onto its front facade.

6. If I were to rank the options.

1. A Different Option
2. Option One
3. Option Two

Thank you,
Terry Hill

Subject:

RE: COMMENT: 4/6/2022 Planning Commission Item #3 - 122 E Ojai Ave \ Hotel El Roblar (DRP 21-003) T. Drew Mashburn

-----Original Message-----

From: T. Drew Mashburn

To:

Cc:

Sent: Thu, Apr 7, 2022 9:15 am

Subject: Fwd: COMMENT: 4/6/2022 Planning Commission Item #3 - 122 E Ojai Ave \ Hotel El Roblar (DRP 21-003)

Ms. Herbuck,

I attempted to send this email to you not long before yesterday evening's Planning Commissioner's Meeting, but it seems it failed to get through to you. So, here it is again.

Also, I watched the meeting via zoom. I attempted more than once to join the meeting during the "Public Comments" portion by clicking on the "Hands Up", but I was never called upon. I had wanted to make a verbal presentation.

Sincerely,

-- T. Drew Mashburn

217 N. Lomita Ave.

Ojai, Ca. 93023

Ph.: (805) 272-5849

-----Original Message-----

From: T. Drew Mashburn

To:

Cc:

Sent: Wed, Apr 6, 2022 5:46 pm

Subject: COMMENT: 4/6/2022 Planning Commission Item #3 - 122 E Ojai Ave \ Hotel El Roblar (DRP 21-003)

TO: Ojai Planning Commission

FROM: T. Drew Mashburn (71-year Ojai Valley Native)

RE: April 6, 2022 Meeting PUBLIC HEARING ITEM 3: Proposed remodel of Entire Hotel El Roblar site (formerly The Oaks at Ojai), Design Review Permit (DRP 21-003)

I'm writing you with my concerns about Design Options 1 and 2 for the South Facade of the Hotel El Roblar (AKA: The Oaks Hotel).

I must admit I like both design options, but Design Option 1 is NOT what Edward Drummond Libbey or the architects (Requa & Meade) envisioned when the building was being planned. All one has to do is to look at early photographs and drawings of the original building to see that it was a fairly plain looking two-story rectangular building without any arches on the front of it. By the time this building was being considered to be built, Libbey had already oversaw the construction and completion of the Arcade, Pergola and Post Office Bell Tower in the main downtown commercial district of Nordhoff. Had Libbey desired to have arches built on the front of Hotel El Roblar, he, without a doubt, would have had them added at the time the building was being built. My guess is that he felt arches on the hotel would have detracted from the uniqueness of the arches of the Arcade, Pergola and Post Office. I know that's how I feel. So, I cannot support Design Option 1.

The arches of the Arcade, Pergola and Post Office are a heavy-looking architectural presentation. Having such a heavy looking addition to the front of the hotel would unbalance the look of the block running from Ventura Street to Signal Street. It is well known one of the reasons for the Pergola's construction was to create a balance in appearance across Ojai Avenue from the Arcade. The Pergola has the same heaviness of the Arcade and arches as well. This would be

sorely lacking across the street from the hotel should arches be added to its entire south-facing exterior wall. There's not a single arch across the street from the hotel.

I am not opposed to a renovation/upgrade of this building, but the front that faces the main street that passes through Ojai must be a reflection of what Libbey envisioned, especially, now that it is included in the Downtown Ojai Historic District.

I've seen The Oaks at Ojai evolve over a long period of time to what it is today. I ask, "Why should the South Facade be changed at all?" It is very pleasing as is with its four arches to the West of the building's main front entrance, the three arches in the front of the covered entrance, and even small arches in the two towers on either side of the covered entrance. To the East of the main entrance are stucco columns supporting a log shade roof much like the Pergola's. The whole front of the building, as is, reflects what downtown Ojai should look like to me. It's a compromise because the applicant for changing to Design Option 1 or 2 is getting some of what he wants, and at present it's partially what those that would like to see more of a return to what Libbey and his architects envisioned.

If it's not possible to keep the front of the building as is, then I want to go on record as being opposed to Design Option 1 and in favor of Design Option 2 which more meets what Libbey envisioned for his upgrade of what he considered to be a somewhat dilapidated frontier-style town. Lastly, Design Option 1 is not in compliance with the Secretary of Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Resources, but Design Option 2 does so. So, if there are going to be changes made, let's get it done correctly!

Re: April 6, 2022 Ojai Planning Commission meeting, Agenda item 3
The former Oaks Hotel

Dear Chair Quilici, Commissioners, and City Staff:

I request that you continue this item to a future meeting.

I'm grateful to live in Ojai and appreciate your service to our community. I wholeheartedly support the reopening of the former Oaks Hotel, but do not support the proposed expansion and increases in intensity of use. I encourage you to vote to continue this item for the following reasons:

1. This commission regularly discusses and approves projects, increases in intensity of use, and zoning overlays, all of which will likely increase demand on our water supply. These discussions and approvals are made absent meaningful discussion and study of the extended drought we're presently experiencing, climate driven aridification of the entire Western US, and the fact that Ventura County's average temperature increase of 2.6 degrees Celsius since preindustrial times ranks us as the fastest-warming county in the Lower 48 states. Warmer temperatures that increase the evaporation rate of water reservoirs and record low rainfall will likely soon lead us to Stage 5 drought. Please note that this is the most severe designation (there is no Stage 6). **Page 4 of the resolution City Staff is recommending you adopt tonight states: "There are adequate provisions for . . . water. . ."** I dispute this statement, and suggest that the Planning Commission direct staff to further review this question. I respectfully assert that before approving any more projects that increase water demand, the commission and/or another City of Ojai governing body make a determination as to the potential value of passing a moratorium on approval of any increases in intensity of use or development in Ojai that increase demand on our scarce water reserves so that whatever surplus water we may be blessed with can go toward increasing our dwindling reserves. **Please see the graph at the end of this document from the Casitas Water District titled "Potential Scenarios - Decline in Lake Casitas Storage at the end of this document."** The Casitas Water District provides water to the City of Ojai. This graph was adopted by the Casitas Board of Directors June 23, 2021. This is the most current report.

2. One element of the proposed expansion and increase in intensity of use is offsite valet parking at 202 North Ventura Street. Valet parking at this

location unnecessarily increases car trips to and from the hotel as well as increases noise impacts for nearby residential neighbors caused by proposed tandem parking in said lot and the resulting continual jockeying of cars necessary to retrieve vehicles that have cars parked in front of them.

An alternative the Planning Commission could direct city staff to explore would be self parking of cars at this location as this would cut parking related car trips to this lot in half and eliminate car jockeying caused by tandem valet parking.

3. Thoroughly consider all potential options for onsite valet parking that do not require, or at a minimum diminish valet parking circulation via Ojai Avenue, North Ventura Street, East Matilija Street, North Signal Street, or any other public rights of way. **Doing so has the potential to reduce traffic and neighborhood impacts.**

4. Compare the value of the present quality of life for Ojai residents should the hotel be reopened absent the proposed expansion and increased intensity of use, to the reduced quality of life caused by increased traffic, noise, air pollution, reduction in available public parking, and crowding of pedestrian areas should the expansion and increase in intensity of use be approved.

I also have a few questions I would appreciate the Planning Commission and or City Staff answer before approval is considered.

1. There are six event centers within a short walk of the hotel. They are the Ojai Playhouse, Ojai Art Center, Chaparral Auditorium, Sane Living Center, Ojai Valley Woman's Club, and Libbey Bowl. **Should the Planning Commission direct City Staff to study the pros and cons of a seventh event center in downtown Ojai?**

2. The proposed project has had multiple iterations of various aspects of the plan and related parking. On Friday, April 1st a new 292 page informational document that includes a Staff Report, proposed resolution, exhibits, communications from the public and other documents was made available to the public. **Is it reasonable to expect members of the public to be able to review, digest, and comment on such a large volume of material in five days, two of which were over the weekend?**

3. If approved as proposed, the event center and outdoor spillover would accommodate 192 people. Considering that project proponents have

offered no guarantee that most of those who occupy the event center will actually be guests staying in the hotel, **how can the Planning Commission approve only 15 parking spaces for the event center?**

4. The cost of a place to live in Ojai continues to rapidly increase. In comparison, Ojai tourism industry wages have increased very little. **Considering the fact that they are seeking a Conditional Use Permit, should the hotel owners be required to pay a living wage to employees of the hotel at a level that allows them to afford to live in Ojai, thereby avoiding an increase in the number of people in the Ojai workforce that cannot afford a place to live?**

Considering the above statements and questions, I respectfully request this item be continued and that City Staff be directed to address these issues.

Sincerely,

Tom Francis

Figure 7-1

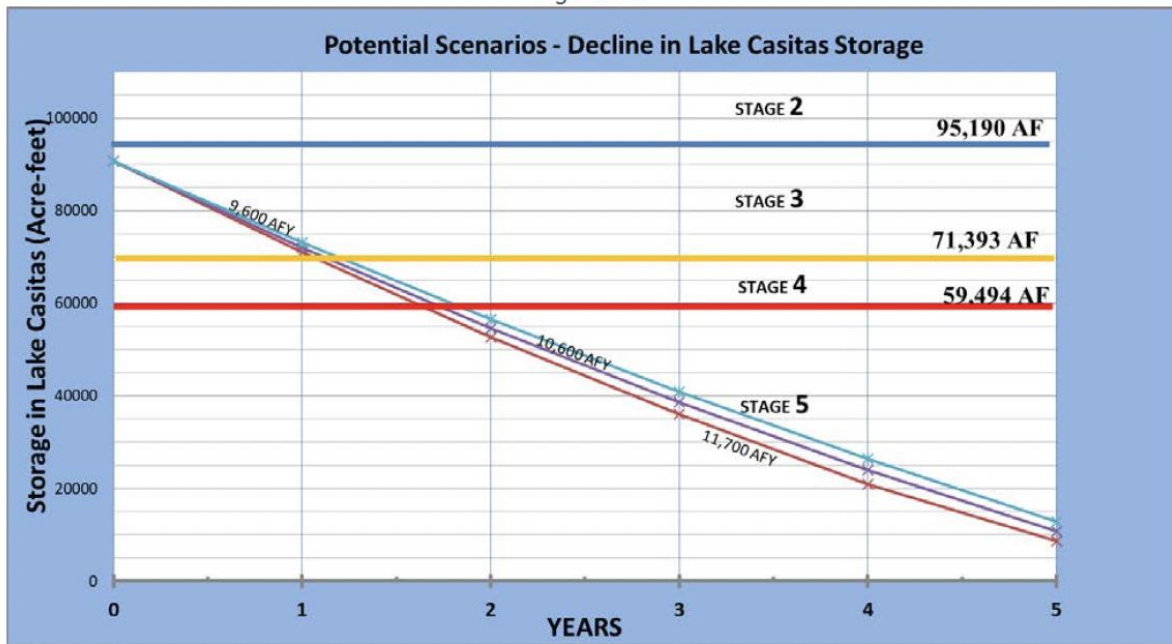
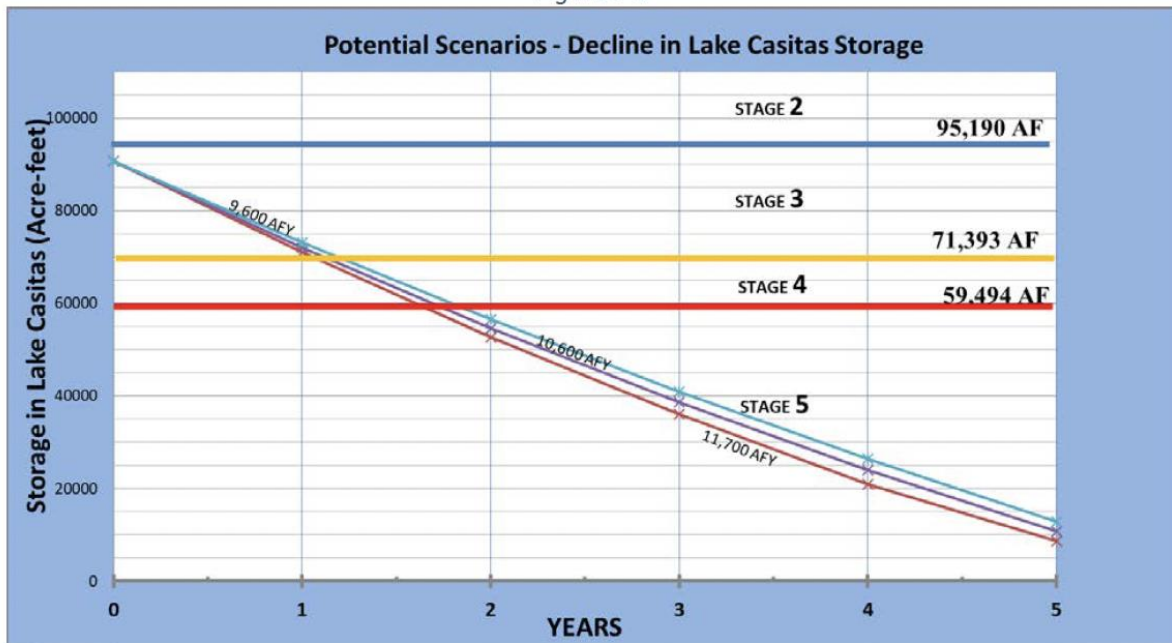


Figure 7-1



Subject:

RE: PUBLIC COMMENT RE ELROBLAR HOTEL MODIFICATION -- SOUTH FACADE

-----Original Message-----

From: Charles Johnson

Sent: Wednesday, April 6, 2022 5:00 PM

To: Shari Herbruck

Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT RE ELROBLAR HOTEL MODIFICATION -- SOUTH FACADE

Ms. Herbruck:

Only earlier today did I become aware of the proposed modifications to the south facade of the El Roblar Hotel.

I am a 28-year resident of the Ojai Valley, have spent more than three decades—most of my working life—involved in the history of Ventura County, most of that time as head of an historical research library in Ventura, but also as a member of the Ventura County Cultural Heritage Board and now as a private historical consultant.

I will make this short and sweet: while both design options are well designed, Option 1— a recreation of the arches in both the arcade and the pergola is, historically, both confusing and inaccurate.

I strongly suggest that Option 2 be chosen, to avoid confusion and to not diminish the relative importance of both the arcade and the pergola.

Thank You,

Charles Johnson

Subject: Ojai Planning Commission Approval of Design Review Permit (DRP 21-003) Hotel El Roblar

-----Original Message-----

From: Julie Hahn

Sent: Wednesday, April 6, 2022 4:54 PM

To: Shari Herbruck <shari.herbruck@ojai.ca.gov>

Cc: Ramin Shamshiri

Subject: Ojai Planning Commission Approval of Design Review Permit (DRP 21-003) Hotel El Roblar

To the Ojai Planning Commission: It is my hope that the Ojai Planning Commission continues in good faith to respect the hard work and care that the Design team for Hotel El Roblar has put in to bringing back to the heart of Ojai, an already existing hotel. I am concerned that the actions of the Mayor of Ojai to "save the soul of Ojai" by banning valet parking seems to be a direct affront to blocking the permitting process for the Hotel El Roblar. Not only does such action of the Mayor undermine, the Planning Commission's role, it creates confusion and allows for intended divisiveness to block new, or in this case, already existing businesses to upgrade or evolve. As a citizen of Ojai, I count on the professional integrity of the planning process and look forward to your continued professional review and approval of the Hotel El Roblar. Thank you, Julie Hahn, 1333 Foothill, Ojai

Shari Herbruck

To: Andrea Mackey
Subject: Tim Rhone

From: TimRhone
Sent: Wednesday, April 6, 2022 1:52 PM
To:
Subject: New submission from E-Mail all City Council Members & Mayor

Name

Tim Rhone

Email

Subject

Valet Parking for the El Roblar Hotel

Message

Council Members and Mayor Stix,

I'm writing ahead of tonight's Planning Commission meeting to express support for the El Roblar Hotel plans. I understand that there has been some resistance to the hotel's goal to offer valet parking in private lots. I find the resistance non-sensical and ill-directed. The former Oaks Hotel never had enough parking for its guests, and the owners of the El Roblar have made every effort to expand parking in private lots at their expense.

Like it or not, Ojai is a tourism-based economy, and local businesses depend on the influx of tourists to stay in business. The El Roblar Hotel utilizes the existing model by enhancing a space that has historically been a hotel and restoring a significant revenue stream that the city has been without since 2017.

With the long-term closures of the Ojai Playhouse and The Oaks, the block between Signal and Ventura Street has been a blank spot on our main street for far too long. It's time to move forward.

Respectfully,

Tim Rhone
Co-Owner, The Mob Shop

TO: OJAI PLANNING COMMISSION
FROM: Dawn Thieding, Cultural Resources Specialist
RE: April 6, 2022 Meeting PUBLIC HEARING ITEM 3: Proposed remodel of Entire Hotel El Roblar site (formerly The Oaks at Ojai), Design Review Permit (DRP 21-003)

***** PLEASE SEE IMAGES ON PAGES 7-9 *****

I am writing regarding the proposed modifications of Hotel El Roblar's exterior south façade.

The project's stated intention is to return the building to its original design roots as presented in Image 1 on Page 7 of this report. The two front design options are:

Design Option 1 with Arches Extending the Length of the front building façade (Arcade Extension)
Design Option 2 with Columns (Covered Walkway)

While I support the re-opening of Hotel El Roblar, the hotel is a state-designated and registered historical resource and the front facade should be renovated according to Secretary of Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties in order to preserve the integrity and significance of the building, the historic downtown, existing Ojai landmarks and Ojai's historic and scenic viewshed.

Therefore, I respectfully request that Design Option 1 (Arcade Extension) be rejected in favor of Design Option 2 (Covered Walkway) for the following reasons:

1. Design Option 1 "adds a new design element (arcade extension) that is incompatible with the original rustic Spanish Colonial Revival design aesthetic of the building" (ARG Historical Resources Report) and does not return this historic building to its original design roots;
2. Design Option 1 "addition/extension of the arched entrance arcade creates a false sense of historic development by including a design feature (arcade) that never existed on the building but is typical to buildings of this era, creating some confusion as to what is original and what is not" (ARG Historical Resources Report);
3. Design Option 1 may diminish the historical significance of individual historical resources including the Ojai Arcade (Ojai Landmark #5), pergola, and the Ojai Post Office Tower (Landmark #6) resulting in an indirect impact to individual historical resources;
4. Design Option 1 may significantly alter Ojai's historic and scenic viewshed and distort Ojai's Sense of Place; and,
5. Design Option 1 imposes numerous CEQA exemption challenges.

Design Option 1 (Arcade Extension) does not comply with Secretary of Interior Standards #9 and #3, and, for the reasons listed above and historic resource report inconsistencies and discrepancies, may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of historical resources and therefore, Design Option 1 (Arcade Extension) requires further review under the CEQA (14 CCR Section 15064.5).

Design Option 2 (Covered Walkway) addresses these concerns. The staff report states:

Design Option 2 would be compatible with the historic character and appearance of the property, and with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. Further, Design Option 2 is compatible with the original downtown design and does not diminish the significance of existing Ojai Landmarks.

Staff recommended that Design Option 2 be brought forward to the Planning Commission at the February 28 Historic Preservation Commission Special Meeting and I support this recommendation and approval of Design Option 2 for the front façade of Hotel El Roblar.

HISTORIC HOTEL EL ROBLAR | Design Option Summary

Hotel El Roblar is a registered historical resource with the State of California. While the hotel has undergone numerous alterations over its more than 100 year history, *“despite these alterations, its overall form has not been significantly altered and the building retains sufficient integrity to contribute to the Downtown Ojai Historic District”* (2018 GPA Consulting Historical Resources Evaluation Report aka the Caltrans Report). This finding was reviewed and approved by Caltrans and confirmed by the State of California Office of Historic Preservation.

The proposed front façade design options for this project are described on Page 35 of ARG Historic Resources Report:

- *The only difference between the designs is the treatment of the south (main) façade.*
- *Design Option 1 proposes retention/extension of the existing arcade.*
- *Design Option 2 proposes removal of the existing arcade and its replacement with a covered walkway which supports a second-level balcony.*
- *All other Project components would be the same under both designs.*

The original hotel was relatively stark and of a rustic Spanish Colonial Revival design (see Image 1). The project's stated intention is to return the building to its original design roots.

1. DESIGN Option 1 (Arcade Extension) adds a new design element and does not return the building to its original design roots

Design Option 1 introduces a new design element -- an arcade extension that spans the entire length of the south façade. Page 40 of the ARG Historical Resources Report states:

Design Option 1 proposes extending the arched arcade to span the length of the south façade. As the original south façade design consisted of a simple rectangular pergola structure, as opposed to a more stylized arched entry, the proposed arcade extension is incompatible with the original rustic Spanish Colonial Revival design aesthetic of the building, which never included an arcade or arches of any kind on the south façade. For this reason, Design Option 1 does not comply with (Secretary of Interior) Standard No. 9.

2. DESIGN Option 1 (Arcade Extension) creates a false sense of historic development

The Staff Report fails to mention ARG's additional finding stated on page 38 that:

Under Design Option 1, the arched entrance arcade would be expanded to span the entire length of the south façade. The original design of the building consisted of a rustic, Spanish Colonial Revival aesthetic, and the historic main entrance was delineated by a simple rectangular pergola structure with columns and rough-hewn supports, with no arches. The addition/extension of the arched entrance arcade creates a false sense of historic development by including a design feature (arcade) that never existed on the building but is typical to buildings of this era, creating some confusion as to what is original and what is not.

The Project's Design Option 1 does not comply with (Secretary of Interior) Standard No. 3.

The importance of complying with Secretary of Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties is addressed on page 207 of the April 6 staff report and page 33 of the ARG Historic Resources Report.

Design Option 2 (Covered Walkway) addresses these concerns. The current April 6 staff report states:

Design Option 2 would be compatible with the historic character and appearance of the property, and with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

Staff recommended that Design Option 2 be brought forward to the Planning Commission at the February 28 Historic Preservation Commission Special Meeting (see attachment). It is unclear why staff has reversed their previous recommendation and it is unclear why Design Option 2 is not presented nor discussed in the body of the current staff report for your consideration.

Ojai Historic Preservation Commission Review Issues

The Ojai Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) was presented with the ARG Historic Resources Report under Ojai Municipal Code Section 4-8.05(o) for review and comment. City attorney Matt Summers provided strict instruction to review and comment only – no vote or recommendation was to be made. The staff report (attached) recommended that the Commission:

1. *Conduct a discussion regarding the merits of the Historic Resources Report Prepared by Architectural Resources Group for the proposed exterior modifications to the existing hotel;*
2. *Receive public input on this matter; and*
3. *Consider design option no. 2 and forward this recommendation to the Planning Commission, which would replace the existing arcade with a covered walkway supported by round columns located at 122 East Ojai Avenue and would be in keeping with the Secretary of Interior Standards.*

The HPC did not discuss the merits of the Historic Resources Report. Rather, each commissioner discussed his/her personal design preference. Additionally, the HPC discussed that this project “sets a precedent on what they do and how they treat owners” and discussed the need to “not look difficult” to downtown merchants so that owners would look favorably on the future proposed local historic district.

The HPC was misguided by false statements that “there is nothing left of Hotel El Roblar that is historic” and that the Secretary of Interior Standards are just guidelines and need not be followed. These misleading comments were addressed at the March 10 Historic Preservation Meeting public general comment (see page 207 of the current April 6 administrative report).

No HPC comments or meeting minutes were provided in the staff report for your consideration.

Historic Resource Report Inconsistencies and Deficiencies

Architectural Resources Group (ARG) prepared a historic resources report for this project. The report states that *“the main hotel building has previously been significantly altered, and very little historic fabric remains”* (page 35) and lists character-defining features (physical characteristics that convey its historical significance) of Hotel El Roblar relating to its significance as a contributor to the Downtown Ojai Historic District on page 32 of the report:

- *Prominent sitting on Ojai Avenue, slightly set back from the street and comprising an entire block between Ventura and Signal streets*
- *Two-story height*
- *Rectangular massing*
- *Flat roof*

These features imply that that there is nothing left but a rectangular two-story box on the original footprint. This is at odds with the 2018 GPA Consulting Report findings that despite alterations to El Roblar Hotel, *“its overall form and many of its original and historic features have not been significantly altered since the end of the period of significance for the Downtown Ojai Historic District in 1928”* (GPA Consulting Historical Resources Evaluation Report, page 123).

Character-defining features may be missing from the ARG Historic Resources Report and therefore, the determination as to whether this project may cause a substantial adverse change to the significance of a resource may be flawed. Additionally, the ARG Report:

- Does not address indirect impacts to the significance of individual Ojai Landmarks, Ojai’s historic and scenic viewshed and sense of place;
- Makes overly broad assessments of design options using generalizations of “Spanish/Mission Revival designs”; and
- Does not analyze design options on potential impacts on the Downtown Ojai Historic District according to Secretary of Interior Standards.

3. DESIGN Option 1 (Arcade Extension) may cause indirect impacts to the integrity and significance of prominent individual historical resources (the Ojai Arcade, pergola, and Ojai Post Office Tower)

Indirect impacts of this project have not been addressed. Indirect impacts to the individual historical resources including the Ojai Arcade (Ojai Landmark #5), pergola, and the Ojai Post Office Tower (Ojai Landmark #6) could occur if the project design reduces the integrity or significance of these resources.

The Ojai Arcade (Ojai Landmark #5) Determination of Significance states:

(a) The Arcade is one of the three primary architectural symbols of the City of Ojai and (g) it's unique location or singular physical characteristics make it an established familiar visual feature; The Arcade is one of the two most prominent structures in Ojai. Without the Arcade, there would be no Ojai as it is known today.

Ojai Valley Museum Representative Terry Hill “expressed a concern that he does not like the current design of the hotel competing with the historic Arcade” (see page 4 of the February 28 HPC Special Meeting Staff Report and Image 2).

Design Option 1 (Arcade Extension) introduces a new design element to a state-registered historic district that may significantly impact the ability of the Ojai Arcade, the pergola, the Ojai Post Office Tower to convey their historic significance and importance.

ARG report found that Design Option 1 creates a false sense of Ojai history and may create confusion. An independent architectural historian confirmed that visitors may confuse the Hotel El Roblar’s arcade that spans the entire length of the building with the Ojai Arcade and their continuous arches may appear as one structure (see Image 2). A sense of history and the significance and grandeur of the Ojai Arcade will be lost. Additional arches may also impact the existing arches of the pergola and post office tower.

This impact to the integrity of setting, feeling and association of the Ojai Arcade and other prominent Ojai historical resources may impact the ability of these historical resources to convey their historic significance. Thus, Design Option 1 (Arcade Extension) may cause a substantial adverse change to the significance of these prominent Ojai historical resources.

4. DESIGN Option 1 (Arcade Extension) May Significantly Impact Ojai’s Historic and Scenic Viewshed and Ojai’s Sense of Place

Potential impacts of the project on Ojai’s historic and scenic viewshed have not been addressed (see Image 3).

Hotel El Roblar is the first noticeable building approaching downtown Ojai from the west. It is a two-story building that spans an entire city block. The ARG historical resources report calls out the hotel’s placement as a character-defining feature of the hotel.

The Ojai Arcade (Ojai Landmark #5) designation states that “*the arcade, post office and pergola function as the architectural, physical and psychological focal point of the local community.*” As reported in the 1916 local newspaper, the Ojai Arcade design served the purpose to obscure unsightly store fronts and to unify the sites store fronts.

Design Option 1 (Arcade Extension) is similar to Mission San Luis Rey (see Image 2). It adds a new design element – an additional arcade – not only to the building but to the historic landscape immediately preceding arrival into the heart of Ojai and distorts Ojai’s visual character and unique sense of place.

Design Option 1 extends arches for two city blocks as illustrated in the Image 2. The hotel would add 13 arches to the 24 arches of the Ojai Arcade for a total of 37 arches within two blocks on the north side of Ojai Avenue. On the south side of Ojai Avenue, the pergola, whose entrance was actually designed based on the Mission San Luis Rey east entranceway, may lose its significance being near to a building whose façade is similar to Mission San Luis Rey.

Libbey, Mead and Requa did not design El Roblar Hotel with arches for a reason.

5. DESIGN Option 1 (Arcade Extension) Imposes Numerous CEQA Challenges

Design Option 1 (Arcade Extension) imposes numerous CEQA challenges. As discussed above, Design Option 1:

- a. May cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource (14 CCR Section 15064.5) as discussed above and based on expert testimonies by Ojai historians and local experts;
- b. May result in indirect impacts to individual prominent Ojai historical resources and landmarks; and
- c. May significantly impact Ojai's historic and scenic viewshed and Ojai's Sense of Place.

Additionally, Design Option 1 (Arcade Extension) presents CEQA challenges relating to:

- d. CUMULATIVE IMPACTS. Hotel El Roblar has undergone numerous modifications that have varied from the original design. These successive variations from one project to the next may eventually lead to blended non-distinctive architecture. Part of Hotel El Roblar's value is in its contribution to the Downtown Ojai Historic District. Determination is needed as to whether the proposed project would cause a "cumulatively considerable" (and thus significant) incremental contribution to any cumulatively significant impacts. Section 15065(a)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines defines "cumulatively considerable" to mean "the incremental effects of an individual project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probably future projects."
- e. UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES. A CEQA categorical exemption cannot be used for any activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances (14 CCR Section 15300.2(c)). This exception to the exemption applies to this project due to the extremely large size of the property (two acres) and its prominence as a two-story building upon entering downtown Ojai.
- f. GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY. The City of Ojai General Plan requires the City to provide for the long-term preservation of all known and potential cultural resources including historical buildings/resources and states that Historical resources shall be registered and preserved, according to appropriate Federal, State and Local guidelines. Ojai Municipal Code Section 10-2.103(b)(1) also requires that "all development within the City shall be consistent with the General Plan."

CEQA exemptions may not apply if exceptions to the exemptions exist (14 CCR Section 15300.2).

Design Option 1 (Arcade Extension) may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of historical resources and therefore, Design Option 1 requires further review under the CEQA (14 CCR Section 15064.5).

SUMMARY | DESIGN Option 2 is the Solution.

Design Option 1 (Arcade Extension) presents numerous issues including design direct and indirect impacts, historic report inconsistencies and deficiencies, Secretary of Interior Standards compliance, and CEQA challenges.

Alterations to the front façade of Hotel El Roblar should be considered in the context of the whole. Alterations should comply with historic preservation standards. The front façade design option selected for Hotel El Roblar will affect not only this historic hotel but the Downtown Ojai Historic District, prominent individual Ojai Landmarks, and Ojai's historic and scenic viewshed and sense of place.

Hotel El Roblar, the Downtown Ojai Historic District and its 26 other contributing resources are not just historical resource within Ojai but they are recognized by the State of California and are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. As such, Secretary of Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties / Rehabilitation should be followed.

Design Option 1 (Arcade Extension) does not meet the project's stated intention to return the building to its original design roots. Design Option 1 presents numerous design and legal issues and it is simply not appropriate to add a new design element to a historic resource on the state register.

Design Option 2 (Covered Walkway) returns the building to its original design roots and avoids all of these issues. The staff report states:

Design Option 2 would be compatible with the historic character and appearance of the property, and with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. Further, Design Option 2 is compatible with the original downtown design and does not diminish the significance of existing Ojai Landmarks.

Design Option 2 will not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource (14 CCR Section 15126.4(b)(1)) and can be considered categorically exempt from CEQA (14 CCR Section 15331).

At the February 28 HPC Special Meeting, the applicant stated that he would work with either design option.

Please retain Hotel El Roblar's historic character and appearance, retain Ojai's historic look and Mead and Requa's original design, and the significance of prominent Ojai landmarks, and approve Design Option 2 in compliance with the Secretary of Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Resources and CEQA.

ATTACHMENT

February 28 2022 HPC Special Meeting Administrative Report (Design Option 2 Staff Recommendation)

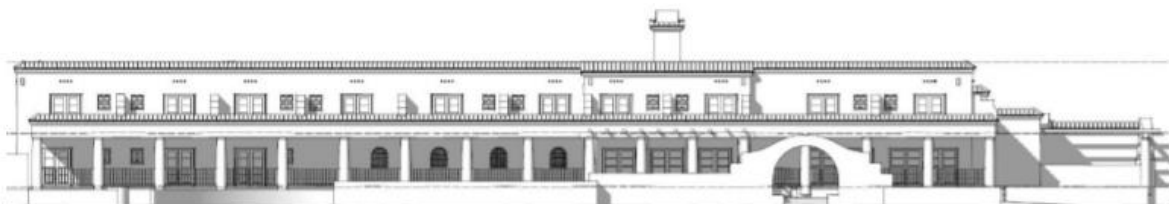
IMAGE 1. Original hotel, existing hotel, and compatible Design Option 2 (Covered Walkway)



El Roblar Hotel in c. 1920, looking northeast. (California State Library)

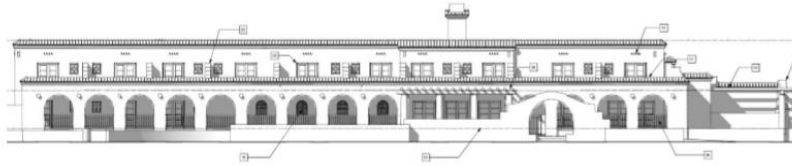


View northwest of the east half of the primary façade (ARG, 2021).



Design Option 2

IMAGE 2. Incompatible Design Option 1 (Arcade Extension) in the Context of the Ojai Arcade with Mission San Luis Rey Comparison



Design Option 1



California Missions

**San Luis Rey de Francia - California
Missions**

[Visit](#)

IMAGE 3. Ojai's Historic and Scenic Viewshed from Hotel El Roblar to the Ojai Arcade





Administrative Report

DISCUSSION ITEM

TO: HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

FROM: Lucas Seibert, Community Development Director

DATE PREPARED: February 23, 2022

MEETING DATE: February 28, 2022

SUBJECT: **REVIEW OF HISTORIC RESOURCES REPORT | Regarding proposed rehabilitation of the historic resource Hotel El Roblar (Formerly: "The Oaks of Ojai") including exterior modifications and full interior renovation of the main hotel building which include two design options for the primary façade of the building, design option no. 1 consists of the existing south façade arched arcade, and option no. 2 replaces the existing arcade with a covered walkway supported by round columns located at 122 East Ojai Avenue. Property Owner: El Roblar Investment Property, LLC. Applicant: Ramin Shamshiri. Architect: andrulaitis+mixon architects, Joe Andrulaitis, and recommendation the project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act.**

Recommendations

That the Commission:

1. Conduct a discussion regarding the merits of the Historic Resources Report Prepared by Architectural Resources Group for the proposed exterior modifications to the existing hotel;
2. Receive public input on this matter; and
3. Consider design option no. 2 and forward this recommendation to the Planning Commission, which would replace the existing arcade with a covered walkway supported by round columns located at 122 East Ojai Avenue and would be in keeping with the Secretary of Interior Standards.

Summary

Architectural Resources Group (ARG) was retained through a Request For Proposals process to prepare a historic resources report for the subject historic resource. The main purpose of the report is to fulfill the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) related to historic resources. The report prepared by ARG evaluates applicable historic context and themes,

evaluates the subject property against eligibility criteria for listing as an Ojai Historic Landmark, and evaluates the project design options under the Secretary of Interior Standards.

The subject site is located within the City of Ojai and constructed circa 1919. Over the span of over 100 years several modifications and expansions have taken place at the hotel site, including Mission Revival Style architectural revisions made in 2003-2004. The applicant proposed to remove the 2003-2004 architectural style and replace these revisions with one of two options highlighted in the historic resources report.

The conclusion to this report identifies that both design options (option no. one & option no. two) are categorically exempt from CEQA. However, option no. two is also consistent with the Secretary of Interior Standards, which provides an additional categorical exemption from CEQA. Option no. one is not consistent with the Secretary of Interior Standards as the arched design extension is incompatible with the original rustic Spanish Colonial Revival design aesthetic of the building. The proposed design feature was never included as an arcade or arches of any kind on the south façade and for this reason design option no. one doesn't comply with standard no. nine. The director recommends design option no. two as it meets the Secretary of Interior Standards and is consistent with Title 4, Chapter 8 (Historic Preservation Law) of the Ojai Municipal Code. The applicant is supportive of design option no. one.

Also, the results of ARG's analysis identified that the project's status as a contributor to the Downtown Ojai Historic District will be retained as the proposed changes will continue to retain sufficient integrity to convey its significance as a contributor to the downtown district.

Lastly, the report concludes that the site is not individually eligible for listing as a City of Ojai Landmark. Pursuant to Title 4, Chapter 8 (Historic Preservation Law) in order for a property to be eligible for listing as a local landmark, it must be eligible under one or more of the eight registration criteria and it must also have sufficient integrity of location design, materials, and workmanship. The site has undergone substantial alterations identified in the report, and as such no longer retains sufficient integrity of design, materials, and workmanship.

The next step for this matter is that the recommendation by this commission regarding the historic resources report and the design options identified would be forwarded to the Planning Commission for consideration of the proposed Hotel El Roblar project.

Discussion

Historic Resources Report

Architectural Resources Group (ARG) prepared the historic resources report related to the proposed development project located at 122 East Ojai Avenue. The project site comprises an entire block between East Matilija Street to the north, East Ojai Avenue to the South, North Signal Street to the east, and North Ventura Street to the west. The site is developed with a one- and two-story hotel buildings (formerly the "Oaks of Ojai"), but also historically known as Hotel El Roblar or the El Roblar Hotel; as well as six smaller buildings comprising hotel guest cottages and a pool house. The report was submitted to the City February 4, 2022.

The applicants' proposal includes the rehabilitation of the Hotel El Roblar for continued use as a hotel and restaurant. Proposed site work includes the remodeling and/or replacement of the ancillary buildings (pool house and guest cottages), and new landscaping and hardscaping throughout. The project also propose certain exterior changes and a full interior renovation of the main hotel building. There are two design options being considered for the primary (south) façade of the building. The first option, design option no. one, consists of the extension of the existing south façade arched arcade. The second option (design option no. 2) replaces the existing arcade with a covered walkway supported by round columns.

The purpose of the report is to fulfill the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as relate to historical resources. CEQA states that "a project that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment." An evaluation of potential impacts under CEQA includes both a determination of whether, and the extent to which, historic resources as defined by CEQA are present on and adjacent to the Site and, if so, the identification of potential impacts to historical resources cause by the project.

Pursuant to Section 4-8.05 of the Ojai Municipal Code, the Historic Preservation Commission is charged which reviewing and providing comments as it relates to the Historic Resources Report to be forwarded to the Planning Commission for consideration as part of their determination of the proposed project. As part of the commissions review they must also evaluate the merits of the structures pursuant to findings presented in the report, and weighted with the Secretary of Interior's Standards and Guidelines for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

The subject property is listed in the California Register of Historical Resources as a contributor to the State-designated Downtown Historic District. The State-designated historic district was determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places through Section 106 process. The Section 106 review process is an integral component of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and requires each federal agency to identify and assess the effects its actions may have on historic buildings. Through the formal determination and consensus from the State Historic Preservation Officer, the site is listed in the California Register and thus meets the definition of a historic resource for the purposes of CEQA.

The Hotel El Roblar has been previously determined ineligible for individual listing in the National Register and California Register, and ARG concurs with these findings. ARG evaluated the subject project against the City's eligibility criteria and finds that the site does not retain sufficient integrity for individual local designation as an Ojai Landmark due to substantial alterations that have resulted in a loss of almost all of the buildings' original historic fabric.

The subject site has been identified as a contributor to the State-designated Downtown Ojai Historic District. ARG conducted an analysis of the subject site and the proposed project – including both design options being considered for the south façade, and evaluated its potential to impact historic resources. ARG found that the proposed project, which includes both south façade design options, will not cause physical impairment to the Hotel El Roblar in such a way that it will no longer be a contributor to the historic district. The subject site will retain all of its character-defining features and will continue to retain sufficient integrity to convey its significant as a

contributor to the State-designated Downtown Ojai Historic District following the completion of the proposed project. Also, the proposed project will not have any indirect impacts on adjacent historic resources. The Historic Resources report prepared by Architectural Resources Group is Attachment A.

Chronology

On Friday, October 29, 2021 a Request for Proposals (RFP) was released by the Community Development Director and posted. At the conclusion of the submittal timeframe for the RFP, six proposals were received, and Architectural Resources Group (ARG) was selected.

On Friday, February 4, 2022 the final draft Historic Resources Report, prepared by ARG, was submitted to the Community Development Department for review and discussed with the applicant/homeowner and architect.

On January 20, 2022 the Community Development Director and ARG met with a member of the community (Craig Walker) who has a rich history and deep interest in Ojai's historic fabric. Mr. Walker provided his background to the group and interest in the subject site and the City's history as a whole. At this virtual meeting, ARG and the director shared the two design options being considered and Mr. Walker identified that he favored option no. two as it would be in keeping with the Secretary of Interior Standards and recognized that little to none of the original building façade remains.

On February 8, 2022 the applicant/homeowner, architect, Community Development Director, and the Ojai Valley Museum representative, Terry Hill, discussed the Historic Resources Report prepared by Post/Hazeltine Associates.

Ojai Valley Museum Representative

The Ojai Valley Museum Board selected Terry Hill to represent the Museum on this matter. Terry Hill is a long time resident of Ojai. His educational background includes studying Historic Architecture, and he served on the Historic Preservation Commission for approximately 25 years.

On February 8, 2022 a conference call was conducted with the Museum Representative, the site owner, the architect, and the Community Development Director. A copy of the ARG report had been hand delivered to Mr. Hill a couple days in advance of this meeting. The group discussed the proposal of the Hotel El Roblar Site (Formerly the Oaks of Ojai) in detail and Mr. Hill asked several questions related to the Historic Resources Report and the proposed plans.

At the conclusion of the call, Mr. Hill expressed comments but did not express favoritism towards option no. one or option no. two identified within the historic resources report. Also, Mr. Hill did support the portion of the cottages being relocated to the north and east of the site, and expressed a concern that he does not like the current design of the hotel competing with the historic Arcade.

Design Options

The historic resources report included two options. These options are highlighted below and further discussed within the report prepared by ARG. The options are not in numeric order but instead meant to identify to options for façade changes to the hotel facing Ojai Avenue. Option no.

one is supported by the applicant and option no. two is supported by the director. Both are exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act.

Option No. Two | Under Design Option No. two the arched entrance arcade, built in 2003-2004, would be replaced with a covered walkway extending the length of the façade. The walkway would feature clay tile coping and rectangular openings supported by round columns (the walkway cover would also support balconies at the second story). As part of the redesign for option no. two, the 2003-2004 Mission revival would be removed and replaced with a new porte-cochere pergola structure consisting of round columns and rough-hewn wood horizontal members, similar to the original (non-extant) entrance pergola. All existing windows and doors would be replaced with new wood casement windows and French doors.

The second design option complies with Secretary of Interior standard no. three as it would not create a false sense of historical development, such as the prominent Mission Revival style porte-cochere and arched entrance arcade, which would be removed. Standard no. three identifies changes which create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties are not being undertaken. Any new interventions at the primary façade would be designed in such a way that they are compatible yet contemporary and would not create a false sense of historical development. To achieve this, the walkway openings would be rectangular and supported by simplified round columns.

As mentioned, this option is recommend by the Community Development Director as it would meet the Secretary of Interior Standards and is consistent with the Ojai Municipal Code as it relates to Historic Resources Reports providing consistency and compatibility with the Secretary of Interior Standards.

Option No. One | Under Project design option no. one the arcade extension does not comply with standard no. three of the Secretary of Interior Standards and thus would not be consistent with the Secretary of Interior Standards. Standard no. three identifies changes which create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties. In this case, retaining and extending the arches to span the entire length of the façade creates a false sense of historical development. The first option would also remove the 2003-2004 Mission Revival style porte-cochere, a design element that has created a false sense of historical development, the design option would retain the incompatible arched entrance arcade and extend the arcade façade the length of the building facing Ojai Avenue. As mentioned, this design option is supported by the applicant.

Background

The subject site is currently developed with an existing hotel known as The Oaks at Ojai, which has been operating as a 46-room hotel, spa, and includes an interior dining room with a patio. The hotel is sited on an approximately two-acre parcel located at 122 East Ojai Avenue. The site fronts on East Ojai Avenue and currently has a circular driveway approach for ingress/egress purposes, which provides access to the parking lot located along the front and eastern sides of the main hotel building. Access for the existing circular driveway is provided along North Ventura Street and Ojai Avenue; ingress along Ojai Avenue and egress along Ventura Street (one-way).

Direct parking access is currently provided along North Signal Street, East Matilija Street, and North Ventura Street as well as angled parking and internally accessed parking. A total of 50 parking spaces are located onsite and provide access along all four sides of the subject site; with the main access to the hotel being along Ojai Avenue.

The Oaks at Ojai was constructed circa 1919 as El Roblar Hotel. The hotel has undergone several renovations over the years and in 1976 was purchased by Don and Sheila Cluff. Since the change in ownership in 1976, the Cluff family has added several Spa features which are incorporated throughout the Oaks at Ojai hotel campus.

Discussion

The proposal for Hotel El Roblar renovations include several exterior modifications and logistic adjustments to the hotel campus (Attached B), includes the following:

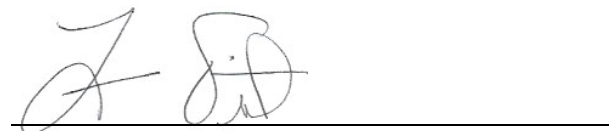
- Exterior modifications to the main two-story building including the modification of the exterior façade of the building, and the replacement of all exterior doors and windows;
- Conversion, demolition, and reconstruction of existing onsite buildings including the demolition of a one-story two-room suite, the reconstruction of the pool building, construction of a spa, and demolition and reconstruction of the former gym space;
- The repurposing of the coral spa/gym interior space into an Event Space;
- The construction of a new building (one- and two-story) which include the new gym building, pool cabana, and two-story addition to building no. five, which would accommodate the relocation of an existing hotel room;
- The proposed relocation of a portion of onsite parking spaces to an off-site parking location;
- Conversion and reconfiguration of rooms back to suites/hotel rooms bringing the total count of hotel rooms on-site to 50 rooms;
- Valet parking service provided to accommodate guests arriving at the hotel;
- Relocation of the existing ceramic tile fountain to the southwest portion of the property;
- Removal of the ingress/egress point on Ventura Street and the introduction of a new ingress/egress access point along Ojai Avenue, circulation pattern unchanged;
- A newly expanded pool cabana area;
- New landscaping and wall relocations and all related items as shown on the project site plans; and
- Enlarged outdoor patio for the bar area located along the eastern side of the main hotel building.

Environmental Review

A Historic Resources Report dated February 4, 2022 was prepared by Evanne St. Charles and Katie Horak of Architectural Resources Group evaluating the proposed alterations to the historic resource and contributor to the State Designated Downtown Ojai Historic District. The historic resources report is Attachment A.

As designed, the remodel and exterior changes to the hotel are categorically exempt under Sections 15301 (Class 1), 15303 (Class 3), and 15331 (Class 31) of the California Code of Regulations (California Environmental Quality Act). The proposed changes as further discussed within the historic resources report as related to design option no. two were found to be consistent with the Secretary of Interior Standards guidelines for historic preservation, restoration, and maintenance.

Therefore, no further environmental review is necessary.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lucas Seibert', is written over a horizontal line.

Prepared and Submitted by:
Lucas Seibert,
Community Development Director

Attachments:

- A – Historic Resources Report
- B – Architectural Design Plans

Planning Commission Meeting
April 6, 2022
Subject: DRP 21-003, Hotel El Roblar remodel

Comments from Elise DePuydt, Ojai historian

Dear Planning Commissioners,

The fundamental design question before the Planning Commission today, the results of which will greatly affect Ojai's historic downtown, is whether or not to permit the El Roblar Hotel applicants to erect a faux arcade that is nearly identical to the actual Ojai Arcade.

The design for the renovation of the El Roblar Hotel (a California State historical resource as part of the state-listed Downtown Ojai Historic District) must include a discussion of the affect the design would have on the signature city historical landmarks in downtown Ojai: the Ojai Arcade, landmark #5; the Ojai Post Office Tower, landmark #6; St. Thomas Aquinas Church, landmark #7; and the Ojai Pergola (not a city landmark). Would this new arcade confuse viewers and diminish these landmarks?

The El Roblar Hotel Historic Resource Report (HRR) prepared by Architectural Resource Group (ARG), dated February 4, 2022, clearly states that this design (labeled design no.1 in the report) is inconsistent with Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation #3 and #9. Standard 3 states: "Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken."

The Community Development Department (CDD) Administrative Report prepared for the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) Special Meeting of February 28, 2022, heeds the judgment contained in the ARG report by recommending to the HPC that they: "Consider design option no. 2 and forward this recommendation to the Planning Commission, which would replace the existing arcade with a covered walkway supported by round columns located at 122 East Ojai Avenue and would be in keeping with the Secretary of Interior Standards. It further states on page 5 that: "As mentioned, this option is recommend by the Community Development Director as it would meet the Secretary of Interior Standards and is consistent with the Ojai Municipal Code as it relates to Historic Resources Reports providing consistency and compatibility with the Secretary of Interior Standards."

Now, there is no recommendation from the CDD for design no. 2 in the April 6 Administrative Report to the Planning Commission, and no depiction or description of design no. 2 for the Planning Commission to consider (except in the attached HRR). The report largely passes over the issue of the hotel's long arcade and its potential deleterious effect on the Arcade and other landmarks.

In several locations in the report (page 1 and Attachment A, p.7, 2a), the CDD gives the vague description of the exterior work "as restoration of the main entry to the original design," which is only partially true. Replacement of the current Mission porte-cochere with a new pergola structure and an arch entryway would return the entry to the 1920 original. However, the original design had no arches.

At the February 28 special meeting, the HPC was tasked with review and comment (under Ojai Municipal Code Section 4-8.05(o)) of the HRR and the historical aspects of the two design plans presented. Part of the discussion by the HPC commissioners, however, and their final recommendations were actually about which design each commissioner favored visually. This was not their task.

Therefore, I would urge the Planning Commissioners to consider the impact of adding the faux arcade to the front of the El Roblar Hotel and that you request a presentation of design no. 2 for discussion.

David Comfort

Ojai, CA 93023

April 6, 2022

Ms. Shari Herbruck

City of Ojai

Planning and Building Technician

401 South Ventura Street

Ojai, CA 93024

Dear Ms. Herbruck,

I am writing to voice my family's support for The Hotel El Roblar Project (formerly The Oaks Hotel) located at 122 East Ojai Avenue. We are looking forward for this property to be brought back to its original historic beauty and believe that it will be a great addition to downtown Ojai. We know Ramin Shamshiri and Warner Ebbink to be responsible stewards who care greatly for the Ojai and the Valley. We hope that you approve their planning commission submission today, April 6, 2022, so that there will be no delay in bringing back this wonderful hotel. Thank you.

Regards,

David Comfort and Kasey Crown

April 5, 2022

Dear Ojai Planning Commissioners,

RE: This letter is in support of Design Option 2 of the Historic Resources Report for the Hotel El Roblar prepared for the City by Architectural Resources Group, dated February 4, 2022.

I am an industrial designer whose career has been substantially in the development of architectural products. Since semi-retiring to Ojai, I have been a volunteer and staff member with the Ojai Valley Museum for the last twenty two years mainly working on exhibits. During that time I was also an Arts Commissioner with the City for nine years. My comments here represent my professional opinions and interest in the history of Ojai, not as a spokesperson for any organizations I have been affiliated with.

In the Historic Resources Report mentioned above, two design options were presented for altering the south facade of the Hotel El Roblar, formerly know as The Oaks of Ojai.

Option 1 incorporates an arched entry arcade spanning the entire facade that seems to copy the business district arcade. In the report, Architectural Resources Group states on page 37 "....it is ARG's professional opinion that the proposed Design Option 1 for the primary (south) façade of the building does not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (specifically Standard Nos. 3 and 9, which state that a Project shall not include the addition of features that "create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements") due to its extension of the arched entrance arcade across the entirety of the façade. As the Hotel El Roblar did not feature arches or arcades in its original south façade design, an arcade at its primary façade creates a false sense of historical development."

Option 2 has a covered walkway extending the length of the facade with rectangular openings supported by round columns. ARG goes on to state "On the other hand, it is ARG's professional opinion that Design Option 2 does comply with the Standards since this design option would remove the existing incompatible arched entry arcade and replace it with a covered walkway that is compatible with, but differentiated from, the historic character and appearance of the building."

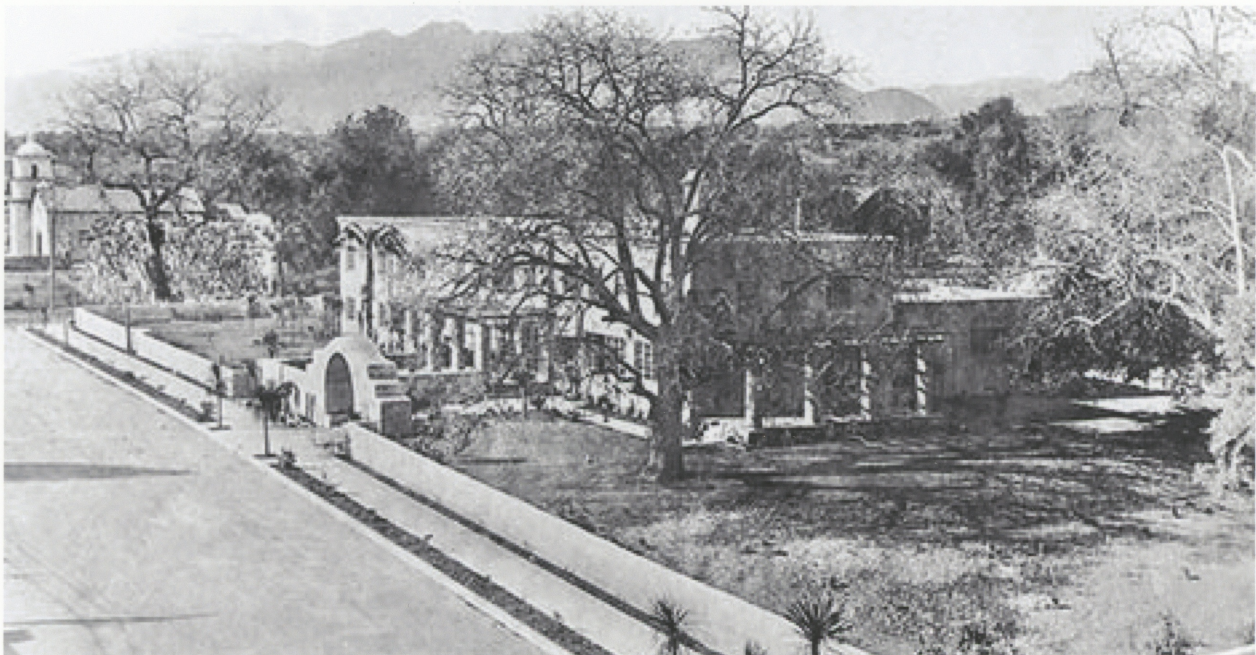
The original building was inspired by Spanish Colonial Revival style architecture while later modifications to the structure introduced Mission Revival style arches... "that have created a false sense of historical development..." This may seem to be an unimportant distinction to the casual viewer, but I choose to look back to Edward Drummond Libbey, Ojai's visionary benefactor who spearheaded the city's downtown transformation.

Libbey was inspired by the turn-of-the-century City Beautiful Movement and wanted to use those principles to Ojai's benefit. He hired the San Diego firm of Frank Mead and Richard Requa to design a "Spanish Town" master plan. Mead and Requa were

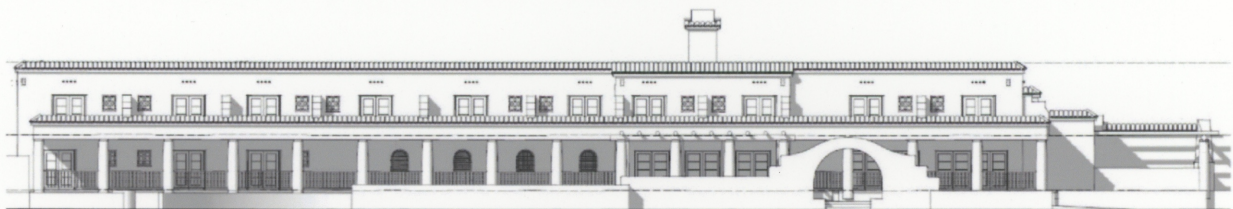
responsible for designing the Ojai Post Office and Tower, the Arcade, Pergola and what was to become Libbey Park, St. Thomas Aquinas Chapel (now the Ojai Valley Museum) and the Hotel El Roblar. These structures define Ojai to this day. Most have retained their design integrity with the exception of the Hotel El Roblar. I am sure Mead, Requa and Libbey intended the El Roblar to have a unique simple Spanish style. I think this was to keep the stronger visual elements of the pergola, post office and arcaded business district the town focus. The arcade had to be a large dynamic feature in order to cover up the many ramshackle shops behind it in 1917. To have a similar row of arches on the El Roblar would have visually suggested that there are more shops there instead of the quiet repose of a hotel.

I think design Option 2 for the Hotel El Roblar would go a long way to restore the vision of its original architects and Libbey. As a last note, the use of arches to make buildings look "Spanish" often become a cliché in time.

Sincerely,
Roger Conrad
11400 Sulphur Mountain Road
Ojai, CA 93023



Original Meade and Requa design for the Hotel El Roblar



Design Option 2 for the new Hotel El Roblar

Planning Commission Meeting
April 6, 2022
Subject: DRP 21-003, Hotel El Roblar remodel

Comments from Elise DePuydt, Ojai historian

Dear Planning Commissioners,

The fundamental design question before the Planning Commission today, the results of which will greatly affect Ojai's historic downtown, is whether or not to permit the El Roblar Hotel applicants to erect a faux arcade that is nearly identical to the actual Ojai Arcade.

The design for the renovation of the El Roblar Hotel (a California State historical resource as part of the state-listed Downtown Ojai Historic District) must include a discussion of the affect the design would have on the signature city historical landmarks in downtown Ojai: the Ojai Arcade, landmark #5; the Ojai Post Office Tower, landmark #6; St. Thomas Aquinas Church, landmark #7; and the Ojai Pergola (not a city landmark). Would this new arcade confuse viewers and diminish these landmarks?

The El Roblar Hotel Historic Resource Report (HRR) prepared by Architectural Resource Group (ARG), dated February 4, 2022, clearly states that this design (labeled design no.1 in the report) is inconsistent with Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation #3 and #9. Standard 3 states: "Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken."

The Community Development Department (CDD) Administrative Report prepared for the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) Special Meeting of February 28, 2022, heeds the judgment contained in the ARG report by recommending to the HPC that they: "Consider design option no. 2 and forward this recommendation to the Planning Commission, which would replace the existing arcade with a covered walkway supported by round columns located at 122 East Ojai Avenue and would be in keeping with the Secretary of Interior Standards. It further states on page 5 that: "As mentioned, this option is recommend by the Community Development Director as it would meet the Secretary of Interior Standards and is consistent with the Ojai Municipal Code as it relates to Historic Resources Reports providing consistency and compatibility with the Secretary of Interior Standards."

Now, there is no recommendation from the CDD for design no. 2 in the April 6 Administrative Report to the Planning Commission, and no depiction or description of design no. 2 for the Planning Commission to consider (except in the attached HRR). The report largely passes over the issue of the hotel's long arcade and its potential deleterious effect on the Arcade and other landmarks.

In several locations in the report (page 1 and Attachment A, p.7, 2a), the CDD gives the vague description of the exterior work "as restoration of the main entry to the original design," which is only partially true. Replacement of the current Mission porte-cochere with a new pergola structure and an arch entryway would return the entry to the 1920 original. However, the original design had no arches.

At the February 28 special meeting, the HPC was tasked with evaluating the HRR and the historical aspects of the two design plans presented in the report and to put forth a recommendation to the Planning Commission. Part of the discussion by the HPC commissioners, however, and their final recommendations were actually about which design each commissioner favored visually, which was not their task.

Therefore, I would urge the Planning Commissioners to consider the impact of adding the faux arcade to the front of the El Roblar Hotel and that you request a presentation of design no. 2 for discussion.

El Roblar Hotel Comments. April 6, 2022. Planning Commission

My name is Craig Walker. I recently wrote a book for the City of Ojai called *Ojai By Design* on the architecture of our beautiful town.

What do the Arcade, Pergola, Post Office, and Catholic Church all have in common?

You're right! They were all developed by Ojai's great benefactor, Edward Drummond Libbey. They were all designed by the San Diego firm of Mead & Requa as a unified composition of buildings expressing *City Beautiful* architectural ideals. All were constructed by Robert Winfield, Mead & Requa's builder from Los Angeles.

AND, all of them have been lovingly rehabilitated and restored over the years so that we today might enjoy them in all their glory...and continue to feel the civic pride they were intended to evoke. When you look at historic photos of these buildings, you appreciate what previous generations have accomplished in keeping Ojai's City Beautiful downtown historically accurate.

In 1971 the original Pergola was completely demolished; 28 years later, in 1999, the citizens of Ojai raised the money and rebuilt it, restoring it to look as it did 100 years ago. When the restored Pergola was unveiled on July 4, 1999, we all felt like something lost had been returned to us.

Did you know that the Post Office was rebuilt in 1959? It is now twice the size it was originally, and yet it still looks today like it did in 1917. The tower and portico were preserved at great expense to the Ojai Civic Association so that the integrity of Libbey's vision would continue.

The Arcade was thoroughly refurbished in 1990 and the Catholic Church in 1995. Neither was embellished with new architectural elements borrowed from other downtown buildings.

The Arcade was thoroughly refurbished in 1990 and the Catholic Church in 1995. Neither was embellished with new architectural elements borrowed from other downtown buildings.

These historic buildings all have a unique individual design, yet together they form a unified composition with a balance of architectural elements. The Post Office is the town's Spanish-Colonial campanile, the Pergola is the Mediterranean arbor with large Mission arches, the Arcade is *the* Mission arcade, the Catholic Church is *the* Mission Church. The Library was given a Spanish Hacienda style. Each has its own distinct architectural elements.

The missing piece here is the El Roblar Hotel. It, too, was part of Mr. Libbey's redevelopment of the downtown. It, too, was designed by Mead & Requa and built by Robert Winfield. It, too, had its own distinct design that contributed to the harmonious balance of architectural elements in the original design of the downtown.

Twenty years ago, the City didn't require a historic report when the Oaks was remodeled, and so the architect added a few Mission arches to the façade. Today, we know better. The hotel is now listed on the California Register of Historic Places and a proper historic report has been completed. We now know the addition of a Mission arcade to the façade (Option #1) is inappropriate and diminishes the historic integrity of the downtown. The historic consultants even asked the owners to create an alternative design, which they did.

I implore you to follow the practice of those who have come before you in ensuring that Ojai's historic downtown STAYS historic and that the architectural integrity of Mead & Requa's design remains for future generations to admire and enjoy as we have. Design #1 diminishes the significance of the individual Ojai downtown landmarks, the Arcade, Pergola and Post Office tower and portico -- Ojai's crowning architectural jewels. Please approve Design Option #2, or ask that another design be submitted that is consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for rehabilitating historic structures.

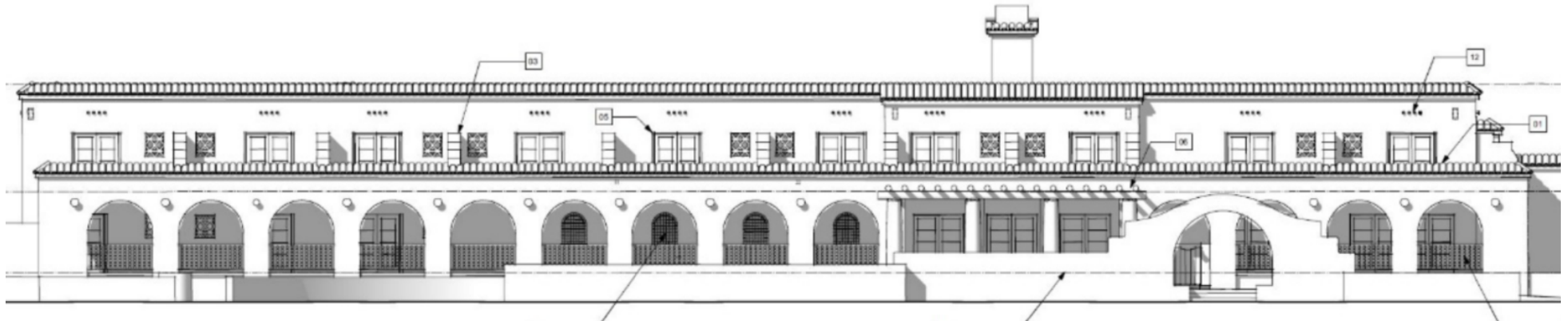
Craig Walker

HISTORIC DESIGN REVIEW OF THE EL ROBLAR HOTEL by Craig Walker

SUMMARY: Design Option #1 will impact the historic significance of both the hotel AND the Ojai Arcade--a City of Ojai historic landmark. It is also inconsistent with the City's Redevelopment Area Theme Guidelines. The Planning Commission should approve Design #2 or another design that doesn't violate the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.



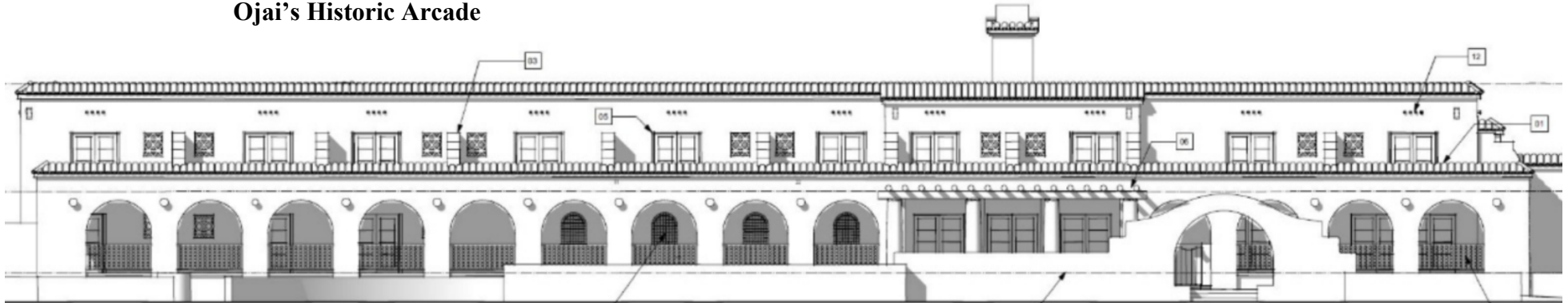
Original design of the El Roblar Hotel. (Note the design of both the second floor and the first-floor facade.)



Design Option #1: Aside from the second-floor windows being extended to create doors and the new balcony dividers, the design of the second-floor façade--along with the new entrances--retains most of the building's historic look. However, the expanded new arcade attached to the first-floor violates two historic design standards by adding an inauthentic architectural element that mimics Ojai's historic Arcade; the faux historic arcade is incompatible with the original rectangular design of the hotel (see next page). This is why the ARG historic consultant recommended Design Option #2 (or a new version of #2).

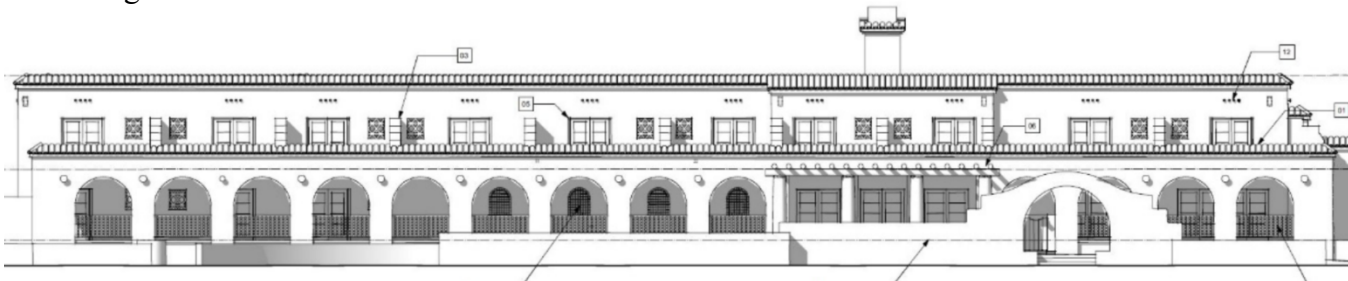


Ojai's Historic Arcade



The proposed first-floor remodel features a historically false and inappropriate arcade that mimics Ojai's historic Arcade (Violating Standard #3).

The side-by-side pictures below show the similarities between the two arcades, which will diminish the historic significance of the original Arcade



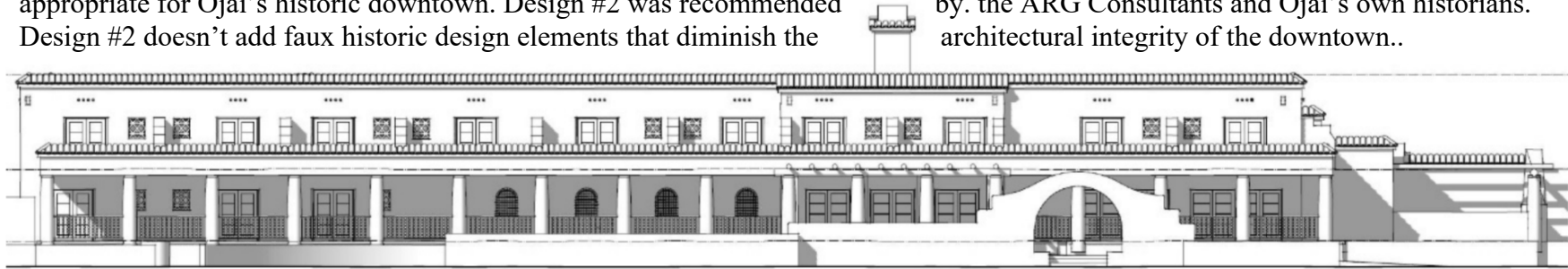


The applicants say they prefer the aesthetic look of the arches in Design #1. However, the architectural consultants determined that Design #1 violates the city's adopted *historic* standards and diminishes the historic character of the hotel and the original Arcade:

Standard #3: 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.

Standard #9: 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 applicant has submitted an alternative design, Design #2 (below) that meets all Federal, State, and Local historic standards and is appropriate for Ojai's historic downtown. Design #2 was recommended by the ARG Consultants and Ojai's own historians. Design #2 doesn't add faux historic design elements that diminish the architectural integrity of the downtown..



Design Option #2

FACT: The El Roblar Hotel is a Historic Building. It is currently listed on the California Register of Historic Places as a contributing property to Ojai's historic downtown. It is one of the Libbey buildings, and it should be protected. The Ojai Arcade is a City of Ojai Landmark which is protected by city law from impacts caused by adjacent buildings.

QUESTION: Does it make sense to add false or historically inappropriate design elements when rehabilitating a historic building? The Secretary of the Interior's Standards (which are the City's adopted Standards), ARG Consultants, the museum historian, and other local historians all say NO.

Design Option #1 and Ojai's Redevelopment Statement of Theme Design Guidelines

Design #1 is not only inconsistent with the City's adopted *historic* standards (the Secretary of the Interior's Standards), it is also inconsistent with the City's existing Redevelopment Statement of Theme Design Guidelines. Below are Craig Walker's comments.:

From the Redevelopment Theme Guidelines: "The *historic* design character of downtown Ojai is dominated by the Arcade, the Post Office, Library, and St. Thomas Aquinas Church."

- The historic buildings listed should continue to dominate, as they have historically. They should capture the viewer's attention and convey their prominent design elements without competition from any new additions to the area. These elements include the central Mission-Style Arcade, the massive arches of the Pergola, and the Spanish-Colonial Post Office Tower. The other historic buildings in the area should be compatible with, and contribute to, the overall design of the dominant buildings without competing with the prominent features of these buildings.
- The key word, "historic," does not merely mean "Spanish" or "Mission-style." It refers to the particular balance of architectural features designed by Mead & Requa in 1916-1920. How do we apply the Theme Design Guidelines to make sure any new construction or additions satisfy the requirement that they fit in with the historic character of the downtown? That is the purpose of the city's adopted *historic* standards-- the Secretary of the Interior's Standards (see both Ojai municipal code and the Ojai General Plan).
- New additions to *any* of the authentic historic buildings should preserve the historic (1920s) character of the Redevelopment Theme Area. Therefore, new additions should not apply false historic design elements that were not part of the original building. Spanish arches and arcades were not added to the El Roblar Hotel until 2004 when the city failed to require a historic report for the Cluff remodel. The ARG consultants state that this inappropriate addition in 2004 diminishes the historic integrity and authenticity of the building. Adding additional arches would only further impact the building. Because the hotel is now a State of California historic resource, the City should follow the historic building standards when evaluating any new additions to the building. The historic consultant agrees and recommends Design Option #2.

From the Redevelopment Theme Guidelines: "New construction and remodeling in the Redevelopment Theme Area should have an architectural theme in keeping with historic downtown Ojai."

- "...an architectural theme in keeping with the historic downtown." This means that new construction should complement the Spanish theme without adding competing elements; new additions to the historic buildings should preserve or restore the original building as much as possible but not add new, conjectural, or competing elements from the other historic buildings. Keep in mind the integrity of the whole downtown—the El Roblar, the Arcade, and the whole *City Beautiful* effect.

The key question: Is the architectural theme of the remodel in keeping with "historic downtown Ojai?" Only if you define "historic downtown Ojai" as "Spanish-style" and not the particular balance of architecture elements in Mead & Requa's City Beautiful architectural composition.

Subject:

EL ROBLAR HOTEL PARKING AND CIRCULATION

From: Merry Dunn**Sent:** Friday, March 18, 2022 4:10 PM**To:** Shari Herbruck**Subject:** EL ROBLAR HOTEL PARKING AND CIRCULATION

To: Shari Herbruck

March 18, 2022

ITEM #5, EL ROBLAR HOTEL PARKING AND CIRCULATION

Please do not consider or approve off-property valet parking anywhere in Ojai.

Valet parking is common at trendy Los Angeles restaurants and Santa Barbara luxury hotels, but in small-town Ojai it would create an unwelcome urban vibe.

It would also exude exclusivity, defined in the dictionary as "the state of catering for or being affordable by only a few, select customers, as in 'the hotel's emphasis is on exclusivity and luxury.'"

In Ojai the emphasis is on equality, friendliness, and mutual respect. Let's keep it that way.

Sincerely,

Merry Vaughan Dunn

Ojai (city)

Cheryl Davis

From: Elise DePuydt <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, March 11, 2022 11:03 AM
To: Cheryl Davis; Lucas Seibert
Subject: Historical Addendum to El Roblar Hotel HRR
Attachments: Attract And to Hold-The Ojai 10-13-1916.jpg; Ojai Incorporation-Oxnard Courier_6-8-1921.pdf; Addendum to Hotel El Roblar HRR_DePuydt_3-10-22.docx; Catholic Church_The Ojai 5-27-1905 pp 1-2.pdf

Hello Lucas and Cheryl,

Below and attached are my historical corrections and clarifications to the El Roblar Hotel HRR. I also attached several substantiating reference articles. As I stated at the HPC meeting last night, many of the concerns can be attributed to the references materials ARG used and cited. Please send the addendum to the HPC commissioners and include it in the official city record.

Thank you, Elise

Addendum

Historical corrections and clarifications to Hotel El Roblar, Historic Resource Report by the Architectural Resources Group (ARG)
dated February 4, 2022 (The resources ARG cited are in italics.)

by Elise DePuydt – March 10, 2022

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No-Hit Game is Houk's Record

Nordhoff-Santa Paula game:
Nordhoff 10; Santa Paula 0.
The Nordhoff boys have at last "arrived." The hard work they have put in the last two years has finally shown itself and the new coach, Mr. Rich, has taken hold of a strange team and in two weeks has put on the finishing touches that the following score is the result. He deserves a lot of credit as does each and every man on the team. A marked improvement was noticed both in base running and hitting and all-round play. Mentioning and hitting of Smith's work, too, must be made of Smith's work. Coming to us from Oxnard, he has strengthened the team fifty per cent behind the box. The wonderful work of Houk stands out pre-eminent, it being the first time in the county that a no-hit game has been pitched. We have a team that will give any team a run for the pennant, and are now tied for first place in the league with Ventura.

| | AB | R | H | O | A | E |
|---------|----|---|---|----|---|---|
| Smith | 5 | 2 | 0 | 16 | 4 | 1 |
| Jackson | 4 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Bailey | 4 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Houk | 4 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Menafee | 4 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Gardner | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Dowling | 3 | 1 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| Taylor | 3 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 1 |
| Parsons | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Waits | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Struck out by Houk, 16. 28 men faced Houk, who pitched a no-hit no-run game.

High School Notes.

It may be interesting to the public to know how our students are divided. As to classes they stand as follows: Freshmen 18, sophomores 28, juniors 13, seniors 9, post graduates 1; boys 27, girls 40. As to studies: Elementary Algebra 15, Advanced Algebra 6, Bookkeeping 11, Chemistry 16, Commercial Arithmetic 9, German (2 classes) 9, Latin (2 classes) 12, English (5 classes) 43, History (4 classes) 30, Spanish (2 classes) 29, German (1 class) 15, General Science 15, Domestic

TO ATTRACT AND TO HOLD SHOULD BE UNITED PURPOSE

The new era of progress and achievement inaugurated by E. D. Libbey is destined to revolutionize the commercial and social life of Nordhoff and the Ojai valley.

There is apparent a harmony of purpose and action that brings us closer to hopes fruition, and to further emphasize our abiding faith in the community's future, it should be our concerted aim not only to attract public attention, but to hold those whom we attract.

Our property owners accepted Mr. Libbey's suggestion of an articulated business section, and this artistic innovation will be a reality long before the philanthropist arrives in January to admire it. This of itself will prove a drawing card and will please the eye for a fleeting moment, to be commented upon after it passes from view. The Libbey park, with its shady drives, cosy nooks and, mayhap, playing

steam up these days. They played Thacher second team on Wednesday. The score was 18 to 4 in favor of Thacher. Our team was misdirected in this case.

Mr. and Mrs. Twichell were down to the game on Wednesday.

The Alumni Day committee has been appointed, but the date is yet uncertain. Jewel Goodman, Ruth Parmanter and Chas. Parsons constitute the committee.

Well Qualified

For State Senator

who know Mr. Thompson best, declare that if elected, his high official position will be well served.

Ojai Valley Men's League.

The first past-vacation meeting of the executive committee of the Men's League was held at the Boyd Club Tuesday afternoon. Considerable routine business was disposed of, but the subject which elicited most discussion was "Shall we change the name of our town?"

Collegiate Alumnae Has Been Formed

At a luncheon held September 30 at Hotel Oxnard the Ventura county branch of the National Organization of Collegiate Alumnae was formed. Twenty women graduates of various colleges of the U. S. were present. Fifteen more have signified their intentions of joining and it is expected that the number will be increased to fifty before the next meeting.

Miss Alice L. Fleenor, who has been connected with the northern branch of the organization, ably set forth its aims and purposes. A constitution was adopted and the following officers were elected:

Miss Alice Fleenor of Oxnard, president; Mrs. F. W. Hunter of Ventura, vice-president; Mrs. Henry Levy of Oxnard, Secretary; Miss Jean Walden of Santa Paula, treasurer.

An executive board of four members, one from each of the principal cities of the county, will be elected at the next meeting. The president will be ex-officio member of this board.

It was decided to meet once a month at a luncheon to be held at the various towns of the county. The next meeting will be held at the Hotel De Leon, Ventura. It is hoped that Dr. Aurelia Henry Reinhardt will speak at that meeting. It is the aim of the association to have some well known speaker address the monthly meetings. From time to time there will be open meetings to which the public will be invited.

OJAI TO BE MADE CITY INCORPORATED

PROMINENT MEN FROM OJAI
COME BEFORE SUPERVISORS TODAY.

A. L. Brown, Ira Gosnell and Frank Blend, the latter being the California representative of E. D. Libbey, the Toledo millionaire, with large interests in the Ojai, will address the supervisors yesterday in favor of the matter of town incorporation of Ojai. It developed that these men were the people to the incorporation of Ojai the new town, which it refused to incorporate. It developed also that there is much property belonging to Mr. Blend within the boundaries of the town, and the fact of the proposed city and its location is also interesting and there is some discussion to having it excluded.

It also developed that while the Pothills Hotel company was willing enough that all that part of its property taking in the golf links might be included in the boundaries, the company desires the property on which the hotel itself stands be kept out. Also it appears that this will make it awkward for property holders in the rear of the hotel, including Messrs. Pratt, Dan Smith and others, who desire to come into the new town, but could not unless the hotel was itself taken in.

The board put the whole matter over until this afternoon at 2 o'clock.



Clipped By:

craigw9953

Mon, Mar 7, 2022

Addendum

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by Elise DePuydt – March 10, 2022

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THE NEW CATHOLIC CHURCH.

Laying The Cornerstone.

The ceremonies of breaking ground for the Roman Catholic Church of St. Thomas of Aquin at Nordhoff and laying the cornerstone took place last Monday afternoon. The Right Reverend Thos. J. Conaty, D. D., Bishop of Los Angeles and Monterey officiated, assisted by Father John Pujol and Father J. F. Laubacher of Oxnard, Father Grogan of Ventura and Father King of Santa Paula.

The bishop and priests arrived before noon and were served with an excellent dinner at Mrs. George Bald's, the ladies of the new church assisting, Mr. Thomas Clark, Mr. and Mrs. W. P. Weber, Mr. Joseph Hobart, Mr. E. S. Thacher and Mr. S. D. Thacher being among the invited guests.

A large party of children from Santa Paula arrived later and had dinner.

At two o'clock the procession, preceded by the acolytes in red and purple gowns, with cross, censer, and holy water, started for the scene of the ceremonies. The priests in their black robes and the bishop in royal purple with the scarlet gowned boys made a brilliant picture in the bright sunlight.

Some four or five hundred people were collected about the temporary stand which had been raised on the church lot. After ascertaining where the boundaries of the building were to be, the Bishop mounted the platform, explained the ceremonies and then proceeded with them, assisted by the four priests. The ground was broken and the limits of the edifice sprinkled with holy water. The Bishop then returned to the platform and addressed the company, speaking eloquently of the part played by religion and the church in human life and the important significance of the building of a church by the roadside close to where the people are living and passing. The Bishop promised to return to dedicate the church after its completion before his departure for Rome in about two months, and

The Chicken Industry.

The chicken industry is perhaps one of the best paying industries in this part of the state for the person with small capital. Eggs and poultry at all times find a ready market at a good price. Chicken raising, either for the production of eggs or the sale of young chickens for broilers, must be entered upon intellectually if it is to be made a success. Many find it a failure for the simple reason it is not given the study and attention necessary. The manipulating of incubators and brooders, the diet of young chicks, the building of the coops, runs, etc., is a matter of much study and good sound judgment, to the interest of which there are many magazine and periodical articles published as to the best methods for the different climates.

A visit to Mr. Levelle's chicken ranch, just west of the depot, convinces the visitor that Mr. Levelle is destined to be one of the successful. His selection of a location is an ideal spot for the industry, with an ample supply of running water for the raising of alfalfa—the very best of green feed for this stock.

The construction of his coops, runs, etc., shows good sound judgment; the floors of the coops will be of cement, the walls are of galvanized iron, and the roosts are iron rods, consequently it can be kept perfectly clean, free from insects and poultry diseases.

There are now about 500 chickens on the ranch, white and brown leghorns, black minorcas and white and barred plymouth rocks, all of which are good laying strains, and at the age of from three to four months find a ready market in our cities at from five to six dollars per dozen.

The chicks are hatched by incubator and raised in brooders, and, whether you contemplate going into the chicken business or not, you will find it very interesting to visit this chicken ranch and see the intellectual methods now in use and the preparations for trebling the capacity.

IN THE OPEN MARKET.

It was to be expected that a vigorous protest would be raised over the approval by Secretary Taft of the resolution adopted by the Panama commission, to buy their supplies, including steel rails, machinery and ships, in open market, instead of inviting only the competition of American firms. There is much to be said on both sides of this question, but it is natural that the American manufacturers, finding themselves exposed to foreign competition in a market that they had deemed securely their own, should only see one side. The commissioners look at the matter only from the viewpoint of economy. They received no instructions from Congress to buy their supplies only from the United States, probably because Congress did not dream of the possibility of their following any other course, and as their reputation is involved in their record for economy as well as efficiency, it is not strange that they should avail themselves of the opportunity left open to them to make the best bargain possible.

On the other hand, the people of the United States, who stand pledged to pay \$200,000,000 for this great work, have a right to expect that a considerable proportion of this money shall be returned to them in the purchase of needed supplies and in wages and work to American artisans in the production of such supplies. The people of the United States have decreed that the policy of protection to American labor, and the action of the government, in setting that policy aside, as far as relates to the prosecution of this great work, is inconsistent if nothing more.

It may be doubted, however, if the manufacturers of steel rails, who are the parties most directly interested, will make any very strenuous open protest against the action of the Commission. The Commissioners say that the price asked by the American steel mills for rails is \$32 a ton, while the English firms offer them the same

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before noon and were served with an excellent dinner at Mrs. George Bald's, the ladies of the new church assisting, Mr. Thomas Clark, Mr. and Mrs. W. P. Weber, Mr. Joseph Hobart, Mr. E. S. Thacher and Mr. S. D. Thacher being among the invited guests.

A large party of children from Santa Paula arrived later and had dinner.

At two o'clock the procession, preceded by the acolytes in red and purple gowns, with cross, censer, and holy water, started for the scene of the ceremonies. The priests in their black robes and the bishop in royal purple with the scarlet gowned boys made a brilliant picture in the bright sunlight.

Some four or five hundred people were collected about the temporary stand which had been raised on the church lot. After ascertaining where the boundaries of the building were to be, the Bishop mounted the platform, explained the ceremonies and then proceeded with them, assisted by the four priests. The ground was broken and the limits of the edifice sprinkled with holy water. The Bishop then returned to the platform and addressed the company, speaking eloquently of the part played by religion and the church in human life and the important significance of the building of a church by the roadside close to where the people are living and passing. The Bishop promised to return to dedicate the church after its completion before his departure for Rome in about two months, and as an earnest of his desire that it might be free from debt announced his own personal contribution of one hundred dollars. He thanked Mr. Thomas Clark for his liberal gift of the ground, as well as the other contributors, and announced that the patron of the church was Saint Thomas Aquinas, who was known as "the angelic doctor", perhaps the most eminent scholastic teacher that ever lived. He died in 1274.

The Bishop then assumed his full robes, mitre and staff, and the cornerstone was blessed and laid with the usual ceremonies and prayer in

the building of the coops, runs, etc., is a matter of much study and good sound judgment, to the interest of which there are many magazine and periodical articles published as to the best methods for the different climates.

A visit to Mr. Levelle's chicken ranch, just west of the depot, convinces the visitor that Mr. Levelle is destined to be one of the successful. His selection of a location is an ideal spot for the industry, with an ample supply of running water for the raising of alfalfa—the very best of green feed for this stock.

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The chicks are hatched by incubator and raised in brooders, and, whether you contemplate going into the chicken business or not, you will find it very interesting to visit this chicken ranch and see the intellectual methods now in use and the preparations for trebling the capacity.

Latin, the book used by the Bishop for the ritual being the old volume from the San Buenaventura mission, perhaps never before used since the time of the mission fathers.

After the benediction, a number of the Ojai people had the pleasure of meeting the Bishop, who departed later in the afternoon for Los Angeles. Bishop Conaty was until two years ago president of the Catholic University at Washington, D. C.

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should only see one side. The commissioners look at the matter only from the viewpoint of economy. They received no instructions from Congress to buy their supplies only from the United States, probably because Congress did not dream of the possibility of their following any other course, and as their reputation is involved in their record for economy as well as efficiency, it is not strange that they should avail themselves of the opportunity left open to them to make the best bargain possible.

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It may be doubted, however, if the manufacturers of steel rails, who are the parties most directly interested, will make any very strenuous open protest against the action of the Commission. The Commissioners say that the price asked by the American steel mills for rails is \$32 a ton, while the English firms offer them the same rails—not "just as good," but the same rails, made in the same mills—for \$20 a ton. It is often argued that it is sound policy for American manufacturers to sacrifice a portion of their profits, or even to sell at a sacrifice, to foreign buyers, for the purpose of securing foreign markets, but if they can afford to make so heavy a rebate on foreign sales as the foregoing prices indicate, it is inevitable that the people should ask themselves why the tariff on steel should be kept so high as to make such profits possible. Nor, from the workman's standpoint,

worthy of her.

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Cheryl Davis

From: Dawn Thieding <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, March 10, 2022 6:50 PM
To: Cheryl Davis
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: 3/10/22 HPC GENERAL COMMENT/HOTEL EL ROBLAR

Cheryl,

Below please find comment presented orally at tonight's March 10 2022 Historic Preservation Commission meeting.

I am submitting for the record.

Thank you,
Dawn

Dawn Thieding
Cultural Resources Specialist
[REDACTED]

On behalf of myself and Ojai historians Craig Walker and Elise DePuydt, we would like to provide clarification on two matters discussed during the February 28 special meeting of the HPC, specifically the SECRETARY OF INTERIOR STANDARDS and the Historicity of Hotel El Roblar.

1. SECRETARY OF INTERIOR STANDARDS are STANDARDS

Statements were made at the meeting that these Standards are not law but just guidelines, implying that they need not be followed.

Secretary of the Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties are law, codified in the Federal Regulations under 36 CFR 68.

There are four (4) treatment standards -- Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration, and Reconstruction.

Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation are codified in the Federal Regulations under 36 CFR 67.

There are related, but separate, guidelines for the Standards that illustrate the practical application of the treatment standards.

It is these separate guidelines that are advisory.

The Standards themselves stand alone as Standards and are codified in the law.

Compliance with the Standards is required for local, state and federal historic preservation tax incentive programs.

Secretary of Interior standards are more than just "a good measuring tool." These are professional standards for historic preservation. Just like there are building standards and a medical standard of care in healthcare that you expect professionals to follow, the Secretary of Interior Standards are the professional "industry-standard" for historic preservation. They are adopted on the national level and by the State of California to prevent a substantial adverse change to a historical resource under CEQA. One would expect historic preservationists to follow the Standards.

The basic philosophy of the Standards is to do the least amount of harm to a historical resource. Proposed work should preserve the character and integrity of the irreplaceable historic resource.

The City of Ojai has adopted these Standards in Ojai Historic Preservation Law outlined in Title 4, Chapter 8 of the Ojai Municipal Code.

Excellent training on the Secretary of the Interior Standards is available on the California Office of Historic Preservation eLearning webpage.

2. HOTEL EL ROBLAR IS HISTORICAL

Statements were made at the February 28 meeting that there is nothing left of the building that's historic.

If this statement were true, proposed alterations to Hotel El Roblar would not have come before you.

In 2018, Hotel El Roblar, with all of its existing alterations, were assessed by professional architectural historians at GPA Consulting who determined that:

"Despite these alterations, its overall form and many of its original and historic features have not been significantly altered.... the building retains sufficient integrity to contribute to the Downtown Ojai District."

This finding was reviewed and approved by CALTRANS.

The State of California Office of Historic Preservation concurred.

As a contributing resource to Downtown Ojai Historic District and in its current state -- alterations and all:

Hotel El Roblar is listed in the California Register of Historical Resources.

Hotel El Roblar is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historical Resources.

Hotel El Roblar is a "historical resource" under state law.

Hotel El Roblar is historical.

This information would be considered "significant new information" under CEQA, California's environmental state law.

Therefore, decisions made in 2003 by the HPC are irrelevant as they pre-date this information.

Personal opinions on proposed design aesthetics should also be irrelevant.

And, the ability to remove proposed alterations in the future should not excuse following historic preservation standards now.

Proposed work on a historical resource should follow Secretary of the Interior Standards to preserve the character and historic integrity of the resource.

And in the case of Hotel El Roblar, proposed work on this historical resource should follow Secretary of the Interior Standards to preserve the character and historic integrity of the State-designated Downtown Ojai Historic District and the district's other contributing resources.

CONCLUSION

As stated during the last meeting, the decision on Hotel El Roblar sets a precedent moving forward for a proposed local Downtown Ojai Historic District and the future treatment of its contributing resources.

Deferring to the developer and not choosing to follow professional standards and professional expert opinion is -- in our opinion -- harmful to the significance and the integrity of Ojai's historical resources and its downtown historic district.

Property owners in the local Downtown Ojai Historic District need clear, simple expectations.

What professional standards will be followed for the proposed local Downtown District if not the Secretary of Interior Standards?

Compliance with these Standards is in fact required under the Ojai General Plan and the Ojai Historic Preservation Law of the Ojai Municipal Code.

Local, state and federal historic preservation tax incentive programs also require adherence to these Standards.

Moving forward, we urge you to follow both the Letter of the Law AND the Spirit of the Law for historic preservation.

As stewards of Ojai's irreplaceable historical resources, we urge you to follow the Secretary of Interior Standards.

The future of Ojai's history is in your hands.

March 1, 2022

Mr. Lucas Seibert
Community Development Manager, City of Ojai
401 S. Ventura St, Ojai Ca
cc: Planning Commission

I am writing to you today to provide an update on my discussions with the team representing the El Roblar Hotel development. I met with Jeremy McBride and team/partners in late January to discuss parking issues associated with the El Roblar and how they would impact the residents of my property at 204/206 N. Ventura St. We had the opportunity to tour the property and discuss the development plans and the expected operation of the facility. The primary focus was on the development of the empty lot adjacent to my property that has been purchased by El Roblar to provide 18 tandem spaces for off-site parking. I shared the concerns I had...primarily noise and other disturbances to the residents. I also shared with Jeremy the six 'asks' that I proposed in my prior letter to you on January 16, 2022. I'll repeat those asks here for clarity:

I would ask the Commission to consider requiring these changes to the project:

- 1. No waiver for decreasing on-site parking. 50 sites – or more - should remain.*
- 2. Reduce parking spots on 202 N Ventura to 10. Eliminate tandem and blocked in spots that add considerably to noise disturbance when a vehicle is moved.*
- 3. Provide a six foot high sound barrier wall on property line between 202 N Ventura and 204 N Ventura*
- 4. Provide 5 foot setback for parking and pavement between 202 N Ventura and 204 N Ventura*
- 5. Restrict hours of access to parking near residential sites. No access from 10PM to 7AM.*
- 6. Provide a formal method for the City to easily repeal parking permits for off-site lots based on repeated problems with noise disturbance and other violations*

Based on our discussions, the El Roblar has agreed with me to provide a sub-set of these proposals as follows:

1. El Roblar will construct a wall on the property line between 202 and 204 N. Ventura St. The target will be six foot height. This will match the already proposed wall around much of the property.
2. El Roblar will use "good faith" efforts to restrict use of the lot between 7PM and 7AM to eliminate overnight disturbances. Lot is intended for overnight guests, not restaurant and events. Occasional access after 7PM could be possible.
3. El Roblar will attempt to limit/reduce use of blocked-in tandem spots by making them "last fill" during operation of the lot.
4. El Roblar will review operation of the lot and any issues with me on a regular basis.
5. El Roblar will provide a mechanism for formal dispute resolution with the City.

I believe this is a reasonable proposal provided in good faith. If these conditions can be met, I would support the parking proposal as part of the development of El Roblar.

Best Regards,

Chris Gardner

802 Country Club Rd.
Ojai, Ca 93023

RECEIVED

MAR 03 2022

Subject:

RE: January 19th Planning Meeting Comments

From: Chris Gardner**Sent:** Wednesday, January 19, 2022 6:11 PM**To:** Shari Herbruck**Cc:** Chris Gardner**Subject:** January 19th Planning Meeting Comments

January 19, 2022

Earlier this week, I submitted a document to the Commission that details some concerns I have on the El Roblar proposal. I imagine the majority of Ojai residents would concur with these concerns. I'll summarize a few here.

The proposal adds a restaurant, bars and events that are open to the public. This substantially changes the use of the property, particularly at night. To provide space for profitable development, the proposal reduces the number of on-site parking spaces from 50 to 40. It requests a waiver from existing parking requirements that substantially and illegally increases the non-conformance of the property. I hope the Commission will challenge many of their assumptions in the El Roblar proposal:

1. The proposal claims "Parking ... is not in the best interest of residents". Not true. Ask a resident.
2. They acknowledge that community "efforts to convert additional areas to parking" are underway, but claim that this should be done by the "community rather than burdening an individual applicant". But in fact, they propose to **remove** ten existing on-site parking spaces, and then **burden** the community with increased noise and traffic congestion created by off-site parking. Conveniently, they convert these existing spaces to more profitable areas such as dining, pools, event areas etc.
3. They claim that "challenges related to parking may contribute to more vibrant streetscapes and less traffic". They want to discourage the residents of Ojai from coming to their own downtown for the benefit of their hotel guests.
4. Their plan claims to "prioritize on-site parking" but then goes on to list all the "constraints" ...aka excuses... why they do not maintain the current level of parking or add more as they should... to meet City ordinance.
5. They plan to have 38 off-site parking spaces. They will lease valet to another company, meaning the Hotel is NOT responsible for any issues that occur with parking. They will likely hire young minimum-wage-drivers who enjoy squealing tires, slamming doors, rolling stop signs, and generally abusing traffic laws. This will add substantial traffic to Ojai Ave. At one location in town, they plan to pave over the grass at an open lot to park 18 cars. These cars will be within four feet of the windows of residents. This WILL impact the residents in the neighborhood, potentially at all times of day and night.
6. There is NOTHING in the El Roblar plan that addresses the majority of these concerns. I hope you will consider them in your discussion and review.

I have provided the Commission with a list of suggestions that should be required mitigations as part of the development. I hope you will consider them.

Thank you. Chris Gardner

Subject:

RE: comments in advance of the 1/19/22 Planning Commission meeting

From: Christopher Land**Sent:** Wednesday, January 19, 2022 10:56 AM**To:** Shari Herbruck <shari.herbruck@ojai.ca.gov>**Cc:** Lucas Seibert <Lucas.seibert@ojai.ca.gov>**Subject:** comments in advance of the 1/19/22 Planning Commission meeting

Here are some comments relating to the El Roblar Hotel parking plan in advance of tonight's meeting. We'll watch via Zoom and may opt to comment.

Thanks!

To begin, let me observe that much of this conversation is proceeding as though the use of the Beacon parking lots is the only of best option and the aim of the conversation is to fine tune that use. I want to offer the reminder that earlier proposals included the use of a lot at Signal and Aliso, and behind the scenes, many other options have no doubt been considered by the city and the developers. For various reasons, today we are only talking about the Beacon lots because they have become the option of least resistance. So I want it to be noted that there have been and still are other options. My purpose today is to highlight some of the reasons why the Beacon option ought to be resisted.

Before I do that, I want to say that we appreciate the conversations we have had with the city and with Mr. Ebbink, a representative of the El Roblar development team. We appreciate these opportunities to learn about the plans as they evolve and to air our continued concerns. And we appreciate that the plans have been adjusted in an effort to respond to some of the concerns we and others have shared. That being said, the off-site parking option at Beacon remains both a poor parking solution for Ojai and a threat to the quiet enjoyment of our property and that of our neighbors.

Staff and community members have expressed many different concerns about the plan to use off-site parking so distant from the hotel. These concerns include the following:

- The Beacon lots are far from the hotel and across a major thoroughfare, which makes them impractical for anything but counting spots toward meeting the hotel's required number. It is probable that many people—be they guests or employees—would choose not to use these spaces at all and would instead save time and steps by parking on the street or in lots closer to the hotel, defeating the purpose of this plan. (The employee parking would also represent a serious liability to the hotel group were an employee to be injured making the walk between work and the staff parking lot.)
- For those who do choose to make the trek, we can expect safety and traffic disruption issues caused by pedestrians walking between the parking lot and the hotel.
- Increased, round-the-clock use of lots at Beacon would result in increased noise and nuisance to neighbors of the lot.
- Should it serve as an employee lot, the rear Beacon lot would be likely to trigger OSHA safety lighting requirements, which would impose another nuisance on neighbors.
- This is not a durable plan; it is easy to imagine a situation in which the Beacon property might change hands and the hotel's lease terminated. Even though one of the hotel partners has first right of refusal on a future sale of the property, it is not certain that this option would protect access to the property in the long run.
- As the lot was depicted in the Jensen conceptual parking plan, eight or so of the parking spaces are actually outside of the property line of the Beacon property, occupying an easement that might require

an encroachment permit from the Ventura County Watershed Protection district. Three spots in particular would block access to the stormwater channel that might be needed during significant rain events.

It's been clear from the planning commission meetings and our conversations with both the city and the developer that the true viability of the off-site parking proposal depends on details yet to be worked out—in particular, a more granular understanding of which kinds of workers will use which parking resources when. Given the round the clock nature of a hotel operation, the planning around special events, differences between weekend and weekday traffic, etc. it is all but impossible to accurately assess parking use patterns and to evaluate any given parking plan without a more specific picture of what day-to-day operations look like. The hotel cannot be expected to have such plans drawn up at this stage, but it should be understood in the Planning Commission's deliberations that the projections are necessarily fuzzy.

Due to the existence of so many hypotheticals, Mr. Ebbink made assurances to us that the hotel team would be willing to work with us, the neighbors of the lot, to monitor and manage any negative impact of the parking and mitigate what they can. We appreciate this offer and take him at his word, but also note that this arrangement would put us in the position of monitoring, documenting, and reporting issues, which is not a position we choose to be in regardless of how cooperative and responsive the hotel may be. In other words, even this best-case scenario of neighborly cooperation would be a burden on us and a diminishment of the quiet enjoyment of our home.

It's been suggested that the plan be approved on the condition of periodic reevaluation. In this spirit, the earlier "assisted parking" version of the plan included the provision that, "The hotel will maintain hourly records of car counts to better understand peak hours and trends and will adjust protocols as needed to alleviate congestion and provide safe and efficient service." No similar provision exists that I can see in the current proposal, ostensibly since hotel staff will no longer be managing the lot directly and that oversight would fall to neighbors like us.

As I have said before, we moved into our downtown home with eyes and ears wide open to the realities of the neighboring businesses and we have no objection to them. On the contrary, we consider them amenities. But we will resist any steps to change the ways these businesses operate that would diminish the peace and quiet we currently enjoy.

The developers are not the only party involved in this process; the City of Ojai and the Planning Commission also play a material part and we have concerns about the way the city has managed parking as a whole and in this case.

As I've researched and spoken to more people about this matter, I've learned that some feel the city has been lax in the past about requiring adequate parking from applicants and quick to waive in-lieu-of fees, and that there is the perception that these decisions have not always been made fairly or consistently. For this reason, I applaud the work of the current Community Development Director, who appears to be willing to enter into creative, open dialog with applicants and community members in order to find a fair and farsighted solution to complex issues.

Still, it is my view that the city and the developers have not exhausted the opportunity to create an appropriate plan that might allow the city to address city-wide parking issues rather than requiring the El Roblar Hotel (or any other business for that matter) to create one-off, piecemeal solutions. To do this, I think the city should be making more of an effort to use the mechanism of in-lieu-of fees as they were intended: to fund comprehensive solutions to the city's parking challenges.

To conclude, I encourage the city and the developers to continue working together until they have a more viable and durable solution to the hotel's parking deficit.

I suggest that the city offer the El Roblar Hotel partners a larger in-lieu-of option. For example, what if instead of the back 21 spots at Beacon, the hotel group made an in-lieu-of payment and the city then combined those

fees with previously collected fees to actually create new parking spaces that might also serve the many new and returning business in town (Topa Topa, The Dutchess, Rory's, and the movie theater, when it comes back on line)? By my math, that, plus previous in-lieu-of funds already collected, would give the city around \$250,000, which would be a good start. There appear to be several possible lot locations for purchase or lease by the city that could serve in this way: the original hotel parking proposal included the lot behind the offices at Signal and Aliso; there is a large vacant area in the block behind Marche Gourmet and Barbara Bowman; there is the AT&T lot at Blanche and Matilija. Any of these locations, all much closer to the hotel than the Beacon lots, could contribute a significant number of spots to meeting the hotel's and the city's needs.

In closing, I want to note that a process like this effort to resolve the El Roblar Hotel's parking deficit tends to follow the path of least resistance. However, that path has led to a proposal that is poorly considered, unrealistic, and unmanageable. Perhaps the Beacon lot seemed like an easy solve at one point because one of the hotel partners held the lease on it, but we all know that the easy answer is often not the best answer. And we've now seen many reasons why this option is far worse than others that have been abandoned or overlooked. So I'm hoping that, instead of following the path of least resistance to a deeply flawed plan, the hotel group and the city continue exploring alternatives. For an otherwise first-class hotel project, why settle for a half-baked parking solution?

Thank you,

Christopher and Margo Land

Subject:

RE: 1-19-22 Meeting - Comment on Item 5

-----Original Message-----

From: Jerry Dunn

Sent: Wednesday, January 19, 2022 3:22 PM

To: Shari Herbruck <shari.herbruck@ojai.ca.gov>

Subject: 1-19-22 Meeting - Comment on Item 5

January 19, 2022

ITEM #5, EL ROBLAR HOTEL PARKING AND CIRCULATION

In looking at plans for the El Roblar Hotel, please do not consider or approve valet parking.

Valet parking is common at hot Los Angeles restaurants and Santa Barbara luxury hotels, but in small-town Ojai it would create an unwelcome urban vibe.

It would also exude exclusivity, defined in the dictionary as "the state of catering for or being affordable by only a few, select customers: 'the hotel's emphasis is on exclusivity and luxury.'"

In Ojai the emphasis is on equality, friendliness, and mutual respect. Let's keep it that way.

Sincerely,

Jerry Camarillo Dunn, Jr.

Merry Vaughan Dunn

Ojai (city)

Subject:

RE: Planning Commission 1/19/22 El Roblar Hotel

From: BILL MILEY

Sent: Wednesday, January 19, 2022 5:03 AM

To: Shari Herbruck

Cc:

1/19/22

To: Planning Commission

Cc: city manager, planning director, others

From: Bill Miley

Subject: parking and the Hotel

Hello. The following are “points” I want to make.

Points to make on El Roblar parking needs and plans.

1. I understand there are formulas for predicting parking space needs for hotels, restaurants, event centers and employees. **A strong brand will create demand which parking should accommodate with an extra number of parking spaces.**
2. The old Oaks Spa was designed for multi day stays for “spa” treatments and I believe few outside guests for food or spa day services, thus not requiring parking beyond what was provided on campus. **I do not know where the employees parked.**
3. In my thoughts and I am sure others too **having permanent parking space for my hotel guests, employees and day guests would be Ideal and the best solution.**
4. Keeping the hotel as it is would almost erase off-site parking need. Except for employees and day guests. **Parking off site is a challenge...shared parking for 15 years (20 year contract) for a remodeled hotel which easily will be here 50 - 100 plus years from now seems worrisome. Long range options I assume are part of the owners thinking.** Losing parking in the future is almost too “volcanic” to think about.
5. **With the owners vision of restoration and expansion an interim solution through shared parking as proposed would allow the vision to be created.** That certainly benefits the city, the government and the valley.
6. **Agreement factors for shared parking use I would assume are crucial to avoid conflict... where spaces “set aside” are taken by others.** How to guarantee sufficient parking spaces on a 24 hour clock 7 day a week basis seems very challenging. Likely having pavement painted indicators is one way. Beacon business hours and customer demand may change and expand..that should I assume be part of the contractual agreement. One way is to reserve more than is estimated...having a reserve. **Extra spaces allows for unknowns.**
7. **Safety for visitor access, safety for parked vehicles, and safety for valets is important. Lighting at dark.**

8. **To and from valet and guest “pedestrian” movement in a safe and convenient way would be key.** Crossing lights exist between north Ventura and (ojai Ave) south ventura streets (library side). A similar pedestrian light crossing seems important for the south Ventura street crossing between library and Westridge. Also, crossing at Blanch street (south side) at Ojai avenue is problematic as that route is used a lot for Westridge market and Bank of America parking access and leaving for ojai avenue.

9. **The proposed penalty for losing parking spaces on a one to one basis (space for rented room) seems drastic.** I have suggested that instead of closing rooms, **the city offer on an interim basis rental use of city parking charged per space while the hotel looks for other parking options.** (Suggest lower montgomery street parking lot south of the trail.) loss of parking spaces (total spaces including employee) would count.

10. It seems important to limit the use of neighborhood street parking by employees. **Employees should have dedicated spaces for their guaranteed use allowing their scheduled work timing to be regulated.** Day visitors will park where they can...however it seems best to limit such parking in residential areas.

11. **This hotel remodel carry’s a vibrancy for ojai’s downtown almost as an institution.** Supporting the process of development and assuring each part of the “jig saw puzzle” will be strong and functional should be our goal. **The parking puzzle piece (shared parking) I see as an interim part to be replaced by a permanent solution before the 15 years are up.**

End. Thanks for considering my thoughts. Bill Miley, MPH, since 1968

Subject:

RE: Planning Commission: dealing with the parking issue/El Roblar Hotel

From: Nicholas Oatway

Sent: Wednesday, January 19, 2022 7:41 AM

To: Shari Herbruck

Cc:

Subject: Planning Commission: dealing with the parking issue/El Roblar Hotel

To the Planing Commission,

1. To reduce the demand for parking from use of the future wonderfully improved and restored El; Roblar Hotel I suggest the Planning Commission ask
the new owners of the hotel - how is this hotel going to work, be a place for building the life of Ojai, Ojai people, a place for "both" town's people and visitors.
2. It's a fair question and an important one. Or is their plan a group of visitors paying 400-600 a night who don't really want the town people joining them
at the bar or the restaurants. Another enclave for the out-of-towners?
3. To the parking issue. If the owners assuming a great success for them want to populate the available down town space with parked cars, and valets
dashing hurriedly back and forth across the avenue fetching cars I suggest that they be asked to consider the following:
 - a. Develop a door to door mini bus adventure for angelenos and others escaping their urban life for the weekend thus providing a continuous service
transporting guests to the El Roblar for their stay, no cars just few suitcases loaded on top of the bus. People can get to know their fellow travelers.
They could call it of course, The Ojai Adventure. Car free. Thus reducing to some extent the need for parking.
 - b. If the Owners want to fill the small lot on Matilija Street or any other empty lot with parking ask them at the same time to propose housing on a floor above
for their employees or others in Ojai seeking "affordable" places to live. This would do two obvious plus things...permanently screen the now dead space
taken by parked cars and provide housing for happy employees or anyone else, in town people with some money left over to enjoy eating in the new
Roblar's restaurant once and awhile.

Why am I saying these things? With all the empty and underused spaces in the center of Ojai, the town has an extraordinary opportunity right now of developing a strong response to this emptiness. It's easy to attract day trippers and weekenders from everywhere else. What about in town? In town people who want to work here, live here, be here in town. People who's dream doesn't demand broad expanses of space. A good sized deck or patio, large enough to

entertain friends, maybe a lemon tree...a condo or loft type apartment will do. An affordable rent or monthly cost! Their reward? An in town life with easy access outside their front door to life's needs and pleasures.

Finally, it's my conviction that every discussion from now on regarding how to assign use to Ojai's central core must include a growing awareness and dedicated response to building "affordable" housing. The first step to making it real is bringing it up again and again and again.

Respectfully submitted, **Nicholas Oatway, Architect**, License: C-9372

Subject: RE: Planning Commission Letter

From: leslie hess
Sent: Wednesday, January 19, 2022 12:34 PM
To: Shari Herbruck
Subject: Planning Commission Letter

January 19, 2022

Mr. Lucas Seibert
Chair Quilici
Vice Chair Nolan
Commissioner Bennett
Commissioner Lottes
Commissioner Trent

Re: Agenda Item #5 Parking "Circulation" Hotel El Roblar

Dear Commissioners and Mr. Seibert:

Thank you all for your service to Ojai.

Please consider the sweeping impact of this design on downtown Ojai. There are so many things that are unacceptable, safety being one of them. Please deny this conditional use permit.

As stated in previous letters, I strongly object to valet parking that requires movement of vehicles offsite.

A hotel commandeering our downtown to shift cars from lot to lot depending on the arrival of their guests, the departure of their guests, the availability of parking spaces at a coffee shop across the street only at night, moving those cars in the morning when the coffee shop gets packed, and cramming cars ("tandem parking") into a tiny lot at 202 North Ventura Street, will be detrimental to the downtown area and to those who live and visit here. Maneuvering cars to get to the cars behind them in a small parking lot on a small street is not safe. Valets dashing across the 150, a state highway, to retrieve cars or shift cars to other spaces, is not safe. This flies in the face of our "Complete Streets" project. The City of Ojai and Caltrans have spent years planning and budgeted millions of dollars to complete the project to calm traffic and make downtown Ojai safe and inviting for everyone and now this gets thrown into the mix? It makes no sense.

Proposed parking agreements to provide off site parking spaces, which are not under the control of the hotel owners, should not be relied upon by those that are deciding whether or not to approve this conditional use permit. Inadequate onsite parking continues to create a requirement of city staff time to "police" the hotel to be sure that it stops renting rooms for which it does not have parking. This is unreasonable.

I ask the commissioners to please deny the conditional use permit.

Thank you, Leslie Hess
Ojai

Subject:

RE: Comment on El Roblar Proposal, Ojai Planning Commission Meeting

From: Craig Walker**Sent:** Monday, January 17, 2022 7:19 AM**To:** Shari Herbruck**Subject:** Comment on El Roblar Proposal, Ojai Planning Commission Meeting

To the Ojai Planning Commission
January 19th Meeting; Item #5

The Oaks Hotel (former El Roblar Hotel) is currently listed on the California Register of Historic Places as a contributing property to Ojai's downtown historic district (which is also listed on the State register). The hotel was designed by the firm of Mead & Requa and built by Robert Winfield as part of Edward D. Libbey's transformation of downtown Ojai. Although the hotel has undergone several additions and alterations over the years, a recent CalTrans historic report found it still contributes significantly to the "City Beautiful" layout and design of Ojai's historic downtown. Therefore, the hotel's historic architecture should be restored wherever possible, but certainly it should not be diminished by new construction projects

The most recent rehabilitation of the hotel (in 2002) was designed by Ojai architect David Bury for the Cluffs. To their credit, the Cluff's restored much of the hotel's original Spanish-Moorish character. (Bury also restored several other historic buildings in Ojai, including the Catholic Chapel, the Ojai Pergola, and buildings at the Ojai Valley Inn.) Unfortunately, Bury added some Mission-Style arches and a short arcade to the front of the building, which violated Historic Standard #3 (see below). The original building (until 2002) had no Spanish arches or arcades, except one on the wall along the street. The hotel was designed by Mead & Requa to reflect more of a Moorish and Mediterranean style. It was even landscaped with palm trees to add to the exotic look.

The goal of the city and developers today should be to avoid any further loss of historical significance, and to remove inappropriate historical elements whenever possible. This will not only preserve the historic character of the El Roblar Hotel, it will also preserve the authentic historic character of the whole downtown, for which the El Roblar is a contributing structure.

The question for now is whether the project before you can be exempted from CEQA review. Exemptions cannot be granted if a project negatively impacts a building's historical and architectural significance. The new owners first argued that The Oaks was not a historic resource. However, the State Office of Historic Preservation has affirmed what Ojai residents already knew--that it is an important historic resource.

Over the past several years, the citizens of Ojai have demonstrated that they value the downtown historic buildings and favor the preservation of the city's architectural and historic legacy. There are 19 historic landmarks in the downtown area and, as stated earlier, the downtown core is listed on the California register as a historic district. It is also deemed eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

The consultant (and ultimately the Planning Commission) must evaluate the proposal in terms of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Rehabilitation ("the Standards"). These are listed below so you can read each one to determine whether the proposal violates that standard. Adhering to the Standards will not only protect the buildings, but will allow the owners to take advantage of numerous tax benefits and the State Historic Building Code. Further, because the hotel contributes to Ojai's historic downtown, adhering to the standards will protect the historic integrity and significance of the Arcade, Post Office, Pergola, and Catholic Chapel.

Note: the Standards are primarily concerned with the exterior of historic buildings, though interior alterations should complement and be appropriate for a historic building.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards:

- 1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.**
- 2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.**

- 3. Each property shall 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 architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.**
- 4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.**
- 5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.**
- 6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.**
- 7. 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.**
- 8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.**
- 9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.**
- 10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall 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.**

If the proposed project violates any of these standards, it only means that a more in-depth study (EIR) must be completed to see if the violations can be avoided or mitigated. Most negative impacts to a historic building can be eliminated by simple design changes.

It is my hope that the new owners will continue restoring original design elements wherever possible. In some areas, it looks like they already have: the new entrance to the hotel, for example, appears to restore the original street entrance.

Some famous historic hotels have actually gained historic significance through their early historic alterations. The Riverside Mission Inn is a good example. Many important architects designed additions and alterations that are now part of the hotel's historic legacy.

The same is true for the El Roblar Hotel. Early additions by John Roine (1927) and Roy C. Wilson (1954) have become part of the hotel's history and character. The consultant will need to determine under Standard #4 whether these early additions contribute to, or detract from, the historical significance of the hotel. Also, relating to Standard #3, the 2002 remodel added several conjectural and faux historic design elements. The new 2022 proposal adds even more Spanish arches and arcades to the building, moving the hotel further away from Mead & Requa's original design.

The proposed new alterations to the El Roblar Hotel may be beautiful, elegant, and creative expressions of the Spanish style, while at the same time detracting from the historical and architectural significance of the building.

I ask that the commission wait for the Historic Report and HPC comments before reviewing the proposed additions and alterations to the hotel.

Thank you,

Craig Walker

January 16, 2022

Mr. Lucas Seibert
Community Development Manager, City of Ojai
401 S. Ventura St, Ojai Ca
cc: Planning Commission

I am writing to you today regarding three items:

1. Accuracy of Planning Commission minutes from the meeting of November 3, 2020.
2. Failure to notify residents nearby 202 Ventura Rd and 122 East Ojai Avenue and 209-211 E. Ojai Ave of pending discussions regarding development of El Roblar Hotel facilities at these properties.
3. Comments on the "Informational" Administrative Report published by Mr. Seibert on January 12, 2022 regarding these same properties and attached reports.

On the first item: I attended the November 3rd meeting last year to comment on proposed development at 202 N. Ventura St and 122 E. Ojai Ave. I was noticed about this meeting by the traditional postcard provided to nearby residents who would likely be materially impacted by the proposed aggressive developments at these locations. Of course, even though the item still appeared on the agenda, it had been postponed to a future date un-certain with no notice to previously notified parties. With apologies for wasted time, Mr. Seibert stated that any further discussion of this topic would be re-noticed via postcard. The delinquent agenda item postponement, the comments by Mr. Seibert apologizing for the failure of transparency, and the specific commitment to re-notify were not in the minutes of the meeting. This seems a gross oversight. In addition, my comments on the development were truncated to zero.

On the second item: I was fortunate to open the Planning Commission Agenda for January 19th. I do not typically do this. I was surprised to find an agenda item for the El Roblar development. In fact, a very substantial report was included. Mr. Seibert summarized the goal of the item to "file the information and presentation by the applicants with the opportunity for the public to comment...". While apparently a formal notification is not a requirement until a planning commission decision is pending, it is troublesome that a meeting with opportunity for public comment occurs with virtually no notification (only an agenda item listed on a document on a website) to the most severely impacted residents prior to the meeting. After a notification for a presentation and discussion that was cancelled on November 3, 2020, I wonder how many people are aware of the multiple presentations and discussions that have occurred by the end of the December 19th meeting. Is it appropriate that only the El Roblar owners and their multiple consultants have dialog with the Planning Commission, Community Development Director, and City Staff ?

Finally, on the third item: I thought it appropriate to document some concerns I have, and I believe many of the residents of the City may have, to this development. I have not seen many of them addressed clearly in prior meeting minutes. I am in favor of careful and constrained development. So I have tried to limit my comments to areas where I think the existing proposal for El Roblar is excessive.

Based on my review, the ERIP LLC proposal dated October 15, 2021 reduces the number of on-site parking spaces from 50 to 40 to provide space for further development of the property. It requests a waiver from existing parking requirements. In their proposal they further arguments that stress credulity. Here are a few:

1. The proposal states that "Parking ... is not an efficient use of land, and not in the best interest of residents". I would guess that 90% of residents of Ojai would disagree and would prefer more and simpler parking to additional hotel rooms used only for out-of-town guests.
2. They acknowledge community "efforts to convert additional areas to parking lots" are underway (not consistent with statement number 1) but claim that this should be done by the "community rather than burdening an individual applicant". In fact, they propose to **remove** ten existing on-site parking spaces, increasing the non-conformance of the property and then burden the community with increased noise and traffic congestion created by off-site parking. Conveniently, they convert these existing spaces to more profitable areas such as dining, pools, event areas etc.
3. This one is funny. They claim that "challenges related to parking may contribute to more vibrant streetscapes and less traffic" as folks choose to walk rather than drive. Really? Is a tourist from LA or NYC not going to travel to Ojai because they heard the parking is tough? Of course not. But as is already happening, locals will avoid downtown. And those who do come to downtown will start circling, looking for spaces and creating congestion. We've all been to those places. It's a joke to think that cities everywhere are trying to create parking challenges so as to contribute to their vibrant streetscapes.
4. The plan claims to "prioritize on-site parking." Clearly not true. Their plan eliminates 20 percent of the on-site spaces and creates off-site parking with related traffic congestion, valet foot traffic, and noise.
5. They claim there are "constraints" to on-site parking, so they cannot maintain the current level or add more as they should. Specifically, they suggest that "vegetation occurs on-site for the enjoyment of guests" and that is preferable to existing or new parking spaces. And they expand this concept to include the empty lot at 202 N. Ventura St. where they plan to pave over the majority of the grass and field to park 18 cars. In the existing proposal, with zero setback, these cars will be within four feet of the windows of existing and future residents of Ojai. Their desire to preserve and/or expand their profitable on-site ground for hotel guests supersedes their desire to leave open space in Ojai and protect existing residential areas.
6. They site "Precedence" of various city approvals granted with special consideration for parking. While an interesting legal construct, it's difficult to understand how other potentially marginal decisions should materially impact this specific case. Many(all?) of the cases cited have various non-conformances and have been dealt with on a case by case basis. El Roblar is similar in this regard. The proposal adds restaurant and bars and events open to the public that substantially change the use of this property, particularly at night. Is it reasonable, in fact, is it legal to provide waivers that would actually increase the non-conformance of the offending property just to support this additional business?
7. The proposal includes a Parking Management Plan to manage the 40 on-site spaces, the 20 spaces at 209-211 W. Ojai Ave and the 18 tandem spaces at 202 N. Ventura St. First off, they will lease parking management to another LLC. This will mean that the Hotel is NOT responsible for any issues that occur with parking...such as congestion, noise, damage etc. This seems like a bad indicator. The plan calls for "proven, traditional methods" to maximize capacity. One assumes this means they hire very young minimum-wage-drivers who enjoy squealing tires, slamming doors, rolling stop signs, and generally abusing traffic laws. Valet will be provided but guests will be able to access their cars if they like. Effectively they cannot control when cars will be in and out and who will be driving. In addition, if you review the parking proposal, you will see that at least four cars(~25% of total) are

blocked in, meaning extraction of these cars may require moving up to four other cars, causing a long duration of noise. This WILL impact the residents in the neighborhood, potentially at all times of day and night.

8. 204-206 N. Ventura Ave is a residential rental property with four families on-site. As owner of this property, I am very concerned with how this development will impact these families and other neighbors on Ventura St. Similar issues will impact neighbors at 209 W. Ojai Ave. My wife and I are well versed with parking issues as we live a few doors away from the Ojai Valley Inn. The empty lot adjacent to our lot is occasionally used for overflow parking. Despite best efforts by the Inn (who have substantially more staff than El Roblar will have), we have seen innumerable problems over the years. These have included traffic congestion, car lights coming thru our windows, parking noise such as door slamming, engines starting and stopping, late night noises from people- particularly late-night-drunks, and even major damage to cars from falling tree branches. These problems are constant and inevitable when commercial parking is located next to a residence. This is particularly true when the commercial entity supports multiple late night activities such as dining, drinking and events. There is NOTHING in the El Roblar plan that addresses the concerns of these existing residents of Ojai. In the case of 202 N. Ventura Ave, there is a wall proposed to protect the trees, but no set-back, no wall, no limitation of hours of operation, NOTHING to protect the residents of the adjacent lot. Are we really at the point where the comfort of the trees is more important than that of the residents? And if we need to take action in the future to address any issues, we will be dealing with a separate LLC who manages parking, not the El Roblar Hotel LLC.

I hope you will consider these items in your discussion on the parking issues associated with the El Roblar project. Incidentally, if you would like to further review the issue of "precedence" that would support a waiver, I would offer to you the history of 204-206 N. Ventura St. When I re-modeled this property, I was required to remove the non-conformance and increase the on-site parking from four to eight spots at substantial cost. As this was just 4 years ago, and as it was a re-model with no substantial changes, it would seem that on-site parking was a very high priority for the City. I hope that becomes a priority for this project as well.

I would ask the Commission to consider requiring these changes to the project:

1. No waiver for decreasing on-site parking. 50 sites – or more - should remain.
2. Reduce parking spots on 202 N Ventura to 10. Eliminate tandem and blocked in spots that add considerably to noise disturbance when a vehicle is moved.
3. Provide a six foot high sound barrier wall on property line between 202 N Ventura and 204 N Ventura
4. Provide 5 foot setback for parking and pavement between 202 N Ventura and 204 N Ventura
5. Restrict hours of access to parking near residential sites. No access from 10PM to 7AM.
6. Provide a formal method for the City to easily repeal parking permits for off-site lots based on repeated problems with noise disturbance and other violations.

Best Regards,

Chris Gardner

Ojai, Ca 93023

Shari Herbruck

From: Christopher Land <c.land@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Thursday, December 16, 2021 7:45 AM
To: Shari Herbruck; Cheryl Davis
Subject: Further comments relating to the El Roblar hotel parking plan

Dear Planning Commission:

After watching the proceeds of the Planning Commissions special meeting on December 8, we have additional concerns and comments to submit. After viewing the meeting, we have to say that we are less confident that the Planning Commission and city staff are willing and able to support our interests. So we will attempt to communicate our concerns more clearly and more forcefully below.

We are also wondering how the process goes from this point on. Can you inform us of that?

First, however, let us say that we remain strong supporters of the El Roblar Hotel project. Our specific concern is with their parking plan, in particular the plan to supplement their limited parking with a sublease of the lots at 209 and 211 West Ojai Avenue.

Term of Sublease for parking at 209 and 211 West Ojai Avenue

In our oral and written comments for the December 8 Special Meeting, we described the off-site parking proposal as "a short term solution to a long term problem."

Lucas corrected me (Chris) after I spoke via Zoom at the meeting and there followed some discussion about a longer lease that we did not completely hear given the poor audio. The only information about the term of the lease that we could see in the published report on the discussion item was this (on page 20 of Exhibit D):

2021-12-16 10:00:00

2. Sublease Term.

(a) Initial Term. The initial term of this 2021 (the "Commencement Date"), and, unless so Sublease, shall expire on December 31, 2025 (the "

As we read this, the lease included with the meeting materials expires on December 31, 2025. So we still don't understand how this is a long term lease. Others in the meeting seemed to believe there was a longer lease in place; we did not see evidence of that in the meeting materials.

This discussion is about granting a variance

Also, the word "variance" seems to have been absent from the discussion. A variance should be granted only when a proposal is deemed worthy of exemption from restrictions that would normally limit it. We encourage the Planning Commission to remember that the code is the code for a reason and that exemptions or variances should only be granted when the applicant has proven that they serve the interests of the community as described in city code (Sec. 10-2.2601). In this case, the applicant has not made that case and there are good reasons for locating parking for a business within a reasonable distance of that business. This is especially true once you begin moving commercial activities into residential areas. Most of the concerns relating to this proposed parking solution pertain to that distance and the impacts on residential areas. For that reason alone, it should be denied and other options for additional parking explored.

Lighting is not our only concern

Lucas said he'd spoken with neighbors about lighting concerns. I (Chris) was one of those neighbors, but I expressed other concerns to Lucas that he failed to mention. The other concerns I have include noise, litter, loitering, how the lot would be managed etc. Also, the difference in impact between parking in front of Beacon/Blue and parking behind. These are of great concern.

Valet vs Self Park

There were clear inconsistencies between the written proposal (for self-park) and the discussion itself, which often spoke about guided/valet parking, fencing, and lighting. We gathered from the proceedings that the proposal for self-park at the off-site location came as a recommendation of staff and that the developers would prefer to manage the lot themselves. We're surprised and disappointed that staff (after speaking to us and hearing neighbor concerns in response to the first parking proposal) would ignore our concerns about times of lot access and recommend the self-park option. This does not give us confidence in this process or the advocacy of staff for neighbors. We were also disconcerted that one of the developers confessed that they did not yet have an understanding of the requirements of the Beacon lot. We can say with some certainty, that if the Beacon lot is used as overflow parking for the hotel, there will be a lot of problems either way with noise, foot traffic, and hours of use chief among them. But even if a valet option is put into place, most of our concerns still hold.

Difficulty of managing the remote lots

To oversee and manage the use of the parking lot at 209 and 211 West Ojai Avenue per any agreement, the hotel would need to staff that lot to a degree that seems unlikely given the parking operations the developers outlined in the meeting. If reasonable arguments fail and the off-site parking plan is approved, at the very least it needs to be governed by residential noise level restrictions rather than commercial ones. And even if those are the conditions set by the city, enforcing them is likely to be a challenge, which means the residential neighbors will be impacted adversely. It's still a bad idea.

Liquor license and hours of operation concerns

It is one thing to grant a full liquor license to a business (like the El Roblar Hotel) in the center of town, but it should be recognized that doing so will also impact residential neighbors of the parking lots that support that business. It goes against the policies of the California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control to grant a license to a bar that is open until midnight adjacent to a residential neighborhood due to the impact it would have on its residential neighbors. So why would we consider allowing the patrons of that hotel/restaurant/bar park their cars next to residential areas? This is another reason to argue that the parking solution for the hotel and restaurant should be close at hand to the business itself regardless of whether it is a self-park or valet operation. The Planning Commission's deliberations on the Tipple and Ramble case make clear the need to consider the interests of residential neighbors when businesses apply for variances or operational changes. The parking plan

and midnight hours of operation proposed for the restaurant/bar of the El Roblar Hotel are not only unprecedented for Ojai, but the true impact of that late closing will be felt disproportionately by those of us who live right next to the parking lot, which is 50 feet from our bedroom. Should the hotel/restaurant/bar operation be granted the license to operate until midnight and the variance to park cars at 209 and 211 West Ojai Avenue, due to the nature of their proposed parking operations, this would effectively be permitting a late-night bar to operate within 100 feet of a residence, which goes against ABC policies and would be a bad precedent for the Planning Commission to set in Ojai.

We are happy to have a conversation about any of this with anyone who wishes to converse. In the meantime, we hope and trust that the Planning Commission will give weight to our interests as they seek a path forward.

Chris Land
Margo Land

Subject:

RE: 122 E. Ojai Avenue (Oaks Hotel) Project

From: Ernest Niglio**Sent:** Wednesday, October 27, 2021 11:49 AM**To:** Shari Herbruck**Cc:****Subject:** 122 E. Ojai Avenue (Oaks Hotel) Project

Hi Shari,

Mr. Shamshiri, one of the principals working on the old Oaks Hotel across the street from Rainbow Bridge, offered to show me what they are doing there. I was first grateful that someone thought of their neighbor, to introduce themselves and explain their plans for the project.

I was very impressed with the sensitivity they showed for Ojais' history and with the quality and beauty of what they are planning. I feel what they are planning will add tremendously to our already charming town.

Sincerely,

Ernest Niglio, Rainbow Bridge

From: Jeff Berndt
Sent: Wednesday, October 27, 2021 9:18 AM
To: Shari Herbruck
Subject: Support of Hotel El Roblar

Please accept this letter from Kristin Berndt and Jeff Berndt of Thacher Road in Ojai in support of The Hotel El Roblar Project (formally The Oaks Hotel) located at 122 E Ojai Avenue.

We believe that it is so sad to have such a lovely facility dormant in what is the epicenter of our amazing downtown historic core. We would love to have that building and – hopefully – the theatre brought back to its original glory.

We have lived in Ojai since 2015 and the theatre has been closed that entire time and the Oaks has been closed since the Thomas Fire. We understand that those two facilities were once assets and gems of Ojai. Unfortunately, they have been dormant for almost our entire time in Ojai.

Empty buildings are not good for a town.

Additionally, it has become so hard for our friends and family to find a place to stay in town – there is such limited availability in Ojai hotels. The Ojai Valley Inn has become so expensive and exclusive and is now only available to uber-wealthy families. Normal people like us and our friends are being priced out of experiencing this amazing town. The Inn has too much pricing power.

Reviving an existing hotel like the Oaks would (1) clean up a vacant building (2) not add any new facility to Ojai (for those who are worried about the downsides of growth) (3) bring more hotel units to Ojai which would bring down the cost of all hotel rooms which would allow normal people – not just super-rich families – the chance to experience Ojai and (4) would add tourists to support our downtown stores, restaurants (which seem to be more and more limited) and merchants and (5) would add tax revenue which would support our schools and other public services.

This project seems like a no-brainer for Ojai. This is good for our town. I hope we not only approve the project but that we also partner with the owners to support them and their interests in investing in Ojai.

Let's not look a gift-horse in the mouth.

Jeff and Kristin Berndt

Jeffrey D Berndt
Director of Institutional Advancement
The Thacher School

From: Rick Ridgeway
Sent: Tuesday, October 26, 2021 9:39 PM
To: Shari Herbruck
Subject: Supporting the Oaks (El Roblar) Hotel Project

Hi Shari. I'm a 30-year Ojai resident writing in support of the renovation and reopening of the El Roblar Hotel catty-corner to the Post Office. I've had a chance to look through the hotel and can confirm the restoration work is first-rate. I think it will be a great addition to downtown, and it will also provide access for visitors who can walk around from their hotel rooms without getting in their cars, such that they won't be adding to the traffic congestion from visitors in other hotels from the Ojai Valley Inn to the Capri, who have to get in their cars and drive in order to visit downtown.

I have stayed in Eric Goode's hotels in NYC, and they are exquisitely designed and appointed. He has wonderful tastes that match Ojai's heritage, and he's a terrific hotelier who knows how to make guests feel at home, another attribute aligned with our town's values.

Thank you so much,

Rick Ridgeway

Sent: Craig Walker
To: Tuesday, October 5, 2021 1:57 PM
Subject: Shari Herbruck
Public Comment for Planning Commission Meeting Oct. 6

October 5, 2021

For Public Comments at the October 6 Planning Commission Meeting:

To the Ojai Planning Commission,

Recently it came to my attention that CalTrans completed a Historic Resources Report on downtown Ojai as part of the City's ATP proposal. The report evaluated the downtown in terms of its eligibility for the California and National Registers of Historic Places.

The CalTrans consultants concluded that the El Roblar Hotel is a historic resource for CEQA purposes. This means a historic report is required for any project that could impact its historic significance. The report will determine the historic significance of the buildings and whether the project will negatively impact them. This is necessary before any CEQA exemptions can be granted.

In their report, the CalTrans consultants concluded that the El Roblar contributes to a potential downtown historic district that is eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. Their review of the hotel did not consider its eligibility as a local landmark; thus, it must be evaluated as a potential local historic resource as well.

CEQA requires that historic reports be written by consultants under contract with the lead agency—the City of Ojai. This is also required for all historic reports in the City of Ojai's historic preservation ordinance.

I urge you to follow the CEQA regulations (and City ordinance) by requiring and commissioning a HRR report to accompany the El Roblar DRP packet so the commission—and the public—can evaluate any potential impacts to one of Ojai's most historic buildings. This will ensure transparency and ensure the historic El Roblar Hotel continues to contribute to the wonderful complex of historic buildings that have defined downtown Ojai for over 100 years.

Thank you,

Craig Walker



CAROLYN GLASOE BAILEY FOUNDATION

October 4, 2021

Ojai City Planning Commission

Attn: Shari Herbruck

shari.herbruck@ojai.ca.gov

Ojai, CA

Letter of Support: El Roblar (122 E Ojai Avenue, formerly known as The Oaks Hotel)

Dear Ojai City Planning Commission,

I, Frederick Janka, Executive Director, Carolyn Glasoe Bailey Foundation, located at 100 South Montgomery Street, am in support of The Hotel El Roblar Project (formally The Oaks Hotel) located at 122 E Ojai Avenue.

I strongly believe that this project will serve as not only an economic revitalization but also a cultural revitalization of Downtown Ojai. I look forward to a new, and welcoming, gathering space for the arts and culture community and our artists, friends, and patrons. We applaud the efforts of the owners and development team to return the site to its original and historic presence, while honoring the Ojai of past, present, and future. Our community continues to lack a true "heart of Ojai" and we are counting on the future Hotel El Roblar to help fill this void. I hope that you will strongly consider moving this project forward.

Sincerely,

Frederick Janka

Executive Director

David Comfort

Ojai, CA 93023

October 2, 2021

Ms. Shari Herbruck
City of Ojai
Planning and Building Technician
401 South Ventura Street
Ojai, CA 93024

RECEIVED

OCT 04 2021

Community Development
Department

Dear Ms. Herbruck,

I am writing to voice my family's support for The Hotel El Roblar Project (formerly The Oaks Hotel) located at 122 East Ojai Avenue. We are looking forward for this property to be brought back to its original historic beauty and believe that it will be a great addition to downtown Ojai. We know Ramin Shamshiri and Warner Ebbink to be responsible stewards who care greatly for the Ojai and the Valley. We hope that you approve their design review on October 6th so that there will be no delay in bringing back this wonderful hotel. Thank you.

Regards,

David Comfort and Kasey Crown

From: Ray Powers Creekside Prods.
Sent: Friday, October 1, 2021 4:37 PM
To: Shari Herbruck
Subject: Planning Commission Public Comment

Hello Shari,

I'd like to make public comment on two of the agenda items for the upcoming planning commission meeting on October 6.

Item #2: El Roblar Hotel

My main concern is the reduction of on-site parking spaces and what has been done to accommodate this. Where are the employees going to park? Where is any overflow parking going to be? Parking is already difficult to find in that area. What requirements are being made of the owner in regards to parking?

Thank you,
Ray Powers

From: Dawn Thieding
Sent: Monday, September 27, 2021 10:09 AM
To: Lucas Seibert
Cc: Shari Herbruck; James Vega; Gail Davis; Brian Aikens Elise
DePuydt; Craig Walker
Subject: DRP 21-003, Hotel El Roblar / Historical Resource

Mr. Siebert:

I am submitting the "HISTORICAL RESOURCES EVALUATION REPORT for the City of Ojai Ojai Ave/Maricopa Highway Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Improvements Project" dated April 2018 for the record for Design Review Permit DRP 21-003, Proposed Remodel of the Entire Hotel El Roblar located at 122 East Ojai Avenue.

Image of report cover page is provided below:

HISTORICAL RESOURCES EVALUATION REPORT
FOR THE
CITY OF OJAI OJAI AVE/MARICOPA HIGHWAY PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE
IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT
CITY OF OJAI, VENTURA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA


EFIS 07 1700 0274
EA 07-34220

Prepared by: 

Laura O'Neill, Sr. Architectural Historian, Emily Rinaldi, Assoc. Architectural Historian,
Allison Lyons, Assoc. Architectural Historian, and Audrey von Ahrens, Architectural Historian
GPA Consulting
617 S. Olive Street, Suite 910
Los Angeles, CA 90014

Reviewed by: 

Josh Knudson
PQS Architectural History
Caltrans District 7
100 S. Main Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Approved by: 

Kelly Ewing-Toledo
Environmental Branch Chief, Cultural Studies
Caltrans District 7
100 S. Main Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

As file size exceeds allowable email attachment size, report is accessible via Google Drive link at:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1x0kSuppFxxN12m4Zb9ID5ADAFp2fYkG/view?usp=drivesdk>

Information regarding archaeological resources is confidential and is redacted. The complete report is on file with the City of Ojai Public Works. Excerpts of sections relevant to Hotel El Roblar are provided below.

In summary, the report states that Hotel El Roblar is a contributing resource to an National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)- and California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) eligible historic district and that Hotel El Roblar is determined eligible for the NHRP and CRHR. As such, Hotel El Roblar is a historic property for the purposes of NEPA Section 106 compliance and a historical resource for the purposes of CEQA compliance. Findings of this report require that a Historic Resources Report (HRR) be performed for this project (DRP 21-003) pursuant to the Ojai General Plan, Ojai Municipal Code and CEQA.

Please note that the attached evaluation reviews historic buildings and historical resources in compliance with state and federal regulations. Further evaluation is needed to determine whether Hotel El Roblar is eligible for listing on the local register of historical resources (i.e., as a City of Ojai Historical Landmark) or otherwise historically significant to the City of Ojai. Additionally, further consideration should be given to Hotel El Roblar's individual eligibility for the California Register of Historic Places as many of the alterations made over the years and people involved were significant in local history and changes to the property may have acquired historic significance in their own right. The 2018 report does not include much important and relevant information about the hotel and its place in the development of the community of Ojai. As such, an HRR for DRP 21-003 is needed to further evaluate the property and to determine if the proposed project may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource -- both Hotel El Roblar and the Downtown Ojai Historic District.

Information contained within the 2018 Historical Resources Evaluation Report is also relevant to the Historic Preservation Commission's efforts regarding the Downtown Ojai Historic District and should be forwarded accordingly.

Please confirm receipt of this email and download

Sincerely,
Dawn Thieding
Cultural Resources Specialist

EXCERPTS FROM:

HISTORICAL RESOURCES EVALUATION REPORT
for the City of Ojai Ojai Ave/Maricopa Highway Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Improvements Project
conducted by CALTRANS
dated April 2018

PAGE iii:

The Downtown Ojai Historic District is determined eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion A for its important association with commercial, institutional, and recreational development in Ojai; under Criterion B for its association with Edward Drummond Libbey; and under Criterion C as an early example of a unified "Spanish Town" plan in the Mission Revival style, as well as for representing the work of master architects Frank Mead and Richard S. Requa. Therefore, it is considered a historic property for the purposes of Section 106 compliance. Its period of significance is 1917 to 1928. In addition, the historic district is eligible for the CRHR. Therefore, it also is a historical resource for the purposes of CEQA compliance.

Of the 37 resources documented within the Downtown Ojai Historic District boundary, 28 contribute to its significance and integrity and 9 do not. As contributors to an NRHP- and CRHR-eligible historic district, the 28 contributing resources are determined eligible for the NHRP and CRHR, as well. As such, they are historic properties for the purposes of Section 106 compliance and historical resources for the purposes of CEQA compliance.

PAGE 23.

One property, the El Roblar Hotel (Map Reference No. 16), was evaluated as both a potential contributor to the historic district and as a potential individual resource, due to its unique context and integrity considerations.

PAGE 26.

El Roblar Hotel

(Map Reference No. 16, 122 E. Ojai Avenue)

This hotel, now known as the Oaks at Ojai, was designed by Mead and Requa as part of Edward Libbey's 1917 vision for redeveloping the City of Ojai. It was constructed in 1919-1920 in the Mission Revival style. The property has experienced several alterations since its initial construction, including additions, adjacent new construction, window and door changes, and changes to its highly visible perimeter wall. The original main building retains sufficient integrity to contribute to the Downtown Ojai Historic District, despite the changes to the property as a whole; however, the property does not possess individual significance under any of the established NRHP or CRHR criteria, so it is not individually eligible. Thus, the recommended status code is 2D2.

PAGE 28.

Historical resources for the purposes of CEQA [resources in this category would include CRHR listed or eligible resources (per State Historical Resources Commission determination), resources identified as significant in surveys that meet State Office of Historic Preservation standards, resources that are designated landmarks under local ordinances, and resources that meet the CRHR criteria as outlined in PRC §5024.1.]

-->> TABLE LISTS 122 E OJAI AVE, EL ROBLAR HOTEL, OHP Status Code 2D2

PAGE 63.

DPR PRIMARY RECORD, DOWNTOWN OJAI HISTORIC DISTRICT

PAGE 119.

DPR PRIMARY RECORD, EL ROBLAR HOTEL

From: Tina Wilhelm
Sent: Wednesday, September 22, 2021 1:22 PM
To: Shari Herbruck
Subject: The Hotel El Roblar Project

Hi Shari,

As a resident of Ojai located at 1333 E. Sulphur Mountain Rd., I want to express my support for The Roblar Project (formally The Oaks Hotel) located at 122 E Ojai Avenue. I believe that this project will enhance the historic feel of downtown Ojai and help increase revenue for local businesses that rely on tourism.

Best regards,
Tina Wilhelm

From: Alexandra Hrivnak <alex@ojaimountainfarm.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 22, 2021 1:25 PM
To: Shari Herbruck
Subject: Hotel El Roblar

Good Afternoon Shari,

As a resident of Ojai located at East Sulphur Mountain Road, I am in support of the Hotel El Roblar Project (formally The Oaks Hotel) located at 122 E Ojai Avenue.

It would be wonderful to bring the history of Ojai back to life and I think this project will do just that.

Best regards,
Alex Hrivnak

From: Lucas Brower
Sent: Tuesday, September 21, 2021 8:26 AM
To: Shari Herbruck
Subject: Hotel Roblar

To whom it may concern,

I, Lucas Brower, located at Montana Circle, Ojai CA 93023, am in support of The Hotel El Roblar Project (formally The Oaks Hotel) located at 122 E Ojai Avenue.

I believe that Ojai residents and visitors would both benefit from the addition of another hotel in town. Personally, I am looking forward to having another option for fine dining and evening activity! I believe that Hotel Roblar will be a great addition to the community, and will certainly be better for town than a hotel which has been sitting empty since the pandemic began. I understand concerns regarding crowding, and regarding the pace of change in Ojai, but I believe that this project will be in line with the aesthetics and spirit of this valley, and that we will all benefit as a result. I also believe that Ojai has the capacity to receive these additional guests without causing any major crowding or inconvenience to the residents of the valley.

Warm regards and good luck with the decision process.

Sincerely,

Lucas Brower

From: Chelsea Cox
Sent: Saturday, September 18, 2021 9:37 AM
To: Shari Heßbruck
Cc:
Subject: 122 E Ojai Ave

Hello,

My name is Chelsea Cox. I'm raising my family here in Ojai. I've lived here for five years but have been spending time here for more than a decade.

I was elated to hear the plans for the Hotel El Roblar and wish to lodge my full support for this project.

The Oaks was nice enough but I'm confident this new ownership group will greatly improve the space and be respectful of the community and locale.

Thank you,
Chelsea

From: Kristopher Moller
Sent: Friday, September 17, 2021 3:21 PM
To: Shari Herbruck; Lawren Howell

Dear City Planning Commission Members,

We, Lawren Howell and Kristopher Moller, residing at France Circle in Ojai, are writing to express our support of the El Roblar Hotel (formerly the Oaks located at 122 E Ojai Avenue) renovation project. We believe that reviving this business, in a visual style that is representative of the city's founding aesthetics, will create additional revenues to our local businesses in our city center. We have been anticipating an inspired revival of the old Oaks Hotel since it closed after the Thomas Fire, and the plans for the El Roblar seem to go above and beyond our hopes for this cornerstone of our city.

Thank you for your time,

Lawren and Kris

From: KMB
Sent: Friday, September 17, 2021 2:02 PM
To: Shari Herbruck
Cc:
Subject: EL ROBLAR HOTEL, YES!

Dear Ms. Herbruck,

I am so very excited about the renovation and rejuvenation of the property fka The Oaks Hotel by the amazing group headed by Warner and Ramin. The design sense and successful track record of these individuals and their businesses will be such a welcome addition to Ojai.

I am in west downtown at West Eucalyptus Street so this project is very much in my backyard. I wholeheartedly support this revamped hotel and restaurant and look forward to its opening.

Thank you for all that you can do to support this project.

Very sincerely,
Karen Marie Bellavita

Dr. Charlie Walton

Ojai, CA 93023

September 15, 2021

Ms. Shari Herbruck

City of Ojai

Planning and Building Technician

401 South Ventura Street

Ojai, CA 93024

Dear Ms. Herbruck,

I am writing to voice my family's support for The Hotel El Roblar Project (formerly The Oaks Hotel) located at 122 East Ojai Avenue. We are excited for this property to be brought back to its original historic beauty and believe that it will be a great addition to downtown Ojai. We know Ramin Shamshiri and Warner Ebbink to be responsible stewards who care greatly for the Ojai Valley. We hope that you approve their design review on October 6th so that there will be no delay in bringing back this wonderful hotel. Thanks you.

Sincerely,

Charlie Walton

Lilly Walton

Clementine Walton

Goldie Walton

Vera Walton

From: Booda Belly Massage
Sent: Thursday, September 16, 2021 11:38 AM
To: Shari Herbruck
Subject: Hotel El Roblar

Dear Shari,

I, Becca Fuchs, am an Ojai resident and local business owner (sole proprietor) writing in support of The Hotel El Roblar Project (formally The Oaks Hotel) located at 122 E Ojai Avenue. The intention of the business owners, to bring the building back to its historic original glory, is unique in our day and age. I have seen other new Ojai businesses come in with a design that changes the feel of downtown, making it seem more urban than it is meant to be. I love that the designers and owners of Hotel El Roblar share a real love of Ojai and therefore have a priority to stay true to it.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Becca Fuchs

From: tony yanow
Sent: Thursday, September 16, 2021 10:19 AM
To: Shari Herbruck
Subject: Hotel El Roblar

Good Morning Shari,

As a local resident and business owner, I think The Hotel El Roblar at 122 E Ojai Ave would be a benefit to the community greatly. It will be good for Ojai to have such a historic building reanimated.

Please accept this email as my support letter for this project.

Many thanks,
Tony Yanow

From: Griffin Barkley
Sent: Wednesday, September 15, 2021 5:36 PM
To: Shari Herbruck
Subject: In Support of Hotel El Roblar

Hello,

My name is Griffin Barkley and my family and I live in Ojai at Meiners Rd. I am writing to show our support of The Hotel El Roblar Project (formally The Oaks Hotel) located at 122 E Ojai Avenue.

We think this a very positive and important project for the city of Ojai, it's residents and local businesses. This city block has been vacant and abandoned for nearly 5 years and a hotel as proposed would certainly restore and improve the energy and heartbeat of downtown Ojai.

We feel strongly that allowing this Hotel to come to fruition can certainly bring additional business to the local community. Not to mention the tax revenue this certainly delivers to the city of Ojai.

I am convinced the design, style, and soul of the hotel as proposed captures the essence of Ojai.

Thank you and we look forward to spending lots of time at the hotel in the near future.

Regards,

Griffin Barkley

Ojai, CA 93023

From: jules'
Sent: Wednesday, September 15, 2021 12:53 PM
To: Shari Herbruck
Subject: City Planning Commission Design Review Hotel El Roblar

To the City Planning Commission:

I, Julie Hahn, resident, Foothill, Ojai, am writing on behalf of my neighbor, Ramin Shamshiri, who has a pending hotel project scheduled for Design Review in front of the City Planning Commission on October 6, 2021.

Over the past 3 years I have shared a daily ritual of hiking up Foothill into the LosPadres with Ramin. I am always excited to see Ramin and hear of his enthusiasm for his restoration of the "Oaks" and our shared passion for preserving Ojai's character, especially Ojai's beautiful downtown historic core. Ojai is so lucky to have Ramin, a world class designer, who is passionate about Ojai and preserving its historic character!

Ojai is also very fortunate to have a City Planning Commission that carefully monitors our building designs. Hopefully after this extensive planning phase, the Commission will approve the Design Review for the "Oaks" so as to begin the revitalization process of this historic iconic gem and bring life and vitality back to the heart of Ojai.

Thank you,

Julie Hahn

From: Will Knox
Sent: Tuesday, September 14, 2021 6:22 PM
To: Shari Herbruck
Subject: THE HOTEL EL ROBLAR PROJECT

Wendi and Will Knox residing at Fairview, Ojai 93023 are heartily in support of The Hotel El Roblar Project (formally The Oaks Hotel) located at 122 E Ojai Avenue.

This will create a wonderful addition to the corner which has suffered so, since the fire and add to a local hospitality scene which can only help the economy of Ojai with additional tax dollars and visitor spending into our central business district.

It is our understanding that the team re-developing the property only wish to upgrade and restore to its former luster and glory. Adding another iconic building to our iconic town.

Thank you.

Will & Wendi Knox

Will Knox

The logo for theknoxcompany features the word "theknoxcompany" in a lowercase, sans-serif font. The "knox" part is bolded, and a small icon of a fork is integrated into the letter "x". Below the main text, the words "restaurant real estate & concept development" are written in a smaller, all-caps, sans-serif font.

From: Fatima Robinson
Sent: Tuesday, September 14, 2021 11:46 AM
To: Shari Herbruck

To whom it may concern,

I am in full support of the hotel located at 122 E. Ojai Ave being renovated. I live at Mcnell Rd and am always in need of a place for my friends to stay and everywhere is always sold out.

Please consider this as a much needed asset to Ojai.

Thank you,

Fatima Robinson

From: Dmitri Siegel
Sent: Tuesday, September 14, 2021 12:45 PM
To: Shari Herbruck
Subject: Our family supports the Hotel El Roblar Project

Hello. My wife, two kids and I have lived at Cuyama Rd. in Ojai for the last seven years and have lived in Ojai for ten years. In that time we have grown to love Ojai for many things but have been consistently frustrated that the historic center of town is so fragmented and under-utilized.

That is why we are so supportive of The Hotel El Roblar Project (formally The Oaks Hotel) located at 122 E Ojai Avenue. We want there to be a true center of town feeling and revive the historic nature of our downtown. This space has been under-utilized and largely dormant since we moved here and it forms a dead zone right in the middle of town. We feel like having a vibrant and beautiful hotel/bar/restaurant in this location will bring our town into better balance and make it more walkable.

We also feel like this project will help local businesses in and around the Arcade with more visitors exploring Ojai on foot. Right now visitors to Ojai seem to drive to town from out-lying accommodations and due to the fragmented downtown experience they drive even from spot to spot in Ojai. We expect that guests at the Hotel El Roblar will park once and then venture out on foot creating a more congenial and walkable downtown experience.

Thanks for considering our input on this project. We really feel it will have a tremendously positive impact on the quality of life in Ojai.

Thank you,
Dmitri Siegel

From:

Sent:

Wednesday, September 8, 2021 6:00 PM

To:

Shari Herbruck

Subject:

El Roblar Hotel

I reside at **703 Country Club Drive, Ojai** and want to register my support for The Hotel El Roblar Project (formally The Oaks Hotel) located at 122 E Ojai Avenue. While I send this support as a private residence of Ojai, I, as the Vice President of the Board of Trustees of the Ojai Valley Museum, support the mission of the Ojai Valley Museum to preserve the history of the Ojai valley. I think this Project serves that mission and, in the process, lends beauty, functionality, and vitality to our downtown district. The applicants have a long history of doing projects like this and the City will do well in relying upon them to do as they say and on delivering. This project will bring more people to downtown to support our fragile retail economy there, and those people will be walking from the hotel!

The logo for Stradling, featuring the word "Stradling" in a bold, sans-serif font. Above the letter "i" in "Stradling", there is a small, stylized graphic of a bird or a winged figure.

James D. Richman
Shareholder

Stradling Yocca Carlson & Rauth

Santa Barbara, CA 93101

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE

This message is intended only for the use of the individual or entity to which it is addressed, and may contain information that is privileged, confidential and exempt from disclosure under applicable law. If the reader of this message is not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any dissemination, distribution or copying of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please notify us immediately. Thank you.

From:
Sent: Wednesday, September 8, 2021 5:29 PM
To: Shari Herbruck
Cc:
Subject: Letter of Support for Hotel El Roblar

Dear Ojai City Planning Commission,

My name is Tim Rhone and I am co-owner of The Mob Shop, a future neighbor to Hotel El Roblar.

As you know, 122 E Ojai Ave has been inactive since The Oaks Hotel closed due to damage from the Thomas Fire in 2017. This new project, the Hotel El Roblar, will honor the history of this integral Ojai property and bring new vibrancy to our neighborhood.

I fully support this project and I sincerely hope you will allow it to move forward.

My very best,

Tim

The primary driver of our well-being is our culture. A culture built on selfishness is harsh, brittle, and short-lived. - Seth Godin

Tim Rhone
Co-Owner, The Mob Shop

Shop Hours (Find me there Thu - Mon)

Mon, Wed, Thu, Fri: 10 - 5

Sat: 9 - 5

Sun: 9 - 4

Closed Tue

From: Cathy Cluff
Sent: Wednesday, September 8, 2021 5:04 PM
To: Shari Herbruck
Subject: Planning commission meeting for the former Oaks at Ojai

Dear Shari and committee members,

Cathy Sheila Cluff residing at 267 Fairview Rd Ojai along with my father Don Cluff at 222 Running ridge trail Ojai wish to express our support of the plans for the reinvention of the El Roblar hotel at 122 E. Ojai Ave Ojai.

It took me as the President and CEO of The Oaks at Ojai, and our family, the previous owners of 40+ years considerable time and due diligence in choosing Ramin Shamshiri and partners to buy our families legacy. In our consideration of dozens of bidders the top priority even above price was "what would be best for the town of Ojai." I asked potential owners what they envisioned for the building, the staffing, the foot print on Ojai and the potential for increasing revenue to the city with bed tax. When one such bidder said they wanted to reduce the number of rooms to around 25 and share their staff from their Malibu location, we viewed that as a negative for Ojai. Another potential owner wanted to own and operate the property from their home state in the South, also a negative in our eyes as we wanted hands-on owners who would be part of the community.

The plan that Ramin and his partners laid out checked all the boxes we were looking for to benefit Ojai. They want to maintain a historic essence of the building, with its Spanish Colonial Revival stylings to blend into the downtown landscape. This is something myself and my parents worked hard to capture, while keeping the flexibility of our own concepts and designs to maximize our resources. There was no question in our minds that when they can get the new hotel up and running, it will provide not only a plethora of jobs for locals, but create careers such as we did with The Oaks for the last 40 years.

In reviewing their plans the idea of valet parking stood out as a wonderful option to encourage guests to have their car parked and leave it, as most of our Oaks guests did. We viewed riding a bike, walking the shops, and hiking the trails as the best way to enjoy Ojai.

I as well as my father hope the planning commission will treat Ramin and partners with the same respect and admiration The Oaks and The Cluff family always had as productive and beneficial partners of the community.

We believe this idyllic and prominent Ojai property renovated will truly benefit the stores, restaurants, the arts and the residents in the form of jobs and city revenue for improvements with little to no additional impact than The Oaks at Ojai wellness spa had for so many years.

Sincerely,

Cathy S. Cluff and Don Cluff

From: leslie hess
Sent: Wednesday, September 8, 2021 3:29 PM
To: Shari Herbruck
Subject: Agenda Item #3, Hotel El Roblar

Good afternoon Ms. Herbruck. Below is a letter for distribution to the Planning Commissioners concerning an item on the agenda tonight. Could you kindly let me know that you have received this email? Thank you, Leslie Hess

September 8, 2021

Mr. Lucas Seibert
Chair Quilici
Vice Chair Nolan
Commissioner Lottes
Commissioner Swift
Commissioner Trent

There are some concerns regarding agenda item #3, the Hotel El Roblar plans.

This plan first should be reviewed by the historic preservation commission. It is a treasured part of Ojai's architectural history. It seems appropriate, logical, and most importantly, fair to the community, that this first be reviewed by the historic preservation commission.

There are other concerns about this design. The plan does not serve what is in the best interests of our community. It is inappropriate for the size of the town. Substantially decreasing parking on the property from 40 spots to 10, having valet parkers driving cars across Ojai Avenue and other directions day and night, is not in our best interests. Having over a hundred parking spaces in parking lots around town which are somehow reserved for hotel guests, special event attendees and bar and restaurant patrons, does not seem enforceable, and it will push out others of us who use downtown parking spaces. The idea that if the hotel loses access to some of these "guaranteed" off-site parking places that the hotel owner/manager will immediately inform the Ojai Community Development office seems unrealistic. Tracking whether or not the hotel has shut down rooms relative to parking availability sounds potentially unworkable and puts an undue burden on City Staff.

Adequate parking is critical to an inviting and well-functioning downtown. The applicant should provide for parking onsite as that is what is best for all who live in Ojai, and those who visit here.

People patronizing the bar and the restaurant from in the Ojai valley or beyond, will also need places to park. Additionally, people who provide services at the hotel, which could be about forty or more people a day, will need to park. The service providers, and restaurant and bar patrons will likely park on residential streets.

The staff report references a traffic study which states that the project would generate an additional eight daily trips over the entitled trip allowance. This portion of the document is unclear, but maybe that's eight daily trips in addition to 110 daily trips? Please clarify. The report states "further vehicle miles traveled analysis is not required." It is unclear why further study is not required. Most people who stay in hotels in Ojai do drive their cars to various destinations, such as the East end, Santa Barbara, the beach, wineries, and shops. They will take their cars in and out of valet parking to make these trips.

From: David Berger
Sent: Wednesday, September 8, 2021 1:27 PM
To: Shari Herbruck
Subject: City Planning Commission Aena - Hotel El Roblar (formerly The Oaks Hotel)

Hi Shari,

I hope you are doing well.

Would you please include the below public note in tonight's Planning Commission meeting regarding the Hotel El Roblar (formerly The Oaks Hotel), item #3 on the agenda.

Thank you.

Dear Ojai City Planning Commission,

I am pleased to write this letter of support for the proposed renovation and restoration of the Hotel El Roblar (formerly The Oaks Hotel) located at 122 E. Ojai Avenue. The caliber of the work proposed by Mr. Goode and his design team will reinvigorate this important facility for the Ojai community as well as the many visitors who are drawn to this special place. I am sure that this project will be a wonderful complement to our restoration work at the Ojai Playhouse and help to make our downtown corridor ever more inviting. Please accept my wholehearted endorsement of this important endeavor.

Sincerely,

David Berger

Owner, The Ojai Playhouse

145 E. Ojai Avenue



September 8, 2021

City Council of Ojai
9/8/21 Meeting

Re: Support of The Hotel El Roblar Project (formerly The Oaks Hotel)

To Whom It May Concern:

I, Charles W Casey, both a long time resident and business owner in Ojai, support The Hotel El Roblar Project (formerly The Oaks Hotel) which is located at 122 E Ojai Avenue.

Having lived in Ojai when the hotel was still in its historic state, I do appreciate the historic roots and architecture and highly support restoring the buildings and property back to what I fondly remember. Not only would it beautify downtown Ojai, but it would generate additional opportunities for other local businesses, job opportunities for local residents and it would include amenities for local residents as well as hotel guests. It would also improve on the transient occupancy tax and sales tax revenues which have been none-existent for the City of Ojai since the hotel was closed after the Thomas fire in December of 2017.

Most important is keeping Ojai's unique downtown feel. We are proud to live in Ojai and would love to continue to appreciate a great part of what originally attracted us to Ojai.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles W. Casey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right.

Charles W. Casey
Insurance Broker and
Resident of Ojai

Charles W. Casey III, Lic. #0631024 • Carol Moerschbaccher, Lic. #0E88200

603 WEST OJAI AVENUE SUITE B OJAI, CA 93023-3732 T 805.646.6864 F 805.646.2766 scainsure.com

To: Linda Harmon
Subject: RE: Planning Commission meeting of September 8, 2021 Item 3- Design Review Permit Hotel El Roblar

From: Linda Harmon
Sent: Wednesday, September 8, 2021 11:36 AM
To: .
Subject: Planning Commission meeting of September 8, 2021 Item 3- Design Review Permit Hotel El Roblar

James,
I'm not sure who I have to send my "ditto" to Len's comments but I do indeed want to reinforce them.
Can you send this to the Planning Commission please?
Dear Planning Commission,
As a resident for over 30 years and a former City Commissioner for 15.
The idea that a hotel can open without a dedicated parking lot in downtown Ojai seems absurd.
It sounds like the owner wants to get the event center space by eliminating a parking lot that has worked perfectly fine in the past. Why would you even consider this?
This is too absurd to me as people have to drive to their hotel and always have. Previously, The Oaks always encouraged longer stays, walking downtown and patronizing local merchants. Sheliah was a wonderful part of the Ojai community. I realize we can't turn back the clock but this plan seems filled with empty promises created for the sole purpose of bamboozling the City.
Respectfully and with a huge
Thank you for all you do.
Sincerely,
Linda Harmon
Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Leonard Klaif
Date: September 8, 2021 at 10:55:22 AM PDT
To: .
Subject: Planning Commission meeting of September 8, 2021 Item 3- Design Review Permit Hotel El Roblar

Dear members of the Planning Commission:

I regret that I will be unable to attend the meeting of September 8 to present my concerns with the project in person. I appreciate your consideration to my written response.

My comments are limited to the parking situation and the semi-related events center and restaurant.

The City, in my opinion, has failed miserably with respect to parking, allowing applicants to flim-flam their way out of complying with the City's regulations and needs. For example, the wine tasting room on S. Montgomery next to the Art Center, was granted an exemption after they argued that their business plan did not include having many customers. The Topa Brewery was granted a waiver with respect to parking, eliminating the spots in front of what had been Ojai Cleaners and subsequently being allowed to take over two spots on S. Montgomery, claiming that they could not afford to open if they had to pay an "in lieu" fee. The Hotel El

In sum, the proposal vis a vis housing, the restaurant, and the event center is woefully inadequate vis a vis the needs of the residents and plays games with the applicable parking ordinances. I thus request that the proposal to eliminate the on-site parking be rejected.

Thank you for your consideration.

Leonard Klaif

Ojai, CA.

From: asaka ueno
Sent: Wednesday, September 8, 2021 12:17 PM
To: Shari Herbruck
Subject: support of hotel of The Hotel ElRoblar

We, Asaka and Yuya UENO located at 1193 forest ave and Izakaya Full Moon (928 E ojai ave) are in support of The Hotel El Roblar Project (formally The Oaks Hotel) located at 122 E Ojai Avenue.

They are very familiar with the historical beauty of Ojai and are truing to create an opportunity for them to know the beauty of the area. It's going to bring very good energy to City of Ojai.

Asaka Ueno

From: matthew velkes
Sent: Wednesday, September 8, 2021 11:34 AM
To: Shari Herbruck
Cc: Liza Chasin
Subject: El Roblar project

Matthew Velkes and Liza Chasin

Ojai, CA 93023

Dear Shari,

We are writing to you in support of The Hotel El Roblar Project (formally The Oaks Hotel) located at 122 E Ojai Avenue.

We are excited about the additional amenities that the hotel will provide to residents of Ojai as well as the economic opportunities that the project will provide to local businesses, especially in the historic downtown of Ojai. Returning this historic hotel in the heart of downtown to its former glory will be a fitting way to celebrate the centenary of Ojai this year. We also believe that this is a unique opportunity to add to the vitality of Ojai as well as increase the tax revenues of the city available for public schooling and other additional city services.

We couldn't be more supportive of this project.

Warm regards.

Matthew and Liza

From: Barbara Bowmar
Sent: Wednesday, September 8, 2021 11:26 AM
To: Shari Herbruck
Subject: Regarding City Planning Commission Design review of the El Roblar Hotel

To members of the City Planning Commission,

My Name is Barbara Bowman, a resident of Ojai. I have been an active retailer and landlord in the downtown historical core of Ojai for 40 plus years.

I am writing this letter because I feel that the principle success to our merchant community is directly related to having the former Oaks Hotel open and operating as soon as possible. The Cluff's deserve a great deal of credit for having run a successful business until 2017 when they were forced to close following the Thomas Fire. While they were operating every retail establishment thrived due to the steady stream of up scale clients they brought to Ojai. The closure of the hotel has cost not only the city in bed tax revenue but most certainly in lost sales which provide a good sales tax base to the state and city.

We are incredibly fortunate that like the Cluff's, Ramin Shamshiri and Eric Goode are both residents of Ojai and as such understand the responsibility of making the El Roblar part of the community and will look for ways to encourage residents to frequent both the bar and restaurant. Eric Goode is known to have successful Manhattan Hotels and has certainly added to the prestige of Ojai with the world famous Turtle Conservancy he spear headed and supports. Ramin Shamshiri has a known and respected interior design business which will assure the El Roblar of having an interior that will reflect his international acclaim. Warner Ebbink, a known restaurateur will bring the expertise that a successful hotel needs to enhance and build a reputation for food service.

As a merchant I cannot stress enough how important it is that the El Roblar gets open and starts operating as soon as possible. This hotel is the most vital single business in Ojai. The Ojai Valley Inn is lovely, however they have become almost a totally separate community. With the number of restaurants and shops they have on the grounds, most guests never venture beyond their walls. The El Roblar, being in the center of our merchant community, their guests will contribute to the success of our retail stores. The employment opportunities for our local residents with the many positions that will become available once the hotel is open is invaluable in a small city like ours.

Sincerely

Barbara Bowman
Barbara Bowman Inc.

From: Chet Hilgers
Sent: Wednesday, September 8, 2021 11:07 AM
To: Shari Herbruck
Cc: Warner Ebbink; Mellanie Hilgers
Subject: El Roblar Public Comments

Morning Shari,

Planning Commission Public Comments.

I'm writing in support of the return of the El Roblar Hotel. As a child I remember when the Hotel was a Hotel. My parents along with other valley residents would often go there to see and hear acts perform, such as Lynn Hansen. The El Roblar will once again be a center piece of support for the valley's businesses, including other Hotels. Look at the 3 local families that have purchased and are restoring this property. With their combined knowledge and expertise, the El Roblar will be nothing short of amazing. I can't wait to see the El Roblar Hotel, in all its glory.... once again.

Chet Hilgers

Ojai

Sent from my iPhone

From: Leonard Klaif
Sent: Wednesday, September 8, 2021 10:55 AM
To: Shari Herbruck
Subject: Planning Commission meeting of September 8, 2021 Item 3- Design Review Permit
Hotel El Roblar

Dear members of the Planning Commission:

I regret that I will be unable to attend the meeting of September 8 to present my concerns with the project in person. I appreciate your consideration to my written response.

My comments are limited to the parking situation and the semi-related events center and restaurant.

The City, in my opinion, has failed miserably with respect to parking, allowing applicants to flim-flam their way out of complying with the City's regulations and needs. For example, the wine tasting room on S. Montgomery next to the Art Center, was granted an exemption after they argued that their business plan did not include having many customers. The Topa Brewery was granted a waiver with respect to parking, eliminating the spots in front of what had been Ojai Cleaners and subsequently being allowed to take over two spots on S. Montgomery, claiming that they could not afford to open if they had to pay an "in lieu" fee. The Hotel El Roblar proposal, however, takes the cake in terms of nonsense. The proposal is in my opinion full of contradictions, inaccuracies, and promises that are integral to the proposal but which will likely never be enforced by the City.

For example, on page 1 of 14 in the staff report, it is stated that the Oaks of Ojai has been operating as a 46 room hotel. On the bottom of page 4 of 14, it is stated that the "impact analysis" identifies the increase from 49 rooms to 50. In part 3b, page 7 of 14, it claims that of the 77 spaces at 206 N. Signal, 58 spaces would be available seven days a week and 19 would be available outside regular business hours; this is incomprehensible - is the claim that 58 spaces can be used by the Hotel 24/7 and 19 would be available to tenants during business hours. This makes no sense. In addition, it must be noted that the portion of the lot on Aliso is used Sunday mornings by Farmer's Markets shoppers, who for the most part are Ojai residents, not tourists.

In the last full paragraph on page 4 of 14, it is stated that the off-site proposed parking would be 138 spaces; on page 6 of 14 (paragraph 3 at the bottom of the page) states that there will be 128 off site spaces. As noted at the top of page 7 of 14, it appears that the 128 spaces is accurate (51 at 211 West Ojai Ave and 77 spaces at 206 N. Signal equals 128, not 138.)

These two inconsistencies in the report is minor in comparison to the true inaccuracy; I counted spaces myself and there are only 41 spaces available at the N. Signal Street property and 40 on the Ojai Avenue property. While ten or so more cars could be squeezed into the Ojai Avenue property, 41 is the absolute limit on N. Signal. I would be curious as to an explanation between my count and the numbers in the staff report.

The inconsistency between my count and the reports count of available off site parking is also minor, this time in comparison to the absurdity of the proposal in real time. How will the excess number of cars parked in the off site lots be moved in the mornings at the start of business hours. I often frequent one of the Ojai Avenue business, Beacon Coffee; the parking in the Ojai Avenue side of the building is often full or almost full. Will valets be running back and forth between 7 and 8 in the morning moving cars from the lot? Where will they be moved to?

From: Gary Latham }>
Sent: Wednesday, September 8, 2021 10:50 AM
To: Shari Herbruck
Subject: Oaks Hotel Renovation

Hi, Shari.

My name is Gary Latham. Along with my wife, three children, two grandchildren, three dogs, and a bunch of chickens, we are residents of Ojai since relocating here in 2013.

Collectively, we are writing in support of the pending hotel project for the space at 122 East Ojai Ave...formerly "The Oaks".

Our family is familiar with the history of The Oaks and it's transition to new management/ownership. We applauded that change when it happened because we see it as a real opportunity to bring value to our beautiful downtown space...value in the context of taxes, jobs, and increased commerce across Ojai businesses.

I understand that the project is up for design review with the Planning Commission. Please consider this to be whole-hearted support for the project and the team making it happen.

Cheers

Gary Latham

Ojai, CA
93023

Gary Latham
Executive Director
Security Advisor Alliance

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To: Ramin Shamshiri
Subject: RE: Hotel El Roblar

From: Bob Huey
Date: Tuesday, September 7, 2021 at 8:42 PM
To: Ramin Shamshiri
Subject: Re: Hotel El Roblar

Ramin,

Thank you so much for sharing the plans for the renovation of the new El Roblar Hotel. As a business owner in Ojai, I have been patiently awaiting such a renovation to occur for the past 4+ years. Ever since the Thomas Fire in 2017, there has been no activity at the site. From the moment I opened my wine shop across Signal street in the summer of 2017, other business owners told me that I would get plenty of business from hotel guests at "The Oaks". Instead, there were very few guests who frequented the old hotel before it closed completely at the end of 2017. Since then it has been vacant.

The plans you have shared with me are just the thing this property needs to bring it back to life, while respecting the historical nature of the hotel. I wholeheartedly endorse this plan and look forward to the day when the El Roblar Hotel is open for business. It is sorely needed in downtown Ojai and will bring much-needed support back to local businesses after the difficulties associated with Covid-19. Please help to move this project forward!

Regards,
Bob Huey

Bob Huey, Proprietor
Point de Chene Wine & Beer
108B North Signal Street
Ojai, CA 93023
mobile: !
WSET - Advanced Certification
WSET - Diploma Candidate

From: Hawk Koch
Sent: Tuesday, September 7, 2021 7:54 PM
To: Shari Herbruck
Subject: Hotel El Roblar

To the Ojai City Planning Commission,

We, Molly and Hawk Koch, are in total support of The El Roblar Hotel Project.

Our beautiful city took a hit first from the Thomas Fire and then during COVID with the biggest impact being to local businesses. We think the hotel project will benefit our community in many ways. It will generate additional revenue opportunities for local businesses, restore and improve occupancy, and increase sales tax revenues.

We know Warner Ebbink, and can attest to his good taste and his genuine intentions to bring the best kind of growth to Ojai.

Sincerely,

Hawk and Molly Koch

Ojai, CA 93023

"Shower the people you love with love"

From: Ajay Sahgal
Sent: Tuesday, September 7, 2021 8:24 PM
To: Shari Herbruck
Subject: El Roblar Hotel

I have been a resident of the Ojai Valley since 2012, first in the Arbolada and now in the East End. I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the renovations at the buildings at 122 East Ojai Avenue, on the corner of Signal Street, formerly The Oaks. I believe the hotel that is set to open there, along with its restaurant, will positively impact the City in many ways, including new employment opportunities for the members of our community, room tax revenue to help with the City budget and contributing overall to a vibrant and revitalized downtown. I'm strongly in favor of granting the new owners their permits to build a place for visitors as well as locals to enjoy the character and feeling of our beautiful little town.

Sincerely,

Ajay Sahgal

From: Bobbi Corbin
Sent: Tuesday, September 7, 2021 8:27 PM
To: Shari Herbruck
Subject: El Roblar Hotel

To The Planning Commission

Dear Commissioners;

My name is Bobbi Corbin. I live at 706 Daly Road in Ojai. I have lived in Ojai since 2009. I owned and operated a business in downtown Ojai from 2009 until 2018.

This letter is to support the new El Roblar Hotel which you are currently reviewing. Reviving the hotel is an important piece of our downtown Ojai fabric. We couldn't have a more gifted and professional team than Ramin Shamshiri and his partners who are well experienced in hotel and restaurant management and exceptional design. From my four years of service on the Planning Commission, the plans Ramin submitted for work on his historic house stood out as the most exceptional and beautiful. The drawings for the hotel invigorate the existing building and show utmost respect for the existing style of the town. They are mission style at its finest.

The hotel holds a dominant visual place on our main street. It brings life to the downtown. I am excited for this renovation. The plans for the hotel provide a welcome meeting spot for visitors and locals as well. The hotel will bring revenue to our town and help support our other businesses. I hope that you will support this project and allow it to move forward.

Sincerely,

Bobbi Corbin

From: Peter Farrelly
Sent: Wednesday, September 8, 2021 3:43 AM
To: Shari Herbruck
Subject: Citizen letter regarding the Hotel El Roblar....

September 8, 2021

Dear City Planning Commission—

Please, please, pleeeeeeaaasse approve the renovations for the Hotel El Roblar (previously the Oaks Hotel.) We've been waiting years for this! It's one of the most beautiful and architecturally-significant buildings in Ojai and it saddens us that it's been closed for so long. We walk past the building all the time with our dogs and can't wait to get back in there. When we heard several years ago that it was being renovated by Warner Ebbink (Little Dom's) and Eric Goode (the Bowery Hotel), we were thrilled. But then it never happened.

Please let it happen now, so it doesn't just sit there like the movie theater and the old bowling alley. We've lived in Ojai for 15 years and we know the importance of that site and that building. It's a gem, and we're guessing it will be even more of a gem when those gentlemen get through with it. They're famous for their imbecilic taste—I mean *impeccable* taste--and for never over-doing things. Please put us down for a big thumbs up on this project. Sooner rather than later!

Yours,

Pete and Melinda Farrelly

Ojai 93023

Peter Farrelly

Please note my new email address!

From: Cindy Convery
Sent: Tuesday, September 7, 2021 5:09 PM
To: Shari Herbruck; Gail Davis
Subject: for Planning Commission meeting 9/8

Dear Planning Commission,

I am writing in regard to agenda item 3, El Roblar Hotel.

The El Roblar Hotel was built in 1920 by the Ojai Hotel Company in partnership with Edward Libbey as part of the city beautiful movement. Architects Mead & Requa designed the hotel in keeping with their other works - the post office tower and the museum - to create the unified village effect that has anchored Ojai as one of best small towns in America.

The El Roblar hotel is listed on Ojai's Sites of Merits and is a historic structure as defined by the requirements of the State of California Historical Building Register.

The Planning Commission cannot make an informed decision about any changes to the property without a qualified historic report.

I am asking that the Commission request a historic report from the current developers so that best practices will be used in making any planning decisions going forward. It will be impossible to make qualified planning decisions without this historic report.

Yours truly,
Cindy Convery
Historic Preservation Commission

RE: Proposed remodel of the Entire Hotel El Roblar site (formerly The Oaks at Ojai)

Greetings Commissioners:

I am writing to oppose the recommended CEQA exemption and to recommend that a Historical Resources Report be required for this project before further project consideration.

Hotel El Roblar, formerly known as The Oaks of Ojai, is steeped in over 100 years of Ojai history and is a significant icon located in Ojai's historic downtown landscape. The hotel dates back to the development of Ojai's downtown area by architects Mead and Requa and financed in part by the celebrated Edward Libbey.

The hotel is located diagonally across from Ojai Historical Landmark #6, the Post Office Bell Tower and Portico, and is situated across from Ojai Historical Landmarks #26 and #21, the Ojai Playhouse Theater and Twice Sold Tales Bookstore, respectively. Directly to the east sits Ojai Historical Landmark #5, The Ojai Arcade. And on the adjacent block to the west sits Historical Landmark #7, the St. Thomas Aquinas chapel, now home to the Ojai Valley Museum and a building listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Hotel El Roblar is a stopping spot on the Ojai Valley Museum's famous Saturday Historical Walking Tour of downtown. Now, the future of this beloved building rests in your hands but you do not have all the facts that you need to make an informed decision on this project in accordance with state and local laws.

As stated in the Administrative Report for this project, "The Design Review Permit requires the applicant undertake mitigation measures to address all impacts that may result with the issuance of the permit and modifications to the hotel site..." To date, possible impacts to this potential historical resource and its surrounding environment have not been addressed.

The Administrative Report finds this project categorically exempt from CEQA. However, a categorical exemption is not allowed if a project may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource (14 CCR Section 15300.2 (f)). (For discussion, please see State of California Office of Historic Preservation at https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=21728).

In addition, a CEQA categorical exemption shall not be used for any activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances (14 CCR Section 15300.2(c)). This exception to the exemption applies to this project due to the extremely large size of the property (2-acres) situated within a historic setting of downtown Ojai.

Further, CEQA analysis must analyze project consistency with the City of Ojai General Plan, which requires the City to identify, evaluate and preserve potential historical resources.

As stated in the Administrative Report Required Planning Permit section, "approval of this project is subject to Ojai Municipal Code..." Ojai Municipal Code Section 10-2.103(b)(1) states that "all development within the City shall be consistent with the General Plan." As such, this project requires review of potential impacts to a possible historic building by a qualified professional.

For these reasons, and for the preservation of an Ojai icon, please oppose the recommended CEQA exemption and require a Historical Resources Report by a qualified historian contracted by the City of Ojai before further consideration of this project.

Sincerely,
Dawn Thieding
Cultural Resources Specialist

CC | City of Ojai Historic Preservation Commission
Craig Walker
Elise DePuydt
Ojai Valley Museum
Ojai Valley News

RECEIVED

SEP 07 2021
Community Development
Department

From: Elise DePuydt
Sent: Tuesday, September 7, 2021 12:59 PM
To: Shari Herbruck
Cc: Lucas Seibert
Subject: Comments for Planning Commission 9-8-21 meeting Item 3
Attachments: Planning Comm_9-8-21 Mtg_Item 3_DePuydt comments.docx

To: Ojai Planning Commissioners

September 8, 2021 Planning Commission Meeting

Elise DePuydt - Comments on Agenda Item 3 (comments also attached)

There is a serious omission in the Administrative Report presented to the Planning Commission regarding Item 3, DRP 21-003: The proposed remodel of the entire Hotel El Roblar site (formerly The Oaks at Ojai). This omission is the absence of a Historical Resource Report prepared by a qualified historian under contract with the City of Ojai. The lack of a Historical Resource Report would prevent the commissioners from being able to evaluate the project's effects on one of the city's most important historical resources.

On page 5, the Administrative Report states: "The Design Review Permit requires the applicant undertake mitigation measures to address all impacts that may result with the issuance of the permit and modifications to the hotel site including building renovations, site modifications, parking demand, valet parking service, and other impacts from this project." How can mitigation measures be undertaken for possible impacts to a historic resource without a Historical Resource Report to determine which measures need to be mitigated?

The El Roblar Hotel (now The Oak at Ojai) was developed in a period from 1918-1919 and opened in early 1920. The historical importance to the city of this property, which encompasses an entire city block, is without question. It is one of the key features of Edward Libbey's vision for the Spanish-style center of Ojai.

Under CEQA, California Code 14:15300.2(f), an agency must first determine if a project has the potential to impact a historical resource, and whether or not impacts could be adverse, prior to determining if a categorical exemption may be utilized for any given project. This is a complex project involving demolition, additions, and major changes to the exterior. Only by a thorough study of the history of the property and its structures, and an examination of the proposed renovations, by a qualified historical consultant can potential impacts to the historic resource be determined. The guidelines for these determinations are based on the Secretary of Interior Standard's for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

I urge the Planning Commission to reject the CEQA exemptions recommended on page 4 of Attachment A of the Administrative Report and also to deny the Design Review Permit DRP 21-003 until such time as a Historic Resource Report can be presented and evaluated.

Thank you, Elise DePuydt

Comment on Agenda Item #3 --September 8, 2021, Planning Commission Meeting
DRP 21-003 for Hotel El Roblar (formerly Oaks at Ojai)

To the Ojai Planning Commission,

I have read through the report attached to Item #3 on the proposed renovations and additions to the Hotel El Roblar (Oaks at Ojai). The Development Department is recommending that you approve three categorical exemptions from a CEQA environment review.

As you know, California Code 14:15300.2(f), states: "Historical Resources. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource." The standards by which the project must be evaluated are the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation. According to the State Office of historic Preservation: "Lead agencies must first determine if the project has the potential to impact historical resources and if those impacts could be adverse prior to determining if a categorical exemption may be utilized for any given project."

As defined in the law, "Historical resources" include not only designated landmarks, but also "potential landmarks," structures eligible for the California Register of Historic Places. It is the city's responsibility to determine whether a property may be a historic resource. To do this, the city must prepare a Historic Resource Report, written by a qualified historic consultant. This report must evaluate whether a subject project is eligible for the State register and whether the proposed changes will adversely affect its historic significance.

The "Hotel El Roblar" is part of Edward Libbey's "City Beautiful" plan for downtown Ojai. All the buildings are linked together by a common plan and architectural design. Each building is historic in its own right, but each affects the overall significance of the whole. Libbey organized the Ojai Hotel Company and used the same architects and builders who designed and built the Arcade, the Post Office, and Pergola. There is no question that this property is an important historic resource for the City of Ojai.

Imagine my surprise to find that no historic study has been completed, no historic report written, and no historic review by the city's Historic Preservation Commission. It is inconceivable that significant alterations and additions would be allowed without a proper historic review. Given the interconnectedness of the buildings, it is important that the hotel not only be evaluated in terms of its own significance, but also as it relates to the whole "Spanish Village" effect of the downtown.

I am asking that the Ojai Planning Commission not approve the categorical exemptions, nor process the DRP proposal, until the legally required historic review is completed and the project is found to meet the required standards. This project will impact not only the beauty and historic significance of the historic El Roblar Hotel, it will impact the design and integrity of the entire downtown civic center as envisioned by Libbey and his architects.

Craig Walker

RECEIVED
SEP 07 2021
Community Development
Department

From: Joan Sangster
Sent: Tuesday, September 7, 2021 9:46 AM
To: Shari Herbruck
Cc: james Sangster
Subject: Hotel El Roblar project

City of Ojai Planning Commission,

Jim & Joan Sangster residents of 1013 Grandview Ave, Ojai enthusiastically support the Hotel El Roblar Project (formerly the Oaks at Ojai). As 35+ year Ojai residents we welcome the innovative rebirth of what is the anchor location in the community. This restoration project will bring to our town a gem of a hotel, one we can all visit and admire. Unlike the Inn, which is invaluable to the community yet provides a bubble experience for its guests, the El Roblar will be a destination hotel invigorating the entire downtown economy. Hopefully this significant revitalization of Ojai's core will inspire redevelopment of the many blighted properties which have been lingering for years.

Joan Sangster

Ojai, CA. 93024

From: Bii
Sent: Tuesday, September 7, 2021 6:33 AM
To: Shari Herbruck
Cc: James Vega; Lucas Seibert; Jeffrey Starkweather; Judy Murphy; Dale Hanson; William Ulrich; Bob Daddi; Marianne; Carolyn Vondriska; Jeffery Becker; Brian Aikens; Russ Baggerly; garrett clifford; Tom Farmer; John Gentry; Luis Gomez; Wendy Hilgers; Severo Lara; marc@whitman-architect.com; judy k nelson; Ted Moore; Nick Oatway; Doug Parker; Teal Rowe; Carol Smith; Patrick Tumamait; Andrew Whitman; Terri Wolfe
Subject: Planning C. Mtg 9/8/21 item 3

Hello. Shari. Please transmit. Thank you. Bill

9/7/21

To: Ojai Planning Commission
Cc: city manager, city planning Director, others
From: Bill Miley
Subject: Meeting 9/8/21, item 3 - Oaks at Ojai

Hello. My family's arrival in Ojai preceded the Cluffs by about 8 years. So, i have a visual history of this hotel-spa since then. Restoration of the exterior to the Hotel El Roblar seems worthy although the facade remodel by David Bury, Ojai architect was/is good.

The only issue I have questions about is the proposed removal of parking spaces on-site and "leasing" them from two locations nearby, project plan item e. Page 6.

My concern....(i have a proposed solution...see at bottom)

e. (Page 6) the challenge...Removal of approximately 40 onsite parking spaces and relocated off-site at two locations including 206 North Signal Street and 209-211 West Ojai Avenue (211 West Ojai Avenue). I consider this a questionable solution.

Some Reasoning.....

1. Oaks Spa of Ojai operated from mid 1970's to around 2015 with 50 parking spaces on site. To my knowledge no on-street parking problems came to the city for problem solving. 50 on site worked fine.
2. The renovation adds one guest suite to the room total bringing it to 50. Only one more guest room.
3. 40 of the 50 parking sites are being removed to reconfigure features and functions for the 50 guest rooms.
4. City parking requirements are fairly strict (not always enforced) and are set for a definite purpose of balancing vehicle use and people's need to be close to their destinations.
5. Several city parking lots have been created over the years to add parking places. I assume the funding of such came from "in lieu" payments by property owners of local businesses needing parking but not physically having it.
6. The proposed leasing of spaces from private property owners who at the present do not need all of what they were required to create seems PROBLEMATIC. Their parking need never developed?

From: Barbara Snyder
Sent: Monday, September 6, 2021 4:41 PM
To: Shari Herbruck
Subject: Comments regarding the Design Review Permit for the new Hotel El Roblar

Shari, please distribute a copy of these comments to the Planning Commissioners prior to their meeting on September 8th. Thank you.

To the Commissioners:

I would like to provide comments regarding the request for a Design Review Permit (DRP 21-003) for the new Hotel El Roblar. Certainly, this hotel will be a lovely addition to our town. However, the proposal to remove nearly all of the on-site parking for off-site parking is indeed something which will not be a benefit to Ojai.

Let me begin by saying that if this is approved, guests will park anywhere they please. How on earth are hotel employees able to ensure that hotel guests utilize the Valet Parking service. On-the-street parking in the city of Ojai is allowed (for 72 hours) and I believe that hotel guests will take advantage of that. Nowadays, as you have probably noticed, people do what they want to do.

I understand that there is ownership in the off-site parking lot located at 211 East Ojai Avenue (the old Carrows building). The rear parking lot's 20 parking spots surely can be used for this, however, please know that this parking lot and adjoining hillside has been a customary hangout for homeless individuals especially pre-pandemic. Will this parking lot no longer be available to the store employees who park there now or will they be parking along S. Blanche Street? Will that parking lot be fenced off, east and west? What kind of overnight security will be available for the fine automobiles parked there? Would you want your Tesla parked there overnight? Since the front 31 spaces are only available during evening hours, will there really be enough spots for overnight parking for hotel guests?

This takes me to the off-site lot at 206 N. Signal Street. The proposal notes that the 19 spots will only be available outside of business hours. Will cars parked there overnight have to be moved to make way for customers of the businesses inside? Will the 58 parking spaces be dedicated solely for the use of Hotel guests? If this is not the case, then there will be no guarantee that this proposal for off-site parking could be used as proposed. Currently that lot fills daily. I used to have chiropractic work done in that building on weekday mornings. The lot was often quite full. And on Sunday morning, cars are lined up waiting for a spot in that lot for the Farmer's Market.

In short, I believe that the removal of on-site parking historically utilized by guests of the Oaks should not be allowed to go forward, unless, the new owners can purchase or rent a single lot for the exclusive use of hotel guests, employees, and contractors needing access to the building. I know that this is an expense they would prefer not to have, but it's the only thing that makes any sense if removing the on-site spots. Be aware that all overnight businesses have been required to provide adequate parking. Allowing this to go forward sets a bad precedent.

Lastly, my other concern is that if that this will be allowed to go forward, in a short time, the agreements approved will fall apart, and there will be another proposal to alter the parking requirements which will be worse. We have watched this occur in the past.

Thank you for listening,

Barbara Ann Snyder

Subject:

Hotel El Roblar - PC Meeting December 8

From: Craig Walker**Sent:** Monday, December 6, 2021 6:40 AM**To:** Shari Herbruck**Subject:** Comments Item #2 Planning Commission Meeting December 8

Hello!

This letter addresses Agenda Item #2 for the December 8th Planning Commission meeting: provide commission feedback regarding parking and circulation options and proposed façade restoration for the reopening of Hotel El Roblar (formerly "the Oaks at Ojai").

Parking and Traffic Circulation

I support any discussion of the project's impact on downtown traffic circulation and parking. The proposal to remove on-site parking and rely on valet parking—for room guests, restaurant customers, shoppers, and event attendees—sounds like a recipe for more traffic congestion and parking problems in downtown Ojai. The report states that the hotel will be responsible for enforcing a valet parking requirement, but I wonder how that will be accomplished? Why would someone attending an event at the hotel, eating in the restaurant, or even renting a room, go through the hassle, time, and expense of dealing with valet parking when they could just park on a side street and walk to the hotel? Also, how many additional "trips" will be added to downtown street impacts by valets parking and retrieving cars? Parking and traffic are already major problems in the downtown area, and this plan will only add to them.

Proposed Façade Restoration

In 2017, the downtown was evaluated by GPA historic consultants and determined to be a historic district worthy of the National Register of Historic Places. Just two weeks ago we discovered that the downtown district is already listed in the California Register of Historic Places. The Oaks Hotel is documented as an important contributing structure to that historic district. This means that the hotel is an established historic resource and subject to CEQA protocols. The city cannot grant the project a CEQA exemption without first evaluating the proposal against the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation, and so determine whether there will be impacts to the historical significance (and integrity) of the property.

If impacts are found, the city will either need to complete an Environmental Impact Study that shows mitigations and/or alternative designs, or the owners will need to redesign the project to eliminate the impacts. The City has just hired a consultant to begin an official historic review of the proposal. Their report may determine that the current design will negatively impact the historic significance of the downtown and must be reworked or require an EIR. It may even conclude that the hotel is eligible for designation as a City of Ojai landmark. We cannot know until the study is completed.

Therefore, it would appear to be a waste of the commission's time to review the proposed façade design—or the impact of any new additions or alterations—at this time. We cannot judge what impact the proposal will have on the historic character of the buildings without the historic report. There could be mitigations suggested that would restore much of the original design to ensure harmony with the other downtown historic structures.

It could set up false expectations in the minds of the developers to provide feedback about the façade design before the historic report is completed and reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission. The commission may like the design of a proposed renovation or new addition, but the report may find that it will diminish the historic character of the property, and even diminish the unified design of the downtown as envisioned by Libbey and his architects, Mead & Requa. Remember, the submitted design before you was based on the erroneous belief that the hotel was not a historic resource. Now we know it *is* a historic resource, and one of national importance. Please let the historic evaluation run its course before making any judgements about the design of the façade or any related new additions and alterations.

In 1917-1920, Edward Libbey and his architects gave Ojai one of its most important assets—a "City Beautiful" downtown unified by Spanish Mission-style architecture. With its recent listing on the California Register of Historic Places, Ojai's historic downtown buildings can continue to serve as an important asset far into the future. The Oaks is a key element of Ojai's historic downtown and its historic significance should be restored, if possible, but certainly never diminished.

Thank you, Craig Walker

Subject:

RE: 12/8/21 Planning Commission...El Roblar Hotel

From: BILL MILEY**Sent:** Tuesday, December 7, 2021 4:46 PM**To:** Shari Herbruck**Subject:** 12/8/21 Planning Commission...El Roblar Hotel

Hi Shari. Please transmit. Thanks. Bill
12/7/21

To: Planning Commission.**Cc:** City manager, Planning Director, others**From:** Bill Miley**Subject:** 12/8/21 Commission Meeting. Item...El Roblar Hotel

Hello. (I strongly support this hotel) The following are my comments about the proposed remodel of the Oaks at Ojai to become the El Roblar Hotel into its original facade...especially the factor of vehicle management and parking proposals. I am very supportive of this development and want it to greatly succeed.

My comments and suggestions follow:

1. (Adequate and dedicated parking a must) Unless we were in a high mountain valley served by no roads but by mono rail system and cabled tram, vehicle management including places to store them would be academic and excluded. Such becomes part of the life blood of this business development plan and venture.
2. (No reduction in parking...an increase) I know our code sees parking as a minor conditional use permit for reduction of parking and minor variance for off site parking. So be it. I do disagree with term reduction as the study need shows 98 places.
3. (Parking is a life blood of a hotel...dedicated destination parking a must) I see establishing a smart, reliable, long term parking design as a foundational item in this development. I do not want this hotel to depend on a shared parking arrangement which is changeable or cancellable at the directions of a property owner. With parking providing the life blood of a hotel business, except in the high mountains i whimsically mentioned, i would suggest that in a term i just created, vehicle management should be guided by dependable "destination parking" for guests, visitors and employees, including as need services workers.
4. (Parking is everything) "Destination Parking" means dedicated places which the city planning commission and city council recognize as needed for years to come...and are tied to a development which enhances our cities values, goals, circulation, air quality, safety, and comfort for residents and quests, in this case visitors and tourists.
5. (Details needed for tandem parking) A new term "tandem parking" has been introduced. It needs further definition as to how it will be arranged...side by side, one behind the other...and how much vehicle movement during a day will be required for its management...vehicle engine starting frequency to move vehicles.
6. (Plan for parking expansion) The ratio of parking demand to parking supply is obviously very important. I studied the Standec Engineering company study and report. Using their estimates 98 spaces is the demand. I

would suggest if the hotel is as successful as i hope it is, parking needs may be greater. Ability to expand the 98 to more would be important to build into the parking plan. I hope that gets done.

7. (New street and front parking) New on street parking in front of the hotel seems worthy as does the new half circular front access with 8 temporary valet parking added to the arrival and departure “entrance”.

8. (Who get valet service?) With shared parking a major piece in the parking puzzle, there is some discrepancy in the use of valet services for moving cars to the 209-211 site. I read all visitors/guests parking there had to do it on their own, but also read that staying guests of the hotel would have valet services move their vehicles. What’s the proposal?

9. (Safety of valet and non staying guests) Safety of valet workers and visitors parking vehicles there (209-211) as they walk back to the hotel or away to the vehicles is a serious question which needs review. Crossing Ojai Avenue/State highway 150 and crossing the “tee” intersection at North Ventura Street and Ojai Avenue are both risky. Especially No. Ventura and Ojai avenue as it is a major turning intersection for vehicles arriving in town from the west turning into the north part of Ojai. I use it all of the time. At dusk and night it requires much caution to avoid walkers.

10. (A needed Plan B for shared parking) I would suggest that with shared parking providing 50% + of the vehicle spaces needed there be a “plan B” built into the Development Agreement beyond “with loss of parking spaces rooms must to closed using parking/room ratios”. In my mind such a “fallback” option is scary and tragic. I would not want that to be a real option.

A plan B should allow interim use of a parking facility (maybe owned by the city) by the hotel until it is able to produce adequate alternative parking. If this happens during a summer, consider school site empty parking spaces...if in the winter, consider the city parking on lower south Montgomery street which for the most part is not full. The space in front of the old bowling alley is still vacant and might be leasable.

Shutting down of hotel rooms due to loss of parking in my mind is unacceptable. Please avoid that!! That not only penalizes the hotel but the city as well. And creates a potential damaged Brand for the El Roblar Hotel. Not good. Not acceptable. Not smart. In my opinion.

11. (Employee parking is missing) What is missing in the proposed plan is parking for the folks employed to management and service the hotel operations. Having them look for street parking is unfair and not acceptable.

Assuming one service staff for 10 rooms twice a day means at least 10 workers per day needing to arrive for work. Maybe 10 parking spaces. Plus restaurant staff of possibly 10, event and pool staff of possible 10, management staff of possibly 10.

Resulting in a need for 40 parking spaces for folks who run the hotel. Street parking is not an option. Such parking should be dedicated.

12. (DEDICATED PARKING FOR EMPLOYEES IN A MUST.) Anything short of that penalizes our city as well as the employees, and the hotel support of the staff should be equal to the desire to service guests with the best of hospitality. Treat employees fairly and well and they will serve guests with their best intentions, in my opinion.

13. (Where will delivery trucks deliver?) With tandem parking filling up the spaces off of North Signal Street used for deliveries by the Oaks of Ojai, where will service trucks deliver their supplies to the hotel? The short section of North Signal Street is narrow now and has much north and south traffic on it from morning to evening. It is now a risky section of road which I try to avoid. Some folks on occasion park in the red zone for

a quick chore. Not good. With tandem parking using the North Signal Street entrance for access traffic volume will increase and congestion may be a problem. Study of this area needs to consider all of the potential problems.

In conclusion, this project is complicated as it should be. It will change both the structure and function of a almost historical institution established in 1926 (28) into a viable destination resort which has to blend its function into an established downtown environment. It requires focused thinking on key factors as parking for guests, visitors, management staff, service staff and service deliveries. Dedicated, destination parking is a foundational factor in supporting not only the hotel function but also the greater downtown dynamics. It should add to the viability of the downtown...not the congestion of this already at times very busy area.

Thank you for considering my thoughts and opinions.

Bill Miley, MPH
Since 1968. Best for Ojai!

Subject: El Roblar hotel parking

From: Christopher and Margo Land

Sent: Tuesday, December 7, 2021 7:26 PM

To: Shari Herbruck

Cc: Cheryl Davis

Subject: comment re El Roblar hotel parking proposal for Planning Commission agenda 12/8/21

Shari

Please see below our written comments for the 12/8/21 special meeting of the Ojai Planning Commission. Our comments pertain to agenda item 2:

Feedback Regarding Parking and Circulation Options and proposed Façade Restoration for the Reopening of Hotel El Roblar (formerly “the Oaks at Ojai”) located at 122 East Ojai Avenue, with an Assessor’s Parcel Number 021-0-112-020. The General Plan Land Use Designation of this site is Downtown Commercial (DC) and Zoning Classification of the site is General Commercial (C-1) with a Thoroughfare Corridor Overlay (T-C-O). Property Owner: El Roblar Investment Property, LLC. Applicant: Ramin Shamshiri. Architect: andrulaitis+mixon architects, Joe Andrulaitis.

We have a conflict and will not be able to attend or express our opposition to this plan at the meeting or via Zoom, but we trust that registering them with you will get them into the record.

Thank you, Chris Land and Margo Land

Written Comment:

Dear Ojai Planning Commission:

We are the homeowners at 206 Topa Topa Drive; the back of our house abuts the rear parking lot of Beacon Coffee, which we understand to be one of the locations being considered for overflow parking by the Hotel El Roblar. We are longtime Ojai residents and enthusiastic about the renovation of the hotel and the eventual amenity it will provide to us and our city. Like many, we look forward to the day when we can welcome our out-of-town guests to the hotel and enjoy a meal or drink on the property. However, we have serious concerns about the parking plan itself and the ways it will impact our quality of life and the value of our home. We seek your assurances and efforts to see that our interests will be protected by the City of Ojai and the Planning Commission. To that end, we describe some conditions below that may help ensure that this proposal does not impact us negatively.

These are our concerns:

1. We are extremely concerned about the impact—mostly in terms of noise, safety, litter, lighting, etc.—to the parking lot behind 209 and 211 W Ojai Avenue, which is proposed as an after 5pm overflow and special event parking lot. Guests coming and going from a restaurant/bar and special events are likely to be highly disruptive to us and our neighbors. Furthermore, safe nighttime use of the lot would require lighting that is not presently there, that is not allowed to be there (as we understand Ojai’s lighting code), and that would be extremely problematic for us and our home, were it to be installed. The lot in question is the one used by Beacon Coffee, which normally operates from 7 am to 2 pm. We appreciate Beacon as a neighbor and were well aware of what their business entailed when we purchased our property. Though not ideal, it was something we were prepared to live with, despite the early morning noise (including loud talking, car radios, doors slamming, car alarms sounding, and dogs barking) that

comes with it. That's life in the "big city." Most importantly, use of this lot essentially ceases by early afternoon and thus does not interfere with our evenings, which we often spend in our backyard, which is separated from the Beacon parking lot by only a wall. Should that parking area, which is approximately 50 feet from our bedroom, be put into use later in the day, into the evening, or overnight, it would present a serious noise issue for us with the inevitable sounds of late-night revelers in conversation, car doors opening and closing, car alarms chirping, or being set off.

2. Beyond those concerns, which should be enough on their own to deny the requested variance, we believe the entire proposal to contract for parking spots at 209 and 211 W Ojai Avenue to be ill-advised and wrong for the City as a whole because it represents a short term solution to a long term problem. The lease agreement (appended to the administrative report) for the parking lots at 209 and 211 W Ojai Avenue expires in 2025. What then? We note the stipulations about reduced room occupancy in the event that parking spots are lost in the future, but that seems like a poor assurance that will not be practical for city staff to manage or enforce. It would be far better for the city and the hotel to invest in a parking plan as durable as the building it supports.

3. The plan calls for 20 "all-day" spots in the 209 and 211 W Ojai Avenue lot, but we regularly witness that lot fully occupied, especially on weekend days. There seems to be an erroneous assumption that Beacon Coffee and Blue don't use or can get by without those parking spots. That may not be our problem, but it speaks to faulty assumptions in this proposal.

4. We routinely observe cars parking in the strip between our property and 211 W Ojai, an easement held by the Ventura County Watershed Protection District (VCWPD). Often we find vehicles occupying that easement and blocking our rear gate and our access out through the back of our property. Given the increased burdens on this rear lot, how can we be assured that parking will be monitored and enforced? How will the VCWPD feel about their access being blocked on a regular basis.

5. We note that the parking lease also gives the sublessee sole discretion over hours of lot operation. That seems to be at odds with the "after 5 pm" designation as well as a potential conflict for the current tenants in 209 and 211 W Ojai Avenue.

We strongly request the following:

1. That the City requires the developers to invest in a more robust and sustainable parking plan for their required additional spaces. Ideally one closer to the hotel (so it would not require a variance and impact traffic on Ojai Avenue by increasing pedestrian crossings) and one secured by ownership or a long term lease as they were able to accomplish with the 202 N Ventura lot.
2. That, if over the above objections the developers are granted a variance to use the parking lots at 209 and 211 W Ojai Avenue, that parking be limited to the spaces in the front lot and prohibited in the back lot (20 spaces) closest to our house and those of our neighbors.

The partnership behind this proposal comprises experienced business people who are only doing what they should do by trying to minimize their expenses. However, they are also members of our community who share a hope of a vital Ojai that also remains true to its sense of community, traditions, and values. This is our opportunity to let them hear from their neighbors about what in this proposal works (almost everything else I have not mentioned!) and what does not. Of course they are going to seek the most economical path toward realizing their goals; who can fault them for trying. However, they have the resources to do this the right way without causing harm to our town and in doing so, they will be doing the city a favor and also, most likely, turning a decent profit. We can all win in this if we have a Planning Commission willing to adjudicate it fairly.

Thank you for your consideration and the work you do to improve Ojai while balancing the interests of residents with those of the business community.

In appreciation of all you do, Christopher Land and Margo Land

Subject:

RE: El Roblar Hotel Parking

From: Nutmeg's OjaiHouse**Sent:** Wednesday, December 8, 2021 12:03 AM**To:** Shari Herbruck**Subject:** El Roblar Hotel Parking

Shari, my computer doesn't seem to support the Zoom program, so I am submitting an email for the Wednesday December 8 meeting:

El Roblar Hotel Parking I am concerned that the Hotel cannot accommodate at least the number of spaces required for rooms, let alone staff and restaurant business. At minimum there should be 50 on-site parking spaces. When the Theater and restaurant across the street reopens, we will need all the current public parking options available. The option at 209-211 W Ojai Avenue is ok for a conference, but I would not want to stay in a Hotel where I had to park off site. That seems ridiculous, even in our small town. I fear it will add a burden to our police, it is too tempting for petty theft. Other than that, the design is nice, just too bad they are going to tear down the recently built bungalows..

Thank you.

Meg Goodwin

Subject: El Roblar Hotel

From: Ray Powers Creekside Prods.

Sent: Wednesday, December 8, 2021 8:33 AM

To: BILL MILEY

Cc:

Subject: Re: 12/8/21 Planning Commission...El Roblar Hotel

Thank you, Bill, for the due diligence regarding the parking considerations and challenges the El Roblar presents.

It's a concern for me as well. I'm in alignment with your analysis and solutions. One thing not taken into account is that the movie theater will be re-opening next year. With a seating capacity of 200+ and street parking the only option there's a potential, and likelihood, of extreme congestion occurring at ingress and egress times for their films.

Ray Powers

Subject:

RE: El Roblar Plan

From: Hans Nielsen

Sent: Wednesday, December 8, 2021 8:50 AM

To: Shari Herbruck

Subject: El Roblar Plan

Lucas and Sheri,

The idea that overflow parking could be contracted to the lots at Beacon Coffee will definitely affect many of us on Topa Topa Dr. We already feel concert traffic as people circle around looking for a spot to enjoy a Libby Bowl event. This plan will just add more congestion to our small and quaint neighborhood. Weddings, parties, late nights, high intensity lights, drunk, staggering, loud voices belong in the public realm, not here. Please! I know you would not want it in your neighborhood.

The parking spaces along the arcade are always open for evening and nighttime events.

You could roll bowling balls through the streets around the post office. Perhaps Westridge can provide some contract parking since they are closed by 9:00PM.

Furthermore, there are moments I cannot back out of my driveway because of the skinny street and parking of cars already, here on Topa Topa Dr.

OUR SUGGESTION IS THAT EL ROBLAR CONTRACT WITH THE SCHOOL ON MONTGOMERY STREET. THE SCHOOL HAS AMPLE SPACE, LIGHTS AND CERTAINLY WON'T BURDEN ANY NEIGHBORHOOD WITH ALL THE NOISE, CONGESTION AND PARKING THEY NEED. IT'S CLOSER AND SAFER FOR THE PEOPLE WALKING TO AND FROM SINCE THEY RISK THEIR LIVES TRYING TO CROSS OJAI AVENUE. That, I believe, is the most crucial aspect that is getting lost here. Safety of the public. When have you last tried crossing with the yellow warning lights? Half the time people speed right through the crosswalks and pretend that because it's not a real signal, the driver gets to decide who has the right-of-way. THE SCHOOL PLAN IS THE SAFEST, LOGICAL and CLOSEST, MOST EFFECTIVE PLAN FOR THE EL ROBLAR.

The El Roblar can invest in electric carts to shuttle their clients back and forth like the Ojai Valley Inn does. Valet parking for the guests can ease what new strains will be foisted on all of us in the downtown. I truly believe this is the answer and will allow the El Roblar to act and be first class, which I keep hearing, is their goal.

Please nix this Beacon Coffee overflow idea. It's dumb. Really dumb. Eric Goode will spend lots to impress his visitors. The school parking is the remedy and he can spend his funds to improve how the elementary school looks and functions for him in his business. That would be the winning plan.

Please, please, please.

Hans and Nancy Nielsen

Subject: El Roblar Hotel project overflow parking lots

From: Jane Cotti

Sent: Wednesday, December 8, 2021 8:59 AM

To: Shari Herbruck

Subject: El Roblar Hotel project overflow parking lots

Dear Ojai Planning Commision:

I am a long-time Ojai homeowner at [REDACTED] Topa Topa Drive. My property is adjacent to the rear parking lot of Beacon Coffee. It has come to my attention that the Beacon Coffee parking lot is being considered for overflow parking by the El Roblar hotel project.

Beacon Coffee has been a fine neighbor. Their closing time of 2pm has allowed our neighborhood to remain quiet during the evening. If the proposed overflow parking after 5pm is allowed, our calm evenings will be replaced by excessive noise, trash, all night lighting and many other safety concerns. Noise carries, especially at night.

If the new project cannot accommodate their parking needs on their property, obviously there is a problem with the plan. The solution should not be the creation of an undeniable noise nuisance problem for a currently quiet neighborhood. Also the parking lease gives the sublessee sole discretion over hours of lot operation. That is concerning!

Ask yourself, if the city of Ojai decided to allow a business to create an all night parking lot outside your bedroom window, what would you think?

I understand the Ojai Planning Commission must address the needs of homeowners and the needs of business. I appreciate the work you do. Please reconsider how this seemingly appropriate solution to the El Roblar parking problem is a terrible idea for the homeowners that love and support our beautiful community.

Jane Cotti

Subject:

RE: Parking proposal for El Roblar-tonight's agenda

From: Leonard Klaif

Sent: Wednesday, December 8, 2021 2:53 PM

To: Shari Herbruck <shari.herbruck@ojai.ca.gov>

Subject: Parking proposal for El Roblar-tonight's agenda

Dear Member of the Planning Commission, City Council, and Staff,

I voiced my concerns regarding the parking proposal prior to the last time this item was on the agenda. I have reviewed the staff report for tonight's meeting (Dec. 8, 2021) and my concerns are unabated. I was at Beacon Coffee this morning and nearly all spaces, front and back were taken by, presumably, customers and staff. Where will customers and staff park if the Hotel has 20 spots during business hours? When the clock turns to 8:00 am where will all the cars in nighttime only spaces go? Will a dozen or so parking attendants race across the street from the Hotel to Beacon and start moving cars? The Hotel is removing current on site parking spaces and creating a need for more spaces and only planning on using existing spaces already in use.

This is not a viable plan.

Sincerely yours,

Leonard Klaif

Subject: RE: proposed hotel overflow parking

From: Cindy Frings

Sent: Wednesday, December 8, 2021 5:37 PM

To: Shari Herbruck

Subject: proposed hotel overflow parking

Hi Shari,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed overflow parking for the renovated El Roblar Hotel. First, I would like to say that I'm excited about the reopening of this Ojai landmark. As a long time resident of Ojai and a landowner on Topa Topa Dr, I'm very concerned about the potential impact from both noise and property value point of view. I sold my house and moved to Topa Topa Dr six years ago because it was a sleepy little street.. virtually a one lane road in the middle of town with only one street light. Creating a valet parking lot on the backside of this street has major implications from people, cars and car alarms and for property values. I would be deeply disappointed if this was allowed to pass. We live in a downtown area and the businesses that exist in the downtown area need to be respectful of the property owners that live around their businesses. This proposed expansion is not in the best interests of our community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Cindy Frings

December 8, 2021

Mr. Lucas Seibert
Chair Quilici
Vice Chair Nolan
Commissioner Lottes
Commissioner Swift
Commissioner Trent

Re: Agenda Item #2 The Hotel El Roblar

Dear Commissioners and Mr. Seibert:

Thank you all for your service to Ojai.

I am concerned about several topics in agenda item #2, the proposed Hotel El Roblar project.

Before going further, this plan should be reviewed by the historic preservation commission. It is a treasured part of Ojai's architectural and cultural history..

The proposed plan does not serve what is in the best interests of our community. It is inappropriate for the size of the town.

I strongly object to valet parking that requires movement of vehicles offsite. This activity negatively impacts Ojai residents and visitors alike. Adequate parking is critical to an inviting and well-functioning downtown. The applicant should provide for parking onsite, as that is what is best for all who live in Ojai, those who visit here, and for other downtown businesses.

Proposed parking agreements to provide 109 offsite parking spaces that are not under the control of the hotel owners should not be relied upon by those that are deciding whether or not to approve this conditional use permit. Also, inadequate onsite parking creates a requirement of city staff time to "police" the hotel to be sure that it stops renting rooms for which it does not have parking.

Thank you,

Leslie Hess